

ANNOTATIONS UPON THE HOLY BIBLE;

BY MATTHEW POOLE

DANIEL TO ACTS

THE MORE DIFFICULT TERMS IN EACH VERSE ARE EXPLAINED, SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED, QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS RESOLVED, AND THE WHOLE TEXT OPENED.

They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading – Neh. viii. 8.

Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I, except some man should guide me? – Acts viii. 30,31.



MATTHEW POOLE
(1624-1679)

Matthew Poole was born in York in 1624. He graduated from Emmanuel College in Cambridge in 1645, and succeeded Anthony Tuckney in pasturing at St. Michael-le-Querne church. It was the only pastorate Poole ever held. A strict Presbyterian, he resigned his living rather than conform to the Act of Uniformity. At the suggestion of William Lloyd, who was to become Bishop of Worcester, Poole undertook his life's work, his *Synopsis*, which we know as his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. He began this work in 1666 and labored at it for ten years.

Matthew Poole completed his *Synopsis Criticorum* (Synopsis of Interpreters) on the entire Bible in Latin. But he felt the need to supplement his magnum opus with a commentary on the Bible for English readers. He wrote his English Annotations on the Bible through Isaiah 58 before he died in Amsterdam. His friends decided to take up the remainder of the work and complete the English Annotations through Revelation. Following is a list of continuators.

John Jackson [Isaiah 59, 60]

John Collinges (1623-1691) [Isaiah 61-66; Jeremiah; Lamentations; Gospels; 1 and 2 Corinthians; Galatians; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Revelation]

Henry Hurst (1629-1690) [Ezekiel; Minor Prophets]

William Cooper [Daniel]

Peter Vinke (d. 1702) [Acts]

Richard Mayo (d. 1695) [Romans]

Edward Veale (d. 1708) [Ephesians; James; 1 and 2 Peter; Jude]

Richard Adams (c. 1626-1698) [Philippians; Colossians]

Matthew Barker (d. 1698) [1 and 2 Thessalonians]

Obadiah Hughes (d. 1704) [Hebrews]

John Howe (1630-1705) [1, 2, and 3 John]

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

THE ARGUMENT

IN Daniel and his prophecy, observe these things for the better understanding of this book, and the mind of God in it:

1. As to the author; First, He was a prophet, as appears in the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, meaning Christ the Messiah and his kingdom, what he should do, chapter 2; likewise chapter 7 to the end of the book: the first six chapters are historical, the last six prophetic. Secondly, As to his lineage, he was one of the royal seed. Thirdly, He was a captive. Fourthly, He was rarely qualified for piety, wisdom, beauty. Fifthly, As to his education, he was trained for three years in learning. Sixthly, His advancement for his parts and wisdom. Seventhly, He was faithful and blameless in the place of honour to which he was preferred. Eighthly, His care and kindness for his companions; he procured their promotion also. Ninthly, His singular holiness and power with God in prayer, **#Eze 14:14**. Tenthly, His faithfulness and constancy in the worship of God, maugre the envy and persecution of his enemies. Eleventhly, The strange providence of God in his preservation and deliverance. Twelfthly, His signal integrity and flourishing state under several kings' reigns, even in critical times and great changes, unto his old age, and beyond the seventy years of captivity.

2. AS to the book itself, both the historical and prophetic part of it, especially the latter, we find, First. Great variety in them. Secondly, Famous predictions; of the Messiah, of dreadful wars, of fearful desolations to countries, and the Jewish nation in particular, for putting Christ to death; great persecutions of the church, by the Grecians and Romans especially, in which Antiochus and antichrist are pointed at. These things are all of such weighty consideration, that our blessed Saviour calls for especial understanding in the reading even of one part of it, **#Mt 24:15**. His chronology and calculations may be called the key of time, relating to the church's sufferings and deliverances. Daniel was the greatest favourite we read of, namely, of the King of heaven, **#Da 9:23 10:11**, and of the greatest kings then on earth. He was the noblest pattern of a public heart for the church of God,

for whose affliction he was deeply afflicted in the midst of his court honours and employments.

Daniel 1:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 1

Jehoiakim's captivity, Dan_1:1,**2**. By the king of Babylon's order the master of the eunuchs taketh Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to instruct them, and changeth their names, Dan_1:3-7. They refusing to eat of the king' s meat thrive upon pulse and water, Dan_1:8-16. Their proficiency in wisdom, Dan_1:17-21.

Comparing this with 2Ki_24:1, and with 2Ch_36:6, the meaning is, after the Lord had taken away that good king Josiah for the sins of Judah and Manasseh, which were very great, by Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king; he reigned but three months, wherein he did so much evil in the sight of the Lord, that the said Pharaoh-necho put him in bands at Riblah, and afterwards carried him to Egypt, where he died, and made Eliakim his brother king in his stead, and turned his name to Jehoiakim; he became Nebuchadnezzar's servant three years, for that king of Babylon had overthrown Pharaoh's army at Carchemish by the river Euphrates. Jehoiakim rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar, made him come up from Babylon and take Jehoiakim, and bind him in fetters to carry him to Babylon; of whom, and his death and burial, you have a sad account, Jer_22:17-19.

Daniel 1:2

In this expedition Nebuchadnezzar carried away some of the vessels of the temple, and some captives, among whom was Daniel and his friends. These vessels he carried into the house of his god; which god was Baal or Bel, and Nebo, Isa_46:1; which words they put into the names of their kings and favourites, of which more afterward. These vessels as spoils he put in the house of his god, for his honour, because he thought he had gotten his victory by the help of his idol god, 1Sa_31:9,**10**, as the Philistines did, Jud_16:23,**24**; whereas the text saith the Lord gave all into his hand, Dan_1:2. The executioners of God's wrath upon God's sinful people have other thoughts than God hath about that, Isa_10:5-16.

Daniel 1:3

These here called eunuchs were chief among the king's servants, and they are called

eunuchs because many of them were such of old among all the princes of the East, and at this day, but they were not all such, Jer_52:25. The word translated

eunuch signifies also

chamberlain; such was

Hatach, Est_4:5; such were

Bigthana and

Teresh, Est_6:2, and

Harbonah, Est_7:9, and

Ashpenaz in the text, the master of the king's eunuchs, who had set

Melzar over Daniel and his companions, Dan_1:11.

Here was fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah had foretold king Hezekiah, Isa_39:7. Some think Daniel and his companions were made eunuchs in a strict sense, which doth not appear to be probable; but rather to be bred up in the court for officers, and thereby to alienate their minds from the religion of their country, and from seeking the welfare and return of their people; but God had otherwise appointed by this education of them, as appears in many signal testimonies of the presence and power of God with them, for the conviction of idolaters that God was above all gods.

Daniel 1:4

If the princes are so curious in their choice, no marvel that God was cautious in his, Lev_21:17-21 **22:20-25**. The reason why they were so delicately trained up was, that they being in the flower of their age should be allured with the delights of the court, and should: thereby be brought to forget their fathers' house and their religion; this hath been the artifice of the Turk in taking Christians' children, and making them Mamelukes and Janizaries, that thereby they may become, as renegades, the greatest champions for Mahomet, and enemies to the Christians.

To stand in the king's palace: this notes men fit by their parts to give advice in arduous matters, 2Ch_10:6: which shows that men only of promising abilities, and not incompetent, should be admitted to the presence of kings.

The learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans: for this cause *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, Act_7:22; yet it must be supposed that neither Moses nor Daniel learned any thing that was ungodly, but only to search nature, and that which was only moral; wherein both the Chaldeans and Egyptians were skilled above any other nations of the heathens. And although their magi or wise men did at last degenerate into curious and vain arts, yet Daniel had no further design to know their wisdom than to choose the good of it, and to shun and reject that which was unlawful. The Chaldean tongue differed from the Hebrew in dialect and in pronunciation, which they learned in the right tone and accent, that they might be the more acceptable to the king and court, by their conformity in garb, language, and manners; for which they had the space of three years allotted them.

Daniel 1:5

Of the king's meat; such as he had at his own table, wherein his bounty and humanity appeared towards them the more conspicuous, they being captives. By this preparation they were judged fit to stand before the king. Men of ingenuity and proficiency are fit to stand before kings, Pro_22:29.

Daniel 1:6

Doubtless most of them of the royal lineage of Judah, to which tribe God had a special respect, upon the account of David; and this tribe of Judah had the pre-eminence in many things.

Daniel 1:7

Names; that is, other names: this was done by the subtle instigation of Satan, that they might renounce their names received in circumcision, by assuming names imposed relating to the idol gods, being a profanation and a further degree of their apostacy; for Daniel had

the name of Belteshazzar, or Baltasar, from the great Babylonian idol Baal or Bel, &c. This was by the king's command, and herein

he put forth an act of his sovereignty. Thus Adam, Gen_2:19,**20**. Thus Pharaoh did, Gen_41:45; he gave

Joseph the name of Zaphnath-paaneah. And Pharaohnechoh changed the name of

Eliakim, Josiah's son, to Jehoiakim, 2Ki_23:34. And the king of Babylon turned the name of

Mattaniah to Zedekiah, 2Ki_24:17. The Lord changed the name of

Sarai to Sarah, of

Abram to Abraham, of

Jacob to Israel. Thus the Lord changed

Simon's name to Cephas or Peter, Mar_3:16.

Daniel 1:8

Ver. 8. There may be several weighty reasons assigned why Daniel did this.

1. Because many of those meats provided for the king's table were such as were forbidden by the Jews' law, whereof Daniel made conscience,

2. Daniel knew these delicacies would too much gratify and pamper the flesh, and therefore he would prevent the defilements which too often do arise from delicious fare, Deu_32:14,**15 Eze 16:49** Hos_13:6 Rom_13:13; so that those who fare deliciously would practise this.

3. Daniel knew he should by this bait be taken with the hook which lay hid under it, and insensibly be drawn from the true to a false religion, by eating and drinking things consecrated to idols.

4. Daniel saw his people lie under God's displeasure by their captivity, and therefore could not but be sensible how unsuitable a courtly life would be in him to the afflicted state of God's people, Heb_11:24-26. Therefore Daniel was herein a rare pattern of avoiding all the occasions of evil, which he did with purpose of heart, Act_11:23; saith the text, he

purposed in his heart to abstain.

Daniel 1:9

This is a special act of God's favour to his afflicted people, to give them any favour in the eyes of them that do afflict them; Psa_106:46,

He made them to be pitied of those that carried them captive.

This is the effect of sincere holiness and innocence, Pro_16:7. This is the effect of prayer, 1Ki_8:50. This is the effect of the special presence of God, Gen_39:3,4,21.

Daniel 1:10

He believed their countenances would betray them; and the king having appointed it, he dares not disobey, for his life lay at stake.

Daniel 1:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 1:12

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 1:13

By these words Daniel secures Melzar against fear and danger, only by ten days' trial; which was a fair and reasonable proffer. Thus the servants of God must carefully do, when they have good offices done them by the servants of princes, as Elijah was careful of good Obadiah, 1Ki_18:11,12, to secure him from death.

Daniel 1:14

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 1:15

There be three things here to be observed.

1. The hand of God, in persuading Melzar to incline to Daniel's request.
2. The goodness of God, to make good Daniel's words.
3. That the blessing of God upon homely fare affords oftentimes more healthful nourishment and strength, than more costly fare to them that eat the fat and drink the sweet.

Daniel 1:16

Which he could not but take well, for hereby he gained the costly provision of four men for the space of three years to his own use

and profit. Hence observe that courtiers are no losers by the favours they procure for God's servants. They are most willing to serve God's servants when they can therein also serve themselves by it.

Daniel 1:17

We must own

knowledge, and skill, and wisdom to come from God, Jam_1:5. These are beams of light shining in us from the Father of lights, and a man can receive nothing of this unless it be given him from above, Joh_3:27.

Object. But was not this magic, and was not this learning forbidden as abomination to the Lord, Deu_18:9-14?

Ans. The Chaldeans used lawful arts and sciences, and unlawful; these four young men, Daniel and his companions, used only those that were lawful; rejecting all that wisdom which is sensual, carnal, and devilish, Jam_3:15. In all visions and dreams; not in idle, vain, and lying, but in such as were sent of God, and predictions of things to come, as Num_12:6, such as the prophets had. Such was that of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 1:18

At the three years' end, according to the king's command, which Melzar punctually observed, and brought them in before the king.

Daniel 1:19

Communed with them, i.e. to try their proficiency: this argues the king's ability and judgment, how else could he discern their fitness and their excellency above others? He examined all candidates, he preferred those that outstripped others.

Daniel 1:20

This is a further confirmation of the king's noble endowments of mind, and of his great care whom he chose to be in offices of trust; namely, persons excellently qualified to serve him in the great affairs of the kingdom, not to serve his lusts by them for base jobs, for which men of no abilities or honour are usually chosen.

Daniel 1:21

i.e. In the court of Babylon until Cyrus, and then he was in the Persian court, and he lived in honour and high employment all that time, yea, after Cyrus began to reign; for, Dan_10:1, he had visions and revelations in the third year of Cyrus. He might live longer, for the word *until* doth not exclude things that follow after, Psa_110:1 **112:8**.

Daniel 2:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 2

In this chapter are four principal parts:

I. The king's, dream, Dan_2:1.

II. The wise men's ignorance and danger, Dan_2:2-13.

III. The revelation and interpretation of the dream by Daniel, Dan_2:14-45.

IV. The advancement of Daniel to great honour by that means, Dan_2:46-49.

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Heb.

in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, for this was properly in the fifth year of that king's reign and of Daniel's captivity, and the ninth year of Jehoiakim; but in the second year after Daniel had by his three years' preparation been brought before the king and approved, then the king dreamed.

Dreamed dreams; it was one dream, but of many parts, therefore called dreams; chiefly for what follows.

His spirit was troubled; by reason of the strangeness of it, he was terrified and in great consternation, and this made him awake.

Daniel 2:2

The magicians and the astrologers: these words signify astrologers, or those that cast nativities, that pretended great skill in natural and supernatural things; and the sorcerers, or necromancers, were those who used diabolical arts. **See Poole "Exo_7:11"; See Poole "Exo_22:18", See Poole "Deu_18:10"**. Though Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar made use of these as their great counsellors, yet God baffled them by Moses and Daniel; and forbade his people the use or toleration of them, because they are

an abomination to him. God will have his people ask counsel of him and his words, and not of the devil's oracles.

Chaldeans: this name the magicians assumed, as being national and most noble; and whatever these wise men or wizards said, it was as if Jupiter himself had spoken it, as the Roman satirist said of them, Juv. Sat. 6.

They came and stood before the king. Daniel was not called among them. Why? Because the king confided more in these his own old standers; but chiefly God had thus ordered by his wise providence that Daniel should not be in their number, for if he had, the interpretation would have been attributed to astrology and magic, and not to God, as now it was.

Daniel 2:3

He remembered the fact in general, but could not repeat it perfectly, much less know the meaning of it; yet it had left such an impression on him, as put him into great perplexity. The Lord hath ways to affright the greatest men in the world, in the midst of their security and jollity.

Daniel 2:4

In Syriac; that is, in the Chaldee tongue, for Syria or Aram is taken in a large sense sometimes, containing Assyria, Babylon, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Palestine, 2Ki_18:26, and from hence to the 8th chapter all is written in the Chaldee language, and not Hebrew, because it most concerned that people, and from thence in Hebrew again.

O king, live for ever: this was a salutation to princes of old, 1Sa_10:24 1Ki_1:25; their meaning was, Let him live a long happy life, for thus the word live is often taken, Psa_34:12, and this is agreeable to the desires of all worldly men in their prosperity.

We will show the interpretation: it is observed of old to this day, that there is not any sort of men who are such flatterers as impostors. So confident and arrogant are these fortune-tellers, that they promise to interpret a dream which they never knew: this was boldly said of them, seeing the Egyptian magicians could not interpret Pharaoh's dream though he told it them, Gen_41:8.

Daniel 2:5

The thing is gone from me: this was of God, that these impostors should be made infamous, by detecting their ignorance and their arrogance, and that this should be a step to Daniel's honour, for knowing the king's dream and interpreting it, neither of which the Chaldeans could do.

With the interpretation thereof: if they do not both, saith the king.

Cut in pieces, and your houses, & c, this was a usual punishment in those parts of the world; thus Samuel cut Agag in pieces, 1Sa_15:33 1Ch_20:3. Thus David dealt with the Ammonites. And the like was in making houses a dunghill. The like we have Dan_3:29; and thus they did to the house of Baal, *made it a draught-house to this day*, by Jehu's command, 2Ki_10:27. The like did Darius threaten to them that would alter his decree for building the house of God, Ezr_6:11. This commination argued the king's wrath to be excessive and furious, in punishing for not doing what was above their human strength, and which the Chaldeans never arrogated to themselves; yet was this a just reward to these men, that were so presumptuous.

Daniel 2:6

As I threatened you with death for not doing, I promise you rewards and honour if ye perform it. This is in the power of princes, as they think, but all this would not do; therefore they are still where they were, they answered the king again.

Daniel 2:7

But this the king could not do; they could not tell the dream, and the king could not, yet both require impossibilities.

Daniel 2:8

This ye do in policy, to escape punishment; when taken up with other affairs, I may forget to make further inquiry after this thing, but it shall not serve your turn.

Daniel 2:9

There is but one decree for you; that is, I will not retract my sentence, ye shall surely die: you are upon tricks, ye have prepared corrupt and lying words, for he that can interpret a dream

can tell the dream, both come from a Divine inspiration, which ye pretend to; but I say ye have it not.

Daniel 2:10

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 2:11

The Chaldeans bring three arguments to convince the king.

1. There is not a man upon earth can show the king's matter.
2. There is no king requires such a thing of any magician.
3. None but the gods can do this. The Chaldeans with other Gentiles did believe more gods than one and the supreme deity or deities did not meddle with the affairs of men, but had the cognizance by inferior or intermediate demons. So Plato and many of them held. The meaning then is this, Seeing there are some things that God, who knoweth all things, will not communicate the knowledge of to men, and hath not done it to us, it is therefore a singular and unreasonable thing the king should require it of us, and that so suddenly, and upon such penalties.

Daniel 2:12

Tyrants are inexorable, and they rule according to their will, and being crossed they are furious, and that brings forth death; the wrath of such is the roaring of a lion.

Daniel 2:13

This was unjust, that Daniel and his fellows should have their share in the punishment, and yet be excluded from the other part which was the reward; the reason why they were not called was because of their youth, which the Chaldeans despised, wherein we have these three things observable.

1. The magicians confessed this, that knowledge and revelation must come from God, and therefore what Daniel did was not by any human strength, but Divine only.
2. That the Lord held the governor's hands, so that he did not slay Daniel presently with the first.
3. That Daniel, by his prudence and piety, saved all the magicians' lives.

Daniel 2:14

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 2:15

So hasty; so precipitate, to slay the innocent who were never called, who knew nothing of it-this appears plainly from these words,

Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel, Dan_2:15, which was this, that the king had dreamed a strange dream that troubled him, that he had forgotten it, that he called all his wise men to show both the dream and interpretation, but they could not; therefore the king decreed the death of all the wise men in Babylon, and Daniel with his fellows among them, without saving the life of one of them, and he, viz. Arioch, had received command to execute it presently. Thus there was but a step between him and death.

Daniel 2:16

There are four things here very strange and wonderful.

1. That Arioch, instead of executing the king's decree speedily, should make this stop.
 2. That he should dare to see the king's face when he was so wroth, instead of doing what his commission tied him to.
 3. That Daniel should have the boldness to go in to the king when he was in his fury.
 4. That he should desire time and obtain it of the king, who had denied the same thing to the wise men. To which we answer, The signal hand of God was in all this.
2. In particular, Daniel was in great esteem with the king above all the wise men, Dan_1:19,**20 3.**
3. He gave both Arioch and the king hopes he would show and interpret the king's dream.

Daniel 2:17

According to the good hand of his God upon him, who had shown him favour thus far, and obtained the king's leave, he went to his house near the palace, that he might seek God in secret for this great thing. For,

1. Their lives were at stake.

2. It was not a small thing, he was sure, that God was about, wherewith he had troubled the king's mind in such a manner. Therefore he reinforceth his strength, calling his friends to help him: as prayer in times of danger is the most seasonable and sovereign help so, in a common danger we must call in all the help we can to it.

Daniel 2:18

Observe here Daniel's humility, he sought not to engross this business, and the honour of it, wholly to himself, but would have his fellows share in it with him. Again, they would desire mercy, Heb. *the bowels of tender mercy* : the choicest saints desire to be saved by mercy, Psa_51:1.

That Daniel and his fellows should not perish: the Lord hath a distinguishing care and love for his people, 2Th_1:6 2Pe_2:9, especially in common calamities, Exo_14:19, &c.; Rev_18:4.

Daniel 2:19

It is not improbably conjectured that Daniel spent the night in watching and prayer, for night vision is distinguished from dreams, Num_12:6; whether sleeping or waking, Daniel had the same thing revealed unto him which king Nebuchadnezzar had, with this difference, the king remembered not his dream, nor knew what it meant, but Daniel was able to tell his dream and give the meaning of it also.

Daniel blessed the God of heaven; he gave thanks and praise to the Father of lights, from whom all wisdom comes, who heard his prayer, and revealed this secret to him. Note, this was revealed to Daniel, and not to his companions, for he was chief, and by this is signified by what steps he rose up to the degree of a famous prophet. Again, he calls the true God the

God of heaven, because he made heaven, his throne is there, and the magicians' and heathen gods come not there, but were cast out thence, being devils of hell; but the God of Israel is the *God of heaven* .

Daniel 2:20

He blesseth God for two things.

1. **Wisdom;** he means chiefly the wisdom God gave him in revealing this great secret to him, which the wise men could not attain to, because they knew not the true God, nor did seek to him for it, this is clear in Dan_2:21-23.

2. **Might is his;** that is, almighty, above all mighty potentates of the world, above Nebuchadnezzar and all the kings of the earth, for he sets them up and plucks them down at pleasure, Dan_2:21, as the interpretation of the dream and vision shows.

Daniel 2:21

God made time; God made the sun, moon, and stars, the measure of time; he made the day and the night, and seasons of the year, yea, the revolutions and change of times; he can make bad times better, and turn night into day. He can make the sun go backward or stand still, as in Ahaz's and Joshua's time; it is the great part of God's power and prerogative to change times. Daniel here attributes that to God which heathens attributed to nature, which they deified, or to chance; seeing that God only, that made all by his power, doth rule, and sometimes overrule all by his providence.

Daniel 2:22

The deep and secret things; both of nature, wherein are infinite depths and secrets: and of men's hearts and counsels, which are very close, deep, and secret, saying in themselves, Who can see us? and the deep and secret things of grace, and the mysteries of Christ's kingdom: all this is comfortable to the saints, and glorious to God.

He knoweth what is in the darkness, and it dwelleth with him, and he in it. He sees and foresees the most hidden things. Daniel points at the king's dream in the night, which he only gave the king, and then took it from him, and then gave it Daniel for him again.

Daniel 2:23

Here he gives his God another distinguishing title from all the gods of the heathen, he calls him the God of his fathers, meaning the covenant made with Abraham, &c., to whom and their seed God revealed his saving knowledge, which he did not to the

heathen. God is the God of all by the kingdom of his power, but the God of his church only according to the kingdom of his grace.

Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter; in which words he intimates a twofold privilege; the one that, as the son of such fathers, he obtained the grace and favour of God in giving him safety and wisdom; the other, that he found him a God hearing prayer, and that in a thing of a high nature, he made known to him the king's matter.

Daniel 2:24

Being now prepared, he goes to Arioch to go in with him to the king; and bid him stay his hand, and not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Arioch might plead the king's command, Daniel tells him that was because they could not tell the king's dream: come, saith he, I will show that; by that I take away the ground of thy commission to destroy.

Quest. Did Daniel do well in desiring to have them spared, who deserved to die for their unlawful arts, diviners, necromancers, &c.?

Ans. Two things are usually answered to this:

1. They were not all such, some were innocent, studied arts and sciences lawful and laudable.
2. Those that were otherwise, he pleaded not for them as such, but for justice, that they ought not to die unjustly; and that was their case and cause.

Daniel 2:25

How comes Arioch to boast of what he had found; as if he got him by great search, or by great chance, and as if Daniel had been some obscure, unknown person, when Daniel had asked time of the king just before? It is the manner of courtiers to be very officious, and to commend their own little deeds, that thereby they may signify something with their prince, and make themselves necessary to him, possibly Arioch might not know that Daniel had been with the king, and therefore comes with this Eurhka, I have found your man, here he is, behold him, he will give the king full satisfaction in all concerning the dream.

Daniel 2:26

By this name of

Belteshazzar he had given Daniel, he took courage as if he might expect some great thing from him; for the word signifies the keeper of secret treasure, i.e. to lay up and bring forth.

Art thou able, & c.? as if he had said, I question if thou canst, seeing all my wise men cannot do it; canst thou presume to do more than all they?

Daniel 2:27

He reckons up here all sorts of divination, to show that divine things, and the secrets of God, cannot be comprehended by man without special revelation; and that those who presume to do it arrogate too much to themselves, and that it is too tyrannical to require it of any, and that upon pain of death; for, saith Daniel, they cannot do it.

Daniel 2:28

Here the prophet gives God entirely all the glory, proving all the powers on earth to come short in it, it being one of God's peculiar prerogatives to reveal secrets. Yea, in great humility he denies himself to have any share in it, as also Dan_2:29.

What shall be in the latter days: observe here the prophet's wisdom in this discovery, he doth not fall abruptly upon the dream, but first prepares this lofty king for it in general, and by degrees he doth labour to win him to the knowledge of the true God.

1. By this his power; and,

2. By his gracious favour to the king, in revealing to him the greatest secret in the world about the change of kingdoms and governments, and touching the power of Christ's kingdom over all in the latter days. See Dan_2:44.

Daniel 2:29

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 2:30

For their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king: some will have this relate to the Jews and the church of

God, by whose prayers this was obtained; but the more plain sense is this, But that the interpretation may be manifest to the king, and that thou mayst know the thoughts of thy heart, that thou mayst be better instructed and satisfied in thy mind in this great secret, when thou seest the mind of God in it, and what it points at, and what thy duty is, and how to steer thy counsel and actions in this vast monarchy, and towards the afflicted church of God in it.

Daniel 2:31

A great image; not a painted, superficial image, but a massy one, a statue in man's shape, great, splendid, majestic: thus they were wont of old to represent great emperors and empires, and worshipped them as gods: called here an image, and in a dream, all which is in show and shadow rather than in substance, and therefore vanishing.

Stood before thee, and that upright, of a prodigious height, noting the grandeur of those monarchies.

The form thereof was terrible: government is to be feared, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour; also some had rather be feared than loved. Some say the image was so placed that the face looked toward the king, and thus it might trouble and terrify him.

Daniel 2:32

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 2:33

By this we see the world is much worse and far declined, every age degenerating from what it was of old; as the poets, which borrowed their fancy from this image, have described the ages of the world from metals; the first was golden, and so, coming on coarser, it ended at last, as this image in the text, in dirt.

Daniel 2:34

i.e. All of it to pieces, all vanished, and the stone became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth: this is the dream, and the interpretation of all follows.

Daniel 2:35

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 2:36

By this word we appears Daniel's piety and modesty, for he declares by it that he and his companions had begged this skill from God, and therefore he did not and could not arrogate it to himself, excluding them, without injury and dishonour to God that heard prayer. Now begins the interpretation.

Daniel 2:37

A king of kings; he means Nebuchadnezzar in person, together with his successors, Evil-merodach and Belshazzar. The prophet would not mind the king of any thing past, nor of any other governments but those with whom his church were then and to be concerned for the future, till the coming of the Messiah, by whose coming they should support and comfort themselves against all their sufferings by oppressors; and also God would have the prophet mind Nebuchadnezzar of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, growing and breaking in pieces all earthly power.

The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom; it came not to thee by thy ancestors, or by fortune, or by thy valour, but the great God of heaven hath the bestowing of those, and giveth them to whomsoever he will.

Power, and strength, and glory; authority; victorious armies, with great prosperity.

Daniel 2:38

Hath made thee ruler over them all, i.e. hath given thee absolute dominion of all creatures, men and beasts, within the bounds of thy vast kingdom, to hunt, catch, or kill far thy use and pleasure. God as Lord paramount allows thee, his vassal and tenant at will, all this. This was not universal over all the world, but only within his large territories, which yet were bounded.

Thou art this head of gold.

1. Why head? Because he was first in order, as the head is before the other parts, and the vision began in him, and descended downwards to the other three monarchies.

2. Why head of gold? Because of the vast riches wherein it abounded, and which the Chaldeans most coveted, and scraped

from the spoils and tributes of all countries, Isa_10:13,14 Jer 51:41,44. Also this is called the golden head, because it stood longest, five hundred years, and was fortunate and flourishing to the last.

Daniel 2:39

Another kingdom inferior to thee; this was that of the Medes and Persians, inferior in time and succession; in duration, it lasted not half so long as the Assyrian; and in prosperity and tranquillity, for the Persian was fuller of trouble; yet was this wonderfully rich and large for a time, Est_1:1: this was the breast and arms of silver.

Another third kingdom of brass; this was the Grecian monarchy, under Alexander the Great, who conquered the former, called "the city," because given so much to luxury; brass, because coarser than the other, and their armour was chiefly brass, calkocitonev.

Which shall bear rule over all the earth; therefore this is also called a universal monarchy; for Alexander marched into the Indies, and conquered much of that, (by which he was said to conquer the world,) and wept that he had not another world to conquer: yet; his lasted not long, for he was soon overcome and killed by his worldly lusts.

Daniel 2:40

The fourth kingdom is the kingdom of the Romans; and was to last not only to Christ's first coming, but under antichrist to his second coming, but still going down as to pagan worship, and at last to antichristian and papal power; for in Dan_2:28 Daniel tells the king that God made known to him that should be in the latter days; therefore he intended a general history to the end of the world, Dan_2:44 **Da 7**, latter end; and **Da 11, Da 12**.

It shall break in pieces and bruise: this did break in pieces all other kingdoms, being too strong for them, and was never in subjection to any, but brought all in subjection to it, till the stone fell upon it, of which afterward.

Daniel 2:41

The kingdom shall be divided; partly strong and partly weak. The Roman kingdom was divided, partly, because tyranny

followed aristocracy, and the government made up of both; partly, in their civil wars, when two competitors strove each for dominion, the common people against the senate, Sylla against Marius, Caesar against Pompey; also, partly, when conquered provinces and kingdoms cast off the Roman yoke, and set up kings of their own, and so the empire was divided into ten kingdoms or toes. The vision attributes two legs to the image, and to the fourth monarchy, because the Romans had sometimes duumvirs, two consuls, two emperors, one in the east, the other in the west.

Daniel 2:42

This was plain in the civil wars of the Romans, the falling off of some countries, especially in and towards the end of it.

Daniel 2:43

With the seed of men, i.e. by marriage; but they shall never solder well together, because ambition is of stronger force than affinity and consanguinity in rulers.

Daniel 2:44

In the days of these kings, i.e. while the iron kingdom stood, (for Christ was born in the reign of Augustus Caesar, Luk_2:1)

shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom. Now see the difference of Christ's kingdom from all other kingdoms in the world.

1. In the rise of it, it was not by earthly succession, or arms, or policy.
2. It is spiritual and heavenly in the laws and administration of it.
3. Jesus Christ was not a mere man, but God-man, he is the King, the Son of God.
4. It is stronger than all others, because it breaks them in pieces.
5. It is not bounded by any limits as worldly empires are, but truly universal.
6. It shall be for ever, and never destroyed and given to others, as the rest were.

Daniel 2:45

This verse notes,

1. The small beginning of Christ's kingdom visibly.
2. The different rise of Christ from all other; his conception by the Holy Ghost, like as Melchizedek, without father and mother, respectively as to his two natures.

Who shall declare his generation? His name shall be called Wonderful, Isa_9:6.

3. This stone, as a heavy rock, tumbling down from the mountain, brake the image in pieces, which it could not be said any other did.
4. Christ is a stone that grinds to powder those it falls on. He is the precious foundation and chief corner-stone of his church for ever.
5. He is a growing stone, even to a mountain, mid therefore will fill the earth, 1Co_15:24. God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter, i.e. the great God hath shown all this, who is above all the kings of the earth, and only knows, and decrees, and effects future things, who only doth great and wondrous things.

The dream is certain, i.e. this dream is no ordinary dream, but an oracle of God; it is sent from heaven, and gives a perfect scheme and prophetic history of things to come, about the special providence of God in changing governors and governments, with particular regard to his church under them; and above all, about the kingdom of Christ, and the growth of it, maugre all the enterprises of pagan and antichristian Rome.

The interpretation thereof sure; it is not a conjectural guess of the magicians and wise men of Babylon, who use to prepare lying words, because they have no knowledge of the true God, and therefore are; wholly unacquainted with his secrets, which he revealeth to his prophets by the Spirit of prophecy; which he hath now signally imparted to me; this I have faithfully made known unto thee, O King.

Daniel 2:46

This was strange, that so great a monarch should thus worship his vassal: thus was it sometimes done to men, as to Elias the prophet, 2Ki_1:13: this was done in consternation and admiration, because he saw so much of God in the prophet, and in the revelation of the dream; but why did Daniel suffer it to be done to him?

1. Though he could not hinder the king in his prostration, and in his word of command, yet doubtless he showed his averseness with much zeal and abhorrence, as the apostles did in the like case, Act_14:13-15, because it was high sacrilege and idolatry.

2. It is not said they offered sacrifice to Daniel, but only the king commanded it, which doubtless Daniel refused, because he was so careful in not defiling himself with the king's dainties, Dan_1:8; also when he would not omit the worship of God, though with the hazard of his life, Dan_6:10; therefore the king, being instructed of Daniel, gives God all the glory, in the next words.

Daniel 2:47

A God of gods; the greatest and supreme God of all the world, above Baal, or Bel, and above all other gods.

A Lord of kings; the word is *Maron* or *Maran* , which in the Syriac signifies *Lord* , or *high Lord* , seeing he is the highest King of all the earth. He makes, overrules, and pulls down whom he will, 1Ti_6:15 Rev_17:14 **19:16:** by this he gathers that God is a

revealer of secrets, Isa_48:3,**5-8.** A revealer of secrets; is supreme God, because he knows, and foreknows, and decrees all things future.

Seeing thou couldst reveal this secret; therefore Daniel had it from God, who revealed it to him, which here the king confesseth.

Daniel 2:48

Made Daniel a great man, Chald. *rabbi* , magnified him.

Many great gifts; an estate suitable to his honour.

Ruler over the whole province of Babylon; gnal col medina over the chief province of Babylon, which was head, because of the metropolis; the word is also Arabic, and therefore used in Spain at this day.

Chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon: see Dan_4:9. Daniel was chief of them in wisdom, for he could unfold what none of the wise men could. Again, he was chief in place and power, he had the rule and inspection of them which were students and professors of wisdom and learning, into their studies and manners, like a perpetual lord chancellor. Not that this holy prophet gave any encouragement to them in their unlawful arts and divinations, but rather discouraged and corrected them, leaching them the knowledge of the true God: thus doth the true religion top all the world, and make the grandeur thereof stoop to it, for it is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Daniel 2:49

He substituted them as lieutenants for the king's service, under Daniel, which, as the curious observe, was chiefly about agriculture, and gathering revenues and provisions for the court; but Daniel was as privy counsellor and lord chamberlain, about arduous affairs of the king and kingdom, sitting sometimes in judgment, and also admitting and conducting persons and causes to the king, as there was need, to whom there was difficult access, according to the magnificence and majesty of the kings of the East. Thus Daniel sat in the king's gate, to be near and ready for the king's chiefest business; and it notes honour, also high favour; but especially we must look upon Daniel's promotion to be for the service and protection of his brethren in their present state of captivity, as Mordecai was, which shows that God doth remember his people in their low estate, and doth not leave himself without witness to them, in raising up nursing-fathers for them.

Daniel 3:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 3

Nebuchadnezzar setting up an image commandeth all persons to worship it, Dan_3:1-7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are accused of disobeying the command, Dan_3:8-12. The king threateneth them; their resolute answer, Dan_3:13-18. They are cast into the fiery furnace, Dan_3:19-23. God delivereth them unhurt out of it, which Nebuchadnezzar seeing blesseth God, and acknowledgeth his power, Dan_3:24-29. Their advancement, Dan_3:30.

This daring sin of Nebuchadnezzar was aggravated many ways, by the greatness of the kingdom and majesty God had given him, by the late discovery made to him when Daniel interpreted his dream, by his conviction and confession upon it of that great God and his sovereign power: this is the height of ingratitude, arguing his carriage before to be only a fit of astonishment, without the least change upon his heart.

The vast proportion of the statue, or idol, was to show his greatness by the height and bulk of it, and his pride and magnificence in the richness of it, seeing it was of gold, and to be a monument to posterity of his famous exploits. Some give this reason, that he might seem hereby to avert the fate of his empire, foretold by Daniel, and declare himself sole monarch of the world, or head of gold, because he made it of gold, whether massy, or plated, or gilded, matters not. Likewise that he might seem no ways to be inclined to the Jews, or their religion, whereof the Chaldeans might be jealous, seeing he had owned their God to be greatest, and had preferred Daniel and his friends to great honours. Nebuchadnezzar assured his wise men and nobles that he would still maintain the old established religion, without innovation or mixture: so Mald, Menochius, Geierus: that they had a spite against the Jews is clear, Dan_3:8,12.

Daniel 3:2

This great statue, whether Nebuchadnezzar's own, or Bel, or any other of his gods, see Dan_3:14, must be solemnly dedicated, and therefore all the peers of the realm are called to it; but whether these ranks of men and officers are truly rendered from the Chaldee words is hard to determine, and not worth disputing; etymologists differ in it: this only is material, that the heads of all that vast empire were summoned, of several nations and languages, to testify their conformity to the emperor's will, and thereby give assurance of obliging the people under them to the same obedience, i.e. to the same idolatrous worship.

It was the manner of the heathen to consecrate their idol before they worshipped it, and herein, as in many other, Satan imitated the Jews, and their temple dedication, Joh_10:22: they held a feast. The popish church do the like, when they dedicate material

temples to particular saints, with solemnity and jollity, from whence come the feasts of wakes and revels to this day.

Daniel 3:3

i. e. In the plains of Dura, where great multitudes might easily be gathered, and behold it lifted up on high, conspicuous to all; they beheld it with admiration, ready to adore it, in obedience to the king's will and pleasure, for whatsoever pleased him pleased them, walking willingly after the commandment, as Jeroboam by his calves made Israel to sin. Heathenish and profane men are unstable as water, and blown any way by every wind of doctrine, suitable to their princes and to their own lusts. If the king had commanded idols to be broken and burnt, and the worship of the true God to be set up, this people would not have been so forward in their conformity, because men are generally more inclined to false worship than true.

Daniel 3:4

An herald: it is likely there were many heralds at the head of that great concourse, else they could not all hear.

People, nations, and languages: proclamation was made therefore in several languages, to some of several nations assembled there, and to the representatives of all.

Daniel 3:5

All kinds of music, i.e. wind and stringed instruments of various sorts and fashions, for we have here Syrian and Greek ones, as appears by the words, though in Chaldee letters, for this mighty monarch was lord over them all.

Ye fall down and worship: mark, all that is required of them is only a gesture of worship, without oral profession. The pomp and equipage, the solemn sound of the music, and the strict command, was enough to induce them to stoop and fall down to it. This is one of Satan's great engines to draw the world from God's pure worship, and the simplicity that is in Christ, dazzling men's eyes, and bewitching them with a gaudy, whorish dress of idolatrous service, as ye see in this example, and Rev_17:4,5; all which ariseth merely from hence, because men do not or will not see that God's worship is wholly spiritual, and most beautiful and glorious as such, 2Co_3:7 to the end; by this it excels all pagan, Jewish,

and antichristian worship, all which is human, bodily, uncommanded of God, therefore displeasing and provoking, unprofitable, insnaring, and destructive. Now idolatrous gestures are sinful, because forbidden of God, Exo_20:5, because this satisfies and hardens idolater's in their way, also because by this snare and critical mark their proselytes are known and distinguished, as here, they that stood up, when others fell down; thus antichrist and new Babylon hath her mark in the forehead and hands of her followers, Rev_13:15-17. Primitive Christians would not offer a grain of frankincense to a pagan idol for fear or favour, nor true protestants kneel to the host, which the popish priest holds up to insnare them.

Daniel 3:6

This was a punishment usual among the Chaldeans, to scorch, roast, and burn offenders with fire, Jer_29:22: see /APC 1Ma_7:3. And this the king of Moab imitated, 2Ki_3:27 Amo_2:1. This shows the hellish malice and cruelty of wicked men, especially against those that cross their pride and superstition, which was visible in the tortures Christians were put to in the ten persecutions, and in the fires which antichrist hath kindled in all his reign against the witnesses of Jesus; witness the book of "Acts and Monuments" whom they cannot allure with their gaudery, they fright with their fires and massacres, as ye see the effects of both in the verse following.

Daniel 3:7

The same methods hath new Babylon followed, in the long slavery of their false catholic church, for the whole world wondered after the beast, and none could make war with him, Rev_13:3,4,7,8.

Daniel 3:8

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 3:9

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 3:10

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 3:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 3:12

Now the devil's cloven foot appears, now ye have the bottom of the plot; one of these two is clear: these Chaldeans finding the Jews made courtiers, and preferred to places of trust and honour, they either put the king upon this work, or else made use of it, both to satisfy their ambition and wreak their malice against those three worthies; as they dealt with Daniel, Dan_6:4,5.

They accused the Jews; which word signifies to calumniate, and also to eat up and devour, which is the design of envy and malice. See how they go to work:

1. They strike while the iron is hot, they take the king in his huff.
2. They read a law established.
3. Then they say the Jews do not observe the king's laws, a people already obnoxious.
4. Yea, several of them despise the king's laws and authority.
5. They abuse the king's great favour and indulgence to them.
6. They should give good example, being in places of trust and dignity.
7. Yet, behold, they declare their contumacy and rebellion in not conforming to the king's laws.

This set the king all in a flame of rage and fury, and he commanded to bring these three men before him.

Daniel 3:13

Why not Daniel too, because he was chief of all in honour?

Answ. Because the king had a greater favour for him, and he was popular, and beloved for his great wisdom and unblamable carriage; they would not meddle with him now, lest by his knowledge and interest in the king he might chance to spoil their plot.

Daniel 3:14

Now when these men were brought before the king, though in rage, yet he doth not presently throw them into the fire, but makes inquiry by interrogatories, that he might see first if they were guilty, by hearing them speak for themselves, and telling them he

expected obedience and conformity to his laws from them, and it was in vain to look for any indulgence from him, he would bate them nothing, they should be burned. What! do ye make a jest of my gods, and my religion, and my commands? so the word

tseda in the Syriac doth signify, to scoff or deride, as if he had said, Is it true indeed that ye refuse to worship my gods? do ye do it in earnest, or in jest? it seems by your carriage, if it be true what I hear of you, that ye slight my gods, and make a mock of my authority, but ye shall know there is no jesting with these edge-tools.

Daniel 3:15

Prodigious pride and blasphemy! for he doth not only insult over all gods in general, but particularly against the only true God, whom he lately confessed, Dan_2:47, to be

a God of gods, and a Lord of kings. So the king of Assyria, 2Ki_18:30,33. Thus all the tyrants of the East, Turk, Mogul, Kham, whose very titles are blasphemy. It is a wonder why these men worship any god, seeing they set up themselves above all. Reason of state makes them set up somewhat to keep the people in awe; they themselves are exempt, and care for none. The root of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance lay chiefly here, he had burnt the temple of the Jews' God, and made slaves of his people, and he did not deliver either, and therefore thought he could not; and so presumes the same now; but God will make him quickly of another mind.

Daniel 3:16

Heb. **We care not**, we may not, there is no need of any answer in this case, for it is in vain for us to deliberate and debate the matter; the king is resolved to have his will of us, and we are resolved on the contrary; for to obey him in this horrid thing will be disobedience against our God to the highest.

Daniel 3:17

They were endued with a strong faith in their God, not only as to his power, which was omnipotent and unlimited, but also as to his will, which readily inclined him to succour his servants in their distress, for his name's sake, according to his promise and the saints' experience in the like cases of extremity.

Daniel 3:18

They add this,

But if not, to show they did not presume to tie God to this deliverance absolutely, for God is arbitrary, and knows how to deliver, and sometimes to suffer his saints to glorify him by suffering. It was therefore all one to them, which way of the two God would honour himself, they were resolved to venture suffering rather than sinning, and leave the cause to God.

Daniel 3:19

The king's fury appeared in his face, and in his words; taking this answer for the highest affront and provocation, which as the case stood he could not bear, the pride of his heart made his indignation boil over, and therefore he made the

furnace seven times hotter. Tyrants would burn the people of God in hell if they could.

Daniel 3:20

Did he think these three men would have resisted, or that their God would defend them from his power, or that, if he had, the king and his mighty men could have prevailed? None of all this was in the case, for God purposed to show his power when the king did his worst, and to quench the violence of the fire, both of the furnace and of the king's fury, at once; and in the thing wherein he dealt proudly, to be above him.

Daniel 3:21

This is observable and wonderful, that the fire should not catch their garments, being the most obnoxious to it.

Daniel 3:22

The king's commandment was urgent; which made them the more hasty and precipitate in their execution, and took less care for themselves against the violence of the flame.

The fire slew those men; a signal hand of God upon such as execute wicked commands, who, though mighty men, had no might to escape the flame at the mouth of the furnace, when the other escaped in the midst of it.

Daniel 3:23

All this is expressed with emphasis, to make the power of God more glorious in their preservation; for that flame that slew the executioners might much more easily have suffocated the three children before they fell down.

Daniel 3:24

Rose up in haste: this fear, perturbation, and amazement as the word signifies, surprised the king, being surprised with the strangeness of it, beholding something supernatural in it, together with the disappointment of his design and cruel commands.

True, O king: the Lord extorted this confession from them, though enemies.

Daniel 3:25

I see; the fire gave light to see them, though it had no power of heat to burn them.

Like the Son of God; a Divine, most beautiful, and glorious countenance; either of a mere angel, or rather of Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant, who did sometimes appear in the Old Testament before his incarnation, Gen_12:7 **18:10,13,17,20 Exo 23:23 33:2** Jos_5:13-15 Pro_8:31; in all which places it is Jehovah; Gen_19:24 Exo_3:2 Act_7:30,**32,33,38**.

Daniel 3:26

Came near; as near as he durst come, within hearing. *And spake* with a milder tone than before, God having abated the fire of his fury. Now he could at once confess and acknowledge the true God to be the Most High above all gods, and the three worthies to be his faithful servants.

Came forth of the midst of the fire; they went out upon the king's call, without which they would not have stirred.

Daniel 3:27

Saw these men, with great admiration, for the satisfaction of all by their sight of them, and by their smell. All the works of God are perfect, and there was nothing here wanting to make this wonderful deliverance complete. Here was a pure act of God's omnipotence, to divide between the fire and its most intense heat, and to master any creature in the world in its height, by working

against and above nature, whose utmost sphere of activity is limited by God.

Daniel 3:28

Thus out of the mouths of blasphemers and contemners of God can the Lord ordain praise: yet all this did not draw off this king from his idolatry, for he saith,

the God of Shadrach, & c., not his God. Wonders will not work conversion till God work upon the heart, Deu_29:24. He blesseth God for four things.

1. For sending his angel to deliver his servants that trusted in him.
2. That they changed the king's commandment, i.e. frustrated it, and make it void, and convinced the king, and brought him to a better mind.
3. Therefore yielded their bodies to the fire, and to his fury, by passive obedience, rather than not obey God actively, by worshipping any false god,
4. But only the true, whom they chose to be their own God. Observe also here the power of faith, it quencheth the violence of fire, Heb_11:34; and the presence of God with his people, even in the fire, and in fiery trials, Isa_43:2 1Pe_1:7 **4:12**.

Daniel 3:29

Observe here, that though he doth not resolve to worship the true God, nor command others to do it, yet he would not allow the God of the Jews to be evil spoken of; this was all that he came up to. He was resolved to hold fast to the religion established, his own idols; nay, the great golden idol, which had been slurred and slighted by these three worthies, he would not take down and relinquish: this was the best quarter the true God could get among them, not to be spoken amiss of under great penalty; though he confessed no god else could deliver after that strange sort. Bel could not preserve his men out of the furnace, God preserves his servants in the furnace. All was one for that, Bel should be his god still.

Daniel 3:30

They that honour God, them will God honour. To suffer, and suffer shame and pains, for God, is to honour God. Joh_21:19

1Pe_4:14. It is probable that the Chaldeans used to reproach the God of the Jews, and more upon this account, because for his sake these his servants refused conformity to Babylonish idolatry; and their common quarrel with the people of God was upon the account of their religion; thus here in this instance, and thus in Daniel's case, Dan_6:4,5; thus Haman, Est_3:8. Also for that very thing they make them disloyal, and breakers of the king's laws. Now God would vindicate his people herein, and make this great king to do it too, knowing it was a grief of heart for these men, Shadrach, &c., to hear the name of God abused by idolaters and profane wretches, and doubtless they complained to the king of it, who did them right by this severe decree, as long as it lasted, seeing the king moreover thought fit to promote them to honour, i.e. he did restore them to their places, as the word signifies, and made an addition to their former dignities.

Daniel 4:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 4

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledgeth God's eternal dominion, Dan_4:1-3. He relateth a dream which the magicians could not interpret, Dan_4:4-7. Daniel hearing the dream, Dan_4:3-18, interpreteth it, Dan_4:19-27. The dream fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar's loss of dignity and reason for a time; which being restored to him, he glorifieth God, Dan_4:28-37.

The prophet Daniel here sets down another strange story, after he had finished that of the three young men: this the prophet sets forth not in his own words, but in the words of the king's own proclamation, that it might pass with undoubted credit, and without all dispute; being sent to all his vast kingdoms, and questionless put into the king's archives and court rolls, as the manner was. These three first verses of this fourth chapter are improperly annexed to the end of the foregoing third chapter, by some; seeing they are the preface of the following history.

Peace be multiplied unto you, i.e. all health and happiness: this was always the form of greeting and salutation among the Eastern nations, comprehending peace, plenty, with uninterrupted joy and felicity in all comfortable enjoyments: and from them it came derived down to the penmen of the New Testament, and notes more, even peace with God in Jesus Christ, spiritual and

everlasting. Now the reason hereof was, that war being the root of all misery, especially where all government was tyrannical, and when once it brake forth, it made all desolate; therefore peace was as heaven in comparison of the hell of war, which made the heathens paint Plutus the god of riches in the bosom of peace.

Daniel 4:2

I did upon mature thoughts judge it very becoming me, yea, it was my pleasure to let all the world know,

1. The signs and wonders,
2. Wrought by the high God,
3. Toward me, wherein I was personally concerned: these were his reasons why he made it known to the world.

Daniel 4:3

How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! these two words signify in their roots, admiration and astonishment; it seems these works of God had that impression upon this king; a great cause whereof was his ignorance of the true God, together with his own excessive pride and epicurism. God by this following dream, and Daniel's instruction, had told him his fate, and that no kingdom but God's kingdom was everlasting, which he had told him once before this, Dan_2:44.

This confession of the king was upon conviction, and it looks somewhat like repentance, but the sequel proves him to be no changeling, though God made prodigious mutations in his kingdom, and in the form of his person, as ye see, Dan_4:31,32 of this chapter; he was metamorphosed to a monstrous beast, and then to a man again, and yet no convert.

Daniel 4:4

At rest when his wars were over, which were great, and he victorious. Then I sat down quiet, enjoying the spoils of my enemies.

In my palace; which was most magnificent, there I lived in all delights and grandeur.

Daniel 4:5

There is no felicity in this world lasting; a black cloud, big with storm and tempest, spoils the fairest sun-shine day. They that fear not God shall be frightened by him. God doth justly make epicures and tyrants uneasy in the midst of their fool's paradise, where if the fool saith in his heart, There is no God, he shall soon find in his heart to think otherwise.

Daniel 4:6

Though he had experienced before that these wise men were fooled, and could do nothing either in telling or interpreting his dream, **Da 2**, yet he will try them once again, possibly because they might gain fresh credit with the king; or he would hear what they could do, and if they failed him, he would then make use of Daniel whom he had in reserve. Perhaps these Chaldean doctors and wizards shunned and scorned Daniel's company, and he was as much shy of theirs; therefore they came not together; but God had disposed of this whole scene, and, for the honour of his name, suffered Daniel not to be sent for till the last.

Daniel 4:7

And yet this was it they stood upon before, that the king should tell the dream, and they would interpret it, which now they could not do: this shows them to be mere impostors, and that neither their natural skill nor diabolical help could unfold God's secrets.

Daniel 4:8

Daniel came in before me; whether sent for by the king, or brought in by another, appears not, but he was last, that it might appear he had the true understanding of these secrets; for if he had come first, before the rest had done their best in trying all their skill in vain, they would have said they knew as well as he, and so God would not have had the glory; but now it is plain the Spirit of God in the prophet did all.

The holy gods; he speaks in the plural, like an idolater, and because he calls him

Belteshazzar, according to the name of his god, i.e. Bel or Baal. By the

spirit of the gods he means the spirit of divination, or prophecy of future contingent things, which God only knows, and reveals by

his Spirit as he pleaseth, which none of the magicians were endued with.

Daniel 4:9

This argued he was convinced of Daniel's great abilities, and that he truly deserved the title and dignity the king had honoured him with; and by this persuasion and confidence he had of him, Daniel would show he answered both the opinion and expectation the king had of him.

Daniel 4:10

The visions of mine head; because the fancy and imagination is in the head; and he calls them

visions or

seeings, because eyes and sight are attributed to the understanding, and the thing seemed visible to him, as if he beheld it with his eyes.

A tree: those that write of the language of the East tell us that a tree denote some excellent man. Thus the prophet Ezekiel, **Eze 31** throughout, describes the king of Assyria, and Pharaoh king of Egypt, in their flourish, height, and great fall, comparing them to huge cedars.

Daniel 4:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:12

The fruit thereof much: this notes the public good and benefit of magistracy; so that it is better living under tyranny than anarchy, as Calvin saith.

Daniel 4:13

By

a watcher is meant an angel, a holy or good angel, the instruments of God, and his messengers to execute God's judgments, which they watch constantly to perform, Psa_103:20,21.

Daniel 4:14

He cried aloud, and said; whereby is shown the consent of the angels, when one stirs up another to cut down, i.e. to cast out and take away.

Daniel 4:15

Here he mitigates and corrects the former rigour of his sentence, that the kingdom should remain, with hope of return and readmission: God cuts off many flourishing kingdoms to the stumps, by spoiling their riches, beauty, and majesty.

In the tender grass of the field: let the body of Nebuchadnezzar be preserved, and the king doth remain firm, though he be turned out to grass for a while among the beasts.

Daniel 4:16

Let him live seven years as a beast in man's shape, among beasts of the field, let him become brutish, without human sense and understanding: and this appeared much also in his outward shape; nails like claws, and hair like feathers. Some think that he was truly changed into a beast, but this cannot be, for then the Chaldeans would never more have owned or restored him. Others judge that he was not changed at all but in appearance only to the beholders and in their fancies; but this is a false construction of God's works, when the Scripture saith it was truly done. It is probable he was mute, and bellowed only, that he went naked, and bowed, and ate grass among the beasts, with whom his converse was: a dreadful example upon the greatest man on earth, for his brutish and raging tyranny, and inhuman carriage, abasing himself, and abusing his honours and great prerogatives to wickedness and savage cruelty, to be thus forsaken of God and men, and to be made a prodigy and spectacle to the world, and that upon record to all generations.

Daniel 4:17

The decree was God's, and the demand was of the holy angels; if God would enact and ratify it, the angels as commissioners had the dispensation of it put into their hands, and they all consent to it as a just judgment of God, to be executed by them according to the will and pleasure of God; and they desire of God it may be done, alluding to the customs of some nations, and speaking after

the manner, for the holy angels are zealous for God's honour, and pray him to assert his own sovereignty against the bold encroachments of mortal men, especially rampant and savage tyrants, to make them know themselves.

Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men: this Nebuchadnezzar and his flatterers conceited he was god in earth, independent and unaccountable to any; and though he had notions of a supreme God, yet he confined his government to heaven. Jupiter in heaven, Caesar in earth, rules all, said the heathen poet. But the great God will make all men know he rules all in earth too, and sets up at his pleasure whom he will, and plucks them down again. All power is of God, Rom_13:1, who doth often make use of his power in this case, thereby declaring he only is arbitrary and absolute; for instance, he gives this dignity sometimes to the basest of men, as he took it from Saul and gave it David, a poor shepherd's boy, Psa_78:70,**71**, and made him a name among the great men of the earth, 1Sa_2:7,**8** 1Ch_17:7,**8**.

Daniel 4:18

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:19

His thoughts troubled him, because he foresaw such tragical things coming upon the king, for whom he had such reverence for the high favours and honours he had conferred on him, and he was afraid to declare them; these things coming upon him while he was acted by a Spirit of prophecy, doubled his consternation, and troubled his thoughts, Dan_10:16,**17**.

Let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee; speak out freely, let the event be what it will.

Though this king were a tyrant, and an enemy of God and his people, yet the prophet is grieved for him, and prayed for him that God would avert his judgments from him, and lay them rather upon his enemies, Jer_29:7.

Daniel 4:20

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:21

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:22

It is thou, O king; thou art he that is meant by it. The king is the tree, the branches are his princes, children, and nephews, the leaves are his nobles and captains, the fruits are his riches and revenues, the shadow is the protection which his people had under him. See Aehmetes of the Language of the East. Now in that he speaks plainly and roundly the whole truth, this prophet is herein a pattern to every faithful minister of Christ; first to preach the truth of God and to apply it without respect of persons, and yet with that wisdom and moderation that men may see they have a compassionate care for their souls.

Thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven; thou art high and mighty in the majesty and splendour which God hath given thee.

To the end of the earth; say some, to the Caspian Sea north, to the Euxine and @gean west, to the Mediterranean south, for it is not clear that it reached further, and this alone was great.

Daniel 4:23

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:24

By saying these words,

my lord the king, he endeavours to sweeten the bitterness of this cup of God's displeasure as much as he can.

Daniel 4:25

Because thou hast lived a brutish, epicurean life, and wert lifted up above the common race of mankind in thy heart, therefore thy fate shall be, not to be cast out to live among the basest and meanest sort of men, which were hard enough; no, not among herdsmen, as if that were too good for him; but among the beasts, to herd with them. This was such a thundering peal, that it was wonderful the king could endure to hear without wrath and fury boiling in his heart, yet the Lord withheld him.

How hard is it for lofty princes to learn this lesson, that God is the giver of all they have, and will call them to account severely for all they do, and make the kings and kingdoms of the world to know they are his, and not theirs, and that their tenure is but at the

will of the Lord solely, who can alter and alienate the property of all their enjoyments, being the high Lord paramount above all!

Daniel 4:26

There shall be no other king chosen in thy room all the time thou livest as a stump of a tree. Thou shalt recover all again, young branches shall sprout out of thee, Job_14:7-9.

After that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule: see Dan_4:34,35, &c. If princes will not learn and know this, God will beat it into them. This is the end of all God's rods upon them, if they would hear the voice of them, and him that hath appointed them, 2Ch_33:12,13 Psa 119:67,71 Mic 6:9. Though Nebuchadnezzar never proved a convert, yet God made him acknowledge this truth upon his restoration.

Daniel 4:27

Let my counsel be acceptable unto thee: these words Daniel adds out of his good will to the king, if perhaps it might turn away this dreadful stroke from him, and give the king some hopes of mitigation at least, as it was with Nineveh and others.

Break off: the word is well translated *break off*, for so it properly signifies, and not redeem, as the papists would wrest it, to establish their works of satisfaction and merit; and is no more than this, cease to do evil and learn to do well, change thy course, instead of oppressing the poor show them mercy.

If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity: Daniel was not certain of pardon for him, nor did he altogether despair of it, as Peter dealt with Simon Magus, Act_8:22 Joe_2:14,

Who knoweth if he will return and repent? Jon_3:9 Zep_2:1-3. Though Daniel save not this counsel to elude or nullify the decree of God, which was immutable, yet it might turn to the king's good many ways, if he followed this counsel.

1. Hereby this judgment was shorter in the time, and easier in the rigour.

2. That he might acknowledge God to be gracious to him in this chastisement. And,

3. That he might become by his reformation more capable of pardon, and prepared for it.

Daniel 4:28

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 4:29

Here we see God did forbear the execution of his judgment decreed the space of one whole year, which may be upon Daniel's words, and he did reform somewhat, as Ahab was spared a good while upon his humiliation, 1Ki_21:27; and God would try him by giving him space of repentance, as he did to them before the flood, Gen_6:3; and to Jezebel, Rev_2:21; but it is most probable, though he may be a little astonished at the first, when he heard God's decree against him, yet having this respite, he grew hardened, and thought it was over, and therefore spreads his plumes and strutted in his pride as high as ever.

Daniel 4:30

Great Babylon: as to the greatness of this place, it might be well called great, for most historians and geographers make it forty-five miles about the walls, some sixty; for the height of the walls, they affirm them to be a hundred cubits, and for their thickness, such as six chariots might go abreast upon the top of them. See Bochart in his Phaleg.

That I have built; which words of his are not true, as to the first foundation of Babylon; for that was done by Nimrod, or Bel, which is the same, Gen_10:10; but if ye speak touching the repairing and enlarging of it after Nineveh was destroyed, so Nebuchadnezzar might be said to build it, i.e. to make it so great and glorious as at last.

For the honour of my majesty: the manner of proud tyrants is to engross all honour to themselves; moreover, he attributes nothing to the signal goodness of God to him, but takes all to himself. Now God, that resists the proud, presently falls upon him, and down he comes while he stood crowing and pruning his gay feathers.

Daniel 4:31

There fell a voice from heaven: this made the judgment more remarkable, and argued the sin more provoking, and the anger of

God more just against him. Sudden judgments are most dreadful; whereof we have many instances, as in Herod, Elymas, Ananias and Sapphira, &c.: this voice was from God; it also was loud, and clearly perceived by the king and them about him, which the dream intimated more obscurely. Not the kingdom, but the administration of the government, was transferred to others.

Daniel 4:32

From men; from the society and conversation of men.

Daniel 4:33

He was driven from men; being bereft of his understanding, as a man distracted, he fled, and betook himself to the woods; or was thrust and driven out, either by popular tumults, or conspiracy of his nobles, or by his son Evil-merodach. Some think, when he raved, he was bound with chains, and after turned off loose into the woods among beasts.

And his nails like birds claws, which might easily grow in seven years to a prodigious length and deformity.

Daniel 4:34

Mine understanding returned unto me; God shined upon his soul, and gave him understanding to reflect upon his condition, to consider his sad state, and the causes of it.

I blessed the Most High; by prayer and praise adoring the justice and mercy of God towards him, giving God the glory of his sovereignty and unchangeableness, Dan_4:35.

Daniel 4:35

A due consideration of God's infinite greatness makes the creature appear as nothing in comparison of God. Creatures are nothing to help, nothing to hurt, nothing absolutely, nothing in duration, nothing solid and substantial, nothing without dependence, and influence, and support from God. God is

I am, and there is none else.

Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Selah, Psa_39:5.

Yea, less than vanity, and nothing, Psa_62:9 Isa_40:17.

He doeth according to his will, Psa_115:3. God only is arbitrary. *In the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ;* being the Lord of hosts, and the only absolute and universal Monarch of the world.

None can stay his hand; he is irresistible and uncontrollable, Job_9:12 Isa_45:9 Rom_11:33-36.

Daniel 4:36

My reason returned unto me: what is a magistrate, yea, or a man, without reason? A brute; as a ship without a pilot, as an army without a commander, as a flock or herd without a shepherd.

Mine honour and brightness returned unto me; instead of the shape of a savage beast, I got the majesty of a king in my countenance.

My counsellors and my lords sought unto me; they who before despised and rejected me now were glad to creep to me, and to know their place and distance.

I was established in my kingdom; in my wonted power and place, owned and obeyed without competitors by all, without question or complaint: see Dan_5:18,19.

Excellent majesty was added unto me; he was the most august and magnificent prince on earth, therefore was his kingdom called the lady of kingdoms, Isa_47:7,8.

Daniel 4:37

Thus can the Lord make the stoutest hearts to stoop, and do him homage. This doxology proceeds from his heart. God is

truth essentially; he is the rule and standard of truth, his words are truth, his ways are truth: and they are

judgment; he is wise, and hath dealt justly with me for my pride, and in very faithfulness hath afflicted me, and in very tenderness hath restored me: I do and ever shall adore him for it.

Those that walk in pride he is able to abase; as he hath declared upon me, in stupendous changes, which I proclaim to all the world for his glory. He had a just controversy with me, and I have no ground to quarrel with him, but to give him glory by this confession.

Daniel 5:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 5

Belshazzar's impious feast, Dan_5:1-4. The hand-writing on the wall, which the magicians could not explain, troubleth him, Dan_5:5-9. At the recommendation of the queen Daniel is brought in, Dan_5:10-16. He reproveth the king of pride, profaneness, and idolatry, Dan_5:17-24. He readeth and interpreteth the writing, Dan_5:25-29. Belshazzar slain; the kingdom translated to the Medes, Dan_5:30,**31**.

Belshazzar's name is from riches and power. They were wont, when they were promoted, to take new names, which also were significant, as this is, Belshazzar; Bel hath or gives power and riches; this they attributed to the honour of their idol, which belongs only to the God of heaven. There is much contest among the learned who this Belshazzar was; let us mind the Scripture, and not trust to heathen historians. In the second verse here he is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar, his father, so Dan_5:11 twice, and Dan_5:13,**18,22**; if he were his son, then was he called also Merodach, or Evil-merodach. Yet he might be called his son though his grandson; under these three was the captivity, Jer_27:7, Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, and Belshazzar.

Made a great feast, after the manner of the East, who showed their magnificence this way, and pleased the epicurean palates of his nobles herein, it being no small piece of policy with some princes to oblige their grantees by balls and comptions; this I believe: yet I conceive also, this feast was anniversary for the honour of their idol Bel, as Herodotus testifieth. But this is prodigious, that he should carouse when the city was besieged and ready to be taken by Darius the Mede, for, saith the text, *he drank wine before the thousand*. These Bacchanalian feasts have often proved fatal and tragical, **Es 1**.

Daniel 5:2

This king having the wine, liked it so well, that he resolved to make a merry day of it, and in order to it, sent for the vessels of God's temple, which he did in scorn and contempt, triumphing thereby over God and his people; but this sport lasted not long: they had more honour for the vessels of their own idols, which they kept sacred and untouched; therefore the prophet upbraids

them with this insolent profaneness, for the concubines also drank of them.

Daniel 5:3

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:4

At the same time insulting the great God of heaven and earth. The name of God is never more profaned than among drunkards and epicures.

Daniel 5:5

In the same hour: by this it did appear what was the cause of the king's punishment and ruin, namely, his reproaching of God and profaning the holy vessels.

Fingers of a man's hand; the likeness of a man's hand, which Rabbi Solomon saith was managed by the angel Gabriel; it is clear it was immediately from God. This was a plainer testimony then that of his father's dream, for hereof were above a thousand witnesses, besides his conscience that shook him, a thousand more.

Over against the candlestick by this it appears how the feast continued far in the night in which Babylon was taken and Belshazzar slain, Dan_5:30.

The king saw the part of the hand that wrote: God intended it for him, and that he should see it with his own eyes, and it should not be brought him by report, which affords ground of doubting; but here was undeniable proof and conviction, the visible hand of God was here; and it was also for terror to him, and spoiled his draughts of wine, and was a cooler to their jollities.

Daniel 5:6

His cheerful countenance was turned to paleness, fear and horror had quite blasted the majesty of his face, like an eclipse of the sun. So soon can the terrors of God shake the loftiest cedars; it is like an earthquake in the bowels. Thus can God terrify the tyrants of the earth, that he who hath the heart of a lion shall utterly melt away. Thus can the Lord spoil the mad mirth of drunken atheists in a moment; when they are in their cups, oh how valiant are they! as the king of Syria, 1Ki_20:16,19, &c.

Daniel 5:7

To bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, to read the hand-writing, with promise of scarlet clothing, gold chains, and honours. This is the old trade, and the last refuge this poor heathen prince had, which yet failed him; for how can the devil help when God is against him? 1Sa_28:16, &c. Moreover, he had his father's experience, Dan_2:27 **4:7**. Twice he tried them, and they could do nothing, and yet he will go to the devil's oracle. Men naturally leave God and go to refuges of lies, and God gives them up to strong delusions to believe their lies.

Daniel 5:8

The rabbies say it was not in the Chaldee character, though the words were Chaldee, but the old Hebrew, Canaanitish, Phoenician, and Samaritan letters; or else because only the initial letters, M. T. P., were written. But God reserved this honour for Daniel, and to him that He might have all the glory. Besides, this interpretation was figurative, about weighing in a balance.

Daniel 5:9

The second time, because his hopes in his wise men made him ashamed, and God would give him so much grief as he had pleasure in his luxury.

His lords were astonished: these were associates in sinning, and therefore must share in his consternation: so far were they from comforting him.

Daniel 5:10

The women in those courts had always an apartment by themselves, and this being queen mother, and aged, did not mingle herself with the king's wives and concubines, but withdrew herself from those pleasures in banqueting, yet brake rule in coming in now upon this solemn occasion and fright.

Daniel 5:11

A man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: this man was Daniel; but how came the king not to think of him? Daniel possibly was out of his place, by his own resignation, or his enemies' malicious contrivance, and was willing to withdraw himself from the court, and from the company of the soothsayers, and would not be reckoned one of them.

Daniel 5:12

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:13

Though he was in high esteem for his skill in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, who had him in high honour, for the Spirit of God in him; yet he being dead, and other kings coming on that had never tried his abilities nor known his merits, (as it was in Joseph's case, Exo_1:8) hereby he came to be neglected and despised, as those words seem to import, Dan_5:13,

Art thou that Daniel of the captivity of the children of Judah, & c.?

Daniel 5:14

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:15

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:16

These things were spoken to before, Dan_5:7,8.

Daniel 5:17

Did not Daniel receive gifts and honour, from Nebuchadnezzar, on the like occasion?

Answ. He was then young, and the captivity was to be long, and he by his place could be helpful to his poor brethren; but now the time of the captivity was near expired, and Babylon in distress by invasion and siege, and that night king, city, and kingdom lost; and there the time was different, and the case also. Moreover Daniel would not receive a reward for so sad a message.

Daniel 5:18

This the prophet repeats, to put Belshazzar in mind how God dealt with his father; for it is good for kings to read over the story of their ancestors, and take warning, and take example. In the first they are seamarks, in the second landmarks.

Daniel 5:19

He ruled arbitrarily, and had power of life and death, he did what he would, his will was a law. And this lifted up his heart in pride, and hardened it as Pharaoh's, for which, being incorrigible,

he was deposed from his kingly throne, as in the next verse.

Daniel 5:20

Which was explained before: all this Daniel minds him of to rub up his memory, that he might have the fuller blow in the application, Dan_5:22, for the aggravation of his crime.

Daniel 5:21

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:22

Sins against knowledge, experience, and example have the highest aggravation. Thy father was punished for his pride most dreadfully, and thou knewest it, and behold thou art worse than he. God punisheth others for example and warning to us, that we *may hear and fear, and do no more wickedly* ; but thou, O king Belshazzar, art more wicked than thy father; he was restored, but thou art utterly destroyed. And now he goes on to tell for what.

Daniel 5:23

He instanceth in three or four things.

1. They have brought the vessels of his house before thee to drink wine in them, to profane them in your idolatrous feast, and ye have all polluted them with your filthy, blasphemous mouths, concubines and all.
2. Ye have praised the idol gods of metal, wood, and stone, which cannot hear, nor see, nor know.
3. And hast not glorified the true God, in whose hands thy breath is, and all thy ways. Yea, thou hast highly dishonoured, and affronted, and reproached him.

Daniel 5:24

It is called

part of the hand, because the hand appeared parted from the rest of the body.

Daniel 5:25

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 5:26

Mene, Mene; He hath numbered, or, It is numbered, it is numbered. These words are doubled for the greater confirmation, to note that the number of his sins and of his days, both of life and reign, are full. It relates to the number of the seventy years' captivity now completed, or to the seventy years for the overthrow of the Babylonish empire, or the translation of it to the Medes and Persians, foretold **Isa 13** \$ Isa 14\$ **Jer 1**\$, and in the dream, Dan_2:32.

Daniel 5:27

Thou art weighed in a hanging balance, alluding to the weighing of goods exactly in scales; and God is said to weigh the mountains in scales: it shows his just proceeding; God is not hasty in punishing, but will give just allowance in weighing, he will hold the scales, he will do it fairly before all the world.

Art found wanting; thou dost not hold weight, but comest short vastly. There is no weight nor worth in thee. Thou hast made light of God in his honour, people, vessels; and the Lord makes light of thee, thou art reprobate silver, false coin; thou art of no value.

Daniel 5:28

Separated, divided, broken.

Peres signifies two things,

broken off, and

Persian; noting, first, That this kingdom was broken from Belshazzar, and his line and family. Secondly, That it was given from the Chaldeans to the Persians. Then it was divided between the Medes and Persians; for Cyrus took Babylon, he was a Persian; after that he gave part of it to Darius his son-in-law, and he was a Mede; and so they were as it were partners. So this vast empire, that was one sole, entire thing under Belshazzar, becomes now as it were two, divided betwixt the Medes and Persians, which thing is curious to observe, from this word

Phars, Pharsin, Peres, which signifies not only dividing, but

Persian, as Pliny testifies. With the Chaldeans, the Persians, in Scripture, are called Elamites.

Daniel 5:29

Though it were a sad unwelcome message to him, yet he would be as good as his word, and performed his promise; for his princes were witnesses to it, and the word of those kings was counted sacred; besides, it was a great thing that Daniel had unfolded, all were convinced of it as well as the king.

Quest. But how comes Daniel to accept that now, which he seemed to refuse before, Dan_5:17?

Answ. He refused before lest he should seem to prophesy for reward, which was dishonourable; now it is as it were forced upon him, for the king commanded it, and there is as much danger and crime with some in refusing a favour as boldness in begging.

Daniel 5:30

Which the heathen histories do also confirm. This shows the severity of God's judgment against the highest offenders, **Psa 2\$ Psa 90\$ Psa 149\$ Hos_10:7**. It also confirms the truth of God's threatenings, and of the hand-writing, as Daniel interpreted. Some are sad instances of God's veracity.

Daniel 5:31

There were two of this name, one called the Mede, another Darius called Persian. This in the text was he that with Cyrus besieged and took Babylon; he gave himself the name Darius, being before called Nabonnedus. He was chief in the siege, and first in the quarrel against the Chaldees.

Daniel 6:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 6

Daniel is made chief of the presidents and princes of the realm, Dan_6:1-3. They conspire against him, and obtain an insnaring decree, Dan_6:4-9. Daniel, excused of the breach thereof, against the king's will is east into the lions' den, Dan_6:10-17. The king findeth him miraculously saved, Dan_6:18-23. His adversaries are cast in and devoured, Dan_6:24. Darius by a decree magnifieth God, Dan_6:25-28.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 6:2

Of whom Daniel was first: this was Belshazzar's promise to Daniel, he should be the third ruler in the kingdom, Dan_5:7,16,29; the first was general of the army, the second president of the palace, the third of the land and provinces.

Daniel 6:3

There were three things that made Darius greatly favour Daniel.

1. Because he prophesied the destruction of Belshazzar and his reign, for which cause the king of Babylon favoured Jeremiah the prophet, Jer_39:11, &c.

2. Because he saw so noble a spirit in him, the spirit of the holy gods.

3. Because Darius himself was old and unfit for government, and therefore took Daniel with him into Media, Joseph. Antiq. 10. 12, whereby the Lord by advancing Daniel made careful provision for his church. This was an act of great wisdom in Darius, to prefer men for their parts and merit, and to make them that have most of God in them to be their chief favourites; a thing rarely minded by the princes of the world, who usually favour them most that do most gratify their lusts.

Daniel 6:4

Sought to find occasion against Daniel; made diligent inquiry, and set their wits to work about it: who can stand before envy? This disease always reigns in princes' courts, every one would be uppermost and chief favourite, and quarrel with all them that stand in their light; their eye is evil because their prince's eye is good.

Concerning the kingdom; and so to have made him guilty of treason, or other high misdemeanours, unfaithfulness, and falseness in the king's business; but all their wit and malice could find none, forasmuch as he was conscientiously faithful.

Daniel 6:5

Pliny said of old, it is the custom of courtiers to study how to make innocent men faulty, and Scripture and experience tell us that the most religious are accounted most dangerous to the government, and that debauchery is loyalty; and that flatterers ought to be the best favourites. Ezr_4:12-14 Neh_6:5-7 Est_3:8

Dan_3:12, and this text, are plain proofs of it, besides the experience of every age to this day. This was for the honour of Daniel's integrity, and for a brand of infamy upon his malicious enemies.

Daniel 6:6

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 6:7

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 6:8

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 6:9

The sum of all was this; they had a plot against Daniel and his people, to throw him out of place and favour; to effect that, they fall upon him in the point of religion, which they would make to be treason. How so? They contrived an act of uniformity, by an unalterable law, to ask no petition of any god or man, but of the king, for one month, upon pain of death. They wheedled the king into it, and passed it into a law. The king sees the plot to be against Daniel, and would have saved him, but they held the king to it; they were zealous for executing laws of their own procuring; it was a net they had privily laid for this holy man, and had got him fast.

1. We see the horridness of this decree against God, for it was to ungod him for a time, that Darius might be deified.

2. It is marvellous that Darius should suffer himself to be persuaded to this idolatry, blasphemy, and sacrilege, but that we know it was common to the kings of the East to show themselves willing to be accounted gods. Some give three reasons why Darius was persuaded to it.

(1.) Because he was old, and had not much authority, and by this means he would gain it highly.

(2.) Because by this the superstitious Chaldeans, newly conquered, would be the better kept under.

(3.) Hereby he would seem not at all to be beholden to Cyrus for the share of his government.

3. The wickedness of this decree appeared also in this, that it brake all the bonds of nature's laws, between superiors and inferiors, for one month.

4. The craft of this cursed cabal is seen in this, that they mind Darius that it was his honour, interest, and duty to see this law executed, seeing it was the custom and constitution of the Medes and Persians, and he himself was a Mede. The Babylonians had no such law and custom, but the others had of old, Est_1:15, **19 8:8**

5. The courage, zeal, and sincerity of Daniel in not baulking the course of his devotion for fear of the king's edict; but as if he had not been concerned at all in it, being overawed by the fear of God, who was superior to all the gods and princes of the world, he made the command and institution of God alone the rule of his worship.

Daniel 6:10

His windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem: this was, 1Ki_8:47-49, according to Solomon's prayer, which doubtless all the devout Jews in their captivity did observe.

Toward Jerusalem; not towards the east, which was the manner of the Gentiles; nor towards the king's palace, lest that, in compliance with the king's edict, he should seem to worship him; but towards the west and the temple in Jerusalem, where the holy of holies stood in the west end, and because the temple was the place where the Lord placed his name and worship, and promised to appear, and accept his people and their sacrifices, all being a type of Christ, through whom only the saints are accepted; which doubtless Daniel by faith had an eye to; believing also that God in his own time would deliver them out of this captivity, and bring them back again, and that he faithfully minded these things in the midst of his honours, and riches, and employments.

Kneeled upon his knees: this posture was always used in times of mourning and danger; not that we are tied to this gesture, but it is a comely posture before the great God; noting of guilt at the bar of God's tribunal, and begging for our lives, by humble confession and humiliation, and craving pardon, and blessing God for his mercies.

Three times a day: thus David, Psa_55:17. These three times were, one at nine in the morning, which was their third hour of the day, Act_2:15; the sixth hour was at twelve o'clock, then Peter prayed, Act_10:9; the ninth hour was our three in the afternoon, which was the time of the evening sacrifice, 1Ki_18:36 Act_3:1; it is called

the hour of prayer, and at that our Saviour Christ offered up himself a sacrifice for us, Mat_27:46,50. Now Daniel ordered his affairs so, that, though great, they should not hinder his solemn devotions to God.

As he did aforetime; by which we see he was a holy man, also that he did not abate his prayers for the king's command, nor did he rashly break the law, by doing it purposely, because he did no more than he was wont to do in serving his God. Daniel did not imprudently, much less sinfully, in this action.

1. Because he would have declared by it that he preferred man before God.
2. It was against the law of nature, which commands God to be worshipped.
3. Against the dictates and peace of his own conscience.
4. Against the people of God, whom he would grieve and stumble by this forbearance.
5. Against his enemies, by hardening them in their evil way, and giving them occasion of triumphing and blaspheming.

Daniel 6:11

This design being laid by them, they watched narrowly, and it took; they came and found all open. He feared not to be found praying, he prevented their breaking open doors, and rushing in, or making proof; he owned all, and freely offered himself.

Daniel 6:12

They had enough now, they came with open mouth, they pleaded the breach of the king's laws, they tell the king he had signed it, and it could not be disannulled; the king's authority and the honour of the nation lay at stake. The king owned such a law, and it was unalterable.

Daniel 6:13

Here they call him

that Daniel, as, Dan_6:5,

this Daniel; both by way of contempt, when they had laid him low in their thoughts and words, intending the king should have the same thoughts of him too; hereby they should have the fairer blow at him.

Of the children of the captivity of Judah; a prisoner at mercy, and yet rebelliously slights the king and his laws. What! because he chose to obey God rather than men, and an ungodly law, as this was in the height? Well, that is his great crime, that he prays to his God three times a day.

Regardeth not thee, O king; which we account dishonourable to thy greatness, and unsufferable from such a mushroom as he is. What, do all the native subjects of the king keep his laws, and must this Daniel presume to break them and be indemnified? Wilt thou tolerate this, O king?

Daniel 6:14

He was not wroth with Daniel, as Nebuchadnezzar upon the accusation against the three young men, Dan_3:19, but he was angry with himself, that he should be so moved by his courtiers, against an innocent person of so much honour and honesty. This made him labour to save Daniel till sun-set. Sometimes blaming his own inadvertency and levity in so rash and sinful a decree. Sometimes considering the great reverence of so holy a man. Then the cruelty and craft in laying snares by laws made on purpose, against the best people in his court and kingdom. Then withal how hard it was to break or elude a law that was by custom unalterable, and how unsafe to reject his princes when they pleaded for the king and his laws.

Daniel 6:15

These were bold men, they were resolved to follow their blows, and would have their will rather than the king should have his in this case; which on the king's part was honourable and royal, to retrieve an evil act, and to retract, or at least to mitigate, a rigid and, rash decree.

No decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed: thus Haman contrived and pleaded, yet there was a way found to prevent execution, **Es 8**. Again, this law, which they plead was fundamental to make all laws and decrees immutable, was absurd and impolitic; for laws should be essentially changeable by the law-makers, because they often see greater cause to change a law when it grows obsolete and burdensome, though before thought necessary, than to make it at first; whereof we have sufficient instances in all nations in all ages. Will any legislative power in the world so bind their own hands, as to entail a yoke upon themselves and nation which they and posterity could not remedy? The intent of the lawgiver is the law, the equity of it is the obligation of it, which also is the true measure of its duration.

Daniel 6:16

The king commanded: he had a good mind to do Daniel a kindness, but he could not stem the tide of his flatterers, who being crossed might machinate some mischief against him; having this plausible pretence for it, that they stood for the fundamental laws of the land, which the king endeavoured to null by his prerogative for the sake of one person, his pure vassal, being an alien, and of another religion, which was contrary to that which was by law established. *Cast him into the den of lions* : thus the best man in the kingdom becomes a sacrifice to the malice of the vilest men; the king consenting and commanding it against his conscience, but for reasons of state; being inexcusable for assuming the honour and worship of a god, exclusive to all other gods and worship; and, for all that he was convinced of the true God, would not worship him, nor suffer others to do it, under pain of death.

Thy God will deliver thee. No thanks to him. Why, then, did he cast the servant of God to the lions to try experiments upon him? No, to excuse himself, and to comfort Daniel; but to little purpose either.

Daniel 6:17

They are resolved to make all fast and sure. So did the enemies of the three young men, by the hellish heat of the fiery furnace. So did the enemies of Christ, *Mat_27:66*. So did Herod serve Peter,

Act_12:4, &c. Thus Paul and Silas were made sure, Act_16:23,24. Thus the heathen persecutors, that thought by variety, cruelty, and universality of persecutions and torments to drive the Christian religion out of the world. And thus antichrist by crusades, massacres, and burnings. In this *sealing of the den* they took away all power from the king of delivering Daniel, because they knew he favoured him; by which the power and providence of God for his preservation and deliverance was the more signalized, Act_4:26-28. Thus the Lord gratifies the enemies of his people oftentimes, as if they had a commission from him to do their worst; and they go a great way in it, as far as they have rope, Isa_10:6,7 Lu 22:53.

Daniel 6:18

Passed the night fasting; yea, and without instruments of music and sleep. The king was in perplexity, he was under great conviction that he had done very dishonourably and cruelly, by hearkening to the counsel of his wicked courtiers; he should have rescinded his rash decree, and rated them for their barbarity against Daniel, and have overruled them, and let him out; he is convinced of all this, and grieves for it, but to little purpose. Many are displeased with themselves for their vices, yet are drawn away with them; and, upon a point of honour, or other carnal ground, never come to true repentance, which consists in a change of heart and life. Herod was like troubled for John Baptist, but for all that, for his oath's sake to a wanton wretch, and for the company's sake, he sent and beheaded him, Mat_14:9.

Daniel 6:19

Watching, and grieving, and being between fear and hope, longing to be satisfied.

Daniel 6:20

Servant of the living God: this was a commendation both of Daniel and his God, though he served both very coarsely.

Is thy God able to deliver thee? is he omnipotent? surely if ever he will put forth his power, it will be in thy case, for thou servest him continually, thou wilt not be frightened from his service by savage beasts, by ramping and roaring lions; now it will appear

what thy God will do for his servant. Ah, poor king, God is a better Master to his servants than thou art, even to Daniel.

Daniel 6:21

He prays for the king's prosperity, though he suffered under his hand.

Daniel 6:22

My God hath sent his angel; he had his eye specially to Him whose cause and honour was concerned in this matter. The Lord either took the lions' hunger away from them, or made Daniel appeared terrible to them; or, literally, shut their mouths.

Before him innocency was found in me; because by faith he trusted in the Lord, Heb_11:33; therefore the papists from hence falsely conclude justification by works and merits, assigning fallaciously a false cause instead of a principal, formal, and meritorious cause; for the word *forasmuch* or *because* in Scripture doth often signify an occasion rather than a cause; Psa_25:11,

Pardon my sin, for it is great. Daniel did not use to argue thus, but the contrary, Dan_9:7,18. Daniel pleads the innocence of his cause to the king in suffering, not the righteousness of his person; and that the Lord delivered him to assert his honour in his unjust sufferings.

Before thee, O king have I done no hurt; nor have I sinned against, thee, O king: the fear of God is set before honouring of kings, 1Pe_2:17.

Daniel 6:23

He trusted in God's power and faithfulness, not to work a miracle, but committed himself to him as a righteous Judge, who would deliver here, or save him hereafter.

Daniel 6:24

They cast them into the den of lions; thus they digged a pit for another, and fell into it themselves, which the heathens say was a very just law, the law of retaliation, which the Lord doth often observe, as in the case of Adonibezek, and Ahab, and many more.

Them, their children, and their wives: Darius was yet cruel in this execution, because he cast in with them to the lions their wives and children. This is not without precedent in Scripture, as

in Korah and his company, Achan, and Haman, for the greater terror. For the king's justice in this fact, we need not trouble ourselves, it being the custom of the arbitrary tyrants of the East.

Daniel 6:25

In all the earth, i.e. of the known earth then, being chiefly that great empire; for what had he to do in all the world besides? It is usual with the Turk, Tartar, Chinese, to arrogate the same universality with the like pride.

Daniel 6:26

Tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; take heed how they speak evil of this great God, but own and honour him as such; whereof he gives the reason following.

He is the living God, & c. You would take Darius by these words to be a convert: how far this went with him, and how long it lasted, who knoweth? Surely if he were in earnest, he would forsake his idolatry, and set up the worship of the true God in his kingdom, that his subjects might turn from dumb idols, as inconsistent with the living God and his worship. Howbeit, it is clear that Darius had learnt this doctrine from Daniel, whom he heard and honoured, and was the more convinced of it by this miraculous deliverance of Daniel from the lions.

Daniel 6:27

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 6:28

See Dan_1:21. Who was after Darius's death, who was called, say some, Nabonnedus. Daniel continued all this time in great honour.

Daniel 7:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 7

Daniel's vision of the four beasts, Dan_7:1-8, and of God's kingdom, Dan_7:9-14. The interpretation thereof, Dan_7:15-28.

This prophecy is written in Chaldee, to be a monument and document to him of the reverence his father and grandfather showed towards God, who had done such mighty works for them, and against them, to humble their pride, and make them know that the high God ruled, and they reigned at his mercy. Howbeit

Belshazzar made no use of it, but lifted himself up in profaneness and pride till the wrath of God plucked him down.

In the first year of Belshazzar: now Daniel begins to declare the visions God showed him at sundry times, therefore he goes back to the first year of Belshazzar. It is observed by the curious, that the word Belshazzar is here changed by the prophet, one letter transposed, which alters the signification greatly; for his name is ruvaln Dan_5:1, which signifies

treasures searched out and possessed; but the word in the text is this, ruavln which means,

Bel is consumed with the fire of an enemy, as was prophesied by Jeremiah, Dan_1:2 Jer_51:44. See Jer_51:25,58. The Jews used to change the names of idols and idolaters, and it turned to a reproach to them, as Grotius proves well out of Moses de Kotzi.

He wrote the dream: these visions of Daniel were sent, and recorded by him in writing, for the benefit of the church, to rectify their mistake; for they thought all things would succeed prosperously after they returned out of their captivity: yet they should find a world of troubles in many generations following, seeing that of the four great monarchies, which he calls beasts, there was but one passed, and they should find three more yet to come. This Daniel dreamed, saw, wrote, and told the sum of it.

Daniel 7:2

Because Daniel doth not expound what is meant by

winds, expositors think there is room left for every one's conjecture; wherein this seems most likely, that by the four winds of the great sea is signified commotions of contrary nations and factions, striving together by wars, and producing these four beasts successively. That this is often signified by winds, see Jer_49:36 **51:1**; in the destruction of Babylon, the first monarchy; and of Elam, i.e. the Persian monarchy.

The great sea in Scripture is the Mediterranean Sea, called now the Levant, Archipelago, Straits, &c.

1. Comparatively; for the people called lakes seas, as the sea of Galilee, Gennesareth, Cinneroth, the Dead Sea, or lake of Sodom; but the Mediterranean was

Jamma rabba, the great sea, for its length and breadth, above all the lakes put together, though it be itself but a lake in comparison of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

2. Great sea, because the great stage of action hath been on it, and adjoined to it; and all the four great monarchies have been masters of it.

3. Allegorically, for it is usual in Scripture to compare people to waters, and nations to seas, Rev_13:1 **17:15**; called so from the confused noise of it, Rev_19:6, and from the unstableness of them, always running and rolling with every wind as it blows, endangering those that ride upon the backs of its swelling waves.

Daniel 7:3

That is, four great monarchies,

great in comparison of particular kingdoms that were little to them; beasts for their idolatry, and tyrannical oppressions and depredations.

Daniel 7:4

Lion, and eagle; one the king of beasts, the other the king of birds, for which he is called the golden head, as Dan_2:32,**38**. This was the Chaldean or Assyrian; whose seat was first at Babylon, after at Nineveh, and then at Babylon again.

Had eagle's wings; they were swift, overrunning many countries, and brought their monarchy to a prodigious height in a short time. Thus Jeremiah prophesied, Dan_4:13,

He shall come up as clouds, his chariots shall be as a whirlwind, his horses are swifter than eagles; in the 7th verse called a

lion, and here like

clouds, whirlwinds, and eagles for swiftness, Jer_48:40 Eze_17:3.

The wings thereof were plucked; which was first in stopping the career of their victories, and after in casting them out of their kingdom, the nation was not destroyed, but their monarchy.

A man's heart was given unto it: this was truly verified in Nebuchadnezzar, after he was as a beast turned out amongst beasts, Dan_4:31-34; and finished upon his son Belshazzar for not taking warning, Dan_5:22.

Daniel 7:5

Another beast, viz. the Medes and Persians, a fierce, grim, ravenous creature, and barbarously cruel, especially the mountainous part, as of Caucasus, Armenia, and Media by The Caspian Sea near the Tartars, and that which borders upon the Mogul, the Usbecks, and the Sasbutts; read Isa_13:17, **18 Jer 51:48,53**, called

spoilers. See Jer_51:11, &c. Thus God sent in the northern bears upon Babylon to devour flesh. See how God calls them against Babylon, Jer_51:20-23, **27,28**; he reckons Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz, and the Medes, i.e. Armenia, Parthia, Hyrcania, &c., the rough northern hungry bears.

On one side, i.e. the north side; for the Mede first arose and sent to Cyrus the Persian to come in and assist him against the Assyrian, and made him general.

It had three ribs in the mouth of it: several of the Babylonian subjects revolted from the Babylonian, (and all these made the three ribs,) as the Hyrcanians, and Gobrias.

Daniel 7:6

This

leopard was the Grecian monarchy; a leopard is less than a lion, so was this monarchy at first, but yet durst fight with a lion; so did Alexander encounter Darius with a force very small to the other. A

leopard also for his swiftness; therefore described with **four wings** on his back.

The beast had also four heads, because his commanders that succeeded him were four of his chief commanders, that divided that empire into four parts between them; and these were the four heads to whom dominion was given, Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philipus, Antigonus, or, as others, Perdicas and Meleager,

Dan_8:21,22. Dominion was given to it: Alexander did this by the mighty power of God; else how could he conquer Darius, that had six hundred thousand, with thirty thousand, and in so short a time go conqueror over Asia to the East Indies, I mean that part which now the Mogul possesseth, where he fought with Porus and beat him?

Daniel 7:7

A fourth beast: this was the Roman empire; for that followed the Grecian, and was monstrous as to his rise and progress.

Stamped the residue with the feet of it. As to the variety and cruelty of the government, it made use not only of Italians, but Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, Britons, which made their armies hardy and hard as iron, which broke in pieces the gold, silver, and brass. But it is plain this is the last kingdom of the Four, that was to be destroyed by Christ's kingdom, and this work was to be doing till the last age, Dan_7:13.

Ten horns, i.e. kings, Dan_7:24 Rev_17:12, called

horns. i.e. of iron, as the teeth were, i.e. cruel and persecuting; as beasts push and gore with their horns.

Daniel 7:8

Daniel

considered, and this calls upon us to consider the matter.

Another little horn: some will have the Turk meant; others, before him, Antiochus Epiphanes; others Julius Caesar; others antichrist. It is certain the horn that riseth out of the he-goat is Antiochus, Dan_8:9-12, but the horn here mentioned riseth out of the fourth beast, or under him. Therefore he must be the Turk, as some will have it, or the Romish antichrist. Not the Turk, since,

1. The horn signified only one king, Dan_7:24.
2. He must gain all the fourth kingdom.
3. He must reign before the kingdom of Christ is erected.

Before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: some will have Egypt, Asia, and Greece to be the three which are possessed by the Turk; but though he hath got the

Egyptian and Constantinopolitan, which are two, must the German be the third? He hath pushed hard for it now of late. A mouth speaking great things: this again some interpret of Antiochus, some of Mahomet, some of the Caesars, others of antichrist, all concerning their craft and blasphemies, which properly can be meant but of one.

Daniel 7:9

By

thrones cast down must be meant the kingdoms of this world, destroyed by Christ the King and Judge of all, called the Ancient of days, because of his eternal Deity;

without beginning and end of days. Whose garment was white as snow; thus kings' viceroys were clothed, as Joseph in fine silk, Gen_41:42, and Mordecai, Est_8:15.

The hair of his head like the pure wool; see Rev_1:14; noting his innocence, and righteousness in judgment, Isa_42:4.

His throne was like the fiery flame: this notes his majesty in judgment: see Psa_1:3,4 Mal 4:1 Rev_19:11,12.

His wheels as burning fire; arguing the greatest and most formidable state of the last Judge and judgment; alluding to the kings who had movable thrones, which had wheels: it notes also God's swiftness in judgment, Mal_3:5.

Daniel 7:10

A fiery stream issued; see Psa 1 3; noting his justice and wrath, in giving sentence and executing it.

Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: this is the great assize.

The judgment was set, and the books were opened: see Rev_20:11,12. This, say some, is spoken agreeable to the Synedrium or Sanhedrim, and after the manner of men, and notes the book of life, of God's eternal decree, the book of God's omniscience, &c.

Daniel 7:11

This cannot but be meant of the ruin and judgment of antichrist, till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame, 2Th_2:8 Rev_17:8 **19:20 20:10**.

Daniel 7:12

They had their dominion taken away; the prophet chiefly intends the fourth empire, and therein the proud, blasphemous horn; yet did not wholly omit to speak of the three first empires, and what became of them. He saith they were wholly taken away, that is, successively, as histories tell us. The beast and the horn perish together, for the Holy Ghost tells us that the horn shall prevail against the saints till the

Ancient of days come to sit in judgment, and because the session of judgment in Daniel's vision was principally to pluck up by the roots that wicked horn, Dan_7:26 following, Daniel's expectation had failed him, if the horn had not perished with the beast. Besides, the state of the beast under the horn was to be a time, times, and the dividing of time, Dan_7:25, of which more when we come to it.

Daniel 7:13

One like the Son of man; that is, the Messiah: this is the same with the stone, **Da 2**; he came *with the clouds of heaven* , Mat_24:30, i.e. gloriously, swiftly, and terribly, Jer_4:13.

They brought him near before him: this relates to his ascension, Act_1:9-11, at which time, though King before, Mat_2:2, yet now, and not before, he seems to receive his royal investiture for the protection of his church and the curbing of their enemies, which he says he had before, Mat_28:18 1Co_15:25 Dan_2:44.

Daniel 7:14

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 7:15

I was transported even to astonishment with the vision, it was so strange, surprising, and terrible to me.

Daniel 7:16

Unto one of them that stood by; that is, to an angel that ministered, Zec_3:4,7.

Asked him the truth of all this; that I might learn of him the true and full meaning of this vision; which the angel readily told him.

Daniel 7:17

Men of the earth, of earthly principles, idolatrous, ambitious, sensual, tyrannical; who, after they have acted their parts, shall be driven off the stage into the tiring rooms of death and destruction.

Daniel 7:18

Jesus Christ being their King, they shall reign with him, Rev_1:6 **20:4**, and possess the kingdom for ever, Mat_19:28 1Co_1:9 **6:3** 1Pe_2:9 Rev_5:10. This shall be for ever, because Christ's kingdom is the last kingdom, never any shall succeed after that.

Daniel 7:19

I would feign know it more perfectly and exactly, because the Jewish nation and church were to be scattered long by and under the fourth beast.

Daniel 7:20

And of the ten horns; what they meant.

Whose look was more stout than his fellows, i.e. he had more power and more fierceness. This is wont to be interpreted of Antiochus, and the persecuting emperors, because it agrees well to them.

Daniel 7:21

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 7:22

This shows plainly the horn is antichrist of Rome, or the whore that rides the beast, and this is more apparent in the interpretation of the

fourth beast and the ten kings.

Daniel 7:23

Verse 23. No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 7:24

Ten kings; which Junius, Piscator, Polanus make to be the kings of Syria, and reckon ten of them, and that is not all neither; the tenth is Antiochus, but this cannot be, for he died one hundred and sixty years before Christ.

Others interpret the other

that riseth after the ten, and that shall subdue three, to be Mahomet; but Maldonate himself saith it agrees better to antichrist, and the 25th verse too, where he speaks of

changing times and laws, which

God hath set; none of which things he could do, but that God gives him commission for it, till God's set time be fulfilled, which is three years and a half, i.e. one thousand two hundred and sixty years; or forty-two months, which is all the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being in the wilderness, and of antichrist's reign, Rev_11:3 **12:6 13:5,6**, &c.: mind these places and compare this of Daniel with them, and Dan_7:26,**27**, how he shall be judged and executed. The sixth and seventh vials will decide, and illustrate all this.

Daniel 7:25

The numbers of Daniel and John seem to agree. Daniel was certainly prophetic in these things, and his prophecy reacheth to the end of times, even of antichrist's reign. I will not deny but Antiochus might be a type and forerunner of antichrist, and did many things against the Jewish church, with craft, cruelty, and blasphemy; but he was no part of the fourth, but of the third beast; whereas Daniel here points mainly at the Roman power and persecution, especially by

the little horn, which lasted to his ruin; after which it is clear the Lord Christ will reign in and over his saints much more gloriously; which the Jews will never be beaten from, because there are so many signal places in the prophets speaking of it yet unfulfilled, and in the Apocalypse, to the wise reader, after the beast and whore are destroyed, with all their supporters. But enough of that at present.

Daniel 7:26

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 7:27

Verse 27. No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 7:28

The end of the matter, i.e. of the vision, and the angel's interpretation.

My countenance changed in me:

1. Because it became him so to be, as a holy wise man ought to be in that case.
2. By this impression made upon him, God would have it laid up in his heart to be drawn out occasionally, and delivered to his people, and that all these wonderful discoveries from God might engage him more earnestly in prayer for the church of God, as he doth, **Da 9**.

Daniel 8:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 8

Daniel's vision of the ram and he goat, Dan_8:1-12. The days of suspension of the daily sacrifice, and desolation of the sanctuary, Dan_8:13,**14**. Gabriel comforteth Daniel, and interpreteth the vision, Dan_8:15-27.

This follows then in time after the former. Those things that were meet for the Chaldees to know are recorded by Daniel in that tongue; but now he writes in Hebrew, which lasts to the end of the book, because these things relate to the church of Christ, Jew and Gentile, to the end of the world.

In the other vision he speaks of all the four monarchies, here only of the three first; this vision being both as a part and a comment upon the first.

Daniel 8:2

I was at Shushan; in his mind and thoughts, not bodily, and was by the river Ulai: some think he was locally there, being sent thither in embassy by Cyrus; but Daniel was now at Babylon, when it was besieged and taken, **Da 5**; he was only there in spirit, as the prophet Ezekiel saith he was in Jerusalem, Eze_8:3. Now Daniel had this vision at Shushan, because their deliverance was to come by Cyrus the Persian or Elamite, for Elam is Persia. This city was called Shushan, i.e. a lily, for the pleasantness of it: such names they give also their cities in China.

The river of Ulai; a river whose waters were so wholesome that they were carried far, and the king drank of no other.

Daniel 8:3

Which had two horns; by which is meant the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, as it is in Dan_8:20, where it is so interpreted. Before he was called a

bear, and here a

ram, both noting the same thing, though by different expressions. A ram because he is a fighting creature, pushing.

The two horns were high, i.e. they were very powerful.

One was higher than the other, i.e. the Median, that it came up last; but afterward the Persian was much superior in magnificence and fame, which was verified in Cyrus; who had an incredible heap, even fifty millions of talents. See Curtius and Strabo.

Daniel 8:4

Westward, i.e. towards Babylon, Syria, Cappadocia. Asia the Less, and Greece, all westward from Media and Persia; for the Persians under Darius and Xerxes made war against Greece.

Northward, i.e. against the Armenians, Iberians, Lydians, Colchi, Cusptans.

Southward, i.e. against Ethiopia, Arabia, Egypt, which Cambyses invaded.

No beasts might stand before him; they prospered and conquered all, as did Cyrus.

He did according to his will, and became great; he prevailed against all that opposed, and did what he would without control, and became the greatest king of the earth then.

Daniel 8:5

An he-goat; Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia and all Greece, called a he-goat because the Greeks were called @geans, as was their sea, that country and its islands abounding in goats, as the word signifies, goatish. The word

he-goat signifies a

young he-goat; for so was Alexander, called *pellaeus juvenis* . The he-goat goes before the flock, Jer_1:8. This notes him to be the Grecian captain and leader. This he-goat answers to the belly and thighs of the image, and to the leopard and third beast.

On the face of the whole earth, i.e. in that part of Asia where he opposed Xerxes, and overran all the Eastern empire.

Touched not the ground; therefore called a

leopard with wings, for he conquered with incredible swiftness in a short time, for in six years' space he overcame the Medes and Persians, Babylon, Egypt, and all the countries round far and near; as if he had but travelled over them, he so came, saw, and overcame them.

A notable horn between his eyes: this was Alexander the Great, the western emperor. Creatures that have one horn are therefore strong, as the monoceros or unicorn, Num_23:22.

Between his eyes, noting his power and policy; also his wise council, captains, and conduct, as Parmenio, Clitus, Philotes, &c.

Daniel 8:6

The ram that had two horns, i.e. the king of Media and Persia, and joined battle presently and furiously, Jehu like.

Daniel 8:7

Brake his two horns: Artaxerxes Mnemon, by aiding Cyrus against him and then Darius Codomanus; these are the two horns, or the Medes and Persians.

Cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; he overthrew him utterly, that he could never rise again. This was at the Granicus, Issus, and Arbela.

Daniel 8:8

The he-goat waxed very great, by conquering all the Eastern empire and power, even to India.

The great horn was broken: this was the mighty power of the Lord of hosts, who is higher than the highest, and stronger than the strongest, though they seem invincible. *Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Selah* . When Alexander the Great was greatest, in his youth, not thirtythree years old; when he

called himself the son of Jupiter; when he was swoln with victories and successes; then was he broken, and that to pieces, for he, his mother, son, brother, and all his kindred were destroyed. So weak are the greatest to bear prosperity long! for this wonder of men, by pride, luxury, and passion, prepared himself for ruin; he that wept because he had not another world to conquer, and wanted breathing room in this, how soon was he tumbled into a grave of six feet!

For it came up four notable ones:

1. Antipater got Greece.
2. Asia was possessed by Antigonus.
3. Ptolemy got Egypt.
4. Seleucus had Babylon and Syria. All these were variously situated: to the east, Babylon and Syria; to the south, Egypt; to the north, Asia the Less; to the west, Greece.

Daniel 8:9

A little horn; the little horn was Antiochus Epiphanes, he arose out of the Seleucidae of Syria; called a little horn,

1. Because he was much less than Alexander, called a notable horn; Dan_8:5.
2. Little, because he was the youngest of his brethren.
3. He was held a prisoner and pledge at Rome, whence he escaped.
4. Little, because he had nothing at first of greatness and heroic nobleness in him, also of low fortune.

Toward the south, i.e. Egypt, where he besieged and took many places from Philometer, till the Romans stopped him.

Toward the east, i.e. in Syria, Babylon, Armenia.

Toward the pleasant land; Judea, so called because of the temple and people of God in it, and the fruitfulness of it, Eze_20:6,

the glory of all lands. So Dan_9:15 Psa_48:2,3, Jer_3:19 Dan_11:16,**41,45.**

Daniel 8:10

Even to the host of heaven, i.e. the church of God militant, who worship the God of heaven, who are citizens of heaven, whose names are written in heaven; and among these chiefly the priests, and nobles, and champions, who were as stars shining above the rest; these he profaned and slew cruelly.

Daniel 8:11

Even to the prince of the host; not only against the high priest Onias, whom he put from his priesthood, and sold the high priesthood, /**APC 2Mac 4**, but against God himself, which showed his daring insolence, and God's patience and permission, for the sins of his people.

By him the daily sacrifice was taken away; for he so persecuted the people of God, that he forced them to omit the worship of God.

The place of his sanctuary was cast down; he took away the use of the temple as to the holy service and sacrifices, commanding that it should not be called the temple of God, but of Jupiter Olympus, whose image he set up in it, and gave the priesthood to wicked men, as Jason and Menelaus.

Daniel 8:12

By reason of transgression, i.e. either the transgression of the priests, for Jason perfidiously took away the priesthood from his brother Onias, and afterwards Menelaus did the like by him. Or else for the sin of the people about the worship of God. Or else Antiochus wickedly and in contempt of God put soldiers into the city to hinder or break up the meetings of God's people about his worship, /**APC 1Ma_1:47**.

It cast down the truth, i.e. the law of God, called the law of truth, **Mal_2:6**, which Antiochus cut in pieces and burnt, /**APC 1Ma_1:59**. This was his practice, and it succeeded for a time as he desired.

Daniel 8:13

By the first

saint is meant a holy angel, by the other is meant Jesus Christ,

Palmoni, a

numberer or revealer of secrets, a wonderful revealer, Isa_9:6. Of him the angel asks this secret concerning the calamity of the church, how long it would last, for Daniel's sake and his people. For the Lord Christ is the Teacher of his people, the Wisdom of God, and hath all this in his power by office, and as he stands in relation to his church, and for them.

The Lord knows his suffering people are much concerned about the time of their sufferings, because there is an appointed time for it, and the Lord doth sometimes reveal it, as we see here, unto his considering ones, Dan_8:5, and praying saints, **Da 9**; they cry out in their agonies, How long, O Lord? and it is an addition to their sorrow that no man knoweth how long, Psa_74:9. How long shall Antiochus continue his tyrannical vexations against the people of God, and the worship of God? This is the

treading down of the sanctuary and the host.

Daniel 8:14

He said unto me, i.e. that angel unnamed. Why did he speak to Daniel, and not to the angel that asked him? Because Daniel, and the church to which he related and was to communicate the answer, was most concerned in it, and the angel that asked the question did it upon their account. **Unto two thousand and three hundred days**: this seems to many learned men a very difficult place, i.e. where to begin and where to end these days.

1. Some explain it thus: A year contains three hundred and sixty-five days; then two thousand three hundred make six years, three months, and eighteen days, reckoning in two days of the leap years gained from the supernumerary hours and minutes. Now this time begins at the first entrance of Antiochus into Judea, when he profaned the priesthood; and takes in also his second coming in, when he interdicted their worship, set up an idol in the temple, and interrupted the daily sacrifice.

2. Others count the two thousand three hundred days from the people's revolt, which was procured by Menelaus, which began in the year 141 of the reign of the Seleucidae, /**APC 1Mac 1**; but Antiochus did not act his impieties till the next year after, viz. 142, in the 6th month and the 6th day; from whence if we reckon

to the 25th day of the 9th month of the year 148, there will fall out precisely six years, three months, and eighteen days.

3. Others reckon a little otherwise, from the beginning of Antiochus's profanations to his death; from 143 to 148, taking in both years to the number. For though Judas Maccabeus recovered the city and cleansed the temple in 148, yet Antiochus was not dead till 149, till when the work was not finished.

4. Others make it to, begin in the year of the Seleneidea 145, and to end anne 151, two years after Antiochus's death, for the abomination of desolation was set up in the month Chisleu, /APC 1Ma_1:57, for not till two years after Antiochus's death was Nicanor overthrown with all his army. Thus Jacob Capell, and L'Empereur.

5. Others reckon not days, but sacrifices, (at two every day,) and restrain the time to fewer years, out of Maccabees. *Josephus* .

Daniel 8:15

Having obtained the favour of knowing something, he longed for a more clear discovery of those things; and he had his desire granted.

As the appearance of a man; either the angel Gabriel or Michael, who appeared often in the shape of men, and are the messengers of God in the great things concerning his church, Heb_1:14; others will have this angel to be Christ.

Daniel 8:16

A man's voice, i.e. of him but now before mentioned, namely, Christ.

To understand the vision, i.e. by declaring it more plainly to him: this shows Christ to be God, in commanding and sending his angel. Gabriel signifies the strength of God.

Daniel 8:17

He came near, that he might speak more familiarly to him, yet Daniel could not bear the glory of it, Mat_17:6. How much less can we bear the glory of God! and how graciously hath the Lord dealt with us to teach us by men, and not by angels! and how vain are they who aspire to a converse with angels here on earth!

O son of man: he calls him son of man, to make him mind his frailty, and not to be lifted up with visions, and this great condescension and familiarity of Heaven with him.

At the time of the end, i.e. in God's appointed time, i.e. in the latter generations, but not now in thy lifetime, but about four hundred years hence. See Dan_8:26.

Daniel 8:18

In a deep sleep on my face toward the ground; being terrified and astonished with the splendour and grandeur both of the messenger and message; by the sight and by the voice. Set me upright, by one touch only. The power of spirits is incomparably greater than the strongest of men. Carnal, and flesh and blood, in Scripture signifies weak, 2Co_10:3,4.

Daniel 8:19

In the last end of the indignation, i.e. that God will raise up Antiochus to execute his wrath against the Jews for their sins, and that yet there shall be an end of that

indignation; God will have the end of his intention, and the end of his execution, in all his severe providences relating to his people.

At the time appointed the end shall be: this he saith to make us wait patiently. He that believeth will not make haste.

Daniel 8:20

Or the kingdom, Dan_7:17.

Daniel 8:21

The king of Grecia; of Javan, or Ion, or Joan, which properly is Asia the Less, which was inhabited by Javan, Gen_10:2, but spread over all Greece, and all spake Greek, and the sea was thence called the Ionian Sea, See more in Bochart.

The first king, i.e. Alexander the Great; called the Great from his great power, success, and possessions; and the

first king, i.e. in Asia, and by his exploits and victories over the Persian monarchy; for else there were other kings of Greece before him, but none of them in the sense aforesaid.

Daniel 8:22

Being broken, i.e. by death, which breaks the horn of all pride and earthly glory.

Four stood up for it, i.e. four kingdoms of the nations of the Greeks.

Not in his power; that is, not in his majesty and magnificence, but inferior to him.

Daniel 8:23

In the latter time of their kingdom, i.e. when they were come to the height, and beginning to decline. It notes that time when the Romans began to seize part of the Grecian kingdom, by Emilius Probus, who subdued Perseus king of Macedonia, and thereby brought all Greece under the Roman jurisdiction; which was one hundred and sixty-six years before Christ was born, that very year Antiochus set up the abomination of desolation.

When the transgressors are come to the full; when the Jews were grown to an excess of wickedness, and called for punishment, then God suffered Antiochus to persecute them.

Of fierce countenance; such was he: the word is translated impudent, inhuman, for the countenance is the discoverer of the mind and manners oftentimes.

Understanding dark sentences; full of all subtlety, another Julian, to lay snares, and fetch over the inconstant and backsliding Jews: such a one all histories declare this Antiochus to be.

Daniel 8:24

Not by his own power; not by any heroic deeds, or truly regal qualities, but by making use of the Jewish factions, and also through the Divine permission, and commission given him to punish a backsliding, degenerate nation; lastly, by the help of Eumenes and Attalus, by whose means and help he got up to this height; who being kings, suspected the Roman power, and raised him to be a kind of cheek to them.

The holy people; he shall by force, craft, and cruelty destroy many of God's people, from the highest to the meanest ranks of them.

Daniel 8:25

He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; he shall contrive many devices, and most of them shall take; he shall be a great master of those kinds of artifices: all to circumvent and destroy, as beasts and birds of prey have a kind of craft to compass and then devour their prey.

He shall magnify himself in his heart; shall take a pride in his wicked devices and tricks.

By peace shall destroy many; under colour of kindness, and promising peace and amity, shall lull men asleep, so as to fear nothing from him.

He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes: all this you find verified of him in the Maccabees and Josephus. He fought against God in removing the high priest, affronting God's laws, profaning God's worship, name, and temple, and setting up the image and worship of Jupiter there. He shall be broken without hand, by a disease whereof he died, /APC 1Ma_6:8 2Ma_9:5.

Daniel 8:26

The vision is true, i.e. of the two thousand three hundred days before, Dan_8:14. This exposition of it is true, plain, and certain. and therefore to be believed and seriously minded. Shut thou up the vision; lay it up in thy heart, keep it secret, reveal it to none till it be fulfilled. He doth not mean that it should be concealed from the people of God that were wise in heart, for they were concerned in it, and therefore it was revealed to Daniel; but he would not have it revealed to the Chaldeans and profane heathens, and therefore it was written in Hebrew, and not in Chaldee. It was to be fulfilled in after-times, and therefore to be safely laid up, and wisely to be thought on and improved. Therefore it is added,

for it shall be for many days; three hundred years after this, in the time of the Seleucidae; long after Daniel's days and that generation. See Rev_22:10.

Daniel 8:27

Was sick certain days; greatly afflicted, to consider the sad calamity that should befall the poor people of God. This he did in

compassion and sympathy with his people, upon whom these sufferings should fall.

2. Under the dreadful apprehensions of God's wrath, provoked by his people's sins, which made it an act of justice in God to punish them thus severely.

3. That Daniel should not be lifted up with this vision and revelation.

4. That hereby Daniel might be in a due frame of humiliation and posture for prayer.

5. To show the powerful operations and impressions of the mind upon the bodies of men by the passions chiefly of fear and grief, causing often faintings, and consternation, which appear most in thoughtful, good men, whereof are many instances in Scripture, Hab_3:16 Rom_9:1-3. Having digested his grief, and recovered strength, he minded his place, duty, and trust, and concealed the whole, that they might not see it by his countenance; though he had deep thoughts of heart about it.

Daniel 9:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 9

Daniel, considering the time of the captivity, Dan_9:1,2, maketh confession of his people's sins, Dan_9:3-15, and prayeth for the restoration of Jerusalem, Dan_9:16-19. Gabriel informeth him of the seventy weeks, and of the time and death of the Messiah, and of the succeeding troubles, Dan_9:20-27.

In the first year of Darius; that is, immediately after the overthrow of the kingdom of Babylon, which was also the year of the Jews' deliverance from their seventy years' captivity; therefore punctually here set down. The Lord hath carefully recorded the several periods of time that relate to his church, and the signal providences both of mercy or judgment exercised towards it; for hereby God is glorified in the signal displaying of his attributes, and the saints' graces exercised, especially faith and patience, by calling to mind what God hath done in time past, Psa_77:5-7. This Darius was not Darius the Persian, under whom the temple was built, as Porphyrius would have it, that thereby he might persuade unlearned men that Daniel lived long after the

time that he did live in. Therefore this is called Darius the Mede, and by the Greeks called Cyaxares.

Which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; and this is confirmed by Xenophon.

Daniel 9:2

Understood by books; by sacred books, both of Jeremiah the prophet, Jer_25:11,**12 29:10**; so also the Pentateuch, which he had, as is plain, Dan_9:10-13, &c.; by which we see this great prophet did not disdain to study the word of God, and the state of the church of God, though he had the converse and revelation of angels, and though he was in a heathen court, and in high office, which required great attendance.

That he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem: see Jer_7:3,**1 22:5 25:18**.

Daniel 9:3

Observe two things:

1. That deep revolting, and deep afflictions, call for deep and solemn humiliation.
2. God's decrees and promises do not excuse us from duty and prayer, but include it and require it. God will be inquired of for those things which he hath purposed and promised to give his people, Eze_36:37. And if it be objected by any, (as it is by Calovius,) that both God's threats and promises are absolute, and not hypothetical, as they will prove by Jer_25:11,**12 29:10**; it is answered that,
 1. Though it be spoken peremptorily and absolutely, yet not without a tacit condition and secret reserve in God, Jon_3:4.
 2. God often speaks positively to put sinners in the more awe of his judgments, and to drive them to repentance, Jer_18:7-10.
 3. If God give a reason of his threatening, viz. because they have despised his word and abused his patience, 2Ch_36:15,**16 Lu 19:42-44**; then the threat is absolute.
 4. And if God add upon his threatenings such words as these, *I will not hear you, pray not for this people*, of which we have many instances, then it is peremptory.

5. When the threat and the judgment threatened are the fruit of God's decree, then it is irreversible; not else. Mind all these rules well in this case.

Daniel 9:4

By this it appeared he prayed in faith, to the true God, and his God.

2. He made confession of sin when he prayed for deliverance, because hereby he justified God in the captivity of his people.

3. He knew if God vouchsafed pardon of sin, upon this confession, that would be a sure foundation of future mercy.

4. He set down here the words of his prayer, because it is the prayer of a righteous man, and one of God's eminent saints and favourites in Scripture, who had great power with God in prayer, Job_42:7-9 Eze_14:14,20 Jas 5:16. Keeping the covenant; he puts God in mind of his covenant, Deu_7:8 Neh_1:5; he calls him great and dreadful, as to his severe justice and wrath: now though the covenant hath promises and mercy, yet it includeth obedience on our part, as here is expressed.

Daniel 9:5

As if he had said, We are not only sinners, but our sin is wickedness aggravated to the height: thus much the gradation here intimates, by

doing wickedly and rebelling. In our confessions of sin to God there must be no mincing nor cloaking of sin, but a full and naked discovery, with selfjudging and self-abhorrence. Note here, all along after, this holy man Daniel puts himself in the number of the greatest sinners: so when we are suppliants and penitents, we must include ourselves in the general petition.

Daniel 9:6

For God to send his prophets to his people was their high privilege, and the highest act of favour to them, and of his authority over them, for they were God's ambassadors, and came to them in the Lord's name; and therefore their sin and punishment was the greater. God's ambassadors have a large commission, and general instruction to speak in the name of their

Lord with all authority, and without respect of persons. And this shows,

1. God's authority over all.
2. God's mercy towards all, of all sorts.
3. The aggravation of this sin, because it was of all sorts, as Gen_6:12,**13** 2Ch_36:16. Now the abuse of ambassadors hath by the law of nations ever been highly resented, 2Sa_10:12:**29-31**.

Daniel 9:7

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 9:8

Here the prophet, after he had arraigned himself and his people upon their guilt, passeth judgment; for in this case every true penitent sits in judgment, and proceeds judicially, that is, solemnly and impartially; for he judgeth for God, and proceeds according to God's law, and conscience is witness; and this God takes notice of, and takes well, for it prevents his judging of us, 1Co_11:31, and is a true sign of true repentance: see 2Co_7:11.

Daniel 9:9

How did God show himself merciful, when he punished them so severely?

Answ.

1. Because it was less than their sin deserved, for it was rebellion.
2. Because their punishment was God's chastisement, which to his people is an act of love and mercy, as you see, Heb_12:6-9.
3. Because God preserved them in their captivity, and delivered them from it. They therefore that pray to God under their sin and misery must eye God's mercies, as well as his justice, Psa_2:1 **130:4**. For as the one doth east them down, so the other bears them up, and gives them hope; or else we might he swallowed up of too much sorrow and despair, 2Co_2:7,**11**, wherein Satan would be too hard for us, as well as in dedolency or want of godly sorrow.

Daniel 9:10

To be large in,

1. Confession of sin, especially in a day of humiliation, is no vain repetition, for we offend commonly in being slight and perfunctory in our confessions; and God will have all out, and make us own it.

2. It was God's mercy not only to give his people a law, which he did solemnly by Moses, but set it plainly and powerfully before them, and set it home upon them by the expositions and applications of all the prophets, for this was their work.

Daniel 9:11

1. When sin is epidemical, it is sad and fatal to a nation, as in Psa_14:3 Rom_3:12: so a deluge of sin brought a deluge of judgment, Gen_6:13,17.

2. This makes the gap great, and leaves none to stand in it. Then the curse comes upon a people, i.e. the punishment of the breach of God's law, Jer_42:18 **44:12**. This,

1. Shows the holiness of God's law.

2. It shows the sinfulness and heinousness of sin, the breach of it.

3. It shows the necessity and excellency of Jesus Christ, who was sent of God to bless us, in freeing us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

Daniel 9:12

He hath confirmed his words which he spake against us: by this it appears that God's judgments threatened against sin are to be feared, because of the great and terrible God, Dan_9:4 Deu_7:9,10 Ne 1:8.

Against our judges that judged us; whose place and duty it was to govern the people, to judge their causes, and to appoint others for it; wherein if there be a failure, as there often was, it was a sin and judgment upon the people, and upon the rulers and judges themselves also, of which we find many instances and complaints in Scripture, Psa_2:2,9,10 **58:1,2**.

Jerusalem; a place privileged many ways above all others, chiefly by the signal presence of God there, and his promises to it, Psa_76:1,2; yet when sin is found there, as it was in Jerusalem, to

the height, as in Sodom, it was punished to the height. Read the book of Lamentations.

Daniel 9:13

As it is written in the law of Moses: see Lev_26:14-39. The sum of all is, As the Lord threatened and forewarned us long ago, so it is come to pass this day upon us, because we took no warning, we understood not, but sinned and returned not. The Lord is true and just in all that is come upon us; chiefly because we have not made our prayer unto God to prevent our misery before it came upon us, nor to remove it when it lay heavy on us. See it in Ezekiel, who prophesied in the captivity, and how they received him; and though they kept a formal fast, yet what did that signify? Zec_7:5-7.

Daniel 9:14

Therefore hath the Lord watched: this notes,

1. God's taking notice of all their ways, even while men sleep in carnal security, and dream of no danger.
2. God's watching here notes the fit ways that he always takes to punish sinners.
3. It notes his haste in executing judgment duly and seasonably, when it makes most for the honour of his justice.
4. That he may, like a careful watchman, not suffer any to escape his hands.

Daniel 9:15

Daniel mentions this deliverance now, that God would please to put forth the same power in this deliverance out of Babylon, according to his promise, Psa_80:8 Jer_16:14 **23:7:** this lie grounds his faith upon, Jer_32:13, read thence to the end.

1. How the Lord assured them they should return out of captivity, by the prophet's making a purchase and sealing evidences, and laying them up safe.
2. How the Lord would certainly plague them notwithstanding for their wickedness.
3. How he would deliver them, as once out of Egypt.

Daniel 9:16

As if he had said, Lord, according to thy righteousness thou hast punished thy people, as they justly deserved; now also, according to thy mercies, which is the other part of thy righteousness, save thy people, though they deserve it not. See Psa_143:1,2. For God hath promised, and therefore he will do it, yet in mercy, and this is faithfulness and righteousness. See 1Jo_1:9. Now though sin is the reproach of any people and nation, yet much more of the people of God, which should be a holy people, because their God is a holy God, and his laws are holy laws, by which they excel all other people. Yet, Lord, saith he, if Jerusalem be a reproach, this is a reproach to thee, because of their relation to thee; therefore, I pray thee, take away this double reproach; it is grievous unto us to bear it; for thy name's sake, O let it be grievous unto thee, and therefore wipe it away.

Daniel 9:17

1. Here the prophet is most concerned for the sanctuary, and place of worship, a type not only of the church, and the worship of God, but also of Christ; because in all these the Lord is greatly concerned in honour, especially considering,

2. His argument, for the Lord's sake; for Christ's sake, the Messiah, who is meant here: which I prove,

1. Because the concurrent testimony of the best interpreters, and the synod of Sardis, is for this interpretation.

2. Because this construction is most agreeable to the text and the Hebrew: the contrary is against it, and forced and figurative, when there is no need of it.

3. The plurality of persons is expressed thus.

4. The word

Lord is often attributed to Christ in the Old Testament, Psa_110:1; and in the New Testament, Luk_1:43 **2:11** Joh_20:28 Rev_17:14 **5**. Because the Jews had none else to trust to for salvation, Joh_14:13 Act_15:11 Eph_3:12 1Ti_2:5. Thus in the Old Testament, Psa_80:15-17; for the Son's sake, whom he calls the Son of man, Dan_9:17, for so the Chaldee paraphrase, for the King Messiah. So upon that place, Psa_72:1,

Give the king thy judgments, and thy righteousness to the king's son, i.e. the King the Messiah. 2Sa_7:21,

For thy word's sake, i.e. Christ, Joh_1:1 2Sa_12:25, He called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord, of whom Solomon was a type.

Daniel 9:18

Observe here,

1. How he entitles God to the city for his name. It was the city of God, Psa_48:1,2,8 **Jer 25:29**. It is a good argument in prayer to entitle ourselves to God; yea, to interest God to ourselves, and to our cause. Observe,

2. How careful and cautious the prophet is to flee to mercy, and to renounce merit. Thus all the saints.

Daniel 9:19

Here,

1. We have the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man prevailing: he never gave over till he got it.

2. The Lord allows and loves importunity in prayer.

3. He and the people of God were under a sore trial, for the seventy years' captivity were expired. Therefore he saith, Defer not now, Lord, it is high time for thee to have mercy upon Zion, yea, the set time is come: Lord, hear for thine own sake, though not for ours. What! hast thou forgotten? O Lord, remember.

Daniel 9:20

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 9:21

1. By this we see Daniel used vocal prayer, pouring out his soul.

2. That the saints in prayer do parley with God; it is a humble, and holy, and fervent unbosoming our soul to God.

3. That holy men, in confessing the sins of the nation, confess their own sins too, and that impartially, begging pardon for all.

4. That when a child of God sets himself in earnest to seek God by prayer, the Lord hears him. Compare Dan_9:20 with Dan_9:23.

5. As the angels are all ministering spirits, so the chiefest angels are sent in the chiefest messages relating to the church of God. Thus Gabriel before, Dan_8:16. Thus here. Also to Zacharias, and Mary, Luk_1:11,**19,26**, about the incarnation of Christ, and our salvation by him.

6. God herein gives a great encouragement to prayer, and fulfils his promises made of old to his people in this behalf, Lev_26:40-42 Deu_30:1-3 Isa_30:19; and Isa_65:24,

It shall come to pass, before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.

7. The Lord is quick in hearing and helping his people. The angel was made

to fly swiftly, even unto weariness, as some translate it. Or, to fly with flight, Hab_1:8.

The time of the evening sacrifice was a solemn and set time of devotion. Then God heard Elijah and did wonders, 1Ki_18:36-38; and Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world was sacrificed for us at that time, about the ninth hour, Mat_27:46 Mar_15:34 Luk_23:44, &c.; all these three evangelists mention Christ's giving up the ghost at the ninth hour, which was the time of the evening sacrifice. At this time Gabriel is sent to Daniel to tell him the time of the Messiah's death, and the consequence of it. See Dan_9:24, &c.

Daniel 9:22

That is, to make thee know great and secret things concerning the city and sanctuary of Jerusalem, of the rebuilding of it, and of the Messiah, &c.

Daniel 9:23

The commandment came forth: this thing was decreed before in God's counsel; but not divulged, or ordered to be proclaimed, till Daniel petitioned.

Greatly beloved, Heb. *a man of desires* , i.e. dear to God, Luk_1:28.

Daniel 9:24

Seventy weeks: these weeks are weeks of days, and these days are so many years; though neither days, nor months, nor years are expressed, (which makes it somewhat the more obscure,) but weeks only. It is yet plain and obvious that the angel useth the number seventy to show the favour of God towards them, that they might have so much liberty and joy as their seventy years' bondage and sufferings amounted to. Yet was this but a type of the time of grace which was to follow after by the coming of Christ. Upon thy people, and upon thy holy city. Why doth he call them Daniel's people?

1. Because they were his by nation, blood, laws, and profession.
2. Thine because thou dost own them, and art so tender of them, and so zealous for them.

To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity. Note,

1. The angel discovers first the disease, in three several words, havh Nwe evk which contain all sorts of sin, which the Messiah should free us from by his full redemption, see Exo_34:6,7 **Mt 1:21** viz. original, actual, of ignorance, presumption, &c.; also fault and punishment, which we may prove by Scripture.

2. The angel shows us also the cure of this disease in three words, *le callee, le chatem, le capper* :

1. To finish transgression;
2. To make an end of sin;
3. To make reconciliation: all which words are very significant in the original, and signify to pardon, to blot out, mortify, expiate.

To bring in everlasting righteousness, i.e. to bring in justification by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ the Lord our Righteousness, Isa_53:6 Jer_23:6 **33:16** 1Co_1:30; called *everlasting* because Christ is eternal, and he and his righteousness is everlasting. Christ brings this in,

1. By his merit;
2. By his gospel declaring it;

3. By faith applying and sealing it by the Holy Ghost.

To seal up the vision and prophecy; to abrogate the former dispensation of the laws, and to fulfil it, and the prophecies relating to Christ, and to confirm and ratify the new testament or gospel covenant of grace. The Talmud saith, all the prophecies of the prophets related to Christ.

To anoint the most Holy; by which alluding to the holy of holies, which was anointed, Exo_30:25-31 **40:9-16**. This typified the church, which is called anointed, 2Co_1:21, and heaven, into which Christ is entered, Heb_8:1 **9:24 10:19**; but chiefly Christ himself, who is the Holy One, Act_3:14. He received the Spirit

without measure, Joh_3:34. His human nature is therefore called the temple, Joh_2:19, and tabernacle, Heb_8:2 **9:11**: moreover Christ is he that held the law, by which the will of God is revealed; the propitiatory, appeasing God; the table, that nourisheth us; the candlestick, that enlightens; the altar, that sanctifies the gift and offering. All these were anointed and holy: by this word anointing he alludes to his name Messiah and Christ, both which signify anointed. Christ was anointed at his first *conception* and personal union, Luk_1:35; in his

baptism, Mat_3:17; to his three offices by the Holy Ghost,

(1.) *King*, Mat_2:2,

(2.) *Prophet*, Isa_61:1,

(3.) *Priest*, Psa_110:4.

Daniel 9:25

Know therefore and understand, i.e. by deep consideration, upon a due search of reason, and comparing of things, and minding what the angel saith.

Seven weeks from the publication of the edict, whether of Cyrus or Darius, to restore and to build, we shall see anon.

Even in troublous times; noting the enemy should create them much trouble in the building and reparations of the wall, city, and temple, which they did many ways, as we read in Nehemiah, which the Spirit of God doth premonish them of, lest they should think this their chief deliverance and redemption. These seven

weeks are therefore mentioned by themselves, and repeated no more, because they contained the time of building the wall, city, and temple of Jerusalem, at the end of which seem to begin the sixty-two weeks.

Daniel 9:26

After the threescore and two weeks. i.e. after the seven before, and after the sixty-two that followed them, which all make up sixty-nine, referring the angel's seventy weeks, which is nothing though no week more be described, because it makes up the number a round number, after the Jewish manner of calculation, and there might be some fragments in the particular reckoning to make up the sum, or it might be finished in the seventieth week, and that was enough to call it seventy weeks, Dan_9:24.

Shall Messiah be cut off; which word *trk* signifies cutting off, or cutting down, as a tree, Isa_44:14 Jer_10:3. Secondly, it is used for cutting off by capital punishment, Exo_12:15 **30:33,38**; whether this be by the signal hand of God, or by the magistrate, for some heinous offence, Lev_18:29 **20:17** Psa_37:34. This foreshows that the death of Christ should be as of a condemned malefactor sentenced to death, and that justly. So did the Jews, Christ's executioners, proclaim that he died for blasphemy, and that he was a devilish impostor, &c. Yea, God himself charged sin upon him and the curse, Isa_53:4 2Co_5:21 Gal_3:13.

But not for himself; *wl Nyaw* which being abrupt, is variously rendered and read; some referring it to Christ, and some to the people: and others to both, and all with very probable conjectures, Psa_22:6,7 Isa **53:3**: i.e. not to him: There was none to succour him; or that they would none of him for their Messiah; they set him at nought, and would not have him live, and therefore he would not own them for his people, but cast them off, for thus dying is expressed in short, not to be. Thus Enoch, Gen_5:24, Joseph, Gen_42:36, and Rachel's children, Jer_31:15 Mat_2:17,18. But our English translation seems to hit the truest sense, i.e. not

for himself. He was innocent and guiltless, he died for others, not for himself, but for our sakes and for our salvation.

The people of the prince that shall come; the Romans under the conduct of Titus Vespasianus. Some will include Christ's people here, whom he should chiefly gather out of the Roman empire, should ruin that church, and polity, and worship. *Desolations are determined* ; God hath decreed to destroy that place and people by the miseries and desolations of war, i.e. sword, famine, sickness, scattering. All this is signified by

shomemoth: also the profaning of the temple by idols, which are called abominations that make desolate; this was done by the Greeks and Jews before, and the Romans at their siege, and after.

Quest. But some will query, why the angel who was sent to comfort Daniel should insert here this tragical business of destruction and desolation, being beyond the space of seventy weeks?

Answ.

1. That Daniel might be informed of the judgments of God upon that place and people, and the reasons of it, viz. their rejecting and killing Christ.
2. That the spirit of God's people should not fail when these tragedies were acted; being foretold, thereby they were prepared and fortified against it, and to expect it, and not to be surprised by it when it came.

Daniel 9:27

He: this

he is not Titus making truce with the Jews, which he did not, though he endeavoured to persuade them that he might spare them. I say then with Graser, Mede, and others, that this *he* is the Messiah, and the covenant he confirms is the new testament or covenant, called therefore the covenant of the people, Isa_42:6 **49:8**; and the Angel of the covenant, Mal_3:1; and the Surety of the covenant, Heb_7:22; and the ancient rabbins called the Messiah xrk a *middle man* , or middle man between two.

Quest. How did Christ confirm the covenant?

Answ. 1. By testimony,

(1.) Of angels, Luk_2:10 **Mt 28**;

- (2.) John Baptist;
- (3.) Of the wise men;
- (4.) By the saints then living, Luk_1:2;
- (5.) Moses and Elias, Mat_17:3;
- (6.) Pharisees, as Nicodemus, Joh_3:2;
- (7.) The devils that confessed him.

- 2. By his preaching.
- 3. By signs and wonders.
- 4. By his holy life.
- 5. By his resurrection and ascension.
- 6. By his death and blood shed.

Shall confirm the covenant; rybgh he shall corroborate it, as if it began before his coming to fail and be invalid.

With many; noting hereby the paucity of the Jewish church and nation, compared with the great increase and enlargement by believing Gentiles throughout all nations and ages of the world, Isa_11:9 **49:6 53:11,12 54:2,3 Mr 16:15** Act_13:46: q.d. With many Jews first and last, and with many more of the nations, yea, with the many whom the rabbins and Pharisees despise as the rabble, the common people, Isa_42:3 Mat_21:31 Joh_7:48,**49** 1Co_1:26,**27**.

For one week; by a figure, take the greater part of the whole, he shall, though rejected by the chief and bulk of the Jewish nation, yet make the new testament prevail with many in that time, i.e. at the latter end of the seventy weeks.

The sacrifice and the oblation to cease; zebach and mincha, bloody and unbloody, to cease. i.e. all the Jewish rites, and Levitical ceremonious worship, i.e. by the burning of the temple before the city was taken, for they were only to offer sacrifice in the temple, nor had they wherewithal in the siege. Yet is there more in it than this, viz. that the Lord Jesus, by his death, and by the execution of his wrath, and abrogate and put an end to this laborious service, and made it to cease for ever.

For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate; desolate

for the wing, for the manifold and great abominations stretching, and our text hath it well overspreading. This abomination was the Roman army with their eagles, and with their superstitious rites in approaching to besiege and subdue any place; and this is executed by Christ upon them, Mat_22:7, when he is called a King sending forth his armies, and destroying the murderers that destroyed him, and burning their city, and their coming is Christ's coming, Mal_3:1,2Jo_21:22 Jam_5:7; therefore it is said here,

he shall make it desolate. Even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate: here all this is made the effect of God's decree, and therefore irrevocable. This word *shomen* notes that this people were bewitched, sottishly superstitious, wanderers, banished, the astonishment and scorn of the world; all which did justly and dreadfully befall them, and they verify it to this day.

They that will curiously search further into the seventy weeks and other numbers in Daniel, and have leisure and skill, let them read Graserus, L'Empereur, Wasmuth, Mede, Willet, Wichmannus, Sanctius, Rainoldus, Pererius, Derorlon, Broughton, Liveleius, Helvicns, Calovius, Geierus. &c. Read also Joseph Med. p. 861, &c., and Bail. p. 180, &c. This scripture shows the coming of the Messiah so clearly, his sufferings, and the wrath of God so severely upon the Jews for it, that it thoroughly confutes their unbelief; and fully confirms our faith in Jesus Christ.

Daniel 10:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 10

Daniel, having humbled himself, seeth a glorious vision, and is troubled with fear, Dan_10:1-9. An angel comforteth him, and, telling him of the opposition of the prince of Persia, the assistance he had from Michael, and the coming in of the prince of Grecia, promiseth him further information, Dan_10:10-21.

This fell out in the thirty-first year, which was the last year of the kingdom of Persia, but the third year after his seizure and monarchy of Babylon; indeed it is said, Dan_1:21, that Daniel

continued to the first year of Cyrus, i.e. in his place of honour, but he lived much longer.

A thing was revealed unto Daniel; revealed by an angel from heaven, not in a dream, or in any more obscure and uncertain way, but plainly. This chapter is but a general preface to what is more particularly declared in the next chapter.

Belteshazzar: by this name Daniel was famous among many people, and they took notice of him by his honourable place, name, and prophecy.

The thing was true; both in the matter, and that which was truly to come to pass, not feigned, nor a bare conjecture, hman it was truth. The time appointed was long, i.e. for three hundred years' space, as was said, Dan_8:26, or to the end of Antiochus's persecution, or of the world, Dan_12:2.

And he understood the thing and the vision. This is doubled, to beget the greater credit, and assurance of the truth of it.

Daniel 10:2

There are several causes of Daniel's mourning.

1. Because the Jews had liberty to go out of captivity, yet many of them staid still in Babylon.
2. Because when they were building the temple, walls, and city they were greatly hindered and molested, Ezr_4:4.
3. Because he foresaw the many calamities of the Jews that would befall them for their sins, especially in destroying the Messiah, and rejecting his gospel.

Three full weeks; he fasted and mourned all that time, both to declare his deep sense of those calamities ensuing, and to be in a better posture to receive Divine impressions, which usually God reveals to humble souls.

Daniel 10:3

Fasting and feasting are very inconsistent; Daniel at other times lived magnificently, according to the dignity of his place, he had the best bread, flesh, wine, and anointing after the manner of the East, all which he laid aside, that by austerity he might afflict his

body, and quicken his soul suitably to the time of Jacob's trouble and to a true fasting frame.

Daniel 10:4

The first month; it was the month Nisan, which is March. This

Hiddekel was Tigris, which is a great branch of Euphrates: the prophets had many of their visions by rivers.

Daniel 10:5

He beheld wistly and with a composed mind.

A certain man; which man some will have an angel, either Gabriel, who appeared to him before, or Michael, chief among the angels, **Jude 9**, archangel, who is mentioned after. Or rather, Christ, who was true man.

1. He appeared to Daniel in royal and priestly robes, which was not proper for any angel.

2. He appeared in so great brightness and majesty, which made Daniel astonished, and laid him prostrate.

3. Compare this place with Dan_12:6,7, and you find him the same as here, revealing the secrets of times, and of God's providence towards his church, which is Christ.

Clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: see Rev_1:13-17, where the Lord Jesus Christ is described as here in Daniel, and for the same end. Now he appeared thus before his incarnation, in the Old Testament, as a prelude of it, as the best expositors grant it. By this appearance the Lord Christ held out clearly his three offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. The girding of loins signifies his readiness to obey the commands and do the work of his Father; besides the ornament of the curious golden girdle.

Daniel 10:6

Like the beryl, which is of a sea colour; others translate it the chrysolite, others the jacinth, the word in the text vyvrtk like the tarsi, this is a colour like the sea: the beryl, which is azure, and like the heavens, show Christ to be immortal and glorious, the Lord from heaven, heavenly, 1Co_15:47. See Eze_1:16 **10:9 28:13**. His face as the lightning quickens to succour his saints and

terrify his enemies, Mat_24:27 **28:3** Rev_4:5. *His eyes like lamps of fire* , signify omniscience, splendour, and terror in Christ. His arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, note his incredible power and swiftness to defend or to destroy invincibly. *The voice of his words like the voice of a multitude* : by this the Lord would distinguish the Lord Christ from creatures, and when he comes with a noise and a sound, to show the grandeur and terror of his presence. And thus his presence is wont to be ushered in before the revelation of great things, Eze_1:24 **43:2** Act_2:2 Rev_1:10,15 **14:2 19:1**; by the example of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the apostles; noting also the mighty power of Christ to fear.

Daniel 10:7

So Luk_24:16 Act_9:7.

1. The Lord hereby shows his power over our senses, both outward and inward, in a signal, distinguishing way.
2. The weakness of mortals to see or hear heavenly things, unless he strengthen them.
3. Their fleeing and quaking argued the terror of God upon them; and thereby the truth and certainty of the vision, by hearing such a sound though they saw it not, Act_9:7,8.

Daniel 10:8

This great vision; great in the appearance, and great in the great things revealed.

There remained no strength in me; by the recoiling of his spirits inward.

My comeliness was turned in me into corruption; his colour was changed into paleness, as one that is faint, and pining into a consumption, by terror and consternation.

Daniel 10:9

Yet heard I the voice of his words; nevertheless he made me to hear: here was power in weakness, and yet this added to his fear and frailty.

Then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground; as one that swooned, or as one that slumbered, and as one that adored the ground.

Daniel 10:10

What a poor worm is man to crush or to raise by the mighty hand of God! This dealt the angel Gabriel with him before, Dan_8:16,17.

Daniel 10:11

A man greatly beloved: the Lord moulds and models us as clay in his hands to receive his impressions: we are not fit for any great thing till we are abased; and yet when we are vilest in our eyes we are most precious in God's eyes.

Understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright. Thus Saul, when he was struck down, and struck blind, then he received his call and commission to be an apostle, and to know the mystery of Christ: see Hab_3:16.

When he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling: the Lord doth not restore at once his servants from their frailties, that they by gradual comforts may prize every drop of mercy, being not quickened at once, when they are mortified, but may be admonished, by the remains of fears and frailties, to keep their hearts humble.

Daniel 10:12

1. The Lord is quick in hearing the fervent prayer of a humble soul, though he doth not presently let them know it. God heard the first day, though he sent not his angel to tell Daniel of it till three weeks after.

2. A soul that would obtain great things from God by prayer must be solemn and fervent in seeking God.

3. The fervent and constant prayers of the saints make God to send from heaven and save. Thus in Peter's case, Act_12:5-15, and here in Daniel's.

Daniel 10:13

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: this place hath some difficulty, therefore variously expounded. Some expound it of earthly princes, some of angels,

and among them some will have good angels meant, who they say have the patronage of the kingdoms and provinces of the earth; but who can imagine that good angels should quarrel one with the other? therefore, say others, they are bad angels that oppose the people of God, and their deliverance, seeking rather their ruin, as Michael and the devil strove, Rev_12:7: now sometimes God permits Satan to do much this way. But I judge by the prince of Persia is meant Cambyses, who was an enemy to the Jews, and hindered the building of the temple. Now he could not properly resist the angel, but figuratively he did. Angels' power is not unlimited, but by commission and instructions from God, and their works successive. Therefore God suffered the wicked counsels of Cambyses to take place a while; but Daniel by his prayers, and the angel by his power, overcame him at last. And this very thing laid a foundation of the Persian monarchy's ruin, Dan_10:20; and doubtless that king was stirred up to his evil machinations against the people of God by the prince of the powers of darkness, that ruleth in the children of disobedience, Eph_2:2.

Michael: this we take to be Christ.

1. His name signifies, who is like God.
2. He is the first in dignity above all the angels, Heb_1:4-7, &c., called archangel, and the church's prince, Dan_10:21.
3. The chief champion of his church, helping Gabriel not as his fellow, but as his general. Thus we see what care God takes of his church's safety against their potent enemies, by doubling their succours, (when he could do it, if he pleased, without means,) thereby to consult his own glory in the world by defeating the counsels and breaking the powers of the mightiest enemies, after he had given them rope to do their worst.

Daniel 10:14

Now at last, with much ado, after the contest is over, I am come to give thee understanding touching all the purposes and providences of God relating to his church: this made amends for the delay; this was the comfortable effect of effectual fervent prayer; this was God's overflowing kindness to his servant Daniel, to certify him by so honourable a messenger as this, that God would not only

give him the knowledge of the present times and dispensations towards his church and their enemies, but for a long time after, even four hundred and ninety years, to the coming of the Messiah, as he did to David, 2Sa_7:19. By which we learn this solemn truth, that God will never leave himself without witness to his people; but in the worst of times he will afford them sufficient discoveries of his care of them; as he did by this prophecy in those dark days.

Daniel 10:15

He was not yet quite free of all his fear, of which we heard, Dan_10:9; haply this pressed him down the more, when he considered the majesty of the angel, the greatness of the vision, and his own frailty; this transported him with astonishment; and above all, that he saw so much of God in it, in his favour to him and his poor church.

Daniel 10:16

One like the similitude of the sons of men; an angel in the shape of a man, and no other but Jesus Christ, as before he that had humbled him now helped and encouraged him.

I opened my mouth, and spake; which cannot be till the Lord touch our lips, Psa_51:15 Isa_6:5-7 Jer_1:9. Though the angel appeared to him, and spake to him as a man, yet could not Daniel bear his presence without some dread.

Daniel 10:17

The condition of the church under the gospel is a better dispensation than the law and the prophets, when God spake often by angels; but now by his Son, and that not in angelical shape and splendour, but as a mean man, in a meek and humble garb, and most familiar, Isa_61:1-3 Joh_13:5 Act_3:22.

Daniel 10:18

Daniel needed a second touch, and another word of encouragement, before he could hear and bear the angel's words as to the vision and prophecy; and now, being fortified by degrees, he hath got courage.

Daniel 10:19

The Lord is gracious and compassionate towards his saints under their infirmities, Psa_103:13,14. And this tender carriage towards

him was a token for good to him and his people, that the Lord would be propitious to them.

Daniel 10:20

Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? i.e. by what I have said already, and what I have further to tell thee upon thy prayers, which God hath accepted, and hath given me in charge to reveal to thee as followeth to the end.

To fight with the prince of Persia; Cyrus, or Cambyses, who by his counsels and captains hinder the work of God; and to bring the prince of Greece upon him, viz. Alexander the Great, who utterly ruined the Persian monarchy, which is ushered with the word

to, because it was a wonder that the prince of Greece with thirty thousand men should do it. Thus the Lord sets and disposeth the fates of empires, and changeth them as he lists; especially in his church's quarrel.

Daniel 10:21

In the scripture of truth, i.e. in the peremptory decree and purpose of God, more authentic and unalterable than the laws of the Medes and Persians. Now God hath appointed to deliver the Jews from the Persians by the Greeks; and from the Greeks by the Maccabees, especially the Seleucidae and Lagidae; and how the Romans should come after, and plague the people of God long, both by the persecuting emperors and by antichrist, and how that also should have an end.

Michael your prince; Jesus Christ alone is the Champion and Protector of his church, and that all-sufficient, when all the princes of the earth besides deserted or opposed it. For it cannot be meant of

angels in any sound sense, as popish interpreters would have it, thereby to countenance their angel worship; for can we imagine upon rational and orthodox principles, that the angels of heaven should be divided into parties, and but two of them mind the cause of the church of God, with other like absurdities, which accompany the popish sense that Maldonate, a Lapide, &c. fasten upon this scripture?

Daniel 11 1 DANIEL CHAPTER 11

The overthrow of Persia by the king of Greeks, whose empire shall be divided, Dan_11:1-4. Leagues and conflicts between the kings of the south and of the north, Dan_11:5-20. The exploits of one of the latter princes, Dan_11:21-29; who, being checked in his progress by the ships of Chittim, shall turn his fury against the Holy Land, Dan_11:30-35. An impious tyranny set up, Dan_11:36-39. Events that shall take place in the latter times, Dan_11:40-45.

This first verse should have been the last verse of the tenth chapter, for it pertains to it; and the second verse of this chapter should have been the first; which neglect those who divided the Scripture into chapters have been found guilty of more than once.

Thus speaks the angel to Daniel; because Darius had the rule of Babylon by the consent of Cyrus, he settled the monarchy of the Medes and Persians upon the ruins of the Babylonian, for the verifying of prophecies, and for protection and preservation of the church.

Daniel 11:2

The truth: this is that thing which Daniel saith, Dan_10:1, was revealed unto him, and was true, i.e. plain, without any obscurity, and should suddenly and certainly come to pass.

There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; which notes their flourishing and strength; for after them that monarchy declined. These three are Cyrus, Smerdis, Darius Hystaspes. Others put Cambyses for Cyrus; others add Xerxes, who is added as the fourth in this same verse, and made more potent than all the other three, because his father Darius had gathered an incredible mass for him, and he also himself drove the same trade for six years together before he made his expedition against Greece. There were more kings of Persia besides those four, but they had no concern with the people of God; but those four had, either in hindering or helping the building of the temple, and therefore the angel's instructions from God to Daniel were principally touching those four who are mentioned.

The fourth shall be far richer than they all: he had vast territories from India to Ethiopia; he had a navy of one thousand two hundred ships, and an army of eight hundred thousand, as Ctesias writes, but Herodotus speaks of a prodigious army that Xerxes had little short of five millions and a half, (five millions two hundred and eighty-three thousand,) and all against the realm of Greece, where he made incredible havoc at Thermopyle and Athens, as the Greek and Latin histories mention.

Daniel 11:3

This was Alexander the Great, the he-goat, who, moved with choler for the Persian invasion, run down the ram and stamped on it, and got a golden fleece from him by that, and after many victories; afterward he did according to his will, even what he would without controlment, by any. See Dan_8:7,8.

Daniel 11:4

When he shall stand up; when he is come to his highest, as monarch of the world, &c. After he had enjoyed that title a little while, his kingdom was broken, as the text saith. So it was, into four pieces, whereof we have spoken, **Da 7 Da 8.**

Not to his posterity, but to four of his chief commanders, who should reign in the four quarters of the world, i.e. Alexander's conquest, though here he only mentions two of them, Egypt and Syria, i.e. the south and the north. Alexander had a brother, named Aridaeus, and two sons, Alexander and Hercules, besides others of his blood, but the nobles destroyed them all; and so the whole race of Alexander was rooted out to fulfil this prophecy; but judicially, for his great cruelty, pride, and luxury.

Nor according to his dominion; they did not reign as kings at first, but only as captains; and as to the extent of their dominion, it was far less than Alexander's, yea, all four fell short of his.

For others beside those; some lesser commanders shared several parts of that empire, as Eumenes, Philotes, with many more, at least ten; as histories tell us.

Daniel 11:5

This king was Ptolemy the son of Lagus, the first king of Egypt after Alexander, who is brought in because he took Jerusalem by treachery, for the angel minds only those persons and things

which related to the Jews, passing over many things that pertained not to them.

His dominion shall be a great dominion; his riches by land and sea, and his territory besides Egypt, that Theocritus takes notice of it in Idyllio, what this first Ptolemy, the father of Ptolemy Philadelphus, added, viz. Cyprus, Phoenicia, with many other countries, to Egypt, and left all to his son, with an incredible treasure and an invincible army.

One of his princes, i.e. either one of these Ptolemies, or Antiochus, or Nicanor, or Seleucus Nicanor, so called for his great victories, who overcame Demetrius, and added Asia to his empire; he overcame the king of Thrace, and a king of India, and built many cities; and Judea, lying in the midst of them, was much afflicted by him, and his antagonists and allies.

Daniel 11:6

They shall join themselves together, i.e. the successors of those first kings of Egypt and Syria shall join and make leagues. This confederacy was two several times: the first peace was concluded between Ptolemy Lagus and Antiochus Soter. The other (which is here meant) was between Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus Theus the son of Soter. So Junius and Polanus. The king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement; Bernice shall come from Egypt and marry with Antiochus Theus, who was the son of Antiochus Soter, and nephew to Seleucus Nicanor, for her father brought her to Pelusium with an infinite sum of gold and silver for her dowry. Here was nothing sincere on either side, for each gaped after the other's kingdom, and covered all with a league and a marriage; for Antiochus put away his lawful wife Laodice, by whom he had two children, that he might take her sister to wife. Thus sacred wedlock and leagues were violated.

But she shall not retain the power of the arm; she continued not in favour and authority, for Antiochus now put away Bernice, and took Laodice again.

Neither shall he stand, nor his arm; for she made away Antiochus by poison, and set up her son Seleucus Callinicus in his stead, who slew Bernice. From hence many cruel wars and

tragedies arose between those two kings. See here the miserable fates of wicked princes and courts, where their sinful politics most commonly end in their ruin; for so it did to these two families: which thing God by his angel instructs Daniel in, to inform and satisfy him about these wonderful providences relating to his church and their enemies.

Daniel 11:7

i.e. Of Bernice shall come Ptolemy Euergetes, who shall be king, and revenge the wrong done to his sister; for he invaded Syria, and took many strong holds, with a great part of Syria. And shall prevail, i.e. shall be conqueror, and destroy Callinicus with his mother, whose treachery was hereby repaid.

Daniel 11:8

With their precious vessels of silver and of gold; which with other vessels amounted to two thousand five hundred, among which were the images which Cambyses long before had carried out of Egypt into Persia; for which good act the Egyptians called this Ptolemy, Euergetes, the Benefactor.

He shall continue more years than the king of the north; he continued forty-six years, and had subdued all Seleucus's kingdom, had he not been recalled.

Daniel 11:9

So he did, with a booty of forty thousand talents of silver, without fear or danger.

Daniel 11:10

His sons shall be stirred up; he means the sons of the king of the north, i.e. Antiochus, and Seleucus Ceraunus, shall be incensed with the deeds of Ptolemy Euergetes, and his son Ptolemy Philopater.

One shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through; he means Antiochus the Great, because the other, viz. Seleucus Ceraunus, is taken off by poison at the beginning; he shall pass through Syria, and recover what the king of Egypt took from his father.

To his fortress, i.e. to the entering of Egypt Raphia, which was check to any irruptions from Arabia or Idumea, besides many

other places. The cause of which success was partly the Egyptian king's luxury, and the hatred his people had against him for his cruelty in slaying his father, mother, and sister; called Philopater ironically and reproachfully.

Daniel 11:11

Enraged by his losses, and the affronts put upon him, he fought with Antiochus, and slew ten thousand of his army, and took four thousand prisoners. So historians relate of it, Polybius and Strabo.

Daniel 11:12

He might have conquered and recovered all again, but he grew proud of his victory, and returned again to his luxury. Entering Judea he entered into the temple of God at Jerusalem and the holy place against the law; yet, though he

cast down many thousands, he was not strengthened by it.

Daniel 11:13

Antiochus the Great shall raise great forces, even from Babylon and Media; Philopater being dead, and Ptolemy Epiphanes his son yet a child, under whom Agathocles, a dissolute, proud person, hated of all, governed Egypt as his viceroy.

Daniel 11:14

i.e. Many of the Grecians, Arabians, Edomites, &c., and some add, many of the profane, apostate Jews, shall join with the rest for plunder and spoil, whereby they fulfil what was foretold of them by Moses and the prophets.

Daniel 11:15

Antiochus Epiphanes shall march on irresistibly and victoriously, besieging and taking fenced cities and strong holds, as Sidon, Samaria, &c., nor shall all the power of Egypt withstand him.

Daniel 11:16

He that cometh against him, i.e. Antiochus,

shall do after his own will, as he listeth, without control.

In the glorious land, i.e. Judea; the word may be rendered pleasant,

desirable, noble, Dan_8:9. Antiochus held all Judea, the Jews not opposing, and with the provision and product of it maintained his army. N̄ *Josephus* . And to win them to his side from the Egyptians, he gave them liberties, as to their religion, encouraging their sacrifices, and easing their taxes. For so Josephus translates hlk by teleioun, to consummate and make perfect, and not to consume, as some render it; and thus the LXX. likewise.

Daniel 11:17

He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom; he shall use all the force and fraud he can to master Egypt, and engross it to himself, because Ptolemy was then young, and not able to match him.

And upright ones with him, i.e. many of the religions Jews joined with him, Num_23:10, called righteous in opposition to the rest of his army, which was composed of idolaters, and a profane rabble of rude heathens.

He shall give him the daughter of women, i.e. Antiochus shall give Cleopatra his daughter, who was young, to young Ptolemy, called

the daughter of women for her beauty, and rare parts, which she afterwards discovered; and gave in dowry with her Coelosyria, Phoenice, and Judea, dividing the tribute and revenues between them.

But she shall not stand on his side: as Saul gave Michal to David to be a snare to her husband, to betray him and destroy him, but she stuck to her husband's interest, and not her father's.

Daniel 11:18

After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many, i.e. the isles and sea-coasts of that part of the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, as Cyprus, Rhodes, &c.; also Asia the Less with the Grecian coasts, for the Hebrews call countries bordering on the sea isles; particularly Greece and Italy. The meaning is, that this Antiochus craftily desisted for a time from his enterprise against Egypt, for fear of the Romans. and, dissembling with them both, presumed he should outwit them all, and therefore persuaded as many of the Greeks as he could to take part with him against the Romans, slighting and reviling them.

But a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease, i.e. a brave Roman ambassador, and commanders sent by the Roman senate, viz. Atilius, and chiefly Scipio, beat Antiochus at his own weapons of power and policy, and turned the reproach

upon his own head; for they fell upon him, because Ptolemy required help of them, who was besieged by Antiochus; they raised the siege, and recovered all that he had gotten from them; for the Romans were dexterous in protecting their allies, and in retorting indignities and affronts offered them by encroachers and oppressors.

Daniel 11:19

Being beaten in battle by Scipio, with thirty thousand Romans, he himself having seventy thousand, and rejecting the counsel of Hannibal, he yielded upon dishonourable terms to deliver his ships and elephants to the Romans, and all the places he had taken from them, which turned to his disgrace. Then he turned his face homeward, and was made to be content with the narrow limits of the remotest corner of his kingdom; and though he sported himself with his retirement, yet was he not in safety so, but was slain when he sought to enrich himself by the sacrilegious spoils of the temple. Thus Antiochus called Magnus came to nothing.

Daniel 11:20

This was Seleucus Philopater, a very covetous griper, who peeled his subjects; who being told by his friends this would alienate his friends from him, answered, Money was his best friend; and therefore spared not to rob the temple, for which cause he sent Heliodorus to rifle that treasury, /APC 2Ma_3:7, therefore said to raise taxes in the glory of his kingdom.

But within few days he shall be destroyed; for he lived not out the thirteenth part of his father's reign.

Neither in anger, nor in battle; not by open force, but by poison or secret wiles, and treachery of Heliodorus, as some write of him: the seed of evil-doers are never renowned, in life or death.

Daniel 11:21

Antiochus called Epiphanes, i.e. illustrious; thus he was called by his flatterers and admirers: but the people of God accounted him

contrary, i.e. infamous, base, treacherous, barbarous; such were his manners, and accordingly the angel calls him here a

vile person, the type of antichrist, Epimanes, a mad persecutor.

To whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom, i.e. neither peers nor people; nor was he the heir, but his nephew, or brother, Philopater's son, but he cheated him of the kingdom, and crept in by flatteries, i.e. he was a great flatterer of the Romans, as well as of his people, till he got up, and shut out Demetrius the son of Selencus; so vile a flatterer was he, that he would bathe in the same bath with mean people, to make them believe he was good-natured, and not proud. He soothed and courted the nobles with much kindness and presents, and said he was but guardian to his brother's son the heir, till he destroyed him.

Daniel 11:22

They shall be overflown, i.e. the Egyptian force near Pelusium, where they fell by the power of Antiochus, with a great slaughter; and it was near the river Nilus, to which the Holy Ghost alludes here by the phrase,

arms of a flood.

The prince of the covenant, i.e. the high priest with his place and honour, for he put out Onias, and set up in his stead Jason his brother, ambitious of that honour. Thus he opposed the people and worship of God with the same stratagems as he did the king of Egypt.

Daniel 11:23

For he made a league with Egypt, and came with a few in comparison, (but they were chosen men,) and he took the passes, and set garrisons, and put all in subjection to him.

Daniel 11:24

He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; he shall come in upon the Egyptians under pretence of peace, and in time of peace, to a secure people in a plentiful and delicious country, and among a mass of treasures which the kings successively had heaped up, the greatest part of which this Antiochus took and distributed among his chiefest confidants,

whereby he obliged them the faster to him, for he was large-hearted and liberal. He did herein (saith the text.)

what his fathers had not done, the kings of Syria before him could never attain to this success over Egypt. as he did.

He shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, i.e. having succeeded thus far in the lesser places of the country, he shall proceed to the most important cities and places of greatest strength in that kingdom. Even for a time; that is, till God put a stop to his career; for he held Egypt not long, the Egyptians found means to deliver themselves from his yoke when their king grew to riper years; yet against this did Antiochus forecast his devices, as saith the text.

Daniel 11:25

Antiochus Epiphanes, being imboldened by his former successes, shall wage war against Ptolemy king of Egypt, with all his might, and with open force.

And the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle; being exasperated against Antiochus.

But he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him: he might have prospered, if he had not been betrayed by Eulaius, Leneus, and the rest of his nobles, being corrupted by Antiochus.

Daniel 11:26

His most familiar friends and confidants shall be false and treacherous to him, for he shall be overthrown with a great slaughter, as when Nilus overflows the country, for there was the battle, between Mount Casius and Pelusium.

Daniel 11:27

They shall speak lies at one table; they shall meet under pretence of peace, but with treacherous intents on both sides; they both played the gipsies with each other at Memphis, where Ptolemy invited Antiochus to a feast. These interviews of neighbour kings jealous one of another have ever proved fatal, though under the smoothest pro. raises.

But it shall not prosper; for neither shall Antiochus gain Egypt by all his artifice, nor Ptolemy Syria.

At the time appointed, viz. by the Lord, whose purpose and counsel shall stand, whatever the devices of men's hearts are.

Daniel 11:28

Antiochus shall depart with his booty gotten in Egypt into his kingdom of Syria, and be content with the bounds of that, leaving Egypt behind him.

And his heart shall be against the holy covenant; against the law and covenant of God, with the people that worshipped God according to his rule and will. He shall do exploits, and return to his own land; he shall greatly afflict and vex the people of God; yet was it a mercy they had this warning of this sore trial. Antiochus was a fit instrument of the devil for this work, being rich and proud, and thought he might take this in his way: God permitting this horn to push and gore, for his people's sins, and for a preparation to his own ruin.

Daniel 11:29

Come toward the south, i.e. Egypt, to fight against Ptolemy and his wife Cleopatra, sister to Antiochus.

But it shall not be as the former, or as the latter; this shall not be so prosperous as the two former expeditions, but shall fail of his victory and booty.

Daniel 11:30

The ships of Chittim shall come against him, i.e. the Romans out of Italy, and parts of the Archipelago, under them, shall come with force, and they shall vex and afflict him; for the Romans had harbours for their ships and galleys in Cilicia, Macedonia, and other parts of those coasts; whereby, after they had subdued Greece, they pursued Antiochus in Asia, and sent into Egypt to prevent his going into Alexandria. Ñ *Liv. l. 45*. This grieved and fretted him; for when he lingered and framed excuses, Popilius the Roman ambassador made a circle about him with his rod, commanding he should not stir thence till he gave him a positive present answer, by which, sore against his will, he was fain to pack away out of Egypt, and withdraw his garrisons and navy thence. This made his heart boil with rancour, which he spit out all against the Jews; therefore it is said,

he shall be grieved and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant; especially being solicited to it by Jason first, and Menelaus after, who were apostates, and betrayers of their brethren, and the true worship of God, /APC 2Ma 4:26,27, &c. Because Onias was in power, this they envied, therefore went to Antiochus.

Daniel 11:31

Arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, i.e. Antiochus shall come with armed power to assist the deserters, and force the faithful Jews by his garrisons.

Shall take away the daily sacrifice; for he polluted the sanctuary by taking away the holy vessels, and forbidding the public worship; but he added a third pollution, by setting up in the temple the

abomination of desolation, i.e. the abominable idol of Jupiter Olympius, with many more, /APC 1Ma_1:21-23,**41**, to the end; /APC 2Mac v. 24.

Daniel 11:32

By gifts, preferments, and promises he drew away great multitudes of this wretched people of Judea, always bent to backsliding, to his idolatrous and heathenish practices and interest: but they that adhere to the true worship of God, and are zealous for it, shall scorn Antiochus's gifts, and abhor his ways, and defy his force, not loving their lives to the death; as you have many instances, /APC 1Ma_1:62,**63**; /APC 2Mac **5\$ 6\$ 7\$ 8\$**; and also how Judas Maccabeus and his few followers did exploits against Nicanor and others.

Daniel 11:33

Such as Eleazar, that old scribe, /APC 2Ma_6:18, and some others learned in the laws of God, and holy in heart and life, shall instruct many in the righteous ways of God, and retain them from apostacy when others fall off: yet many of the people shall fall, yea, of their pious and learned teachers, as well as their disciples, /APC 1Ma_1:52,**56**; 2Mac **6**

Daniel 11:34

i.e. God in their affliction, when it is great, wherein he never leaves himself without witness, shall raise up some succour, to be witnesses to this truth, to vindicate his honour and save his people from utter destruction, viz. by the Maccabees. Read what Mattathias and his sons did at Modin, /**APC 1Mac 2**, read the chapter, who would not be flattered out of their religion.

Daniel 11:35

To try them: we see hereby that the best of men have some dross, which makes afflictions, yea, fiery trials, necessary for them, for the word signifies all kind of examination and trials, either as founders try metals to purge them, or as corn is winnowed to cleanse it from chaff, or as fullers that wash and scour to take out spots, Mal_3:1-3.

Even to the time of the end: now mark here the Spirit of God seems to slide into the Roman monarchy, for this began in the reign of Antiochus, so that he did begin that which the Romans afterward in process of time acted more highly against the Jews and Christians too. For Antiochus is made by all a type of antichrist; as Maldonate confesseth. And thus you find the prophets, and our Saviour too. David brings in Christ; Psa_72:8, when the rest is spoken of Solomon. So **Psa 16 Isa 49 Isa 44 Isa 60**. So our Saviour, speaking of the temple, speaks with it of the end of the word. And thus the end of this chapter is clearly of antichrist, and this prophecy of Daniel cads with the world's end. Therefore Antiochus is a type of antichrist, in his pride, covetousness, craft, and cruelty against the people of God, and blasphemies and idolatries to the reproach of Christ. Therefore it is here added,

because it is yet for a time appointed.

Daniel 11:36

The king, i.e. the Roman government, whether by the senate, or by emperors, or by the bishop of Rome, who shall shove out the imperial power not only from Rome, but from Italy and all the western empire, as far as he could, by striking in with the barbarous nations that invaded it, who are called ten kings. Read for all this Rev_17:10-13, as all the seven or eight governments of

Rome are called horns, and the horns kings, Dan_11:10,11. The sum is this: Though it is granted some of these things are applicable to Antiochus, yet the angel speaks of him here and henceforward but by the by and very lightly; his main scope is antichrist, as will appear in the interpretation.

Shall do according to his will; Antiochus did according to his will: he shall be arbitrary in his actions, notwithstanding any checks of Divine and human laws: the cause follows.

Shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods: this is true of the Romans, who would defy what they please, and defy it or ungod it; most true of the persecutors of Christ and Christians in the time of the emperors, but most notoriously of the Roman antichrist. See how this agrees with that prophecy, 2Th_2:3-10 Rev_17:3.

And shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; then shall antichrist continue long and prevail; read for this, **Re 13**.

For that that is determined shall be done; that which God hath decreed to be done by him against the saints shall be done, and that which God hath purposed to be done upon him shall be executed also to his destruction.

Daniel 11:37

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers; he shall so far degenerate from the rule of Christ, and from primitive Christianity, that he shall be the head of that apostacy, 1Ti_4:1 2Th_2:3: mark those places, the first whereof is so fully opened by Mr. Joseph Mede in his Doctrine of Demons. The other by Bishop Jewel in his comment on that place.

Nor the desire of women, i.e. the desire of wiving, i.e. forbidding to marry, forbidding priests marriage.

Daniel 11:38

He shall honour the god of forces; Mauzzim, of strengths or strong holds. The Phoenicians worshipped Mars the God of wars, which Antiochus did worship; but we are come to the Romans; and though many have conjectured several senses of this Mynem translated god of forces, yet none comes nearer than Mr. Mede, who interprets it of demons, or tutelar gods, which the Romans

should worship with Christ, supposing them to be angels or saints. This is not to be thought a novel opinion, for many of the fathers say that this Mauzzim is the idol that antichrist should worship. So the meaning is, that in Christ's seat, or place, the temple, they should worship saints and angels with Christ, as the preposition imports, together with Christ; which it is notorious they do. That which, made this place obscure was, that men generally took this strange god for an idol, which indeed the Jews call the Gentiles' gods, and so doth the Old Testament often, because foreign to the true God, which was their God; but the true God was foreign and strange to the Romans, because their gods were idols. Therefore the philosophers called Christ Xenon daimonion, a strange god. This god they should

honour with gold, and silver, and precious stones. The Vulgate translates *Mauzzim, protector*, and we know too well how the Romanists adorn the churches and shrines of these their patrons and tutelar saints, Psa_27:1 **28:8 31:3**. And the fathers sometimes fatally hit upon this expression at the first setting and honouring of martyrs, calling them strong holds, and strong towers of defence; but the Council Of Constantinople called them the devil's strong holds; thus they called their images also.

Daniel 11:39

A confirmation and ingemination of what he said before, he shall use all art and authority to propagate this idolatrous worship. We have laid by the interpretation of these things of Antiochus, though Polanus, Junius, and others apply all to him; but the angel speaks of the Romans, and it is plainly verified of antichrist, who did not only take upon him to dispose of kingdoms and provinces by usurped power, for his profit, drawing incredible masses of money from them, but upon a pretended religious account appointing tutelar saints over them.

Daniel 11:40

At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; in the last times, towards the end of the world, for it cannot be true of Antiochus, who died the eleventh year of his reign, and these things are joined to the last resurrection Dan_12:2. Therefore some understand the Turk and Saracen, who is without the church, as antichrist before mentioned sat in the temple; he extending his

dominions into Asia and Africa, will be a great stop to antichrist's proceedings and encroachments.

The king of the north shall come, & c., i.e. The Turk from the north shall invade, and run down the Saracen. Ñ *Mede* .

Daniel 11:41

When the Turk should subdue Judea, those people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon shall be left, because all along to this day these Arabians live partly by robberies, and partly by Turkish salaries to secure their caravans; these shall live, and not be overthrown by Mahometans.

Daniel 11:42

Though Egypt (and the adjacent countries) long stood out under the Mamelukes, yet was forced to submit to the Ottoman, anno 1517.

Daniel 11:43

i.e. The parts westward from Egypt along the Barbary coast, and Ethiopia, not the Abyssines, but Arabia.

Daniel 11:44

The Christian princes of the north, and the dispersed Israelites, and the Jews carried captive into the north, Jer_16:14,**15**, called also kings of the east, shall come and trouble him, and all his power shall not be able to withstand. See Rev_16:12.

Daniel 11:45

Between the seas; the Euxine and Mediterranean. at Constantinople, and even to the Red Sea;

in the glorious holy mountain, in the church of Christ eastern: so the Turk. Or in the western seas, the Mediterranean and Adriatic: so the pope, reaching to the western ocean. Both antichrists, one without, and the other within the temple of God.

Daniel 12:1 DANIEL CHAPTER 12

Michael shall deliver Israel out of trouble: the general resurrection and recompence of the just and unjust, Dan_12:1-4. Daniel heareth the times, but understandeth not: he is bid to wait the end, which shall be in his favour, Dan_12:5-13.

Many interpret this of the heat of Antiochus's persecution, but their arguments are not cogent; but the meaning is this, as after the death of Antiochus the Jews had some deliverance and respite, so there will be yet a more famous deliverance to the people of God when Michael your prince, i.e. Messiah the Prince, shall signally appear for your salvation. He is called

the great Prince; but these words in their contexture refer not to the times of Antiochus, but to antichrist, and to that part of them which are the last part. Yet I think the truest meaning is to interpret these words, at that time, of all the time of Christ, from his first coming to the last. These all are the last times wherein God spake to us by his Son, Heb_1:1-3, to which Michael answers well, i.e. who is like God, which notes his equality with God, Phi_2:6. It was necessary Christ should now appear as a

Prince to comfort his people against the oppression of Herod and the Romans, by bringing in a glorious salvation, which should wholly free the elect Israel of God from the Roman yoke, both under the persecuting emperors and under antichrist.

Every one that shall be found written in the book: thus this election is called by a metaphor usual in Scripture, and drawn from the usage of men in many cases, namely, writing some select men's names in a book; showing that this salvation shall not be national neither to Jews nor any Gentile nation, but only a gathering together of the elect of God which are scattered abroad, called therefore a remnant, **Ro 9**.

Daniel 12 2

So enamoured are some of their notions, though found false and ill-grounded, that they will pertinaciously hold them, and seek still to prove one absurdity from another, as Grotius doth here, still expounding all of Antiochus, and so makes this resurrection metaphorical, and not the real ultimate one; whereas the most learned Jews themselves are against him, as the late Manasseh Ben Israel in his book de Resurrectione.

Daniel 12:3

Here the faithful are called wise, i. e. *to salvation*, and so these two members include teachers, and disciples that are truly taught the way of salvation, i.e. such as are taught of God to learn Christ

as the truth is in Jesus, Joh_6:45 Eph_4:21. They that teach true justification by the *righteousness of Christ* , imputed to faith, which is the sum of the gospel, and express it by righteous walking, they shall have high degrees of glory. By being diligent and faithful instruments in the Lord's hand, by the word of God, and a holy example of the conversion of souls from an evil state, from an evil heart, and from an evil life unto God, they shall shine, not in fame for a long time, as Grotius lamely renders it, but for ever and ever in heavenly glory, as the words import.

Daniel 12:4

Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: by these words the angel doth not forbid all knowledge of the things here foretold, for

whatsoever is written is written for our learning; but the meaning is,

1. That Daniel must take notice of the special favour of God to him to make so great discoveries of the Divine secrets.
2. That they were intrusted with him to see the force and fruit of his humiliation and fervent prayer.
3. That he should support, and lay up these things for the support of the godly in their future deep afflictions.
4. That God would never utterly forsake his people, though their sins justly provoked his heavy hand upon them.
5. That these things be kept from the profane, who would make an evil' use of them.
6. The book was commanded to be sealed, because it would be long ere the words would be all fulfilled, whereas those that were shortly to be fulfilled were forbidden to be sealed: see 2Ch_21:12 Isa_8:16 Rev_22:10. *Many shall run to and fro* ; they shall diligently inquire and search these prophecies concerning the fates of the church, and shall see and admire both the prescience and providence of God concerning things to come; they shall know signs of the times, and wait upon God in the way of his judgments: see Psa_77:5-7 Isa_26:8 1Pe_1:10-12. The miserable Jews pervert this scripture, and forbid the people by dire threatenings to calculate times, namely, lest they find thereby that

Jesus Christ is the true Messiah. Thus are they wilfully and judicially blinded, Act_28:26 Rom_11:8. And knowledge shall be increased; he means chiefly in gospel times, which came by the preaching of Christ and searching the Scriptures about it.

Daniel 12:5

Two angels, waiting and ministering on Christ to observe his commands, by the banks of the river Tigris or Hiddekel, where this new vision was.

Daniel 12:6

To the man clothed in linen; to Michael, Dan_10:5; Christ, who seemed to stand between the banks, i.e. in the air above the waters, or upon them, Mat_14:25; upon many people, say some, Rev_10:2.

How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? the angels themselves inquire into these things, for they do not know all, yea, they are ignorant of many things, Mat_24:36 Eph_3:10.

Daniel 12:7

He held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven: here he calls God to witness the truth of this thing: many reasons are given by sundry expositors of it why he held up both hands to heaven.

1. For the more sure and solemn confirmation of it.
2. To denote the unchangeableness of God's decrees, both for good to the church, and for evil to her enemies.

By him that liveth for ever; by God the Father, and by the Deity, which was himself, that liveth for ever, to show the eternal God only knew that decreed it, and would bring it to pass; that he only is master of the times, Act_1:7.

It shall be for a time, times, and an half; it shall be for a long time, and yet a definite time. Some will have all this to be and end in Antiochus's time, but we have proved before that this is a great mistake, and the text and this chapter disprove that conceit.

When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished; which reacheth to the calling of the Jews upon the destruction of antichrist, for till he

be down the church will suffer and will not be up, which will fall out upon the pouring out the sixth vial and after, Rev_16:12, &c., and the seventh vial, then all is finished, Rev_16:17: see also **2Th 2 3**. The judgment of Christ will not come till the man of sin come and fall.

Daniel 12:8

i.e. What is the meaning of all this, of the

times, time, and half, when they begin and end; and when the enemies of the churches, and the sufferings of the church, shall have their end.

Daniel 12:9

They shall not be clearly understood till the event make them good: see Dan_12:4, and Dan_8:26. God is choice in keeping the keys of time at his own girdle, Act_1:7.

Daniel 12:10

Of this purging and purifying you heard before, Dan_11:35; the meaning is, the great afflictions of the church are to prepare them, by taking away their filth, for the Bridegroom, as gold and silver are tried and refined.

None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand: they shall be blinded, they know not what they do, viz. they shall not be bettered by the word, or rod, or any warnings of God, but be hardened to their ruin; but the godly shall be taught of God to understand the ways of God's providence, foretold by the prophets, for this is it they are always minded of and commended for; particularly in this kind of wisdom:

1. Because it is obscure.

2. Because they are concerned greatly to know their safety, and God's honour lies in it.

Daniel 12:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Daniel 12:12

These days are either,

1. Natural days, and properly so called, and so the times of Antiochus are hereby noted. Or,

2. Prophetical days, a day for a year, Eze_4:6; and thus one thousand two hundred and ninety days is forty-two months, which if we multiply at thirty days the month make the sum one thousand two hundred and ninety. Here many learned expositors fall in together to that opinion of calculating these years by days, beginning the one thousand two hundred and ninety days from the profaning of the temple to the letter of king Antiochus to the Jews, /APC 2Ma_11:27, and so make them to end exactly then: and concerning the abomination of desolation, whereof see what is said Dan_7:25 **8:14 9:25**, being the epoch from Apollonius's coming, who was called the prince of abominations, or from the worship of God forbidden by Antiochus, and at last restored by Judas Maccabeus, and confirmed by Antiochus, from thence to the death of Antiochus are fortyfive days, which added to one thousand two hundred and ninety make one thousand three hundred and thirty-five; but this is a false account, and contrary to the scope of this place, and to history and chronology, which the learned Joseph Mede hath proved at large, Lib. Oper. III. p. 882. The Jews make these days, i.e. years, to end at the coming of Christ, but uncertainly when to begin their reckoning, but have been often and grossly deceived. Sound Christians refer it to the second coming of Christ. Mr. Mede makes the chief revelation of antichrist to be in 1123. The latter number of one thousand three hundred and thirty-five ends in *anno Christi* 1168; and so the type of antichrist, which is Antiochus Epiphanes, leads us by the hand to the revelation of antichrist, which fell out *anno 1106 to anno 1120* ; between which time the papal power was highly mounted, the church greatly persecuted, after that great numbers of them had separated from the abominations of Rome, openly declaring it to be antichristian. Therefore the angel saith, the saints by their trials

shall be purified and made white, that is, by those cruel persecutions which befell them, from their ignorant and enraged enemies, who went on to do wickedly and did not understand. How this is further cleared, and why the angel makes use of the Roman supputation in this case, namely, by indications, and how it answers and resolves the case, see in the forecited author.

Daniel 12:13

I have revealed to thee of these things what I had in commission, that thou and thy people should be prepared for the sufferings which will come upon them, and yet not without hope of a glorious deliverance. In which hope thou shalt die, and rest from fear or feeling of trouble, till the resurrection of the just to the joys of another world: which some make to be here after all enemies are destroyed, at least to begin here, and to be consummated in heaven eternally, comparing this with Rev_19:20,21.

HOSEA

THE ARGUMENT

Without dispute our prophet is one of the obscurest and most difficult to unfold clearly and fully. Though he come not, as Isaiah and Amos do sometimes, nor as Ezekiel and Zechariah do frequently, with visions; yet his sententious and concise style, peculiar to himself, renders it many times difficult to find out first, and to declare next the genuine and undoubted sense of his words. In expounding this prophet, the expositor needs the candour of his reader, and the reader owes his expositor thanks if he make some darker passages fairly intelligible, though he do not demonstrate his exposition to be the only sense of the place. This latter is not pretended to; the former it is hoped the reader will find in the most, if not in every obscure passage. It was a very debauched age our prophet did live in, and you will find him very sharp against the vices of the ten tribes, and very plain and open in his threats for their sins, which he saw punished; for he lived to see Samaria taken, and Hoshea made a prisoner, and the people carried captives. As it is not agreed when he began, so nor is it agreed how long he continued to prophesy.

The kings of Judah and of Israel, in whose time he first appeared a prophet, were of long reigns; the one forty-one, the other fifty-two; in which long space of time very different beginnings may be conjectured. All agree that he continued a prophet very long, seventy years at least, and some add more years, and make them up ninety. The sum of what he prophesied is here given us in short heads, rather than in a continued discourse. And as it was preached in Israel. (though we read not of the places where Hosea either lived, or died, or did preach, it is most likely within the hearing of the court,) so it doth more particularly refer to Israel or the ten tribes: declaring to them what were their sins; advising them to repent; promising them mercy upon sincere repentance; threatening grievous judgments on their impenitence; foretelling their rejection if they did not amend; and, for the comfort of the godly, predicting mercy to them; intermixing many promises of the future kingdom and coming of the Messiah, to whom many should be converted, and by him be saved, and especially many of

the two tribes, who hear from our prophet a more comfortable message (viz. of returning to their own land) than Israel, which must not expect any such return, i.e. for the whole body of the people. And he closeth his whole prophecy either with a form of confession and supplication for the remnant returned, or a prediction in what manner they would return, confess, supplicate, and rely upon God alone; to which duty performed, he adjoineth sweet and excellent promises, containing both temporal and spiritual blessings, **#Ho 14**.

HOSEA CHAPTER 1

The times in which Hosea prophesied, **#Ho 1:1**. To show the idolatrous whoredoms of the land, he marrieth a wife of whoredom, and hath by her Jezreel, **#Ho 1:2-5**, Lo-ruhamah, **#Ho 1:6,7**, and Lo-ammi, **#Ho 1:8,9**. The restoration of Judah and Israel under one head, **#Ho 1:10,11**.

Ver. 1.

The word, or the command, and the thing commanded; or the prediction expressed in the very words God suggested by his Spirit to the prophet, and the things too which are now foretold; for holy men of God spake as they were moved, &c., **#2Pe 1:21**, and the things that were shortly to come to pass were revealed also, in the words of **#Re 1:1**. Hosea shows the things, and speaks them in words which God hath suggested to him.

The Lord; *the Eternal*, as the French, Jehovah, Heb., which expreseth the eternity and infinite being of our God, together with his sovereignty and absolute authority over all. This is expressly added, to give warning to the prophet, to command audience, attention, reverence, and submission in the hearers, and to intimate to them the certainty of execution if they repent not, and the certainty of performance of promise if they believe; for it is Jehovah who changeth not that speakest both.

Came to Hosea; or was with him; as it came to him, so it did abide with him, made a deep impression upon his mind. Prophets were too backward, rather than overforward, to publish sad tidings to sinning people. Moses was unwilling to go to Pharaoh; Jeremiah pent up the word till it grew like fire in his bowels, too

hot, and he could have no ease till he gave it vent. It is not unlikely the prophet Hosea intimates by this expression some such effect the word of God had on him; he was full of the prophetic Spirit, its motions were ever with him, and stirring within him.

Hosea; a name that carrieth most comfortable news in the letter and signification of it, being the same with Joshua or Jesus; and his word or message from God to the good was comfortable, it was assurance both of preservation and salvation, as will appear in process of his prophecy.

The son of Beeri: though some would have this Beeri to be the same with Beerah, #1Ch 5:6, it hath no probability, the names being different; beside that Beerah was carried captive by Tilgath-pilneser, and it is probable his family was carried away with him; or if Hosea had escaped his father's mishap, he would have given us at least some ground to believe by his words that he resented the unhappiness of his family in that respect; but we know the name of the prophet's father, we know not his tribe or country, or of what quality he was, where he lived, or when he died.

In the days, i.e. during the reign, in the times; it is a Scripture expression of times.

Of Uzziah, called Azariah, #2Ki 14:21, and

Ozias, #Mt 1:8; the beginning of whose reign is very variously guessed at, and after all is left uncertain; but this is clear, that Jeroboam was contemporary with Uzziah, who began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam: reckoning thence to the forty-first year of his reign, which was the last of Jeroboam, there will be fourteen years of Uzziah's reign in which Hosea prophesied; but if there was (as for aught I find there might be) some years of viceroyship in which Amaziah reigned with his father Joash, and the like between Jeroboam and his father, then a longer synchronism ariseth between Uzziah and Jeroboam, and a larger space of time for Hosea to prophesy in their days, which I search not into. Jotham; who succeeded Uzziah as governor, and judged the people while Uzziah, being a leper, was, according to the law, retired from conversing with men, and dwelt in a separate house, but retained the royal title and authority; but it is uncertain how many years this was. Some say fifteen years, others say four

years (for we read, **#2Ki 15:33**, that he reigned sixteen years; and in **#2Ki 15:30** we have his twentieth year. Now the four here mentioned seem to be those years of his viceroyship, or government for Uzziah); yet others say his governor's power was of shorter date, and that Uzziah was struck with the plague of leprosy in the last year of his age and reign. This seems scarce consistent with the report of Jotham's being over the house of the king, judging the people; and the leper king dwelling in a separate house till the day of his death, **#2Ki 15:5 2Ch 26:21**. They mistake, I think, who place this stroke of leprosy so late; and they do as much mistake who place it at the twenty-fifth of Uzziah, and make him a leper and seclude him twenty-seven years. Jotham hath the character of a good king, **#1Ch 27:2,6**; but he could not make his subjects good, **#2Ch 27:2**. Ahaz; the worst son of a good father, yet the father of one of the best of kings. He sinned more in his distress, **#2Ch 28:22**, and hastened God's judgments on him and his. Hezekiah; who reformed Judah, and walked so with God, that above any of the kings of Judah he was protected and rescued by the immediate hand of Heaven. How long Hosea prophesied in this king's reign appears not; but that he did prophesy a great while is most apparent, whether fifty, or sixty-five, or seventy, or seventy-five, or ninety years, which different computations have some to assert them, I determine not. Jeroboam; the great-grandson of Jehu, of whose greatness and sins you read **#2Ki 14:24,25**; he was of the religion of Jeroboam son of Nebat.

Joash; whose story you meet with **#2Ki 13:10**: though a great idolater, and reprov'd for it no doubt by Elisha, yet he gave a visit to the dying prophet, and with tears bewail'd the public loss by Elisha's death, and by the prophet had a legacy given him, three victories over the Syrians; and more they should have been, had not Joash been sparing too much to his own great loss. I remember not any single visit so nobly and magnificently repaid.

Israel; kingdom of the ten tribes, contradistinguished to Judah. By this then it appears Hosea was sent to prophesy against the sins of Israel, or the ten tribes, as well as against the sins of Judah; against Israel he prophesied during Jeroboam's times, (and afterward left them to their obstinacy,) but he continued to prophesy to Judah until his death.

Ver. 2.

The beginning of the word of the Lord: this, say some, gives Hosea the precedence of all the prophets, which perhaps may be allowed to him among all the prophets that have written distinct books of their prophecies, but simply first of all the prophets he was not; in David's and Solomon's times we meet with Nathan and Ahijah the Shilonite. Or this

beginning may be, as our ordinary phrase, so soon as God spake, or at the very first of God's speaking, to Hosea, he commanded him to take such a wife, &c.

The Lord: see #Ho 2:1.

By Hosea; in Hosea; denoting the impulse of the Spirit of prophecy, the internal motions and influence of the Spirit in the prophet: see #Ho 1:1.

The Lord said; directed and commanded him: this was warrant to him, doing which otherwise was unseemly for a prophet to have done. Go,

take unto thee: this was, say some, done in vision, and was to be told to the people as other visions were: it was parabolically proposed to them, and this might be sufficient to convince the Jews, would they have considered it well, as David considered Nathan's parable. Others say it was really acted, and that the prophet did, as commanded, marry one who had been a strumpet, or that proved to be so after she was married. And though this would have been unseemly in the prophet, had he done it without this particular direction, now the scandal ceaseth, and it is very fit God be obeyed, and the prophet may with credit enough do what God had by his command made a necessary duty to him, and marry one known to be a lewd whore.

A wife of whoredoms; an openly noted whore, a notorious one, so the Hebrew phrase,

wife of whoredoms, as, a man of bloods, or man of sorrows; a woman of many whoredoms, and very lively emblem of idolatrous Israel.

Children of whoredoms; either that, born of such a mother, are, as she, addicted to lewdness; or else, with the mother made his

wife, he is to receive and maintain the children she had by her adulterers. And thus understood, it may lead our thoughts to God's rich mercy towards their ancestors, who were (Abraham himself not excepted) idolaters, when they dwelt on the other side the river, #Jos 24:2,3: yet God took them, and married them to himself, and did show wonderful kindness to them and theirs; all which is slighted and forgotten by their posterity, by you, O idolatrous Israelites! Or it may refer more expressly to what God did for Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt, and made covenant with them in Horeb, which was as a solemn espousing them to God. The Lord found them tainted with Egyptian idolatries, yet, as the prophet here, married them to himself, and covenanted with them to be faithful to him, but they broke the covenant.

The land, i.e. the people of the land, intimating the universal spreading of this sin, all, or most of all, so infected.

Hath committed great whoredom: the phrase, Heb. *playing the harlot hath played the harlot*, speaks the continuance of this idolatry among them, as well as the greatness of the whoredom. From their forefathers they had been idolaters; while God was giving them his law (from the nuptial day to Hosea's time) they committed spiritual whoredom, and first made, next worshipped, the golden calf.

Departing from the Lord; so they left their first Husband, and doted on adulterers, on idols, as #Ho 2:5.

Ver. 3.

So he went and took Gomer; as commanded, so he did, whether you take it parabolically or literally. If you take it literally, this Gomer will be some known harlot, and perhaps she was famous for her beauty, and skill in the courtesan's art, as her name may import. If you take it as a parable, we must take this name for a made name, assumed for its signification; both in the best sense Israel was perfect with the perfection which God did put upon her, #Eze 16:14, he made her

Gomer; and in the worst sense she made herself *Gomer*, one who was drawing to her end, who had undone and consumed herself; thus the word, #Ps 12:1; and so, in one word, God's bounty and

mercy, and Israel's ingratitude and sin, is set forth, together with her punishment hastening upon her.

The daughter of Diblaim: literally understood, this Diblaim must be either father or mother of this Gomer, or else the name of the place where she was born. Parabolically understood, Diblaim, *bunches of dried figs*, may imply the deliciousness of her provision made of God, such as was made for great feasts, #1Sa 25:18; so #1Ch 12:40: thus it will suit #Ho 2:5,9, and the places where the fig is mentioned as fruit with which God had blessed Israel. All which abused to luxury and sin, will now make her a daughter of Diblaim, of wilderness, desolate.

Bare him a son: this seems to favour the literal acceptance of all this as really done, and not only as represented in vision, parable, or hieroglyphic. But while either way it will be well applied to the purpose in hand, I shall leave it to the choice of every judicious reader to interpret and apply as best likes him.

Ver. 4.

And the Lord said unto him, Hosea the prophet, who as in taking to wife an adulteress, so in giving name' to his son by her, was to presignify Israel's future calamities. Call his name, thy son now born,

Jezreel: the word is, *The seed of the Lord*, or, *The arm of the Lord*, or, *The Lord will scatter*; so it may insinuate that God by his own arm will scatter among the people, i.e. the Assyrians, those who were his people or seed. But we have a surer guide to lead us through this, i.e. the history of what was by Jehu done in Jezreel; of which more presently.

For; this is the reason why the prophet's son is so called.

Yet a little while: it was four generations of Jehu God promised the throne to, and now the third that is now running, how near to an end we know not, but are sure it was within twenty-eight years; for Jeroboam began his reign in the fifteenth of Amaziah, and so thirteen years of his forty-one are spent ere Uzziah comes to the throne, #2Ki 14:23; this according to one account: but #2Ki 15:1 accounteth Jeroboam's twenty-seventh to be the first of Uzziah, and then there are not above fourteen years to come; so little a while was this here spoken of, for in six months after Jeroboam's

death Shallum conspired against Zachariah, and slew him, and reigned a month; so Jehu's seed was cast out of the throne.

Will avenge; inquire after and punish these crimes, which were committed in Jezreel. Heb. *I will visit*, i.e. as a just and impartial judge I will require an account, and execute punishments.

The blood: murders committed are in Scripture expressed thus by blood: here are particularly meant the slaughters made by Jehu's hand or by his order, #2Ki 9:10,11 10:1-7, in Jezreel, where he did with a treacherous mind, and aiming at his own greatness, destroy Ahab's house, and slew Ahaziah king of Judah also. This was the just judgment of God upon that wicked house by Jehu executed, but he did it not with that mind God required.

Of Jezreel; the town which Ahab chose above others to dwell in, where the dogs licked up Ahab's blood, when his chariot was washed and cleansed of the blood of that slain king, and where dogs did eat Jezebel, as the prophet threatened, #1Ki 21:23.

Upon the house of Jehu; which had now possessed the throne (Jehu usurped) through the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam; but the usurper and his successors adhering to the idolatry of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and adding other sins to it, had now provoked God to declare a sudden extirpation of the family, which God will in his just revenge make as like to Jeroboam's family as Ahab's, and they had made themselves like them in sin; all which came to pass when Shallum, conspiring against Zachariah, slew him, #2Ki 15:10. *And will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel;* not immediately, but soon after the death of Zachariah, the kingdom of Israel did cease first to be free, for Menahem made it tributary to strengthen himself; so it is likely it continued for ten years during his life, and two years during his son Pekahiah's reign; after him Pekah the conspirator and murderer usurped the throne for twenty years, and probably was feudatory to Tiglath-pileser; to be sure Hoses was so, and in his ninth year this word was fulfilled in the letter of it, the kingdom of Israel, after one and forty years' tottering, fell to utter ruin, and hath so continued to this day. Israel, or the ten tribes divided from the house of David.

Ver. 5.

It shall come to pass; most certainly this shall be effected.

At that day; when my vengeance hath overtaken the house of Jehu, when his great-great-grandson shall be slain. I will break; weaken, and by degrees quite break, i.e. by the conspiracies, seditions, and civil wars which will arise among themselves.

The bow: this was a warlike weapon they much used and were skilful in; this one weapon put for all their warlike provision, power, and skill; possibly it may allude to the bow of Jehu, who slew Joram with an arrow, and usurped his throne, but now the bow of the house of Jehu and of Israel shall be broken.

Of Israel: see #Ho 1:4.

In the valley of Jezreel: next to Samaria, Jezreel was chief city of the ten tribes, a very strong and fortified town, and both situated in the large and pleasant valley that hath from Joshua's time been known by this name, valley of Jezreel, #Jos 17:16. In this valley it is probable the bloodiest battles in the civil wars were fought, between Zachariah and Shallum, #2Ki 15:10, and between Shallum and Menahem, #2Ki 15:14; between Pekahiah and Pekah, #2Ki 15:25, and Pekah and Hoshea; the reason whereof probably might be this, because whoever carried the victory in this place were soon masters of Samaria and Jezreel, and consequently carried the kingdom too.

Ver. 6.

And she, Gomer, the hieroglyphic wife, who was to be a sign to Israel,

conceived again, whether visionary or really it comes to one, and bare a daughter; which is to be a sign too, as was her mother. It is too nice which Ribera observes, that the state grew weaker, as appeared by the bringing forth of one of the weaker sex. This daughter was fit to be an emblem, and therefore it is a daughter rather than a son, though it will be next a son and no daughter. But

Lo-ruhamah is feminine, and in congruity of speech it must be a female who bears this name. God said unto him: as before God imposed, so now again he imposeth a name, signifying what he would do with Israel. Though God direct what it shall be, the

prophet is to give the name. *Lo-ruhamah, Not pitied*. Israel's name had been through many ages *Ruhamah*, i.e. *Pitied*. God had with marvellous patience forborne them, and with tender bowels pitied them, and saved them from enemies, but now Israel should be no more pitied as formerly, God would throw them up to the rage of usurpers, and to the merciless hands of prosperous conspirators; so Menahem mercilessly ripped up women with child in Tiphshah, #2Ki 15:16, and God gave up this bloody tyrant into the hand of Tiglath-pileser.

I will no more have mercy; I was wont to add mercy unto mercy for Israel, I was never weary of showing them mercy, but I will do no more so for them; my pity saved them in Jeroboam's time, and raised them to a great height and glory, but now they shall, unpitied by me, sink lower and lower. Restraints of Divine pity are sure forerunners of destruction, #Jer 13:14.

Upon the house of Israel: this to me seems a qualifying of the former threat; though the house of Israel as a body politic, as a kingdom, under this character, shall no more be as it hath been, pitied, yet many among them may obtain mercy in the days of gospel grace, and many of them had mercy showed to them by the Lord, when they joined with Judah in the return from Babylon's captivity; but the whole house, the families of the ten tribes, united in a kingdom, shall no more be to God *Ruhamah*, but ever *Lo-ruhamah*. Thus it hath been through the long series of two thousand four hundred years and more.

I will utterly take them away; taking away I will take away, till the whole kingdom is utterly overthrown, and removed out of the land wherein it once had flourished. Thus some were taken away by the sword of civil wars, some ruined by oppression of the prevailing faction in those divided times, whole cities and all the land of Naphtali was taken away by Tiglath-pileser, #2Ki 15:29, and at last all swept away by Shalmaneser, #2Ki 17:3-5.

Ver. 7.

But, or *And*, or *Yet*.

I; the Lord, who threateneth Israel, proud, flourishing, secure, and sinful Israel: he promiseth mercy to poor, oppressed, and impoverished Judah.

Will have mercy on the house of Judah; prolonging that kingdom one hundred and thirty-two years after Israel ceased to be a kingdom; preserving them from the combined powers of the king of Syria and the king of Israel, who combine to destroy them; raising them up to greatness and glory in the reign of Hezekiah, in whose days the house of Judah was saved by a miracle: beside all these, Judah's captivity was for seventy years, Israel's for ever; Judah returned to their own land, Israel never did. By this, as the prophet would abate the pride of Israel, so possibly he would secretly direct the best among Israel whither to go to find mercy. Judah; including Benjamin, and such of the Levites as adhered constant to God's law and worship, and as many of the other tribes as renounced the calves, Baal, and all idolatrous worship, and worship God alone as he required, all these, in this case, are included in Judah, and so we find many such returning with Judah.

And will save them; preserve, that violence do not swallow them up, nor length of captivity wear them out; and this preserved remnant shall return and be planted in their own land, and there kept in safety. This promise does seem to point out such temporal salvation, but as a type of a far better and more glorious salvation.

By the Lord their God; either by Messiah, who is the Lord and their God, or by God himself, as their God, whom they did not, as Israel, forsake utterly. This passage bids us look to that extraordinary miraculous deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem: see **#Isa 37:36 2Ki 18:13 2Ch 32:1**.

Will not save them by bow, &c.: here God removeth all force and might, whether their own or their allies', all that might eclipse the glory of God in this salvation. Now this was very fully performed in Hezekiah's time, when Sennacherib's army was cut off in one night by an angel, **#Isa 37:35,36**: and in Cyrus's time and Darius's the captive Jews saw it was not by power nor by might, but the Lord saved them; so should it be here, as **#Ps 44:5,6 Isa 43:7,15 Zec 4:6**.

Ver. 8.

Though some wrest the words to an allegorical sense, I think the prophet keeps the decorum in the similitude, and therefore, as

women ordinarily conceive not whilst they give suck, so this Gomer weaned her daughter ere she conceived the son which is to be an emblem of the final rejection of the ten tribes.

Bare a son, to be a third sign to this incorrigible and self-undoing kingdom.

Ver. 9.

Then said God to the prophet, as before, #Ho 1:4,6.

Call his name; the name of his new-born son, the sign or type of the ten tribes, who had rejected God, and would not be reclaimed.

Lo-ammi, Not my people; though once you were a peculiar people, you are so no more in my account, you are cast off as you deserved.

For ye; the whole house of apostate Israel, who first cast off the house of David and my temple, and at last rejected me, that I should not be your God.

Are not my people; though circumcised,. yet have you cast off my covenant, you neither worship me, nor come up to my temple, nor keep my law; Baal, the calves, and the idols of your neighbours are your gods; ye are their people: ye are neither mine as to the civil constitution, you made you kings, and I knew it not, #Ho 8:4, without my leave or liking; nor as to church constitution are ye mine, for your whole worship is the politic contrivance of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. You have forgotten your Maker, and build temples, #Ho 8:14: ye count the great things of my law strange things to you; I must count you strangers to me.

I will not be your God, to protect you against dangers and enemies, or to replenish you with blessings, the fruits of my wonted goodness, or to pity you when you do either want or smart, or to counsel you in difficulties, or to hear your cries, or pardon your sins, or accept an offering at your hand; as you have long and lang refused me, and I have tried all ways to prevent your final self-undoing obstinacy, so now I do for ever reject you, O house of Israel, and will be a God to you no more than to any of the heathen nations. This God executed when he gave them up into the hands of Shalmaneser, who sent them where none now can find them; they are lost to men, they know not where they are; they are lost to God, he loves not nor careth for them.

Ver. 10.

Yet: this may anticipate the carnal Israel's objection, that thus God would fail of his word to Abraham, or he would lose his people. Nothing so, yet, though ten tribes be for ever captivated, God will have his Israel.

The number of the children of Israel; not Israel after the flesh, not those very persons, families that are carried captive, (though for aught I know, or any can tell to the contrary, these may be so increased for Abraham's sake,) but the Israel of God according to the faith, the spiritual seed of Abraham, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles.

Shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; innumerable, expressed by an elegant proverbial speech, alluding to the immenseness of the sands, **#Isa 10:22,23**
Ro 9:27.

It shall come to pass; the time is fixed, and the thing shall certainly be, God will bring it about in his time. In the place: as we read it, it is plain that in those places or countries where a people dwelt who knew not God, were not his people, there should be a people that should both be called and be his people; the heathen should be called into the church, and in every place God should have his people. Or else thus: Instead of being called the people of God, you shall be called the children; so blessed a change, that who were once far off, and not a people, shall now be more than people, they shall be children. *Where it was said unto them,* the Gentiles and Jews unconverted.

Ye are not my people; in the state of unconverted ones, are far from God, without his covenant, and no people.

There it shall be said; known, declared, men shall confess it, God will own it himself, and make it known to others.

Ye are the sons; grace shall be enlarged, your relation nearer and sweeter, you shall be sons, not servants, have communion with God as with your father; and this shall be the common or equal privilege of this whole Israel of God. This is fulfilled in the kingdom of the Messiah under the gospel, as the apostle argueth it, **#Ro 9:25,26.**

Of the living God, who is the fountain of life to all his children, and who giveth them lively affections to serve him, to offer living sacrifices to the living God. So are we called, #Ro 12:1,2 1Th 1:9.

Ver. 11.

This verse without doubt hath in it both an historical sense and a mystical or spiritual sense; it looketh somewhat to the return out of the Babylonish captivity, and to their settling in Canaan; but it looketh further to a more glorious deliverance from a more miserable captivity.

Then; in the type and history, when the Babylonish captivity is dissolved, and the captives are loosed.

The children of Judah; the children of the two tribes, who adhered to the house of David, who were carried captives, but under promise of a redemption from it.

The children of Israel; some of the ten tribes who either went over to and did incorporate with the kingdom of Judah, and so were carried captives with them; or some of the ten tribes which the children of Judah found in the kingdom of Babylon, which having swallowed up the Assyrian monarchy, now the ten tribes were captives to their conquering sword. Thus in type, but it is spiritually and mystically to be understood of the whole Israel of God, Jew and Gentile, redeemed by and converted to Christ, in the day of his power.

Be gathered together, by the power of God, by the decree Of Cyrus, by each other, heartening one another to return; so the type: in the antitype, shall be gathered together by the Spirit of God, the preaching of the gospel, and mutual instruction, exhortation, and encouragements of each other

Appoint themselves one head; Zerubbabel in type, who was appointed by Cyrus, yet with full approbation of the people, putting themselves under his conduct, to carry them up to Jerusalem. But in the antitype Christ, appointed by the Father Head of his church, whom believers, heartily accepting, may in large sense be said to appoint to themselves.

Out of the land; literally, out of Babylon; spiritually, out of captivity of sill and Satan.

For great, good, joyous, and comfortable,

shall be the day of Jezreel; of the seed or people of God, the sons of God once dispersed, but now gathered by the gospel.

HOSEA CHAPTER 2

The people are exhorted to forsake idolatry, which is threatened with severe judgments, **#Ho 2:1-13**. God allureth them with promises of reconciliation, **#Ho 2:14-23**.

Ver. 1.

In the two last verses of the former chapter, the prophet did from God promise marvellous mercy to Judah and Israel, to that remnant of the seed of Abraham who returned out of captivity, and to the converted Gentiles; now in this verse he calls upon them to acknowledge the mercy, and to excite one another to mutual love and esteem.

Say; declare, own, or publish.

Ye; who of no people are made a people, who were once unpitied and unregarded, but now have obtained mercy; you that are the sons of the living God, whether Jews or Gentiles. You Christians, as the apostle applies the words, **#Ro 9:24,25**; and so in the ant,type no doubt they are to be understood; but in the letter and type, the persons here mentioned are those who among this people were pious, feared God, and kept his law; some such there were among them.

Unto your brethren; to those of the ten tribes who are, and will be these forty years, your brethren.

Ammi; let them know that yet they are the people of God, and repentance may remedy all; they are still within the covenant of their father Abraham; if they will, as their father. walk with God, all shall be well.

And to your sisters, Ruhamah: in a decorum, to (what before was made an emblem of Israel) the prophet's daughter, *Lo-ruhamah*, some are here directed to reason (as it is **#Ho 2:2**) with her, i.e. with Israel, whose name is yet Ruhamah, and it may be so still, if Israel will retain it by returning to God.

Ver. 2.

Plead; argue the case, state it aright between me and your mother, then debate it fully; lay open either my displeasure, how great it is, or the effects of it already upon the house of Israel, or my menaces against them for the future, by my prophet Hosea: and next recollect the carriage of your mother of Israel; consider her sins, her lewdness, her adulteries, her unthankfulness, how notorious, how long, how multiplied and aggravated.

With your mother; the synagogues, the whole body of the people Israel, which were emblemized in Gomer, the wife of whoredoms.

Plead; ye that are sons or daughters of God amidst this degenerate, idolatrous nation, you that have any resentments for your Father, debate, or at least deal plainly with her, who is called your mother, and say how little right she hath to be called my wife, and how little reason I have to own myself her Husband.

She is not my wife; in point of right she is not, for by her adulteries she hath dissolved the marriage covenant, and so abolished the relation, though in point of fact she is not cast off utterly; I have not sued out the divorce, nor turned her out of doors. but yet for all that she is no wife, nor hath any right to the honour, maintenance, or love of a wife.

Neither am I her husband; I do not account myself bound by any covenant of marriage to love, maintain, comfort, or protect her; nor will I long do it, if by her continued lewdness she still violate her faith, and abuse my patience. Tell idolatrous Israel, that her God will deal with her as an abused husband will deal with an unreclaimed adulterous wife.

Let her therefore put away her whoredoms; when you have pleaded, then make an offer to her yet once more, counsel, persuade, entreat, and encourage her to do what becomes a wife that would not be divorced; try if you can prevail with her to cast aside and to remove from her all evil practices and inclinations, to cast off spiritual whoredoms, which all her idolatrous practices are accounted to be.

Out of her sight; either remove the idols, their temples, priests, and gaudy rites, for ever out of her sight, as they did, **#Isa 2:20**; or

else cease from her whorish looks, her unchaste and immodest framing her face and gestures.

And her adulteries, idolatries, which are spiritual adulteries,

from between her breasts: by an immodest and lascivious manner of framing the breasts, and laying them open, these kinds of women here alluded to did entice adulterers; and so were idolatrous Israelites grown impudent in their idolatries, and courted others in shameless manner to turn idolaters also.

Ver. 3.

Lest: this little word suggests great hopes; if this treacherous wife will cease her lewdness, and become chaste, she may be forgiven; it reserves room for repentance and reconciliation, without these it threatens.

Strip her naked; as was usually done by incensed husbands, divorcing impudent adulteresses: see **#Eze 16:38,39 23:26**. So God will strip her of all her ornaments which he gave; so he did gradually by Israel's enemies the Assyrians, till at last by Shalmaneser she was stripped to the skin, and led away captive; God east her out thus by him.

And set her as in the day that she was born: it is not much material to fix the period of this birth, viz. between their going out of Egypt and the giving of the law, or their entering upon their travels in the wilderness. Their state was poor enough then, now it shall be as bad, or worse; they shall be as the wilderness, barren and desolate, affording nothing for life or delight, much less for profit: whereas adulteresses ordinarily hunt after profit and delights, God will punish adulterous Israel with denying both to her, she shall be like the wilderness, horrid and starving.

And make her as a wilderness: this phrase may somewhat intimate the time of Israel's birth, viz. between their going out of Egypt and the giving of the law, or their entering upon their travels in the wilderness. Their state was poor enough then, now it shall be as bad, or worse; they shall be as the wilderness, barren and desolate, affording nothing for life or delight, much less for profit: whereas adulteresses ordinarily hunt after profit and delights, God will punish adulterous Israel with denying both to her, she shall be like the wilderness, horrid and starving.

And set her like a dry land: this is much the same with the former, and added to confirm and illustrate it.

And slay her: all this shall be done to the end she may be destroyed: of old God led his people through the wilderness to a city of habitation, now he will make them as the wilderness that they may perish in it.

With thirst: a miserable end, surely, thus to be scorched up with parching heat! so will God's wrath burn up these wicked, idolatrous Israelites.

Ver. 4.

I will not have mercy: see #Ho 1:6.

Upon her children: by this expression particular persons are severally, as by mother the whole nation was, threatened, that none might flatter themselves with hope of better: it is observable they are called her children, not God's.

For they be the children of whoredoms; born in whoredom, and, like the mother, addicted to whoredom; as if God had said, They are none of mine by birth, nor any whit like me in disposition, but a spurious and hateful brood, and as such I will use them.

Ver. 5.

For: this demonstrates the truth of the charge, and justifieth the severity of the punishment.

Their mother: see #Ho 2:2.

Played the harlot; doted on idols, worshipped them, and brought forth and educated children for diem.

She hath done shamefully: this practice, in the best circumstances it can be put, was dishonourable as well as dishonest; but here is an aggravation of it, it was done with shameless impudence, and openly avowed, with *a whore's forehead*, #Jer 3:3.

She said; she took lip resolutions, declared them, stood to them, none could alter her course.

I will go after: when they came not to her, she will go to them. Impudent adulteress! forsaken, thou courtest and woost.

My lovers: this spoken as if they loved her better than her Husband loved her; a high degree of impudence. These are the idols she worshipped, and the idolaters she associated and traded with.

That give me my bread, &c.: whereas every mercy she enjoyed was God's gift to her, and a fruit of his covenant love and faithfulness towards her; yet she denies (like an impudent strumpet) all his kindness, and in a manner chargeth him with such hardness and ill usage, that she had starved if her idols and idolatrous friends had not maintained her, and gives out, the bread she ate, and water she drank, and the clothes she wore, all was of their kindness. This is shameful indeed, and the prophet hath set it forth to the life: and now is there not good reason why a Husband so abused should without pity cast off such a mother, such children, and leave them to live on their chosen lovers, or to perish under the hatred of their despised God?

Ver. 6.

Therefore; because she is so impetuous and shameless in her idolatrous courses, nothing hath, and she resolves nothing shall, hinder her, but she will follow them.

Behold; take notice of it, thou lewd woman, and all that stand by.

I will hedge up thy way with thorns: thou wilt set no bounds to thy lusts, and thy wanderings to satisfy them; I will deal with thee as men do with unruly and rambling beasts, set a hedge of thorns about thee, i.e. compass thee in with wars and other calamities, which shall wound and pierce thee, that though thou love thy sinful courses, and wilt follow them, thou shalt have little pleasure in them.

And make a wall; another allusion to the method men take to keep in the wildest cattle, which would break through hedges, but cannot break through walls. God will make the calamities of this people as a strong and high wall, over which they cannot leap, nor through which they cannot break. So was the Assyrian army under Shalmaneser, which cooped them up in a long siege of Samaria, and at last took them, and carried them into a long captivity, which now lasteth.

That she shall not find her paths; wherein then didst go when thou wentest to Egypt or Syria for help; but by my judgments, and thine enemies' power and watchfulness, always shall be watched and guarded, thou shalt not find how to send to them for relief. These were her paths, whereas a chaste wife would have gone to her husband for relief.

Ver. 7.

And she, hedged in with many and great distresses, when under the judgments of God, *shall follow after her lovers*; with earnest travel, and with wearisome toil, she shall attempt every way to get to them, but to no purpose: afflictions and sorrows surround Israel; these Israel can by no means break out of to these lovers, and they, like false lovers, hasten as fast and as far from this adulteress as they can.

Her lovers, idols and idolaters, her false friends, and falser gods.

She shall not overtake them; they which hasten after such strange gods and helps, as this shameless harlot, shall meet with sorrow, but never overtake their desired help.

She shall seek them; as is the manner of immodest strumpets; it speaks also her obstinate resolution in her way: so Israel forsook a God that would have sought him to do him good, and by no disappointments would be (for a long time) taken off from this frantic wildness, of seeking to idols that could do him no good.

But shall not find them; the final issue of all is at last, she is wearied in her folly, tired with fruitless labour, and sits down hopeless of ever finding help from idols and idolaters.

Then shall she say; as the prodigal, first think well on it, next resolve with herself.

I will go and return; restless, she will try one way more; happy she if she had tried this sooner, this would have been successful; she will return, come back, and seek to her Husband.

To my first Husband, i.e. God, who had married Israel to himself, who was her Husband indeed: all others were as adulterers, as deceivers and seducers, who abuse the credulity of wanton women first, and next abuse their husbands' beds.

For then was it better with me than now: how much the tune is changed! In #Ho 2:5, all her gallantry, her feasts, her rich apparel, these are gifts of her lovers; not a word of her Husband's greatest kindnesses. But now she sees and confesseth the least of her Husband's kindnesses was better than the greatest kindness of these her paramours, and at worst with her Husband she was better than at best with adulterers.

Ver. 8.

For; this unexampled ignorance, or inconsiderateness, was the cause of all this lost labour, and unthankfulness to God.

She, in her rayons and prosperity, as were the days of Jeroboam, in which much of this lewdness was committed, and in which the prophet calls them to repentance,

did not know; considered not, but carried it toward God as if indeed she did not know; nor did she own it or acknowledge it by any suitable obedience and thankfulness to the God of her mercies.

That I gave, without desert or worthiness; it was mercy, and this free, from whence all she had came.

Corn; which is the stay and strength of our life; one necessary corn fort put for all the rest.

Wine and oil: these cheer the heart, and include all provision for delight and sweetness.

And multiplied her silver and gold: the treasures of gold and silver, and all precious things brought in by trade, and increased among them, were the effect of mine undiscerned and unacknowledged bounty and goodness.

Which they, the generality or body of the Jews, these idolatrous Jews,

prepared for Baal; first made the idol with the gold and silver, and next dedicated it to the service of the idol. Sottish ignorance, that with one part of the gold and silver make a god, with the other part provide for sacrifices to be offered to it. Thus one part is advanced to be a deity, the other part of the same mass

consecrated to the service of its fellow lump. What absurdities will not down with such fools and sots?

Ver. 9.

Therefore, because I was not acknowledged nor served as the giver,

will I return: much after the manner of man doth God speak; he had left large blessings behind him among this people, but their sottish ingratitude provokes him to resolutions of returning and seizing of all.

Take away; take into my hands, or resume all I give, for all given was mine still; God never gives away his right.

My corn; it was hers while thankfully received and rightly used, but want of these forfeit that right, and the propriety reverts to God. See #Ho 2:8.

In the time thereof; either when they should gather it in, as being ripe, or when they need it, and should use it. All they enjoy is mine, but since they so use me as to serve Baal by it, I will either take all away from them, or make all useless to them. When I take away my wool and my flax, she shall appear shamefully naked, not having one rag of her own.

Ver. 10.

And now, when I make a seizure, and strip her of all that is mine, I will expose her, or else I shortly will do so, ere long.

Her lewdness; the folly and wickedness of her idolatrous worship; and perhaps the corporal lewdnesses which idolaters seldom were free from may be here intended.

In the sight of her lovers; among whom most will loathe her and hoot at her, some secretly despise her; if any shall attempt to help at this dead lift, it shall be to no purpose.

None shall deliver her out of mine hand; they who would deliver her are few and weak, unable to rescue her from the infamy I adjudge her to. In short, as she hath like a strumpet shamelessly sinned, so like a strumpet she shall be shamefully, with greatest infamy, punished; and I, saith the Lord, will see it done.

Ver. 11.

I will also cause all her mirth to cease; the jollity of Israel was certainly damped when Tiglath-pileser took Ijon, and other cities, and captivated Naphtali, #2Ki 15:29, which was some, yet but few, years after this prophecy: but sure all their joy ceased about ten or twelve years after, when Samaria was taken, and Hoshea and all Israel made captives: so the threat was executed in this sense. But the prophet speaks (as by what follows appeareth) of their sacred or religious joys, which God will abolish. He did not set them up, but he will pull them down.

Her feast days: though apostate Israel was fallen to idolatry, and renounced the true worship of God, yet by this text it appears they retained many of the rites and ceremonies that were used by the Jews, or else set up others like them, as their solemn feast at setting up the calves at Dan and Beth-el, in Jeroboam's time.

New moons: these were days of greater sacrifices, #Nu 28:11, and greater feasting, #1Sa 20:5.

Sabbaths; their weekly sabbaths. All her solemn feasts; the three annual feasts of tabernacles, weeks, and passover, or others with them, all which should cease when these people were carried captive, as they were by Shalmaneser.

Ver. 12.

God will do it either by blasting, or by the Assyrians, who, as other invaders, shall spoil all.

Destroy; make very desolate, or lay waste.

Her vines and her fig trees: these two were mentioned, but all other fruit trees are meant.

Whereof she hath said, These are my rewards: this was in peculiar manner the sin for which Israel was punished thus, they gave the praise of the fruitfulness of these trees, and the abundance of them, to idols, robbed God of the praise due for them, therefore God will take them away.

That my lovers have given me: their false gods are here made the givers of all outward blessings to Israel: see #Ho 2:5.

I will make them; their vineyards and oliveyards, and places where they planted and fenced in their fig trees, and other fruitful trees.

A forest; wild and uncultivated, the hedges and fences shall be thrown up, and all run into the wildness of a forest, as it came to pass in the Assyrian invasion.

The beasts of the field; savage men, such as the Assyrians were; or rather in the letter, the beasts of the field should break down their branches, and devour them, and pull off the fruit, as foxes pull the grapes, or wild boars of the wood root up and eat the tender and sappy branches and springles.

Shall eat them; the trees and their fruits.

Ver. 13.

I will visit; punish, for the prophet threatens them with this visitation, by which it evidently appears to be a visiting in wrath.

Upon her; the kingdom of Israel.

The days; the sins of those days past.

Of Baalim: Baal was the great idol of the ten tribes, the chief of their idols, their lord (as the word signifieth) and patron; here it is plural, Baalim, either to denote the multitude of idols which they worshipped, all called by this one name, or perhaps because of the multitude of his statues or images, and of his altars and temples, erected to Baal in all places of the land.

Burnt incense to them; sacrificed and worshipped, for this one kind of religious observance is put for all the rest.

She decked herself with her earrings and her jewels; to put the greater honour upon the idol, they put on their richest and best attire, or it may be they blindly thought this rich habit would make them the more acceptable to their senseless idol.

And she went after her lovers; decked thus, strumpet like, she went on by her spiritual adultery to provoke me.

And forgot me; and slighted me, if she did at all think of me, adulteress like.

Ver. 14.

Therefore: this particle seems to connect these following passages with those that went before, as causal, or giving a reason why God will do thus, and so are difficulter than if read as *zkl* might be, either as a particle that speaks order or time of things, and is as much as *afterwards*; so it will be easy, *I will visit, &c., afterwards I will allure*; first punish, next comfort: or else it may be adversative, as much as yet, or but; so it is plain, thus, She like an adulteress hath sinned, and I have punished; *but, or yet, or notwithstanding,*

I will allure: or else it is a particle that doth more strongly affirm; so rendered the place would be less obscure, thus,

I will destroy her vines, &c.; *surely I will allure, &c.:* thus *zkl* is used #**Jer 5:2 Zec 11:7.** *Behold* with attention, and wonder at the methods of Divine grace.

I will allure her; with kind words and kinder usage I will incline her mind to hear and consider what I propose; I will persuade by sweetest dealings, like a kind husband that makes use of the distresses of his disloyal wife to commend his love to her, to win her to himself, and to ways that are the honour and happiness of a wife.

And bring her into the wilderness; after that I have brought her into the wilderness; so the French, and some other versions, and so it is plainer than as we read it.

The wilderness; deep distress or captivity, with all the sorrows that attend captivity; then it is likely she will hearken: or by *wilderness* may be understood a retired place, and solitary, where shall be no diversions of her mind, no such temptations as formerly, where with best leisure she may consider and bethink herself: so understood, our version is easily intelligible.

And speak comfortably; things that are full of comfort, and in such manner too as is comfortable to the hearer. Here are glad tidings, gracious promises, and wonderful mercy to the true Israel after afflictions have brought them to God, after they are converted from sin by these means.

Ver. 15.

And I, reconciled to her, will give her her vineyards; will both settle her, and abundantly enrich her with blessings, as the phrase implieth.

From thence; either from the place of their exile and sufferings, or from the time of their hearkening to the Lord speaking to them in their distresses and sorrows; or if it refer to **#Ho 2:12**, it is a promise to comfort them under that threat which swept away the blessings of vines mid fig trees in their own land, and here is a promise of vineyards to them from the time of their repentance, and from the place where they are captives.

The valley of Achor; which was a large, fruitful, and pleasant valley near Jericho, and on the very entrance into the land of Canaan, where after forty years' travels and sorrows Israel first set foot on a country such as they expected.

For a door of hope: as that valley was a door of hope to Israel then, by that Israel saw that he should enjoy the Promised Land; so would God deal with repenting Israel in the times here pointed at.

She shall sing praises to their God for his mercies, and sing forth their own joys too, and answer each other, sing in responses, as the word signifieth.

As in the days of her youth: as that age is most jocund, and expresseth it by singing, so shall it be as renewed youth to Israel, full of blessings from God, and full of praises to God.

When she came up out of the land of Egypt: this passage explains the former; their youth is a time somewhat like the time of their coming out of Egypt, their mercies now like the mercies of that time, and their joys and songs shall be like too. However these things were fulfilled to the type, whose repentance and return to God is not very eminent, they are all fully made good to antitype Israel, the church of Christ, in spiritual blessings, chiefly here intended.

Ver. 16.

At that day; when through deep distresses I have prepared her to return, and she who was an adulteress repents, and renews her

covenant of love and obedience, and in the day of my blessings on her.

Saith the Lord: this confirmeth and insureth the thing.

Thou, my repenting Israel,

shalt call me Ishi; both by words, affections, and obedience shall own me as thy loving, tender Husband, and delight to call me so.

And shalt call me no more Baali; though the word hath no ill in itself, yet it is so near to the name of the abominable idols, that I will no more be called Baali.

Ver. 17.

For I will take away the names of Baalim; it is my purpose to abolish the memory of Baalim. This great idol for all others; God will cut off all the remains of idolatry from his church.

Out of her mouth; so God required, of old, #Ex 23:13.

They shall no more be remembered by their name; these false gods and provoking idols shall be quite forgotten, their names perishing with them. When God shall so cut off all idolatry from his church in gospel days, it will be the final and fullest accomplishment of this prediction.

Ver. 18.

In that day: see #Ho 2:16.

Make a covenant; command or enjoin, and these creatures shall as duly observe the command as just ones keep a covenant.

For them; true converts, the Israel of God.

With the beasts of the field, &c.; with all the creatures that might either serve or hurt them; it is a full and gracious promise of abundance of peace, safety, and love among all, through the creation, for the comfort of God's people.

And I will break the bow, &c: but if brute beasts do not hurt, yet unless more brutish creatures, bloody men, be tamed, there will be little safety to the church; therefore God will put an end to wars, and make men peaceable in their disposition, far more peaceable than heretofore they have been.

And will make them to lie down safely; by a special care of, love for, and presence with them, God will provide for their safety. Now I doubt not but all this in some measure was made good to the Jews returning out of captivity, among whom were also some thousands of the house of Israel, who had their share in this promised peace, safety, and prosperity; but the full accomplishment is to be to the church of Christ, and in spiritual blessings shadowed out by these temporal blessings.

Ver. 19.

And I, thy God, who was offended, but now am reconciled, though I was divorcing thee, will now

betroth, on new terms enter marriage covenant with

thee, O Israel, who art my people, and leavest thine idolatries and rebellions.

Unto me, God of mercy and truth, who hath forgiven and changed thee, and made thee suitable to myself, and who will be as kind and gracious as thou canst desire or need.

For ever: the former covenant was broken, and the marriage nulled, but now it shall be an everlasting contract and marriage between my Israel and their God.

I will betroth thee unto me: this promise is repeated to confirm it, and to remove scruples and jealousies.

In righteousness; on equal terms on both sides.

In judgment; with mature advice, or well-informed and settled judgment and resolution; this covenant shall be, as a well-taken oath, finished with integrity of heart and judgment. In loving-kindness; without desert in her that is betrothed, of mere love, and freest kindness.

And in mercies: this, though the same with the former, is added to insure all to this new-espoused wife; or

loving-kindness is the never-exhausted fountain, mercies are the never-failing streams, the abundant fruits of that love toward the poor and undeserving objects of it.

Ver. 20.

This verse is a third promise in the same words to comfort and encourage the true Israel, only faithfulness is here added a qualification of this new marriage, which shall continue firm on a mutual, faithful promise, love, and contract.

Thou shalt know the Lord; his just anger which hath punished, his rich grace which hath now pardoned and taken into covenant again, his faithfulness and tender compassions, his all-sufficiency and sovereignty, that we may obey him, and rest satisfied in his love, as it is our reward and happiness.

Ver. 21.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Ver. 22.

In that day, when this new alliance is made, or in the day of gospel grace, *I will hear*: this general promise God gives us to encourage us to cry to him; he will so hear as to answer. *Saith the Lord*: this is the seal to the truth and certainty of the things promised.

There is a subordination of causes, all second causes do in their ranks (like wheels in a curious engine) move as moved by the first great spring, and so contribute to the good of such as any way depend on them. Thus here, God, the first and universal cause, will influence the heavens, he will command their dew and showers; they would be as iron over us, if God did not command them to distil their drops on the earth; when this is dry, parched, and barren, it does as it were cry to the heavens for refreshing showers, for fruitful rains; when the seed sown, the vines and olives planted, are at a stand, take no rooting, they do as it were cry to the earth for its kindly influences and fatness, that they may spring up and yield fruit for Jezreel: which may call, and cry, and wait, but never be satisfied, if God do not hear them, and command his blessing of fructifying influences, which God here doth promise to his people on renewing covenant with them. God's seed, his gathered ones, his espoused church, shall be served to hey comfort by all the creatures. When disobedience, backslidings, idolatries, and such-like sins did provoke God to punish them with famine and scarcity; now their repentance and obedience shall be blessed with plenty, and God will set the frame

of heaven and earth in due order to effect this, there shall be a harmony and correspondence between all subordinate causes moved by God the first great cause, whence expected events and fruits shall certainly be produced for their good and comfort.

Ver. 23.

Their sins, the enemies' sword, and God's just displeasure, had wasted and lessened their numbers; but now the Lord will bless them with wonderful increase of people, expressed with allusion to a seed sown in the earth, which multiplieth exceedingly: so the Jews multiplied after the Babylonish captivity, but much more are the numbers increased since the preaching of the gospel, and the gathering in the dispersed elect of God.

The earth; either the land of Canaan, if you refer this to the Jews after the captivity; or the whole earth, all places and nations, if you do, as you should, refer it to gospel days; and so we have seen this promise fulfilled.

I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy: see #Ho 1:6,10.

I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; so great is the change grace hath made, that a rejected people are once more taken to be a peculiar people; a remnant among them is saved. Not in word only, but with hearty consent, joy, affection. and thankfulness they shall be my people, as well as call themselves so.

They shall say, Thou art my God: this people of whom the prophet here speaketh shall openly confess the Lord is their God, Sovereign to command and rule, and Saviour to deliver and save them. Their God to give them law and life, to direct their obedience, and to be their exceeding great reward for it; their God to sanctify, justify, and glorify.

HOSEA CHAPTER 3

By the prophet taking unto him an adulteress is showed the desolation of Israel, and their restoration.

Ver. 1.

Then, or *And*, Heb. or Furthermore.

Said the Lord; commanded. *Unto me*; Hosea. *Go yet*; again, or once more; so it implieth he had once already been commanded and done some such-like thing.

Love a woman: in the former he was commanded to marry, in this he is commanded to love, (the reason of which will appear in the application of the parable,) a woman, though described by her character, yet not named; and though her character would suit well enough to Gomer, yet it was not she, for this woman was to abide for him, #**Ho 3:3**, but Gomer was presently married to him, or at least so represented; this was brought, Gomer was not.

Beloved of her friend; her husband, though some think it may be some other person or lover.

An adulteress; either already tainted, or that certainly will be tainted with that vice; a divorced woman, separate from her husband because of her falseness to him.

According to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel; let this be the emblem of my love to the children of Israel: by this I intend, saith God, to let Israel know how I have loved, and how she hath loved: how greatly, dearly, constantly on my part; how slightly, inconstantly, falsely on her part.

Who look to other gods: when I adopted them to be a peculiar people to me, to take me for their God, and required they shall have none other, (which relation is well expressed by that of husband and wife,) they have looked, liked, loved other gods, and depended on them, and their hearts have been estranged from me, they have turned downright idolaters. *Love flagons of wine*; loved the feasts of their idols, where they drank wine to excess, by too great measures, which, without dispute, was usual in the idol feasts, #**Am 2:8 1Co 10:21**; or else these flagons of wine speak their loose, drunken, and riotous living.

Ver. 2.

So I bought her; as I was commanded, I procured, or, as we read it, bought her: which exactly answers to the state of the Jews when in Egypt, tainted with Egyptian idolatry, and poor, without a portion; bought or redeemed to be affianced to God.

Fifteen pieces of silver; whatever was the exact quantity and value of these pieces we need not here curiously inquire; but note, it was half the value of a slave, #Ex 21:32, and was some 37s. 6d.

An homer: this measure might be about fourteen bushels; so the whole will, for her diet, amount to twenty-one bushels, no great provision for her diet; and it is

barley in both places, the meanest kind of provision, and suited to a low condition, #Jud 7:13 Eze 4:9,12: all this the fuller to set forth Israel's indigence and ingratitude to God, and God's bounty to Israel.

Ver. 3.

This verse is the form of contract, or the articles of agreement, between the prophet and this woman.

Abide for me; dwell with me, and expect and wait in an unmarried condition, until I see it fit to espouse thee.

Many days; it is not said how long, but a slave, as she is represented here, may not think this severe; the preferment will compensate her waiting.

Thou shalt not play the harlot: this is the third condition, she is to live chaste and modest, not to do as she had done. This was to settle her in a virtuous life, and to prove whether she would betake herself to a life praiseworthy.

Thou shalt not be for another man; she is bound to marry, none other, nor to commit adultery with any other.

So will I also be for thee; in due time I will accomplish the contract, and, as I wait, so I will be for thee. So the deed is mutually sealed and signed.

Ver. 4.

Now the parable is unfolded and made plain; it shall be with Israel much like as with such a woman, they and she guilty of adultery, both punished with a divorce, both punished long with such afflicted state, both made slaves, kept hardly, and valued meanly, yet in mercy at last pardoned, reaccepted, and preferred, but this after long time of probation: how long we cannot tell, nor list to dispute whether seventy years of Babylon's captivity, or whether these seventy and the one hundred and thirty years of the ten

tribes' captivity before the two tribes went captives, i.e. two hundred years; or whether till Messiah's coming, or the general and last conversion of the Jews; long it was to be no doubt.

Without a king; none of their own royal line shall sit on the throne, and rule them, but foreigners, enemies, and they that had conquered them, should be kings over them. So the kingdom ceased, as #Ho 1:4.

Without a prince; the conquering kings will not out of the Jews make their chief officers to rule the Jews, but strangers shall be princes and governors over them.

Without a sacrifice; either right, and according to law, (these sacrifices they had long since cast off,) or idolatrous ones, which they would choose.

Without an image; they could carry none of their images with them, and the Assyrians would not let them make new ones.

Without an ephod; no priest as well as no ephod.

Without teraphim; idolatrous images kept in their private houses to worship and consult with, like the Roman *lares* and *penates*, household gods. In one word, such should be the state of these captives, they should have nothing of their own, either in kingdom and civil affairs, or in church and religion, but be wholly under the power and arbitrary wills of their conquering enemies.

Ver. 5.

Afterward; after these long and sore troubles have broken their hearts and opened their eyes.

Return; repent; it is not a promise of return into their own country.

Seek the Lord their God, to know his way, and to live under his protection and blessing, to worship him, and they shall pray to him, depend on him, consult with him, with ardency and earnestness of desire.

David their king; not son of Jesse, who was long since dead; nor Zerubbabel; but Messiah, who is elsewhere called David, #Ps 132:10 Jer 30:9 Eze 34:24 37:24,25, which see; and #Am 9:11. *Shall fear the Lord;* with reverence shall pray, depend on, and

consult their God, and worship his Son the Messiah, whom the Father sent out of his infinite goodness and kindness towards us.

And his goodness; God and his goodness, i.e. the good and gracious God, such to us in Christ; God in Christ and with Christ shall be worshipped. In the latter days; in the days of the Messiah, in gospel times, and perhaps the last of these latter days.

HOSEA CHAPTER 4

God's judgments against the sins of the people, **#Ho 4:1-5**, and of the priests, **#Ho 4:6-11**, and against their idolatry, **#Ho 4:12-14**. Judah is exhorted to take warning by Israel's calamity, **#Ho 4:15-19**.

Ver. 1.

Hear; attend, consider, and duly weigh: it is the hearing of the mind, as well as of the ear, is here required.

The word of the Lord; he that speaks is the great God, though the messenger be a man; the message is not man's, but it is the word, the message of the sovereign, holy; just, and mighty Jehovah, who ever speaks most important things, things that respect our duty and safety.

Ye children of Israel; you of the ten tribes, with whose ancestors my covenant was made, who received the law by the disposition of angels, but have not kept it, you that have turned aside from your God to idols.

The Lord; who knoweth your sins, who hateth, threateneth, and will judge, and punish unless you repent, it is he that speaketh, and summoneth you to plead with him.

Hath a controversy; just matter of debate or arguing against you; you have wronged him, and he will right himself, yet so that he will be clear in his judgment, all shall see that the just Lord doth justly, and that this people's sins are the cause of all their sufferings, that God doth not delight to afflict the children of men.

With the inhabitants of the land; who dwell in the cities and towns of Israel, divided from the house of David, and from the house of God; ye that dwell with idolatrous neighbours: it is not a

few, but the generality of the inhabitants; it is the whole land I have an action against.

There is no truth, no faithfulness, in their minds, words, or works; they cover falsehood with fair words, till they may fitly execute their designed frauds. There is neither plain-heartedness nor constancy in their purposes and words.

Nor mercy, kindness or gentleness of mind; all are hardened, and restrain their bowels, which should be opened toward the indigent and necessitous. There is neither compassion nor beneficence among them, they pity not, nor relieve any.

Nor knowledge of God; all generally are ignorant, know not what God hath done for them, or what God is in himself, or what candour and truth, or what tenderness and beneficence, he requires in his word; if they have a slight knowledge of those things, yet they consider them not. They have rased the knowledge of God out of their minds.

In the land: this speaks the universal ignorance, mercilessness, and unfaithfulness of that age.

Ver. 2.

By swearing; either falsely or profanely, or cursing and wishing evil to one; instead of truth here is perjury; instead of compassion here is execration and evil-speaking.

Lying of all kinds; affirming of falsehoods, denying of truths, defrauding, lessening good, and representing it what it is not, greatening what is in others ill, and so flattering in some cases, and defaming in other cases, &c.

Killing: though God hath forbidden all kinds and degrees of murder, this people, through ignorance of God, do fill the land with murders, either open or secret; by cruelty withholding relief from some, by violence and falsehood cutting off others: the temper of this people was toward killing, their designs laid for it, &c.

Stealing; injuring one another, either by taking away what was another's, or detaining what should have been his, or giving less to another than was his due: every one inclined to frauds, many addicted to secret thefts, and some openly practicing it.

Committing adultery; which was a sin grown high among them, a sin directly against the truth and mercy which should have been among them. Under this, all degrees of adultery, unchaste thoughts, words, and gestures are included.

They break out; as waters that swell above all banks, or as unruly beasts that break over all hedges, so you, O Israelites, have broken down the hedge of the law, which expressly forbids what you daily practise.

Blood toucheth blood; slaughters are multiplied: by blood the Scripture understandeth slaughter, **#Ge 4:10**, &c.; **#Ps 58:10**. Possibly the wrong done by the adulterer was (as Ammon's) revenged with the slaughter of the adulterer; or possibly it may refer to murders committed in the very court of the temple; so the blood of the murdered touched the blood of sacrifices. It is too particular to refer it to the blood of Zechariah slain between the porch and the altar, and which (some say) ran down to the altar and touched the blood of the sacrifice. Or what if this should refer to what will be ere long, when Jeroboam is dead, when Zachariah is murdered by Shallum, **#2Ki 15:10**; Menahem slew Shallum, **#2Ki 15:14**, and ripped up women with child in Tiphshah, **#2Ki 15:16**; when Pekah slew Pekahiah, and Hoshea slew him? These kings being thus slain, no doubt much blood was spilt; all which happened in less than forty years; for from Zechariah to Pekah's usurpation are but fourteen years, from Pekah's entrance on the throne to Hoshea's conspiracy are twenty years.

Ver. 3.

Therefore, since their sins are so many and so great, for those very sins already mentioned in the 1st and 2nd verses,

shall the land, which the ten tribes did now inhabit, mourn: it is a metaphorical expression, for properly it cannot be spoken of the senseless and inanimate creatures; but as men and women mourn under the loss of their comforts and joys, as they neglect themselves in their habits, and go less neat, so when the sins of the people shall bring an enemy upon the land, when war shall first spoil their cities, towns, vineyards, and oliveyards, and finally shall carry the people captive, all shall run into horrid and saddest

state, and into doleful plight. The same expression see in **#Isa 24:4**, and much like **#Am 1:2**.

Every one that dwelleth therein; no sort of men but had provoked God and sinned, no sort but should be punished; all that continue in the land till these threatened judgments overtake them.

Shall languish; shall with grief and vexation pine away; what they see with their eye shall make their heart ache, and faint with greatest dejectedness and despair, as the word imports, **#Isa 16:8**
Joe 1:12.

With the beasts of the field: these are elsewhere menaced, **#Zep 1:2**, which see. God punisheth man in cutting off what was made for man's benefit and comfort; and it is probable that the tamer cattle were starved for want of grass or fodder, all being eaten up and consumed by the wasting armies.

With the fowls of heaven; the tamer and innocent either killed by enemies, or, offended with stench and noxious air, die or forsake the country, or are devoured by eagles and birds of prey, which in those countries wait on armies.

Yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away; whether by drying up the waters of rivers, lakes, and ponds, or by corrupting them with blood and carcasses, or by what other way we know not, he can do it, who saith he will; and we are sure it speaks the greatness of the threatened desolation.

Ver. 4.

Yet; though judgments great and wasting are so sure, though the approaching calamities will lay all utterly waste.

Let no man; none of private capacity, no priest or prophet, any more open their mouths to reason and debate with this people; let all know they are so obstinate and hardened it is to no purpose to warn any more.

Strive; contend, as in causes pleaded before a judge; lay not the law before them, who have so often refused to hear it.

Nor reprove; no more chide, or sharply inveigh against their sins and ways. Or this whole passage may be thus read,

Yet certainly there is none that may or can strive, &c. All are so corrupted, that there is none free who may with confidence argue against others. But our version is better of the two.

Thy people; thy countrymen, Hosea, if the former words be the words of God to the prophet. Or else, if they be the words of the prophet to the people, then he speaks to them of the temper of their neighbours and people with whom they dwelt. It is much one which we take, for Hosea was now among them; and whether his people or no, they are still the same persons spoken of.

Are as they that strive with the priest; there is no ingenuity, modesty, or fear of God or man left among them, they will contend with their teachers, reprovers, and counsellors; they will justify themselves, and contemn all reproof; they will adhere to sin, and reject all better advice, just as they #Mal 1:2,7 2:14. This doth not suppose, much less assert, the priests of Baal and the calves to be true priests; but were they as true as they are false, yet such is the temper of the people, they would not hear, consider, and amend, whoever contested with them. Let them alone therefore to perish with obstinate sinners.

Ver. 5.

Therefore, because thy sins are so many and so great, and thou art incorrigible in them,

shalt thou fall; the prophet turns his speech to the people, thou, O Israel; he speaks to them as to one person, they were all of one piece in sin, and should be so one in punishment. Fall; stumble, and fall, and be broken.

In the day; or this day, i.e. very suddenly, your fall shall be presently effected by your enemies' power, vigilance, and successes; it shall be no longer delayed.

The prophet; who spake smooth things, who prophesied lies; the false prophets of Baal and the groves, #Jer 14:13-16 23:15.

Shall fall; be in as sad calamitous condition as any.

With thee; either the prophet that is with thee, that lived with and prophesied to this people; or, as we read it, when the people are ruined and captivated, with them the false prophet shall be likewise ruined and captivated.

In the night; either proverbially taken, people and prophet shall continually fall; or allusively, both shall fall as a man that falls in the night. Or else, the prophet shall fall in the darkest calamities, he shall be covered with thickest clouds, who falsely foretold and promised light unto such people.

And I, the Lord, against whom thou hast sinned, will destroy, cut off, or make to cease or be silent for ever: see **#Ho 1:4**.

Thy mother; both the state, or kingdom, and the synagogues, or mock churches: the public is as a mother to private persons: so all shall be destroyed; which also came to pass before the prophet Hosea died, he lived to see his threats fulfilled.

Ver. 6.

My people: the divorce was not yet issued out, the ten tribes yet were in some sense *Ammi. Are destroyed*; not only in the prophetic style, are, because ere long they shall most certainly be destroyed, but in the course of the history it is plain in matter of fact; many of them were cut off by Pul king of Assyria, **#2Ki 15**, and many were destroyed by the bloody and cruel tyranny of Menahem, and more were ruined in their estates by exactions and impositions. The civil wars, the seditions, the usurpations of some and the deposing of others, were things the prophet Hosea lived to see, and I believe speaks of here as things that had already destroyed many.

For lack of knowledge of God, his law, his menaces, his providences, and government of the world. Had they known his holy nature, his jealousy for his own glory, his hatred of sin and his power to punish it, had they known their God, they would either have forborne to sin, or repented of what sins they had committed, and so prevented his wrath. *Because thou:* the prophet now turns his words from the people to the priests among them. The people's ignorance was much from the ignorance and profane humour of their priests, and this the prophet doth tacitly charge on the priests, to whom he speaks as to one particular person:

Thou, who callest thyself, art accounted by the people, and goest under the name of a priest.

Hast rejected knowledge: strange perverseness! they who should direct others, who should be teachers, are and will be ignorant,

will not know, reject knowledge; detestest to know, as the Chaldee paraphrase.

I will also reject thee; with equal dislike I will reject time, I will destroy your church constitution, and with that I will destroy your priesthood; and I will do this with detestation and abhorrence too.

Thou hast forgotten the law of thy God: O Israel, and you, O priests, you have all sinned together, slighted and disrespected the law, broken all the precepts of it, set up other gods, other worship, other priests than the law directs.

I will also forget; I will pay thee in thy own coin, I will forget, i. e. slight and disregard.

Thy children; the people of Israel, the whole kingdom of the ten tribes; both those pretended priests and their ghostly children with them.

Ver. 7.

As they; kings, priests, and people of that age, that is, Jeroboam the Second, great-grandson of Jehu, who raised the kingdom to its highest pitch and glory.

Were increased; both multiplied for number, and grew great in riches, power, and honour. Such temper were they of, **#Isa 1:2**.

So they sinned against me: sin grew with their wealth and honour; God who raised them was by them provoked the more, they turned his bounty into sin: too usual a return from sinners to God.

I will change, turn by a just retaliation,

their glory into shame: they turned their glory, all that in which they might glory above others, into sin; I will turn it into shame; that shall be their dishonour which, had it been well used, might have been their honour. I will degrade their priests, impoverish the people, captivate both.

Ver. 8.

They, the priests who minister to the idols,

eat up the sin of my people; live upon with delight, maintain themselves and theirs; either by conniving at their sins, not

reproving as they deserve, lest thereby they should disoblige persons, and lessen their bounty to them; or leave them to sin first, and next look for sacrifices for those sins, like some that make gain by the sins of people with whom they dispense. Or more plainly, by

sin is meant sin-offering, in which the priest had his share.

My people: see #Ho 4:6.

And they; covetous, luxurious, idolatrous priests, the priests of Baal and the calves,

set their heart on their iniquity; watch to, and earnestly desire, hope, and expect the people will sin, and bring offerings for sin, which is the iniquity as well as gain of these priests.

Ver. 9.

The sum of these words is this, that God will certainly punish; for the sins both of priests and people are such that God will no further forbear either; and when he comes to punish, he will do it according to the ways and doings of both; where sins have been equal, punishment shall be equal too, both priest and people shall be led into captivity, and there used without any differencing respect of one or other.

Ver. 10.

For, or *And*, Heb. This is another part of their punishment, and it is better rendered as a particular part of their curse, than as a cause of that which was spoken in the former verse.

They shall eat, and not have enough: in #Ho 4:8 they are said to eat up the sin of that people, i.e. by sinful courses they project for their livelihood; now comes the curse God will punish this sin with. He will withhold his blessing, they shall not be nourished, not satisfied, with what they eat. See #Hag 1:6.

They shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase; though they multiply wives to relieve them under the curse of barrenness and want of children, or by fornication seek to multiply their offspring, though they do this which they ought not to do, they shall not hereby increase the number of their children; either the women shall not bear, or the children not live.

Because they have left off to take heed to the Lord; they have apostatized and turned from the true God, from his worship and law.

Ver. 11.

Whoredom; unlawful converse with wanton women, the forbidden pleasures of an adulterous bed.

And wine and new wine; excess of drinking, and indeed all immoderate pleasures; one kind being put for all.

Take away the heart; besot men, and deprive them of the right use of their Understanding and judgment. By these courses both priests and people here have disabled themselves to discern aright between good and bad, between safe and dangerous.

Ver. 12.

My people; whom I chose, brought out of Egypt, and settled in this land, were not yet cast off, though they deserve it, who call themselves my people.

Ask counsel; inquire about future things, and what shall befall them. I threaten from heaven, they believe not me, but flatter themselves it will be better than my prophets say it will, and they inquire of their idolatrous priests concerning their fate.

At their stocks; wooden statues or idols with which their priests consult, and make them give answer suiting to the hope of these people.

Their staff declareth unto them: this was another kind of forbidden consulting with the devil; an art much in use in those times and places. You read of this **#Eze 21:2**. These were parts of their sottish idolatry. So they thought, they believed what their false prophets reported from the staff or stock. Unparalleled folly! not to believe God speaking from heaven, but at the same time believe a stock or staff, that knows not in whose hand it is, or what use it is put to.

The spirit of whoredoms; a heart addicted to and insnared with whoredoms, spiritual and corporal.

Hath caused them to err; hath blinded, misled, and deceived them. So **#Isa 40:20 44:14,18**.

And they have gone a whoring from under their God; so they have left their God, refusing to be under his guidance, endeavouring to evade his corrections, and to fortify themselves, rebel-like, against his armies raised to chastise them, trusting herein to idols.

Ver. 13.

They, both priests and people,

sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains; where their altars were sometimes to God, sometimes to idols: these were the high places, chosen out by themselves, and where their sacrifices offered to God were esteemed little else than idolatry, **#Isa 57:7.**

Burn incense upon the hills; another piece of idolatry they practised, which as it usually was joined to their sacrifices, so is it here added by the prophet. This idolatry abounded in Israel, where without control it had been in use ever since their revolt, if not before: a wood so deep-rooted, that the best kings of Judah could not quite extirpate it.

Under oaks; some say pines, or the alder.

Poplars; the white poplar.

Elms; or lime-tree, or the tree whose boughs stretched out together cast a pleasant shadow. Under all these it is certain the ancient heathen did perform their idolatrous services; so did this people choose all these great trees which, having many and great boughs, do afford the darkest and coolest recesses, **#Eze 20:28.**

Because the shadow thereof is good; convenient for the sacrificers, while the smoke and smell of the sacrifice went up through the boughs, and the coolness of the shady place kept their persons from sultry heat; it may be they thought (as the heathen did) that the *numen*, deity, delighted to dwell or be often in such places.

Therefore; for these sins of yours, though you account them no sins, for your harmonizing with heathenish superstitions; for your leaving my temple, and, against my commands, sacrificing where best liketh you.

Your daughters shall commit whoredom; shall dishonour themselves and their families by their lewdness and unlawful converse with fornicators. The sin of the fathers is thus punished, that they might see God's just hand punishing, and the sin punished. Here is spiritual whoredom punished with giving up daughters to their wandering lusts.

Your spouses shall commit adultery; or, *spouses of your sons*, as the French version; a great unhappiness to any family, to be disparaged and wronged by adulteresses, and a grievous punishment, where or whensoever executed; and this is here foretold it will be so, not countenanced.

Ver. 14.

I will not punish, or visit upon,

your daughters; God will not any more lay on them such restraints, as remarkable punishments are usually to all that observe them. They are threatened thus to be thrown up to their own hearts' and others' lusts. You have rejected my law which directed the correction and punishment of such sins, and do you think I will by extraordinary courses restrain, where you cast off the ordinary? You shall have no bitter water of jealousy to discover, convict, and torment an adulterous wife, as Judah hath, **#Nu 5:12**, &c., nor will I by unusual strokes of my hand smite them. This impunity will increase your grief and shame, and so you shall be punished.

Themselves, the husbands and fathers, are examples to wives and daughters; those are

separated with the lewd women, which either they took to them upon putting away their lawful wife, which these men did to satisfy their lusts; or else separated, i.e. withdrawn from the company or their fellow idolaters, that in privacy they might commit whoredom with the women they choose to themselves for that end.

They sacrifice with harlots; perform the rites of sacrifices, both in offering first and in feasting next, in which feasts wine and women would prove great and prevalent temptations to whoredom among those men.

Therefore the people that doth not understand: by all this it is evident this people is a sottish, ignorant people, that know not God, as #Ho 4:1,6,11.

Shall fall; be utterly ruined, broken into pieces, and scattered; broken at home first by intestine wars, next by foreign invasions, and carried away at last by conquering enemies.

Ver. 15.

This summeth up the sins, the idolatries of the ten tribes; and is a transition to what next follows; either by way of exhortation, or admonition, or prayer and wish, for the two tribes which stuck to the house of David, as to the temple.

Let not Judah offend; commit like sins as Israel hath done, imitate none of their idolatry: possibly the prophet saw Judah inclined to backslide, or this might be preached in the beginning of Ahaz's reign.

Come not ye, you of Judah, who have the temple and house of God with you, who have hitherto been preserved from Israelitish idolatry,

unto Gilgal; a place near Jordan, where the twelve stones were pitched, #Jos 4:9, the camp was pitched, circumcision revived, the passover kept, #Jos 5:2,10; there Joshua divided the land, #Jos 14:6, there the tabernacle was at first pitched after they came over Jordan, and there they sacrificed. There was in Ahab's time a college of prophets; and now, whether out of reverence to the place on these accounts, or for what other reasons, it matters not, but certain it is, this Gilgal was chosen out by Jeroboam, or by succeeding idolaters, for a place of public worship of their idols, and grew famous for it. Go not up to partake of their idolatry, or to learn it. It is a concise speech, which forbids all the sins committed at Gilgal.

Neither go ye up to Beth-aven; which is Beth-el, where Jacob lodged, had a vision of angels, and a more comfortable vision of God, who appeared to Jacob, who for this gave name to the place, and called it Beth-el, house of God; but when Jeroboam made it the place of his calf worship, it became, and is called, Beth-avert, house of vanity or iniquity. Go not thither to worship. It is as the former, a prohibition of being of that religion which was in use at

Beth-avert, and had been the established religion for two hundred years, or thereabouts, viz. ever since Jeroboam's time.

Nor swear, The Lord liveth this is in itself lawful oath, and may be used; but in the circumstances wherewith it is here attended it is forbidden, because many who went thither yet pretended there to sacrifice only to the true God, that they owned him the only living God, revered him, swore by him; though they went up to Beth-avert or Gilgal, yet they worshipped God there. This is a synecdoche, a part being put for the whole worship of God, which the prophet warns them not to blend and mix with idolatries, which yet was done before Josiah's time, **#Zep 1:5**, which see, with the annotations on it.

Ver. 16.

There is just cause why Judah should not imitate Israel, and this cause is here assigned.

Israel; the ten tribes

As a backsliding heifer, grown lusty, fed and wanton, will neither endure the yoke to work, nor be confined in her allowed pastures, breaks over all bounds, casts off all service, so as Israel, as **#Ho 4:7**, which see.

Now; ere long, or suddenly; so **#Ho 2:10**.

The Lord, offended by their sins, and provoked to displeasure,

will feed them as a lamb in a large place; in their sinning they were like an untamed heifer, boundless, strong, and stood upon their defence, but in their punishments they shall be like a lamb, solitary, full of fears, in a large place or wilderness, where is no rest, safety, or provision: such shall be the condition of the ten captivated tribes. This is a proverbial speech, setting forth the forlorn state which Israel ere long should fall under.

Ver. 17.

The children of Ephraim were numerous and potent among the ten tribes, a principal part of them, and out of which tribe the first idolater and usurper did arise, **#1Ki 11:26**; and therefore the whole body of the ten tribes, and the rulers among them, are here particularly pointed at.

Is joined to idols; associated as friends to friends, or joined as lovers are joined to lovers; married to idols, and will not be taken off.

Let him alone; he is indeed obstinately bent on his old courses, and as such throw him up; he will not return; let him wander, but let it be alone, O Judah, be not his companion, his friend, go not with him.

Ver. 18.

Though in their idol feasts they drink wine and strong drinks, yet this is either sour and unpleasant, or corrupt and hurtful, there is no good savour in it; therefore, O Judah, decline thou the intimate familiarity, and have nothing to do with the idolatries, of Israel.

They have committed whoredom, both spiritual and corporal, continually, without ceasing from Jeroboam's time to this day, two hundred years, one king after another, and one idolater after another; not one but either was an idolatrous worshipper of Baal or the calves, &c.

Her rulers with shame do love, Give ye; beside all this, there is shameful oppression and bribery among them; and what good then, O Judah, canst thou look for from society and friendship with them?

Ver. 19.

The whirlwind of wrath from God hath already seized this old adulteress, and carried some of her children away already, #2Ki 15:19,29. Execution of judgment is already begun, and therefore, O Judah, keep distance from Ephraim.

They shall be ashamed; greatly confounded and disappointed of their hopes: as thou, O Judah, wouldst prevent this shame, flee the society of these idolaters.

Because of their sacrifices; what they made their confidence shall be their shame, their own idols cannot help them. but their idolatry shall surely undo them. Their idols which they worshipped and depended on shall be their shame and confusion, for thy God, O Judah, hath cursed such people. *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols,* #Ps 97:7. If Israel do, yet, O Judah, do not thou so.

HOSEA CHAPTER 5

God's judgments against the priests, the people, and the princes of Israel, for their manifold sins, **#Ho 5:1-14**, until they repent, **#Ho 5:15**.

Ver. 1.

Hear ye this, O priests: proclamation is made, and the criminals are cited to appear, and attend their charge; amongst which the priests are first summoned: not of the tribe of Levi, not God's priests, but Baal's priests, priests of the high places; such they called themselves, so accounted by the people, and priests they were as good as their constitution by Jeroboam son of Nebat could make them.

Hearken, ye house of Israel; all the people of Israel, hearken and consider duly.

Give ye ear, O house of the king; all you of Menahem's court, and all you that are of the royal family. It is very probable, if not plainly certain, that Menahem was king at this time over Israel, and that Hosea points him out with his whole family.

For judgment is toward you; for to you it appertained to execute judgment, and do right, so some; but the most read it, as we do,

judgment is toward, i.e. against you; you have sinned, and God will punish. God's controversy, **#Ho 4:1**, is with you all, but first with priests who neglected to instruct the people, next with the body of the people, and lastly with the king, court, and his family.

Ye have been a snare; you, O priests and princes, nobles and judges, have ensnared the people by your examples and practices, which have been idolatrous, and the people have imitated you: it may possibly refer to that the Jews say was done, spies set to watch who went to Jerusalem to worship and to inform, that they might be punished: or else thus. By commending the calves, and palliating the idolatry committed in worshipping them, by persuading the people they might as well worship there as at Jerusalem, you have been a snare unto them, and drawn them into idolatry.

On Mizpah; either taken comparatively, as fowlers and hunters have taken many birds and beasts, by gins and snares, on Mizpah, so you have insnared many souls in idolatry; or, by idolatries acted at Mizpah you have insnared many: so at Mizpah there was a high place, and idolatrous worship performed there; whether at Mizpah in Judah, which is not very likely, or Mizpah part of Libanus, which is the more likely, I determine not.

And a net spread upon Tabor; a very famous mount for its exact roundness, and the height thereof, and as famous for the pleasantness thereof, which easily persuades me to think this hill must needs have some high place on it, and that where high places were so much in fashion, Tabor could not be omitted. Here, as in Mizpah, idolatry caught men as birds or wild beasts are taken in a net: or briefly thus. The priests and secular power did make religion and the civil government a snare for men, both so managed the laws of each as to entrap all they could; as if men were fowls and beasts, and governors civil and ecclesiastical hunters and fowlers, and their laws nets and gins set to catch men, and make a prey of them. Thus it was in Israel at that day.

Ver. 2.

The revolters; all those that have cast off the law of God, both in matters of religion and civil government.

Are profound; dig deep to hide their counsels, or have taken deep root since their apostasy from God, and revolt from the house of David.

To make slaughter: all their religion is but a butchering of cattle, no sacrifice to God; or, which is worse, a murdering of men.

Though I, Hosea, *have been a rebuker;* a preacher, who ill the name and word of God have sharply inveighed against their brutish religion and their bloody slaughters.

Of them all: none that have been guilty have escaped the reproof; I have declaimed against idolatrous priests and bloody usurpers, such as were in those times, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekah.

Ver. 3.

These revolvers neither are nor can be so deep as to conceal themselves, their designs, contrivances, and practices, from me; I thoroughly know Ephraim. The revolvers are also called **Israel** in this verse, who is not hid from me. It is an elegant repetition of the same thing in different words.

Thou committest whoredom; all thy fair pretences thou canst put upon thy devised religion cannot better it, still it is downright idolatry or spiritual whoredom.

And Israel is defiled: Israel here is Ephraim; and when Israel is said to be polluted, it is to be understood both of spiritual and corporal pollution, which mostly are linked together, and draw on each other.

Ver. 4.

They, those revolvers, polluted Israelites and idolatrous Ephraimites, will not frame their doings; they are so intent upon their idolatries and oppressions, they have been so long inured to these doings, that now they are become slaves to their own doings, insomuch that they neither have will or power to change them, as **#Jer 13:23**.

To turn unto their God; to repent of those wicked courses, and to leave them, and so return to their God, who was once theirs by covenant, though now they have violated the covenant, and departed from God. They are in sin hardened to a hopeless and remediless obstinacy and impenitence.

The spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them: see **#Ho 4:12**. Their mind and inclination stands bent and fixed upon spiritual whoredoms, and they are incited to it by the seducing spirit, allured by examples, and all these hurry them on. It is a universal distemper among them, all filled with this spirit, it hath seized the heart of them.

They have not known; they never did rightly know, nor would they ever know, they forgot, were wilfully ignorant of, the way of holiness and pure religion, contained in the law of God.

The Lord, who is pure, zealous for his glory, sovereign in his authority, rich in his rewards, severe in his punishments, and true

to his promises and threats; that nothing can be more prejudicial to a people than to forsake, nor any thing more conducive to the good of a people than to keep, his law.

Ver. 5.

The pride of Israel: it might have been rendered, the excellency or glory of Israel; and so, referred to God, it would be a prediction that God himself would witness against Israel. God is said to swear by the *excellency of Jacob*, #Am 8:7, i.e. by himself. Thus interpreted, it would very well accord with what follows in this and the following verse. But as it is here rendered, it is the haughtiness, carnal confidence of Israel, grown great under the long and prosperous reign of Jeroboam the Second, that they thought it impossible such calamities as foretold by the prophet should overtake them, or that God should think so ill of that worship they thought so well of; they neither confess their sins, nor fear God's judgments.

Doth testify; is so full and evident witness against Israel, that no other testimony need be produced.

To his face; to convince and silence the most impudent and shameless among them.

Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim, the nine tribes, and the head of them, Ephraim,

fall in their iniquity; be ruined for their sins of which they are guilty, but repent not.

Judah, the two tribes under Ahaz, now lapsed to idolatry, also shall fall with them; be captivated too ere long, soon after sin will undo them.

Ver. 6.

They; the people of Judah, say some, but I rather think it is spoken of the Ephraimites, and either implies by what they did support their confidence of escaping ruin, or else foretells that extremity of sufferings should force them at last to offer sacrifices to God; and the Jewish doctors tell us, that under Hoshea's reign Israel had liberty of bringing their offerings and sacrifices to Jerusalem: whether this were so or not, it is certain they did not

seek him in right manner, it was with their flocks and herds, but not with their hearts, not with sound repentance.

But they shall not find him; whilst he might have been found they would not seek him, now as a punishment, and to leave them remediless, God will not be found of them; he will not either accept a sacrifice, or pardon their sin, or return to save them.

He hath withdrawn himself from them; in displeasure hath withdrawn his favourable presence from them, and with resolution to leave them to the violences of the Assyrian powers.

Ver. 7.

They, the whole house of Israel, priests, people, and princes, and their kings with them,

have dealt treacherously; have falsified their word and promise of fidelity and constancy, of love and affection, when they entered covenant with me; have turned idolaters, and worshipped and relied on false gods.

They have begotten strange children; as if it were not enough that they were idolaters, they have trained up their children in the same idolatry, partly by their instruction, and more by their examples.

Now, or therefore, or ere long, as **#Ho 2:10.**

A month; either the new moon, one particular species of ceremonial, superstitious worship put for all the rest, as some interpret, or rather, a time not long (as an age); not as to the old world, nor as to Nineveh, forty days, but a shorter time: possibly it may refer to Shallum's short time of usurpation, which lasted but a month; a month shall devour them, the Assyrians shall make a speedy conquest over you.

With their portions; not only persons, but their goods and chattels, are exposed to speediest spoiling; and as a token of such future speedy desolation, the prophet points out a short reign of one of the usurpers, and foretells the precise time of his continuance, that when they shall see this come to pass. They might believe the rest foretold by the prophet should also come to pass. Nor is this conjecture without some ground, since we know that Shallum slew Zachariah before the people, **#2Ki 15:10,**

implying the people's concurrence herein, and their accepting of Shallum with expectation of peace and prosperity, to the increase of their portion under his government, all which was blasted at the month's end.

Ver. 8.

Blow ye the cornet; ye watchmen, or whoever have the care and custody of these fortified towns, sound the alarm, for the enemy cometh.

In Gibeah; a town of Benjamin situate on a hill, built by Asa, #1Ki 15:22; made by him a frontier, and likely always garrisoned against the incursion of the ten tribes.

And the trumpet; add to the sound of the cornet the trumpet also, which is proper for war, and will be best understood by the people; lest they mistake the meaning of the cornet, which is, say some, a pastoral instrument, proper for shepherds, sound the trumpet.

In Ramah; of which there were three, one in Naphtali, and Rama-sophim, and this of Benjamin near Gibeah, and was an inlet into Judah, of great importance, as appears #1Ki 15:17,21; a town of strength, built on a high hill, and fit to be as a watchtower. Be you upon your guard when the invader is so near.

Cry aloud at Beth-aven; as more concerned, cry out with more vehemency, awaken all to prepare for defence; or, howl and lament for the things that are come upon thee, O Beth-aven. The Assyrians' march will alarm thy neighbours, but their success against thee will ruin thee utterly. Let thine inhabitants therefore cry and howl. If that Beth-aven situate in the wilderness, this passage foretells the destruction of it by the Assyrians, probably in the beginning of their invasion; if it were Beth-el, it was the chief seat of idolatry, and first or chief in miseries.

After thee, O Benjamin:

thee referred to Beth-aven speaks thus; after thy cries, when thou hast howled, let Benjamin and Judah too begin theirs, for they shall also fall for their sin.

Ver. 9.

Ephraim; the whole kingdom of the ten tribes, all sorts and ranks of men among them.

Shall be desolate; a desolation, i. e. most desolate, utterly cut off.

In the day of rebuke; when Shalmaneser shall come up with his forces, besiege, sack, and captivate all thy cities, and Samaria with the rest; when by these Assyrians I shall rebuke, i.e. punish.

Among the tribes of Israel, to the house of Israel openly, so that all might be informed, have I made known; by my prophets I have foretold what should be, and by some judgments already executed I have further made known to them; they are sufficiently warned, and should have considered in time, and prevented their own calamities.

That which shall surely be; what is irrevocably determined and ratified, and they shall never evade, nor ever overcome.

Ver. 10.

The princes; the great men about the king and court, the rulers and governors, who by the law of God and man should have been the maintainers of equity and justice among the people.

Of Judah; of the kingdom of Judah, or the two tribes.

Were; have been, and now are in the days of Ahaz, for to this man's time the prophet now pointeth.

Like them that remove the bound; the ancient bounds which limited every one, prevented controversies and oppressions of encroaching, covetous men. The prophet, I doubt not, aims at reproving the sin of these great ones in changing the laws of religion, as well as altering the bounds of civil rights, whether by encroaching upon foreigners, and enlarging the kingdom of Judah by entrenching on the neighbouring kingdoms, or, which is more certain, by injustice and violence seizing what was another's.

Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them: this was sin and forbidden, #De 19:14; this practice is cursed, #De 27:17, and God now will punish it.

Like water; like an overflowing flood.

Ver. 11.

Ephraim; the subjects of the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes; the prophet resumeth his threat against them.

Is oppressed; supposing, as well we may, that this prophecy respecteth Ahaz's time, it will appear that the reigns of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah were past, which were unjust, seditious, bloody, and tyrannical times, in which oppressions abounded, and of which our prophet now speaketh. The ten tribes are by sedition, civil wars, and bloody conspiracies eaten up already almost. But to those God will add his displeasure, and the Assyrians shall be the executioners, and shall oppress Ephraim.

Broken in judgment, i.e. through fear of the partiality of the judge; though his cause be equal and just, yet money, or money's worth, is extorted, to prevent an unjust, or to procure a just sentence; a known course in such days as those the prophet lived in, or as the days of Marius and Sylla.

Because he, Ephraim, spoken of as if one person, perhaps to intimate the universal defection,

willingly walked; it was not forced upon them, they did it willingly. Though there was a law commanding, yet there was in the people a forwardness, and too great a readiness, to comply and obey that law which made idolatry the establishment in the ten tribes.

After the commandment; to forbear going to the temple, and to worship the calves at Dan and Beth-el, as Jeroboam son of Nebat required.

Ver. 12.

Therefore, or *And*, Heb. *I will be*; I am; it is concise in the Hebrew, and might be thus expressed, But, or And, as for me, I am, and will be, to the ten tribes.

As a moth: moths do leisurely eat up and mar our clothes; so God was then, and had been from Jeroboam's death to this day, weakening the ten tribes; their seditions did eat them up.

And to the house of Judah; the two tribes, who now with Ahaz did, as Ephraim, cast God off.

As rottenness; shall secretly consume and rot as wood doth by worms; so God will punish both Israel and Judah, these shall be forerunners and preparatories to the final desolation of both; of the one by Assyria, and of the other by Babylon.

Ver. 13.

When, Heb. *And*, after that. Ephraim; the king, and council, and kingdom of the ten tribes; Menahem is surely meant: see 2 Kings xv.

Saw his sickness; weakness, like a consumption, threatening death. Though Menahem had killed Shallun, and got into the throne, yet he found himself unable to hold it against the opposite faction, and therefore sent for assistance from Assyria, #2Ki 15:19, or at least purchased the friendship of Pul, who was come out as an enemy.

Judah, the other kingdom of the two tribes, saw his wound; a deep and festering wound; or a corrupting imposthume, which needs be opened, cleansed, and bound up: such was the state of the two tribes at that day, ulcerous and full of danger, for Ahaz had done very wickedly, and wounded the kingdom.

Then went, made application,

Ephraim to the Assyrian; particularly to Pul, as #2Ki 15:19,20. Not one word of their going to God, he was not in all their thoughts: he did afflict leisurely that they might seek him, but they forgot him still.

And sent ambassadors and presents to entreat and procure his help,

to king Jareb: whilst interpreters agree not who this Jareb was, while some will have it be a proper, others an appellative name, of a person or place, I think it will be a surer course' to compare times, who was king of Assyria when Ephraim was sick and Judah was wounded, and both felt it, for whoever this will prove to be, he it is that is meant by Jareb: Pul in Menahem's time, Tiglath-pileser in Ahaz's time. Or what if Jareb be the sum of what Ephraim and Judah desired of this Assyrian king; they complained of wrong received, and sent to this foreign king their complaint,

and requested that he would judge, or, in our modern terms, be arbitrator; so the word will bear.

Yet could he not heal you; Ephraim's sickness grew worse by it, Israel was sicker for it.

Nor cure you, Judah, Ahaz, and his wounded state, of your wound; the Assyrian king was either unable or unwilling to heal the wound, which he knew would as much profit him as hurt his patient.

Ver. 14.

For I, the Lord, whose power is infinite, whose wrath they have enkindled, who hath threatened to extirpate them,

will be unto Ephraim as a lion; a panther, say some, a very swift beast, wherein he excels the lion, and a very fierce and ravenous creature, wherein he equals the lion; or a lioness, say others: but to leave that, God will make the Assyrian a surgeon, such as a fierce, ravenous lion would be to a wounded man. As a young lion to the house of Judah; which is grown up to his strength for mischief, and retains his inclination to gamesomeness, or to play with his prey; so should Judah find himself when caught by this lion, first made a sport to please the tyrannous humour, and after made a feast to feed his ravenous hunger.

I, even I, will tear: the threat is doubled to ascertain it and make it more dreadful. Divine vengeance by the Assyrians shall be as a lion tearing his prey.

And go away: when satisfied, the lion goes away, fleeth not for fear.

I will take away: he leaveth not ally behind him, carrieth away what he did not cat; so should Assyria devour the land, and carry away the people.

None shall rescue him: none have courage to attempt or power to effect a rescue, the prey must hopelessly perish; so it will be with Ephraim and Judah, when God appears as a lion against them.

Ver. 15.

I will go and return to my place: after the manner of man God speaks, he will do that which shall be like a man's going away

from such as refuse though they need his help, he retires; God will withdraw his saving help.

Till they acknowledge their offence; till they confess and humble themselves for their sins.

And seek my face; me their God, my mercy, and my law; their Sovereign as well as Saviour.

In their affliction they will seek me early; in deep distresses they will, at least some will, seek me diligently, as indeed they did at the end of Judah's seventy years' captivity.

HOSEA CHAPTER 6

An exhortation to repentance, **#Ho 6:1-3**. A complaint against Israel and Judah for persisting still in their wickedness, **#Ho 6:4-11**.

Ver. 1.

The former chapter ended with a declaration of God's resolution to bring his own chosen ones, true Israelites, by deep distresses to repentance, and to seek him whom they had forsaken; this chapter begins with a declaration of the success of this project. The prophet therefore brings them in exhorting and calling upon one another, and encouraging each other; the phrase you have **#Isa 2:3 Mic 4:2**, &c.

Let us return unto the Lord; let us be wiser at last, idols have not profited us, they have been our sin, and our fall; we forsook the fountain of living water when we did forsake the Lord. Let us now, with repenting hearts, leave idols, and return to the Lord; let us cast them off, and betake ourselves to the worship, obedience, love, and fear of the Lord, the only true and eternal God.

For he hath torn; we now see his hand in all we suffer, and as it is his we own it very just: we, like froward rebels, sought our help from his enemies, and he, as he threatened, hath met us, like a lion, and hath torn us: his voice in the judgment, like the roaring of a lion, hath awakened us; and our bleeding wounds have told us, that God hath done all this against us, and all this because we were departed from him.

And he will heal us; for, beside his mercy inclining him, we know it was his design by this course to recover us to himself; and we are assured he hath withdrawn his hand. left us in perplexities, but till we would seek, till we would be willing to be healed: he will be our Physician, and by his lenitives will ease and cure us, now his severer course hath abated our phrensy. The Assyrian king could not, but Israel's God and King can and will heal.

He hath smitten; the same thing in a different simile, God hath wounded.

And he will bind us up, as a skillful and tender chirurgeon binds up with plasters, and swathes to heal.

Ver. 2.

In this verse it is most certain we are to regard both the literal and historical sense, and distinguish it from the mystical and accommodated sense; in this latter, these words foretell the death, and resurrection, and future glory of Christ and Christians, as **#1Co 15:4**, and so are generally interpreted and applied by expositors. As to the letter, his history, it is in brief thus:

After two days; after some short time of sufferings for our sins, or rather when our sufferings have brought us to repentance and return to God, our God will soon after show us his grace and favour, and revive our dead state. It is not needful we inquire how long time this two days intends, it is a certain time for an uncertain, two days for a short time. God doth not delay long when we return to him, **#Jer 31:18,19**, with **#Jer 31:20**; and **#Ho 14:3**, with **#Ho 14:4**.

He will revive us: though we were as dead men, buried in our miseries, and neither deserved from God, nor could hope from any other hand, a resurrection, and recovery to a better state; yet our merciful God will quicken us again. **#Ezr 9:8,9**, expresseth their return out of captivity in those words that might well paraphrase our prophet.

In the third day he will raise us up: mercy recovers by degrees, and therefore a third day is added, in which this people shall be raised up, increased, established, and confirmed. Possibly the prophet may allude to the third day, which is said to be a critical day to the wounded, who conceive hopes when better on that day;

or possibly it may refer to the third decree by Darius made to Nehemiah for building Jerusalem, and the two days may refer to the times of Cyrus reviving the Jews, first, by his decree of liberty, and command to build the temple. The second day or time that of Darius Hystaspes to Zerubbabel and Joshua, for building the temple, in which work his bounty revived the hopes of the Jews; however poor and unable, yet the temple should be built, and the worship of God restored. This was a great reviving, but their settlement was upon the third decree, which was given out by Darius Longimanus to Nehemiah, **#Ne 2:1**.

We shall live; flourish in peace, wealth, and joy; in pure worship of God, in righteousness among ourselves, in safety from enemies.

In his sight; the eye of our God being upon us for good, and we filled with the fruits of his favour, inheriting his promises here till we fully possess them in the light of glory.

Ver. 3.

Then; after that God hath revived and raised his repenting and inquiring captives, brought them to his temple and city, restored his worship and his law amongst them (all which are figures of more glorious things to be expected by the church of Christ after his resurrection).

Shall we know; be better instructed in the law of our God, know what worship he requires, and is best pleased with. This knowledge of God shall be to us a spring of all holy, righteous, sober, and temperate conversation. Such knowledge, if we observe the Scriptures, was promised to the Jews after their return out of captivity, and their seeking the Lord, **#Jer 24:5-7 31:34 Eze 11:17-20 36:23 Hab 2:14 Zep 3:9, &c.**

Follow on to know; it shall be an increasing knowledge, which by a diligent attendance to the word and works of God these shall attain, and improve by doing the will of God, and by worshipping him; they shall know experimentally and practically how holy, how good, how faithful God is, **#Joh 8:31,32**. Before this they knew not God, and sinned, provoked God, and undid themselves; but now they shall know, obey, and please their God and Saviour.

His going forth before his people who know him, and endeavour to increase that knowledge; his gracious, faithful, holy, just, and

wise providences, and manifestations of himself in the conduct of them for his people's good and comfort.

Is prepared as the morning; as sure, seasonable, beautiful, grateful, and as clear as the morning; which dispels the darkness, and proclaims its own approach.

As the latter and former rain unto the earth; which reviveth, maketh it fruitful, beautifieth it, and gives a new face to all. So God will abundantly bless his repenting Israel, his returning people. This blessing he promised over and over to the Jews after the captivity, #**Eze 34:25 Ho 2:18,19 14:5,6 Mal 3:10.**

Ver. 4.

The Lord now enters a debate with both Israel (here called **Ephraim**) and the two tribes, with all that were his, people anciently; much after the manner of men, who having to do with froward and ungovernable children, or servants, whom they pity, and would not cast off, after much kindness and patience showed to them, and abused by them, at last seem at a stand what more to do, or appeal to by-standers whether more might be done, or demand of the untractable ones what they can desire more to be done. So #**Isa 5:3-6 Mic 6:3,5.** What is it I may do becoming my holy, just, and wise procedures, with my reasonable creatures? What should I do more to save you from ruin, and salve my own honour, truth, add justice? Would you of the ten tribes, and you of the two tribes, have me cease to be God, and resign to your idols? or repeal my own laws, and subscribe to your idols' rites? Or would you have Satan the wicked one, who hath seduced your kings, prophets, priests, and people, whom you worship in your idols, would you that he should still retain your love and service, and I maintain you in it? I would do, as appears by what I have done, any thing that may be done to reduce, reclaim, and reform you, who are as impudent adulteresses, that will not be sincere and faithful to their reconciled husband.

Your goodness, or your kindness, your love to me, my law, worship, and honour, your promises of love and loyalty,

is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew; vanisheth without effect, it is deceitful; you are hypocrites, nothing but short and empty signs of goodness, piety, and amendment. Their hypocrisy

and unconstancy, elegantly expressed in this double allusion, renders them incapable of further gentleness.

Ver. 5.

Therefore; because I would do for you whatever might be done, because I would cure you of your obstinacy and hypocrisy, and make you upright and constant. I have hewed them; I have severely, continually, and unweariedly by the prophets reproved, warned, and threatened. Your hearts have been like knotty trees, or hardest stones: I have made my prophets like labourers, and, my words like axes or hammers to cut off the knots, and to hew off the roughness which make unfit for use; but all to no purpose, the desired effect hath not been attained.

By the prophets; some that were before Hosea. Jeroboam the First was by a prophet reproved and threatened for this idolatry, in which Israel persisted, and to which Judah did too often fall; and through the space of two hundred years, from Jeroboam the First to Hosea's time, many other prophets were sent, whose names, and some memoirs of them, we have, as Ahijah, Jehu, Hanani, Elijah, and Elisha. These and such like were the prophets that did hew crooked and knotty Israel.

I have slain them: some say the false prophets are the persons meant here, whom God did slay for their sin, seducing Israel to, and confirming them in, idolatry; indeed Elijah's sincere zeal did cut off so many, #1Ki 18:22,40, and Jehu's counterfeit zeal cut off so many, #2Ki 10:21,25, that it could never be forgotten among that people. So the thing is true, many false prophets were slain for this sin; yet the persons in our text were not these false prophets, but they were the people of Israel and Judah, the idolatrous, refractory hypocrites among them, whom God threatened with death, and that by the sword of enemies.

By the words of my mouth; as he did by his word foretell, so he did effect too in due time.

Thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth, i.e. the punishments threatened, the miseries foretold, which fell upon this people, did so fully answer the prediction, that every one might see them clear as the light, and as constantly executed as the morning. So #Zep 3:5.

Ver. 6.

I so hewed and slew them, because they did not what I most of all required, approved, and could accept of; they were full of sacrifices, and spared them not, but either to idols, or else in formality and pride. These sacrificers were either abominable idolaters, as were they of Ephraim, or proud hypocrites, as were too many of Judah.

I desired mercy; compassion and charity towards men, this one principal duty of the second table put for all works of godly humanity, pleaseth me, in this I delight. I had found little of this among you, nor could I persuade you to it; though this was it that I required, #Mic 6:8.

And not sacrifice; rather than, or more than, sacrifice, for it is not an absolute, but a comparative negative. Mercy to man who needed it, without a sacrifice to me who need it not, was more pleasing than a sacrifice (though required) with cruelty to man, which I forbade.

The knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings: hearty, affectionate knowledge of God, which fills the mind with reverence of his majesty, fear of his goodness, love of his holiness, trust in his promise, and submission to his will; knowledge of God's law, the rule of our obedience, of his favour, the reward of our obedience, and knowledge of his omniscience, discerning and judging it, with those excellent effects, proper fruits hereof; are more than all sacrifice, as though they were burnt-sacrifices, which of all other were entirely given to God. But truth is, who knows God aright, and doth keep his heart for God, gives God more than he that brings whole burnt-offerings; for these are but ceremonies and signs, empty and insipid to God, without the heart. In short, these people acted all so contrary to this temper of their God, gave him so much of that he valued not, and so little of that he did most value, that he could not be too severe against them, nor is it any wonder he was so displeased with their sacrifices.

Ver. 7.

I told them by my prophets what I required of them by covenant, but I could not obtain it, they regarded not what I said.

Like men; or, like Adam: some take it for a proper name, and so refer it unto the first man, and his breaking covenant; and, for aught I see, it may well enough refer to him, who forgot or slighted the threat, who judged of what he did by what it appeared, as a small matter; and so these forget and slight my threats, and judge of the place where, and the persons by whom, and the times when, sacrifices are to be offered as no material circumstances, and therefore do choose what places they please, and appoint what priest liketh them best to offer; or else transgress the covenant, as if it were the covenant of a man like themselves.

The covenant; the law of their God, which directed and encouraged their obedience, and which threatened their disobedience, and cursed it.

There; in that very place, the good land, which by covenant I gave them, they have broken my covenant; or in the things in which they thought they kept covenant, in their sacrifices, and observing of feasts, in these things they transgress the covenant.

Dealt treacherously against me; very frowardly, and with wilful resolutions perverted my law; their transgressing was a designed perfidiousness. I told them, Obedience, not sacrifice; they reply, Sacrifice, and stop there; they give no obedience, though they offer many sacrifices.

Ver. 8.

Gilead; one of the six cities of refuge, situate in the country of that name, on a high hill, whence it is called Ramoth-gilead: now as a city of refuge it was a city pertaining to the priests and Levites, as all the cities of refuge did, in what tribe soever they were, #Nu 35:6.

Is a city of them that work iniquity; a sacerdotal city, where priests did, and religion, i.e. knowledge of God and mercy to man, should, dwell; but Gilead is a city full of most notorious transgressors, the inhabitants, though Levites and priests, are a generation of men that work all manner of wickedness.

And is polluted with blood; murders committed there have polluted it, or murderers protected there against the law of God, who provided these cities a relief for such as unawares, without malice, by chance slew his neighbour, not for wilful murderers;

yet these for money or interest got in and were secured there; and probably many were kept out or delivered up to the avenger of blood contrary to the law: thus Gilead by name, and all the rest of the cities of refuge intended too, were polluted with blood.

Ver. 9.

What is here charged upon these priests, they turned highway-men and murderers, some understand of their killing and spoiling those that were going up to Jerusalem to worship God there; but more likely it is, that in this Gilead were many murderers, who durst not go out, nor could get their livelihood within the city, but, reduced to straits, took this wicked course for a livelihood, robbed and murdered on the highway, and then divided the prey with the priests, whose consent to the thing made them deeply guilty. And thus in this manner they act most lewd things; or these things are done and encouraged by the priests, because they make it their business, it is their trade now to contrive and act wickedness, highest wickednesses. Or, if you rather like it in the brief, the priests by companies lay wait, and rob, and murder, like as do the troops which rob towards Shethem.

Ver. 10.

I have seen: it may be understood of the prophet speaking what he had seen; or of God, who seeth now, and hath seen,

an horrible thing, a very horrible thing, as some observe from the word, in the house of Israel, the ten tribes.

The whoredom, idolatry,

of Ephraim; which was brought in by an Ephraimite, by Jeroboam the First, two hundred years ago, and it is there still.

Israel is defiled; it hath overspread all Israel, none free, but all defiled greatly with it.

Ver. 11.

This verse is confessedly very dark to interpreters, who agree not whether Judah be vocative or nominative; or who it is that setteth, whether Ephraim, Judah, or God; or what captivity is here meant, whether one past or to come: the conciseness of our prophet makes him very obscure.

Also, O Judah; or also Judah, i.e. as Israel is polluted, and must expect to be chastised; or, O Judah, thou art like polluted Israel in sin, and mightest be every way like in punishment.

He hath set an harvest for thee; but thy God hath appointed a harvest for thee, thou shalt not as Israel be utterly cut off, a seed of thee shall be sowed, and thou shalt reap the harvest with joy.

When I returned; when I shall return, rather, so it looks to what is to come; or else, forasmuch as I will turn

the captivity of my people, the house of Judah.

HOSEA CHAPTER 7

Israel reprov'd for manifold sins, **#Ho 7:1-10**. God's wrath against them for their hypocrisy, **#Ho 7:11-16**.

Ver. 1.

When: whether this chapter be a new sermon, or a continuation of that begun **#Ho 6**, we need not inquire, nor are there any particulars by which we can guess at the time when this healing work was attempted; but, so soon as it was endeavoured; indefinitely it is spoken, and so to be interpreted.

I would have healed Israel: God doth assume the person of a physician or chirurgeon, who compassionately endeavours to cure a people sick and wounded: such was the house of Israel, the whole body of the people.

The iniquity; the hidden, old, and putrefying sores, here called iniquity, the impieties and injustice.

Of Ephraim; of Israel, called Ephraim, or of Ephraim, the chief tribe of this revolting kingdom; some would have it mean the rulers, or principal men.

Was discovered; broke out; as many times in cures of old sores it happens some deeper and more rooted distemper, unthought of by the chirurgeon, appears. The wickedness, the great and many sins

of Samaria, the royal city of the kingdom, where citizens, priests, prophets, and courtiers as much outsin'd others as they exceeded them in wealth and ease.

They commit falsehood; lying and cozening each other is acted as if it were a business they were bound to attend.

The thief cometh in; secret thefts, or robbing others by subtle and undiscerned methods.

The troop of robbers spoileth without; and open violence by hands joined to hands to spoil abroad. In a word, the strength and danger of their disease appears and increaseth more and more under endeavours to heal them.

Ver. 2.

They who are thus greatly wicked, notorious sinners,

consider not in their hearts, do not remember, nor will they once seriously ponder this, that I remember all their wickedness; that I see all they do, and remember all I see; and that with more than an idle, unactive looking on, or retaining in memory; I look on, and remember to call them to account, and to punish for their sins. They would flatter themselves into an opinion that I take no notice of their wickedness, and that I will never require it.

Their own doings; the guilt and punishment, the iniquity and mischief, of the works they have done; their own doings, not their fathers', as hypocrites and the incorrigible are ready to complain.

Have beset them about: as cords wrap one taken in them, or as an enemy invests and besiegeth a town on every side, so these profligate people, courtiers, priests, prophets, and citizens, are all held enclosed with their own sins.

They are before my face; what they have done I do see, and what they suffer I do see, and it is but just they should suffer what their sins deserve: they hoped for impunity, because they thought I did not regard, but now by a just punishment, by full measures of sorrows heaped upon them, they shall find all their ways were under my eye, and that I weighed their doings.

Ver. 3.

They, either the subjects in general, or rather the courtiers in particular who were about the king,

make the king glad with their wickedness: the kings of Israel, every one of them from first to last, were addicted to vicious

practices, and their minds were vitiated, deeply tainted with all kind of sins, and they it seems took pleasure in sins, both in their own and other men's; and here are a parcel of flagitious fellows that make it their work to invent pleasing wickedness, to acquaint their king with it, who is so far from doing his duty in discountenancing it, that it is one of his delights to hear or see it.

The princes; great men about the court.

With their lies; with false accusations brought in against the more innocent, or by false reports made of their words and actions, representing them as ridiculous or foolish, drolling them into infamy.

Ver. 4.

They are all adulterers, both spiritually and carnally, and this latter adultery is that which here is charged on the courtiers and people of Israel.

As an oven heated by the baker: this vice is grown raging hot among them, as you see the fire in an oven, when the baker, having called up those that make the bread, to prepare all things ready, and the whole mass is leavened, he doth by continued supply of fuel heat the oven to the highest degree. So doth adultery among this people grow by degrees to raging flames. The whole mass of the people are leavened with this vice also, as well as the court, and every one inflamed with this unclean fire, as the oven heated by the baker.

Ver. 5.

In the day of our king: whether this day were any occasional day that the king of Israel took to feast his nobles, as Ahasuerus did his; or whether the anniversary of his birth or coronation, both which were usually celebrated among most nations, the birthday especially; so Pharaoh, #Ge 40:20, and Herod, #Mt 14:6; whether of these we inquire not curiously.

The princes, who attended on the king to witness their joy in the remembrance of that day which made the public glad so great a blessing was bestowed upon them, and to wish many such days unto their king and the kingdom.

Have made him sick with bottles of wine; in their excess of drinking healths, no doubt; instead of a pious arid thankful remembrance of God's mercies, they run into monstrous impieties of luxury and drunkenness, and with bottles of wine, drank off probably at one draught, inflame themselves and their king, and drink him almost to death while they drink and wish his life.

He stretched out his hand: in these drunken feasts it seems the king of Israel forgot himself, became too familiar a companion, and used the formalities of these drinking matches, stretched out his hand with scorers, who deride religion, and wish confusion to the professors of it.

Ver. 6.

For; surely.

They; those luxurious and drinking princes, #Ho 7:5.

Have made ready their heart like an oven; do keep close some fire of ambition, revenge, or covetousness, like as a baker keeps a hot fire within his oven.

Whiles they lie in wait, either against the life or estate of some of their fellow subjects, or it may be, as appears #Ho 7:7, against the life which they seemed in their cups to pray for.

Their baker sleepeth all the night; he who should watch and prevent mischief is swallowed up in the day with feasting and drunkenness, and sleeps in security all the night, never suspecting the projects of conspirators.

In the morning it burneth as a flaming fire; but when he awakes too late, he seeth all in flames, and past quenching. Sedition and rebellion is among these a sin as hateful to God as dangerous to the public, yet frequently acted by the usurpers of those dissolute times.

Ver. 7.

This verse is a key to the former, and helps us to understand the true sense thereof.

They: see #Ho 7:6.

All; in a larger and more vulgar sense, the most, or almost all of them, few excepted.

As an oven: see #Ho 7:6.

Have devoured; as fire destroys, so have these conspirators, when successful, destroyed.

Their judges; those that were magistrates and rulers. who having somewhat of integrity, would not join with them, nor promote the interest of usurpers.

All their kings; all that had been since Jeroboam the Second's reign to the delivery of this prophecy, viz. Zachariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, Pekah; these four fell by the conspiracy of such hot princes, only Menahem died a natural death. *Are fallen*, by treason and violence from such as would drink them sick with wishes of health.

There is none among them that calleth unto me; not one of all these either feared, trusted, or worshipped God. By profession all were idolaters, in practice debauched, and by their company they kept these latter kings of Israel appear under a suspicion of men contemning God, and deriding providence; but they are long since fallen, where they must lie for ever, under God's justice.

Ver. 8.

Ephraim; the kingdom of Israel.

Hath mixed himself among the people, by leagues and commerce, by imitation of their manners, and by either entertaining their gods, and sacrificing to them, or at least worshipping idols as the nations about them did, directly contrary to the express law of God, #De 7:2-4 12:2,3. This was their sin, and the greater because voluntary: the expression seems to represent it as a thing of their own seeking, they did mix themselves with the heathen, whereas had the heathen sought it, it would in likelihood have been said that the nations mixed themselves with Ephraim; but this is in other words the same with #Ho 2:5,7. Or this passage may be (as some conceive) a threat that the Ephraimites should be scattered among the nations, be captives to them, and dispersed amongst them, with whom, to ease their condition a little, they should endeavour to mix by friendship and alliances: if so, this is the punishment of their former sinful confederacies.

Ephraim is a cake not turned: some interpret this of the particoloured temper of Ephraim, by such a proverb as ours, Is neither fish nor flesh; neither Israelite nor heathen, but a mongrel; neither a heathen idolater nor yet a worshipper of God, a hotch-potch of different religions and policies, like them, **#1Ki 18:21 Zep 1:5**; neither bread nor yet dough, but partly both, as the unturned cake on the coals is: but it better expresseth their danger and sudden ruin, whose hungry enemies will eat them up quickly, as men do who for haste will not stay the full baking of their cake.

Ver. 9.

Strangers; foreigners, whose aid Ephraim sought, as **#2Ki 15:19,20**, when Menahem bought the friendship of Pul king of Assyria for one thousand talents of silver, and impoverished the land thereby.

Have devoured; eat up, lived upon, as men live on bread they eat.

His strength; the riches and goods of the kingdom of Israel; the fruit of the olive and vine; the fruit of the earth, corn; the increase of their flocks and of their herds; the most or best of all eaten up by strangers, either soldiers in garrison among them, or else courted by presents and rich gifts sent to them.

Knoweth it not; is not sensible either of the cause why, or the tendency of this hasty consumption of all; still they are secure, and sin as much as ever.

Grey hairs are here and there upon him; the manifest symptoms of approaching death, undeniable tokens of old age, and declining strength never recoverable, are upon their kingdom, like grey hairs that are here and there intermixed on the head of a man: what with domestic seditions and foreign invasions, and the fears, cares, and griefs from both, Ephraim is turned grey-headed, his vital vigour and strength decayeth, and this is a forerunner of his death.

Yet he knoweth it not; so secure and stupid, that no notice is taken of this, nor any course thought of for preventing the dismal effects of this declining consumptive state; none turn from sin, none seek to God, the only Physician that can heal.

Ver. 10.

The pride of Israel testifieth to his face: see #Ho 5:5. Their proud contempt of God and his threats, of the prophets and their warnings, is notorious.

They do not return to the Lord; they persist in sin without repentance, run away from God rather than return to him. Of this phrase,

return, see #Ho 6:1.

Their God; who was theirs of old, who still would be theirs on fair terms, of whom they talk and boast.

Nor seek him; see this phrase #Ho 5:15; they pray not, repent not, nor rely on God.

For all this; though so greatly, continually, and severely punished, though almost eaten up.

Ver. 11.

Ephraim: see #Ho 7:1,8.

Is like a silly dove; a deceived dove, seduced by false prophets and idolatrous priests, whose weak arguments are soon believed, and whose unseasonable advice is too soon followed: Ephraim is now become like the dove in weakness and fear, as well as in imprudence and liableness to be deceived.

Without heart: this explains the former, whether heart here be judgment and discretion, as sometimes it is, or be resolution and courage, as other while it is; this dove, this Ephraim, wants both.

They call; they should in their perplexity call on God, who can help, but they do not; they call indeed, but not to their God, or to a friend.

To Egypt: this Hoshea did, #2Ki 17:4; and I remember not any mention of other application to Egypt since Jehu's time. It is probable Hosea aims at this embassy, and private confederacy, of which, as of a thing in hand, he speaketh. They do call to Egypt, whose king is called So, and judged to be Sabacon the Ethiopian, who had lately conquered Egypt: by this also may we guess at the time of this prophecy, about some four years before Samaria was taken.

They go to Assyria; so did Menahem when on the throne, so did Hoshea, as is evident, #2Ki 15:19,20, with #2Ki 17:3. Thus both betrayed the greatest imprudence, depending for help on professed, old inveterate enemies. So silly were they! See #Ho 5:13 14:3.

Ver. 12.

When they shall go, whensoever they shall send their ambassadors to seek aid of Egypt or Assyria,

I will spread my net upon them; as fowlers spread the net, watch the birds, and cast it over them to catch them, so will God do to Ephraim. So he did with Israel when he accepted the alliance of Shalmaneser, and turned tributary; and again, when Israel sought by Egypt's help to get out of the snares of their vassalage to Shalmaneser, who revenged the conspiracy with a total captivity; nor can there be likelihood or possibility these fugitives should escape when it is God's net, and he spreads it, his almighty power, his allsearching wisdom, his just vengeance, that follows them.

I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; though they attempt to fly, yet as fowls in the net they shall certainly fall, I will bring them down; as he did when they were gathered into Samaria as a net, and there made prisoners, and thence carried captives.

I will chastise them, thus they shall be punished,

as their congregation hath heard, both from the law of Moses which they had with them, and as they had heard from my prophets which I have sent unto them. I will, saith God, make good my word.

Ver. 13.

Woe unto them! it is the voice both of menace and lamentation, the prophet doth at once foretell and bewail their miseries.

They have fled from me; as if it were not enough that they did at first leave my government, temple, and worship, they have gone further from me, they have hastened herein, they flew from me as birds on wing: their sin is apostacy.

Destruction unto them! this explains the woe already mentioned, such woe it will be as ends in destruction.

Because they have transgressed against me; rebelliously cast off my law and government, much in state, more in church matters, oppressors in one, idolaters in the other, and incorrigible in both.

Though I have redeemed them; out of Egypt; but that is long since, and the prophet speaks of deliverance nearer to the times he lived in: God redeemed them partly by Joash, #2Ki 18, but more fully by Jeroboam the Second, #2Ki 14, and would have completed this deliverance, but they by sins hinder it.

Yet they have spoken lies against me; practically they belie me, fleeing to idols, worshipping them, praying to them, as if I were not able or willing to help them; and ascribing praise of the good they enjoy to their idols, #Ho 2:5-7: they belied his corrections, as if not deserved, or severer than need; they belied the good done, as if too little, or not done by God, but by their idol.

Ver. 14.

And they, immersed in these troubles. taken in the net, have not cried unto me; either they cried to their idols, not to God, see #Ho 7:7; or else their tongues made noise, their hearts were silent, and that is, in God's account, no cry at all.

With their heart; with affection, hope, humility, and sincerity; but out of some trouble, and more fear, they cried out to be delivered out of their pain and fear; it is therefore elegantly and properly called howling; though they did thus howl, yet they prayed not, they did not pour out a supplication to their God.

Upon their beds; on their couches, or in their chambers.

They assemble, in the houses of their idols, for corn and wine; that they may have plenty of these to satisfy their appetite, to live luxuriously, and in jollity.

They rebel against me; as in the use of these to excess, so in this manner of seeking these, they rebel against God, and give that honour to the idol which is due only to God.

Ver. 15.

Though I; but as for me, or, And I.

Bound; or chastised, as the word will bear; or instructed; either notion will well suit the place. When I had chastised them for their sins, as in Jehoahaz's time, I strengthened them in Jehoash's time, and in Jeroboam's time, and made them stronger than their enemies. Or, I taught them, gave them wisdom and skill to handle their weapons; so David speaks, **#Ps 18:34**, *He teacheth my hands to war*, and **#Ps 144:1**. But the sense best suits with what he took upon him before, if we retain it as our version hath it, *bound* as a chirurgeon binds up a weakened member, or, having set a broken one, doth with swathes and bands bind it up; so did God for Ephraim, when the Syrians and other enemies had broken their arms.

And strengthened their arms; as I took care to bind, so I did, what none else could, give strength to them, both courage of mind, and strength of body, and success added to both; so they subdued them that had formerly wasted and spoiled them. What successes Jehoash had, or Jeroboam had, I gave, and they should have owned it, and been thankful; but they imagine mischief against me; they contrived, laid their heads together, and designed what evil they could against me: they imputed their successes to their idols, to their way of worship, and hardened themselves against all thoughts of repentance, and returning to me; and devised mischief against my prophets, and let loose the reins to all impieties. This is their requital for all my love!

Ver. 16.

They return; they sometimes have given some signs of returning, as when Jehu destroyed Baal, or Hoshea gave liberty to Israel to go up to Jerusalem (if it be true which some affirm of him); and if I were sure Hoshea did this, I should think the prophet aimed at it; in this they return,

but not to the Most High; Jehu fell off to the calves, and Hoshea's reign was wicked too much, though the reigns of other kings were more wicked; what show soever of repentance among them, yet they never thoroughly repented, never fully embraced the law of God.

They are like a deceitful bow; all was done (as the similitude elegantly sets it forth) in mere hypocrisy; though they seemed bent for and aiming at the mark, yet, like a weak bow, they carried not the arrow home, and, like a false bow, they never carried it straight toward the mark. Their princes; the royal family, principal nobles and magistrates, their brave commanders and leaders.

Shall fall by the sword; be slain by either sword of base, false, and bloody traitors at home, or by sword of foreigners, as the Assyrian.

The rage of their tongue, against God, his prophets and providence, which to decry with scorers was their usual diversion, #Ho 7:5. This, this sad end,

shall be their derision, shall be upbraided to them, in the land of Egypt; among their allies and seeming friends.

HOSEA CHAPTER 8

Destruction is threatened both to Israel and Judah for their impiety and idolatry.

Ver. 1.

The Lord here commands the prophet to publish, as by sound of trumpet, that which God will bring upon apostate Israel, awaken them with the alarm of war.

He; the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser, who carried Israel captive.

As an eagle; swift, hungry, surmounting all difficulties, and which from above seizeth his prey; so shall the Assyrian army come.

Against; or up to, as far as, so some, but it is better as here,

against. The house of the Lord; either so called because the Israelites pretended their temples were not idols' houses, but houses of Jehovah, and so the prophet for once calls them so, perhaps to intimate to that their sins would bring an enemy against those though they were indeed what they pretend them to be, the house of the Lord; or else by

house of the Lord is meant the family of Israel, or the Israelitish church, which till unchurched might be called the house of the

Lord: or it may be a sarcasm or irony against their wilful, brutish ignorance, who would not understand what was most plain, that his house was only at Jerusalem; or a softer derision of them, one of whose principal places of worship was Beth-el, which in signification is near the same with this in the text, house of God.

They have transgressed my covenant; taken other gods instead of me, turned idolaters.

Trespassed against my law: this explains and confirms the former; covenant and law are synonymous, and so are transgressing and trespassing. They have violated the whole law and covenant, and are apostates from their God, rebels against him their King.

Ver. 2.

Israel, the ten tribes,

shall cry in deep distress; when the Assyrian rangeth over their country, when Samaria is besieged, they will cry out aloud, but hypocritically; they will roar, but not pray.

My God; then they will look to the ancient alliance and league between their fathers and me.

We know thee, an only Saviour; be ours, for we are thine. Thus in hypocrisy will they carry it.

Ver. 3.

This seems to be the answer God by his prophet gives to Israel; in the first part of the verse he doth refute their pretence of a peculiar relation and interest in God, in the latter he tells them what they must expect.

Israel, the whole house of Israel, hath cast off, with an abhorrence, as an adulterous wife puts away her husband.

Good; moral good to be done, all virtue and goodness; and the supreme good to be enjoyed, God, true religion and virtue; all cast off for idols, false religion, and debaucheries. Such a nation cannot be my people, nor do they know me.

The enemy shall pursue him; that enemy he would be delivered from, the Assyrian army, shall overthrow, and then pursue, till he have cooped him up in Samaria, and till he have brought them

captives out of their own land into Chalah, Chabor, and Gozan, &c. By this they shall know that I know them, their transgressions and hypocrisy.

Ver. 4.

They; Israel, the prevailing faction among them in Hosea's time.

Have set up kings; Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, who usurped the throne.

But not by me; not by my direction, or with my approbation; they neither prayed his blessing nor asked his leave. And this may be applied to the very first founding of the kingdom of Israel, divided from the house of David. They have made princes; rulers and magistrates, or nobles.

And I knew it not: he that will not approve any one evil, when his omniscience discerns all, is pleased to say he knew not what he did not approve.

They made them idols; heathen like, they have made them gods, and set up idolatry, so have perverted all in church and state settled by me.

That they may be cut off; as if they were resolved to cut themselves off from being a people. By this they thought to establish themselves, but it will be quite contrary, these sins will be their ruin.

Ver. 5.

Thy calf; Jeroboam at first set up two calves, at Dan and Beth-el, but it is probable that in process of time there were more set up in other places, for when Israel forgot his God he built temples, **#Ho 8:14.** The calf then here is the chief idol set up in Samaria, and worshipped there. The prophet, in contempt of the idol, and in derision of their folly, gives it its right name, it is no god, but a calf; nor yet so much, for that it is senseless and without life.

Hath cast thee off; been the occasion of casting thee far off, in that by this thou hast provoked God to anger, and he hath cast thee off. Or else thus, if thy God, thy idol, thy calf, have done aught, it is mischief; thy calf could not keep itself in Samaria, but it is either carried a captive god, or, broken into pieces, is carried

piecemeal into Assyria, and so hath cast time off: it carrieth somewhat of irony in it.

Mine anger is kindled against them; now it is evident that my anger, as fire, burneth against the idols, idol-makers, and idol-worshippers, and shall so burn till they are purified or consumed.

How long will it be ere they attain to innocency? the prophet is very concise, and perhaps here must be supposed some or other (some one of the people, or the prophet himself) sighing out to God, How long shall thine anger burn? and answer returned by God, How long will it be ere they be cleansed?

Ver. 6.

For, or because,

from Israel, by their invention and authority, was it also, both the idol and the worship of it.

The workman, the founder, silversmith, or goldsmith,

made it; fashioned the calf.

Therefore it is not God; you are sottish fools to think it is a god: if the making it will not convince you it is no god, yet I hope the destroying it will prove, whatever it was made for, or whatever thought to be, yet it was not, nor could it ever be, a god.

But the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces; but when the idol is broken into pieces, Samaria shall see it was but a calf, and confess their folly in worshipping it; however, the destruction of it will be a perpetual witness of Samaria's sin, and God's just displeasure in its ruin.

Ver. 7.

For; since that; or, for so much as; or, verily; so the Hebrew particle is sometimes used, **#Isa 7:9.**

They have sown the wind; a proverbial speech, to denote either lost labour, or, which is much worse, labour that will undo and tear to pieces him that laboureth: both these are in the verse. Man's life and labour is a seed that will bring forth fruit; but when this life and labour is laid out on sin, as here Israel's was, it will bring forth that fruit the sinner is unwilling to reap.

They shall reap the whirlwind; a violent, tearing, and dissipating tempest, which beareth down and destroyeth all that is in its way; an emblem of the wrath of God breaking out against these vain and sinful men: so Ephraim reaped in his civil wars, and much more in the Assyrian war, which ended in a whirlwind, that hath scattered them into unknown countries, and where they have lain buried in forgetfulness above two thousand four hundred years.

It hath no stalk; suppose this seed should have its harvest in no whirlwind, it will end in loss and disappointment, as seed that never springs up into a stalk, nor hath bud or ear: all your worship of and dependence on idols, and foreign assistance, will at best be as seed that yields neither stalk nor bud.

The bud shall yield no meal; or suppose it produced stalk and bud, yet it will be no profit, but all lost labour, for the bud shall be lank, shrivelled, and blasted, and never yield meal: so was the fruit Israel reaped, from Pul to Menahem, and from Egypt's assistance to Hoshea against Shalmaneser.

If so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up; or, if yet meal be found in the bud, Israel shall be never the better, foreigners devour it: so did Pul and his, and Shalmaneser and his Assyrians, eat up all.

Ver. 8.

In the former verse the prophet foretells the lost labour of such pains and seed as Ephraim bestowed; now he addeth somewhat more dreadful, the harvest is ruin and destruction to the seedsman, he is swallowed up; and this is the effect of the whirlwind, **#Ho 8:7**: ordinarily whirlwinds scatter the fruit, but here is one swallows up both labour and labourer.

Swallowed up, very soon and irreparably, as a man that is swallowed alive by a mighty, overgrown shark.

Now; ere long, within three or four years at most, as I noted on **#Ho 7:11**.

Shall they be among the Gentiles; carried out of their own country by Shalmaneser, and dispersed at the pleasure of the conqueror into Chalah, Habor, &c.

As a vessel wherein is no pleasure; as worthless and useless, cast out of doors; or if of any use, yet in basest and most contemptible: so shall these captives be among the nations whom they must serve; or Israel, impoverished by chargeable confederates, is now looked upon with contempt by them all, and cast off.

Ver. 9.

The prophet gives now an account why Israel was so impoverished, and why they should be so severely punished, why so punished of God, and why so slighted by man.

They are gone up to Assyria; either gone, i.e. have sent ambassadors with rich presents to purchase assistance from Assyria, or gone with their tribute to procure the continuance of the Assyrian confederacy and aids. This confidence and trust in Assyria was accompanied with a casting off their dependence on and subjection to God: this their sin was very great, and their punishment shall, as their sin, be very great. Others refer this going up to their going into captivity into Assyria, and it surely may be a prediction of what shall be (if it be not a narrative of what is) done.

Assyria was at that time a mighty nation, whose kings were very great, and yet more proud than great, as appears in Sennacherib's deportment toward God and man. This kingdom had now grown on through Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib's reigns, was a terror to enemies, and the vain confidence of this foolish and sinful people, for which they are particularly threatened and severely punished.

A wild ass: this is differently applied by interpreters; some refer it to the king of Assyria, who is fierce, swift, and haughty as the wild ass, and all for himself; thus the French interpret it: so it suits well; Israel, thou wilt be disappointed in thy expectation from Asshur, a wild ass, who seeks himself only. Others refer

wild ass to Israel, who, wild, untamed, and burning in lust, (as is reported of the wild ass,) rangeth far and wide for lovers, seeks every where for aids and succours.

Alone by himself; solitary, or in a wilderness, where is no path or track: this will well suit them in their captivity, when they shall

be left as in a wilderness, and may, as perhaps many did, flee into more remote and desolate places, and ramble into uninhabited places, and there take rooting, and give being to nations which are now known to us, though we know not whence they descended. Or,

alone by himself, in a posture fit to become a prey to the lion of Assyria; so it is reported the lions make a prey of the wild asses in the wilderness; so will Assyria make Israel a prey.

Ephraim hath hired lovers; hath dearly bought the friendship of Assyria in Pul and Shalmaneser's time, and more dearly bought friendship of Egypt in the time of So, or Sabacon, or Sevechus; for beside all the treasure they laid out on this, they parted with their God for it, and set him against Israel.

Ver. 10.

Yea, though; or, Yea, because; they think this the way to prevent their calamities, but it shall appear this was the ready way to bring their calamities upon them; and forasmuch as they have hired the aid of the nations to secure them against their God and his judgments, therefore, &c.

Gather them; bring Israel together by a secret and unfailing train. I will, saith God, assemble and herd them together, that they may be taken and destroyed together. Others say, God will gather the nations together against Israel.

They shall sorrow a little, for a while before their final captivity they shall complain and be grieved,

for the burden of the king of princes; the tribute laid on them by the king and princes, i.e. of Israel; but better as we read it, the king of Assyria, the great king who boasted of his princes.

Ver. 11.

Because: this refers to what follows.

Ephraim hath made many altars; multiplied either to many idols, every one having his altar, or multiplied altars in several places to the same idol. They had many high places, and altars in all of them.

To sin; both as acting against the law of God, which required but one altar, and also these altars were to sin, in that they were for sacrifices to be offered on them to idols. These persons did not intend them for sin, but their good intention did not, could not change the thing, it was sin, however they intended.

Altars, either those here erected, or those they shall find in Assyria when they come captives thither,

shall be unto him to sin; either because forced in captivity to worship Assyrian idols, and to attend their altars and sacrifices, or else by a just and dreadful judgment from God delivering them over to their wilful blindness and idolatrous heart: since they would never be reclaimed, nor taken off from sinful multiplying altars, let them follow their own hearts, and set up what they will; much like that **#Re 22:11**. Or else thus, Altars shall be the occasion of his greater guilt and punishment, his altars, i.e. his idolatrous worship, shall be that sin that ruins him.

Ver. 12.

I have written: some read it in the future, and by way of question, Shall I write? but most read as we, in the perfect or past tense, I have written, by Moses first, by other prophets afterwards; the law was given to them, as well as to the two tribes.

Great things; for their importance, weighty; for their excellency, precious; and for multitude of precepts, counsels, and directions, sufficient; my law had all this in it for their conduct in all righteousness towards God and man.

But they, all these things which I have written,

were counted as a strange thing; Israel looks on them as nothing to them; they are a distinct kingdom, and have a distinct establishment, their laws are now become unpracticable to us, and we have, by the wisdom of our governors, other laws established for our worship; let Judah keep to theirs, we will keep to our laws; after two hundred years' desuetude, would it not be madness to introduce Judah's laws, and innovate all in Israel? Thus they contemned the excellent things of God's law, as if they were nothing concerned in them. And thus all their sins at last become incurable diseases, which nothing but utter destruction of the sinners can put an end unto.

Ver. 13.

They sacrifice; or, As for sacrifices, my gifts, so some, taking the words absolute and in apposition, read them, and perhaps they are plainer and closer connected with the former when so taken. I have written to them, and they count it a strange thing; and the sacrifices and gifts which they call mine, I tell you what I account them to be; as for sacrifices, which now they pretend to give me, it is flesh they sacrifice, and eat it when they have done, and I account no more of it: they sacrifice that they may feast and fill themselves with wine and mirth, and what is that to me?

The Lord accepteth them not; neither owneth them as his, nor taketh any pleasure at all in them. These sacrifices shall never expiate their sins, nor reconcile me to them, saith God. I think here is a meiosis in these words, they may be a softer expression of hatred and detestation, which God bears towards such.

Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins; in his just and hot displeasure, he will reckon with them, and, by punishing them for all, make them know he remembers all their sins. Here remembering and visiting are the same, and include punishment.

They shall return to Egypt; either alluding to their bondage in Egypt; so Assyria shall use them. Or else it is an upbraiding them for and minding them of their perfidiousness to Shalmaneser. They had been ever covenant-breakers with God and man; this last part of treachery God will punish. Or else, they shall return to Egypt, i.e. many shall to save their lives flee from the Assyrian into Egypt, and there seek their safety; and if they preserve their life there, the punishment of their sins shall follow them; exile, with misery as bad as captivity, shall be their lot there. So **#Ho 9:6.**

Ver. 14.

Israel; the ten revolted idolatrous tribes.

Hath forgotten; the same with **#Ho 2:5**, which see; or **#Ho 4:1,6.** Either remembers not at all, or it is without love, thankfulness, and consideration what becomes him towards God. *His Maker*; who made, who preserved, who advanced them, and

gave them all those privileges wherein they excel other nations; who brought them out of Egypt, &c.

Buildeth temples; the word will bear palaces, or towers. It is like their idol temples were magnificent, that they might boast of them, and strong like towers, that they might for need garrison and fortify them, and trust in their strength in a day of war and trouble.

Judah hath multiplied fenced cities; on like designs and motives doth Judah multiply strong holds, fortifying against threatened judgments, making flesh their arm, whilst their heart (as at this time of Ahaz's reign and apostacy) did depart from the living God.

Send a fire upon his cities; bring an enemy upon them that shall besiege them in their cities, and burn them, which was effected by Nebuchadnezzar and his armies about one hundred and thirty years after.

It shall devour the palaces; the stately palaces of their princes and nobles in their cities, these shall be burnt too. Judah hath imitated Israel, and made himself like to Israel in sin, and God will make them like in sufferings; the fire which their sin hath kindled shall consume both.

HOSEA CHAPTER 9

The distress and captivity of Israel for their sins, especially their idolatry.

Ver. 1.

Rejoice not: this might seem a morose humour of a discontented, sullen preacher: what! forbid a people to rejoice when things prosper with them? when should a people rejoice if not then? The prophet, who had a deeper reach, and took a larger prospect of things. had good cause to advise, or warn, or forbid as he doth, for he saw more cause to grieve than to rejoice, and to mourn than to be merry; the reason you will have presently.

O Israel; you of the ten tribes.

For joy; for any thing that is counted just matter of joy; though at present you prosper either under Jeroboam the Second's

victorious arms, or under Menahem, and the safety he hath procured by a confederacy with Assyria, though at other times these might be matter of rejoicing, now in thy circumstances, O Israel, it is not meet thou shouldst show any gladness.

As other people; with feasting, public games, and triumphs, or with solemn sacrifices of thanksgiving, or with erecting statues to the memory of your great and brave commanders, or for continuing the remembrance of their achievements.

For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God; with thee, O Israel, it is as unseemly as it is for an adulterous wife to rejoice and be jovial, whilst the guilt of her adulteries, and the shame of her lewdnesses, and the displeasure of her husband, fly in her face and whisper reproofs in her ear.

Thou hast loved a reward, such as is given by adulterers to lewd women,

on every corn-floor; thou hast loved to see thy floor full, and hast thought, and said thy idols had so furnished thee, and therefore thou didst love them. Though mirth might become an honest woman, it doth not so well suit with a dishonest adulteress; the very place, the Company and occasion, do upbraid such a one rejoicing with her lewd adulterers: besides, this adulteress's joys will be short, and end in sorrows and shame; so will thine, O Israel.

Ver. 2.

The floor; the corn which is gathered into the floor and that is threshed there, that plenty which these sottish idolaters have, and think they have it from their idols, the bread they eat. For here *the floor* is put for the corn, and the bread made of it.

The wine-press, by the same figure, put for the wine that is pressed out in it; though there is great plenty, and the vats overflow as well as the press full.

Shall not feed them; all this plenty shall not nourish and strengthen them. Since they think their idols give them their corn and wine, let them give also, what I will not give, a blessing on these that they may support and refresh them; they shall be lean

and half-starved in their plenty unless their idols can do this for them, i.e. bless their food.

Them, who seek to idols for corn and wine, and praise their idols as givers of it. These I will blast, their provision shall be as theirs, **#Hag 1:6**.

The new wine shall fail in her; or lie unto her, or fail her expectation. Samaria and all Israel expect a fair and full vintage, but they expect it from their idols, which are a doctrine of lies, and in this, as in all other, will lie.

Ver. 3.

They, who worship idols, and give my glory to them, depending on them, and ascribing to them what I alone give them,

shall not dwell in the Lord's land; though they have been in possession many years, and though now they seem out of fear of losing it, being great at home and in peace with neighbours abroad, yet in midst of this prosperity and security, let them note it, they shall not much longer dwell in the Lord's land, which God gave them according to promise, with express condition that they should obey him and fear him, and him only, **#De 6:2,3**, and with express menace of exile and ruin if they forgot God, **#De 8:19,20**. This land, which is the Lord's propriety, and theirs only on condition, and this condition broken, shall be their possession no longer.

Ephraim shall return to Egypt; many of Ephraim, for it is not meant of all or the most part; but of the more timorous, wary, and who consult their safety beforehand, many shall flee into Egypt, and shift out of the enemies' reach. So again **#Ho 9:6**.

They shall eat unclean things in Assyria; the residue who flee not into Egypt shall be carried captives, and in Assyria be forced to eat forbidden meats, called here unclean, such as polluted the eater.

Ver. 4.

They, captured for their idolatry and other sins,

shall not offer wine-offerings: these were by the law appointed to be offered with the morning and evening sacrifice; the sacrifice representing Christ, and pardon by him, the wine-offering

represented the Spirit of grace. The sacrifice repeated daily continued their peace and pardon; the Spirit of grace supported, guided, comforted, and refreshed; all which shall be withheld from these captives, the law of God forbidding on one account, the law of their conquerors forbidding on another account.

Neither shall they be pleasing unto him; or if any should venture to do it, and think thereby to appease God's anger, they shall miss their aim, it will not please God.

Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; their eucharistical sacrifices, in which they were used to feast with joy, shall be to them as the bread of mourners, as if they had buried a father or mother, and to comfort or support their saddened spirits did force themselves to some larger allowance and choicer meats; so great should be their grief in midst of their joys. Or else thus, their sacrifices should as much pollute them and displease God as if one mourning for the dead, and forbidden to sacrifice in tears and mourning, should yet venture to do it, and, against the law, sacrifice to his God when polluted by the dead, **#Nu 19:11-14 De 26:14.**

All that eat thereof shall be polluted; so far shall these men's sacrifices be from expiating and purifying, that they should increase their guilt and danger, and incur the penalty threatened against the polluted, **#Nu 19:13.**

For; or, surely; the particle is not here causal, but assertive, as in many other places it is.

Their bread for their soul; their mincha or bread, which they always offered and were bound to offer with their sacrifices. Or else the first-fruits of their corn, which were to be brought to the Lord, and which being rightly offered did sanctify and insure the rest to them, with a blessing. This should not be done, they should be at that distance from the temple, and under the confinement of captives, so that they should not be able to do it if they were willing.

Shall not come; be brought in to the priest in the temple, **#De 26:2,3, &c.**

Ver. 5.

Think with yourselves what you are likely to do then: on those days you were wont to cease from your labours, to offer sacrifices to God, (as you thought and said,) to feast with one another, all was full of seeming religion and real feasting and jollity on those days in your own country; but will your hard masters, that love their own profit, that hate your persons, and despise your religion, will they lose your labour, indulge your ease, encourage your religion, and suffer you to exercise it? Is this imaginable?

Ver. 6.

For, lo; mark it well, and observe the event.

They are gone because of destruction; some of the wary and timorous are already withdrawn from the desolation that cometh on their country, and more will flee from the Assyrian invader; and it is very near, and very uncertain, expressed therefore in the perfect tense.

Egypt shall gather them up; in Egypt they hope to be quiet, and survive these desolations, and to return into their own land; but they shall die in Egypt, and Egyptians shall lay them out, and prepare them to their grave. So this phrase, **#Jer 8:2 Eze 29:5.**

Memphis, which elsewhere is called *Noph*, **#Isa 19:13**, a very greatly traded city in those days, and at this day also known by the name which speaks its greatness, Grand Cairo.

Shall bury them: many of the ten tribes, fleeing their own wasted country, did no doubt remove so far as Memphis, partly for safety, that they might be out of the Assyrian's reach, but more principally for convenience of a trade, that they might at least get a livelihood, if not grow rich on their trade; there many of these fugitives died; and perhaps by the pestilence (which is a disease that frequently sweeps that city) multitudes of them might be swept away into their graves in and about that city.

The pleasant places for their silver; their beautiful and strong houses built for keeping their wealth in.

Nettles shall possess them; they shall be ruined, and lie long in rubbish, till nettles grow up in them.

Thorns, or briars, or whatever (one kind for all) worthless and hurtful shrubs used to grow in perpetuated desolations, shall be in their tabernacles, in their dwellingplaces, their houses, which here retain the name of their ancient habitations when they dwelt in tents.

Ver. 7.

The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come: the prophet doubleth the same thing, both to confirm the certainty of it, and to awaken the stupid Israelites: the days of God's just displeasure, in which he will punish, and render to these incorrigible idolaters and abominable debauchees as their wickedness deserveth, are come, they are very near, within four years at most.

Israel shall know it; Israel will not believe it, though God hath often told them of it, but when it is come, and they feel it, they shall then know indeed, as fools know when they smart for their folly.

The prophet is a fool; their false prophets were all, to a man of them, fools and rash, judging by present greatness or alliances of Israel, not observing what were their sins and God's wrath. Now when Hosea preached what was contained in this 9th chapter, Israel had made a league with So king of Egypt, cast off the Assyrian, and not sought to God, but vainly trusted to the Egyptian succours; now any wise man might imagine that likely which the prophet Hosea did foretell as certain, that the Assyrian with all his power would fall upon the revolvers; none but fools would promise such a people a time of safety when the war was falling upon their heads.

The spiritual man, that pretends to be full of the Spirit of prophecy, and foretells good to them, whom we thought a true prophet; but. now find by sad experience that we believed a madman, one much out of his wits; yet were we more, to believe what he promised.

For the multitude of thine iniquity: God was highly displeased with the multitude of their iniquities, and began his punishments in giving them over to believe the lies of their false prophets, and to expect what peace these prophets did promise.

And the great hatred which God had against your sins and ways: you would walk in ways which God hated, yet would have prophets to foretell peace and plenty; such you have had as described #Mic 2:11, and you believed them; and God, out of his just dislike, suffered this to be, left you to your choice.

Ver. 8.

The watchman of Ephraim was with my God; the old true prophets indeed were with God, heard what he spake, and told it to the people; they were for God, for his honour, law, worship, and temple; and so should prophets now be. Ephraim once had such prophets, such were Elijah and Elisha, but none such now, or Ephraim cares not for them. The prophet speaks of God, the true God, as his God, in opposition to idols, on which Ephraim doted now, whose pretended oracles they believed.

But the prophet; the prophets now-a-days, who call themselves prophets, and are so accounted by the people, have, as the people, left God, and do no more consult with God.

Is a snare of a fowler; their pretended predictions and promises are but a snare, such as fowlers lay to take fowl in; and these impostors are conscious to themselves that they are deceivers; at least they cannot but know that the true God never gave them answer at any of their images, yet they pretend he hath done it, and that he will prosper them; so they insnare the people first in sin, next in punishment.

In all his ways; and all they design and endeavour by all means is to keep the people in this opinion and hope.

And hatred in the house of his God; so is hatred in the sight of God, he doth hate such deceivers; and he is hated, i.e. ere long will he be hated, in the sight of the people he deceived; they shall hate their false prophets, who from the house of their God, by answers from the idols in their temples, confirmed the people in their rebellion, and hardened them against returning to God, which ends in their ruin: or else hatred, &c., i.e. cause of the people's hatred, against God and one another.

Ver. 9.

They, the people of the ten tribes, prophets, priests, princes, and people, have deeply corrupted themselves, have strangely and

horribly debauched one another; beside all their idolatry, there is more than brutish filthiness among them.

As in the days of Gibeah; the story whereof you have #Jud 19.

Therefore he, God, who hateth such workers of iniquity, **will remember their iniquity**; he will not pardon their iniquity, but charge it upon them: when God saith he will not remember, it is a promise of pardon; When he threatens he will remember, it is a threat of not pardoning.

He will visit their sins; he will punish: see #Ho 9:7.

Ver. 10.

I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness: the Lord speaks of himself in the person of a traveller, who unexpectedly in the wilderness findeth a vine loaded with grapes, which are most delightful and welcome to him; such love did God bear to Israel, i.e. a very strong and hearty love: the simile expresseth the greatness, not the cause, of the Divine love.

I saw your fathers; not Abraham, or Isaac, and Jacob, but your fathers whom I brought out of Egypt.

As the first-ripe in the fig tree at her first time; as the earliest ripe fruit, either of the fig tree as our version, or the first-ripe of any sweet and delicious fruit tree, as the word will bear, which are most valued and desired; so was Israel dear and valued.

They went to Baalpeor: this evinceth that the prophet speaketh not of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but of those who were brought out of Egypt, as appears in the story of their department in Shittim, #Nu 25:1-3, where they committed idolatry with Baalpeor, of whose rites authors do variously discourse, some reporting them to have been practised with shameless looseness, as the rites of Bacchus, Venus, or Priapus among the Romans; others say, this idol of Moab had his name from a mountain in Moab where he was worshipped, and had a stately and famous temple; this mountain is mentioned #Nu 22:41, with #Nu 23:28; and this is the more likely opinion.

Separated themselves; they did consecrate and dedicate themselves; possibly some turned priests to the idol; however,

they addicted themselves to and worshipped the idol, and brought their sacrifices.

To that shame: by way of contempt and detestation the prophet speaks of this idol, and gives it the name of shame in the abstract, to express the greatest degree of detestation of it, and of that they did.

Their abominations, their idols, and way of worshipping them, **were according as they loved;** either as they fancied, or as the idolatrous women whom they loved were multiplied, so their idols were, for they took the idols with them.

Ver. 11.

Their glory; their children or posterity, which was as much the glory of Israel, as their multiplying was above the common rate of other nations' multiplying; it was to them a singular blessing, and performing of promise, and they did greatly rejoice and glory in this blessing, **#Ps 128 Pr 17:6.**

Shall fly away like a bird: it is proverbial, and speaks a sudden and unexpected loss of children. which vanish and are gone as a bird: see **#Pr 23:5**, where sudden loss of riches is expressed in the same proverb.

From the birth; shall die as soon as born.

From the womb; prove abortive, their mothers shall not bring the fruit of the womb to perfection, or alive into the world.

From the conception; through barrenness their wives shall not conceive.

Ver. 12.

Or suppose neither of these, but that their children live, grow up and come to some maturity, yet God, provoked by their sins, will deprive them of their children by famine; or by civil wars, which were long and bloody on each other; or by pestilence; or by captivity, and dispersing them among enemies, to whom they shall be slaves, and, as slaves, beget children not to themselves, but to their masters.

There shall not be a man left; there shall be a total extirpation of them and their memory; or else, I will cut them off from among men, as the phrase will bear.

Woe also to them when I depart from them! to complete their misery, I will leave them, I will depart from them. It is sad to lose children, it is sadder to lose their God.

Ver. 13.

Ephraim; the kingdom of Israel.

Tyrus; of which see #Eze 26\$ Eze 27\$ #Eze 28\$; a very rich, well-fortified, and pleasant city, and secure too, that afterward held out thirteen years' siege against all the power of the Babylonian empire in Nebuchadnezzar's time.

Is planted in a pleasant place; is now well provided, seems invincible, is as secure as Tyrus was in her prosperity; perhaps reckons either strength shall break the enemies, or money buy friends, or the magnificence and beauty of their places and dwellings shall be some safety to them; but all this shall avail nothing.

Shall bring forth his children to the murderer; though a multitude of children to send forth in mighty armies against the enemy, yet it will be but a sending them out to the slaughter: God is departed from them, and will not go out with their armies, so they shall fall by the sword of the enemy, as they needs must whom God doth not befriend in a war.

Ver. 14.

Give them, O Lord; it is an abrupt but very pathetic speech of one that shows his trouble for the state of a sinking, undone nation, it is an intercession for them.

What wilt thou give? as if he should say he knew not what to ask, or how to pray for them; he knew God had peremptorily determined to punish them with a total extermination, and in a most dreadful manner, as described #Ho 9:11-13. Now give some mercy.

Give them a miscarrying womb; the days are coming when the barren womb will be a blessing; give this, O Lord; it is less misery

to have none, than to have all our children murdered by a barbarous enemy, #Lu 23:29.

Dry breasts; not to starve the children born, but it is a further explication of the former; dry breasts are symptoms of a barren womb, whether by abortion or non-conception, by one or other. Prevent these woeful effects of our enemies' unjust rage, and of thy most righteous displeasure against us, O Lord.

Ver. 15.

All; the chief, or sum, or beginning:

Gilgal is not to be understood exclusive to other places, for every city was full, there was all kind of sin elsewhere.

Their wickedness, in rejecting God and his government. Here Saul was made king, and Samuel was rejected. Here they begun to turn the remarkable blessings God gave them in this place into a superstitious and hypocritical veneration of the place, and began their will-worship and idolatries. If all the impiety of Ephraim may be reduced to their horrible degeneracy and corruption in state and church, here it began, and so all was here.

Gilgal; where Israel first pitched their tents after they passed over Jordan: see #Ho 4:15.

There I hated them; as there they began to sin so notoriously, there also I began to show that I hated them for the wickedness of their doings; for the continued wickedness which from their first beginning there they have propagated to other places, and increased daily, and with obstinacy.

I will drive them out; as men thrust out of their houses one that is altogether unworthy to dwell longer with them.

Of mine house; by a synecdoche, the house for land; or, out of their house, which though theirs for use, was yet God's propriety; and when God casts Ephraim out of his house, he sends him into captivity.

I will love them no more; I will cease to express any more love to thee; it is a meiosis, I will add no more love to them, i.e. I will add to hate them and punish them, I will leave them in the hand and under the fury of their enemies in a strange land.

All their princes, their kings and rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical,

are revolters; are and have been idolaters ever since the division in Jeroboam son of Nebat, not one of their kings but were idolaters, and obstinate and perverse in it also.

Ver. 16.

Ephraim is smitten: this gives us some guess at the time of this prophecy, which was after Jeroboam's death, in whose life and reign Ephraim was as a very flourishing tree, whose roots were full of sap and life; but after the death of this king they were, as here it is expressed, a tree smitten, as if scorched with lightning, or burnt up with a vehement and continued heat and drought by day; blasted they were, whatever was the means: or possibly it may refer to those seditions, civil wars, and rebellious conspiracies which (say some) did for some years afflict the kingdom of the ten tribes, which unnatural wars were as an axe to the root of this tree, and gave Pul king of Assyria opportunity and courage to set upon them, of whom they were forced to buy their peace at a dear rate, viz. a thousand talents of silver; or to the captivating of Naphtali, and taking many fortified towns out of Pekah's hand by Tiglath-pileser, who came up to the rescue of Ahaz, #2Ki 15.

Their root is dried up; this hath dried up the very roots of this tree; this blast from heaven hath not only scorched the top boughs, but rent the very body of this Israelitish tree, and hath spoiled its roots; or civil wars first, and foreign wars next, have cut up the roots of this tree, the strong and valiant young men, who were to perpetuate the life and beauty of this people.

They shall bear no fruit: as such a dead root cannot spring out; so these Ephraimites never shall spring forth, they shall ever be barren. *Though they bring forth;* suppose they should yet bring forth, (such a supposition you meet with #Ho 9:12, which see,) they shall not grow to maturity and greatness.

Yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb; either by diseases, which are legibly from God's hand, or by the sword of one another, or of a foreign invader: if you do not enumerate all the ways God will take, we are sure he will take ways enough to

make good his own word, and slay their beloved children, those children that were the more beloved for that their parents had either few, or else had lost some they had before.

Ver. 17.

My God; no more thy God, O Ephraim, thou canst no more have hope on that account, but my God, saith the prophet, my God who hath revealed his purpose to me, and who will accomplish it, who will make good the word I have spoken against you.

Will cast them away: your sins have been a weariness, a loathing to my God, and now as a vile, loathed, and wearisome thing is cast off by a man, so shall you be cast off from your God.

They did not hearken unto him; neither did hearken to God to prevent apostacy, nor would ever after hearken to God at first to repent and turn to him; like a wilful adulteress, they would not keep faithful to their Husband, nor return to him when once departed from him.

They shall be wanderers; have no city of their own, no settled dwelling-place; as much suspected, hated, ill used, and punished as vagabonds are in well-ordered commonwealths; all which is fully come upon them.

Among the nations: Gentiles were such the proud circumcision did despise and hate, but now the sins of the circumcised shall bring them under as much contempt with the nations; nay, these proud apostates from God, when cast off and wanderers, shall account it a favour to be admitted to incorporate with, and so to grow up heathens among heathens, as after long time they did.

HOSEA CHAPTER 10

Israel is reproved and threatened for their impiety and idolatry, and exhorted to repentance.

Ver. 1.

Israel and Ephraim are terms our prophet doth ordinarily use, and they signify the same people, the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, and from the true worship of God.

Is an empty vine; a vine wasted and spoiled, that hath lost its strength to bring forth any fruit, or that is robbed and pilled of the

fruit it doth bring forth; this partly for want of the Divine protection and benediction, which they were wont to have, and partly from an inherent barrenness and weakness in this vine.

He bringeth forth fruit unto himself; whatever fruit was brought forth by its remaining strength was not brought forth to God, for his service and honour; but for themselves, for their own use, for service of a state interest, to make presents, and to pay tribute; or, which is yet worse, to maintain the worship of idols.

According to the multitude of his fruit: when the land yielded more plentiful increase, this plenty was impiously employed on multiplied idols, or on multiplied altars, built to the same idols.

He hath increased the altars of their idols, either by adding to the number of altars, or else adding to the numbers of sacrifices offered to the idols on their altars.

According to the goodness of his land: idolaters sottishly imagined that the goodness of their land was a blessing on them from their idols; thus sacrilegiously they robbed God, and on this mistake they proceed to further impiety.

He hath made goodly images; more stately, more curiously wrought, more richly adorned, and it is most likely more for number too, accounting it a great devotion to have many and rich statues of their idols.

Ver. 2.

Their heart is divided from God and his worship, or between God and Baal, such as **#Zep 1:5** speaks of, or else divided one from another by parties, and factions, and civil wars, which tended to their ruin.

Now shall they be found faulty; as this was their sin, so the effects hereof should manifestly prove them faulty.

He, either God, or the king of Assyria stirred up by God to invade and destroy Ephraim,

shall break down their altars; utterly pull down those altars which they had multiplied to their idols: the Assyrians shall, as other conquering heathen idolaters, rage against the gods of the

people they conquer, as well as against the people; such was the pride and atheism of these men.

He shall spoil their images; waste or destroy them; how goodly soever they had seemed to be, yet they should be broken to pieces; and where made of rich materials, as silver and gold, or if adorned with it, the enemy should the sooner spoil them; and then it will appear how sottish this people were to trust in them, or ascribe any praise to them, when Baal cannot defend his own images or people.

Ver. 3.

For; surely. *Now*; ere long.

They shall say; see, and feel, and be convinced too of this truth. We have no king; either no king at all, as in an interregnum, or no such king as we expected and hoped: our dependence was much upon the wise, valiant, and successful conduct of our king; but he is either less wise and valiant, or less successful in his enterprises.

Because we feared not the Lord; worshipped not, kept not his law, depended not on God, therefore we have no king, or one next to none, not able to help us.

What then should a king do to us? and now if we had our king, were he as powerful, wise, and successful as Jeroboam the Second, yet it would be too late, the Assyrian power hath so far prevailed, and God is so far departed from us: kings are not able to save without the God of kings.

Ver. 4.

They, the nobles and great men in Israel, the heads of the parties, or the counsellors of the kingdom,

have spoken words; have in long and repeated consultations and debates contrived and laid forth the designs most like to help us; but all in vain, all is but words; or thus they have deceived one another, and ruined all; and this latter seems exactly to suit with what follows.

Swearing falsely, by perjury deceiving those they treated with, in making a covenant; either among themselves, accepting a usurper, promising and swearing fealty to him; or with their allies, as with the Assyrian king, whose covenant they perjuringly broke, and,

contrary to oath, sent to and confederated with Sun, or So, king of Egypt.

Judgment, i.e. Divine revenges, do so abound every where; or else unequal and sinful projects, counsels, and resolutions of their rulers are, instead of just, wholesome, and saving, turned into bitter, poisonous, and pernicious as hemlock.

As hemlock in the furrows of the field; a proverbial speech, expressing the greatness of this pernicious evil. So this will be explained by #Am 6:12, oppression, injustice, and all sins spread (as hemlock quickly overruns a field) over all the kingdom.

Ver. 5.

The citizens who dwelt yet safe in Samaria, but knew that the Assyrian invaded the kingdom, beat Israel's army, and took his city; these idolatrous citizens were in bodily fear for their gods, lest the Assyrians should rudely spoil their godships.

Because of the calves of Beth-aven: some give the reason of their fear, because they had sinned by these calves, and provoked God, therefore should this fear seize them; but it is more likely this doth speak the object of the Samaritans' fears, their cow-calves (as by way of contempt in the Hebrew) were the goodly deities they were afraid for; yet they trusted in these for aid against enemies, and now fear they have not power enough to defend themselves: what brutes are idolaters! Of this

Beth-aven, principal seat of the calf god, see #Ho 4:15.

The people thereof; they who dwelt at Beth-aven, who had gain and profit by the idol, to which many resorted; or else they that were addicted to this idol, worshipped it, and trusted in it.

Shall mourn over it; howl and cry over the endangered god: so let all their sorrows be multiplied that hasten after any strange god.

The priests thereof, that were to attend and offer sacrifices to these calves; the priests were like to lose their livings with their idol.

That rejoiced on it: these priests formerly were fed, clothed, enriched, and got into credit by these their idols, this made them right glad.

The glory thereof, all its credit and veneration, is departed from it; is vanished: it was once taken for a god, but now the case is altered, it is turned into a captive, and with loss of liberty hath lost its deity also; the Assyrians have either broken it, or carried it in derision into Assyria.

Ver. 6.

It; the golden calf made by Jeroboam the First, #1Ki 12:28.

Shall be carried; though it hath feet, it cannot go, it must be borne; as Isaiah derides the idols of Babylon, #Isa 46:2,7 Jer 10:5; and it is carried in triumph. For a present; according to the custom of conquering generals, the rich and rare things of the conquered people were reserved for gifts to their kings; and here is a rarity indeed, a captive god, and it is rich, for it is made of gold.

King Jareb: see #Ho 5:13.

Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed: the great confusion of this people is here foretold, and the certainty of it by the ingemination of the phrase: the Assyrians shall upbraid them with their brutish folly, to think that a god which could not keep itself from becoming a prey to insolent soldiers; and when thus taunted, Israel shall have nothing to answer, but must be silent with shame.

Of his own counsel; which is expressly mentioned #1Ki 12:28; it was against the counsel of God; and as they began, so they persisted in it by the same counsel.

Ver. 7.

As for Samaria, after three years' siege she shall be cut off. Her king is cut off; for all the rest of the kingdom was lost, and now he is pent up there also; he that was once the confidence of the ten tribes, and king of a mighty people, is now spoiled of all but one only city, where he is rather a prisoner than a king, kept close till made a captive.

Is cut off; shortly will be cut off; it is not unlikely this prophecy should be delivered when Samaria was besieged.

As the foam upon the water; as a contemptible, weak, and light thing: it is a proverb, and foretells how contemptibly the Assyrians should use them.

Ver. 8.

The high places; the temples and altars of Baal and other idols.

Aven, for Beth-aven, say most interpreters: what if. Aven, vanity, folly, be here put for all idol worship and rites, which was notoriously

the sin of Israel?

Shall be destroyed; utterly overthrown; and lie so long waste and desolate, that thorns and thistles shall spring up out of the places where their altars once stood within their stately temples. When this shall be brought to pass, the idolatrous Israelites shall be in such perplexity, that they shall wish the mountains and hills might fall on them, and bury them alive, that they might escape the troubles that they did foresee were coming upon them; or it may be an upbraiding them for praying to lifeless stocks or statues, and telling them in their distress, and when their gods are gone, and cannot help, they should cry to deaf mountains to cover them.

Ver. 9.

O Israel, thou hast sinned; you of the ten tribes with such consent have sinned, that you seem to do it as one man.

From the days of Gibeah; ever since the days, so we; but, as Rivet observes, it will bear a comparative thus, *thou hast sinned above*, or more than. The ten tribes were greater sinners than those Gibeonites; so the prophet compareth the sins of the present age and that past. See **#Jud 19**, where the story is set down at large. See also **#Ho 5:8**, the place described.

There they stood; in that day and war some stood, who were a seed for raising up the tribe; so I refer this passage to the six hundred men who fled to the rock Rimmon.

The battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them; that fatal battle did not reach them; but now Israel shall be more severely punished; for who escape the sword shall be carried captives, and they shall be no more a people or

kingdom: or else thus; Israel hath sinned more than the Gibeonites, I will therefore punish them more than the Gibeonites; they stood once or twice, but Israel now shall be ever beaten and put to flight; in that war Israel had heart to rally, and after two defeats were victors in the third encounter, but it shall not be so now, a war shall overtake them now, not such to Israel as was that against the Gibeonites, for in that they had at last the better, but in this they shall be totally ruined.

Ver. 10.

Our version leaves this verse somewhat obscure, but our reading in the margin doth much clear the words, and maketh them much more easily intelligible.

It is in my desire that I should chastise them; I am resolved to punish them as I see good; they have deserved the utmost that I shall lay upon them, and therefore I will punish as I see meet.

The people shall be gathered; the forces of the Assyrian empire shall be gathered in arms against them, I will bring Shalmaneser upon this sinful, idolatrous nation.

Against them; Israel, or Ephraim.

When they shall bind themselves in their two furrows; when I shall bind them, or when they shall be bound, for their two transgressions; so the marginal reading: and then it is plain, if once it appear what were their two transgressions; either corporal and spiritual adultery; and what if it were their revolt from David's house, their ancient rebellion and idolatry? or revolt from God: these were the two main spring-heads of their other particular sins, and for these they shall be bound as prisoners and captives, and carried away into Assyria.

Ver. 11.

As an heifer; a young and wanton heifer, unaccustomed to the yoke, not used to hard labour.

Taught; used to, and so skilled in or acquainted with.

Loveth to tread out the corn: what we do by thrashing, the Jews did by these heifers or oxen, tread out the corn, and in doing this the law provided that the ox should not be muzzled, but should eat what it would: so it was with Ephraim, he loved that work that

was so pleasant, which so well fed him. And God doth let Ephraim know that he had been very much indulged herein: God had given them all abundance and prosperity, and with little labour or care; and he expected thankfulness for it; but no such thing was done by Ephraim, he grew more insolent, untractable, and perfidious. When I found it so,

I passed over upon her fair neck, laid some lighter yoke upon her, brought some gentler afflictions upon that people, to tame them, and make them serviceable; but this hath not prevailed.

I will make Ephraim to ride; I will now deal more rigorously, I will try another course, and as horses are brought to work by one that can bring them to bear and carry the rider, so I will deal with Ephraim; I will ride on Ephraim, and tame him, i.e. by the Assyrians, who should subdue and enslave them.

Judah shall plough; Judah, though less sinful, hath been used to harder labour, and more rugged treatment, hath ploughed when Ephraim hath reaped, yet I have spared Ephraim more.

Jacob shall break his clods; the same in other proverbial speech repeated; their work is at present harder, but there is a harvest follows; though Judah plough, and Jacob break his clods, labour hard, and for their sins suffer, yet they sow in tears when harassed by Ephraim or going into Babylon, and shall reap in joy at the return. But Ephraim, who abused all my bounty and kindness, who worked only for his own profit, shall be more severely punished, and when he goeth forth shall return no more.

Ver. 12.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness: the prophet continueth his care of their welfare, by exhorting them yet at last to repent, which, as learned interpreters observe, the prophet doth here in the same elliptic speech which is used before these imperatives, and is to be made up thus, The Lord hath said by his prophets, Sow, &c.; this same duty hath been pressed on them formerly, and is again commended to them; sow in righteousness, in universal righteousness, towards God in piety, towards man in equity, and herein see that ye sow plentifully, that is, exercise yourselves in these works.

Reap in mercy: this is referred both to the Divine mercy, and so amounteth to a promise, and to the mercy we should show to man, and so is direction for another part of duty; both may well have place here.

Break up your fallow ground; your hearts, O ye Ephraimites, have been and still are, as ground overrun with weeds, which need be ploughed and broken up, that good seed may be sowed in them, that you may bring forth fruit in holy life, from a holy heart, and obtain mercy of God.

It is time to seek the Lord; it is full time, if you consider it aright; or, it is yet time, you may seek and find he is not quite gone, still he calls you, therefore hearken, and follow seasonable advice, seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found.

Till he come; seek with patience and faith until he doth, as certainly he will, come; for this passage is a virtual or implicit promise that God will come to them if they seek him, i.e. he will bless, favour, and love them; in these he will appear to them, which is his coming to them.

Rain righteousness; plentifully pour out the fruits of his own goodness and mercy which he hath promised, and, having promised, it is a righteous thing they should be given according to promise; thus the mercies of God to us are his righteousness to us.

Upon you, who repent and obey his counsel by his prophets.

Ver. 13.

You, O Israelites, subjects of the kingdom of the ten tribes, **have ploughed wickedness;** instead of repentance, and a life of righteousness, you have lived in wickedness, and propagated it, you have increased all manner of impieties; thus you have abused and perverted the fruits of God's goodness.

Ye have reaped iniquity; the wickedness you have sown hath sprung up and ripened into iniquity; or, you have met with a recompence worthy of this your labour, God hath punished you for your wickedness; the first seems most agreeable to the text.

Ye have eaten the fruit of lies; fed yourselves with vain hopes, maintained yourselves upon a carnal, sinful confidence, forsaking

the fountain of living waters; and these lies the prophet doth in the following words reduce to two heads.

Thou didst trust in thy way; dependence on idols, worshipping them, and seeking to them; their way was their idolatry committed with the calves.

In the multitude of thy mighty men; the next lie on which they lived was the wisdom and valour of their great men, their king, nobles, captains, and counsellors; in confidence of sufficient help by them, they held on in a way of sin and wickedness.

Ver. 14.

Therefore, since such are their sins, and such will be their disappointments, since their refuges will be so vain, and their enemies so many and strong,

shall a tumult arise; a discontent, murmur, and outcry, as of men affrighted, not knowing what course to take when the alarm is given, and certain news cometh, that Shalmaneser comes with his army against the kingdom of Israel.

Among thy people; the Israelites, among all sorts of people, among all the tribes of the kingdom.

All thy fortresses shall be spoiled; every one of thy strong holds, those impregnable fortifications on which thou hast laid out all that art and diligence could, to make them able to break the power of the enemy that dares besiege them, these, every one of them, (as the Hebrew construction bears it,) shall be wasted.

Shalman; it is most probably spoken of Shalmaneser, though abbreviated, which is usual in all writings of history; so Alexander or Pompey, without the addition of Great, and so here *Shalman* without *eser*, or surnamed prince.

Betharbel, possibly Arbel here may be the name of a man whose house and family Shalman destroyed, and so this passage might be read, the house of Arbel; but the more likely reading is as we read it, so it is the name of some country or city, or both. We meet with a city of this name, famous for the overthrow which Alexander gave to Darius, and probable it is that this might be that Arbel or Beth-arbel here spoken of, rebuilt and grown great again since the sack of it by Shalman, which was at least four hundred years

before the overthrow of Darius. It was a city of Assyria, and gave name, Arbelis, to a country or region, part of Assyria, and lay somewhat below Arpad.

In the day of battle: of this war we nowhere else read; it is likely it was not long before the war with Samaria and the ten tribes, that the memory of that severity was fresh, and the particulars then well known.

The mother was dashed in pieces upon her children; all were put to the sword, and the city utterly destroyed.

Ver. 15.

So; mercilessly and universally sin.

Beth-el; one place put for every one, and the place put for the idolatry committed there.

Do; procure, bring your idolatry and sins, do all this evil against you.

Unto you, O Samaritans, and the rest of the ten tribes.

Because of your great wickedness: this idolatry, and the concomitant sins, are here summed up in their total sum,

great wickedness, exceeding great.

In a morning; suddenly, or so soon as it is day; possibly the Assyrians might assault the city towards morning, and master it.

Shall the king of Israel, Hoshea,

utterly be cut off; his power broken, for his life was spared, and he made a prisoner, #2Ki 17:4.

HOSEA CHAPTER 11.

Israel's ingratitude to God for his benefits, #Ho 11:1-4. God's judgment upon them, #Ho 11:5-7. His mercy toward them, #Ho 11:8-11. Ephraim's falsehood, and Judah's fidelity, #Ho 11:12.

Ver. 1.

When Israel was a child; in the infancy of Israel, which is here dated equal with his being in Egypt.

Then I loved him; manifested that tender and paternal affection which I did bear to him, increasing him in numbers, wealth, and honour.

Called my son; adopted him to be my son, and as my son provided for him, and brought him out of servitude; I so loved him as to give Egypt for his ransom, **#Isa 43:3**.

Out of Egypt; where they had sojourned two hundred and fifteen years, and in them suffered many outrages from the Egyptians, who were their enemies, and aimed at extirpating Israel. Now, amidst such enemies, God owned them to be his sons, his eldest son, and redeemed him out of bondage, a fruit of wonderful love never to be forgotten. This in the letter and history is exceeding plain, but there is difficulty in the application of this unto Christ, and his call out of Egypt, of which many interpreters treat at large, which may not now be so much as summarily touched. It is too little to say that the evangelist doth allude to this place, **#Mt 2:15**, and I think it is too much to say this place is cited by Matthew, as in the history of the thing, referring only to Christ being called out of Egypt; but if you will make Israel the first adopted son, type of Christ, the first-born, and the history of Israel's coming out to be a type of Christ's future coming out, you then give to both their proper share in these words, and the letter and history is verified in both, and the principal import of the words will refer to Christ, as principally intended in them, yet not excluding the type.

Ver. 2.

As they; Moses and Aaron, and other prophets, and holy, zealous judges and priests, as Samuel, &c.

Called; advised, persuaded, entreated, and urged by exhortations.

Them; the whole house of Israel, and among these the ten tribes, or Ephraim.

So they Israelites, called and entreated, especially they of that age when the division was made, and ever since.

Went from; frowardly and most disingenuously apostatized more and more, as the prophet, **#Isa 1:5**. Horrible ingratitude so to requite God!

From them; from the prophets' counsel and commands, delivered as they came from God.

They sacrificed unto Baalim; in the desert they began this apostacy, joined themselves to Baal-peor, #Nu 25:3, and worshipped the calf, #Ex 32:4-6, and held on with obstinacy in it.

Graven images; images of their gods, before which they performed another part of religious worship, burning incense before them.

Ver. 3.

I taught Ephraim also to go; as a mother or nurse doth help the child, and with tenderest care doth guide and form its steps, and by long-continued patience waits on it; such like was the tenderness of God toward Israel in his childhood.

Taking them by their arms; supporting and bearing them up, as nurses bear up the child in their hands, taking them up by the arms, giving strength for motion, till the child should grow to strength.

But they knew not that I healed them; unthankful, sottish, and heedless ones, neither would see nor acknowledge me in it, but within few months' time ascribe their deliverance to a golden calf, #Ex 32:4; thus foolishly they requite the love of their God.

Ver. 4.

I drew them; I found them backward and unapt to lead, I therefore in my pity laid my hand on them, and, as a father or friend, drew them gently to me.

With cords of a man, i.e. with such obliging kindness as best fits and most prevails with a man, with reason.

With bands of love; those arguments of love, which might, as strong bands, hold them fast to my law and worship for their good. I used all manner of kindnesses towards them to fix them in good.

I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws; as a careful husbandman doth in due season take the yoke from his labouring oxen, and takes off the muzzle with which they were

kept from eating when at work, gives them time of rest and feeding: so did God with Israel.

I laid meat unto them; brought them provision in their wants, as the careful husbandman brings fodder and provender for his wearied labouring oxen, by which plain simile God doth inform Israel in Hosea's time what ancient, tender, constant, and vigilant love he had showed to Israel, to their predecessors, and to them also, and hereby discovers their unheard-of ingratitude and wickedness, which began in their fathers, and hath continued with increase to the days of their final ruin.

Ver. 5.

He; Ephraim thus provided for by me, thus indulged, or else Ephraim punished.

Shall not return into the land of Egypt; either needed not have courted Egypt's friendship, or desired that assistance; I would have kept them safe enough, and sufficiently provided for them; so if you refer this to Ephraim not threatened or punished: but if Ephraim be here threatened, then you have it foretold, that though Ephraim flatters himself with false hopes of a refuge in Egypt, it should not be.

But the Assyrian shall be his king; conquering and captivating them, should make himself their king, and rule them with rigour and cruelty. Because they refused to return; the reason of all is, their obstinacy in idolatry, and their impenitence, refusing to return to God; which two latter passages are also explicable as the former, thus, if they would have returned unto me, Assyria should not have been their king.

Ver. 6.

The sword; either intestine or foreign wars, or both. Shall abide; shall be long, not be as a sudden incursion which doth much mischief to surprised and unfortified places, but it shall be a lasting war; three years Samaria was besieged, so the sword did abide.

On his cities; all the cities of Ephraim, the enemy should have courage and leisure to attend the siege of every one of them.

Shall consume; shall prevail to take, sack, burn, and ruin the branches.

His branches; lesser towns and villages.

Devour them; swallow them up with speed and ease, without remedy. Because of their own counsels; which they first took, **#1Ki 12:28**, and ever since irreclaimably have followed, in opposition to all the good counsels the prophets gave them from time to time, to all which they have turned a deaf ear; they have sued for Egypt and Asshur's favour, and slighted mine.

Ver. 7.

My people; yet God owneth them for his, he had not cast them quite off; or since they call themselves his, he is willing to encourage them by owning all in them that looks toward him.

Are bent to backsliding from me; or continue in suspense, doubtful and unresolved what to do, or rather inclined most to an aversion from me: though the Lord's prophets have persuaded them earnestly to return by repentance, yet they continue unresolved what is best to be done, whether to adhere to their idol gods, to make sure of Egyptian aids, or-to turn to God, and east off the other; this they most dislike, and continue as it were tacked and fastened to their rebellion, as the French version.

Though they, the prophets, called them to the Most High; invited, exhorted, and encouraged them with many fair promises to give glory to God by returning.

None at all; not one of many, scarce any one in those great numbers in Israel, would hearken and obey. Would exalt him; God in his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, all which a repenting people do magnify, but these will not. They retain their idols, depend on Egypt, and put all on that cast, and will neither believe nor try God's goodness.

Ver. 8.

After such unparalleled abuse of infinite mercy and patience, what could be expected, but unrelenting wrath and fiercest indignation? but here is a wonder above all the rest; bowels troubled, and struggling with anger, and contesting on behalf of most inexcusable sinners. O Ephraim, thou hast deserved to be

destroyed for ever, thy sins call for this, and my justice threatens it, I may do it; but my mercy interposeth, and I would rather spare in mercy than destroy injustice, there is still a debate between these two: How shall I give up to justice? saith mercy; and, How shall I not give up (saith justice) into the hands of enemies? Justice must be executed, that I must do, saith God; and mercy shall be magnified, that I will do; but how shall this be done? If I deliver thee, O Israel, to thine enemies, they will utterly destroy, and where then is mercy? If I deliver thee not, thy sins will not be chastised, and where then is justice? If I punish thee, as I punished Admah and Zeboim, with fire from heaven, I do what is just, but then I show no mercy; for these are two of the four cities which suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, of which **#Ge 19:24**.

Mine heart is turned within me: after the manner of man God speaks; we know what it is to have a heart turned from wrath into kindness and compassions, so God speaks of himself here, and **#Isa 63:15 Jer 31:20**.

My repentings are kindled together; still, like a compassionate man, he could wish his threats in again, his bowels are now as in a flame for them.

Ver. 9.

Here mercy rejoiceth against judgment, and God declareth his purpose to spare, he promiseth that he will not execute according to utmost severity. This promise he confirmeth by doubling it, though in somewhat different words: I will not do as men, who having beat down an enemy, and wounded him, do return again to see whether he breathe, and to make an end of him; or conquerors, that plunder the conquered city, carry away the wealth of it, and after some time return to burn it; God will not do so.

I am God, and not man; his compassions are infinite, his goodness unchangeable; he remembers all his promises to every one, and now seeth who among Israel believe, and hope for his grace and mercy; these he must spare, as he is just Judge of the whole earth, and for their sakes he will spare many others.

The Holy One in the midst of thee; a holy God, and in covenant, though not with all, yet with many among you, and those that are in covenant with God are holy ones too: I will not

make them as Admah or Zeboim, for the case is different, in the cities of the plain there were no righteous ones, but here are some, though not many: and so Rivet renders the words, there is a holy one in the midst of thee, where the singular is used for plural, as in that passage,

there is none righteous. I will not enter into the city; I will not come amongst you, as I came into Sodom, &c. Here is comfort for God's remnant.

Ver. 10.

They, whom infinite mercy spareth, the choice remnant,

shall walk after the Lord; shall hear and obey, worship and depend on the Lord, on the Messiah, of whom these and the words of the next verse do certainly speak. They refer also to the return out of captivity, in both history and type, of our deliverance out of spiritual and eternal captivity.

He shall roar like a lion; Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, shall send out his gospel: this is meant by the lion's roaring, **#Joe 3:16**, of whom it is observed, that he doth by roaring gather his whelps and others of his kind to the prey: by the mighty voice of the Lord in the gospel, the elect shall be gathered to partake of eternal life.

Then the children shall tremble; the Spirit by its power awakening them to the sight of sin, shall make them fear and tremble,

from the west, to the ends of the earth. This is the mystical sense; yet the literal, I think, refers to the return of the Jews out of captivity, when many out of Assyria and Egypt returned, and some report one hundred thousand from Ethiopia Cusses, and the parts toward Arabia; and possibly this hath particular respect to Darius's decree, on the behalf of those that followed Haggai and Zechariah's counsel, finished the temple, restored the worship of God, reformed strange and unlawful marriages, paid their tithes, &c.; in these they followed the Lord; and Darius made a decree for them, terrible to the children of the west, as the roaring of a lion: Let this work go forward, **#Ezr 6:7**, &c.; who dares to hinder, let timber be taken out of his house, and a gallows made thereof, and such be hanged thereon, **#Ho 11:11,12**. All this filled

the inhabitants of those parts with great fear, when God thus gathered his dispersed ones: but what I conjecture at I do submit to better judgments.

Ver. 11.

The summary of the first part of this verse seems to be, that some should hasten, yet with solicitude, out of Egypt, whither they fled for shelter, like as a bird that hath been cast out of her nest hasteth to it; others like doves shall hasten out of Assyria unto Judea, but with fear and solicitude, which cannot but attend them in a land, though their own, yet now desolate and horrid under one hundred and eighty years' devastation since Shalmaneser transported them, i.e. one hundred and ten years before and seventy years concurrent with the Jews' captivity in Babylon.

I will place them in their houses; they will find none, but I will place them in houses, and they shall be theirs too. It is a very seasonable and comfortable promise, and suited to the state and wants of those returning exiles, and in the letter of it refers to them; and they as types of what is more mysteriously and more darkly contained in them, viz. the gathering of believers from all quarters to Christ with the alacrity and speed which birds make in flying to their nests, and God's providing mansions of rest for them: well resembled here in these similes.

Ver. 12.

This verse might better begin the next chapter, and by most interpreters I have seen, it is the first verse of the next chapter; but since we find it here we will here consider it.

Ephraim; many or the most of Ephraim.

Compasseth me about with lies; play the hypocrites with me still; yet give me good words, call themselves my people, and say I am their God, and that they worship me and seek me; but they flatter me with their mouths, and lie unto me with their tongues, as **#Ps 78:36**. So God upbraids them with this their sin.

And the house of Israel with deceit; the same thing in an ingeminated phrase, to affect and ascertain the more.

Judah; the people of the two tribes, under the government of the house of David.

Ruleth with God; while idolaters are vassals and slaves to the devil and to their own superstitious fears, the true worshippers of God, like princes, rule with God. Or rather, keeping to the house of David, retained the government in state affairs, which was

Theopolitia, a government set up of God: when Ephraim made kings and princes, but God did not know it, i.e. did not advise nor approve it.

And is faithful with the saints; retains also purity, at least truth, of worship, and in the holy things of God keepeth to his word, and comparatively is faithful: whereas Ephraim is hypocritical and false, Judah adheres to God's holy prophets, priests, and other saints of God.

HOSEA CHAPTER 12

Ephraim and Judah are both reprov'd, **#Ho 12:1,2.** In consideration of God's former favours to Jacob they are exhorted to repent, **#Ho 12:3-6.** Ephraim's sins and ingratitude provoke God, **#Ho 12:7-14.**

Ver. 1.

Ephraim feedeth on wind: it is a proverbial speech, denoting; the self-flattery of Ephraim, his supporting himself with hopes as unfit to sustain him, as the wind is to feed the body and nourish it; in his religious pretensions he did, hypocrite like, compass God with lies, and now in his civil concerns he compasseth himself with lies.

Followeth after the east wind: in those countries the east winds were most vehement, dangerous, and blasting, **#Ps 48:7 Jon 4:8;** a very apt emblem to represent the self-destroying course which Ephraim took, which, though yet he will not believe, shall ere long scorch, blast, rend, and tear him as the tempestuous east winds do the weaker and unfenced plants.

He daily increaseth lies; by making new leagues, and fortifying himself with them against the menaces of God by his prophets, he increaseth friendships; but all of them will prove lies to him at last, like the wind he feeds on. The like you have **#Ho 10:13 Isa 57:9,13.**

And desolation: this is worse than merely to be disappointed by a lie; as before the east wind was hurtful and did him mischief, so here his purchased friendships shall hasten and increase his desolation. The league made with Sua, or So, king of Egypt, was accounted a conspiracy in Hoshea, and this brought Shalmaneser upon Israel, which war ended in Israel's ruin and final desolation.

They do make a covenant with the Assyrians; with purpose to defeat the threats of God, and to secure themselves in their courses. Thus they sinfully confederate as before, **#Ho 5:13 7:11 8:9;** they forsake God's covenant, and trust not him, but make a covenant with enemies, and trust them.

Oil is carried into Egypt; not common oil for trade, but rich and precious oils, presents and price to procure friendship there too, though forbidden, **#Isa 30:2,6 31:1.**

Ver. 2.

The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah; though Judah, compared with Ephraim, be faithful, yet when considered in his ways and doings he is found faulty in many things, and God hath just matter of complaint against Judah in point of manners; in public worship Judah was faithful, kept to God and the temple, though not without some defects, but in their lives there were many more and greater faults, about which God will contend that Judah may be reformed.

Judah; the two tribes.

Will punish; or visit with chastising to amend, else to destroy: there is hope of Judah that he will be reclaimed, therefore I will try by gentler visitations, by fatherly corrections, yet I will not leave him as hopeless, nor as faultless.

Jacob; not the patriarch, but those who are of him; his children, but that have degenerated from his ways of love, fear, trust, and obedience. Both Ephraim and Judah are of Jacob, but both have corrupted themselves, and therefore will I proceed against both; and if Judah, the less faulty, escape not, Ephraim can have no hope to escape; if Judah be whipped with rods because a disobedient son, Ephraim may fear a sword because he hath been and still is an obstinate rebel.

According to his ways; neither can justly complain then, since their different ways are made the standard of the different proceedings of God against them, he will not lay upon either more than is equal; who suffers most hath deserved more, and who suffers least needed so much to amend him.

According to his doings will he recompense him: this is an elegant and very usual ingemination of the same thing, which doth assure it will be done, and should affect us the more.

Ver. 3.

He, Jacob,

took his brother, Esau, by the heel in the womb: the matter of fact you have **#Ge 25:26**; the design of mentioning it in this place is to mind them of that goodness which God showed to them in their father Jacob, who was by a miracle foretold to be superior to Esau, that he and his should have the birth-right: this should never be forgotten. The true worship of God they should have preserved, since in the priesthood, part of the primogeniture, it was included both as privilege and duty; justice and equity they should have maintained as a flower of the crown and kingly authority included in the birth-right, and a double portion or share in God's blessings was theirs too. But all these blessings are forfeited by their apostacy, for which at once they should blush, repent, and humble themselves, and at last remember their primogeniture, and labour to recover to a temper worthy this their original. Jacob strove for the blessing in the womb, but you profanely neglect it in full age.

By his strength; this strength was not of nature, But of grace, a fruit of the Divine love and election, strength from God.

He had power with God; strength received of God was well employed betimes, in it he wrestled for and obtained the blessing; but you let it slip out of your hands, and sin it away. There was somewhat of heroic, a conqueror from his birth, but you are revolvers from the womb.

Ver. 4.

He; your famous progenitor of whom you boast.

Had power; behaved himself as a prince with God, **#Ge 32:28**.

Over; with: the angel was willing to be conquered, or Jacob could not have gotten the victory.

The angel; called God, **#Ho 12:3**, and, **#Ho 12:5**, is Jehovah, *Lord of hosts*. He was no created angel, but the uncreated Angel Christ, the Messiah, eternal God by nature and essence, angel by office and voluntary undertaking.

And prevailed; got the victory, went out of the field a conqueror, but not by such arms and methods as you use. You are conquered by man because of your sins, he conquered with God by faith and prayer.

He, not the angel, as some through mistake, but your father Jacob, **wept:** by this we know he prayed with tears, though the story say not so, with sense of his own unworthiness, with earnestness for the mercy he desired, and apprehensive of the majesty of him with whom he wrestled. But you, quite contrary, proud as if worthy, regardless of the best part of the blessing, and earnest only for the meaner part, seek it not of God, but idols.

And made supplication unto him: it is Christ who is here intended; it was no mere creature, Jacob might not have prayed to such, but it was the Creator of angels and the Redeemer of man, the blessed Jesus, to whom every knee ought to bow, **#Php 2:10**.

He, God,

found him, Jacob, full of weariness, fears, and solicitude on his journey to Laban, **#Ge 28:12,20**, when prayers obtained a blessing; but with this, and more directly, when on his return after this wrestling bout, **#Ge 35:1**, &c., God appeared to him, **#Ge 35:7-15**, and blessed him. *Beth-el*; formerly called Luz, but by Jacob new named and called Beth-el, **#Ge 28:19**.

There he, God,

spake, renewed his promise and confirmed the blessing, with us: by the current of the words in their grammatical order it should be,

he spake to him; but it is, not without good reason, changed to the plural first person, us, as posterity were in Jacob's loins, and blessed with him. Yet more, where God appeared to Jacob he commanded him to build an altar there to God, to restore religion

and reform his family from idolatry, which he did, **#Ge 35:4**. But you, children of this Jacob by natural descent, are of another and far different humour; though you have been called and exhorted to leave your idols, yet these two hundred years you have kept them, and will, I see, keep them: this is your sin, and in it you are obstinate, and I will punish such a Jacob as you.

Ver. 5.

Even, or and, he that appeared and spake, who promised the blessing, and commanded the reformation at Beth-el, was

the Lord, Jehovah, the eternal and unchangeable God, who still promiseth with like commands.

God of hosts; who can both perform his promise and execute his threat, who is a most terrible enemy and most desirable friend, all being to us as he is.

The Lord, Jehovah, repeated for confirmation, is his memorial; by this he will be known, by this name, by such methods of his sovereignty and grace, **#Ex 3:15**.

Ver. 6.

Therefore; no more vainly boast of Jacob; but, as he, do you approve yourselves to God.

Turn thou to thy God; repent, leave idols, and all sins. He worshipped God alone, do you so; he cast idols out of his family, do you so too, be Jacob's children herein.

Keep mercy; show kindness to all who need it, cast off cruelty and inhumanity, and be merciful to the afflicted: this contains all the duties we owe to any that are in straits.

And judgment; wrong none, but with justice in dealings, in judicatures, and public offices, render to every one their due. Acquit the innocent, and condemn the guilty, and let none have just cause to complain of injuries.

Wait on thy God; in public worship, and private duties of prayer, and seeking God, him only serve and, trust, let not idols have either sacrifice, prayer, praise, or trust from you.

Continually: and let your hope and worship be perpetuated, for ever continued towards God, till he save and rescue; trust, pray,

and resign yourselves to him, who will be yours as he was Jacob's God, on these terms and no other. This short phrase, wait on they God, includes all duties of the first table of the law, all religions worship of the true God; do this, and the Lord will be to you. as to Jacob, defence against danger and fullness in your wants.

Ver. 7.

He is a merchant; Ephraim, of whom here, is so far from being Jacob, or as Jacob, that you may call and account him a Canaanite, a subtle merchant.

The balances of deceit are in his hand; what he cannot gain by fair trading, he will by downright cheating; he is covetous, and very unjust.

He loveth to oppress; where violence, calumnies, and false accusations are needful to compass his covetous and cozening designs, he will not stick at them; this way of gain he loveth, his heart is upon it; though God hate the false balance, and false witness, and the violent man, yet Ephraim loves them all for his gain.

Ver. 8.

Ephraim said; this covetous, oppressive merchant reckoned with himself, or discoursed with himself, upon the whole of his trading.

Yet I am become rich; whatever is said by some, or thought by others, yet I get what I aim at: either it is good and lawful, and prospered to me by the blessing of God on it because it is just and righteous, or it is not so bad as morose prophets and preachers make it, or at worst (which I will venture, saith Ephraim) it lessens my innocency, but improves my stock, and this is more to such merchants than all the poor innocence in the world.

I have found me out substance; the same thing, with a vain boast of what is not in his wealth and substance. If in his gain he assumed his own only to himself, it were praiseworthy; that is, if he took to himself with shame the sinful manner of acquiring it; but he takes the praise to himself, and forgets God; boasts of his wit, though he cannot of his honesty.

In all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin; finally, he hugs himself in the apprehension of close and

crafty carriage of all his affairs, that no great fault, no crime, can be found in it to deserve a reproach or punishment, that he hath more reason to believe all is well since it doth prosper, than to suspect any great miscarriage which should deserve punishment. So this people do at once flatter themselves into security, fearless of punishment, and into hardened obstinacy in sin incapable of amendment.

Ver. 9.

And, or but, I the Lord thy God, who forbade thy frauds and gave thee wealth, and am forgotten in both, thou fearest not mine anger and sinnest; thou forgettest that I give thee power to get wealth, and takest glory to thyself; but wouldst thou, as thou shouldst, remember, thou wouldst know

that I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, that all thy blessings from thy coming out of Egypt to this day are from me; I give more than thou gettest; thou boastest of what is not thine, and if thou wilt glory, remember it should be in my goodness and bounty.

Will yet make, &c.; hitherto have made, &c.; thy peace, safety, plenty, and joy, (here expressed proverbially, in allusion to the joy and security which they enjoyed in the days of the feast of tabernacles,) were all through my goodness, presence, and faithfulness. And darest thou, O Ephraim, thus sacrilegiously rob me of the praise and glory? darest thou be thus unthankful? Or else thus, I would still make thee to dwell, &c., I take what course is fittest to prevent thy dangers, sorrows, and ruin, but all will not do, thou wilt undo thyself. I am Jehovah, I change not, I am thy God still, and have been so ever since thou camest out of Egypt, I gave thee plenty, peace, safety, joy, and would willingly continue it all, as will appear by what I have done to prevent thy sin, and continue thy obedience. Some tell us it is a threat that God will bring them into the condition of wanderers again, others make it a promise of future mercy; and in various conjectures we have ventured on what will suit the contexture of the words, at least tolerably well; if it be not the best, it best pleaseth at present.

Ver. 10.

I have also spoken by the prophets; Heb. *and*, i.e. since I would have continued Ephraim's peaceful state, I have spoken to them by my prophets, who have warned them of their danger, reproved them for their sins, entreated them to repent and do their duty; so I would have established them, my prophets spake plainly to them.

I have multiplied visions; by many visions and representations of my mind, the duty of the people, what would be safe, what dangerous, by lively emblems set before the prophets, and by them told to Israel, I have advised and warned that I might yet settle them. I would have had them dwelt still in the peace, safety, and joy of festivals, therefore I have sent such as Hosea, Isaiah, Joel, &c.

Used similitudes; parables, examples, actions: Isaiah goes barefoot, names his son Maher-shalal-hash-baz, to warn Israel. Betharbel's desolation is mentioned to prevent Samaria's. Hosea takes an adulteress to wife to bring Israel to sight and sense of their sin. All this and much more by my prophets, because I had compassion and would have made them dwell in peace and safety under my government. And yet uncounselable and unthankful Israel will not understand and comply, will not own their sins and repent.

Ver. 11.

Is there iniquity in Gilead? in this concise interrogatory the prophet warns the refractory, ungodly Israelites by an example of God's wrath on them. About A.M. 326.1, at Ahaz's request and charges, Tiglath-pileser came up against Israel, and took Gilead among other towns, leading the inhabitants captives, #2Ki 15:29; now some sixteen or seventeen years after doth our prophet mind the sinful and secure Ephraimites what they must expect, and doth it in this pungent question,

Is there iniquity in Gilead? i.e. is there only? or is there more? much like that of Christ's, #Lu 13:2,

Suppose ye them greater sinners? Be it so, captive Gilead was all iniquity, and Gilgal is no better. They that come up to Gilgal to sacrifice are idolaters, they sin against God in offering to them, and against their own welfare in trusting to them, both ways they

appear to be vanity; whilst they multiply these altars and sacrifices, they multiply their sins, God's displeasure is increased, and the danger more near and dreadful.

Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields: idolatrous Israel, thou aboundest in altars; but if they are for number like heaps of stones, gathered out of ploughed land and laid in furrows, they are as common too, i.e. as far from sacred, as far from commending any offering to God, or stoning his displeasure. And canst thou, Ephraim, hope to escape, whose sins exceed the sins of captive Gilead? wilt thou never be wise, never warned, never repent?

Ver. 12.

Jacob, the patriarch,

fled into the country of Syria, for fear of Esau.

And Israel, though honoured with that great name, served, stooped to the condition which is next door to slave,

for a wife; a wife was his wages.

And for a wife he kept sheep of Laban. All which in the history is related at large, **#Ge 29**.

Ver. 13.

By a prophet, by Moses,

the Lord brought Israel, your forefathers, out of Egypt; where they had been bondmen two hundred and fifteen years, or near upon it, old slaves, or vassals for some descents.

By a prophet was he preserved in the wilderness: see **#Ex 2 Ex 3**, &c. Now the drift of the prophet herein to me appears to be this, to prevent their vain pride and boasting of their ancestors, their raiser sheltering themselves under ancestors' merits against God's just displeasure on them for their sins, and the sottish plea of what their fathers did at Beth-el and Gilgal. There are many things which arise on consideration of what their fathers were, suffered, enjoyed, and did, to aggravate their sins and insure them of punishment; but nothing to secure them against judgment to come, or to lessen judgments when they come.

Ver. 14.

Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: after all the means used from time to time to reclaim idolatrous sinning Israel, yet still they provoked God to indignation by their idolatries, perjuries, oppressions, murders, and all manner of sins which use to be rife among idolaters; these things were bitterness unto God.

Therefore, seeing he will incorrigibly persist as he hath begun, and end in sin and misery,

shall he leave his blood upon him; he shall bear the guilt and punishment of all his blood, his murders of the innocent, of those that testified against him, and, as one who hath murdered himself, shall bear his own guilt too.

His reproach, which Ephraim hath east upon the prophets and pious worshippers of God, all the reproach Ephraim hath cast on God, preferring idols before him,

shall his Lord return unto him; either God, who is Lord of all, or the Assyrian king and his princes, lording it over captive Ephraim; God shall by these return the shame on Ephraim which he cast on God, his worship, temple, and prophets.

HOSEA CHAPTER 13

Ephraim's glory vanisheth by reason of idolatry, **#Ho 13:1-3**. God's former care of his people: for their abuse of his benefits he will destroy them, **#Ho 13:4-8**. A promise of mercy and redemption from the grave, **#Ho 13:9-14**. The judgment of Samaria for rebellion, **#Ho 13:15,16**.

Ver. 1.

When; so soon as, or according as, as the Hebrew phrase bears it, and implieth there was a time when according to the word of Ephraim there was deep impression on the hearers. Ephraim; Jeroboam son of Nebat, an Ephraimite, say some; but this is wide of truth, nor suits the text, which refers to their worshipping of Baal, and this came into use in Israel in Ahab's time, **#1Ki 16:31**; his wife Jezebel, daughter to Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, prevailed with him to take her country idol and add to Jeroboam's calves.

Ephraim here is either the tribe of Ephraim, which was of all the ten tribes most powerful, and when angry and discontented made the other tribes afraid; or rather the whole kingdom of Israel, called frequently in Hosea Ephraim.

Spake; when he consulted, commanded, threatened, or sent out his proclamation; it is a speaking like a king's or kingdom's speaking, which is backed with power sufficient to act as they speak;

trembling; the tribes and the neighbouring kingdoms apprehended danger, were put into a fear of the consequence too, all men felt a commotion within them. Such once was the authority, power, and glory of Ephraim.

He exalted himself in Israel; was magnified, advanced, and made glorious, the kingdom flourished in multitudes of people, in abundance of wealth, in the successes of their counsels, and in their credit abroad. In this flourishing state Ephraim, a principal tribe, and which first set up for the royal dignity and carried it, had-principal share, and is mid to exalt himself in or with Israel.

But when, so soon as he sinned,

he offended in Baal, by taking Baal to be their god added this idolatry to their former sins,

he died; undid himself, lost his power, glory, and bravery, as a dead man.

Ver. 2.

And now, though they are admonished, threatened, and in part punished, yet now that Baal is taken in for a god and worshipped,

they sin more and more; they go on to sin, and add new idolatries to the old, they increase the number of their sins; in some respect their new sins are greater than those committed formerly, but the prophet here speaks not of greatness of sins, but the number.

And have made them molten images of their silver: these were the figures and representations of the gods they worshipped, and were multiplied as families, able to go to the cost, did multiply; every one got their household gods. heathen like, and most of

these puppets were made of silver. Or the phrase may imply, that at their own charge these people made them gods; so though it was a straight ash, or wood that would not soon putrefy, which was formed into the idol, yet because bought with their silver it may by a metonymy be called their silver.

Idols according to their own understanding; every one as he fancied, as he thought most comely, and proper to represent a deity; perhaps these idolaters vied with each other who should have the handsomest god, as Ahaz would vie altars, and therefore made new ones. Perhaps some of these idolaters melted down their old less handsome gods to run them into more pleasing features.

All of it the work of the craftsmen; whatever is of the image is of the workman, who gave it shape, but could not give it breath, still it is a lifeless lump or image.

They, either the kings of Israel, or the priests of these idols, or the people, say of them, of the idols,

Let the men that sacrifice, let every one that sacrificeth, all that bring their offerings to these idols,

kiss; reverence, worship, or adore, and show they do so by kissing the calves. They will make them give full worship to their idols.

Ver. 3.

Therefore; for these sins in multiplied idolatries and trusting to idols.

They, Ephraim, his king, his captains, his fortresses, and aids, shall be, in the day of the Assyrian invasion, suddenly, easily, totally, and finally dispersed, expressed here by four similes, every one very apt and full, clear and easy to be understood.

Ver. 4.

Yet, though thou hast so revolted, and chosen other gods, it is not occasioned by any change in me,

I am what I was,

the Lord, the mighty God, the everlasting God, Jehovah. *Thy God from the land of Egypt;* thy God who alone brought thee out of

Egypt, and who hath maintained thy lot; the calves and Baal were not known amongst you then. And since I alone brought thee out of Egypt, and saved thee with wonderful salvations many times since, why dost thou seek gods thou needest not, gods that cannot help?

Thou shalt know no god but me; I forbade thee to know any other god but me, in gratitude thou shouldst know no other; if there were any other, in point of interest thou shouldst have known, i.e. worshipped, trusted, and obeyed, none but me. And finally, by woeful experience thou shalt know that calves and Baal are no gods, they cannot save thee nor themselves; thou shalt know I am God alone, who can destroy those who would not obey me.

For there no saviour beside me; when thy idols cannot save thee out of the hands of those I deliver thee up to, then thou shalt see, what now thou wilt not, that there is no saviour but me; none who can deliver from all evil, and who can enrich with all blessings, who can pardon sin and save the sinner.

Ver. 5.

I did know, owned, took care of, guided, and supplied, thee, O Israel, in thy fathers,

in the wilderness; through which for forty years together thou wast moving, and foundest nothing for thy sustenance but what my miraculous goodness and power gave thee; through those many deserts thou never didst want.

In the land of great drought; in the parched sands, where were no refreshing showers, no rivers or springs of water, to suffice so many cattle and men; where thou wentest as it were through flames and on sands, scorching as embers of a fire, a place fit for none but fiery serpents, or salamanders (if any such).

Ver. 6.

According to their pasture, so were they filled; when they were come into Canaan, that land of springs, brooks, and rivers, that land of wheat, barley, vines, olives, and figs, as **#De 8:7-9**; when they had abundance of all things for delight, as well as for necessary sustenance; when I had, like a good, careful, and wise shepherd, brought them into this rich pasture; they, like hungry

beasts, ate to excess, ran into luxury and riot; epicure like, gorged themselves with sweet wines and delicious fare.

They were filled: either this is a reduplication of the charge to confirm it, I say, they thus luxuriously lived; or else it is elliptical, and to be made out thus,

And so soon as they were filled; and thus it will be parallel to that,

Jeshurun waxed fat, #De 32:13-15.

Their heart was exalted; grew proud, entertained high thoughts of their progenitors' worth, their nobleness by descent, their worthiness and righteousness above other people; they thought of God as of man, that he proportioned his blessings to what excellency was found in those he did good to.

Therefore have they forgotten me; so they have forgotten me, who found them in slavery, poverty, reproach, and tears in Egypt, out of which I saved them; and they have most scandalously made them gods, Worshipped them, and with sacrilegious unthankfulness given the praise of all I did for them to dumb idols, though I warned them of it beforehand, #De 6:11,12 8:13,14.

Ver. 7.

Therefore; since they have so abused my gifts by luxury, pride, and atheistical forgetfulness of me, of what I had done for them, what I deserved and expected from them, I will use them as is meet, and take my revenge upon them.

I will be unto them; unthankful, apostates, idolaters, sottish drunkards, belly-gods, who live to eat and drink, and forget me.

As a lion: see #Ho 5:14; that is, in his fullest strength, of a middle age, swift in pursuing, and that can continue the chase till he overtake his prey; and which is strong, courageous, and proud of his strength and success; that will dreadfully roar over his prey, as if he challenged any one to attempt its rescue.

As a leopard; a very fierce, swift, sly, and watchful creature, #Jer 5:6 Hab 1:8. Observe them; watch for them, that I may be sure to take them.

Ver. 8.

I will meet them; I know their haunts, their walks, I will not fail to meet them there.

As a bear bereaved of her whelps; robbed of her whelps, newly taken away, which makes her mad with rage; so great rage is proverbially expressed. #Pr 17:12.

Will rend the caul of their heart; first kill, next tear in pieces, pull out the very heart: it is probable this fierce creature may by instinct hasten to tear up the prey, that it may drink the blood before it run to waste.

There will I devour them, where I find them and seize them, like the hungry and fearless lion, which feasts on his prey where he caught it, draws it not into his den, but devoureth it immediately.

Like a lion; an old lion, that hath his great teeth, his grinders, and hath still whelps, #Ge 49:9; fierce and terrible, that will either call in his whelps to divide the prey, or drag the prey to his den for them: and what hope of any thing to be spared, when you fall into such hands?

The wild beast shall tear them: it is said of the lion, that he calls by his roaring the wild beasts together to the prey when he hath taken it; so you shall be devoured by the whole troop of wild beasts. Or it may be a general threat added to those particular ones before, every wild beast shall prey upon them. All this God executed on them by the Assyrians, who in their fierceness, cruelty, greediness, and courage answered the character here given to them: the particular resemblances I leave to any, who may easily suit them.

Ver. 9.

Thou hast destroyed thyself; after these menaces it might seem I had destroyed thee, but thou thyself hast done it by thy sins. It is the rebel that destroys himself, though he fall by the sword of his provoked sovereign: thou art the cause and author of thine own ruin.

But in me is thy help; or,

for I was always ready and able to help thee, and would certainly have saved thee; but thy sins, thy wickedness carried thee toward

other helps, which were lies, and have disappointed thee; and now thou dost perish under thine own choice, whereas hadst thou chosen me I would have helped and saved thee. Or else thus the whole verse: This hath destroyed thee, O Israel, for thou hast rebelled against me, against thy help: and so Sol. Jarchy.

Ver. 10.

I will be thy King; I would have been thy King to govern and save thee, but thou refusedst me in both; yet I will be thy King to punish thee. I will not lose my right and honour by thy rebellious carriages against me, I will be a King and subdue such: or else it is a taunting question, Where is thy king, on whose counsel, wisdom, power, and conduct thou hast relied? let him now save thee if he can: so it runs smooth with the next words.

Where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? or, who is there, what wise, valiant, and successful commander, in any of thy cities, that can deliver thee first out of my hand, and next out of the Assyrians' hand?

Thy judges, where are they? thy magistrates have sinned with thee, and shall be destroyed with thee. Thy rulers or inferior governors,

of whom thou saidst, Give me a king; whom thou didst importune and solicit, in a manner forcedst to meet, consult, and resolve in seditious times who should be king next, when treasons had taken away him that was? Some refer this to their first asking a king, but it is better referred to the times either after Jeroboam the First, or to the times after Jeroboam the Second, between whose death and Hoshea's time, some say, there was an interregnum of twenty or near twenty years, during which a turbulent people, as the Israelites were, would be frequent and earnest in all likelihood in moving for a king.

And princes, necessary to assist the king.

Ver. 11.

I gave thee a king in mine anger; such as Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, &c.; but in displeasure against you.

I took him away; the Hebrew says not what; I think, their kings mentioned.

In my wrath: God was angry when he gave such kings to Israel, and he was no better pleased when he took them away; they were punishments when given, and it was punishment to Israel when they were taken away. If you read this verse in the future tense, as you may, I will give them a king in my anger, it may refer to God's giving the king of Assyria the rule over them, making them his vassals; and I will take away, i.e. you, O Israelites, in my wrath, I will destroy some, and send others into captivity, take all away out of your land, and send you in wrath to the grave, or captives into Assyria.

Ver. 12.

The iniquity, in the singular, instead of the plural, all the iniquities and sins,

of Ephraim, the kingdom of the ten tribes,

is bound up; as indictments drawn up and tied together against the day of trial; or as bills and bonds tied up that they may be ready against the day of account, when all must be paid. Or, as sins unpardoned; for to loose sins is to forgive, and to bind sins is to charge them upon the sinner, #Mt 16:19. O Ephraim, thine unpardoned sins lie in account against thee, thou shalt hear of them and smart for them.

His sin is hid; not from God, but laid up with God against the day of recompence, as #Job 21:19: so #Ro 2:5 De 32:34.

Ver. 13.

The sorrows of a travailing woman: by this simile, well known in Scripture, the prophet assures Ephraim that the punishment of his sins will overtake him suddenly, with very great anguish, and with as great certainty, #Mic 5:3.

Shall come upon him; as suddenly, inevitably, and with as much danger too, if he be not the wiser, and return to his God.

He, i.e. Ephraim,

is an unwise son; a very foolish son, an inconsiderate child, who endangers himself and his mother.

For he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children: as a child that sticks in the birth, so Ephraim, just at

the birth, hesitateth, one while will, another while will not, return to God; thus dieth under the delay.

Ver. 13.

The sorrows of a travailing woman: by this simile, well known in Scripture, the prophet assures Ephraim that the punishment of his sins will overtake him suddenly, with very great anguish, and with as great certainty, #Mic 5:3.

Shall come upon him; as suddenly, inevitably, and with as much danger too, if he be not the wiser, and return to his God.

He, i.e. Ephraim,

is an unwise son; a very foolish son, an inconsiderate child, who endangers himself and his mother.

For he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children: as a child that sticks in the birth, so Ephraim, just at the birth, hesitateth, one while will, another while will not, return to God; thus dieth under the delay.

Ver. 14.

Some interpreters render this text not in the future absolute, but in the subjunctive and conditionally, I would have ransomed, I would have redeemed, &c., if Israel had been wise; so it will well cohere with the 13th and 15th verses. And if the words be considered as spoken of the whole body of Israel, they will be most intelligible, as they include a condition and are subjunctive. But the apostle doth, and most Christian interpreters with the apostle, interpret them as an absolute promise made for the comfort of the pious and elect among these Israelites, and labour not to connect them with the foregoing or following words, but suppose them to be in a parenthesis between them. And so we take them.

I, Jehovah or Messiah, the Father promiseth the Messiah.

Will ransom, by power and purchase, by the price of the blood of the Lamb of God, and by the power of his Godhead.

Them that repent and believe, and wait for redemption through Christ the Messiah.

From the power of the grave; he conquered the grave, and rose out of it as our Captain and Head, and he will at the great day of the resurrection, by his almighty power, open those prison doors, and bring them out in glory, immortality, and incorruption, whom he redeemed by an inestimable and invaluable price.

I will redeem them from death; from the curse of the first death, henceforth they that die in the Lord shall be blessed; and from the second death, which shall have no power over them; I will take away the sting of death, which is sin, i.e. in the dominion and guilt of it: now Christ redeems from the one by sanctifying grace, and from the other by justifying grace.

O death, I will be thy plagues; thus I will destroy death, and defeat him that had the power of death: it is a metaphor, as the next.

O grave, I will be thy destruction; I will recover the prey out of the mouth of the grave, I will pull down those prison walls, and bring out all that are confined there, of which the bad I will remove into other kind of prisons, the good I will restore to glorious liberty. The wicked shall have a worse prison, the godly shall for ever be freed from prison and so I will raze this prison, the grave, to the very foundation.

Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes: this grace toward the godly, toward believers among Israel and in the church, through all ages, is unchangeable; I will never, as man that repenteth, change my word and purpose, saith the Lord. In either sense they speak the grace of God toward us; he is ready to pardon and save all that will repent, and he will most certainly and eternally save from death. The grave, sin, and hell all that do repent and obey the Messiah; an abundant comfort to pious ones who should yet die captives in Assyria, but rise by the power of the Messiah to eternal glory in the day of the general resurrection.

Ver. 15.

Though he, Ephraim,

be fruitful, at present, as a flourishing tree seems to be fruitful; things in the state seem to be well settled; peace at home, under Hoshea, and peace abroad with Assyria and Egypt.

Among his brethren; and all his brethren surround him, either the rest of the tribes, or the nations who by league are become as his brethren.

An east wind shall come; an enemy as pernicious to his estate as the east wind is to fruits shall certainly come; a mighty and violent enemy, called here,

the wind of the Lord, the usual superlative among the Hebrews.

From the wilderness, which lay south-east from Canaan; and so it speaks a more pernicious quality in these enemies as the southeast winds in that country were of all most hot and blasting, coming over those hot, dry, sandy deserts.

His spring, springs of water, which were most needful, and highly valued, shall become dry; shall fail and be cut off, dry up, that there shall be no waters in them.

His fountain shall be dried up; the same thing in different words, confirming the certainty hereof. This the resemblance of the Assyrian, and the mischief he shall do to Israel lie shall lay Ephraim desolate, and dry up all his fountains, which were the comfort of that land.

He, the Assyrian army, Shalmaneser,

shall spoil the treasure, shall rob their treasuries,

of all pleasant vessels, and carry away all desirable vessels and furniture, out of all their houses and wardrobes: thus all the glory of Ephraim shall wither whilst it is seemingly flourishing and well-rooted too.

Ver. 16.

Samaria, the chief or royal city of the kingdom of Israel,

shall become desolate; besieged, taken, plundered, and sacked, probably it was razed to the foundation, by the Assyrians, provoked by the treachery first, and by the obstinacy next, of Hoshea, maintaining the siege against Shalmaneser three years,
#2Ki 17:5.

Rebelled against her God; both cast off his worship and set up idolatry, and also shook off the yoke of David's house and set up new kings, and maintained both long against God.

They, the inhabitants of Samaria, and also the subjects of the kingdom of Israel, shall fall by the sword; be cut off in war by the prevailing arms of the king of Assyria.

Their infants shall be dashed in pieces; a most barbarous piece of cruelty, yet usually practised in those countries when they were enraged against a people.

Their women with child shall be ripped up; another kind of like or greater inhumanity. Thus Shalman raged against Arbel in the day of battle, and this confirms what the prophet saith **#Ho 10:14**. And this was no doubt executed upon Samaria when it was taken, so their springs (women and children, which are as fountains) were all dried up.

HOSEA CHAPTER 14

An exhortation to repentance, **#Ho 14:1-3**. A promise of God's blessing, **#Ho 14:4-9**.

Ver. 1.

O Israel, you that are the true Israel of God, you that are the remnant amidst so great a body of incurable rebels, return; repent ye thoroughly, not hypocritically, turn ye from all your sins in which with others you have been defiled, and turn to

the Lord, the everlasting, living God, who is worthy to be worshipped and obeyed; your idols were never worth your love, but the Lord, the Fountain of being and life, is worthy of it. Turn to him as

thy God, in covenant with thee, to get pardon for past sins according to covenant promise, to renew covenant for time to come, and to engage thyself sincerely and heartily to be his people.

For thou hast fallen; thy sins against the Lord thy God have enkindled his wrath against thee, have involved thee in endless troubles, have turned thy prosperity into extreme adversity; sin

hath cast thee from the height of glory to the depth of reproach and contempt, thus thou art fallen.

By thine iniquity: it is the singular number, either because all their sins were so linked together they were as one huge mass of sin, or it refers particularly to their idolatry, which is by way of eminency, and above any one other sin a falling from God, and here punished with a fall into calamities.

Ver. 2.

Take with you words; bethink yourselves what words will best set out your sins, God's patience towards you, and your present sorrow and repentance for sin; prepare yourselves to make confessions, petitions, vows, and praises to God; and turn; with words join deeds, let your hearts be in your words, turn, do not as the incorrigible hypocrite.

To the Lord: see #Ho 14:1.

Say unto him; pray, present your petitions to him who heareth prayer: here is no mention of sheep or oxen, or any legal sacrifices; true repentance is required, which is much better, faith and hope through the great Sacrifice, in virtue of which these converts expect the grace they need and seek.

Take away all iniquity: this petition for pardon of sin includes confession of it, sorrow for it, hope that God will of mere grace forgive it, and take away the guilt, prevent the punishment, and abolish the power of sin, not of some, but of all: sincere converts seek full justification, and full sanctification. Receive us into thy protection, guidance, and benediction, graciously; and this of thy mere grace and goodness; having taken away sin, take also graciously our persons, as reconciled and well-pleasing to thee.

So will we render the calves of our lips: this will qualify and encourage us to give the sacrifices which are to God much more pleasing than an ox that hath horns and hoofs, #Ps 69:31; with these calves of our lips we will give our hearts also, for those praises of the lips are fruits of what praise the heart of the convert first gives, and these here are signs of their heart given to God, that so they may be spiritual sacrifices, such as #Ps 50:23, or #Heb 13:15.

Ver. 3.

Asshur shall not save us: it had been one great sin of Israel that they did trust to an arm of flesh; Asshur is particularly named, for that he was the last with whom they made a covenant fairly, or above-board, but any other foreign aids and friendships may be here understood. God promised his peculiar protection, and would have continued it if they had not cast him off, and trusted to man. We will not ride upon horses: another fault of theirs was, they multiplied horses, and trusted to their strength, which God forbade; this includes their home strength, and provision of all sorts.

Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: they had most brutishly thought their idols would be gods to help them; this is the particular confession of their great comprehensive sins, which brought on many others with them; now they renounce as well as confess them, and such renouncing is necessary, and grounded on hope of finding mercy, as appears by the reason they give of their renouncing these sins, and vain confidences in God, to whom they return, in him only there is help to be had.

The fatherless; all that are destitute of strength in themselves, and destitute of help from others; all that, being sensible of their own helpless condition, look for it from God, who hath power, mercy, and wisdom to help and relieve.

Findeth, obtaineth as often as he does rightly sue for,

mercy; both fountain and streams of goodness too, free grace and rich bounty.

Ver. 4.

I will heal: it is a usual metaphor in Scripture; sin is our disease. God is the Physician who healeth us, #Ps 103:3 Jer 3:22; and he doth it through Christ, in whom this promise is made to returning backsliders. This promise God maketh by his prophet, to encourage them to hearken to his advice of repenting.

Backslidings; aversions, voluntary and wilful turning away from God; well expressed here, and called rebellions by some other interpreters. These voluntary, continued, and obstinate aversions, or backslidings, are instances of greatest sins and sinners; yet God

promiseth to heal these old putrefying sores, that we might be assured that he will heal all other lesser wounds: he will fully heal by pardoning and purifying.

I will love them; though before he hated, could take no pleasure in them, now he will show that his mind and heart are towards them to accept them, and do them good.

Freely; without their desert, and without bounds of time, or measure, or kind. All kinds of mercies the fruit of his love, infinite mercy in grace and glory, eternal mercies, his love will afford to them. This is liberal love indeed, this promised here.

For mine anger is turned away from him; I am reconciled to them, my displeasure is turned away.

Ver. 5.

I, the Lord, who have pardoned, and am appeased,

will be as the dew, refresh and water, that they may grow, and that they may be fruitful and flourish, as the dew in those countries, where it was more abundant than with us, and for some months together supplied the want of rain; God will refresh and comfort, and make fruitful in good works, through his grace, such as return to him.

Israel; those that do unfeignedly, not hypocritically, confess, pray, and repent.

As the lily; which grows apace, is fragrant, beautiful, and delights in valleys, often grows among thorns; so the Israel of God among troubles in low state, yet comely, and fragrant to the Lord, and grows up in him speedily.

Lebanon, put for the trees of Lebanon; as those trees spread forth their roots, grow up to strength, are most beautiful, odoriferous, and durable, cedars in Lebanon are these trees; so shall the true Israel, converted backsliders, be blessed of God. So flourishing and happy shall the church be under Christ.

Ver. 6.

His branches, his tenderest branches which are new sprung out, shall gather strength, not be broken off, but by these shall they multiply in number of boughs.

Shall spread; grow great and beautiful, and excellent for shade.

As the olive tree; which retains its verdure all the winter, and is rich in fruit; so the true Israel of God shall flourish, not in fruitless beauty and stateliness, but in desirable and lovely fruit, even in winters of affliction and troubles.

As Lebanon; the mountain famous for cedars, where also were the trees that afford the frankincense, which sweat out that excellent aromatic, and where many more sweetest flowers grow and perfume the air; such shall the spiritual fragrance of the church be to God and man.

Ver. 7.

They that dwell under his shadow; as many as unite to the church, are members of it, shall dwell under these spreading trees: the churches planted and spreading shall be to new converts as such trees to fainting travellers, almost spent with toil and heat; they shall find rest in this shadow, which may refer to Christ and the church.

Shall return; revive and recover new strength and life; so do souls weary and heavy laden with sin and fears find comfort and life coming to Christ, conversing with such as have been eased and comforted by Christ in like manner formerly.

They shall revive as the corn, which dieth ere it liveth to bring forth fruit; so converts die indeed to sin that they may live to God, die to all legal righteousness that they may live on rich grace: or else it may refer to the increase of the church, which shall be as many stalks from one ear of wheat.

And grow as the vine; which in winter seems dead, is pruned, and promiseth little to the eye, but yet life, sap, and a fructifying virtue is in it, and it will spring and bring forth fruit; so the church of Christ is used, that it may bring forth fruit more abundantly,
#Joh 15:2.

The scent thereof, the savour of it to God and good men, shall be pleasing as the scent of the delicious wines of Lebanon, which are mentioned by profane authors with a great praise for their sweetness and deliciousness.

Ver. 8.

Ephraim; not the whole body of Ephraim, but converted Ephraim, those who, #Ho 14:1,2, were sensible of sin, confessed it, and sued for pardon.

What have I to do any more with idols? i.e. I have no more to do with them, nor ever will; they have been, first my sin, and next my sorrows, and my sorrows have been multiplied by hasting after other gods; I will no more do so: and with detestation against idols doth Ephraim speak, as the question implieth.

I have heard him, and observed him: some refer these words to Ephraim, owning what he had found and observed in God; what grace and mercy in pardon, deliverance from miseries, and comfortable revival of his state. Others refer it to God, and make it a gracious promise from God of hearing prayers, and taking especial care of converted Ephraim; either way suits the words and matter, and I leave it to your choice.

I am like a green fir tree: these words also, as the former, are either Israel's giving praise to God, who had on Israel's return changed his dead, withered state into a flourishing, lovely, and beautiful state: others say it is God's promise to be to Ephraim as such a tree is to a weary traveller, who may with delight and safety sit under the shadow of it; a tree, say some, that grows with very thick boughs, that rain or heat pierceth not, and whose smell drives away wild beasts; so there is safety and refreshment under the protection of the Lord, under his shadow.

From me is thy fruit found: this also is differently interpreted: Israel confesseth that the fruit of God's grace is seen from what Israel now is and doth: others say, God promiseth the fruits of comfort Israel enjoys, and still shall enjoy, from God, and his grace toward Israel. I determine neither, but sure I am such is the correspondence of God's grace to the converted, that they cannot more readily acknowledge what God hath done for them, nor more readily engage to do what God adviseth and requireth, than God is ready to encourage them by gracious, and rich, and suitable promises.

Ver. 9.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? though not many wise, yet some methinks; now of those few, who is there that will consider what sins God complains of and threatens to punish in his people, what sins God forbade them so much as once to commit, and peremptorily commanded them to turn from when once committed; what duties he required, what promises he proposed, what patience he used toward them while any hope of their amendment, what severity upon their incorrigible sins? Whoso with any tolerable degree of wisdom will view these things, and seriously consider of them, they will understand, and know that the prophet hath given best advice, and that it is the safest course to follow it.

Prudent, and he shall know them? the same thing doubled with elegancy, and to confirm the word, as is usual in Scripture.

For the ways of the Lord are right; the ways which he would have us walk in towards him, his law, his ordinances of worship, his whole doctrine which directeth our walk, are all righteous and equal. And the ways wherein God walketh toward us, in corrections for sins committed, in suspending his. promises of grace, on conditions of duty, in afflicting or comforting, are all righteous and very equal.

The just shall walk in them; will approve them, all justifying the righteousness of God's displeasure, and confessing he remembereth mercy in the midst of judgment; and justifying the righteousness of his precepts by endeavouring to observe them.

But the transgressors, wilful, obstinate, and inconsiderate sinners,

shall fall therein; eventually it proves so, they stumble and are offended somewhat at his precepts and commands, but more at his severe judgments; they cast off the one, and vainly hope to shift off the other, till at last they fall under the weight of their own sins and God's wrath.

JOEL

THE ARGUMENT

Since so many undeterminable points of less moment occur in our prophet, as of what tribe he was, whether his father were a prophet, whether he prophesied in Jeroboam's or Hezekiah's time, whether contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah; whether he preached to the ten tribes, or to the two tribes, or to both; whether the locusts are literal only, or typical and significative of enemies, or how many years they continued, what nations they did prefigure, when the execution began, when it ended; or when he began, or how long he continued to prophesy; —we may well rest ourselves contented in the undisputable things of greater moment, such as are, the Divine authority with which he came, attested by himself, **#Joe 1:1**, and confirmed to us by the apostle, **#Ac 2:17 Ro 10:13**, and by Christ himself, **#Mt 24:29 Mr 13:24 Lu 21:25**: all he spake is the word of God. The pernicious consequences of national sins, such as were visible on God's own people at this very time in parching droughts, devouring locusts, and famine; the only method for removing these judgments, fasting, prayer, and amendment of our life; the successive sufferings of the church under the several monarchies till the coming of the Messiah, with the wonderful preservation of the good during those times; the just and final decisions God will make for his against their oppressors in those kingdoms, doing it by raising the succeeding empire to punish and overthrow the precedent; the conversion of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles; the advancement of the kingdom of the Messiah and communications of gifts and graces to his church; the final and universal decision of all things that concern God and his church on the one side, and their enemies on the other; the general judgment of quick and dead,—are the great subjects he doth in plainer or darker terms set before us. In unfolding of the whole, whose excludes the letter and historical reference will fail on one hand, and whose excludes the typical and mystical reference will err as much on the other hand. In a due and just application of both lieth the true mean, which hath been aimed at in this enterprise, and how far attained is submitted to the judgment of those that read the ensuing annotations.

JOEL CHAPTER 1

Joel declareth the destruction of the fruits of the earth by noxious insects, **#Joe 1:1-7**, and by a long drought, **#Joe 1:8-13**. He recommendeth a solemn fasting with prayer to deprecate these judgments, **#Joe 1:14-20**.

Ver. 1.

Since this preface is word for word the same with that of Hosea, **#Ho 1:1**, see it there explained.

Joel; supposed to be of the posterity of Reuben, therefore could not be (as the Jews suppose) Samuel's son, nor will his time fit to **#1Ch 5:4,8**; but of what tribe soever, we know he came from God, and with his authority, and is so cited by the apostle, **#Ac 2:16**.

The son of Pethuel: more of this man I know not, and it is possible he might be, as the Jews suppose, very eminent, because he is named; however, it is an honour to be reported a prophet's father. The time of his prophesying, though not demonstrable, is with greatest probability laid about the latter end of Jeroboam the Second's reign over Israel, and in the days' of Uzziah over Judah.

Ver. 2.

Hear this: he is about to report a very wonderful occurrence, and desires all to consider it, mark it well, and tell me what you know.

Ye old men; the oldest among you, who can remember things done in your days when you were young, some scores of years past.

Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: it is an appeal to all that may possibly know more than others, and remember better than others can.

Hath this been in your days? did you personally ever know the like?

Or even in the days of your fathers? did your fathers ever tell you of such a thing happening in their days? was there ever such a thing known among them? have you ever heard them speak of it?

Ver. 3.

Declare it very particularly, or record it, write it as in a book, that your children may know it, and the memory of it may be perpetuated; for as it was a very wonderful and unusual thing, so it was for to mind us of the cause of it, and what it taught, or should have taught, them and us.

Ver. 4.

Four sorts of insects pernicious to all sorts of trees, corn, and herbs are here mentioned, which did succeed each other, and devoured all that might be a future support to the Jews; whence ensued a grievous famine for four years together, say the Jewish interpreters, though there is no cogent reason in what they mention for proof hereof. These insects might in the same year succeed each other, the one, as is usual, might come sooner, the rest successively, each in its season, and so spoil the springing of all things, which they did (I do believe) really; and though these might be emblems of some future devastation, yet it seems most agreeable to reason, and the context, that there should really have been such caterpillars and other vermin, and that they did devour all that was green; and though this is no where else mentioned, as I remember, in the sacred history, yet it is likely it was done, as here told, and as so done was a figure of some greater devastation made by foreign powers, as by Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 5.

Awake: great drinkers of intoxicating liquors are apt to sleep and be secure, the prophet doth therefore here call to them, as to sleepers, and by one apt word expresseth a double duty, vigilance of mind as well as of the body; so may this be paralleled with **#Ro 13:11 1Th 5:6 1Pe 5:8**, or **#Eph 5:14**.

Ye drunkards; riotous livers, such as **#Pr 23:30-32 Isa 5:11,12**, whose life is nothing but a continued feasting with choicest wines, and in excess, such as **#Am 6:4-6**, describeth.

Weep and howl; lament your condition with sober tears, for the sorrows coming upon you are just matter of weeping; nor will an ordinary degree of weeping suffice, cry out and howl, like men surprised with insupportable miseries, **#Isa 13:6 14:31 15:2**.

All ye drinkers of wine, who offend by an inordinate use of wine, for it is not to be understood of every one that drinketh wine, but of such as before are called drunkards, who are in love with wine.

Because of the new wine, which is sweet and pleasing to the taste, and no doubt drank without stint or measure by men of that age, against which Joel prophesieth.

For it is cut off from your mouth; suddenly cut off, even when you are ready to drink it, and totally, all cut off by these devouring vermin; which as it was a narrative of what was already done, refers to that waste and famine by the locusts; as it is allegorical and predictive, it will be more dreadfully fulfilled when the enemies of Judah shall destroy all.

Ver. 6.

This verse countenanceth their conjecture who take the locusts and vermin to be emblematical in part as well as literal; for it seems not very suitable to call their teeth *teeth of a lion*.

For a nation; an innumerable multitude of locusts and caterpillars, called a nation here, as Solomon calls the conies and the ants, #Pr 30:25,26. A prognostic of a very numerous and mighty nation, that ere long will invade Judah.

Is come up, or suddenly will come, upon my land; upon Canaan, which God calls his land; or more particularly the two tribes, Judea strictly taken.

Strong; mighty in power and undaunted in courage, if you refer it to the Assyrians or Babylonians; if to those vermin, they are, though each weak by itself, yet in those multitudes which come, strong enough, and irresistible, and shall do God's work, that is, waste the land, and devour all before them.

Without number; not simply numberless, but in such multitudes none of you shall be able to recount them.

Whose teeth are the teeth of a lion; a strong lion of the middle age, that hath whelps, and hunts the prey for them.

And he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion; which is old, and the more fierce and terrible in his looks, no way lessened in his strength, and that preys for his young ones: now what waste such

lions make, such these locusts will make, such the Assyrians will make.

Ver. 7.

He, that nation of locusts, #**Joe 1:6**, both literally and mystically understood, hath laid my vine waste; made it a desolation, i.e. most desolate, which is more particularly declared in what followeth.

And barked my fig tree; peeled off the bark. which is certain destruction to the tree.

Made it clean bare; eat off all the rind and green bark, and left the body of both vine and fig tree bare and stripped.

And cast it away; as vermin cast out of their mouth the chewings of what they spoil, so here.

The branches thereof, all the branches of both vine and fig tree, are by these devouring vermin made white, all their green being eaten off; so miserably desolate will the enemy signified by these locusts make Judah, God's vine.

Ver. 8.

The vicious and wicked among the Jews were alarmed and threatened in the former part of the chapter; now the prophet bespeaks the good and godly among them to prepare for mournful times.

Lament: this is minatory, and threatens calamitous times shall come, as well as directive, what to do when they are come; when God calls for weeping we must not rejoice.

Like a virgin: this tells us to whom the prophet directs this part of his sermon, it is to those who amidst the Jews were like chaste and modest virgins, whose heart was fixed on one, her own, her chosen beloved husband.

Girded with sackcloth: in deep mournings the people of those countries did use sackcloth in their mourning habit, and wore it girded close to their skin.

For the husband of her youth; either married to her in youth, or espoused to her, but snatched away from her by an untimely death, which she doth most bitterly lament.

Ver. 9.

The meat-offering; which by Divine appointment was to be of fine flour, oil, and frankincense, as #Le 2:1, &c.; vi. 14, &c. This meat-offering was necessary to every sacrifice offered under the law; so that without the *mincha*, or meat-offering, the sacrifice was maimed and illegal.

The drink-offering; required daily, as appears #Ex 29:40,41 Nu 28:8; a fourth part of a hin of wine for one lamb, #Nu 28:7.

Is cut off; by the destruction of the vines by the locusts forementioned, all that wine (out of which they ought to, offer the drink-offering) did fail.

From the house of the Lord; it was to be poured out, if wine, and part of the meat-offering was to be burnt on the altar, so both were disposed according to the law in the house of the Lord.

The priests; sons of Aaron, with the Levites.

The Lord's ministers, who did serve the Lord in the services of the temple.

Mourn; grieve inwardly, and express it by outward signs. These had more cause than others to mourn, for as they had equal cause with others in respect to God, whose service hereby failed, so the priests, in respect to their private gain and maintenance, had more cause to mourn, their provision was by this means shortened.

Ver. 10.

The field is wasted; the soil that was wont to be fat and fruitful, and did shout with fruits, now lieth waste, horrid to look upon, and such as promises no fruit; the famine in their houses, and the ceasing of the sacrifices in the house of God, is like to be perpetuated.

The land mourneth; the inhabitants of the land, by a usual figure, here called the land.

The corn is wasted; the wheat and barley, their bread corn, is eaten up in its greenness by these devouring locusts, whether in the letter by vermin, or in the figure by the Babylonians.

The new wine is dried up; the word may as well be rendered is *ashamed*, or *confounded*; it is then a figurative expression, which

this prophet useth, #Joe 1:12,17, in the last of which it is rendered *withered*; if you retain, as well you may, our version, it plainly tells us the heats and drought with them were so great, that the vines were withered, and all their hopes of new wine by this means cut off.

The oil; the olive trees, as the vines, fade too, and promise very little oil.

Languisheth; neither able to send sap from the root to maintain its verdure, nor to put forth berries, or to bring them to maturity. Now as these words declare what barrenness was now upon the land, so it is a plain account of the reason why the priests are called to mourn, and why the meat-offering and drink-offering are cut off; these must cease when that ceaseth which made them up corn, wine, and oil.

Ver. 11.

Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen: some read it assertively, the husbandmen are ashamed, and as to matter of fact it is true they were ashamed; but the imperative mood, or by way of exhortation, will better suit the context. They are now called upon to blush, repent, and search into the cause of this barrenness, and loss of their labour in ploughing, sowing, and manuring their tillage; the prophet aims at this principally, to bring them, as well as the priests, to repentance.

Vine-dressers; a sort of men as well known with that people as gardeners are with us; men whose work was to plant, water, prune, and manage vineyards, and whose labour (unless for sin blasted) did usually succeed to a great increase.

Because the harvest of the field is perished; your sins have brought upon you this woeful scarcity, your harvest in which you expected your labour, and cares should be recompensed is perished, quite destroyed, as the word imports. This is just cause why you, O husbandmen, should lament, and further inquire why God is so displeased with you.

Ver. 12.

The vine is dried up: see #Joe 1:10,

The fig tree; a tree well known, and the fruit of it was usually a great advantage and benefit to the people of those countries.

The pomegranate tree; a pleasant tree, as appears So 4:13 7:12; and its fruit lovely, therefore fit for ornaments about the pillars of the temple. These in the common drought and by locusts have lost their beauty, and fail the hopes of him that planted them.

The palm tree; of great beauty in the height and uniformity of its growth, and that doth rise under the weight which would depress it, #Ps 92:12: with these Ezekiel's temple was adorned, #Eze 40:16,22,26; with the branches of these triumphant shows were also made; but these are withered and dry.

The apple tree; the fruit whereof was very useful, and did ordinarily well recompense the care of the planter, but now, as other trees, fail them.

All the trees of the field; none so hardy and able to bear unkind seasons, but are now destroyed by the judgments of God in drought and locusts.

Are withered; not as in autumn, when the leaf falleth, but, because the root fails, is either dead or dying.

Because; or therefore, or surely, for the particle here used is oftentimes assertive, not causal.

Joy is withered away from the sons of men; all mirth and liveliness of men is blasted with this dismal blast upon their labours and hopes; they cannot rejoice who foresee they shall be, nay, are already, pinched with want and famine.

Ver. 13.

Gird yourselves; bind your mourning sackcloth close to you with a girdle, that it may be more troublesome to the flesh; for though in Hebrew it is only gird, the phrase is well known in the Scripture, on these occasions, to include sackcloth, as what is girded on the mourner, and sackcloth is expressly mentioned #Joe 1:8, and in many other places, #Isa 15:3 Jer 4:8 La 2:10 Eze 7:18 27:31.

Lament; weep bitterly, as they do who mourn for the dead, lament over your dead joys; let it be a hearty grief, as that of

Abraham for Sarah, #Ge 23:2, of Jacob's children and friends sorrowing for his death, #Ge 1 10, or of Israel lamenting their brave judge, #1Sa 28:3. *Ye priests*; that you may be example to others, and because they had, as observed yet. 9, a double cause to mourn, one more than the rest of the people.

Howl: see #Joe 1:5.

Ye ministers of the altar: they were the Lord's ministers, #Joe 1:9; now ministers of the altar, they served the Lord in the things of the altar.

Lie all night; the case needs a continued fasting, weeping, and supplication in the most humble posture, and with all the tokens of an afflicted spirit. The priests should above others mourn; if they mourn in the day, the priests should mourn night and day.

My God, who, having sent me to speak to you in his name, doth call you to this, that he may pardon and bless you. when you repent.

The meat-offering, &c.: see #Joe 1:9.

Ver. 14.

Sanctify ye; you priests, ministers of my God, set apart a day, or more days, appoint a time, forbid all servile work and sensual pleasures, do what you may to prepare for such a necessary work.

A fast; wherein to afflict yourselves, confess your sins, repent of them, sue out your pardon, and return to God, that tie may remove your present calamities, and prevent the future.

Call a solemn assembly; proclaim and publish it, that every one may know they are restrained from common, daily work, and that they are commanded to come together, most solemnly to seek the Lord. Gather the elders; both for age and for authority, magistrates and rulers, who possibly had been by their sins, more than others, cause of these grievous calamities, and should now be examples to others in repenting.

And all the inhabitants of the land; make this fast as public and universal as you can, command all the people of the land, all that dwell with you; perhaps the prophet intends proselytes of the law, and those of commerce, as well as the Jews.

Into the house of the Lord; courts of the temple, for priests only might go into the temple itself; the court of Israel, where the people were wont to pray. Your God; remember the covenant by which you are his people, and he is your God, that you may plead his promises as well as wait for his mercies. And cry unto the Lord, with tears of repentance, with prayer of faith, cry more with the broken heart than loud voice.

Ver. 15.

This verse and the three next may be looked upon either as a particular declaration of the grounds of this fast, or as a direction how to manage the fast, a suggesting to the people what they should spread before the Lord, or else as the words of the priests, bewailing the calamitous state of the land.

Alas! it is a very pathetic bemoaning themselves, which speaks their sense of the evil they suffered.

For the day; the day of trouble, sorrow, and great distress.

For the day of the Lord: this explains the former; it is a day of greater troubles than yet they felt, troubles which God will heap upon them, a day in which God will be judge, and punish by the locusts, by the drought, and by Babylonians, unless you repent.

Is at hand; great calamities were now upon them, and greater were approaching to them: if the prophet aim at the captivity of the two tribes, it was one hundred and eighty years off; if of the ten tribes, it was about sixty years off, for he prophesieth about the latter end of Jeroboam the Second; it is likely therefore he aimeth at some other calamities.

As a destruction; a total overthrow of the kingdom, the worship of God, and all your labours in your land.

From the Almighty; whose displeasure, as a consuming fire, can and will burn up all before it; his power and hand will do it, and then nothing can resist it.

Shall it come; most certainly and speedily, nothing can retard or divert it, unless fasting, prayers, and tears, and amendment do it.

Ver. 16.

Is not the meat? the question does most vehemently affirm, our food, what we should eat, i.e. all provision we should live upon.

Cut off; devoured by locusts, or withered with drought, it is perished.

Before our eyes; we see it, it is not so far off as what is foretold, it is under our eye.

Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God: sacrifices fail much, and priests have scarce enough to live upon, while free-will offerings, first-fruits, and tithes amount to very little, not sufficient to feast the sacrificers and offerers, who on such occasion did use to rejoice in the house of God.

Ver. 17.

The seed; called so from the seedsman's scattering it abroad when he soweth it, and in this place only so used, for aught I can observe, and yet this use of it here is justified by all the following words; the grain which is sown for the seed against next spring.

Is rotten; is putrefied, grown musty and fruitless; nor is this word any where else used in Scripture. Under their clods, and earth, from under which the seed covered should spring up, but now, as unsound, rotten, and fruitless seed, is lost under it.

The garner, or storehouses, treasuries of corn, in which it was kept for future use,

are laid desolate; either run to ruin, because the owners, discouraged with the barrenness of the seasons, would not repair them; this will intimate that this judgment lasted some years, and is better ground for it than the four sorts of vermin repeated one after another, in **#Joe 1:4:** or else desolate, being pulled down, and the materials employed for other uses, till they may have corn to keep in them.

The barns, in which they lodged their unthrashed corn,

are broken down; neglected, and without repair;

for the corn is withered; there was no use of them, no corn to be laid up, all withered, and therefore the barns were not regarded.

Ver. 18.

How do the beasts groan? so great was the penury and want of sustenance, that the beasts in the field, pinched with hunger,

groaned, made dismal noise for fodder and water; the word *beasts* is general, and contains all sorts.

The herds of cattle; the greater cattle, which go wandering about, and range over all places, yet can find no pasturage.

The flocks of sheep; which, led by shepherds, might likely be supposed better secured; yet their shepherds find no pasture, and the sheep pine away and starve. These things are mentioned, either as convincing men of their stupidity, who were less sensible of present miseries than brute beasts were, or to provoke them to lay to heart the pressing calamities, or as arguments that lie would pity and relieve innocent brutes, though he punished sinful brutes.

Ver. 19.

O Lord, Maker and Preserver of these poor famished cattle,

to thee will I cry: either it is the prophet's prayer he maketh, or a form prescribed for the priests.

The fire; the immoderate heats, or else the scorching and blasting flashes of fire in the air, which in those hot countries are more frequent and more precious than in colder climates.

Hath devoured the pastures; the fruitful and pleasant places where shepherds pitched their tents, and were used to feed their sheep, all are parched and dried as if burned with fire.

Of the wilderness; either because the shepherds chose to pitch their tents far from cities and towns; or else because in those vast wildernesses there were some fruitful pastures scattered up and down, some lower places of springs and water-courses.

The flame, the flashes of fire from the clouds, or in the air, without thunder, or else lightnings with thunder,

hath burnt all the trees, that they neither afford their fruit, their shade, or their green boughs for browse for the relief of man or beast. This extreme desolation should affect them all; it doth shame the sinfully Senseless among them; and it is a good argument to use with God, whose creatures they are as well as man.

Ver. 20.

The beasts: see #Joe 1:18.

Cry; the wilder sort, that rove about many miles seeking their livelihood, find no sustenance, they look up to God, and cry to him: these creatures, that can better shift for themselves, yet can make no good shift; they utter their complaints in their sad tones, they have a voice to cry, as well as an eye to look to God.

Unto thee, who only canst open thy hand, and fill them. Learn, ye brutish among men, look and cry to God. And again, Have pity, O God, many of thy sinless creatures perish without relief; hear them, though thou shouldst not hear men.

The rivers are dried up; most extreme and tedious drought, which hath dried up the rivers themselves; there is no drink for the cattle, they must perish without help, unless thou, O God, send a plentiful and fruitful rain.

The fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness: see this explained above, #Joe 1:19.

JOEL CHAPTER 2

The prophet describeth the locusts as a mighty army led by God to destroy the land, #Joe 2:1-11. He exhorteth to repentance, #Joe 2:12-14; prescribeth a general fast and humiliation, #Joe 2:15-17; and promiseth mercy from God, #Joe 2:18-20. He comforteth Zion with present blessings, #Joe 2:21-27; and prophesieth the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and other blessings of the gospel, #Joe 2:28-32.

Ver. 1.

Blow ye the trumpet: the prophet continueth his advice or exhortation to the priests, who were by office appointed to summon the solemn assemblies, and to call them together by sound of trumpet or cornet; and so would he have the priests to gather the people together to fast, and weep, and pray.

In Zion; which taken largely is the same with Jerusalem, though strictly taken it is the hill on which the city of David, or his royal palace, did stand.

Sound an alarm; give notice that all may be prepared against the enemy, let it be known that the enemy is coining, what danger attends his coming, and what provision should be made.

In my holy mountain; in Jerusalem, in Moriah, on which the temple did stand.

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; stand in awe of God's majesty, fear his displeasure, and do this with a penitent heart, all you that dwell in the land of Canaan, the parched and burnt land.

For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: see #Joe 1:15.

Ver. 2.

A day of darkness and of gloominess; metaphorically taken for a time of exceeding great troubles and calamities, according to the style of the Scriptures, which express prosperity by the metaphor of light, and adversity by darkness. which certainly is intended here; and the synonymous terms are here multiplied, to intimate the extremity and length of these troubles. And this passage may well allude to the day of judgment, and the calamities which shall precede that day.

Thick darkness does undoubtedly imply, as the gradual approach, so the dismal effect of God's judgments and the Jews' miseries. See this word used #2Sa 22:10, with #12-16 Ps 18:9,11. It was such terror with which God gave the law, and in such he will punish the transgressors of his law.

As the morning spread upon the mountains; as the morning spreads itself suddenly over all the hemisphere, and as it first spreads itself upon the high mountains, so should the approaching calamities overtake this people.

A great people: this seems more directly to intend the Babylonians rather than locusts, yet both are numerous, as the word imports, Heb.: see #Joe 1:6.

And a strong; bold to attempt, and mighty in strength to execute; both true of Assyrians or Babylonians, or the locusts.

There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more: locusts, emblem of the warlike nations, and the spoil done by both, are here described the greatest that ever yet were known; and of the Assyrian or Babylonian spoil made in Judea, the history doth ascertain this.

Even to the years of many generations; if ever the like be, it shall not be in many ages to come.

Ver. 3.

A fire, either the heat of the sun more vehement than usual, or the locusts, or Chaldeans and Babylonians resembled by locusts, as fire, shall devour, utterly consume and eat up,

before them; that people, #Joe 2:2.

Behind them a flame burneth; what is left behind them is as burnt with a flame; all that the locusts leave behind them is as that which the flame hath scorched, dried, and turned into charcoal; or, all the Chaldeans and Babylonians leave behind them is (as customary with the barbarous invaders) set on fire, and what they cannot bat or carry away they destroy with fire.

The land is as the garden of Eden before them; it is every where most fruitful and pleasant, a land where they have not yet come. This is expressed in that proverbial speech,

as the garden of Eden: see #Isa 51:3 Eze 36:35.

And behind them a desolate wilderness; but wherever these locusts, or the armies they signify, come, all is turned into a most desolate wilderness. Nothing shall escape; nothing that was for beauty and pleasure, nor any thing for necessity and support of life.

Ver. 4.

The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; their carriage, for fierceness, agility, and irresistibleness, is like that of horses trained up to the wars, of which #Job 39:19, &c.

And as horsemen, so shall they run: this gives light to the former expression, and by it we see these locusts are not resembled to the horse for shape, but for their nimbleness in motion. And as were these types, so should the armies which were typified be also.

Ver. 5.

Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap; such warlike chariots on resounding mountains do, with their rapid motions, and shaking their irons about them, make a

great and dreadful noise; so should these locusts in their flight; by which they shall terrify the people before they come to them, for the noise of them may be heard, say some, at six miles' distance.

Like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; which does with continued crackling burn what is under the flame, and threaten speedy and inevitable ruin to what is before it; all shall be endangered by it, as if surrounded with flaming fire.

As a strong people; so #Joe 2:2.

Set in battle array; prepared to assault and destroy: in pursuance of this metaphor, see #Joe 2:7-11.

Ver. 6.

Before their face, at the sight of these locusts, both literally and figuratively considered,

the people of the land shall be much pained; as a woman in travail is in pain, their fears shall be very great, lest these devouring creatures should seize and destroy whatever was for support of their life, and life of their families.

All faces shall gather blackness; such as is the colour of dead men, or as is the dark paleness of men frightened into fits and swoons.

Ver. 7.

They, locusts, and they who by the locusts are signified, viz. Chaldeans, Assyrians, or Babylonians,

shall run, with speed, fierceness, and irresistible power, against their enemies.

Mighty men; valiant and strong men, or giants.

They shall climb the wall; no walls of any fortified towns shall be high enough to keep them out. Strange locusts, that assault cities! but armed and commissioned of God, they shall vigorously act their part, and do what he appointeth and commandeth them to do.

Like men of war; who fear no power that from within the cities might oppose them, they shall valiantly and skilfully manage the assault.

They shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: naturalists testify the truth of this in the stories of these insects, and their marshalling of themselves, of which also see #Pr 30:27 Na 3:17. This skill in ordering, and steadiness in keeping order, like exactly trained soldiers, foretells the terror and strength both of the armies signified by these locusts, and of the locusts themselves. As these then did, so the Assyrians, Chaldeans, or Babylonians should proceed in arms against this people.

Ver. 8.

Neither shall one thrust another: the prophet, in pursuance of the allegory, tells us how this army of locusts do move without disorder; so shall they who are hereby typified; it is much the same with the last clause of the former verse.

They shall walk; before it was run, i.e. for speed, now it is walk, for stedfast and even motion.

Every one in his path; the track he first takes to, follow his leader exactly, and observe rank and file.

When they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded; the sword shall not be a weapon to destroy them, they shall run among swords, yet not be wounded; literally verified in the locusts, and verified in the strange preservations and escapes from dangers in midst of the most desperate adventures made by Assyrians or Babylonians.

Ver. 9.

In this verse we must discern what is any whir proper to the locusts, and what is applicable more fitly to the soldiers figured by them.

They shall run to and fro: this seems not proper to these insects, which move forward, and alter not their course in such limited and straitened bounds as a city; but this well suits with soldiers that conquer a city, and search all places for plunder and prey.

In the city; in every city that they take.

They shall run upon the wall; to clear the wall of all the besieged who did defend it, to help up others that were scaling the

wall, and to seize towers which were built upon the wall: this is better fitted to soldiers that take a city than to locusts.

They shall climb up upon the houses; either forsaken and shut fast up by the inhabitants before they left them, or houses defended by such as are in them, as is usual in cities taken by assault.

They shall enter in at the windows; where they can find the first entrance, there they will through, and nothing shall keep them out.

Like a thief; suddenly, unexpectedly, to spoil at least, if not to kill and destroy: locusts and soldiers will do this.

Ver. 10.

Literally taken, this verse is an elegant description of most unparalleled armies of locusts, sent of God to waste this sinful people, in the description whereof the prophet shows his lofty style, and in a divine hyperbole warns the people: but there is another sense of the words we must look to; these locusts in this prophecy are hieroglyphics and emblems, and so are the earth, heaven, sun, moon, and stars. By **earth**, thus considered, the vulgar, mean multitudes are many times set forth; here, the common people among the Jews.

Shall quake before them; locusts first, and armies of foreign enemies afterwards, and that ere long.

The heavens shall tremble; grandees, rulers, and counsellors, or the whole frame of the kingdom and government, shall shake and tremble, their hearts shall sink within them who should be a support to others.

The sun, their king,

and the moon, their queen, who may as particularly be here pointed at as the queen of Nineveh is **#Na 2:7**,

shall be dark; overwhelmed with amazement from the greatness of their troubles. The stars shall withdraw their shining; the courtiers and men of eminency, that were as stars for glory and brightness, shall be covered with clouds, and these thick and black; all this miserable confusion threatened against them for

their sins, and in this emblem of vast multitudes of locusts presented to their thoughts.

Ver. 11.

The Lord, Jehovah, the eternal and almighty God, Lord of hosts, **shall utter his voice**; summon them in, and encourage them, as a general doth encourage his soldiers engaging in fight; God commands their attendance, and countenanceth their attempts.

Before his army of locusts and insects; and of Assyrians, Chaldeans, or Babylonians, signified by locusts.

His camp is very great; very numerous and strong, and therefore described by the prophet in a manner almost above belief; it is the host which God gathers together, and by which he will do great things.

He is strong; he giveth strength to his army, and is among them the Strong One; he doth by them execute his own purpose and threats, and so shows his strength.

That executeth his word; what he hath declared and threatened to do.

The day of the Lord: see #Joe 1:15.

Is great; wherein great sinners are punished, great judgments are executed, by great power in the instruments, and by greater power in the hand that useth them.

Very terrible; full of terror, and such as will make the stoutest heart quail.

Who can abide it? neither king, nobles, nor warriors, but all faces gather blackness, as it is #Joe 2:6,10.

Ver. 12.

Therefore, since so great displeasure is conceived against you for your sins, and so terrible execution is shortly to be made upon you, and there is no way of resistance or escape left,

turn ye even to me; repent of your sins whereby you have departed from me; all this preparation made against you is made not to destroy you utterly, but to awaken you to repentance; whilst

you may find mercy upon repentance, be advised to it, and prevent your final desolation.

With all your heart; not hypocritically, with divided heart, but sincerely and with full purpose of amendment: let your heart, your whole heart, first be turned to me your God and Sovereign.

With fasting; public fasting as well as private, such fasting as is required, **#Joe 1:14,**

With weeping; make it appear that you are sensible of, and deeply affected with, your former sins in the jollity of your sensual life, now weep for it.

And with mourning; tears do well become a fast, but they must not be tears only, but a mournful frame of heart within, a fountain of these tears, is expected, and indeed required.

Ver. 13.

Rend your heart; lay them open, as chirurgeons lay open putrefying sores that they may be thoroughly cleansed; remove iniquity from your heart, as the Chaldee paraphrast.

And not your garments; as hypocrites do, who in sudden or great troubles easily stoop to tear a loose garment, but hardly are brought to rend their hearts: what God expecteth most they cannot be persuaded to, but what he careth least for they are ready to do. Be not such hypocrites before God, who cannot be mocked, nor spare them who dare do it: let your garments escape if you please; but your hearts, break them, circumcise them, **#De 10:16.**

Turn unto the Lord your God; in repenting keep hope alive, look to God as your God, who by covenant hath promised to stow you mercy on your repenting and turning to him, **#De 13:17 30:8,9 Isa 55:7 Jer 31:19,20 32:38-10.**

He is gracious; gentle, easy to be entreated, and ready to forgive the guilty.

Merciful; compassionate, and ready to show pity and relieve the indigent: you are both guilty and afflicted; return to your God, who is gracious to pardon your guilt, and merciful to relieve your miseries.

Slow to anger; who hath spared, doth still spare, and waits purposely that you might have time to repent, and turn and live.

Of great kindness: your provocations are many and great, yet return, for his mercy is great, his kindnesses are many.

And repenteth him of the evil; not as man, but as becometh his own holy, just, and immutable nature, he turneth from executing the fierceness of his wrath, **#Jer 18:7-10**. Be wise and obedient, and follow my counsel, repent and make your peace with God.

Ver. 14.

None need be discouraged, as if it were too late to seek and hope for mercy; God will pardon the truly penitent, and deliver them from eternal miseries, and it is possible he may deliver from present temporal calamities also. If you obtain not all you would, you shall obtain enough to show that it was worth your while to seek God.

Return: God doth not locally move from one place to another, but when he withholds his blessings, the fruits of his favour, he is said to withdraw himself; so when he gives out his blessings, he is said to return.

Repent: see #Joe 2:13.

Leave a blessing behind him; cause the locusts to depart before they have eaten up all that is in the land.

A meat-offering and a drink-offering: see #Joe 1:9.

Ver. 15.

Blow the trumpet in Zion: see #Joe 2:1.

Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: see #Joe 1:14.

Ver. 16.

Gather the people, assemble the elders: see **#Joe 1:14**.

Gather the children; though they understand little what is done, yet their cries under the affliction of a fast ascend, God hears, and with pity looks on their tears.

And those that suck the breasts; let your fast be most universal, spare not sucking children, bring them with you; their tears and cries may perhaps move the congregation to greater mourning and

earnest supplication to God for mercy, or will be a fit object to present unto the God of mercy to move him to show mercy. So the Ninevites, #**Jon 3:7,8**.

Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber; let the new-married man leave the mirth of the nuptials, and lay aside his bravery awhile, and afflict himself with the rest.

And the bride out of her closet, or chamber, in which with the virgins she adorned herself or caressed them. That these may more earnestly seek the Lord, let them at this season forbear lawful delights.

Ver. 17.

Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep, see #**Joe 1:13**.

Between the porch; that stately porch built by Solomon, #**1Ki 6 3 Eze 40:48,49**.

And the altar; not of incense, for that was in the holy place; but the great brazen altar, or altar of burnt-offering, which stood at some distance from this porch; and here the priests are commanded to stand, fasting and praying, whence they might be heard and seen by the people in the next court, in which the people were wont to pray.

Let them say, with loud voice, and with louder heart and affection; after this manner let them pray and intercede with God.

Spare: this includes confession of sin, acknowledging God's justice, laying themselves at the foot of God for mercy, and imploring of mercy; Though we have sinned and deserve severe wrath, yet spare, deal not with us as we deserve.

Thy people: this includes all they can plead from the covenant of God with them, his grace, promise, faithfulness, &c.; We are thy peculiar people, thou art our God, therefore spare, &c.

Give not; thou only canst expose us to famine and servitude, and both will come upon us if thou first give us up to these predooming locusts, they will consume all, and if thou after give us up to those nations which as locusts are innumerable and irresistible. O give us not up to them.

Thine heritage; chosen, redeemed, possessed through many ages by thee. O Lord, even since we came out of Egypt thou hast owned us for thine heritage: though whilst we were impenitent, and sinned high against thee, we deserved to be cast off; now we return, repent, and pray, be gracious to us, and continue to own and bless thine heritage; since thou canst make it fruitful and beautiful, command it to excel in both; cultivate, fence, and watch over it, it is thine-heritage.

To reproach; it is a reproach to any land that it starves or eats up the inhabitants thereof, #Nu 13:32 Eze 36:30; and famine, though by locusts, will be a reproach to this thine heritage; it will be greater reproach to be slaves to the nations signified by the locusts; therefore of mercy deliver us from both one and the other.

The heathen; whether Assyrians, or Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

Rule over them; conquer first, and then enslave thy people; or, as the word will bear, take them up for a taunt and proverb, when they shall know that they leave their own land as too barren a place to maintain them, or seek their bread at a dear rate in heathen lands.

Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? nay, these barbarous people will not so much consider our sins, or justify our God, but they will reproach God, our God, the great God, as if unable to maintain us. O spare for thine own glory's sake, never let them as #Ps 115:2 deride thee our God.

Ver. 18.

Then, when you follow my advice, saith Joel. and heartily you of your sins, and turn to God, &c.,

will the Lord be jealous, will show his love and zeal, for the credit of his land, the land of Canaan,

and pity his people; consider their prayers, their arguments, and tears, and upon the whole will deal so with them that they shall know I do own them for my people, and that I will do them good.

Ver. 19.

Yea, or *And*, Heb.

The Lord will answer; before it was he would pity, #**Joe 2:18**; not as men many times pity and profess to have compassion for the miserable who cry to them, yet do nothing; but God will pity their case and hear their request, nay, grant their request and relieve them.

And say; speak to and work for his people.

Unto his people; his covenant, praying, repenting, and reforming people.

Behold; what he doth for such a people shall be visible, remarkable, and such as they may observe.

I will send you corn, and wine, and oil: fruitful seasons shall come when God sends them, his command to the heavens to pour down their sweet and fruitful influences shall certainly be obeyed; these must hear God, and then the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, as #**Ho 2:21,22**.

Ye shall be satisfied therewith; you shall have abundance to fill and satisfy you, that you may rejoice in your habitations and know no want.

I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen; your heathen neighbours shall no more insult over you ny people, nor over The your God. Obey my prophet, turn from your sins, and I will do you all this good I promise, or you need and ask.

Ver. 20.

But, Heb. *And,*

I will remove far off from you the northern army; that part of these numerous locusts which are towards the north shall be removed far from you, no more to annoy you on that quarter: some say this refers to the dissipation of Sennacherib's army, which came up from the parts which lay somewhat northerly from Jerusalem and Judea.

And will drive him; some other part of this locust army shall be driven away into the southern deserts, here described by a

barren and desolate land.

His face; the van of this army, here called the *face*, shall be driven into the

east sea; the sea of Tiberias, or the Salt Sea, or the Dead Sea, east of Jerusalem.

His hinder part, the rear of this army of insects, shall be driven into the great, the west sea, here called the utmost sea, in the letter and history. The total destruction of this army of insects is here foretold, which no doubt came to pass. If Sennacherib's army and its dissipation were here shadowed out, it is fairly accommodable to this place, when upon his death and the rout of his army from heaven, his forces retired out of Judea on all quarters with loss of men, as is ever the fate of an invading army beaten in the heart of the invaded country.

His ill savour shall come up; the stench of these locusts destroyed and lying putrefied on the face of the earth, or the corpses of the Assyrians slain and unburied.

Because he hath done great things: some refer this to the locusts, and those whom they signified; he, i.e. this army of locusts or Assyrians: others refer it to God, thus,

for he will do great things; as indeed the utter destroying of this devouring army, and removal of this dreadful famine, was a great work and marvellous, and it was an answer to their fasting and praying; though it was not all done which is contained in this conditional promise, for that this people never performed the condition.

Ver. 21.

Fear not, O land. In #Joe 2:10, the land is said to quake at the approach of this devouring army; now at the approach of mercy it is encouraged, and commanded not to fear; by the same figure and in the same sense, it should not fear now as before it did quake.

Be glad and rejoice: this tells us that *fear not* was a meosis; shout for joy, express the greatest confidence.

For the Lord, who is your God whom you seek, who by me assureth you it is his gracious purpose to do great things for your good,

will do great things: either this explains that last clause, **#Joe 2:20**, or is antitheton to it; the locusts, God's messengers and servants. did great things against, but now God will recall these, and do great things for Israel.

Ver. 22.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field. In **#Joe 1:18-20**, the poor beasts were represented as in greatest perplexity, for want of pasture they were like to perish; but now they are (as if capable of fears or joy from foresight of what was coming toward them) encouraged, they should find pasture, both the tamer which are under man's hand, and the wilder which range the mountains.

The pastures of the wilderness: see **#Joe 1:19**. *Do spring*; begin to look green, and the grass fresh promise the food for you. The tree beareth her fruit; all sorts of trees, though they were withered, and seemed to be dead, **#Joe 1:12**, now they recover their strength and bring forth fruit.

The fig tree does not, as **#Joe 1:12**, languish.

The vine is not, as before, dried up, but with change of season hath changed its hue.

Do yield their strength; both these trees do mightily bear, are full of fruit, and bring forth as much as ever they are able to stand under.

Ver. 23.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion: in the former verse the prophet, by a usual figure, and with known elegancy, called on land and beasts, though they understood him not; now he addresseth himself to them that can understand their work as well as their advantages, and the children of Zion, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, who were called to fast and weep.

Rejoice in the Lord; show yourselves sensible of your mercies, thankful to that free bounty which gave your mercies; rejoice, but not only in your barns, garners, and bellies full, but in the eternal God, who hath been found of you.

Your God; as such you were advised to seek him, as such own him, rejoice in him, and ascribe glory to him, who keepeth

covenant to a thousand generations, and hath remembered his covenant for you in this your low estate.

He hath given you the former rain moderately; the Hebrew will bear it, *a teacher of, or unto, or according to, righteousness.* Either some eminent prophet, or prophets, as Isaiah, or Joel himself, but as forerunners and types of the great Prophet Christ; so the words will be a promise of the Messiah, and lead these children of Zion to the Messiah, as the fountain of all the blessings they receive of God in temporals as well as spirituals: it is usual in Scripture thus to pass from temporal to spiritual, and from spiritual to temporal promises and blessings; so **#Isa 7:4**, &c, with **#Isa 7:14-16**: but since our best interpreters retain, as ours, this version, rain moderately, or in due measure. We adhere to it also: God had sent sweet, gentle, yet sufficient showers to make the earth fruitful, and these showers have made pastures and trees to spring, flourish, and be fruitful.

And he will cause to come down for you the rain; as he hath already given some, so he will give more, as the earth and trees shall need.

The former rain; the autumn rain, which is needful to mellow the earth, and fit it to receive the corn and fruits, and to plant and sow them, about September.

The latter rain; needful to bring forward and ripen the fruits planted or sown, accounted the latter rain because these husbandmen and vine-dressers reckoned from seed time unto spring and harvest.

In the first month; that is, our March; both these rains, as promised **#De 11:14 Le 26:4**, shall be given from heaven.

Ver. 24.

The floors, where they thrashed their corn, shall be full of wheat, the best and most useful grain, the bread corn for man's life and support.

The fats, the vessels into which the liquor ran out of the press,

shall overflow with wine and oil; there shall be of the grape and olive enough to fill the vessels, nay, to make them run over,

though the care of good husbands will save it; for what was said, **#Joe 2:22**, is here fulfilled, the vine doth yield its strength.

Ver. 25.

I will restore; make up to you, or compensate: the lean years of Egypt did eat up the fat, but with you now the fat years shall feed and enrich the lean ones.

The years: by this it appears that this dreadful famine by these insects was longer than of one year's continuance, and perhaps countenanceth the Jewish conjecture of four because four sorts of insects are mentioned. These in the late years devoured the fruit of the earth, but now God will restore the fruits.

The locust, &c.; all recounted **#Joe 1:4**, with little variation of the order wherein named.

My great army: see **#Joe 2:3-11**.

Which I sent: there was somewhat extraordinary in these armies of insects by which the people then living and afflicted by them might see they were sent immediately from Heaven, though history do not report it to us.

Ver. 26.

Ye shall eat; enjoy and live upon. *In plenty;* not with scarcity, as when water is measured to them, and bread is given by weight, **#Eze 4:16**.

Be satisfied; the bread they eat shall refresh them, maintain their strength, not be as that **#Hag 1:6**.

Praise the name; ascribe the glory to the mercy and faithfulness, to the power and wisdom, of your God; ye shall speak of it to his praise, stop the mouths of insulting heathens.

The Lord your God: see **#Joe 2:13**. *Dealt wondrously;* in one year giving as much as the locusts wasted in the years foregoing, whether three, or four, or more.

My people; you that are my people, demeaning yourselves as becometh my people.

Shall never be ashamed; neither disappointed of your hopes, nor refused when you pray, nor necessitated to seek relief among the heathen, who will reproach you and me.

Ver. 27.

And ye, who repent, pray, are blessed with such answer to your prayers,

shall know; by experience shall see, and acknowledge.

That I am in the midst of Israel; my true Israel, obedient Israel; I am with them to bless them, defend them, guide them, and provide for them.

That I am the Lord; the almighty and everlasting God.

Your God, as I was the God of your father Abraham; yours in peculiar manner by covenant, and to redeem you from evil.

And none else; that there is not a god beside me, that the idols you formerly doted upon were no gods, that the idols the heathen boast of are a doctrine of lies, and deceive them that trust on them.

My people shall never be ashamed: see #Joe 2:26.

Ver. 28.

It shall come to pass, most certainly this shall be done, afterward; in the latter days, after the return out of Babylonish captivity, after the various troubles and salvations by which they may know that I am the Lord, their God in the midst of them, when those wondrous works shall be seconded by the most wonderful of all, the sending the Messiah, in his day and under his kingdom.

I will pour out my Spirit; in large abundant measures will I give my Holy Spirit, which the Messiah exalted shall send, #Joh 16:7; in extraordinary power and gifts in the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, and in ordinary measure and graces to all believers, #Eph 4:8-11.

Upon all flesh; before these gifts were confined to a few people, to one particular nation, to a very small people; but now they shall be enlarged to all nations, #Ac 2:33 10:45, to all that believe, all that are regenerate.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: this was in part fulfilled according to the letter in the first days of the gospel; but this promise is rather of a comparative meaning, thus, By pouring out of the Holy Spirit on your sons and your daughters, they shall have as clear and full knowledge of the deep mysteries of God's law as prophets beforetime had. The law and prophets were till John, and during this time the gifts of the Spirit were given in lesser measures, and of all men the prophets had greatest measures of the Spirit; but in these days, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John.

Your old men shall dream dreams; no difference of age, to old men who had been long blind in the things of God the mysteries of grace shall be revealed, and these shall know as certainly and clearly as if God had extraordinarily revealed himself to them by dreams sent of God upon them.

Your young men shall see visions; many young men shall be as eminent in knowledge as if the things known were communicated by vision. In a word, all knowledge of God and his will shall abound among all ranks, sexes, and ages in the Messiah's days, and not only equal, but surpass, all that formerly was by prophecy dreams, or visions.

Ver. 29.

And also, with equal freeness, upon the servants and upon the handmaids, upon the meanest believers: see **#Ga 3:28 Col 3:11.**

My Spirit, of sanctification and adoption.

Ver. 30.

And I will show wonders; as he promiseth such grace to believers, so he warneth them that they should not be surprised with those alarming prodigies which in those days God would show, which would usher in the hard times that should be chastisement to the best, and destruction to the worst: whoso will read and observe what historians and naturalists report of those times will see this fulfilled in the very letter, and **#Mt 24:7,29 Mr 13:24 Lu 21:11,25.**

In the heavens and in the earth; above men, and under their feet; all which signs are particularly named, and first the signs on the earth.

Blood; possibly eruption of blood, as some fountains have been reported to have run with blood, and these prefiguring the great effusion of blood by the sword and wars following, or by antichristian persecutions.

Fire; either breaking out of the earth, or else unusual lightnings, and unparalleled flashes of lightnings in the lower region of the air, setting many things on fire.

Pillars of smoke; from those burning things fired by lightnings, or by extraordinary flashes, a smoke shall go up like a pillar. Particular instances of these may not here be gathered together, but Hottinger, that learned and painful historian, hath gathered many together of the first age, and so of the following ages of the church, in his Ecclesiastical History, which who desireth may consult.

Ver. 31.

Having mentioned the prodigies which were to be wrought on earth, now the prophet specifieth what shall be done in heaven, where the great luminaries shall be wonderfully affected.

The sun shall be turned into darkness; shall be greatly obscured; shall seem to be turned from a body of light to mere darkness.

The moon into blood; either by eclipse, or by the intervention of vapours drawn up from the places where was great slaughter and effusion of blood; however as to manner, it is most certain as to the event; the moon shall seem to be blood.

Before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come; great to all, terrible to the rejecters and persecutors of Christ. This day was the day of Jerusalem's' destruction, and burning of the temple, and slaughter of the Jews, for their violence against and murder of the Messiah, for their sins against the gospel: this was fulfilled partly in the devastation of Jerusalem, but shall fully and finally be fulfilled in the day of judgment, and at the consummation of the world.

Ver. 32.

Yet when nature seems out of course, and such terrible convulsions overthrow all states and kingdoms, and nothing but ruin and destruction appear on every side, yet then most certainly

it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord; whoso heareth the gospel, repenteth of sin, believeth in Christ, and prayeth for grace, peace, and glory; whoso worshippeth the Father through the Son in truth and faith;

shall be delivered; either delivered from those sad outward afflictions, or else, which is infinitely better, from eternal miseries, which will swallow up the unbelieving and impenitent world. When the Jews who rejected Christ were destroyed by the Romans, all (as Eusebius reports) the Jews that believed in Christ and submitted to the gospel escaped.

In Mount Zion; in the true church, typified by Zion, the city of David; and in Jerusalem; not local Jerusalem; there was the chief place of slaughter, blood, fire, and death; but mystical Jerusalem, the church and city of the Messiah;

shall be deliverance; salvation, whether temporal or eternal, or both;

as the Lord hath said; according as God hath promised; and this promised deliverance gives the believer satisfaction and rest, whether in life or by death.

And in the remnant, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, whom the Lord shall call; called of God to be his peculiar people; called to the knowledge of Christ, to profess his name, to believe in Christ, and by him to wait for eternal life and glory, **#Joh 10:16 Ac 13:46 Ro 11:4,5,7.**

JOEL CHAPTER 3

God's judgments against the enemies of his people, **#Joe 3:1-17.**
His blessing upon the church, **#Joe 3:18-21.**

Ver. 1.

Though our dividing this chapter from the former seems to some a beginning of some new matter, yet indeed the prophet prosecutes his old subject, and proceeds to declare how that great thing mentioned in the last verse of the second chapter should be effected, and in this verse you have a transition to that thing.

Behold: it is a note of great attention, and heeding what is to be here spoken.

When I shall bring again the captivity; when I shall by Cyrus the type bring Judah's people out of Babylonish captivity, the emblem of a greater and worse captivity. Judah after the flesh as the type, but, according to the mystery of it, Judah signifieth the whole remnant or residue of those God will save.

Jerusalem, both literally and typically understood; so that beside what refers to the history of the two tribes, or kingdom of the house of David, restored out of captivity by Cyrus, the bringing back the captivity of the whole Israel of God by Christ the Messiah is here to be considered, and all along through this chapter.

Ver. 2.

I will also gather all nations: in the type, it is not simply all nations, but all those nations that have with hostile minds oppressed and scattered Judah; in the antitype, it is all nations that have been enemies to Christ and the church.

And will bring them down: this is spoken with respect to the low situation of the place, being a valley, and we descend into low parts; so here they are caused to go down

into the valley of Jehoshaphat: much difficulty interpreters find in explaining this; we must look to it as a type to somewhat signified by it, and so apply it. The valley of blessing where Jehoshaphat discomfited mighty and numerous enemies, and then triumphed in God with praises to him, #2Ch 20:22, &c.: so the whole church may be this valley of blessing, and in this God will judge the enemies of his people, and give them occasions of praising God for his righteous judgments; and Jerusalem his church shall see this, as the inhabitants of Jerusalem might see what is done in the valley of Jehoshaphat, if they would be at a little pains to go out of the city.

Will plead with them; after the manner of a just and impartial judge I will debate my people's cause, and do them right.

There; in midst of my church, signified by the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of the judgment of God.

For my people; Judah, the two tribes, but, as in their history, bearing a type of the church of Christ.

For my heritage Israel; purchased and possessed by me ever since they were brought out of Egypt; though many times invaded and injured by their unjust neighbours, who were so much their enemies because they were my peculiar people, and kept to my worship.

Whom they have scattered among the nations; either by force driving them out of their habitations, or else carrying them into captivity, and dispersing them in their insolent humour, of which dispersion more follows, **#Joe 3:3,6,8.**

And parted my land; divided among themselves the land I gave to my people to hold immediately of me; so it was my land that they divided, their robbery and spoil was sacrilege. Such is the injustice and oppression of persecutors of the church now, and so God will judge them in due time.

Ver. 3.

It was customary with conquerors to divide the captives by lot, and so did these enemies of the Jews, **#Ob 11;** and so did the Chaldeans on the captive Ninevites, **#Na 3:10;** though this was grievous, yet it was the common lot of captives.

Have given a boy for an harlot; either procured a boy to bestow on some harlot or other which they kept, or gave a boy, instead of money, the price of an harlot to be enjoyed by lewd soldiers.

And sold a girl; a young girl, which, being captive, fell to their lot, they have valued at a base, low price, and sold

for wine, that they might drink; so much as at one sitting one of them could drink; or perhaps for one draught of wine, when the barbarous soldier was dry or minded to be drunk.

Ver. 4.

What have ye to do with me? what just cause of quarrel have you against me? Have I done you any wrong which now you avenge upon my people? or do you begin to violate the law of neighbourhood and friendship, and think to escape? Do ye think you have to do with a poor oppressed people, my people, and I nothing concerned at it?

Tyre, a great mart town, which neighbour to the Jews, and ought to be friends, either joined forces with the enemy against them, or,

retaining friendship with the enemy, bought the Jews for slaves, and sold them again to strangers, to Grecians: this, in his man trade, Tyre was accustomed to, #Eze 27:13.

Zidon, a famous ancient emporium, whose merchants also bought up captive Jews at cheap rates of these barbarous soldiers.

All the coasts of Palestine, which lay along the midland sea, among which were towns of trade, and merchants that bought and sold these captives.

Will ye render me a recompence? Do ye this by way of reprisal? Have I or my people so dealt with you or yours?

Speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; I will, since you deal so with my people, and with me, certainly and speedily avenge myself and my people on you; as you have used them they shall use you. It is probable this may refer to the Assyrian invasion, when Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah, and might sell the captives, or to Shalmaneser's time', when he captured the ten tribes; or it may be a prediction of what Tyre, and Zidon, and these cities of Palestine would do in the Babylonish successes, and a threat what God would do against them for it; but to whatever particular history it refer, who sees not this in it, that God will plead the cause of his oppressed church, and avenge it as his own cause?

Ver. 5.

Ye have taken; you Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines have received at the hands of those you confederated with, you have taken them either as part of the spoil, or as part of your pay.

My silver and my gold; silver and gold vessels dedicated to my service in the temple, and about the altar.

And have carried into your temples; and in contempt of me, with proud insulting, have presented them in your temples to your idols, as if they were mightier and more glorious than I: so did the Philistines carry the ark into Dagon's temple, but it cost Dagon his head, #1Sa 5:4; and Nebuchadnezzar carried away the sacred vessels when he spoiled the temple.

My goodly pleasant things; God speaks of these after the manner of man, and so accounteth of these things.

Ver. 6.

The children also of Judah, the Jews who dwelt in the land, and the children of Jerusalem, the citizens of Jerusalem; or perhaps the young ones, boys and girls, as **#Joe 3:3**, both of city and country.

Ye; Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, though neighbours, and oftentimes befriended by the Jews, yet you have done this.

Sold unto the Grecians; or sons of Grecians, who either employed them as slaves in Greece, or else sold them to other nations for slaves.

That ye might remove them far from their border; that there might be no hope to these poor captives ever to return to their country, nor fear to the Tyrians and Zidonians of being called to account for the injury by them it was done unto. **#Am 1:6,9**, mentions this sin of the Philistines, and God's displeasure at it.

Ver. 7.

Behold; observe it well, for as it will be strange when done, so it shall certainly be done, to your joy, O my people, and to the astonishment of your enemies.

I will raise them; awaken and raise them; though they lay sleeping, or as dead men, I will stir up some who shall befriend them. Out of the place whither ye have sold them; fulfilled when Alexander the Great and his successors, as Josephus, lib. 13. cap. 5, reports, dismissed all Jews that were slaves in Greece, and gave them leave to return to their own country.

And will return your recompence upon your own head; and more than this, I will pay you in your own coin, you shall read and know your sin in your punishment.

Ver. 8.

I will sell your sons and your daughters; give them up into the hands of the Jews, who thereby shall have opportunities of disposing of them as they see good; so you did with my people, so I will recompense you.

Into the hand of the children of Judah; to the Jews, the posterity and kindred of those you sold.

They shall sell them; either as factors for Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander the Great and his successors, or else as merchants trading on their own account, they shall make this one part of their trade, to sell Grecians, Tyrians, &c. Now though we should not have any particular history that relates the transactions of those people in this kind, yet we may rest assured it was done, since God said it should be done; nor can we expect, or is it necessary it should be, that the Jews should by a conquest of these people bring them captives, and sell them: the Zidonians, Tyrians, and Philistines did not so against the Jews, but they bought particular persons out of the hands of Syrians and Assyrians, who took the Jews captives; so when Tyre, and Zidon, and the Philistines shall be captivated by the Babylonish power, or by the Grecian, these shall sell their captives either into the hands or by the hands of the Jews.

Sabeans were a people in the parts of Arabia most remote from Tyre and Zidon; they were accounted the ends of the earth, #Mt 12:42, and spread themselves along by the sea-coast on both sides of the Arabian bay or Red Sea, and passed over that sea, and planted in Africa, and were part of that country which now doth, or lately did belong to the emperor of Abyssinia, who (as the king of Spain in both Indies) glorieth in being king of both Sabeas, and successor to the queen of Sheba; to one or both of these Sabeans did the Jewish men-sellers dispose of those slaves.

To a people far off: this may be an elliptic speech, thus to be filled up, and the Sabeans shall sell them (i.e. whom they bought of the Jews) unto another nation far off from the Sabeans; or else it is an additional description of this people and their country,

For the Lord hath spoken it; then it was done, whether we know when, or by whom, or how many were sold, or not.

Ver. 9.

Proclaim; publish, or make known, as by sound of trumpet: some say it is an irony; I rather think it is a declaration of what is to come to pass through some ages before the coming of the Messiah, as will appear probable from what followeth.

This; or these things, which I am purposed to do in retaliating to the enemies of my people; proclaim wars which may make captives for sale under the hand of my people.

Among the Gentiles; the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Grecians successively. Prepare war; make ready for wars against the enemies of my people, who shall by these be corrected, but their enemies at last shall be destroyed.

Wake up the mighty men; the valiant men, who dare attempt any thing, and are of great strength to execute what they attempt.

Let all the men of war draw near; all the captains, and experienced soldiers, let them appear at the rendezvous.

Let them come up; when marshalled, let them march up on their design, toward the seat of the war, which will now for many ages be in or about the valley of vision, the church, the valley of judgment from the Lord.

Ver. 10.

Beat your ploughshares into swords: here is a prediction of war, and such as should continue, with some intermissions, through many years; as, on the contrary, when swords were to be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, it was a prediction of peace, **#Isa 2:4:** lay aside your husbandry in ploughing and sowing.

And your pruning-hooks into spears; and let gardeners, vinedressers, and planters think of getting spears instead of pruning-hooks.

Let the weak, either of body, through sickness or natural weakness, or else weak of mind, fearful and cowardly, say,

I am strong: put on strength and valour greater than he hath, let none be absent from this war.

Ver. 11.

Assemble yourselves; the war proclaimed, **#Joe 3:9,** pro vision made, **#Joe 3:10,** now hasten to the general rendezvous; embody yourselves as you march, and hasten what you can, as the word imports.

Come all; not simply and in utmost latitude, but all that are here concerned.

Gather yourselves together round about; all round about Judea, the nations near about this valley of vision.

Thither, toward Judea and Jerusalem, the church and heritage of God, cause thy mighty ones to come down; direct and lead them by thy providence, that they may pitch their tents, or encamp there; let all thy mighty ones, whether enemies of thy church gathered against it, or friends of thy church, and gathered for its defence, let them all here encamp; or all those mighty warriors which thou wilt make use of successively to punish the proud oppressors of thy church; so the Chaldeans punished Assyria, Persians and Medes punished Babylon, Alexander punished the Persians, and the divided captains successors plagued one another with wars within sight, as it were, of Jerusalem and Judah.

O Lord; with which the prophet comforts himself and God's people, intimating that all these mighty ones are under God's conduct, and he is in the midst of them to save his own people.

Ver. 12.

Let the heathen; the several nations in their appointed time; and perhaps the Assyrians are first to awake and stir under Shalmaneser, next under Sennacherib, both which came up against this valley of Jehoshaphat.

Be wakened, by the sins and divisions of God's own people, by their own ravenous and turbulent disposition, and by a secret hand of Providence.

And come up, in hostile manner, against the church and people of God, intended here by this valley: so Sennacherib did in Hezekiah's time.

For there, in the midst of my people and church,

will I sit to judge, to plead with, condemn, and punish by the sword,

all the heathen round about; not all the world, but all the heathen round about Judea, which was oppressed by these heathens: there God judged Sennacherib by his own hand; there

God punished the Egyptians by Nebuchadnezzar who defeated Necho; and within sight of the Jews were all the punishments God inflicted on the Assyrian, Babylonish, Persian, and Grecian monarchies executed; and God all this while in the midst of his people preserved them as a bush all in a flame, yet not consumed: so did the Lord lead his mighty ones, and limited their power.

Ver. 13.

Put ye in the sickle; ye mighty ones, ye men of war, executioners of Divine vengeance, begin to reap, cut down sinners ripe for judgment. Let Tiglath-pileser and his soldiers cut down Syria and its king Rezin, 2 Kings xvi., for their violence against my people; let Cyaxares and his armies begin to cut down Assyria, with Nineveh and its king, for their sins are ripe to judgment; let Nebuchadnezzar put in the sickle and cut down Moab, Aremen, Mount Seir, Egypt, Tyre, Zidon, and the Philistines; after this let Cyrus reap down the ripened Babylonians, and Alexander with his mighty ones reap down Medes and Persians, and let divided Grecian captains cut down one another, till the Romans cut them down. And when this is done, God will have mighty ones still to cut down his enemies, persecutors of his church, when the harvest is fully ripe, and till the final and universal judgment, wherein all God's enemies shall for ever be destroyed.

For the harvest is ripe; the sins of those several nations are fully ripe.

In another metaphor the prophet declares the cutting off the church's enemies. *The press is full:* as the grapegatherer cuts off the bunches and brings them into the press till it be full, and then they are trod; so here the enemies of God's people, ripe in sin and brought together to be punished, are to be trodden in the winepress of God's displeasure. *The fats overflow;* a mighty execution is made, and the blood of slaughtered men runs as wine pressed out in greater abundance than the fats can hold from the press; verified in the slaughter made at the overthrow of the kingdoms here intended. *For their wickedness is great;* the violence and all manner of sins of these kingdoms is grown exceeding great.

Ver. 14.

Multitudes, multitudes; whether prediction or exclamation with wonder, it is doubled to intimate the mighty, numerous armies contending one against another, and thrashing each other, overthrowing numberless men between the conquered and conqueror. So each kingdom was overthrown successively. The Assyrian overthrown by Arbaces and Pul-belochus, conspiring against Sardanapalus, where the multitudes were so great that the blood of the slain is by Diodorus Siculus reported to have coloured the water of a river, and the number of the conspirators' army before Nineveh is said to be four hundred thousand. After this we meet Sennacherib's mighty hosts against Egypt and the Philistines, to neither of which could he march but either through part of Judea or very near to it, and after this he hath one hundred and eighty-five thousand slain in one night before Jerusalem; beside Necho's army marching toward Carchemish, and Nebuchadnezzar's army in pursuit of the routed Egyptian, and the armies of Alexander the Great, and after these the armies of the Seleucid and the Lagidee.

In the valley of decision; where God, having by wise providence gathered them, did by just determination of the victory decide their quarrels, and by the conqueror punished the conquered for their sins against God and his people.

The day of the Lord; the day of vengeance and righteous recompences upon enemies,

is near: if it begin in the punishment of Nineveh and the Assyrian kingdom, by the cutting off Sennacherib's army, it was in Joel's time, not above sixty-four years, supposing Joel prophesied in Jeroboam the Second's time; and probably not quite twenty years to this day of the Lord if Joel prophesied this in Hezekiah's time, or after the captivating of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, which was A.M. 3283, and Sennacherib's overthrow was 3294, eleven years after the deportation, as Archbishop Usher in his Annals.

Ver. 15.

See **#Joe 2:10**. When God doth in the valley of decision punish any of the kingdoms which persecuted and oppressed his church, the punishment shall be so great as to darken the glory of such

kingdoms, it shall be to the utter overthrow of those kingdoms and governments; and so it was effected on Babylon by the Mede and Persian; so on this by the Grecians, and on them by their intestine wars, and by the Romans at last on these and on the murderers of Messiah.

Ver. 16.

The Lord; who, #**Joe 2:27**, is the Lord in the midst of Israel or in the midst of his church.

Shall roar; when he brings forth his mighty ones the men of war, and commands them to march out against his and his church's enemies, he will strike the enemy with astonishment and fear, as the roaring of the lion doth astonish the weaker beasts of the forest. Fear shall surprise them when God shall speak against them.

Out of Zion; the place where God chooseth to dwell, emblem of his church, and of the kingdom of Christ.

And utter his voice, in wrath and indignation against those he will destroy, because they have destroyed his church.

From Jerusalem; typical, so God roared and uttered his voice against Sennacherib; mystical, so he hath often already, and still will further discover his displeasure against his enemies, and he will, as one who dwells in a place for the defence of it, rebuke and check those who assault it: so God dwells in his Jerusalem, as it is #**Joe 3:17**.

The heavens; metaphorically the states and kingdoms, the great ones in those states.

The earth; the common sort of people, the inferior ranks of men; the foundations of those kingdoms shall be shaken and overthrown.

Shall shake, and fly as affrighted, so the word signifieth.

But the Lord; but at that time, and in the midst of all those commotions, the eternal and almighty God, who fills the enemy with fears and astonishment,

will be the hope; shall be the object of his people's expectation, they shall look for good from him by all these troubles: and so

God was to his after their return out of captivity, through the Medo-Persian reign, through the Grecian rule under Alexander, and under the times of Alexander's successors.

Of his people; of them that believe his word and obey his law.

And the strength, strong defence and fortress, to his, here called the children of Israel, those that are Israelites indeed.

Ver. 17.

So, by these effects of my presence with my people, by my anger against their enemies, by punishing them by each other, overthrowing oppressors, by fulfilling what is foretold, shall ye, ye that suffer for my sake, but hope in my word, and support yourselves on my strength,

know, by most comfortable and unquestionable experience,

that I am the Lord your God; that I have remembered my covenant for you, and acted according to the power and mercy of an almighty and all-gracious God.

Dwelling in Zion; very graciously present with you, and ever watching over you, and delighting to save you, as a man would do his dwellinghouse.

My holy mountain; which is chosen and separated from all others to be the place of his habitation, as **#Ps 2:6**, which he loves above all places.

Then, after these things are finished, when enemies are destroyed, and the remnant is saved, and the Messiah is come, (for to him and his days do these things finally and ultimately refer,) and the gospel is preached,

shall Jerusalem, the church of Christ, the spiritual Jerusalem,

be holy; be much more holy and pure than now, being made so by the word and Spirit, and afflictions too.

There shall no strangers pass through her any more; no profane and unclean persons shall pass through it as formerly, and bring their strange fashions, rites, worship, or doctrine; though they have done it formerly, as in Solomon's days, and Ahaz's and Manasseh's time, they shall do so no more for ever.

Ver. 18.

In that day; when afflictions, amidst which they were preserved, from which delivered, and by which they were purified.

The mountains; the vines planted upon the mountains, which were dried up, #**Joe 1:12**, shall now be full of juice and fruit.

Shall drop down, shall come down as the showers or dew, sweetly and plentifully, new wine; sweet and delicious.

The hills shall flow with milk; so fruitful shall the hills be, and keep so many cows, sheep, and goats, that milk shall abound every where, as it were a current that ever runs down.

All the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters: in the great drought rivers dried up, now the rivers shall be full of water and ever flow.

A fountain: the prophet alludes to those waters which were conveyed from some spring through conduit pipes towards the altar, of which #**Eze 47:1-5**, for the use of the temple, in which water the priests washed what was to be washed. This no doubt is a shadow of the purifying blood of Christ, and his sanctifying Spirit and word. And in that it is said to

come from the house of the Lord, it intimateth that these glad tidings, this saving grace, shall be first preached from Jerusalem, and by the church, which is the house of God, shall be published to others.

Shall water, refresh, purge, and make fruitful in all holy works,

the valley of Shittim; it was a place in the plains of Moab, on the borders of Israel towards the south-east, #**Nu 33:49 Jos 3:1**, not far from the Dead Sea. These spiritual waters shall flow down to the dry and thirsty, the barren and fruitless Gentiles, and make them fruitful.

Ver. 19.

Egypt: it was in Egypt that the people of God were long kept in bondage, which defiled Israel too with its idolatries, contrived the ruin of Israel by a barbarous and unparalleled cruelty, murdering all the new-born males, and with utmost obstinacy resisted the deliverer who came to fetch Israel out of bondage. By Egypt

understand we then all the enemies of the church of Christ, who carry it toward the church as Egypt carried it toward Israel. *Shall be a desolation*; most desolate, when God shall judge and punish; so shall spiritual Egypt, **#Re 11:8**.

Edom; the posterity of Esau, of near kin to Israel according to the flesh, whose first father envied Jacob the blessing and vowed his death, and made him flee from his father's house and become a servant in a strange land, and was the first who denied Israel a friendly passage and the common civility of necessities for their money, and came out in hostile manner to fight them, **#Nu 20:18**, &c. It was Edom of whom you read in Obadiah, a most bloody, implacable enemy to Judah in his greatest distress. And all who come under Edom's character are here intended, and threatened under this name.

Shall be a desolate wilderness; most desolate, and which art cannot repair; desolate houses or vineyards may, but wildernesses cannot, by art be repaired.

The children of Judah; the people of God, his churches.

They have shed innocent blood in their land; where distressed Jews should have found safety, they met their death; in Egypt and Judea.

Ver. 20.

But and or yet

Judah the chosen peculiar redeemed of the Lord, his church.

shall dwell for ever; no more be captivated and driven from home, but in their own land and houses abide safely and perpetually. This typifieth the eternal peace and rest to which God's people are redeemed.

Jerusalem; city of God. From generation to generation; through many generations on earth, through eternity in heaven. Some shadow of this possibly we may find in the days of the Maccabees, but the fulness of this we expect when that day, great, dreadful, and finally decisive day, to which interpreters refer this chapter, shall destroy all the wicked and put the godly into possession of eternal mansions of glory.

Ver. 21.

For, Heb. *And.*

Cleanse; purge away, both by the Spirit of sanctification, and by free pardon in the blood of the Redeemer; by their sufferings also, by the waters of affliction, as well as by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Their blood; their moral pollutions and sinfulness, compared here unto blood, as also **#Eze 16:6,9;** and so men in sinful state are called flesh and blood, **#Mt 16:17 Ga 1:16.** God will pardon and purify believers, and when they are pardoned and purified, nothing attempted against them shall succeed. *That I have not cleansed;* which before I had not taken away; what was wanting in their sanctification, or justification and reconciliation, I will make up in them and to them.

For the Lord dwelleth in Zion; and I am Jehovah dwelling in Zion, whence the law of grace was published, where the wonders of pardoning and sanctifying grace are wrought, that Israel might be a people with whom the holy God might dwell. Now whereas this can be done but in part here on earth, there is a Zion above, whither Jehovah who dwells there will take every saint after the day of judgment, having first vindicated, acquitted, and pronounced them holy and meet for enjoyment of the Holy One.

AMOS

THE ARGUMENT

IF we might be allowed to make a conjecture at the quality of our prophet's sermons by the signification of his name, we must conclude that they contain heavy tidings and grievous judgments coming upon them to whom he is sent to preach; Amos in the Hebrew coming from a word which signifies to burden, to lay a weight or load on one. But we have a surer rule to judge the contents of his prophecy by. He is by some ancient writers, erring in this point, said to be the father of Isaiah; but besides that Isaiah was contemporary with Amos, which fairly argues it unlikely that Isaiah should be Amos's son, Amoz the father of Isaiah is quite another name, different from Amos, both in letters wherewith each is spelt, and in signification also. And if Isaiah were of the royal line, (as some say he was,) nephew to either Amaziah or Uzziah by a brother, it cannot be conceived how Amos, a plain herdsman of Tekoa, should be his father. It is certain he was either by birth, or education, or employment, or in all these respects, of the tribe of Judah, and as certain that by an immediate call from God he was taken off the herdsman's work and made a prophet, **#Am 7:14,15**. He did in deed, as he professed in word, come from the Lord, and in his name delivered his message to all those whom God sent him unto. And pursuant hereto he preacheth first against those nations who were borderers, and had been bitter, oppressive, and old adversaries to Israel and Judah, **#Am 1:3**, to the end, and **#Am 2:1-3**. By this express course, declaring future just executions upon Syria, Palestine, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, the prophet doth much prevent the prejudices which Israel and Judah might have had against his person and doctrine. Now he may more freely and plainly reprove and threaten the sins of God's own people, since he hath so plainly reproved and threatened their enemies; and they who easily believed him a prophet in his predictions against foreigners, must in reason as easily believe him a prophet in his reproofs and predictions against themselves. He doth bestow the far greater part of his discourses on Israel, or the kingdom of the ten tribes, to whom he was principally sent; yet he doth prophesy against Judah also; and

to both he is very sharp in his reproofs, impartial in his censures, earnest in his persuasions to repent, very full in his encouragements to this duty, and demonstratively evident in his charging sin upon them. He had Isaiah, Joel, and Hosea contemporary with him, though it appear not how long.

He is in many places sententious and concise, which makes the passages the more obscure. Though he do bring with him many things from his country employment in his reproofs, allusions, and arguments, yet fitted with admirable skill, and beautified with an unimitable eloquence, and fortified with that loftiness of style that proclaims itself to be from Him who gave man both judgment, fancy, and tongue, which is an intrinsic character of divinity in our prophet's writing. He was a person of most undaunted resolution, of a prudent conduct, and of spotless integrity, as appears by the contest he had with Amaziah chief of the priests of Beth-el, **#Am 7:10**, &c.

He lived when Judah's affairs were tolerably well and prosperous, but when Israel's were in the highest meridian, when they thought themselves secure against all the dangers he foretold: Uzziah had pretty well recovered Judah, and settled it; Jeroboam had highly advanced Israel's fame, riches; and power. With their growth in these, sin grew as fast and as exorbitant, and called for judgments, which our prophet foretells very plainly in express words, **#Am 7:11,17**, and in very significant hieroglyphics, **#Am 7 Am 8 Am 9**. He foretells the earthquake, **#Am 1:1**; an emblem of those civil dissensions which shook their foundations, and half ruined them before the Assyrian conquered and captivated them. Which miseries lasted through an interregnum of eleven years, say some; to be sure through the reign of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea, in whose time all these miseries were swallowed up in a greater, their perpetual captivity, which came upon them about fifty-four or sixty-five years after the death of Jeroboam the Second, near to whose court and within their hearing Amos preached many, perhaps most of his sermons; and therefore you may observe his reproofs, threats, and predictions seem to be calculated for that court, which was highly guilty of the sins he reproved, and were called to repent of them, which because they did not, they did deeply suffer both in the civil wars

under those four usurpers and conspirators, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, and most deeply in the Assyrian captivity. In the annotations you will find there is some reference to those times, with somewhat more particular application of the prophetic text to the circumstances of times he aimed at, than hath been by any learned pen I have happened to peruse; and would the brevity to which these annotations are bound have borne a larger account of those times, and a fuller accommodation of them to the prophetic discourses, I do not doubt but the truth of the prophet's charge, reproof, threats, and predictions against Israel would appear to every reader. Lastly, our prophet, as others, closeth the sad tragedy of this fleshly, sinning Israel with promise of a spiritual state under the Messiah, full of grace and peace.

AMOS CHAPTER 1

The time when Amos prophesied, **#Am 1:1,2**. He showeth God's judgments upon Syria, **#Am 1:3-5**; upon the Philistines, **#Am 1:6-8** upon Tyre, **#Am 1:9,10**; upon Edom, **#Am 1:11,12**; upon Ammon **#Am 1:13-15**.

Ver. 1.

The words: the Holy Ghost doth in this expression comprehensively take in all the sermons, visions, and predictions which Amos preached and published; all the exhortations to duty, the menaces against sins, the warnings of dangers coming, and the promises of mercy to them that hear and obey his words: see **#Hag 1:12**. And so what Jeremiah preached to his auditors are the words of Jeremiah, **#Am 1:1**; and the instructions and counsel of Solomon are the words of the Preacher, **#Ec 1:1**. Both the things spoken and the words wherein they are spoken are included.

Amos: those who think this was father to the prophet Isaiah, either discern not the difference that is in the two Hebrew words, or pronounce hastily without considering what each is in the Hebrew, in which tongue these words have but two letters the same, i.e. M and O, the other are quite different; as also is the signification of each, for the one imports strength or might, the other imports a burden or heavy weight.

Among the herdmen, or shepherds, but whether one of the meaner or one of the chief, whether a master herdman or a servant, the word imports the former, yet because the Scripture doth not say, we shall not inquire, since it conduceth little to our profiting, nor will it add to his authority, since it is God who sent him.

Tekoa; whether it belonged to Zebulun, Asher, or Judah is not much material, though this last be most likely, for, **#2Ch 11:5,6**, we read of Rehoboam's building fortresses in Judah, among which Tekoa is mentioned. It was situate on a hill on the north of Judah, as a learned pen describeth it.

He saw; received by revelation: this tells us that the things as well as words were to be understood, when it is said that these were the words of Amos.

Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes, revolted from the house of David, and now under the government of Jehu's great-grandson.

Uzziah; called also Azariah, who was smitten with a leprosy for intruding into the priest's office, **#2Ch 26:16,19**.

Judah; including the tribe of Benjamin, and such of the Levites as did adhere to the house of David, the kingdom of the house of David. Jeroboam; not son of Nebat, but grandson of Jehu. Joash; who had some successes against Syria, according to the prophecy of Elisha, by which successes Israel was raised from a declining to a thriving, prosperous state.

The earthquake; of which only this text, and **#Zec 14:5**, do make particular mention, and where somewhat is spoken of it; which see. It is the tradition of the Jews, that this earthquake happened when Uzziah usurped the priest's work and offered incense in the temple, against which violation of Divine rites God testified thus from heaven, say they. Further than this we need not inquire in this matter. It was a great and dismal earthquake, and perhaps by this God did smite the winter and summer houses, as **#Am 3:15**; however, as it was foretold two years before it came, so we are sure it did come according to the time prefixed by the Lord.

Ver. 2.

He; Amos.

The Lord; the Almighty and Eternal, whom you of the ten tribes have forsaken, and thereby have provoked to displeasure.

Will roar: the prophet, alluding to what was dreadful, dangerous, and most rousing to shepherds, the roaring of a hungry lion that comes out of his den for prey, doth express the danger of Israel, and would awaken them to a sense of it, that they might prevent it by repentance, before the Lord tears them in pieces as a lion tears his prey.

From Zion; either the temple, in opposition to Jeroboam's idolatrous chapels; or intimating their defection and sin in leaving Zion for Dan and Beth-el.

Utter his voice: this explains and confirms the former metaphorical expression of God's wrath.

From Jerusalem; the city God had chosen, where he dwelt, the seat of God's instituted worship in the matters of religion, and the royal seat of the kingdom as God had settled it, from which in both respects the ten tribes had revolted. This whole paragraph you have **#Joe 3:16**, which see; and **#Jer 25:30**.

The habitations of the shepherds: where the shepherds found convenient pasturage they pitched their tents, or built them cottages, and dwelt therein, that they might attend the care of their flocks, for which they also made folds; and this was the delight and wealth of these men: now by allusion to these Amos expresseth all the wealth, greatness, and delightfulness of the kingdom of Israel. Princes are, in the Greek dialect, shepherds of the people, people are the flock, towns and cities are the habitations of both; and so the Scripture useth the expression, **#Jer 2:8 3:15 Eze 34:2,7-9 Na 3:18**, which see.

Shall mourn; be made desolate, and reduced to a sad, mournful, and lamentable state, in which men shall see nothing but matter of sadness and tears.

Carmel; there were two places of this name, and though distant from each other, yet both very fruitful, and much used by shepherds; the one was in the northern parts of Canaan, whither

Elijah resorted; the other in Judah, the southern parts of Canaan: now this was nearer Tekoa, better known to Amos, and therefore some think this to be here intended; but the other was in Israel, which is here threatened, and therefore fitter to be the emblem of the ten tribes, and meant here, say others: whichever you choose, it is no hard thing to accommodate it to the prophet's purpose of Carmel: see #Na 1:4.

Shall wither; either blasted, or else dried up with drought, and turned into barrenness. So the whole kingdoms of the people threatened, and of the ten tribes, though as fruitful and pleasant as Carmel, should be made horrid and desolate as a dry and barren wilderness. See #Joe 1:12,17.

Ver. 3.

Thus saith the Lord; Amos speaks not by conjecture, or of his own head, but as he comes in the name of the Lord, so he assures us of it by this most solemn attestation.

Three transgressions: this certain number is put for an uncertain; three, i.e. many, especially when, as here, it is joined with four; their transgressions are so multiplied, grown to such height and number.

Damascus was the chief city of the kingdom of Syria, and very ancient; Abraham's steward was of this city. It was north-east from Canaan; conquered by David, lost by Solomon, recovered by Jeroboam the Second, though soon after lost again, and was in Ahaz's time the royal seat of Rezin, whom Tiglath-pileser slew, #2Ki 16:9. While it was in its power and greatness it mightily oppressed Israel. It is here by a synecdoche put for the whole kingdom of Syria.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: some refer this to the suffering Damascus to be quiet, God threatens that she shall not have rest; others say it is a threat that God would not convert it, but leave the Syrians to their impenitent heart; but our version is full and plain, it is a threat of punishment which they should certainly fall under. God would no longer continue to be patient and gracious towards such sinners, nor divert the menaced punishment foretold by the prophet, deserved by the people, and which shall be executed by an impartial hand. Because they, the

Syrians, comprised in the word Damascus, by a synecdoche, have threshed; first gathered, (as husbandmen gather sheafs into a floor,) next trod them under foot, beat them small, i.e. with utmost cruelty destroyed the persons, towns, and cities.

Gilead: of this name there was a great mountain fifty miles in length, saith my author; there was also a country of this name, and a city possessed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites; now the Gilead in this text is by a very usual figure put for the inhabitants of this country and city, whom Hazael king of Syria, as was foretold by Elisha, **#2Ki 8:12**, did most barbarously murder, as appears by the words of this text.

With threshing instruments of iron; rakes, or flails, or harrows, or saws, or heavy wheels of iron; whichsoever of these were the instruments intended, it is most certain it was a very barbarous and cruel manner of using them.

Ver. 4.

I the Lord, avenger of mine oppressed Israel, Jehovah, as **#Am 1:3**.

A fire; either literally understood, or figuratively, famine, pestilence, wars foreign or intestine, effects of God's great but just displeasure, which destroys all like fire.

The house of Hazael; the family, or the material house in which he dwelt, or both; Hazael's stately dwelling-place should be consumed by fire, and his whole family be cut off.

Devour; eat up, so as to leave nothing remaining of either.

The palaces; the royal palaces, or those that descended from Hazael, and dwelt in them.

Ben-hadad: whether this were some one of the Syrian kings before Hazael, or the Ben-hadad slain by Hazael, or son and successor to Hazael, is uncertain; nor can we know particularly who this was by this name Ben-hadad, which to the Syrian kings was a common name, as Pharaoh to the ancient Egyptian kings, Caesar to the Roman emperors, and Czar to the Muscovite at this day: three Ben-hadads are mentioned in the books of the Kings, as **#1Ki 15:18 2Ki 8:7 13:3**.

Ver. 5.

I, the mighty God, as **#Am 1:4**,

will break, weaken and shake into pieces,

the bar; literally, the bar with which the city gates were shut, and both fastened and strengthened, **#Jud 16:3 Ne 7:3 Ps 107:16**. Metaphorically it contains all the munitions, fortresses, and strength of a place or people: so here. *Damascus*: see **#Am 1:3**. It is put here, as before, for the whole kingdom, of which it was the metropolis.

Cut off, by the judgments of war, pestilence, famine, or diseases, all commissioned to do this. The inhabitant, for inhabitants, the singular used for the plural; and may possibly denote the universal excision and destruction of the Syrians, who shall perish as one man: see the like use of the singular number, **#Ex 8:6 Jer 8:7**.

The plain of Aven: it is possible this may refer to, some peculiar manner which the Syrians observed in their choosing the valley or champaign for the place of worship to their idols; Israel chose high places, the Syrians chose valleys it is likely, and therefore though beaten in the hills, where they thought the gods which Israel worshipped were strongest, yet are confident that in the valleys, where Syrians worshipped their gods, the Syrians would find their gods the stronger, **#1Ki 20:23** for this reason the valley or plain hath its name the plain of liven, of iniquity and vanity, because in it they worshipped vain gods, and their religion was highest idolatry; or it may be that Bikath-aven was the name of some city of Syria well known then, but whose memory is perished with it a great while ago.

Him that holdeth the sceptre; a description of the king of Syria. whose royal dignity shall be no security to him.

The house of Eden; some royal seat, where the kings of Syria did think good to build them a house or palace, for pleasure and delights, and therefore gave it this name, *Beth-eden*, or the house of pleasure; all their pleasant seats, the king's summer-houses, shall be laid waste.

The people of Syria; the main body of the subjects and people of Syria; this explains *Damascus*, **#Am 1:3**, and in this verse.

Kir; Cyrene of Egypt, say some, but without any probability in this place: there was also Kir of Moab, **#Isa 15:1**; but this was not the Kir in the text: this was Kir of Media, **#Isa 22:6**, now under the Assyrian yoke; and thither did Tiglath-pileser carry the conquered Syrians, **#2Ki 16:9**, and placed them captives in that barren, mountainous country about fifty years after it was foretold by Amos.

Saith the Lord: this gives us an assurance that all here threatened should at last be executed.

Ver. 6.

Three transgressions: see **#Am 1:3**.

Gaza; the principal city of the Philistines; all the rest are to be understood; and here the city is named, but the inhabitants are meant also with the city; ancient and strong, the seat of the Anakims, conquered by Judah, yet lost soon after to the old inhabitants.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see **#Am 1:3**.

They carried away captive: this refers to the inroad by the Philistines and Arabians made upon Judah in the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the violence and cruelty of which is set forth **#2Ch 21:16,17**, about A.M. 3116; and this is that which is here threatened, as a sin that should be punished.

Edom; the posterity of Esau, who were inveterate enemies to the posterity of Jacob, and as ill neighbours are, so were these, the worst enemies the Jacobites had, as appears **#Eze 25:12 Ob 10-14 Ps 137:7**. These Edomites were ever ready to Oppress, enslave, and tyrannize over the Jews, if by any means they could by force or fraud get them into their hands.

Ver. 7.

I will send a fire; see **#Am 1:4**; desolating judgments, expressed here by fire.

On the wall; which was strong, and a mighty defence to the city; this only mentioned, but all the power and strength of Gaza, and of whole Palestina, is here included, and the judgment denounced is here intended against all the munitions of that people: Gaza: see **#Am 1:6**.

Devour: see #Am 1:4.

The palaces thereof: see #Am 1:4. What is here foretold was fulfilled partly by Uzziah, #2Ch 26:6-8, and partly by Hezekiah, #2Ki 18:8, and partly by Sennacherib, #Isa 20:1.

Ver. 8.

The inhabitant: see #Am 1:5.

Ashdod: see #Zep 2:4 Zec 9:6. This was one of the five cities of the Philistines, and had its roitelet. it was afterwards called

Azotus, #Ac 8:40. In this city was Dagon's temple and statue, #1Sa 5:1-3. The like threat against Ashdod did Jeremiah denounce, #Jer 25:16, with #Jer 25:20.

Him that holdeth the sceptre: see #Am 1:5. *Ashkelon*; another city of the Palestine pentarchy, and a very strong one, of which see #Zep 2:7 Zec 9:5,6, which shall perish with the king and inhabitants thereof; which (besides what Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, or Sargon, kings of Assyria, did, and besides what Hezekiah did against Ashkelon) had some accomplishment in Nabopolassar's and Nebuchadnezzar's time, and in Alexander the Great, to whom this city, as well as Gaza and Ashdod, became subject.

I will turn mine hand against Ekron; having destroyed these, saith the Lord, I will proceed on to Ekron, another of the five cities of the Philistines, strong, but, as the rest, cruel to Israel, and very sinfully idolatrous, worshipping Baal-zebul, for which this shall be destroyed also: see #Zep 2:4 Zec 9:5.

The remnant of the Philistines; what remaineth either of cities, towns, or people, not already expressly mentioned and threatened.

Shall perish; be cut off, and wasted utterly.

Saith the Lord God; when all this shall be done, though perhaps ye may not know, yet know ye this, that assuredly it shall be done in its time, for the Lord hath said it.

Ver. 9.

The prophet having foretold the destruction of the Syrians and the Philistines, for their inhumanity and barbarous cruelty against the

Jews, he doth now in the same manner and words foretell the destruction of the Tyrians. See #Am 1:3.

Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom: see #Am 1:6, where these passages are already explained.

And remembered not the brotherly covenant, which was between Hiram on the one part, and David and Solomon on the other part, on account whereof these Tyrians ought to have befriended the Jews, and not betrayed them; so some: others thus, The nearness of blood between Israel and Edom should have been remembered by the Tyrians, and they should therefore have persuaded Edom to carry it as became a brother, and by their mediation the Tyrians should have made peace between Israel and Edom; but they did not so, they took advantage of times, and made merchandise of Israel, sold such as either fled for refuge from other enemies, or such as fell into the hands of the Tyrians, joining with Hazael and Ben-hadad in their wars against Israel. What other sins Tyre added to this between this time and Nebuchadnezzar's besieging and subduing Tyre were then punished, when after thirteen years' siege it was taken, of which see #Eze 26\$ 27\$ 28\$, where at large Tyre is spoken of.

Ver. 10.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Ver. 11.

Three transgressions: see #Am 1:3.

Edom: see #Am 1:6.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see #Am 1:3. *He did pursue*; watch for and lay hold on every occasion to oppress Israel.

His brother; Jacob and his posterity here are meant, as is Esau and his posterity. Esau personally considered was an enemy to the person of Jacob, and vowed his ruin, forced him to flee into Padan-aram, and on his return thence frightened Jacob too by coming out with four hundred men armed; the posterity of Esau behaved themselves no whit more friendly.

With the sword; either joining with the enemies, as **#Ps 83:6-8 137:7**, or setting a war on foot on their own account, as **#2Ch 28:17**, against them.

Cast off all pity; common humanity was by Edom cast off, when Jacob's posterity needed it, as appears by their denial of passage and selling to them necessaries for their relief in travelling by their country, **#Nu 20:14-21**; nay, they armed against Israel, **#Nu 20:20**. Common pity would have forborne strangers travelling by our coasts; how much more brethren. The inhumanity of the Edomites appeared yet further in this, that they were chapmen to buy all the captive Israelites, and to sell them to the heathen for slaves, which is certainly the height of inhumanity.

His anger, which is expressed by fierceness, and with vehemency,

did tear, as a ravenous, hungry, and fierce lion tears the prey; so the word.

Perpetually; though sometimes this anger did intermit for want of opportunity, yet on every occasion it revived, and showed itself again.

Kept his wrath for ever; lest the fire of his wrath should extinguish, Edom did record, treasure up, and reserved the seeds of his displeasure, as men rake up fire in ashes to blow it up into a flame; such was Edom's wrath, a wrath that exceeded all bounds, as the word imports, and never ceased.

Ver. 12.

I will send a fire: see **#Am 1:4,7**.

Teman; metropolis of Idumea, called from Esau's grandson of that name; of this see **#Eze 25:13 Hab 3:3**. And this here taken synecdochically implieth the inhabitants of this city, and of the whole country, which shall perish when the judgment here threatened shall be executed.

Which shall devour the palaces: see **#Am 1:4**.

Bozrah; a city bordering on Moab and Idumea, and which sometimes belonged to the one, sometimes to the other, as events of war determined. It may be there might be two cities of this

name, the one in Moab, the other in Edom, or Idumea; however, this was a very strong city, and one of the chiefest in the whole kingdom, so that in the menace against Bozrah and Teman the strength and glory of Edom is threatened with an utter overthrow, as of that which is burnt up by fire.

Ver. 13.

The children of Ammon: this is the fourth kingdom threatened; a people descended from Lot, by his younger daughter, of near kin to Israel, and much-like neighbours as the Edomites, bitter enemies to the Jews: see **#Eze 25:2**.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see **#Am 1:4**.

Ripped up the women with child; a most inhuman practice, yet usual in those times and places, of which mention is made **#2Ki 8:12 15:16 Ho 13:16**: which see. When, or in what particular place, this was done, is not reported in the history of the Bible. Probably it was when Hazael harassed Israel, **#2Ki 8:12**, with whom the Ammonites perhaps joined; but the thing was done, though we read not in any particular story when and where; all could not be written which was done in those ages.

Gilead: see **#Ho 6:8 Zec 10:10**: name both of city and country about it, and very rich in excellent spices and balms.

Enlarge their border, by destroying all that dwelt in it, and that hereafter might claim or pretend a title to it.

Ver. 14.

I will kindle a fire in the wall: see **#Am 1:4**, where the phrase is explained: as to the time when this prophecy was fulfilled, it was partly when the Assyrian kingdom flourished, and partly by Nebuchadnezzar, as was foretold by Ezekiel, **#Eze 25:1-3**, &c., which see.

Rabbah; the chief city of the kingdom of Ammon, **#2Sa 11:1 12:26**, which by a usual figure compriseth all the Ammonites, and all their strength, wealth, and glory, all which shall be devoured. It shall devour the palaces thereof: see **#Am 1:4**.

With shouting in the day of battle; a mixed and horrid noise of trumpets, and alarms of war, with howlings of the distressed, groans of the dying, and acclamations of the conquerors.

With a tempest in the day of the whirlwind, i.e. with irresistible force, and surprising swiftness, as the similitude imports.

Ver. 15.

Their king; or Milchore, or Moloch, the idol of the Ammonites, so it signifieth, as well as king. I suppose the prophet may intend both, their god as well as their king shall be carried captive, as was customary with conquerors, **#1Sa 5:2 Isa 46:2**.

He: this repeats and confirms the threat, whether it refer to the idol or the king.

His princes; either nobles and ministers of state, who attend and serve the king, or the priests and ministers of the idol; here both may be included, and the utter overthrow of their affairs in religion and state be signified and foretold.

Saith the Lord: this, as elsewhere, doth ratify and insure all; it shall so be, for God hath spoken it.

AMOS CHAPTER 2

God's judgments upon Moab, **#Am 2:1-3** upon Judah, **#Am 2:4,5**, and upon Israel, **#Am 2:6-8**. God complaineth of Israel's ingratitude for past kindnesses, and threateneth them for it, **#Am 2:9-16**.

Ver. 1.

For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: in this form the prophet began, **#Am 1:3**, which see. Here he doth threaten a nation of some kin to Israel, &c., as was Ammon, and almost as much an enemy: they appeared early enemies to Israel, and took most wicked ways to ruin Israel; first hired Balaam to curse them, **#Nu 22 Nu 23**; when this did not succeed, he next acts a vile part, and by lewd harlots draws Israel to sin, **#Nu 25:1,2**, &c., that so he might do against sinful Israel what could not be done against innocent Israel. Moab also was the second oppressor of Israel, who for their sins were delivered into the hands of Eglon king of Moab, who oppressed them eighteen years, **#Jud 3:14**; for which, and other hostile carriages, they are here threatened; yet their inhuman cruelty to

Edom's king is only expressed, the other hostilities to Israel are implied.

He; the king of Moab; who particularly this was is not here nor elsewhere mentioned, though some say it was Mesha, and refer this to #2Ki 3:4; yet it is not very likely that this was the king who acted such cruelty.

Burned the bones; it had been barbarous to have burned the flesh and nerves of an enemy, but to make the fire so hot, and continue it so long, as to burn bones into ashes, is much more barbarous.

Of the king of Edom: this somewhat aggravates the cruelty, he was no common man, but a king, who was so used: his name, and the time when it was done, whether it were some king alive or dead, and his bones digged up, is not mentioned, but every way it was barbarous, though it were done to bones digged out of the grave, as some conjecture.

Into lime, or ashes, calcined the bones, reduced them by fire into fine dust, and (as others conjecture) used these ashes instead of lime to plaster the walls and roofs of his palace; and this was done in hatred and contempt of the king of Edom.

Ver. 2.

I will send a fire: see #Am 1:4.

Moab; some think, but I know not on what ground, that there was a city of this name, and meant here, but on better reason we conclude it to be the whole country, or by a metonymy the people, who were the posterity of Lot by his elder daughter.

It shall devour the palaces: see #Am 1:4.

Kerioth; a strong and principal city of this country; or the cities, so the word will bear, and then the threat is against all their cities.

Moab, the Moabites, all sorts and ranks of them, shall die, be destroyed, and perish utterly, with tumult; such as soldiers in fight or assaults make, when they carry all by force, bearing down all opposition, and slaying all opposers, with that rigour which in such cases is very usual.

With shouting; as conquerors shout, to the end they may dishearten the enemy, and animate their fellow soldiers.

With the sound of the trumpet: this added partly to explain, and partly to confirm, what the prophet had foretold.

Ver. 3.

I will cut off, by the sword of the enemy, the judge; the governor, i. e. every one of them; the singular being put for the plural, to intimate the destruction of all of them.

From the midst thereof; either of Kirioth the metropolis, or of every city in which were judges appointed to govern and minister justice to the people; and these should be cut off in these cities, and in the midst of their government.

The princes; either by birth, or by office, or by excellent endowments, the chief among the Moabitish people.

With him; with the supreme governor, before threatened.

Saith the Lord; noting to us the certainty of the thing, the irrevocable sentence passed upon Moab, its king, princes, and judges, who being cut off, the people must needs perish, and come to nothing.

Ver. 4.

God hath in the former verses threatened the enemies of his people for their outrages against his people; now he does threaten his people for their obstinacy in reiterated sins: see **#Am 4:3**.

Despised; first slighted it, as if no excellency were in it, and next rejected it, as if it were not worthy of their observance; thus they refused with an abhorrence and detestation

the law of the Lord, the whole law, partly by their immoralities and transgressions against the just commands of it, and partly by their false worship and idolatry: that law which was given with so much majesty and terror. on Mount Sinai; from which they should not have departed either to the right hand or to the left; that law which was perfect, holy, and useful, with which no fault could be justly found. So much the greater were their sins, because committed against so clear, full, and pure a law. Have not kept his

commandments, i.e. they have greatly violated, as the Hebrew phrase importeth, #Ne 9:34 Da 9:5,10,11.

Their lies; idols, which are a lie, whether commended to them by their false prophets, or chosen according to their own humour and fancy; all their false, superstitious, and idolatrous worship. Caused them to err; their idolatry was first their error, and this blinded them, made them more sottish and brutish, which was partly from the natural tendency of this sin, and partly from the just judgment of God, #Ro 1:24 2Th 2:10 -12.

After the which, idols or lies,

their fathers, first in Ur of the Chaldees, before Abraham was called, afterwards in Egypt, the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan itself, have walked, successively, one generation after another; idolatry, and superstition, and will-worship have been old hereditary sins, and now shall be punished.

Ver. 5.

I will send a fire: see #Am 1:4.

Judah; the kingdom of the two tribes; Benjamin is to be included with Judah, as elsewhere hath been already often observed. It shall devour the palaces: see #Am 1:4.

Jerusalem; the chief city of Judah's kingdom, the city of God, where was the temple of God, and where were the seats of judicature; the holy city, but now to be destroyed for its sins, as well as other incorrigible nations. Now this was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar, about two hundred years after this prophecy of Amos.

Ver. 6.

For three transgressions: see #Am 1:3.

Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes, under the government of Jeroboam the Second at this time, against which the prophet was chiefly sent, though he began with Syria and others, by the threats against which nations he prepared both Judah and Israel to hearken and consider.

I will not turn away the punishment: see #Am 1:3.

They; those who by the appointment of the law had power to hear and decide causes between man and man; judges and witnesses, like the corrupt judges,

sold, for bribes were their aim, and they would at any time sell justice to the highest bidder.

The righteous; the innocent, or those who had a just and righteous cause, for the prophet here speaks of the justness of the cause, not of the exact justice or absolute righteousness of the person.

For silver: money was the most current and prevailing commodity with these judges, but money's worth would do the feat too, if money were out of the way.

The poor: when poor men went to law with poor men before these judges, and the thing they contended for was of small value, the contenders too had light purses, and could not give a considerable bribe;

a pair of shoes, a very poor bribe, expressed here proverbially, would sway with these judges, who gaped still after somewhat of gain from all.

Ver. 7.

That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor; or swallow up, as the word is most frequently turned by our interpreters; and so perhaps more plainly is their cruelty and violence set forth, in that they make a prey of the poor, who walk with dust on their heads by reason of distresses that are upon them, and, without any compassion towards them, greedily, and as at once, swallow up and devour the poor, whom, by the law of God, and the office they bear as judges, they should deliver out of the hand of the oppressor.

Turn aside the way of the meek; perversely and maliciously misinterpret the actions, words, and designs of the humble and meek, of the compassionate and merciful, who pity the poor in these straits and dangers. These corrupt judges and violent oppressors are also shameless adulterers and fornicators, they commit that lewdness which the better-tutored heathens abhor and forbear; a kind of incestuous pollution; the father and son keep the

same harlot, and go in unto her. Thus they profanely dishonour me, by casting off my law, and doing that which is so shamefully indecent and unlawful; and giving heathens occasion to blaspheme my name, and either think, or say, Like people, like God.

Ver. 8.

The Jews of old did not, as we, sit upright at their feasts, and meals, but in a posture of greater ease did lean, or lie on one side; so here

they lay themselves down, i.e. put themselves in a feasting posture,

upon clothes laid to pledge, of which the law had expressly said none should detain files all night, **#De 14 12,13**.

By every altar: impudent sinners, who dare thus before the altar, where they suppose that God is present, bring their crying, inexcusable oppressions; and feast in sacred places, on sacred viands, with bloody minds and oppressive practices; and seek mercy from God when they show, no mercy to the poor!

They drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god; to complete their wickedness, they offer their drink offerings in wine which they bought with the fines and pecuniary mulcts laid on the innocent and guiltless, and thus rejoice in their violence, whilst God hates robbery for a burnt-offering.

Ver. 9.

Yet destroyed I, whom they have ungratefully forgotten and forsaken, and set up idol's in competition with me; nay, cast off my law and worship, and embraced idolatry, worshipped idols that never could do them good, nor destroy their enemies; this they did after I had destroyed their enemies.

The Amorite; the mightiest nation of all the Canaanites, and therefore expressly mentioned as an instance of God's great mercy, and Israel's great ingratitude: by this nation mentioned all the rest of the Canaanitish nations are to be understood. These Amorites dwelt beyond Jordan, between that and Moab, and their land fell by lot unto Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. Before them, the children of Israel under the conduct of Moses, **#De 2:24**, &c.; **#De 3:1-14**, at the very sight of whom these

mighty men fled, for God had struck them with terror that they might not stand before Israel.

Whose height was like the height of the cedars: the Amorites were men of largest size, they were of the race of the giants, #Nu 13:32,33. This is a proverbial speech, and sets out the Amorites, exceeding ordinary men in stature as much as the cedar exceeds ordinary trees in height.

Strong as the oaks; another proverbial speech, denoting their great strength above the strength of other men.

I destroyed; utterly rooted them out.

His fruit from above: trees propagated by fruit are diminished by destroying the fruit which is the seed of them; so God cut off the children of the Amorites, and thereby prevented all succession.

His roots from beneath: this refers to the destroying the old standards, that present generation: this last clause refers to the command God gave, #De 7:2.

Ver. 10.

You did not rescue yourselves out of the hands of your enemies, I did in mere mercy with a mighty arm save and rescue you, and brought you up from the land of Egypt, where you were oppressed servants, and exposed to ruin.

Led you, as a shepherd leads his flock: nay, miraculously conducting by the pillar of a cloud and fire, and feeding with manna from heaven.

Forty years, reckoning from their coming out of Egypt.

Through the wilderness: they passed through many wildernesses, named in Scripture according as they were then called, but all these lay so contiguous to each other, that they all made up one great wilderness, as the many names given to parts of the sea make us know what particular part is spoken of, but all make one sea.

To possess, as an heir possesseth that he hath a hereditary right to, the land of the Amorite, including all the rest of the accursed and dispossessed nations.

Ver. 11.

I raised up; gave prophetic endowments, stirred up their minds, commissioned them to prophesy, and carried them through by an undaunted courage given to them, that they, should not fear to set upon, or faint in attending to, their office.

Of your sons for prophets; did not employ strangers, whose affections you might with some colour of reason suspect, but your own sons, whose affections to you and to their own country are unquestionable, were sent prophets to tell you of your sins, to foretell your dangers, and to importune you to repent of your sins, and to prevent your dangers.

Your young men; though that age be generally inclined to please their own fancies, to walk after the sight of their eyes, **#Ec 11:9**, yet did God change the mind of some of them in their youth, and inclined them to eminency in religion, to be examples to others.

Nazarites; which were religious persons under vow bound to a very sober, abstemious, and holy life; either for some certain limited time, or for their whole life: see **#Nu 6:1,2**, &c. These were not to drink any strong or intoxicating liquors.

Is it not even thus? God appeals to them in this matter whether he had not done this for them, given prophets to teach them, and Nazarites to be examples to them, in both which God showed his love and care of them.

Ye children of Israel; apostatized Israel, you of the ten tribes.

Saith the Lord: this is added to excite them to serious pondering what is said to them.

Ver. 12.

But ye, for whose benefit both Nazarites and prophets were raised, you who should have heard their word, and imitated their example,

gave the Nazarites wine; importuned, urged, or it may be (as is the custom of excessive drinkers) forced them to drink wine, to violate their vow, and contemn God's law too, **#Nu 6:3,4**.

Commanded: by this passage it appears that they were men in authority who did this; it is not probable that mean persons who

had no authority would enjoin silence on the prophets, **#Isa 30:10 Am 7:13 Mic 2:6**. It is evident Amaziah was chief priest in Beth-el, and by virtue of his jurisdiction there silenceth the prophet.

The prophets; the true, faithful, and plain-dealing prophets, who rebuked their sins, required them to repent, and threatened judgments if they did not repent.

Saying, Prophesy not: see **#Isa 30:10 Am 7:13 Mic 2:6,11**;

Ver. 13.

Hitherto the Lord by the prophet had declared the sins of the kingdom of the ten tribes, now he is about to pronounce judgment against them; he calls for their attention, and diligent weighing what he is about to speak.

I, the Lord, who have so multiplied mercies to this people,

am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves: some read this passage actively, and make this the sense, I will lead you with these judgments as a cart is loaded, and you shall cry and groan under these judgments, as a cart heavy loaded makes a noise in its motion under such pressures. Perhaps sheaves, the loading of a harvest season, are mentioned, to intimate the ripeness of their sins, and God's reaping them or cutting them down by his judgments, and carrying them together to be thrashed by further judgments.

Ver. 14.

Therefore; because they first loaded God with their sins, and now he loads them with punishments, no way of escape shall be left.

The flight shall perish from the swift; not by swiftness of foot fleeing from the judgments, for their enemies shall be swifter than they, **#Isa 30:16**.

The strong shall not strengthen his force; natural strength of body shall not deliver; such, though they might do more than weaker men, yet shall not save themselves, for they shall not know how to use their strength they shall want courage to do it.

The mighty, the valiant, and man of greatest courage, shall not be able to deliver himself, his courage shall fail.

Ver. 15.

Neither shall he stand; though at distance from the enemies, yet shall not dare to keep his place.

That handleth the bow; much used in the wars of those times, and used by strong and valiant men, but now both strength and valour should fail Israel's bow-men.

He that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself: this is the same, and explains that in the 14th verse.

Neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself: here the prophet foretells that the swiftness of the horse, which some will make use of, shall as little avail, nor his strength joined with his speed shall deliver the rider; neither the strength of the horse shall carry him through, nor his swiftness carry him away from the hand of the pursuer.

Ver. 16.

This verse is not a bare repetition of what he had said before, to confirm it, but he doth foretell an inevitable ruin to those who were the most likely to escape, and a most shameful manner of flight.

Courageous among the mighty; a description of the most famous warriors amongst Israel, such as were known for valour among the mighty and valiant ones, like David's worthies, such as had the heart of a lion.

Shall flee away naked; either without his clothes and furniture, or without his weapons and arms, which were cast away to expedite his flight.

In that day; when God will by the Assyrians, under the conduct of Tiglath-pileser first, and finally under the conduct of Shalmaneser, straiten these sinners. and besiege them in their cities.

Saith the Lord; all confirmed under the seal of Heaven.

AMOS CHAPTER 3

The necessity of God's judgment against Israel, #Am 3:1-8. The publication of it, with the causes thereof, #Am 3:9-15.

Ver. 1.

Hear, with ear and mind, consider it well, for this is to hear indeed.

This word, which is spoken, and the thing decreed too, of God.

The Lord hath spoken; the Lord, who did show you greatest kindness, and whom you have repaid with greatest ingratitude, the everlasting God, who changeth not, hath determined and declared his determinate purpose; against you; or to, or concerning; for if menaces are words against them, yet advice, exhortations, and promises are to, and concerning, those to whom they are spoken.

O children of Israel; subjects of Jeroboam the Second, now king of the ten tribes.

Against the whole family: and let the two tribes consider too how far they are concerned in the prophet's reprovng for sin, calling to repent of sin, and threatening it they do not repent.

Brought up from the land of Egypt: see #Am 2:10.

Ver. 2.

You only have I known; chosen, made near to myself adopted to be my peculiar ones, to be sons and daughters to me; to you only have I revealed my whole will, and given you my law for your rule and direction, and my promises for your encouragement, and required you to have no other gods before me. Of all the families of the earth: this possibly may intimate God's choosing them when they were but a small family, as in Abraham's day, and when other families were as considerable as that of Abraham was; the growth of which into a mighty nation was from the favour and blessing of God, performing his promises to their forefathers; and this will aggravate their apostacy from God, which in the next words he threatens to punish.

Therefore: here is an elliptic speech, for God doth not punish his peculiar people because they are so near and dear to him, but for that, being so, they had forgotten their duty and obligations to God, and had abused all these his mercies.

I will punish you; my hand shall punish certainly, whoever are the means, and whatever is the manner, of which you shall hear more, but I will certainly visit for it. For all your iniquities; all

your idolatries, and sins against the precepts of the first table, and all your injustices, and sins against the second table; all your desertings of the law of piety and justice; none of their works shall ever be forgotten, #Am 8:7.

Ver. 3.

Here the prophet threatens this people that God would begin his visitations and their punishments in his forsaking them, and doth by this interrogatory endeavour to convince them that they could not with any reason expect better from him; it could not be they should long have God's presence with them, or that he should walk among them and bless them, while they walk so contrary to him; they could not in reason hope that there should be any friendly commerce where was so little agreement and friendship; a retaliation they must expect from the Lord; he will forsake them who have forsaken him.

Ver. 4.

In this verse, by a double similitude, Amos certifieth the Jews of near and inevitable punishment; first, by similitude of a lion roaring at sight of his prey, which seldom escapes when the lion roareth against it. The lion usually is so nigh to his prey when he roareth, that he leapeth on it presently, and teareth it: so here God would have sinning Israel know that their sins had provoked him to wrath, and that his judgments were near at hand. Nay, nearer yet; like a prey dragged by the old lion into the den for the young lions to feed on, so was their case, their enemies the Assyrians should as certainly devour them as the young lions in the den do devour the prey which is brought to them. If the departure of God from them affect them not, perhaps the fierceness of lion-like enemies may affect them.

Ver. 5.

A bird; a sparrow properly, one kind put for all sorts.

Fall in a snare: these are taken by nets spread on the earth for that end, and these nets are watched by the fowler, attending till the birds are within the shrape, then he draws the net over them: so here, For your sins, O Israel, God will spread his net, he will as a watchful fowler attend and keep his eye upon you, and cast the net over you.

Shall one take up a snare, and have taken nothing at all? flatter not yourselves as if you should finally escape because you have so long been safe and prosperous; though the fowler doth long wait, he will not take up the snare before all the prey, or some of it at least, be taken in it: so the Lord, against whom you have sinned, and who hath spread his net for you, will certainly let it lie till you are taken in it.

Ver. 6.

Shall a trumpet be blown, when an alarm is sounded, by which notice is given of danger approaching, of an enemy invading the land, in the city, any city, but particularly in a frontier city, in which were watchmen on the walls and towers to give notice of an enemy, #Isa 52:8 Eze 3:17 33:7,

and the people not be afraid; affected with the danger, to weigh how great it is, how near it is; whether it be best to prepare to resist it, or to flee from it? Such-like affections doth the alarm of war work in the minds of men ordinarily, and there is good reason for it: but though God hath sounded the alarm, yet brutish, stupid, and sinful Israel fear not, neither consult what is the best course to prevent the danger.

Shall there be evil, of affliction and sorrow, such as plague, famine, &c., in a city, or any where else, and the Lord, the eternal, holy, and righteous Governor of all in heaven and on earth, hath not done it, either immediately by his own hand, or mediately by the hands of those he employs? the evil of punishment he will execute and bring upon Israel; he will by the hands of the Assyrians in due time execute it.

Ver. 7.

Surely, since that, or, forasmuch as, the Lord God will do nothing; usually the Lord doth no great tiring for or against his people, neither brings great judgments upon them for sin, nor bestows great good upon them for their encouragement to duty,

but he revealeth, but he foretelleth the one and the other by his prophets to his people, that they may by repentance prevent the evil threatened, and by constancy in obedience attain the good promised.

His secret; his purpose and determinate counsel, which would never be known aforehand if he did not reveal it.

Unto his servants; who fear the Lord, and do his will in the midst of worst of times; they are holy men of God to whom the Lord revealeth his will.

The prophets; by office called of God to this, and by gifts fitted for this, and by extraordinary assistance carried through this work.

Ver. 8.

The lion hath roared; God hath threatened; and, as a lion roareth when near his prey, so God hath terribly threatened what is near to be done. Amos lived and prophesied in Jeroboam's time, about A.M. 3150, and these threatened judgments began to come upon Israel when the conspiracies and usurpations of Shallum, Menahem, &c. filled all with blood and confusions, about A.M. 3177.

Who will not fear? what wise man, who that is solicitous for his own good and safety, or that hath any affections for the good of others, will do less than reverence and fear, and prevent by a speedy repentance?

The Lord God hath spoken: this is plainly what was before figuratively set forth, God had spoken to his prophets but dreadful things against Israel. Who can but prophesy? they dare not conceal them, Amos cannot but speak what he had heard, **#Jer 1:17 Ac 4:19 5:25.**

Ver. 9.

Publish; you prophets whom I have sent to threaten the sins of my people Israel, now invite strangers to come and observe what just cause I have to do what I threaten.

In the palaces at Ashdod; one of the principal cities of the Philistines, **#Am 1:8 Zep 2:4;** let those that are in the court at Ashdod, and have a mind to travel a while out of their own land, let them know what strange sights they may see in their neighbour land.

And in the palaces in the land of Egypt; let the young noblemen of Egypt come too, yea, let as many as will come.

Assemble yourselves; by an appointment (if it may be) let them meet together, and make their observations, and then judge between their doings and their sufferings, my judgments and the causes of them.

Upon the mountains of Samaria; either the whole kingdom of Samaria or the ten tribes, or else it may denote the great men and cities of Samaria; let Egyptians and Philistines in their travels up and down over the kingdom of Israel associate themselves with the great men, and converse in the cities.

Behold; take an exact view of all done by them and in them.

The great tumults; the seditious counsels and rebellious conspiracies, begun amongst them on the death of Jeroboam the Second, and continued one after another for many years, like madmen, bent on ruining one another, to the undoing of all: besides all former violences of Baasha, Zimri, Omri, and Jehu, who took the kingdom out of the hands of their masters; those of Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, acted in the times Amos pointeth at.

The oppressed; multitudes of oppressed ones in those times, when the usurpers took it to be their interest to crush all they feared or suspected.

In the midst thereof; Samaria, the chief city of the kingdom, and in other cities; yea, rather through the whole kingdom of Samaria.

Ver. 10.

For they know not; those who oppress others do it as unlearned lawyers and judges do, they are shamefully ignorant of the law of God.

To do right; what is equal between man and man they will not consider, nor do they care whether it be done or not.

Store up; as men lay up wealth in their treasures, they fill their houses.

Violence; perverting judgment, first condemning the innocent, next seizing all as forfeited by law; so they did, no doubt, in those times of rebellion and usurpations; sequestrations and decimations, &c. were then too.

Robbery; the true name of all their proceedings, however palliated.

In their palaces: this intimates to us that the greatest among them were chief actors herein; see **#Zep 1:9**; but as they stored up violence, they also treasured up misery and desolation too, as the Hebrew elegantly imports.

Ver. 11.

Therefore; because of all the violence and rapine, with other crying sins, multiplied against God in the midst of them.

An adversary, the Assyrian with united forces, shall be even round about the land, on all sides shall beset thee; the whole land shall be but as one besieged city, out of which none, or so few as next to none, shall escape.

He shall bring down thy strength from thee; lay low all thy fortresses, break all thy power, kill thy valiant men, destroy thy armies, and by force take thy strong holds.

Thy palaces shall be spoiled; where thou laidst up thy spoils gotten by violence and oppression, there thy enemy shall find them, and take them away as lawful plunder; and when thy riches are carried out, they shall burn the palaces themselves too.

Ver. 12.

In brief, this verse foretells how few and with what difficulty they shall escape who are not swallowed up of the approaching judgments, and it is elegantly expressed in the following similitude.

As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth; as the shepherd doth hardly rescue a small part of a sheep or lamb, when the lion hath seized and torn it.

The lion; the fiercest, strongest, and boldest creature, not a bear or wolf.

Two legs; which are parts the ravening lion less regardeth and last eateth;

or a piece of an ear, less considerable than the legs.

So shall the children of Israel, some of the children of Israel, or some of the ten tribes, but the poorer, meaner, and more worthless of them,

be taken out that dwell in Samaria; shall escape when Samaria is taken.

In the corner of a bed; lying in some dark corner, and on a piece of a bed, as the poor do in most places.

In Damascus; the chiefest city of Syria, taken by Tiglath-pileser much about the time when he wasted Israel in aid of Ahaz against Rezin and Pekah.

In a couch; some few of the poorer among them also shall escape, pitied by the enemy when he findeth them weakly and sick upon their couch.

Ver. 13.

Hear ye; prophets.

Testify, publicly declare and witness, make what proof you can of this thing, in the house of Jacob; to the ten tribes, as first and most nearly concerned herein, and to the two tribes also, who, as guilty of many and great sins, so are in danger of many and great judgments, and these hastening on them.

Saith the Lord God; assure them the message comes from the Lord God.

The God of hosts, who is Lord of all, and hath all power in his hand; when he commands, all the hosts of creatures attend to execute his commands, so that what he threateneth he will surely execute.

Ver. 14.

In the day; in the appointed time, and within compass of a little time too; God will in his set time make quick work with them.

Visit the transgressions of Israel upon him; the many and great transgressions of the ten tribes, these God will, as he hath foretold by his prophets, severely punish, and in particular their idolatry.

The altars, erected unto the calves, and on which they Offered sacrifices to those idols by Jeroboam's appointment at first, and

by the continued commands of their idolatrous governors. It is possible there might be altars to other idols too: see #2Ch 34:4 Ho 8:11 10:1.

Beth-el; anciently called Luz, but afterwards Jacob, on his comfortable vision, did change its name into Beth-el; it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and one of the two places Jeroboam first set up his idolatry in.

The horns of the altar; whether a more sacred part in their account I know not, but who fled to the altar, and laid hold on the horns of it, found them a sanctuary, #1Ki 2:28; but these now should not be safety to themselves.

Shall be cut off, the altars shall be pulled down,

and fall to the ground; be cast out as common, and trodden under foot with contempt.

Ver. 15.

I will smite; by the greatness of the desolation it shall appear that God did smite, though by the Assyrian; or perhaps it may refer to the earthquake foretold two years before it came, #Am 1:1.

The winter house; which probably was in the chief city, where the rich and great men retired in the winter time, as more for their delight than the country, horrid and cold, and stripped of its glory.

The summer house; the houses of pleasure, where the nobles and rich men of Israel spent the summer time.

The houses of ivory; not built with, but beautified with ivory, or the elephant's tooth, called here and elsewhere, by way of eminency, the tooth.

Shall perish; by the violence of the enemies, these stately houses shall be ransacked first, and pulled down next, and left in rubbish.

The great houses; or many, for the word includes both. The magnificent palaces of princes and the nobles of Israel

shall have an end; shall cease for ever, either be utterly wasted, or cease to be theirs whose once they were.

Saith the Lord; all this shall infallibly come to pass and be fulfilled in due time.

AMOS CHAPTER 4

Israel reproved for oppression, #Am 4:1-3; for idolatry, #Am 4:4,5; and for their incorrigibleness, #Am 4:6-13.

Ver. 1.

This verse is an introduction to all that follows in this chapter.

Hear attentively, and consider the consequences of it; weigh both what and whose it is that is spoken. This word; prophecy, or sermon of reproof and threatening: see #Am 3:1.

Ye kine of Bashan: so Amos, bred among cattle, compares the mighty, proud, wanton, and oppressive riflers of Israel to those full-fed, strong, and wanton beasts, which in the herds did push at, hurt, and disturb the weaker cattle. Some will by this understand the court ladies of Israel in those times; but this perhaps is too nice: though, as in Ahab's time Jezebel was at court, and a promoter of oppression and violence, so there might be in aftertimes some like her, and perhaps these may be intended secondarily; yet surely Amos intends the great men and governors, whom he calls kine of Bashan, a fruitful country, of which see #Eze 39:18 Na 1:4.

In the mountain of Samaria: in a decorum to his first allusion he calls their places of power, authority, and office in the kingdom of Israel, mountains; for as those beasts grazing on mountains grew fat, so these men by their fees, perquisites, and bribes grew insolent and mischievous: see #Am 3:9.

Which oppress the poor; the meaner sort of the people, the commonalty, under their jurisdiction, by colour of law.

Which crush the needy; by force and open violence break in pieces the afflicted, who have neither power nor friend to relieve them.

Which say to their masters; husbands, say some, so the Hebrew will bear; or it may refer to some of the greatest officers in Israel, who had inferior officers under them, or the masters of the poor.

Bring; get us commission, or bring them into our court and office.

Let us drink; we will get by them to feast on and revel in drink.

Ver. 2.

I have often told you that God had spoken, now I assure you that the mighty and eternal God hath sworn the thing, and you must therefore needs conclude it sure and certain.

He hath sworn by his holiness, by himself, as he is the holy God, and cannot lie: see #Ps 89:35.

The days of darkness, slaughter, famine, desolation, and captivity, threatened against you, shall come upon you, oppressors that crush the poor.

He will take; God by the Assyrian army under Shalmaneser, nay, before that time you shall be taken, as fish are taken with the hook, during the intestine wars that are coming upon you.

You, who now live, and hear the word of Amos and Hoses, but notwithstanding do continue to act the same violence still.

With hooks, or thorns, as the Hebrew, with which they did pierce the greater fish, before they had the skill of making iron darts, as some observe.

Your posterity; the children of these oppressors.

With fish-hooks; shall be taken as silly fish, and as easily carried away; the enemy shall with delight insnare and destroy them.

Ver. 3.

And ye, kine of Bashan, oppressors distressed by the just hand of God, and by the violent hand of your enemy, shall go out, endeavour to make your escape by flight, at the breaches, which the besieging enemy made in your walls, when Samaria is besieged.

Every cow at that which is before her: it shall be a universal flight, and with great consternation, they not able to forecast where the safest, but taking which way is readiest.

Ye shall cast them into the palace; either cast away all the riches and ornaments of your palaces, or the prey and bribes you had laid up there, or ye shall abandon the palaces ye dwelt in.

Ver. 4.

Come to Beth-el, the known place of the moscholatria, calf-worship: see #Am 3:14.

And transgress: this clears it to be an irony, either throwing them up to their obstinate way of sinning, giving them over as hopeless and incorrigible sinners, or deriding their trust and dependence on idols, to which they sacrificed at Beth-el: See what will be the issue hereof, how you shall succeed herein.

At Gilgal multiply transgression; Gilgal was a place also where much idolatry was acted: see #**Ho 4:15 9:15 12:11**. Since you will not be warned, go on, try whether God likes your sacrifices there as well as you like them, and whether they will be a means to preserve from judgments, or sins hastening judgments' on you.

Bring your sacrifices every morning: in the same irony God doth by Amos express his own displeasure, reprove their sin, and threaten it, though they imitate the instituted worship at Jerusalem, #**Ex 29:38,39 Nu 28:3,4**.

And your tithes after three years; God had, #**De 14:28**, commanded every third year that all the tithe of that year should be brought, and laid up in a public storehouse; to this law, with the same irony, doth the prophet allude here.

Ver. 5.

Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven; as all the rest of your will-worship, so this also is against the express law, #**Le 2:11**, but yet you will persist in it; and do so at your peril, try whether it end in good to you.

Proclaim and publish the free-offerings; publicly, frequently, and earnestly persuade your people to voluntary sacrifices, in which you think to please me; but you offer them all to idols; this your religion is impiety.

This liketh you; as you invented it, so it pleaseth you, and you will not be reclaimed.

Ye children of Israel; ye idolatrous, apostate Israelites.

Saith the Lord God; for these you shall be punished by the Lord your God.

Ver. 6.

And I, the Lord, who gave many blessings to win you to repentance, hath also tried what might be done by judgments.

Cleanness of teeth: this is a description of famine by one effect of it; where meat fails the teeth are not fouled, as where it is eaten.

In all your cities; it was a general famine, and probably it was that long famine, #2Ki 8:1.

Want of bread in all your places; if there were some bread, yet it was very scarce every where: this passage explains the former.

Yet have ye not returned unto me; yet this starving people repented not of their idolatries, nor cast off their idols; left not their sins of oppression and cruelty, &c.; see #Joe 2:12,13; what you did like returning was partial and hypocritical, and not lasting.

Ver. 7.

I also have withholden the rain from you; your vanities could not, and because ye did so greatly sin against me I would not, give you rain; I forbade the clouds from above, and they, thus prohibited, did withhold their rain, as I threatened, #De 28:23,24.

When there were yet three months to the harvest; at a season when your country most usually had, and as then it ever did most need, rain: see #Joe 2:23. Three months drought then, as it was unusual in the course of nature, so it was an extraordinary curse and punishment on them. That you might see my hand in it and be instructed, I gave rain to one city, and withheld rain from the next neighbour city; nay, one part of a field, the same field, was watered and flourished, another part dry and withered. All this to convince and turn you.

Ver. 8.

Two or three, a certain for an uncertain number,

cities, the places for the inhabitants, by a usual metonymy,

wandered unto one city to drink water: it seems to imply that they travelled at some uncertainty, as they do who wander and rove about. It is not unlikely but that in the prophet's times the story might be well known and fresh in memory, though here no mention is made of these cities.

But they were not satisfied; either that city they went to had not enough for them, or durst not part with it; or, though they quenched their thirst, yet because they must return back to their

own dry and waterless cities, or because God withdrew his blessing, they were never the better, or else not much or long the better.

Yet have ye not returned unto me: see #Am 4:6.

Ver. 9.

To other judgments inflicted on you I have added this also, my hand hath been heavy upon you,

I have smitten you with blasting; the excessive heat and drought have turned your corn into black and parched smut or ashes;

and mildew; a bane to corn through too much wet; the seasons were extremely unkind, and all spoiled with it.

When your gardens, about your houses for convenience and pleasure.

Vineyards; planted for your support and to enrich you, to cheer your heart.

Fig trees; which were excellent, of very great use and profit in those countries.

Olive trees; a principal commodity arose from their oliveyards: all that was for delight, profit, and necessary use.

Increased, when they were seemingly most fruitful.

The palmer-worm: see #Joe 1:3,10-12.

Devoured; eat up all, as is the manner of that worm.

Ver. 10.

I have sent; you have died of plague, but I commissioned the disease, I sent it, and it swept you away in such manner that any observant eye might have seen the hand of God against you in it, and might have read the commission.

The pestilence; arrow of God, that walketh in the dark, that wasteth at noon-day.

After the manner of Egypt; in which there was somewhat extraordinary, it swept away both men and beasts, say some; probably it was this disease which by the stroke of the angel seized the first-born in Egypt. Others interpret this with particular

respect to the death of them in going down to seek aid of Egypt, or in their return from Egypt, as if the prophet minded them of many that died on the way to or from Egypt; but the phrase in the way is better rendered by our translators after the manner.

Your young men have I slain; God was their enemy, and slew their young men, the choice of their strength and hope.

With the sword; in war, and by their neighbouring enemies in Jehoahaz's time, and Syrians since that too, #2Ki 13:3, and #2Ki 15 2Ki 16, and #2Ki 17 compared.

Have taken away your horses; not by murrain, but by what was worse to you, by the hand of those who did ride them; and these being slain the horses were taken by the enemy, and added to their strength, and your danger.

I have made the stink of our camps to come up unto your nostrils; so great slaughter hath been made in your camp, that there were not sufficient to bury the slain before they stunk and offended you.

Ver. 11.

Overthrown; utterly consumed and destroyed your houses and goods.

Some of you; though it was a total consumption to those it fell on, yet it was but on some, who might be wantings to others, and by which others might see how easy it was for God to destroy them all.

As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: we no where else read of such fire from heaven, yet it is possible some such judgment might fall on some of their cities, and not be recorded; but I do rather understand it proverbially spoken, denoting most grievous and desolating fires, or judgments.

Ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; such of you as escaped were yet in very great danger, and as firebrands in midst of the fire, where you were with others burning till infinite mercy saved a remnant, and plucked you out.

Ver. 12.

Therefore, because none of my former methods have succeeded, as in reason might have been expected,

thus will I do unto thee, in some more terrible manner will I now proceed against thee, O Israel; you of the ten tribes.

Because I will do this unto thee, and therefore my last advice to you is to consider it well; if you think well of it, possibly you may see and prevent the threatened evil.

Prepare to meet thy God; if you humble yourselves, and so return, it will be mercy to you; but if you proudly and sinfully refuse to return, know ye that you must perish, for you can never make good your cause against God, and yet you must meet him, for he will ere he hath done with you end the controversy.

Thy God; who once was thy God, and whom thou still ownest for thy God, and who would yet be thine if thou repent.

Ver. 13.

To move them to act for their safety, the prophet tells them how great and dreadful God is, the most dreadful and terrible enemy, but the most desirable friend.

He that formeth the mountains; when there was not a mountain or hill, or the least dust of either, thy God, O Israel, formed them; and it is wisdom to return to him, for he can remove difficulties and pressures were they as heavy as mountains, and so he can mend all with you quickly; and if your confidences in sinful ways were as strong as mountains, he can overthrow them: return therefore and repent.

Createth; giveth being by an almighty will.

The wind; which for its instability seems of contrary nature to mountains, which doth shake them and overturn foundations; that wind which we feel and hear, though we see it not, that makes hideous noises, and works dreadful effects. The storms you are threatened with, O Israel, are like the wind, dreadful, irresistible; but, as the wind, raised and ruled by God, who can soon with one word lay them all asleep: return therefore to him.

And declareth unto man what is his thought: think not by any counsels to prevent what God determines against an impenitent

and sinful nation, as his power is infinite in creating, his wisdom is infinite too and unsearchable, and he can and will take sinners in their incorrigible wickednesses and punish them: be wise, therefore, and return to him by repentance.

That maketh the morning darkness; can as easily turn outward prosperity into extreme adversity as he can turn a glorious morning into a dark, dismal, and overclouded day, and so will do against you if you repent not; and can turn a cloudy morning into brightness, and misery into happiness, if you repent.

And treadeth upon the high places of the earth; can tread under foot the idols that are worshipped on high places of the earth, and trample on high and mighty potentates, exalted above ordinary men as highest hills are above lowest valleys.

The Lord; who alone am the Lord, the eternal and mighty God.

The God of hosts is his name; whose sovereign power and command all creatures obey, and act for or against us as he willeth.

AMOS CHAPTER 5

A lamentation for Israel, **#Am 5:1-3**. An exhortation to repentance, **#Am 5:4-20**. God rejecteth their hypocritical service, **#Am 5:21-27**.

Ver. 1.

This preface you have in the same words **#Am 3:1**, and in part also **#Am 4:1**; to which I now add, that the person here speaking may refer to the prophet and to the Lord who sent him, both speak this word.

A lamentation; which is very sad and mournful to all concerned in it, woeful news to the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Ver. 2.

The virgin: this name is given to her not for her purity and integrity, for she was an adulteress, but either ironically, or because her present riches, glory, and beauty seemed to be that of a virgin that had her portion, strength, and honour untouched; or else by a figure as properly may it be applied to Israel, as to

Babylon, #Isa 47:1, or to Egypt, #Jer 46:11, to Zidon, #Isa 23:12.

Is fallen; or shall ere long fall, the thing put as done already because of the certainty of it. Or rather, is already falling by civil wars and conspiracies, which prepared way for the final ruin of Israel: it is possible this sermon of the prophet might be about the time that Shallum or Menahem usurped the throne. Or else it may refer to the times of Jehoahaz, when that of the third verse will appear to have been fulfilled; this seems most probable.

She shall no more rise; though they might by repentance have risen again, yet the prophet, considering their obstinacy, speaks of it as a thing that should never be, as eventually it proved also, for Israel never recovered the fall by Shalmaneser.

She is forsaken upon her land; broken to pieces upon her own land, and so left as a broken vessel; or she shall be by home divisions first broken, and afterwards carried captive.

There is none to raise her up; none at home among all her princes, counsellors, and rulers, nor any friend among her allies; all leave her to sink.

Ver. 3.

Thus saith the Lord God: this solemnly attesteth the certainty of the thing.

The city that went out by a thousand, that sent out one thousand soldiers as the quota they were assessed at to help against an invader,

shall leave a hundred; shall lose nine parts of ten, so great shall the slaughter be which the prevailing enemy shall make upon Israel; and here the prophet useth a certain number to express an uncertain; or proverbially, scarce a tenth man shall escape.

That which went forth by a hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes; and this perhaps may refer backward to Jehoahaz's time, #2Ki 13; to be sure it is fulfilled in the wars of Shalmaneser and the taking Samaria.

Ver. 4.

For, or yet, truly.

Thus saith the Lord; amidst all those threats there is still a reserve, a conditional proviso, and the Lord here does by his prophet declare it.

Unto the house of Israel; though apostate both in sacred and civil things, though polluted and defiled greatly, and this through many scores of years, yet after all repentance would help them.

Seek ye me; inquire for my law, and repent of your despising it, obey it in all things for the future, inquire diligently what promises I have made and wait for them, believe, obey, and repent; for this is to seek the Lord, when a people have turned from the Lord, as you have done, O house of Israel.

Ye shall live; it shall be well with you, your persons, families, and the whole kingdom shall prosper, as the Hebrew phrase importeth.

Ver. 5.

But seek not Beth-el; consult not, worship not, depend not on the idol calf at Beth-el; or seek not God at Beth-el, but at Jerusalem, where he will be found; cast off idolatry, return to the true God and to his instituted worship, so shall ye live.

Nor enter into Gilgal; a city of great idolatry, a place where God will not be sought nor found by you: see #**Ho 4:15 9:15 12:11**, where it is more fully explained.

Pass not to Beer-sheba; though God of old did appear there to Isaac, #**Ge 26:24**, though Abraham dwelt there, #**Ge 21:31-33**, and Jacob sacrificed there with acceptance, #**Ge 46:1-3**, yet now God appointeth Jerusalem and the temple the only places of his solemn worship, and of your seeking him.

Gilgal; the inhabitants of Gilgal, for the place could not go into captivity; it is a metonymy, the place put for the people.

Shall surely go into captivity; Shalmaneser and his Assyrians shall certainly carry them away captives.

Beth-el, both city and people,

shall come to nought; shall be vanity and disappointment to all that trust to the idols of it.

Ver. 6.

Seek the Lord, and ye shall life: the prophet repeateth his exhortation to repentance with the repeated promise of a good issue hereon: see **#Am 5:4**.

Lest he break out: this is a new argument to persuade them to do their duty, for unless they do it God's judgments will break out upon them.

Like fire; suddenly, with strength and prevalence, as the Hebrew word here rendered break out importeth. In the house of Joseph; the kingdom of the ten tribes, the chief whereof was Ephraim, who was the younger son of Joseph, and the first erector of this kingdom was an Ephraimite, **#1Ki 11:26**.

And devour it; utterly consume it, as fire useth to do where it gets head and prevaileth.

And there be none to quench it in Beth-el; if once this fire break out from God, all your idols in Beth-el shall not be able to quench it; no tears from your eyes there shed, no blood of sacrifice there offered, shall quench it.

Ver. 7.

Ye; rulers and judges.

Judgment; the righteous sentence of the law, the equity of it, which is sweet and pleasing to just men, and safe for all.

Wormwood; proverbially understood, bitterness, grief, injustice, and oppression.

Leave off righteousness; make it to cease in your courts of judicature, and tread it under foot.

In the earth; or among men, in the land: the latter part of this verse explains the former.

Ver. 8.

Seek him; though this be not in the Hebrew, it is well supplied by our interpreters.

That maketh the seven stars; a famous constellation, and whose rising about September was usually accompanied with rains and sweet showers, which, as **#Am 4:7**, had been withholden, whence

want of water and bread; now the prophet adviseth to seek the Lord, who can give them rain and corn by the kindly influences of that watery constellation, which as he made, so he guides and manageth. This I take to be the most natural meaning of the place.

Orion; which rising about November brings usually cold rains and frosts, intermixed with much uncertainty, but very seasonable for the earth, to make it fruitful; this mentioned to persuade these people to repent, who were afflicted with such barrenness and unfruitfulness as brought famine with it.

Turneth the shadow of death into the morning; proverbially, that turneth greatest adversity, which is here called the

shadow of death, into as great prosperity, here called the morning, #Ps 23:4.

Maketh the day dark with night; metaphorically this expresseth a change of prosperity into adversity. Ye house of Israel, think well of it, you are in a dangerous state; be advised to seek him who can turn your morning into night, or your night into morning; who can on a sudden remove all evil from you, and bring all good upon you; seek him therefore, and seek not idols.

Calleth for the waters of the sea; either to raise them to terrible swellings and rage, or rather calls up waters out of the sea, by commanding the vapour to ascend, which he turneth into rain;

and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; and then poureth out from the clouds to make the earth fruitful.

The Lord is his name; he only is God and the Lord. Who doth thus seek him?

Ver. 9.

That strengtheneth the spoiled; you have been exceedingly weakened and spoiled by your enemies; yet return, repent, seek God, for he can renew your strength, that you shall spoil your spoilers who are strong.

Against the strong; the mighty, victorious, and insolent.

The spoiled, those that had lost their strength, and were as conquered,

shall come against the fortress; shall rally, re-embolden, and form a siege against their besiegers: so God, whom you should serve, will soon turn all from dark and dismal into light and pleasing unto you and yours; in your apostacy all will be misery and darkness, but in your return all shall be well and prosperous with you.

Ver. 10.

Either this is the prophet's complaint of them without further expecting their compliance with his advice, or he foretells what they will do, judges and people.

They hate him that rebuketh; they both hate them that rebuke; judges hate the prophets, who rebuke corrupt judges; and the people hate impartial judges, if any such be among them.

In the gate; where judges sat, and where the prophets did many times deliver their message.

They abhor him that speaketh uprightly; they cannot brook any one that deals plainly and honestly with them, whether judge, prophet, or private person.

Ver. 11.

Your treading; their oppression was more than ordinarily proud and tyrannous, expressed here by treading. It was very heavy on the poor, an effect of fraud, and executed with tyrannical insolence, as the word and its paraphrase imports.

Is upon the poor, who have not power to withstand your violence, nor money to buy your friendship.

Ye take from him, receive when offered, and ye force them to offer, you extort from the poor,

burdens of wheat; great quantities of best wheat, on which the poor should live, either making bread of it to feed them, or else making money of it to serve other occasions. It is not said what burden, but probably as much as the poor man was able to carry.

Ye have built houses; perhaps these corrupt judges had built for their children; so one greedy and ravenous judge might build as many houses as he had sons, or these judges being many, had built many houses.

Of hewn stone; intimating the greatness, beauty, and strength of them, and they flatter themselves that they and their posterity shall long dwell at ease and multiply in these goodly houses.

But ye shall not dwell in them; you by oppression build, but God will by his just hand, and by the Assyrians' violence, turn you out of those houses, and make you captives in a land where your enemies please to carry you, you shall find that, #De 28:30, fulfilled on you.

Pleasant vineyards; most desirable for situation, for fruitfulness, for sweetness and goodness of the grape; every way delightful.

But ye shall not drink wine of them; either they shall not bear, or the enemy shall devour, or you shall be carried away into captivity. The threat, #De 28:39, shall be executed.

Ver. 12.

For; wonder not at the threatened severity, as if it were too rigorous; it is but proportioned to your sins.

I, the Lord, whom you provoke, who have threatened you, know, clearly, fully, and in all the circumstances of them, what moves you to do so, what pretences of law you make: all your evasions are vain and foolish.

Your manifold transgressions; the increased number of your sins, and the greatness of them too, as the word importeth.

Your mighty sins; which mightily wrong and break the poor and needy.

They afflict, besiege, or with hostile minds watch against, and gladly take any occasion to wrong and grieve, the just; not absolutely and sinlessly just, but such as are comparatively just, or those whose cause is just, or those that live with regard to all the commands of God, and follow righteousness: it was the mighty sin of the corrupt rulers in Samaria and Israel at that day, that they were enemies to all righteousness.

They take a bribe; in civil causes bribes carried it; see #Am 2:6; here bribes set criminals free, a ransom. as the word in the Hebrew, buys off the punishment appointed by the law against murderers, adulterers, &c.

They turn aside the poor in the gate; the poor, who appear in their courts for justice, they turn them away, or delay to hear, or hear and judge unjustly, and so send them away wronged and crying.

From their right: these words fully express the prophet's meaning, and are therefore well supplied in our version.

Ver. 13.

Therefore, because that men are so universally impatient of hearing reproof, and yet their sins so much abound, and so much deserve reproof; since they will sooner turn against the speaker, than turn from the sin spoken against.

The prudent; the wise men; prophets, say some, but I rather think other private men are here meant, whose private capacity alloweth them to keep silence when others must speak.

Shall keep silence; be forced to it, say some, they shall be silenced; this is true, but rather here is a voluntary, chosen silence toward vile corrupters of law and justice, who will nothing mend though reprov'd; or a silence before God, owning his justice in punishing such sinners.

For it is an evil time; both for the sinfulness of it, which provoketh God to wrath, and for the sorrows, troubles, wars, and captivity of this people, by the Assyrians.

Ver. 14.

Seek good; turn to the law of God, study it, that ye may do the good it requireth in works of piety, justice, and charity.

And not evil: you have devised evil, and done it in works of impiety, injustice, and cruelty. Or this may be the same with **#Am 5:4-6**, which see.

That ye may live: see **#Am 5:4**.

The Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you; the eternal glorious God, who is Lord of all, and can help you, having all the hosts of heaven and earth at his disposal; he will be with you to bless and save you yet, notwithstanding all your former sins.

As ye have spoken; you have boasted his being with you, you think he is bound to be with you and own you; so he will indeed, but it is if you repent, cease from idols and violence.

Ver. 15.

Slight dislikes will do little in this ease, you rulers and judges must heartily

hate, and show that you hate, the evil, both ways, doings, contrivers, and abettors of the evil among the people and yourselves;

and love the good; commend, encourage, defend, and reward all good in others, and do it yourselves; let your heart be toward good things and good men.

Establish judgment in the gate: by this it is evident the prophet speaks to governors and judges among them: what the import of the phrase is see **#Am 5:10,12**. Set up honest and upright judges in every gate, where judges did sit in those days.

It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious; possibly he will forgive, or abate or respite the evil days, possibly he may give you his gracious presence, and yet save

the remnant of Joseph; what the invasions of enemies, or the civil wars, have spared, and left in Samaria and Israel, the ten tribes: **#Am 5:6**.

Ver. 16.

The prophet foreseeing their obstinacy in their sins, and their refusing to obey his counsel from the Lord, doth proceed to denounce judgment against them.

The Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus: that there might be no doubt made of the truth of the prophet's words, he doth in most solemn manner attest it to be from the Lord; and that he might awake them to repentance and humiliation, he proclaims the majesty and power of God who calls them to it.

Wailing; lamentations uttered in words and gestures, **#Ec 12:5 Jer 4:8 Zec 12:10**, shall every where be seen and heard in the broad streets of your cities, as when the Assyrians prevailed and cut off the forces of Israel, besieged and took their strong holds. Shall be in all streets of great towns or cities.

They shall say in all the highways, abroad in the country, and on the road, all shall cry out, as undone, dispirited, and hopeless men,

Alas! alas! They shall call the husbandman to mourning: this sort of men are little used to such ceremonies of mourning, but now such shall their state be, that they shall be called upon; Leave your toil, betake yourselves to public mourning.

And such as are skilful of lamentation; and to make all sound doleful, call in those whose art lieth in acting the part of mourners, and can move hardest hearts to lament and bewail. See these **#Jer 9:17,18 Mt 9:23.**

Ver. 17.

In all vineyards shall be wailing: in these places was usually the greatest jollity, and they gathered their vintage with joy; but now it is quite contrary, either vines are blasted, or eaten up, or destroyed of the enemy.

I will pass through thee, as an incensed God, punishing all, every where, who have sinned against him; and therefore every place now shall be full of sorrow, because every place hath been full of sin.

Ver. 18.

That desire, scoffingly, or not believing any such day would come: the prophets had long threatened such a day, but these scoffers thought no such thing could overtake them, and if it did they would know the worst of it; alter their course they will not, whatever comes on it, and they are confident the prophets fright them with bugbears: but woe to such scoffers!

The day of the Lord: see **#Joe 1:15 2:1 Zep 1:14.**

To what end is it for you? what do you think to get by it? what good can you expect when darkest calamities overwhelm you?

The day of the Lord is darkness; all adversity, most black and doleful, therefore called in the abstract darkness.

And not light; no joy, hope, or comfort in it.

Ver. 19.

As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him: here proverbially is expressed the continuance and succession of evils

one after another; it will be a long calamity, when your civil dissensions waste you first, next God's armies of locusts and palmer-worms, and the Assyrians too, until all ends in final captivity; you may escape one, but shall fall into another calamity, and worse than that you escaped; abroad your miseries shall be like a lion or bear.

Or went into the house; at home you may hope for safety from such open dangers, but there other kind of mischief shall meet you.

And leaned his hand on the wall; weary and faint, shall think to ease and support himself.

And a serpent bit him; whose biting infuseth a deadly poison, which suddenly corrupts the whole mass of blood, and kills the man. If conspirators at home be lions, the Assyrians will be as bears to you.

Ver. 20.

All these things considered, ye secure, profane, and atheistical scoffers, speak yourselves, will not that day be as dark as I have described, and as little to your comfort?

Ver. 21.

I hate, I despise your feast days; impure and unholy they are, whatever they seem to be, and therefore the Lord hateth them, they are abomination to him, **#Pr 15:8 Isa 1:13,14**. Worthless and contemptible they are, and as such God rejecteth them, **#Isa 1:10-12**, &c. There is no goodness that I should value in them, there is all that vileness in them which attends deep hypocrisy, for which I do hate them. The apostate Israelites imitated the Jews in many things, amongst which they retained their festivals, in which they multiplied their ceremonial sacrifices; and yet God owns them not as his; but brands them with this, They are yours, therefore unwarrantable, will-worship, and displeasing to God.

I will not smell a savour of rest or delight, I will not accept and be pleased with, **#Ge 8:21**,

your solemn assemblies; appointed, as you think, on very weighty reasons, and by sufficient authority, and celebrated with

rich sacrifices, in mighty crowds, and in excellent order; all is yours, not mine.

Ver. 22.

Though ye, that have departed from my temple, law, and institutions, you of the ten tribes, offer me burnt-offerings; which was wholly burnt on the altar; no part due to any but God; of this these hypocrites had a high esteem, #Mic 6:6, because they accounted it an entire gift to God.

And your meat-offerings; to your burnt-offering add the other, your meat-offering also, as #Le 2:1,2 Nu 6:17. See #Joe 1:13 2:14.

I will not accept them; it may be a meiosis, I will hate them, as #Am 5:21.

Neither will I regard the peace-offerings; your thank-offerings too, of which #Le 6:12 7:15, your praises for your prosperity, are no better pleasing neither.

Of your fat beasts: in these peace-offerings, though you bring the best, the fattest, yet you bring nothing but a beast, for you leave your hearts with your sins; and you have no warrant from God to do this, nay, you are prohibited, for you are to offer only at Jerusalem, and at the temple.

Ver. 23.

The noise of thy songs; by way of contempt and loathing, God calls their songs noise; how harmonious, delightful, and ravishing soever they might be to their ears, they were not pleasing unto God.

Songs, used in their sacrifices, and their solemn feasts; herein they imitated temple-worship, but all was displeasing to the Lord.

I will not hear: this is not to be taken absolutely, for God heard the noise; but it is taken in a qualified sense, he did not hear with delight and acceptance.

The melody, the pleasing harmony, the sweet concert,

of thy viols; this one kind of musical instrument put for all the rest: in a word, your hypocrisy, idolatry, and injustice spoil all your services, and make God weary of you and them.

Ver. 24.

But, Heb. *And*

judgment: some interpret this of penal judgment, by God threatened against these hypocrites; but it is better understood of justice to be administered by rulers, whose office it was to determine between party and party.

Run down as waters; freely, constantly, speedily, and for common benefit of all, as waters run.

Righteousness; equity, relieving justice, the want of which hath been notorious among you.

As a mighty stream, which bears down all that opposeth it: be hindered by none from doing every one right; do this, and you may yet be accepted.

Ver. 25.

Their fathers and they, though at so great distance of time, are one people, and so the prophet considers them in this place.

Have ye offered? did you not frequently omit to offer, and yet were not reprov'd or plagued for the omission, when your frequent removes, and many other difficulties, made it unpracticable? so little is sacrifice with your God! and yet, when you did offer, was it to me only? or did you not sacrifice to idols and false gods, and provok'd me? Will-worship and idolatry have been hereditary diseases in your generations; and it is well known, too, that these idolaters fell in the wilderness, and are made admonitions to you.

Sacrifices of beasts slain, as the word properly speaks.

Offerings: minchah, in general, is any gift or present made, but particularly here it is a gift or present of fine flour, oil, and frankincense unto God with the sacrifice.

In the wilderness forty years: it was a broken number of years in exact account, that is, thirty-eight years and eleven months; but, as is common in such cases, the full and round number is taken and so the account runs here, and in **#Ac 7:42**, forty years.

O house of Israel; you of the ten tribes.

Ver. 26.

But ye, the idolatrous children of idolatrous fathers,
have borne, carried along with you in the wilderness,

the tabernacle, or little chapel, or shrine, or canopy, in which the image of their idol was placed. Though others conjecture this to be the proper name of an idol, I conjecture it is the name of the portable temple or chapel in which the supposed deity was placed.

Moloch; the great idol of the Ammonites, as Jupiter was of the Greeks and Romans; some ancient king among them, who was a famous founder, or raiser, and benefactor to their nation, though we know not who this was.

Chiun: perhaps if we understand the whole apparatus or storehouse of their images, We shall not err. Their grand idol was Moloch, whose image they kept, and carried about in a *sacellum*, or consecrated portable chapel, and with him the rest of their pet deities, in their images placed orderly, as they fancied, about their great deity. Others will have Chiun to be Saturn.

Your images: whatever these were, it is plain God accounts them their inventions and their gods.

The star of your god: what star this was we need not inquire; the idolaters appropriated the stars to their gods, and probably did in the roof of their gods' tabernacles frame the star over the image of their god: or, the star your god, or which you worship.

Which ye made to yourselves; all which deities you have found out and established to yourselves.

Ver. 27.

Therefore, for all your idolatry and other sins in which you have obstinately continued,

will I cause you to go into captivity; you shall certainly be subdued and captivated; and this shall be done so that my hand shall appear evidently in it.

Beyond Damascus, into Assyria, and into parts beyond Damascus: it is not certain into what corners of the world they were sent, but probably to those parts that lay about the Caspian Sea, more remote from their own country than ever to hope they

may get back again. Or thus, You shall be carried into a captivity more grievous by Shalmaneser, than was the captivity of those whom Tiglathpileser led captive when he slew Resin, took Damascus, and wasted Israel in the days of Pekah, when some Israelites were carried captives; but this shall be a more grievous captivity.

AMOS CHAPTER 6

The voluptuousness of Israel, #Am 6:1-6, shall be punished with desolation, #Am 6:7-11. Their perversion of justice and vain confidence shall end in affliction, #Am 6:12-14.

Ver. 1.

Woe! this compriseth many and great sorrows, all that God intends against these sinners.

To them that are at ease; who live in abundance, eat, drink, sleep, and are secure, that think to-morrow shall be as this day, and neither fear nor believe the threatened judgments of God. Zion, by a synecdoche put for the kingdom of the two tribes, and principally the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Zion; the ten tribes were hitherto threatened, now the prophet warns the two tribes.

And trust in the mountain of Samaria; woe to them also who rely upon the strength, wealth, and policy of the king, princes, cities, and kingdom of Samaria or Israel!

Which, which two cities, Zion and Samaria, are named chief of the nations; accounted chief cities among the known cities of that part of the world. Others refer this passage to the nobles, wise men, and great men of each place, men that were heads among their own people.

To whom the house of Israel came; to which places all Israel had recourse; so the two tribes went up to Zion, the ten tribes went to Samaria: or, to whom, i.e. to which nobles and rulers, the people of each kingdom did go on all occasions for judgment, counsel, or refuge.

Ver. 2.

Pass ye unto Calneh; run over the history of that great and ancient city; as, Go to Shiloh, #Jer 7:12. It was built by Nimrod,

#Ge 10:10, and after a long growth to power, wealth, and security, through near one thousand three hundred years, was at last ruined, as is probable, in the civil wars which ended in the utter ruin of Sardanapalus by Arbaces, and Pul-belochus, grandfather to Shalmaneser who captivated Israel; the story of which, fresh in the days of Amos, is thus referred unto for warning to Israel. *And see*; consider well what befell that city built on Euphrates, rich, delightful, and, as you, full of sin.

Hamath; head of the Syrian kingdom, lately overthrown by Tiglath-pileser; a very fresh instance of God's just indignation against secure sinners, and a very fit warning to Israel.

Gath; the chief city of the Philistines, a few years before wasted by the arms and cruelty of Hazael, **#2Ki 12:17**; by these examples learn to amend your ways, or expect to perish in them.

Be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? The reading this passage interrogatively renders it darker than if it were read assertively, Yet they were better, i.e. greater, than these kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and their borders, i.e. the bounds of those kingdoms, greater than these of Israel and Judah. But if you retain our version, it will amount to this; Are they, i.e. Israel and Judah, better, more just, thankful, and merciful than these kingdoms, that they should hope to escape? or is the border of these two kingdoms greater, that they should hope to stand by power?

Ver. 3.

Woe to you that flatter yourselves that the day of darkness and misery foretold is far off! **See Poole "Eze 12:27"**. These were great ones too, that the prophet here threateneth, who thus postponed the day of Israel's and Judah's calamities.

The evil day; not as if it should be a short calamity, as a day; but it speaks the determinate, fixed time, and the haste wherewith the execution shall be made.

The seat; the throne, or judgment-seat, which should relieve the oppressed, condemn the wicked, and acquit the innocent, this is made a seat of violence, where unjust judges condemn the just and take bribes.

To come near; thus you draw the judgments of God on yourselves, by acting violence against the poor, and contemning the threats of the prophets.

Ver. 4.

The woe is to be added to them that, either out of laziness or luxury, and to please the flesh, lay themselves to rest **upon beds of ivory;** on beautiful, rich beds, bought with the gain of bribes and oppression.

Stretch themselves upon their couches: this somewhat explains the former; they did extremely indulge their pride and luxury, and on beds or couches laid themselves to feast, when God called them to mourn and weep.

Eat, with excess, as #Mt 24:37,38 Lu 12:19,20.

The lambs out of the flock; the very best in all their flock, and probably they chose them out first, before they set out lambs for sacrifices; or else these gluttonous judges and rulers eat the best lambs, not of their own, but out of poor oppressed men's flocks.

The calves, those that were fattest too,

out of the midst of the stall; kept on purpose to make them most delicious and nourishing meat.

Ver. 5.

Woe to them that, in a time of deepest mourning, do entertain themselves with songs, and with greatest skill sing to their musical instruments, as if they had no greater thing to mind!

Viol; or lute, or gittern, one kind put for every one used in their feastings at this time of Amos.

Invent to themselves instruments of music; not content with known, old-fashioned music, they find out new instruments, new songs and tunes.

Like David; in imitation of David, as they profanely pretend, or else emulating his skill, and preferring their own feast songs and music before his temple music and songs. We may imagine what songs such ungodly, cruel, voluptuous men would sing, and what tunes they would set too, on such occasions, viz. loose, profane, and impure enough.

Ver. 6.

The prophet continues the woe still to these riotous feasters; the jovial, banqueting, dancing, and singing judges.

That drink wine in bowls; not in little vessels, not in moderate glasses or cups, as beseemed sober men, but in great vessels, called bowls; and it is likely they drank these filled as full as they could hold too, and in design to drink each other down.

Anoint themselves with the chief ointments: in those hot countries this anointing was needful to refresh and strengthen the limbs, and it was much used. But here the effeminate use of it, at such a time, and by such men, at feasts, is condemned as a great excess and provoking sin, which God will punish.

But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph; nothing affected with or troubled for the public calamities of their country, though they were sore ones, brought on them by the Syrians, and by their own divisions and civil wars: both kingdoms of Judah and Israel were in a very low, afflicted state, but these rulers and grandees live, feast, sing, and dance, as if no sad occasion called for other carriage.

Ver. 7.

Therefore; for this sin of unseasonable feasting added to all former sins; much like that **#Isa 22:14**.

Now shall they go captive, who ruled others, and whose character you have **#Am 6:1-3**, &c., who put far from them the evil day, &c., these shall certainly be carried captive.

With the first that go captive; and as they deserve by their sins, so shall they be carried away the first of any; God's hand in punishing them shall be as eminent as their hand was in sinning.

The banquet, the feastings of voluptuous ones, shall cease.

That stretched themselves: see **#Am 6:4**.

Shall be removed; God will send the Assyrians to take away the banquet, and to bring in a bill, a reckoning, for these secure sinners, who shall be removed too, as well as their banquet is; they shall go into captivity, and there in sorrows dearly pay for all their luxury, inhumanity, and security.

Ver. 8.

The secure, incredulous, and atheistical among the judges of Israel are here spoken to especially, and the prophet assures them that God had sworn by himself that they should be punished, and in the manner he had foretold.

Saith the Lord the God of hosts; God assureth his prophet, that the prophet might attest it to his hearers.

I abhor, I look with detestation, and remember with loathing,

the excellency of Jacob; all that the seed of Jacob account a glory and excellency to them, and in which they do put their trust, all their external privileges and ceremonious worship.

And hate his palaces; in which violence is stored up, in which luxury abounds.

I will deliver up the city; Jerusalem, Samaria, and all the other cities.

With all that is therein, both persons and things; Assyria first shall sweep away all out of Israel and Samaria, and Babylonians next shall carry away Judah, Jerusalem, and all in it.

Ver. 9.

It shall come to pass; the thing is decreed, and shall take effect.

If there remain, or escape the enemies' sword, or the famine of Samaria, besieged three years.

Ten men in one house; many men, for it is a certain number expressed, though an uncertain be understood.

They shall die, either of pestilence, or by some other stroke of God's hand; though they escape a while they shall not finally escape, #2Ki 17:5.

Ver. 10.

A man's uncle, or some near kinsman, shall take him up, instead of those mercenaries who were wont to do this, and were paid for it; but now none of these to be had, the next to the dead must, as well as he is able, take him up on his shoulders, and carry him, i.e. the last of the ten, the other nine being dead.

He that burneth him: though the Jews mostly buried, yet in some cases they burned the dead bodies, as in this of wasting pestilence, when they could not carry them out, either for fear of infecting others, or for want of help.

To bring out the bones out of the house; all that remained: the flesh of the dead being consumed to ashes, the bones are reserved to be buried, and laid up in some sepulchre of their ancestors.

Shall say; he that doth this office for the last of his dead friends shall inquire of one he seeth either dwelling near, and by the sides of the house out of which the bones are carried, or else of some that lay undiscerned in the corner of the house where so many died,

Is there yet any with thee? is any one living in this your house, hath any one escaped?

He shall say, No; the man of whom the uncle, or whoever carried out the bones, inquireth.

Then shall he say, then shall the inquirer say,

Hold thy tongue; either, Murmur not against God, or mourn not, for so sad is the time that the dead are happier than the living; or, Say nothing, lest all be rifled from thee; for such inhumanity was among them, that there were those who would dare to rifle infected houses. Or else, which suits the next words, Be silent under God's just displeasure.

We may not make mention of the name of the Lord; now it is too late to seek God, who its executing his immutable decree and sentence, which we were advised to prevent, but did not in season.

Ver. 11.

For, behold; consider this well: it seems to be the continued speech of him who took care of the dead, **#Am 6:10.**

The Lord commandeth; God, provoked by our sins, hath sent out thy enemies; war, famine, and pestilence all come commissioned of God, and when the arrow is shot it will hit and kill.

He will smite the great house with breaches; the palaces of great men, and their families, shall have great breaches made in them, by which they shall be ruined.

And the little house with clefts; the cottages and lesser dwellings of poor men, with their families, shall by lesser strokes be ruined, their clefts shall be enough to do this. All shall be overthrown, and we must submit to it.

Ver. 12.

Shall horses run upon the rock? would it not be dangerous to horse and rider? If prophets and pious men exhort, threaten, or advise, they endanger themselves, it does no more good than if you would run your horse on the slippery precipices of rocks. Or, all is lost labour on these hardened sinners.

Will one plough there with oxen? your hearts are hard as the rocks; my prophets' preaching, my lesser judgments warning you, all gentler means used, are but as a husbandman's ploughing the rocks. These shall therefore be torn up by the roots, your state and kingdom shall be utterly overthrown.

For ye, you judges and governors in the ten tribes, and in Judah too,

have turned judgment, see #Am 5:7,

into gall, or poison; by those laws they took away life, and forfeited estate, which, had the laws been rightly executed, had saved both.

The fruit of righteousness, all that fruit which equity and justice would have produced by due application of the law, hath been wormwood, grief, and complaints, by your wresting and perverting the law.

Into hemlock, a deadly and pernicious weed so the course of your courts have been.

Ver. 13.

Ye which rejoice, glorying with a joy and satisfaction, with hope and confidence,

in a thing of nought; in your victories, alliances, fortifications, and idols, all which draw you away from God, and from seeking him as he will be found.

Which say, tell the prophets that reprove you and foretell your downfall, you say to them, notwithstanding all that God threatens,

Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? you have raised yourselves to dominion and greatness by your wisdom, courage, and success, and by the same you will maintain it and so you put off the day of evil.

Ver. 14.

But; notwithstanding all your boasts and carnal confidences.

Behold; observe and weigh well what is said. it will raise up; awaken, call together, strengthen, succeed, and prosper in the attempt against you.

A nation; Pul hath, and Tiglath-pileser hath, or now doth, afflict and break you, but Shalmaneser shall utterly destroy you; if his strength were not enough of itself, mine arm should strengthen him to bring all your hopes to nought.

O house of Israel; kingdom of the ten tribes.

Saith the Lord the God of hosts; who doth what he saith, who commands and it is done, whom none can resist.

They, the Assyrians and their confederates, shall afflict you; distress you and press you hard on all sides, it shall be a great and a universal oppression of you.

From the entering in of Hemath, a city of Syria bordering on the land of Israel north-east, and was an inlet into Syria from the north of Canaan,

unto the river of the wilderness, which is Sichor, in the most south-west parts of Canaan towards Egypt. So all your country, Judah and all, shall be oppressed by that nation which I will raise and strengthen against you.

AMOS CHAPTER 7

The judgment of the grasshoppers, #Am 7:1-3, and of the fire, are diverted by the intercession of Amos, #Am 7:4-6. By a wall and plumbline is signified the desolation of Israel, #Am 7:7-9. Amaziah complaineth of Amos, and forbiddeth him to prophesy at Beth-el, #Am 7:10-13. Amos showeth his calling, #Am 7:14,15, and the judgment upon Amaziah, #Am 7:16,17.

Ver. 1.

Thus: sometimes this refers to what went before, here it refers to what the prophet saw and is about to declare.

Hath the Lord God showed unto me: this is the first of five visions or prophetic representations of what was coming upon this people for their sins. The Lord gave Amos a clear sight of the future calamity by this vision.

Behold; I could not but observe, and it is worthy your observance too.

He formed: it is not said he called for them, but he formed or created them, probably intimating somewhat extraordinary in them, either in their bigness or number, or rather sudden appearing of them. So the plague signified by them should suddenly come upon them.

Grasshoppers: in our country grasshoppers are not hurtful, but these in our text were locusts, and so rendered #Isa 33:4 Na 3:17; and the word used by Amos here is paraphrased by the Hebrew critics by a word that properly notes locust.

It was the latter growth: the shooting up of the first growth being too luxuriant, they did either mow off the tops, or eat it down with cattle, and this was done for preserving the corn and increase of the harvest; but if the second growth were cut off or eat up, it marred the whole harvest; and these devouring locusts were formed in such time as to do this, and so to bring a famine upon the land.

After the king's mowings; it is supposed that the first mowing of the luxuriant corn in the blade was for the king's use, and after this the second springing grew up to the harvest. It may possibly

intimate, that though the kings of Israel did as it were mow the luxuriant riches yet they grew again; but when Assyrian locusts come all is devoured.

Ver. 2.

Either visionally, the whole scheme represented both locusts, grass, herbs, and corn, and it represented the grass as almost all eaten up, and the locusts ready to fall upon the corn, and all that remained. Or else really, it was acted, and the grass was devoured. Though the former seems most likely, I leave it to every one's judgment. Amos interceded by prayer for this people in this case; and he sueth for mercy, entreats for pardon, hereby justifying God's proceedings; and though this people for whom he prays is insensible of their condition, yet the prophet is deeply affected with it, and deprecates the displeasure of God, and implores his mercy; to God belongs forgiveness, to them nothing but shame.

By whom shall Jacob arise? how shall any of Jacob escape? or if thou, O God of Jacob, dost cast him down, who will or can lift him up? he must needs perish if thou be still angry and show not pity. For he is small; weak in strength, few in number, not able to resist his enemies the Assyrians.

Ver. 3.

The Lord repented; this, spoke after the manner of man, is to be understood as becomes the immutability and omniscience of God; what a man when he repenteth doth, desisting from the thing, so God, desisting or suspending his own act, doth tell us he repenteth.

It shall not be: this explains the former; that sore famine like to be caused by these locusts came not, Amos prevailed by prayer, and the judgment was diverted.

Ver. 4.

Thus hath the Lord God showed, *in vision or hieroglyphic:* see #Am 7:1.

And, behold: see #Am 7:1.

Called to contend by fire; declared he would judge as by fire: literally, say some, God would from heaven by fire punish. Others say metaphorically, by drought which should scorch up all fruits of the earth, and dry up fountains and rivers. Or else by very sore,

wasting, and irresistible judgments, that like fire should consume all, hereby denoting the Assyrian rage.

It devoured; eat up, i.e. visionally, or in the emblem.

The great deep; not literally, but, as the other, #Am 7:2, in hieroglyphic; so it appeared to Amos.

And did eat up a part of the land too; it seemed to seize on the earth: now this in vision awakens the prophet, as before, to pray earnestly.

Ver. 5.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Ver. 6.

These two verses are almost word for word the same with #Am 7:2,3, which see.

Ver. 7.

Thus he shewed me: and, behold: see #Am 7:1.

The Lord; the great God, who had long tried Israel, and often spared.

Stood upon a wall; possibly it may denote his fixed purpose now to proceed to demolish this state.

Made by a plumbline; strongly, regularly, and beautifully built, as art could build it.

With a plumbline in his hand; ready, as an artist, to take the measures of this wall, to discover all the defects of it, and how much it was varied from what it was at first built. This shall be the last measuring it, and on this measuring, whatever is faulty shall be pulled down, though to the very foundation. This was visionally represented to the prophet.

Ver. 8.

The Lord, who did before show Amos the emblem in landscape or vision.

What seest thou? this God asketh not as if he were ignorant what Amos saw, or as if he would be informed whether he saw aright, but it is introductory to what follows.

A plumbline; or perpendicular, to which masons first build and frame walls of houses, and by which they do at any time measure them, whether they stand upright, or any way belly out and decline.

I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will exactly measure my people Israel, the whole fabric of the ten kingdoms. I will take a particular view of all, and how far it is right, or how far it is out of order.

I will not again pass by them any more; I will no more forbear, but I will pull down all that is faulty, though I pull up the very foundations; and this is confirmed in what followeth.

Ver. 9.

The high places; the temples on high mountains built to idols, or for the worship of God, though he forbade them. Of Isaac: the father is here named, but his children are intended, all the seed of Isaac. I cannot, though some do, think the prophet alludes to Isaac's being offered upon a high mountain.

Shall be desolate; shall be rased to the foundation, or left to moulder and fall with length of time, and assaults of storms and weather.

The sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste: this explains the former, and, speaking after the custom of those times, the prophet calls the idol temples sanctuaries, whether in Dan and Beth-el or elsewhere.

I will rise; God will, but not immediately, rise up: he will stir up some or other to do what he threatens.

Against the house of Jeroboam; in the days of Zachariah, (son of Jeroboam,) murdered by Shallum. With the sword, first of a conspirator, Shallum, next of civil war.

Ver. 10.

Then; after that Amos had expressly and peremptorily foretold the ruin of idolatry and kingdom of Israel for their sins. Amaziah: it appears not what family he was of, nor is it much material we should know; it is probable he might be of some mean family, or possibly an apostate priest of the tribe of Levi.

The priest, by way of eminency; no common priest, but the chief priest.

Of Beth-el; to the calf at Beth-el; and it is like he was prefect or governor for the king in the civil affairs of that city and country.

Sent; gave information by messengers sent.

To Jeroboam; the second of that name, of Jehu's race: the third from Jehu.

King of Israel; at that time living, and on the throne of Israel.

Saying, Amos hath conspired against thee: he accused the prophet of high treason, and conspiring to raise war against his sovereign.

In the midst of the house of Israel; openly and publicly, or hath endeavoured to raise all Israel into sedition or rebellion against their own king.

The land is not able to bear all his words: either thus, If what he threateneth should come to pass, it will be ruin and utter desolation to all: or thus, The people are incensed so much against this prophet for his harsh predictions, that he must be made an example to quiet and content them. What he saith will come, if it doth come, will certainly ruin all, high and low, and a well-ordered government may not bear such a prophet. Thus far the general accusation.

Ver. 11.

Thus Amos saith; so Amaziah falsely reports the prophet.

Jeroboam shall die by the sword: he no where said so, nor did he insinuate so much, but spake of his house distinguished from his person, as **#Am 7:9**.

Israel shall surely be led away captive: this indeed he foretold, but did no more contribute to it, or contrive it, than the physician doth who foretells the death of an uncounsellable patient, sick of a mortal disease.

Out of their own land: this is added to signify the greatness of the captivity.

Ver. 12.

Also Amaziah said unto Amos: it is probable enough that this arch-priest of Beth-el did send this advice, or gave it to the prophet so soon as he had accused the prophet to Jeroboam; and perhaps he thus intended to insinuate a great good-will towards the prophet, presuming the prophet knew nothing that Amaziah had accused him.

O thou seer: whether this be spoken in scorn, or giving him the respect due to a prophet, I determine not.

Flee thee away into the land of Judah; be advised, stay not here, but with all speed flee out of the kingdom, get thee into Judah whence thou camest, there thou mayst be safe.

There eat bread: thou wilt never get thy bread here by this kind of preaching; in Judah it is likely thou mayst get thy livelihood by thy prophetic art; thither go,

and prophesy there; there thou mayst freely declaim against our vices, and predict our fall, which we do as little as thou dost much believe.

Ver. 13.

Prophesy not again any more at Beth-el; as a friend I advise thou do not, and as having authority from the king, I do declare thou shalt not, prophesy in Beth-el.

For it is the king's chapel, where I am by the king's authority empowered to give license, or impose silence, and to see that none but fit persons preach before the king, who doth there pay his devotions.

And it is the king's court, where all his nobles attend him, and where no ordinary, obscure, and uncourtly doctor may appear: besides, such preaching so near to the king's court will be speedily punished; therefore, as thou lovest thyself, Amos, follow my advice, and let the king's court and this country hear no more of thee.

Ver. 14.

Then answered Amos: so soon as this false accuser had under the vizard of friendship given advice, and withal intimated his resolution to use his authority to make Amos desist if he did not

do it voluntarily, Amos gives him answer readily, boldly, and yet smoothly, and outshoots the court pontiff in his own bow.

Said to Amaziah; not fearing his person or his power.

I was no prophet; not originally, or by succession, or by study, or by any human designation and preparation, as many have been;

neither was I a prophet's son; my father was no prophet, nor was I bred up in the school of the prophets, such as #2Ki 2:3,5,7,15 4:38 6:1. Though you call me seer, whether ironically or seriously, I matter not, but assure you I am not such by art, or trade, or for a livelihood.

But I was a herdman; by breeding, choice, and occupation I was and still am a herdman, and have my concerns in that mystery in or near Tekoa in Judah, on which I can live; though I prophesy without stipend or salary, I needed not to run into the prophet's work for my bread.

And a gatherer of sycamore fruit: the tree and fruit is known by one name; Palestine abounded with both; and the fruit was sweet, not large, yet good for food for man or cattle, as some fruits are with us; on these I could still, as I formerly did, live, and be content.

Ver. 15.

The Lord, the great and jealous God, whom you oppose by idols, took me; by an extraordinary power of his Spirit took me off from my old, mean, and private employment and recess, and I could not withstand him.

As I followed the flock; a description of a shepherd's employment.

The Lord said unto me; commanded, whether by voice from heaven. or extraordinary irradiation of his mind, or impulse of the Divine prophetic Spirit, comes all to one, his authority is Divine.

Go out of Judah.

Prophecy; as a prophet instruct, threaten, promise, invite. and foretell.

My people Israel; the ten tribes, which with like civility are called by Amos God's people as he is called seer.

Ver. 16.

Now; when forbidden, Amos, undaunted, prophesieth to him that forbade him.

Hear thou, Amaziah, who hast accused, yet pretendest to wish and advise my safety, the word of the Lord, who sent me, whom thou contradictest; from him I have somewhat to say to thee, and of much concern also to thee.

Thou sayest, usest thy power to silence me,

Prophecy not against Israel; preach not sedition, or what tends to it, under pretence that God speaks it against Israel: if thou canst speak good of us, and to us, this may be good for thee; but if thou wilt speak sad news against us, it will not be believed; it may hurt thee, it will do no good to others.

Drop not; distil not: see #Eze 21:2 Mic 2:6.

Against the house of Isaac; the posterity of Isaac: this explains the former, and is a hendiadis, or elegant ingemination.

Ver. 17.

Therefore; because thou hast so directly and strenuously opposed the Lord.

Thy wife shall be a harlot, which to a man of sense is a great affliction.

A harlot; a common whore. In the city; a notorious one, that plays not the adulteress in secret at home, but so that all take notice of it, and brand her for it.

Thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword; which in all likelihood doth intimate their slaughter by Shallum when he slew Zachariah, Jeroboam's son, with whom no doubt but his friends fell, among which this family was; or else by the sword of Menahem, who slew Shallum.

Thy land shall be divided by line; thy estate, which no doubt was large, shall be shared among the soldiers and courtiers of Menahem.

And thou shalt die; thy dishonour by a lewd wife, thy childless solitariness, and thy poverty, shall come on thee ere thou die; it is probable he fled to save his life.

In a polluted land; among the heathen, where thou mayst be sure my word was true. Israel, the ten tribes,

shall surely go into captivity forth of his land: see #Am 7:11.

AMOS CHAPTER 8

By a basket of summer fruit is showed the near approach of Israel's end, #Am 8:1-3. Their oppression of the poor shall cause their joy to be turned into mourning, #Am 8:4-10. A famine of God's word threatened, #Am 8:11-14.

Ver. 1.

Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and behold: see #Am 7:1,4,7.

A basket; a hook, say some, with which the gatherer might either pull down the bough, or pull off the ripe fruit; or a basket into which the ripe fruit gathered was put to be carried away.

Summer fruit; not the early ripe fruit, but that which, as it needed, so had the whole summer's heat to ripen it, and was gathered in at the end of the summer.

Ver. 2.

Amos, what seest thou? the like question you have #Am 7:8, which see.

A basket of summer fruit: see #Am 8:1. *Then said the Lord unto me:* the meaning of this hieroglyphic not being very plain in itself, the Lord doth here explain it in the following words.

The end of God's patience towards Israel, of their peace, growth, and glory; the end of their ripening, they are now as fruit fully ripe, in the end of the year, fit to be gathered.

My people Israel; so they were once, so they boast themselves, so the nations about them account Israel to be the people of God.

I will not again pass by them any more: see #Am 7:8. God had with admirable patience spared and tried, but now he will with just severity punish, neither pardon nor spare.

Ver. 3.

The songs; which were composed by choicest wits, and set to sweetest tunes, and chanted out by most skilful singers to the best musical instruments.

Of the temple; either to take in Judah, and foretell the desolation of their temple; or else, by an irony, the idol temples; or else of the palace, as the word in the Hebrew. All court mirth and jollity, balls and music entertainments.

Shall be howlings, Heb. *shall howl*; be turned into the hideous outcries of undone and despairing men.

In that day; when God shall execute his judgments threatened, as he did begin on the death of Jeroboam, and continued that day of vengeance till Shalmaneser finished the work in the ruin of Samaria and its captivity.

Saith the Lord God: this is added to assure Israel that what Amos did foretell should be accomplished, for God spake it.

There shall be many dead bodies; so there were when Shallum slew Zachariah, so there were when Menahem slew Shallum, when he came with his army against Samaria, when he ripped up the women with child in Tiphseh, #2Ki 15:16, and when other usurpers pressed through blood and treason to the crown; beside the howlings when Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser cruelly wasted all.

In every place; in cities, towns, and country, in palaces and temples too, in all which the bloody effects of enemies' swords, the wastes of famine and pestilence, should be seen.

They, who howl, who see this,

shall cast them forth with silence; either shall secretly bury them, so some, or, to rid themselves of that trouble, shall cast them out wherever they can, with silence, that none may observe them; so great calamitous mortality, that the living suffice not to bury the dead; or so great cruelty by the enemy used against them,

that they dare not bury them, or if they do, it must be undiscerned: see #Am 6:10.

Ver. 4.

Though the prophet had several times told them what were the sins for which God would thus punish Israel, yet on a repeated threat he repeateth the rehearsal of the sins which draw down these judgments on their heads.

Hear this, attend, and consider it,

O ye that swallow up, greedily and cruelly devour, that do, like the greater fish, swallow up the lesser fry: in this one word the prophet includeth all the methods of their cruel oppression, wasting the poor.

The needy; such as were objects of your mercy, had you been just and honest, as well as rich and great.

Even to make the poor of the land to fail; either to root them out, or to enslave them, while their necessities force them to sell themselves for bread.

Ver. 5.

When will the new moon be gone? ye that could wish there were nothing to interrupt your marketing, your irreligious impatience, and your eagerness after the world, look on solemn times of Divine worship as very burdensome; such was the first day of every month, and the weekly sabbath.

That we may sell corn: no servile work might be done on new moons, no markets kept, or corn brought forth publicly to be sold.

And the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? they were also bound very religiously to observe the sabbath, and on that day they might not buy or sell; now they are weary of the sabbath, as of the new moon, and on the same account wish it over: here was irreligious gaping after gain.

Making the ephah small; the ephah was a measure for dry things, and contained about half a bushel and one pottle English measure. Now these covetous corn-merchants measured the corn they sold by an ephah that was too little, the poor buyer had not his due.

And the shekel great: they weighed the money which they received, and these rich men had no more pity and justice, than to make their shekel weight greater than the standard; so the poor were twice oppressed in the same way, had less than was their right, and paid more than they ought to pay; and thus they undid the poor, and ate him up.

And falsifying the balances by deceit; deceitfully pervert the balances, that the money or shekel weighed, though of full weight, yet appeared too light on the balance, and they who paid it were forced to add more silver to it.

Ver. 6.

That we may-buy the poor: either it speaks the aim of these men in oppressing the poor thus, that they might at last buy their persons for servants and drudges, or else it speaks the reason why they would have new moons and sabbaths over, that they might to market to buy the poor.

For silver, i.e. a little silver, at under value, as **#Am 2:6**.

The needy for a pair of shoes: this explains the former, and shows us that these cruel oppressors lay in wait for the needy to buy them for a very trifle; when these poor owed but for a very little and cheap commodity, as suppose a pair of shoes, these merciless men would take the advantage against them. and make them sell themselves to pay the debt. All which practices are most directly against the law of God.

Sell the refuse; that which is fitter for hogs to month, or for horses to eat, the poor must either buy at dear rate or starve; and this another kind of oppression, corrupted wares at excessive rates, sold to those that were necessitous.

Ver. 7.

The Lord; who changeth not, whose words and purposes are immutably true and stedfast, who hath often told you, that unless you repent he will punish for your sins, now he hath sworn it, and sends you word by me, that he hath in most solemn and irrevocable manner determined, published, and expressly declared that he will visit all your sins upon you.

By the excellency of Jacob; by himself, for God cannot swear by any greater, and he is called the excellency of Jacob, #Ps 47:4.

Surely, Heb. *If*; if I am a God, I will remember and punish.

I will never forget, or let pass unpunished; I will never remit the punishment by an act of pardon, nor ever omit to punish by an act of forgetfulness.

Any of their works; not one of all those their abominable injustices and irreligion, not one of these cruelties.

Ver. 8.

Shall not the land tremble? either literally, are not such sins and judgments enough to shake the very foundations of the earth? Or, metonymically, the land for the people of it, as after in the verse, they that dwell therein.

For this; this that you have done, O house of Israel, in sinning, and this that God will do in punishing, enough to melt the earth, as #Ps 46:6.

And every one mourn; since every one hath sinned too much, and every one shall suffer in this approaching calamity, every one at the news may well mourn and lament;

that dwelleth therein; in the land of Israel.

It shall rise up wholly as a flood; or, by an interrogation, shall it not? i.e. shall not the judgment, the invading troops of Assyria, the displeasure of God, rise and grow as a mighty, wasting flood? or else thus, the whole land shall rise up; soaked in these judgments, it shall seem to swell and grow greater, ready, like a hydroptic, to burst asunder: or else it is a hypallage, the land shall rise up, i.e. the flood shall rise over the land; or, which I rather incline to, the whole judgment shall rise as a flood.

It shall be cast out; the land, the state, people, and what they have, shall be, as in a shipwreck, or mighty flood which breaks all down before it, tossed in the surges and waves;

and drowned as by the flood of Egypt; and at last, by the continuance of this tempest, drowned all as the overflowing on Nilus doth drown all the plains of Egypt.

Ver. 9.

It shall come to pass, most certainly it will be,

in that day, when God begins to execute these his just and severe judgments on the ten tribes.

I will cause; the great, just, holy, and terrible God, who is provoked by these sins, and hath denounced these judgments, my hand shall be evident in it.

The sun; literally, say some, but erroneously; by *sun* I understand rather the settled state of their prosperity under their present government in the house of Jehu; or it may refer particularly to their king and court, which Jeroboam at his death left like the sun at noon in the height of their glory, as all know who know the history of those times.

To go down at noon; so Israel's sun did as at noon set under the dark cloud of home-bred conspiracies and civil wars by Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, till the midnight darkness drew on by Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser.

I will darken; bring a thick cloud of troubles and afflictions.

The earth; the common people, the whole body of the nation; so the sun speaks the royalty, nobility, and great ones of this kingdom, by an allusion well known in Scripture, and the earth speaks the common sort of people; and all are here threatened.

In the clear day; when they did think (as in Jeroboam's time) all was safe, sure, and well settled, far from the night of sorrow and trouble, then will God bring all this he threateneth upon them.

Ver. 10.

I will turn your feasts, religious, though idolatrous in your temples, see **#Am 8:3**, and your ordinary civil feasts in your palaces, into mourning: see **#Am 8:3**.

And all your songs into lamentation: this ingemination doth assure the thing, and forebode the sadness of their state.

I will bring up sackcloth; as all inwardly shall be sadness, so all that appears outwardly shall speak their sorrow and sadness.

Upon all loins; all sorts of persons should put on this mourning, and gird it close to their loins that it might afflict them the more, a custom very general in those times and places.

Baldness upon every head; partly pulling off the hair of the head through anguish, or shaving the head and beard in sign of greatest sadness, as the Eastern people did: see **#Mic 1:16**.

As the mourning of an only son: this is accounted the greatest mourning, and seems proverbially to express such mourning, **#Jer 6:26 Zec 12:10**, which see; so God will afflict this people with greatest sorrows, and fill them with greatest mourning.

The end; you may hope these troubles will be over, and come to an end, but that will be little to your comfort; a bitter day, which you shall wish you had never seen, shall succeed your dark night, as indeed it doth to this day.

Ver. 11.

Behold; note well what now I shall declare to you, and consider it.

The days come, saith the Lord God; surely, speedily, and according to the threats of God.

I will send a famine in the land; by a signal hand of Divine displeasure it shall appear to be from God, that such a famine cometh upon them of Israel.

Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water: a spiritual famine joined with a corporal famine; their bodies were pined with famine, destitute of bread and water; and this God sent too. but the famine of the soul is worse and more grievous.

But of hearing the words; either the written word which Israel had among them till their captivity, but afterwards should ever want both it and those who should interpret it to them, or else the word of prophecy; now they despise it, though they have it, but then they shall desire it, and have it not. They shall hunt after prophets, to tell them when their troubles shall end, though now they hate prophets who warn them, that their troubles might not begin: now Israel despiseth a prophet's counsel, then they shall hunt for it, but not have a prophet to give them counsel, as **#Ps 74:9**.

Ver. 12.

They shall wander from sea to sea; search all places for a prophet or a preacher from the Syrian or Midland Sea to that of Tiberias, to the Dead Sea, and to the Red Sea.

From the north even to the east; that mountainous tract whither persecuted Elijah fled, and perhaps other prophets in like circumstances retired; proverbially, they shall search all corners for a prophet.

They shall run to and fro; shall diligently and speedily, on every report that a prophet is, on hearsays, in such or such a place, hasten thither, as Ahab in his search for Elijah, #1Ki 18:10.

To seek the word of the Lord; hoping to hear some good news of an end of their miseries from God by a prophet.

And shall not find it; they persecuted and slew such as foretold the beginning of this misery, and now it is come they shall neither hear the news nor see the hopes of an end. God did tell them it would be utter ruin, and no prophet of God can tell them any better news.

Ver. 13.

It is probable these in their strength and rigour would seek earnestly to know what end they might expect, whether they should outlive this famine of the word, and the famine of bread and water, but both should faint with thirst and hunger; neither finding the word of the Lord for their comfort, they should faint with despair, nor finding bread and water, should faint and die with weakness: so Israel should be extinguished.

Ver. 14.

They that swear by; who now do, as formerly they have done, trust in, sacrifice to, and swear by; who are obstinate idolaters, and trust to those lies.

The sin, that which was the sin, the occasion of the sin,
of Samaria, the calves at Dan and Beth-el.

And say, think, profess, and swear too,

Thy god, O Dan, liveth; the idol at Dan is the true and living God.

The manner of, the idols at, Beer-sheba, to which the zealous, mad, and bigoted idolaters in Israel made their pilgrimages.

They shall fall, be consumed by famine, sword, and captivity,

and never rise up again; never return out of captivity, nor recover of this consumption.

AMOS CHAPTER 9

The certainty of Israel's desolation, **#Am 9:1-10**. The restoring of the tabernacle of David, and of the captivity of Israel.

Ver. 1.

I saw: as before, **#Am 7:1,4,7 8:1**; so here the prophet hath a fifth vision.

The Lord; the great, glorious, just, and holy God, in some visible tokens of his majesty.

Standing; either ready to execute sentence, or ready to depart, **#Eze 9:3 10:1,4**; indeed here he will do both, execute his own sentence, and depart from this people.

Upon the altar of burnt-offering before the temple at Jerusalem: here the scene is laid, this altar and temple Israel had forsaken, and set up others against it; and here God in his jealousy appears prepared to take vengeance: possibly it may intimate his future departure from Judah too. There Ezekiel, **#Eze 9:2**, saw the slaughtermen stand.

He said, commanded,

Smite the lintel of the door, or the chapter, knop, ornament that was upon the lintel of the door, which is supposed to be of the gate of the temple, or possibly the door of the gate that led into the priests' courts; and though the party that smites be not named, it is likely it was an angel; or possibly the prophet seemed to do it, for this is to do in vision.

That the posts may shake; which were the strength and beauty of the gate.

And cut, wound deep,

them, the people which were visionally represented as standing in the court of the temple,

in the head, that it may more fully signify the destroying of the chief of the heads of this sinful people.

All; spare not one of these.

I will slay the last; God will slay by the enemies' sword the meanest of them, or the last, i.e. the posterity of them.

He that fleeth of them shall not flee away, or get out of danger.

He that escapeth, for the present, out of battle or besieged city, **shall not be delivered**; shall yet at last fall into the enemies' hand, or by his sword.

Ver. 2.

When David would describe the omnipresence of God, #Ps 139:7-12, he doth it most elegantly in almost the same manner as our inspired herdman here doth. Wherever these seek to hide themselves from the pursuing vengeance, they shall be found; he is with them, from whom they hide.

Though they dig into hell; the deepest recesses, the heart and centre of the earth or the grave; or literally, for so we may lay the supposition, were it possible to be done, to hide in the centre of the earth, or the depth of hell.

Thence shall mine hand take them; for hell is naked to God, and the grave did not hide some of these sinners; when dead and buried, the rage of famine, or of the enemy, might dig some out of their graves.

Though they climb up to heaven; could they fly up to heaven, they would be out of the reach of men;

thence will I bring them down; but there they would meet an offended God, and he would east them down.

Ver. 3.

Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel; one high woody mountain, shelter and hiding-place for wild beasts, by a figure put for all the rest; if they think to be safe where wild beasts find a refuge, they are deceived,

I will search and take them out thence; I will, saith God, hunt them out, and take them.

Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea: this is an irony like brutish atheists, they think to hide themselves in the bottom of the sea.

Thence will I command the serpent, crocodile or shark some sea monster, and he shall bite them; devour them. Miserable Israel, to whom nor sea, nor mountains, nor heaven, nor hell will afford a hiding-place!

Ver. 4.

Though they go into captivity; those excluded from safety every where else may perhaps hope that yet the enemy may spare. Captives are the slaves, the possession of their conquering enemies; these make profit of them by selling them to others, or employing them in labour and service.

Before their enemies: this seems to intimate some voluntariness in these people going before the conqueror, whom they hope hereby to mollify and sweeten, that he may use them well; yet this hope shall fail them too.

Thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: the enemy should, either out of cruel humour and hatred against them, or on any slight occasion and disgust, slay them as if they had commission from me so to do: neither propriety in them, nor service by them, nor profit in the sale of these poor and miserable captives, should be safety to them, they should be accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

I will set mine eyes upon them; I will perpetually watch over them, and then be sure no opportunity will be let slip.

For evil, to afflict and punish them,

and not for good, for their benefit. Thus was the course of God's providence against them from the days Amos aimeth at unto this very day, and God hitherto hath, and still doth, make good his threat against this idolatrous, cruel, oppressing people.

Ver. 5.

The prophet having foretold such sad, universal desolations, miseries beyond what this secure people could think possible, and such as the atheists among them censured, and derided as impossibilities, as **#Am 9:10**; now in this and the following verses to the 10th the prophet confirms his word, and the certainty of these future judgments.

The Lord; Adonai, the sovereign Lord.

God; Jehovah, who speaks and doth, and need no more than will to work and accomplish; so he made, sustaineth, and disposeth of all.

Of hosts; all the creatures are his army, and do what he commands them to do against his enemies.

Is he that toucheth: a light touch of his hand, he needs not as man to take great pains to break and dissolve hard metals, a touch of his finger will do this.

The land; either the inhabitants, or rather the land itself in which they dwelt, the land of Canaan; or more likely the whole earth, how firm and hard soever it seem to be.

And it shall melt, as snow before the sun in its hottest influences, or as wax before a mighty fire. He who can do this, can do all that I have denounced against you, O Israel. The rest of the verse, see **#Am 8:8**.

Ver. 6.

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven; he that threatens and will execute his just severities on you is that mighty, glorious King, whose palace inconceivably surpasseth all the royal palaces of the mightiest monarchs on earth; his chambers, as **#Ps 104:3**, are in the heavens: he by a word of his mouth prepared and garnished those rooms of state, where is glory that ravisheth the mighty angels; how easily can he demolish and ruin your cells, and with the breath of his nostrils, by one command, blow away and scatter your little dust heaps, which you call cities, fortresses, and impregnable munitions!

And hath founded his troop in the earth; he laid the foundations of this lower world, and can as easily shake or

overturn as at first he laid them. All that is below the royal pavilions of God is but as a little bundle which he can soon untie and scatter about, nor are the things tied up of such worth and value that he should lose by doing it; how much more easy is it for him to destroy (as he hath spoken) your land and cities, which are a very small thing compared with the whole world, and this as a point compared with the unmeasurable greatness of the heavens! You set a value on yourselves, and are proud, and think that God will not lose, such jewels; as if a king in his royalty should fear to lose a pin's head, or one atom of dust that lieth on his footstool.

Calleth; the easiest way a man can take to get any thing done; nothing so easy for man to do, as it is easy for God to drown a sinful nation or world: possibly God by this may mind them what seeming impossibility he did when he called for the waters of the sea to drown the old world, and would hereby make them see that he can now do the like.

For the waters of the sea; either by wholesale in judgment to drown, or by retail by vapours in mercy to give rain.

And poureth them out, in storms and violence, or in gentler showers, to punish or refresh.

Upon the face of the earth; either a particular nation, or the whole world.

The Lord is his name; eternal, unchangeable, almighty, and just: see #Am 5:8.

Ver. 7.

Are ye not, who glory in your descent from Abraham, and are in truth the natural descendants of Israel, and think very highly of yourselves on this account, slighting all other nations, and presuming that God neither will nor can, because of his covenant, destroy you, whatever prophets say,

as children of the Ethiopians? not that remote nation beyond Egypt, but those of Arabia Petrea, a wild, thievish, and servile nation, such as now inhabit those parts; base, bloody, and thievish Arabs, hated and despised of all their neighbours, and so by the Israelites their neighbours accounted at that day.

Unto me; I did make them as you, they are my creatures as you; wherein soever you excel them you owe it to me, who made you both as creatures, and have distinguished you by my free mercy and rich grace, giving most to you, of which you boast, and giving less to them, for which you despise them.

Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and whereas you boast my kindness to you, bringing you out of Egypt, and thereupon conclude God cannot leave you whom he hath so redeemed; you argue amiss, for these things aggravate your sin, and render you less capable of hoping or obtaining mercy since you abuse such grace. Remember **#Am 3:2**. You think I cannot, must not now root you out of your land, because I brought you out of Egypt, as if you were the only people that ever were brought out of bondage; but Moses tells you the Philistines were captivated by the Caphtorims, who dwelt in their land; yet the Philistines were restored, and you found them in the land when you came to possess it. Their expulsion you read **#De 2:23**, though I remember no particular mention of their deliverance in any history, yet this hint is enough to assure us of the matter of fact. *And the Assyrians*, an ancient people, inhabiting a large country, and known by several distinct names,

from Kir; conquered by some potent enemies, probably the ancient Assyrians, and sent away to Kir, a city or country of Media, yet delivered at last. Should these nations, as you do, argue themselves to be out of danger of Divine justice and severe punishments, because I had done this for them? Certainly you would not allow such argument in them, nor will I allow it in you.

Ver. 8.

Behold; consider things better, and argue more like men of reason.

The eyes of the Lord God; God of infinite purity and knowledge, whose nature hateth all sin, and whose office it is to punish sinners, his eyes behold all the children of men, they run to and fro, as **#2Ch 16:9**. Are upon the sinful kingdom; every sinful kingdom, and on the kingdom of the ten tribes as notoriously the sinning kingdom, as the Hebrew.

And I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; and I will ruin any such kingdom for their sins, that it shall cease to be a kingdom on earth.

Saving that I will not utterly destroy; and so would I do with the kingdom of Israel, but that I have by covenant with their fathers engaged to be their God for ever, which promise I will keep to a remnant of their seed for ever.

The house of Jacob; the seed of Jacob, which God will not utterly extirpate, though he do extirpate other nations, **#Jer 30:11.**

Saith the Lord: this is added to confirm the gracious word concerning the remnant which shall be spared.

Ver. 9.

For, lo: as this confirms what the 8th verse promiseth, so it requireth a very diligent and full attention of us.

I will command, or give a charge to all nations whither these exiled persons shall come, and they shall observe the charge, it shall as surely be done as it is spoken.

I will sift the house of Israel among all nations; though Assyrians and other nations be the means and instruments, yet God's hand is principal; whilst they would toss and scatter Israel with violence, yet God will hold the sieve, and guide their hands, and set bounds to their violence.

Like as corn is sifted in a sieve, by a skilful and careful husbandman, who designs to separate the chaff from the corn; to preserve this, to tread the other under foot.

Yet shall not the least grain; though covered under much chaff, though tumbled and tossed with the greatest violence, and without any regard to it, yet the smallest and least regarded good grain shall not be lost or destroyed with that fire which consumeth the chaff.

Fall upon the earth, i.e. perish, or be lost; so the phrase **#1Sa 26:20 2Sa 14:11 1Ki 1:52.** Here is a promise of preservation as great and wonderful, and as hardly comprehended, as was the threatened punishment.

Ver. 10.

All the sinners of my people, the great, notorious sinners, idolaters, oppressors, perverters of law and equity, cruel and inhuman judges and others, shall die by the sword; either at home in the wars, or abroad by barbarous men that captivate them; as **#Am 9:4**.

Which say; in their hearts thinking or hoping, or in their words discoursing, the impossibility of what Amos did foretell.

The evil, the sad, miserable, and desolating end, shall not overtake nor prevent us; as a pursuing enemy, we will flee from it: see **#Am 9:1**. It is far off, we shall die first, and be safe in the grave; a kingdom in its prosperity, and well settled, as this kingdom was in Jeroboam's time, cannot soon be brought to such confusion; we shall never see it. This savoured rank of their atheism, and these shall certainly fall and perish, and never rise.

Ver. 11.

This promise I nothing doubt hath a double aspect, both to the return out of captivity, and to the Messiah's kingdom, and each part is to be considered by us: if we would duly explain this and the following verse, let us look first to the letter and historical reference, and next to the mystical and spiritual sense of the words.

In that day; a very usual phrase in Scripture, whereby a time fixed and certain, yet unknown to us, is intended in the set time which God hath prefixed.

I will raise up; lay the foundation and build up. reduce out of captivity and re-establish in their own land. The tabernacle of David; the house of David, and those that did adhere to David's family, which are here called a tabernacle, partly for that it never did after the captivity rise to a free and independent kingdom, and partly because he would distinguish the Jews from the apostate Israelites, who did wholly forsake David's house.

That is fallen; by a revolt of ten tribes in twelve, whereby their state is low, and as fallen to the ground.

And close up the breaches, which are in it by that long division, since Jeroboam the First's time, which breaches shall, upon the return out of captivity, be made up by the voluntary union of the

remnant of the ten tribes which shall return with the two tribes out of the Babylonish captivity.

I will raise up his ruins; disposing the minds of the kings of Persia to advance David's line to the government of the restored captives, and continuing it in the Supreme power till Messiah's coming; and by rebuilding Jerusalem, and the temple, and settling true religion amongst them.

And I will build it as in the days of old; much what it was before the sack of the city and temple, and the carrying the people captive. All which, as far as they are temporal concerns, do suppose and did require a sound turning to God; as did the like promises made by other prophets. And how far soever they fell short of these promises, it was through unbelief and other sins, as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi complain in their prophecies. Now as it refers to Messiah's kingdom, it is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, as appears **#Ac 15:16,17**; of which no more here, because our work is to give the literal sense of the text: who would see more may consult larger commentators on this place, and on **#Ac 15:16,17**.

Ver. 12.

That they; literally and historically the Jews, or they of the two tribes, and with them such of the ten tribes as did unite to them, and returned to Jerusalem.

May possess, both the lands of Edom, and some of the posterity of Edom; these as servants, the other as their propriety. The remnant, left by Nebuchadnezzar, or that fled out of his reach and lived privately where they could find a hiding-place till Israel's return.

Of Edom; the posterity of Esau, wasted by Nebuchadnezzar, and ruined so that they never did recover to be a kingdom, but who remained of them did shelter themselves as retainers to other nations, and among these some did betake themselves to the Jews, and lived under them. Though formerly they had been desperate enemies to the Jews, Edomites, who cried, Rase, rase, **#Ps 137:7**, shall now assist as servants in laying the foundations, and building Jerusalem.

All the heathen, i.e. round about, as Moabites, Ammonites, &c., by usual phrase called all the heathen.

Which are called by my name: these words either must refer to heathen and Edomites proselyted, or they are by a trajection laid here, but in construction are to be joined with the foregoing words thus. *That they which are called by my name may possess, &c.*

Saith the Lord; this immutably confirms the promise.

That doeth this; who saith and doth, who willeth and effecteth, whose command is almighty. That this is a prophecy of setting up the kingdom of the Messiah, and bringing in the Gentiles, is very certain, but appertains to the mystic sense, not to the literal, which is our work.

Ver. 13.

Here is another promise made literally for assurance of abundant plenty to the returned captives, and mystically, of abundant grace poured forth in gospel days. But of the letter and history.

Behold, mark well, ye poor captived Jews,

the days come; the time will certainly come, nay, it hasteth, and whoso lives to return shall see this word performed.

The ploughman, who breaks up the ground, and prepares it for sowing,

shall overtake the reaper; shall be ready to tread on the heels of the reaper, who shall have a harvest so large, that before he can gather it all in it shall be time to plough the ground and prepare it for the seed for next year's crop. So God will take away the reproach of famine (in Ezekiel's phrase) from the mountains of Israel.

And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; so great shall their vintage be, that ere the treaders of grapes can have finished their work, the seedsman shall be sowing his seed against next harvest season.

The mountains: the Jews did plant the mountains and hills of Canaan with vines, **#Isa 5:1**, there were their vineyards.

Shall drop sweet wine; the vineyards shall be so fruitful, and new wine so plentiful, as if it did, like trickling streams, run down

from the mountains; and all the hills shall melt; or as if whole hills were melted into such liquors. See #**Joe 3:18**. It is a lofty strain, and very elegantly expresseth the abundance of outward blessings promised to this people here spoken of. If any will object, It appears not that ever it was so. I answer, It is certain the sins of the returned captives did in very great degrees prevent these blessings, which are here promised under a tacit condition, which they never did fulfil.

Ver. 14.

What is contained in this verse is an express promise of a return to captive Israel, and it is an implicit stating of the time when those former promises, #**Am 9:11-13**, should be fulfilled.

I will bring again: Cyrus was the person who proclaimed liberty of return to captive Israel, but God stirred up his spirit to do this, and it was God's eminent work; he was seen in it, as #**Ps 126:3,4**.

The captivity of my people of Israel; of those Shalmaneser carried captive and those Nebuchadnezzar carried captive, both falling under the disposal of Cyrus by his conquest over Babylon; by which means Israel, the remnant of the ten tribes, as well as the two tribes, had leave to return.

They shall build the waste cities, of Judah and of Israel too, as well as Jerusalem, many of which we meet with in the latter histories of the Jews and their wars.

Inhabit them; so they did from the time of their return till the Roman captivity, and were not by the space of six hundred years pulled out of their habitation.

Shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; be blessed in the increase of them and enjoy it, freed from that curse, #**De 28:39**.

Shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them; these, planted for delight, should be blessed too; both vineyards and gardens should be fruitful, and they that planted them should dwell in their houses safely, and eat the fruit of them.

Ver. 15.

I will plant, or settle them, as trees that are well rooted,

upon their land, by ancient gift, and by late restitution to it by the Lord.

They shall no more be pulled up by the violence of their enemies which promise is an implicit condition that they seek, and not forsake the Lord, and was on God's part with admirable constancy and patience to that sinful nation performed through six hundred years, perhaps the longest time of freedom from captivity they ever knew.

Which I have given, of free gift, without their merit.

Saith the Lord thy God; God, thy God and thy Lord, will do it for his covenant's sake, therefore surely and fully will he do it.

OBADIAH

THE ARGUMENT

This short prophecy will not need any long prefatory argument. He concealeth his nation, family, and place of his birth and abode, which he would not have done had it much concerned us to know, or would it have added any thing material to the authority and efficacy of his word. Yet perhaps we should be thought too slight, if we did not tell you, that some thought him to be a proselyted Edomite, filled with the prophetic Spirit, that he might be sent to declare God's judgments against Edom; but this suggestion will no more prove him an Idumean, than it will prove Jonah or Nahum to be proselyted Assyrians; or Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to be of so many different countries, because they prophesied against so many different nations. Some others will have him the same that was great with Ahab, but greater with God, hiding and feeding his prophets by fifty in a cave. But this is too early for this prophet, as is noted in the annotations. And that he was captain of the band of fifty whom, on his request, Elijah spared; or that he was one of those sent by Jehoshaphat, **#2Ch 17:7**, to instruct the Jews, as is said by some; hath more against than can be said for it. But it is certain he was a prophet sent of God, and that his diligence and faithfulness answered his name, *Obadiah*, i.e. *the servant of the Lord*, whose message he delivered, though we are not certain when, in what king's reign, or what prophets he was contemporary with: some guess he was contemporary with Jeremiah, and they think the 37th and 39th chapters, besides **#La 4:21**, afford arguments to prove it; but if they did not live in the same time, they preached the same things against Edom, which were in due time fulfilled, though we cannot precisely define the time. It is indisputable, that Edom's cruelty, perfidiousness, pride, and rapine against Jacob were the principal causes of this Divine anger against Edom, and yet it admits some dispute when it was Edom did so barbarously lay wait for, cut off, or deliver up the fleeing Jews, whether when Shishak spoiled Jerusalem, or when Nebuchadnezzar sacked it and led the citizens captives. I rather think it had been a constant course observed by Edom to run in with all that invaded Judea, whether Philistines,

Syrians, Assyrians, or Chaldeans, who were cruel enough, but yet Edom was more cruel; for this cause our prophet both threatens punishments upon them, and warns them of their approaching ruin. Some think the prophet warns Edom that they should not do what is here specified; I think he threatens because they had done it. In brief, the accommodating the particulars of this prophecy to their particular times and persons concerned, as it requires some good diligence and skill, so it will ever leave room for modesty towards those that it is likely will differ from us in accommodating them. Edom, type of all the church's enemies, shall be destroyed, and Christ's kingdom shall be set up; as Obadiah foretells, the church believeth, and so shouldst thou, reader.

OBADIAH CHAPTER 1

The destruction of Edom, **#Ob 1:1,2**, for their pride, **#Ob 1:3-9**, and for their unnatural behaviour in Jacob's distress, **#Ob 1:10-16**. The salvation and victories of Jacob, **#Ob 1:17-21**.

Obadiah 1:1

The vision, which the prophet received immediately from the Lord; so prophets are called *seers*, 1Sa_9:9 Amo_7:12; and their prophecy is vision, Isa_1:1 Joe_2:28.

Of Obadiah: who this was appears not on any certainty, or when he prophesied. That it was not Obadiah who hid and fed the prophets of the Lord in Ahab's time is evident, for that the prophet doth threaten Edom for their cruelty against Jerusalem in the day it was taken and sacked, which was three hundred and thirty or forty years after Ahab's time; he began to reign about A.M. 3025, and Jerusalem was sacked about 3363. His name speaks a servant or a worshipper of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God: this includes his authority, the certainty of the things he speaks of concerning Edom, or against Edom; both people and country are so called from their progenitor or founder, Esau, called Edom, Gen_25:30. This country is called Idumea, Isa_34:5,6 **Eze 35:15**, which see; it was a part of Arabia Petraea.

We have heard; other prophets, as I, have heard this news to tell to Edom, or to send to them, Isa_11:14 Jer_27:3 Joe_3:19 Amo_1:12.

A rumour; not an uncertain and vain report, but it comes from God by his prophets.

An ambassador, a herald, or muster-master, who should gather forces together for this expedition, is sent, by the Lord first, and next by Nebuchadnezzar, who executed on Edom what is here foretold. God stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar to make war on Edom, which was (as well as other nations) given up to Nebuchadnezzar, Jer_27:3,6.

Among the heathen, or nations, both those that were confederate with or subject to Nebuchadnezzar, whom all nations served, Jer_27:6,7.

Arise ye: this is a summons to them from Nebuchadnezzar, that they send in their proportions of soldiers.

Let us rise up against her in battle: this seems the voice of soldiers willing to and desirous of the war.

Obadiah 1:2

Behold, ye Edomites , lay it to heart, and consider it well; be not secure amidst such dangers.

I have made thee small; thou art a small people for number, thy land mountainous, rocky, and barren, and it is little that which is of it, situate very incommodiously for any trade, which makes people great and famous; a country titled for moss-troopers, or banditti; and as such outlaws and robbers, thou art proud, and promisest great things to thyself.

Among the heathen, in comparison with other nations.

Thou art greatly despised, by those that do hear of thee, who know thy situation, government, manner of life, and what thy forces are, and how usually employed. Whatever these Edomites had been, now they are despised, and ere long should be more despicable, when, as Jer_49:20, the least of Nebuchadnezzar's army should pull them out of their caves, houses, and strong holds.

Obadiah 1:3

The pride of thy heart: the Edomites were, as most mountaineers are, a rough, hardy, and daring people; necessitated sometimes to extraordinary adventures, and many times succeeded in attempts which others would not venture upon; hence they did swell in pride and confidence, and their hearts were bigger than their achievements, and they proud above measure.

Hath deceived thee; magnifying thy strength above what really it is.

Thou, people of Edom,

that dwellest in the clefts of the rock; houses, fortresses, towns, and cities, built upon inaccessible rocks, which neither could be undermined nor scaled. Or: dwellest in dark deep, and unsearchable caves amidst the rocks.

That saith in his heart; who think with themselves, and are upon report of an invasion ready to say,

Who shalt bring me down to the ground? it is not possible for armies to approach to us, nor bring their engines to shake or batter our walls. *Who shall ?* i.e. none can.

Obadiah 1:4

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle: Edom boasted of his strength from the height of the rocks he dwelt on, Oba_1:3, but here he is answered, if he could build his nest as the eagles, which build and fly much higher than any other bird, neither the height of the nest should save the young ones, nor the height of his flight save the old one.

Though thou set thy nest among the stars; nay yet, in a more lofty strain, suppose you could lodge your brood among the stars for safety, and there fly above the reach of man, yet should you not be out of the reach of danger.

Thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord; God who is in the heavens would throw thee down; when men could not marshal armies against thee, stars should fight in their courses against thee. Nothing can stand which God will cast down. See Jer_49:16,17.

Obadiah 1:5

In this verse the prophet doth in an abrupt manner of speech, mixed of wonder and doubt, express the strange havoc and desolation made in Edom, as if lie had said, Who have been here? or in what posture wast thou found, O Edom! that such strange desolation is found in thee?

If thieves by day had spoiled thee, they would not have thus stripped thee. *If robbers*, which practise their violences in the night, had been with thee, they would have left somewhat behind them.

How art thou cut off? here is either a trajection, this placed here which must be read first in the verse, or an exclamation of one as in haste to know whence such unexpected events; or an insulting derision of that pride which boasted so much and performed so little in self defence.

Would they not have stolen till they had enough? thieves and robbers take till they have what is sufficient for them at present and leave the rest, but here is nothing left.

If the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes? if Edom be a vine, and gathered, some gleanings would be left by grape-gatherers; but, alas, here have been those that have cut up the vine! and is all thy confidence and boasting come to this?

Obadiah 1:6

Esau; the father of this people, and here put for his posterity. All that the Edomites had laid up in the most secret places, in unsearchable caves, and deep abysses of hollow rocks, how are all his treasures found out, seized, and brought forth a prey to greedy soldiers! How durst they adventure here?

Obadiah 1:7

All the men of thy confederacy; they who by league had bound themselves to assist with men and arms, who had made an offensive and defensive league.

Have brought thee even to the border; either have conducted in honourable manner through their country the ambassadors thou didst send, concluded first a confederacy, and next conveyed

home the ambassadors who made it; or else have counselled thee to meet the war before it entereth thy country, and have marched as confederates with thee until thou weft come to the borders of thy country, as if they would there fight for thee against the enemy.

The men that were at peace with thee; this is ingemination, or repeating of the same thing before mentioned, unless *men of thy peace* be men that did make peace, and accept the terms thou didst propose for thy advantage.

Have deceived thee; proved treacherous, nay, designed to betray thee.

Prevailed against thee; either thus their plot took, or else they turned to the enemy, and under his colours destroyed thee.

They that eat thy bread; thy friends, those thou hast maintained, the soldiers thou keptest in pay.

Have laid a wound under thee; have laid a snare, armed with some sharp and piercing instrument, that wounds as soon as thou fallest on the snare.

There is none understanding in him; either no prudence to foresee and prevent this, or to manage and lessen it.

Obadiah 1:8

Shall I not? this interrogation is a strong assertion, I certainly will.

In that day, of war and desolation of Edom, when Nebuchadnezzar with his armies shall invade Idumea.

Destroy; either by war or sicknesses take the wise men out of Edom, they shall die; or deprive them of places of trust where they might help to save Edom; or else turn their wisdom into foolishness, as Ahithophel's was.

The wise men; men of sound counsel and good conduct in the affairs of peace and war.

And understanding out of the mount of Esau; an elegant ingemination for illustrating and confirming the prediction. All

Edom shall miserably perish, not a wise man left to foresee and prevent it.

Obadiah 1:9

Mighty men; valiant commanders and soldiers, who were never blemished with cowardice, who formerly durst adventure on greatest dangers and encounter most formidable enemies, and were never daunted with a slow-approaching enemy, how much soever over number to them, nor with any sudden surprising accidents; men of invincible courage, and most ready minds.

Teman; a principal city and munition of Idumea. See Eze_25:13 Hab_3:3 Amo_1:12.

Dismayed; astonished and surprised with such fear as disableth from action and counsel, shall neither dare to resist, nor hope to escape, but tamely give up all to the enemy.

To the end that every one may be cut off by slaughter; thus all shall be exposed to slaughter when they dare not fight, who should have saved themselves and defended others. Deplorable is their condition, who, surrounded every way with enemies, have neither strength nor counsel to resist their power or defeat their malice!

Obadiah 1:10

For thy violence: though Idumeans were guilty of many other and great sins, they are here charged with this as the great crying sin, inhuman cruelty and perfidiousness; they did mercilessly spoil and basely betray the Jews, which will be particularly mentioned in the following verses. Against thy brother: Edomites, the posterity of Esau, and the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, are here called brothers, for that the fathers of both people were brothers, twins; and this nearness of blood should have been remembered, and kindness should have still run through the blood and kindred. It is a great sin to be cruel and false to any, but greatest sin to be so to a brother. *Jacob* ; put for his children.

Shame shall cover thee; contempt and reproaches shall by all men be cast upon thee, and cover thee as a garment, or swallow thee up. God and man shall pour shame upon thee, thy memory shall be retained with condemnation to shame, and thy end shall be in shame too.

Thou shalt be cut off for ever; never more be a nation or kingdom; which was in a very great degree fulfilled in the cutting them off by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar. See Isa_34:5,**10 Eze 35:9**, threatens the like desolation.

Obadiah 1:11

In the day; during the war which the Babylonians made upon Judea, or in the day of battle when Jews fought with Chaldeans.

That thou stoodest on the other side; tookest up thy stand over-right them, observing with delight how they were worsted, slaughtered. and routed; or didst set thyself in battle-array against thy brother Jacob. The strangers; the Babylonians. and the mixed nations which joined with them.

Carried away captive; first mastered the Jews, and then made them captives. and sent them away out of their own land, a sight which should have moved compassions in thee.

His forces; his strength, his troops, or multitudes that survived and were taken, and their wealth and riches too.

Foreigners entered into his gates; that invaded, slew the inhabitants, and forced the besieged places to open their gates; or took the fortresses by assault.

Cast lots; so robbers divided their prey, and conquerors, Pro_1:14 Joe_3:3, which see.

Upon Jerusalem; upon the citizens and their goods, which were found in Jerusalem when it was taken by the Chaldeans.

Even thou, a neighbour, who wast not molested by Israel when they marched through other nations from Egypt to Canaan, who wast a brother by descent, Oba_1:10,

wast as one of them, as merciless and insolent as any of those barbarous foreigners.

Obadiah 1:12

Thou shouldst not have looked with secret joy and satisfaction to thy eyes and mind; if thou wouldst have looked, it should have been with tears and grief, not with joy and gladness at the sight: so the word, **Psa 37 Psa 44:7 Pro_29:16.**

On the day; on the affliction and sad misery which fell upon thy brother Jacob; so *day* in Scripture, thus absolutely put, doth often signify, Psa_37:13 Mic_7:4.

Became a stranger; having by the misery of war been made a captive, and lost his former right and liberty in his own country, was now looked upon as a stranger, i.e. one who had no more right to any thing in the land.

Neither shouldst thou have rejoiced: this explains the former.

Children of Judah: this expounds brother.

The day of their destruction: this tells us what day meant.

Neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly, vaunting over the Jews, insolently upbraiding and reproaching them with virulent words and exulcerated malice,

in the day of distress, when Jerusalem was taken.

Obadiah 1:13

Thou shouldst not have entered, as an enemy, a conqueror, into the gate; by synecdoche, city is meant by gate. The Edomites warring among the Babylonians, did with them enter the gates of conquered Jerusalem, appeared a proud, insulting enemy of Judah.

My people; thou shouldst have remembered that the Jews thy brethren were my people, my peculiar people.

In the day of their calamity; when their city was broken up, their king imprisoned, and captive with his nobles and other subjects.

Thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction, as before, Oba_1:12.

Nor have laid hands on their substance, or strength, the word notes both: Edom seized the persons of the Jews, and made them prisoners, and they plundered the city, seized the goods of the citizens; this they did with delight, but God will punish for it.

Obadiah 1:14

In the cross-way; or in the breaches, viz. of the walls, by which, when the city was taken, some might have made their escape from the enemy; thou didst, though thou shouldst not, spitefully and cruelly watch at such breaches, and preventedst their flight; or else

thou didst post thyself at the head of the ways, where thou mightest seize fleeing Jews.

To cut off; either kill if they would not yield, or cut off their hopes of escape by making them prisoners.

Those of his that did escape out of the city, and were fleeing farther for safety.

Neither shouldst thou have delivered up, reserved them prisoners, and brought them back into the hands of the Chaldeans,

those of his, of thy brother Jacob's posterity, which did remain, survived the taking of the city, and were fairly like to escape; but thou foundest them and betrayedst them,

in the day of distress, when they could no longer defend their city, nor had any hope but in a flight through all the secret ways they knew; but thou didst watch these ways, and didst cut off many who sought to flee through them.

Obadiah 1:15

For the day of the Lord, of just revenge from the Lord upon this cruelty of Edom, the time which the Lord hath appointed for the punishing of this and other nations, is near upon all the heathen; which God had given to Nebuchadnezzar, and which by this man's arms God would punish, as Jer_27:2-7; and that day may justly be accounted near, which shall come within the compass of one man's life, and that well advanced in years, as Nebuchadnezzar now was.

As thou hast done, perfidiously, cruelly, and ravenously against Jacob, with a hostile, revengeful mind, it shall be done by thine enemies

to thee, as Oba_1:7; and this came to pass on Edom within five years after Jerusalem was sacked and ruined; within which space of time Obadiah prophesied, reproving Edom, and threatening him for what he had done against Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

Thy reward, the punishment or retribution of evil for the evil thou hast done to Jacob,

shall return; by God's just hand, and by thy enemy's cruel hand, shall be poured out upon thee.

Upon thine own head: thy chief men, chief in the cruelty, shall be chief in suffering, for the measure thou hast measured shall be measured to thee, as Psa_137:8 Eze_35:15 Joe_3:7,8.

Obadiah 1:16

This, with some, is a confirmation of what is threatened against Edom, yet others make this verse the beginning of the consolatory sermon to Judah, and either suits well with the context.

As ye, O Edomites, or ye, O Jews.

Have drunk: if you interpret this drinking as feasting, revelling, and carousing, it is to be applied to the Edomites and others, who triumphed first by their arms, next in their cups, over conquered Judah.

Upon my holy mountain; either the whole land, or Jerusalem, or the temple, for all these are called by this name; and here these proud and insolent conquerors did drink confusion to the Jews.

All the heathen; the nations, enemies to Edom, shall on Mount Esau conquer first, and then triumph in their revelling feasts, and drink continually, till they have swallowed up Edom.

And they, Edomites,

shall be as though they had not been; shall by this means perish utterly, and their memory cease with them; so it suits with Eze_35:14,15, which see. Others refer the words to the Jews, thus: Ye have drunk the cup of astonishment in your land, and in Jerusalem, my holy mountain; so now ere long the nations which afflicted you shall drink of the cup of astonishment long, yea, drink the dregs of it, so that they shall perish, and be no more, when your day of dark affliction shall end in a day of light and salvation; and when other nations do this, Edom shall much more, because most deeply guilty above others— see Jer_49:17,18,21,22.

Obadiah 1:17

But. or

And, Heb.

Upon Mount Zion; historically, and in the letter, this refers to the people of the Jews, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and those who

worshipped God in the temple. In the mystical sense or typical, it refers. to the gospel church, and the setting up the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation and redemption of God's Israel.

Deliverance; a remnant that shall escape the enemies' sword, and which, after seventy years' captivity, shall be delivered and restored by Cyrus: a hieroglyphic of Israel's redemption by Christ.

There shall be holiness; or, it shall be holy, the temple, the city rebuilt, the people returned from captivity, shall be holy to the Lord; they shall obey his law, attend his temple service, and offer a pure offering to the Lord, &c. All this typical, and accomplished in the Christian church, though not fully and perfectly till the church is glorified in the heavenly Zion.

The house of Jacob; literally the survivors of the two tribes in the Babylonish kingdom, and some others of the ten tribes, but including the elect of God, the house of Jacob in the extent of it, as taken in Isa_59:20 Rom_11:26.

Shall possess their possessions; either the possessions of the heathen, their enemies, or rather their own ancient possessions, out of which the violence of their enemies did east them when they were led captive, and dispossessed of all.

Obadiah 1:18

Besides what Nebuchadnezzar shall do upon his particular quarrel against Edom, bringing them to a very desolate condition, there shall, (though it be not owned,) intermixed, be the quarrel of God for Israel's sake, which the Chaldeans shall avenge; or else, after the return out of captivity, and some settled state in their own land, Israel himself shall destroy the remnant of Edom, Joe_3:16, with Joe_3:19 Eze_25:14.

The house of Jacob; either the kingdom of the two tribes, or else the whole twelve tribes, the residue of the ten tribes joined with the two in their return from Babylon.

The house of Joseph; the ten tribes, particularly here mentioned to comfort them. and assure them that they should not be cast off, though they were more notoriously guilty of idolatry, and a long apostacy.

The house of Esau for stubble; as unable to resist or secure themselves as stubble is to resist the flame.

They shall kindle in them: this was fulfilled in part by Hyrcanus and the Maccabees, /APC 1Ma_5:3; but more fully to be accomplished in the mystical sense, when the Lord shall make his church as a fire to all its enemies, and Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all nations.

Devour them; as flame eats up the stubble.

There shall not be any; no considerable number or body of them, or none shall continue Edomites, but turn Jews, and be circumcised, be added to the church.

For the Lord hath spoken it; however or whenever this is done, it shall be done, because the Lord hath spoken it; this assures us of the thing.

Obadiah 1:19

They of the south; the Jews who lived in the south parts of Canaan, which was next to Idumea, shall, after their return and victories over Edom, possess his country, called here

the Mount of Esau. They of the plain the Philistines; the Jews who dwelt in the plain country, which was next to Palestina, Jos_15:33, shall enlarge their borders, and possess the Philistines' country, together with their ancient inheritance. Now of the possession of Mount Esau by the Jews, saith Grotius, it was most fully accomplished by Hyrcanus. Josephus, lib. 13. chap; 17, reports the matter thus, that the Idumeans were commanded either to depart their country, or be circumcised. If this were the time of fulfilling the one, it was also the time of fulfilling the other also.

And they shall possess the fields of Ephraim; and all the land which the ten tribes once did possess shall again be possessed by the Jews.

And the fields of Samaria; the fields also about Samaria, how greatly soever wasted, shall be replanted, and that by the Jews too.

Benjamin, either apart, or jointly with Judah, shall possess Gilead; a country beyond Jordan, assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, wasted by Hazael and Tiglathpileser

some time before Samaria was taken, but should be inhabited by the Benjamites; and probably Gad, Manasseh, and Reuben did enlarge upon the Moabites and Ammonites. Here is promised a larger possession than ever they had before the captivity, and it doth no doubt point out the enlargement of the church of Christ in the times of the gospel, and particularly when antichrist, typified in this prophecy by Edom, shall be destroyed: but we are to give the literal meaning, and think we do not miss of it.

Obadiah 1:20

The captivity of this host of the children of Israel, those of the ten tribes that were carried away captive by Shalmaneser, one hundred and thirty years before Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar,

shall possess that of the Canaanites; all the country they anciently possessed, with this addition also, that what the Canaanites held by force, and the Israelites could not take from them, shall now be possessed by these returned captives.

Zarephath, called Sarepta, Luk_4:26, near Sidon.

The captivity of Jerusalem; the two tribes, carried captive when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

In Sepharad; the modern Jews call Spain Sepharad, but without any good ground, nor was it so called anciently, nor doth the Chaldee paraphrase so interpret it; nor do I meet with any thing better than a tacit confession, that most believe it is a city of Chaldea or Assyria, and toward the northern and farthest bounds of it, but where it was exactly they know not.

Shall possess the cities of the south; all the cities, which were once their own, in Judea, which lay southward from this Sepharad, where the captives dwelt, and whence they return.

Obadiah 1:21

And, or *For*, so the Gallic version, printed at Rochelle, 1616.

Saviours; deliverers; literally, the governors or leaders of those captive troops, who shall come up from Babylon to their own country, such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, of whom it was said he came to seek the good of the Jews, Neh_2:10, and successively after these many others, to the times of Hyrcanus and

the Maccabees; mystically, Christ and his apostles, and other preachers of the gospel.

Shall come; literally, with leave and commission from the kings of Persia, such as Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes, to manage the affairs of the returned captives.

Upon Mount Zion; in Judea, at Jerusalem and the temple, and whatever might concern them, with their neighbours round about.

To judge; to avenge Israel upon Edom, to fight, subdue, and give laws to them, as Hyrcanus did when the Edomites were glad to be circumcised to keep their country.

The Mount of Esau; the whole country, so called from the father of that nation, who chose those mountainous countries for his habitation, as most suitable to his wild and rambling humour, which delighted in hunting.

The kingdom shall be the Lord's; the government, called here *the kingdom*, shall manifestly appear to be set up, maintained, and prospered by a power, wisdom, and goodness greater than human. The God of Israel, who is Jehovah, shall be honoured, obeyed, and worshipped by them, and they shall not, as formerly, rely on idols, or foreign aids. All which most fully is accomplished by Christ the Saviour, and now known in the Christian church, who do believe he will, and pray that he would, save his Zion, and destroy Edom, i.e. antichrist and his kingdom.

JONAH

OUR prophet owns himself by both his father's name and by his country; of this latter no great doubt is raised, though it appear not whether he was born in Gath-hepher, or whether it was the place of his abode when he was called to go envoy to the great city Nineveh; of the former, some do inquire whether it be an assumed name; and carry in it the character of some grace or virtue which was eminently in the man, or whether it were the proper name of the person. *Amittai*, in the Hebrew, denotes truth, veracity, or faith, with the pronoun possessive of the first person, My truth. Though Jonah, a dove by name, denounce dreadful things against Nineveh, yet he doth it as God's prophet, and God tells us by Jonah's pen; he is the son of his truth. Whether Obadiah were his father, and had this significant name *Amittai* given him for his owning the truth of God, and his true prophets, in the times of Ahab's apostacy; and whether his mother were that widow, whose son Elijah did raise from the dead; and whether he were the person sent by Elijah to anoint Jehu, Elisha, and Hazael, as the Jewish writers affirm; is of no certain demonstrability, and if demonstrated would be of no great moment or use to us. It is clear that (though this be the only book left under his name) he was employed as a prophet in Israel before he was sent into Assyria; for, **#2Ki 14:25**, he prophesied the future prosperous successes of Jeroboam the Second, enlarging and establishing the borders of Israel; yet is it not certain to us, whether he appeared a prophet before Jeroboam's time, or in the beginning of his reign. Not far from this time we are sure we may date his lime, and range him among the first of the prophets who have left their entire volumes behind them. By this also we may guess who was the king of Assyria, who gave such a rare example of repentance to all succeeding monarchs: it admits a dispute, whether it was Sardanapalus or Belesus, otherwise Pul-belochus, and Pul in Scripture history; if the time do not best suit to the latter (as I think it may) rather than to the former, yet I am sure the unparalleled retiredness of Sardanapalus, reported in history, seems to me a reason why it must be some monarch that, more like a gallant man, lived more free, open, and of easy access, that

the news might, as it is suggested it did, come to his hearing in the first day: such temper, it is like, Pul-belochus was of. Whoever was the king, Jonah little expected the success he did find; he thought so great a king and city would not mind him, or else would deride or punish him; or else if they believed him, then they would repent, God would spare them, and Jonah would be cried out on as a false prophet; upon this he declines the embassy, and till God taught him his duty in little ease he will not do it. When a miracle hath set him on his work, and succeeds it, he grows passionate, and will die; God spares and pardons him as well as Nineveh, (which yet falls to sin, and falls under the ruin foretold by Nahum,) and so leaves him a type of Christ's burial and resurrection, and an instance how far a good man may sometimes be from his duty and that great passions may be in a prophet.

JONAH CHAPTER 1

Jonah, sent by God to Nineveh, fleeth to Tarshish, **#Jon 1:1-3**: he is overtaken by a tempest, and discovered, **#Jon 1:4-10**, thrown into the sea, **#Jon 1:11-16**, and swallowed by a fish, **#Jon 1:17**.

Ver. 1.

Now, Heb. And.

The word of the Lord, which is a usual description of prophecy; what God had to speak against Nineveh, he here does reveal to Jonah, with command that he publish it to those concerned in it.

Came unto, to, or, was with,

Jonah; called Jonas, **#Lu 11:30**, which signifieth a dove; he was of Gath-hepher, a town of Zebulun, **#2Ki 14:25**, but no more is added, by which I conjecture it was some obscure place, to which Jonah gave more light than it could to him.

Amittai; of what rank he was appears not.

Ver. 2.

Arise; forthwith prepare thyself, and get all in readiness, and with hearty resolution set upon the work.

Go; so soon as thou art ready, set forward on thy journey, make not any delay.

Nineveh; the chief city or metropolis of the Assyrian kingdom, built by Asshur, **#Ge 10:11**, if that verse be not better translated thus, He (i.e. Nimrod) went out into Assyria, and builded Nineveh; so Nimrod was the founder and first builder.

That great city: it may be easily conjectured a great city which was situate on such a river as Tigris is, had continued so many hundred years, from A.M. 1119, in which it was built, unto 3124, about which time Jonah was sent to preach against it; during which long growth it may be conceived as great as it is ordinarily described, one hundred and fifty furlongs in length, that is, eighteen miles and three quarters of our English measure, and eleven miles and one quarter of the same measure in breadth.

Cry against it; earnestly and publicly preach against the sins, and denounce the sudden ruin of that city unless they repent; so cry that all may hear, or at least all may come to the knowledge of what is threatened.

For their wickedness is come up before me: their many and great sins, as it is said of Cain's sin when he had slain Abel, **#Ge 4:10**, and Sodom's sins, **#Ge 18:20,21**, and the sins of oppressors, **#Jas 5:4**, cry aloud, the cry enters heaven, and justice must no longer defer; yet I will give them warning; Jonah, go thou, and tell them plainly, their great sins shall be greatly punished.

Ver. 3.

But, Heb. *And*.

Jonah rose up: he was commanded to arise, **#Jon 1:2**, so here Jonah did, but it was to run from his business, not to do it; it was a rising against God.

To flee: whatever was the cause which moved Jonah to do this, it is strange that he should fall into a fixed opinion that he might, and a fixed resolution that he would, thus flee from his God and from his duty.

Unto Tarshish; to sea, as some, but this seemeth too rambling a humour: to Cilicia, say others, and particularly to Tarsus, no mean city of Cilicia, **#Ac 21:39**; others say it was Tunis or Carthage in Africa, to which Jonah minded to flee; either of these carry such probability with them, that we will not determine for our reader.

From the presence of the Lord: I cannot suppose that Jonah dreamed of fleeing from the omnipresence of God, he knew how David described this, #Ps 139:7-12, and natural reason told him he could never flee from this; but this presence of God is to be interpreted of the place where God usually had showed himself present by revealing his word and will to his prophets, who are servants to the Lord, and as such did stand before the Lord ready to receive his commands: now this command to Jonah being displeasing to him, and yet whilst he was in his own country, the valley of vision, he is still put upon the work, now he resolves to shift off the work by shifting place; perhaps he might think God would not put him upon it when he was gotten into a strange and remote country, where were no prophets, nor prophetic impulses. *Joppa*; a well-known haven on the-Mediterranean, now called *Jaffa*, anciently *Japho*, #Jos 19:46.

Going; bound for, and ready to set sail for, the place he designed.

Tarshish; Carthage or Tunis, or Tarsus in Cilicia.

Paid the fare; forthwith agreed. with the master of the ship, and, though unusual, paid presently, staid not till he came to the port designed.

Went down into it; immediately went a ship-board, and in a melancholy, discomposed humour gets into a cabin, or under deck, to go with them; waiting the time when they should go, that he might be sure to go with them.

From the presence of the Lord: see above.

Ver. 4.

The Lord, the almighty and eternal God, from whose work Jonah fleeth, sent out a great wind. God keepeth the winds as in storehouses, or treasuries, and now brings one forth to fetch back a fugitive, and obstinate refuser of his command: the greatness of it, with the suddenness of its rising, and manner of its working, undeniably showed that it was supernatural, and from God, displeased with all, or with some one or other of them.

Into the sea; the winds did not blow aloft over the sea and ship, but, as if they had intermixed with the very waters of the sea, and like an unheard-of hurricane, shook the very keel of the ship.

There was a mighty tempest in the sea; that part of the sea where Jonah's ship was: this messenger soon finds out Jonah, and speaks in most dreadful manner to all in the ship, who all saw and owned it to be from Heaven, the finger of God.

The ship was like to be broken; the master and mariners thought they, ship, and goods, and all should be lost; the Hebrew expresseth it as if the ship had sense of God's anger, as if the ship could think, and did think of its own weakness, and God's mighty hand.

Ver. 5.

Then, when this preternatural tempest fell-with all its violence into the sea, the mariners; passengers are not here named, who, unaccustomed to sea, might be too apprehensive of danger; but the men that were acquainted with the sea, and had seen many a tempest, and weathered many a storm,

were afraid, heartily afraid, full of apprehensions that they should be wrecked.

Cried, with loud voice and earnest petitions, as the manner of such men is, when danger awakens them to the duty they neglect whilst safe. Every man; not a man of them but feared, nor a man of them but cried out, by which it is evident it was a most dreadful storm.

Unto his god: by this it appears that the ship's crew was a mixture of men who worshipped several gods, and every one doth now cry to the god whom he worshipped: whatever god it might be, it was not he that did raise nor could allay the tempest. Cast forth the wares that were in the ship: when prayer to their false gods doth no good, but their danger continued and threatened them with foundering in the sea, to prevent this they lighten the ship, as is usual in such cases, and cast the wares out; not as sacrifice to the god of the flea, or as repenting of piracy, by which the goods were gotten, though some conjecture so, but the text tells us it was

to lighten the ship that it may bear up its head and work with the sea better than when heavy laden.

But Jonah, the greatest weight, and only danger to ship and seamen,

was gone down into the sides of the ship; was under the hold in some cabin or other in the side of the ship, whither he went before the storm arose;

and was fast asleep; in a very deep sleep, as the word imports.

Ver. 6.

So the ship-master, who had the conduct of the vessel, and from whose mouth such a reproof was seasonable, came to him; missing him, when all the rest were toiled with labour, and had been crying mightily to their false gods, but Jonah appeared not.

What meanest thou, O sleeper? a very decent yet sharp reproof to him: What metal art thou made of? or, What god dost thou fear? or, Art thou deaf to all the menaces of Heaven?

Arise, awake, get up, call upon thy God; pray to that God thou worshippes, as we have already each done, for possibly thy God may be mightier than our gods, and may lay the tempest that lieth so heavily upon us. They had lost their labour seeking to other gods, yet think it advisable that Jonah should try his God too; *if so be,* &c.: see #**Joe 2:14**; and so #**Am 5:15**.

Will think upon us, with pity, care, and favour, and do for us in this our strange distress, that we perish not; that ship, goods, and men too, may not be lost.

Ver. 7.

And they said every one to his fellow; after they had prayed, which was necessary in such cases, as being a religious means, and cast out the goods which loaded the ship, which was a proper natural means of safety, but none appeared, still the tempest, and their danger with it, continued, a shrewd symptom that there was one or other amongst them whose sins had provoked God to do this, and that it were fit to be known who this was; and whoever first moved for making the search, all agree in the expedient. It is like that it was upon the thoughts of many of them, and so expressed here.

Let us cast lots; it is extraordinary danger we are in, all ordinary means fail, let us try that which hath somewhat extraordinary in it; though many times used, let the lot decide among us who is the cause of all this. Lots are an appeal to Heaven in doubtful cases,

and therefore not to be used on trifling or unnecessary cases, but where the matter is great, difficult, or undeterminable in any other way, as Scripture instances of lots do inform us, #**Le 16:8,9 Nu 26:55 Jos 14:2 18:6 21:4,5**, &c.; #**1Sa 10:20,21**, Saul chosen by lot; #**Ne 10:34 11:1 Ac 1:26**.

This evil; very great, unusual, and preternatural tempest; not one among them but had deserved more, yet they surmise some notorious offender amongst them, or this had not been.

So they cast lots, they act according to what was proposed, **and the lot fell upon Jonah;** God determines and singles out Jonah.

Ver. 8.

Then said they unto him; when the lot pointed out Jonah, these mariners all are satisfied that he was the man, that heaven had determined that grand inquiry, and accordingly they treat with him.

Tell us, we pray thee; they try what fair means will do with him, and desire to have the account from his own mouth; so Joshua dealt with Achan, #**Jos 7**: satisfied in the person, next they do, with commendable justice and calmness, inquire into the thing.

For whose cause this evil is upon us: what hast thou done, for which God is so angry with thee, and with us for thy sake? sure thou canst not but know what it is, and now frankly tell us what is thine occupation, what course of life hast thou lived, or what employment dost thou now profess to follow, that we may guess by that whether thou art one of flagitious or of honest life.

Whence comest thou? ere he give answer to this, probably another asketh whence he cometh, what company he had kept; by this they conjecture at the man.

What is thy country? another starts a third inquiry, what country or nation he is of; to those ports persons of different nations flocked; possibly they hoped some or other in the ship might be his countrymen, and so fittest to examine him. Of what people art thou? this seems to be the same question repeated, or else an inquiry where he dwelt. These are the heads of the questions asked him.

Ver. 9.

And he said unto them; Jonah freely and readily gives account of himself.

I am a Hebrew; one that am descended from Heber, whose offspring by Abraham are well known, and probably to these mariners: he saith not, *a Jew*, because he was not in strictness of speech, for he was of the tribe of Zebulun; nor an Israelite, distinguished from the Jew, lest he should seem to own himself of that idolatrous faction.

I fear; I worship and serve the true God only; or possibly it may imply that his employment was in the immediate service of God, as a religious person that had abdicated the world, and dedicated himself to God.

The Lord; the eternal and almighty God; yours are upstart gods, and have no power or might, nor can they do any thing.

The God of heaven; who first made, now ruleth, and ever will rule the heavens, which none of your gods can pretend to, those heavens from whence you see this storm falleth.

Which hath made the sea; that sea which now threatens you for my sake, and threatens me for my sin; my God hath raised the sea in his quarrel to contend thus furiously, and he can, and none but he can, command it to be still. *And the dry land;* a description of the earth: you would get thither, but all your gods cannot bring you thither, or give you to set one foot upon it, if my God say no. This is the sum of what Jonah declares, by which he intimateth his innocency from any flagitious crime, as they might imagine him guilty, and yet confesseth the greatness of his sin, which he had before told them, though they understood it not, or thought light of it, he fled from the presence of the Lord.

Ver. 10.

Then; when Jonah had declared his God, whose power and wrath these mariners saw and heard in the tempest, and what sin of his was now punished, and how they had taken him into their ship, knowing that he did runaway from this mighty God.

The men were exceedingly afraid; their fear was doubled, every thing now represents horror to them, their own danger, Nineveh's

approaching dismal ruin, which they believe by what they see, satisfied that he who so tremendously punished the refusal to deliver the message, was able and certainly would execute the sentence which he commanded should be delivered.

Why hast thou done this? now they ask a reason for that of which no reason can be given: it was most unreasonable that Jonah had done, and we find no answer to this interrogatory, though the foregoing questions were answered. Others think it is a reproof of him for so doing; I rather think it mixed of both. It was a real reproof to himself while he more particularly explains the great sinfulness Of this prank of his; and it is an inquiry made for satisfaction to them, who no doubt thought of Jonah's God as they did of their own, that it was no hard matter to be done, nor any great sin if done, to run from their presence. These likely were their thoughts of the thing when he first told them; but the dreadful storm that Jonah's God sent after this fugitive servant of his makes them more curious to know what great sin it was, and so Jonah explaining the whole, confesseth his sin, humbleth himself, and takes the reproof to himself, and informeth them aright. *The men*; the master of the ship, and the mariners.

Knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord: in these words it is probable he told them; now though they knew this was the thing, yet they apprehended not what was in it, but did judge of this by their own gods, and their presence.

He had told them, when they inquired the cause of his travels, as it is very like they would do, ere they took his fare.

Ver. 11.

Then said they; when they heard all that Jonah had declared to them, and well weighed it all, and saw it looked all of one piece, most credible.

Unto him; a prophet fittest in that respect to tell them what should be done, and a party so highly concerned in it.

What shall we do unto thee? if thy God will by thee declare his will and we do it, we shall not provoke him; and if thou submit to his will, and direct us, we shall not injure thee.

That the sea may be calm; cease its rage, and return to its former calmness for us to make our voyage.

For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous; though Jonah had recounted all, and given glory to God, taken shame to himself, and satisfied the seamen, yet the sea grew higher and higher, more tempestuous in itself, and more dangerous to them, and they were sensible that somewhat must be done with Jonah to quiet all. Their fear was lest they should mistake herein, and therefore they ask his counsel.

Ver. 12.

He said unto them; he readily gives them advice for their safety.

Take me up: this he spake as a prophet directed of God, and not, as some Jewish rabbi thinks, choosing to die rather than to go to Nineveh.

Cast me forth into the sea; throw me overboard into the sea; no other way must you deal with me than this, and this way I not only direct as expedient, but from God I give you it as a command, and you must do it; thus my God will punish my disobedience and contempt.

So shall the sea be calm unto you; as a prophet I assure you the tempest shall cease, and you be safe, and by that you may know I being in the ship endangered you all.

I know; I am assured of this, and though I have been your danger, and this was my fault, yet it shall not be my fault if you be drowned.

For my sake; for my sin, which God will punish, but not by my own act, I must not leap overboard; it is a crime God will punish by that justice which is in this place.

This great tempest is upon you; and will be, till you have executed God's sentence on me, which I willingly submit to.

Ver. 13.

Nevertheless, Heb. *And*; but rightly to the proper sense of the phrase rendered here

nevertheless: Notwithstanding the lot fell on Jonah, he confessed his fault, directs them to cast him overboard, and in all this

avoweth himself to be a prophet of God, and assures them of a calm sea if they do this; yet, very willing to save him,

the men rowed hard; they contrived all ways, and are willing to be at any labour to save him; they ply their oars, and strain their strength, with deep strokes to force the ship to shore.

But they could not; all was lost labour; God had given other order to his servants, the wind and sea; both obey him, and both keep Jonah a prisoner, self-condemned, and desirous of what the mariners were very unwilling to.

For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them: see **#Jon 1:11:** the sea tossed itself more violently, and by unsteady motions, like some hurricane, every moment endangered them.

Ver. 14.

Wherefore, since all their labour and skill to carry the ship to shore was successless, and they saw no remedy, but they must either follow Jonah's advice against himself, or drown with him,

they cried, with importunity of mind, and with loud voices too in prayer,

unto the Lord; not now, as in the beginning of the tempest, every man to his god; but, better instructed now, they all cry to Jonah's God, to Jehovah the true God.

We; they all join in prayer.

Beseech; sue to Mercy for mercy; they plead not innocency or merit, but pray for mercy, and that free. Thee; all sue to God, not to saints or intermediate demons. We

beseech thee; it is repeated to note their vehemency in prayer.

Let us not perish for this man's life; though he is pointed out by lot, hath advised us hereunto, yet if possible let the tempest cease, and we all be safe; let not him perish, nor we for him: so their first prayer is for safety to Jonah and all in the ship.

Lay not upon us innocent blood: this is the next suit, that if God, by the continued tempest, do peremptorily and irreversibly require Jonah's life, a person innocent among them, and who had, since he came to them, so demeaned himself, that, should they throw

him overboard before they had tried all kind of means for preserving him, they might not be justly accounted barbarous murderers, and God would certainly charge innocent blood upon them; this they deprecate with all earnestness and importunity.

Hast done; sending the tempest, arresting the prophet by it, detecting him by lot, sentencing him by his own mouth, and confirming the condemning sentence by the continuance of the storm, and so leaving us to perish with this offender against thee, or to be thy executioners; this is thine own doing, and it is just because thou doest it.

As it pleased thee; though it be secret to us, and strange in our opinion, yet it is very just and necessary we know, or it would not please thee it should be so.

Ver. 15.

So, Heb. *And,*

they took up Jonah; as he advised; with reset to themselves, though with full-consent of Jonah, at last they yield. Cast him forth into the sea: see **#Jon 1:12**.

And the sea ceased from her raging; as Jonah had assured them, so they find the sea all on a sudden calm and friendly, which we must understand includes the wind sent into the sea, though it be not mentioned here.

Ver. 16.

Then, when they saw God approved the thing, and confirmed Jonah's word, as of a true prophet, and had spared them, the men, the seamen, and all others, if any others were in the ship,

feared the Lord; with a deep reverence of his power, wisdom, and justice against Jonah, and of his mercy towards them. What was the final effect of this, and whether they were by it thoroughly turned to God, I inquire not now; it may best become our charity, that as Jonah's casting overboard was type of Christ's death, so the effect it had upon the mariners might be a type of the conversion of the heathen from idols to God.

Exceedingly; their fear before was exceeding great, but that was a fear of the danger, and for themselves a natural fear; but now

they do fear the Lord and his majesty and mercy, it is a religious fear.

Offered a sacrifice; what they had in the ship to offer to God, or how they could offer there, appears not to us, but the Scripture affirms they did sacrifice, not to idols, but to the true God: some suppose the words are to be interpreted that they would sacrifice at Jerusalem, where they now know that the God of Jonah was worshipped.

Made vows: vows are a part of natural religion, and here these persons bind themselves by vows to recognize God's goodness in their deliverance. It is not improbable that here is a trajection, as many times in Scripture, that placed last which in construction is to be first. They vowed vows and sacrificed, i.e. vowed they would do it, would be proselytes, and ever worship him Jonah preached to them, Creator of heaven and earth.

Ver. 17.

Now, Heb. *And*.

Prepared; created at first, say some; but what need that, when a mighty overgrown fish of a double age may do this; by God's will and appointment it attended the ship, and followed it in the storm, expecting a prey, and ready to receive the prisoner.

A great fish; a whale, as we read, #Mt 12:40; others say it was a shark, a fish common in those seas.

To swallow up; not to chew upon him, but to take him down whole.

Jonah was in the belly of the fish, in safe custody, three days and three nights, that he might rightly typify Christ's burial in the grave.

JONAH CHAPTER 2

Ver. 1.

The prayer of Jonah, #Jon 1:1-9. He is delivered out of the belly of the fish, #Jon 1:10.

Then, Heb. *And*, at that time when he lay by the heels a close prisoner in a prison, whence none before or since ever came out alive,

Jonah prayed; sent his petition in all humble and submissive manner unto God: Jonah, wonderfully preserved alive, and in full exercise of his judgment and memory, now betakes himself to prayer, and in this exerciseth his graces; his soul follows hard after God, when he was shut up in this dungeon.

Unto the Lord, that was angry, and now was punishing of Jonah; the Lord, who had committed him to this prison; the almighty God, who can do for Jonah all that he can need or desire.

His God; though Jonah in his froward fit flees from his God, yet now, by the rod taught better, he flees to God, nay, as his God, and remembers his particular interest in God. If Jonah prays by faith grounded on God's almightiness, now he prays with assurance and hope of faith, looking to God as his God; if the power of the Lord and his mercy keep Jonah alive in the fish's belly, the same power and mercy can deliver him out of this danger, and the prophet believes he is kept there for an enlargement as miraculous as his confinement was.

Out of the fish's belly; where he was a prisoner under many miracles, and all concur to awaken him to prayer and faith; he calls it

the belly of hell, or the grave, #Jon 2:2. He employed his time well there.

Ver. 2.

And said: the former verse was a general account that he prayed, this word in the front of this verse is a transition to a more full account of his prayer, what for substance, and somewhat of the words also.

I cried; not with a loud voice of the tongue, as it was not ordinarily feasible in so close a prison, so nor was it necessary he should, where none were to hear but his God, who heareth the strongest desires, and accounts them the strongest cries; so Jonah cried with his whole heart.

By reason of mine affliction; distress, or straits with which he was encompasseth and close besieged; nor was there ever closer siege laid to any one, his body and mind both shut up, the one by the monstrous dungeon of the fish's belly, and the other by the terrors of the Almighty.

Unto the Lord: it was in many respects fit Jonah should petition God, for he was committed by his special warrant, and none either had power or authority to deliver him but God.

He heard me: though Jonah say not how God did hear, in what particular, yet he knew both how and in what; the support of his person, the exercise of his reason, the workings of his heart toward God, and a hope or assurance that lie should be delivered, were part of the mercy God gave, and he prayed for.

Out of the belly of hell cried I; the grave, so *Sheol*; so it was as dark to Jonah, and had been as destructive too, if mercy had not prevented. This is doubled, to intimate both the prisoner's earnestness, and the greatness of the mercy given to one that was as shut up in the grave.

Thou heardest my yoke; of his soul, whilst he was in that dismal dungeon; as above.

Ver. 3.

For: this introduceth the account of his distress, mentioned **#Jon 2:2**.

Thou, the Almighty, offended by my frowardness and obstinacy, **hadst cast me into the deep;** though the mariners' hands heaved me overboard, it was thy hand that did it, and pressed me sore. *The deep;* the bottom of the sea: by what follows it is probable Jonah was cast into the sea far from shore.

In the midst of the seas, or heart of the seas, but more literally and strictly in the midst of the seas, than that **#Eze 27:4**.

The floods; either the mighty rivers which run into that sea, or the floods, the mighty currents, which the rolling sea and winds with tide made.

All thy billows and thy waves passed over me; the surges of the sea, which explains what before he called *the floods*. Here is an

elegant description of the violence and horror of the seas into which Jonah was cast, which tossed his body, and signified the terrors wherewith his soul was distressed from God's immediate hand, as **#Ps 42:7**.

Thy waves: Jonah seeth God's hand and sovereignty in all this, intimating that he prayed for what he knew his God could do for him.

Ver. 4.

Then: though this word with us ordinarily denoteth time, yet here it denoteth order and connexion; the Hebrew is *And. I said*, with myself, I thought in the midst of my fears and sufferings.

I am cast out of thy sight; cut off from all hope of life among men; rejected, forsaken, and as it were forgotten of my God, and left by this death to pass to a worse death. Thus he was racked with sense of present danger from God's displeasure, and. is almost carried away with a despair of ever seeing the face of God again with comfort. much as **#Ps 31:22 La 4:22**.

Yet I will look again: his faith begins to recover itself; he will not, as despairing ones, any more look toward lost hopes, but with reviving hope he will hope against hope, and never yield to such despairs.

Towards thy holy temple; where the ark of the covenant, where the mercy-seat, where propitiatory sacrifices are offered, where is God's high priest, types of the great Redeemer, Mediator, and Saviour, by whom sin is expiated, sinners pardoned, grace and favour communicated, where God commands the blessing, life for evermore; he will look and hope to appear in the material typical temple, and to find there grace dispositive for, as well as significative of, glory in the heavenly temple; he hopes for both.

Ver. 5.

The former part of this verse seems to be an ingeminating of what was said **#Jon 2:3**, and bears the self-same meaning and interpretation.

The waters; literally, the waters of the sea; metaphorically, afflictions; mystically, temptations; these last arising from his own

guilt, and from the tokens of God's displeasure against him in so unusual a manner.

Compassed me about, even to the soul; to the endangering his life, and were forerunners (as he apprehended) of worse miseries, the foretastes of an eternal damnation: it was a miracle of providence to preserve my life, it was no less wonder of free grace to save my soul.

The depth closed me round about; he was carried to the bottom of the sea, lay as in the deepest hole of the sea.

The weeds were wrapped about my head; not immediately, as some conjecture, by the fish pulling them from the bottom of the sea and swallowing them down, where they wrapped Jonah's head; but mediately, when the fish swam amidst these: or rather it is a comparative speech; I was no more likely to escape drowning, than a man in the depth of the sea, wrapped up in, and held fast down by, the weeds in the bottom of the sea.

Ver. 6.

I went down, the fish carried him down,

to the bottoms of the mountains; as deep in the sea as are the bottoms of the mountains, or into those depths out of which might be supposed that mountains were thence drawn out by the roots; an elegant description of fathomless depths, whirlpools of the seas.

The earth with her bars was about me for ever; I seemed to be imprisoned where the bars that secured me were as great and durable as the rocks which they were made of.

Yet, notwithstanding all these insuperable difficulties, and my own fears,

hast thou brought up; by what was first my danger thou hast wonderfully secured me, what I thought should have been my grave was made a safety to me; by the fish Jonah is in due time fairly and safely set on shore.

My life; his life of nature; his life of comfort, and peace, and joy too.

From corruption, or the pit; a description of the stale of the dead, whose bodies turn to putrefaction and stench.

O Lord; O almighty and eternal Being, Lord and Sovereign over all.

My God; mine, saith Jonah, by particular choice, faith, and hope, whom I had served and should not have disobeyed, to whom I prayed, who hath pardoned, whom I will adore, obey, and love for ever.

Ver. 7.

When, so soon as, and so often as,

my soul fainted within me, my heart was perplexed with variety of fears, sorrows, temptations, and difficulties; whenever I did forecast, and devise what way I might likely escape out of this forlorn condition, I was dispirited, my heart sunk within me, #**Ps 22:14 42:4**; and I had fainted if I had not remembered the mighty, faithful, wise, and gracious God, who could save me, and on whose mercy I relied, who had promised the best of two deliverances, the eternal, whatever he did with me as to the temporal deliverance.

I remembered the Lord, with faith and prayer, for it is not a bare recalling of God to his mind, but a recalling his mercy and promise to his mind.

And my prayer, made in the fish's belly, in his prison more dismal than ever was that of Manasseh, came in unto thee; did enter the ears of the Lord, he heard and readily answered.

Into thine holy temple; typically the temple at Jerusalem, to which Jonah looked; but principally heaven, the temple of his glory, whence God gives the command for his delivery, orders the gaoler to set him safe on shore.

Ver. 8.

Whoever they are that do, as the heathen mariners, seek to, depend upon, and wait for help from idols, false gods, whoever choose them for their assistance, and worship them, do depend upon most false grounds, wait for most lying and deceiving objects; and this of the prophet is true of, and applicable to, all our creature dependencies, to all trust reposed in any but God himself;

these dig to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, #Jer 2:13.

Forsake; turn away from, and do really and practically forsake, God, as he leaves the east who goeth on to the west; trust in God and idols are as opposite as is the east to the west.

Their own mercy; the Lord, who is to all that seek him, and depend on him, the fountain of living waters, who is an eternal fountain of mercy, and flows forth freely to all that wait for him.

Ver. 9.

Jonah here doth intimate his adherence to God, his assurance that he should find God to be a fountain of mercy to him, that God would hear his prayer.

I will sacrifice; in most solemn manner recognize the mercy I receive; I shall have just ground to do it, and I will certainly be just to the mercy of my God and do it. Who wait on gods that cannot deliver shall never have cause to sacrifice to them; if they do the thing, they do sacrilegiously rob God.

Unto thee; excluding all others, who shall have as little share in the praise as they had in the thing for which praise is offered.

With the voice of thanksgiving; including the heart also; for such is the sacrifice with which God is best pleased, #Ps 50:14,23 116:17 Ho 14:2 Heb 13:15.

I will pay; vows are, when made, debts we owe to God, and must, as just debts, be paid.

That I have vowed: it is not said what it was he had vowed, probably it was a more obedient heart and deportment, likely he resolveth to go to Nineveh and preach what God commandeth him; he will perform his promise to the Lord in all things he did engage to do.

Salvation; power to save, and actual deliverance from all dangers, in all distresses: when none of the gods the marine is invoked, neither any one apart nor yet all together, could quiet the tempest, and save from the danger of the sea, Jonah's God could do both, he could by his own single power deliver Jonah out of the belly of hell.

Is of the Lord; he only can save, none else can as he can, #Ps 3:8 68:20.

Ver. 10.

And, or, as the particle is sometimes rendered,

Then, i.e. after Jonah had prayed, and acted his faith, though in the whale's belly.

The Lord, who made heaven and earth, and commandeth both, who is God of salvation.

Spake; commanded, signified it to be his pleasure; as the same word prepared the fish, and brought it to give attendance to receive the prisoner, so now it doth discharge the keeper, and requires him to set his prisoner at liberty.

Unto the fish: though fishes are destitute of reason, and understand not as man, yet they have ears to hear their Creator, and readily obey.

It vomited out Jonah; it presently obeys the word, it could no longer keep Jonah a prisoner.

On the dry land: the command required this, nor could it be a deliverance without this; had he been cast out of the whale's belly any where else in the sea he had been drowned, but now that which was his danger shall be his safety, a ship now to land him which before was like to be his grave. The Scripture doth not say where he was thus set on shore, but considering he was to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to them, it is a very obvious conjecture that any man might make, that the whale set Jonah on shore in some place of the Syrian shore nearest to Nineveh; and on view of the charts any indifferent geographer would conjecture that it was some where on the bay or gulf of Lajazzo, anciently the Sinus Issicus, or somewhat near to Alexandette, as the French, or Scanderoon, as the Turks call it, whence, though a long, yet by the maps appears to be the straightest, journey to Nineveh. As for some who conjecture it was on the Euxine Sea, they consider not the strait passage of the Propontis, nor the length of one thousand six hundred miles from Joppa to that part of the Euxine which is next to Nineveh, nor the length and difficulty of the passage thence by land to Nineveh: but he that said Jonah was landed on

Nineveh's shore was much wider out in his guess, and never considered that Nineveh was built on Tigris some hundreds of miles by land from Joppa, and if the fish brought him thither, it was by a compass of many thousand miles, which would require some months to run over, besides that the fish would be too great to swim up the river. Their conjecture biddeth fairest who confine it to some places of the Syrian sea, and not far from Scanderoon.

JONAH CHAPTER 3

Jonah, being sent again, preacheth the overthrow of Nineveh, **#Jon 3:1-4**. Upon their repentance, **#Jon 3:5-9**, God repenteth him of the evil, **#Joh 3:10**.

Ver. 1.

And, after that Jonah had been well disciplined for his contumacy, and was set at liberty,

the word of the Lord came; the command, or the prophetic Spirit: see **#Joh 1:1**.

The second time; the first time Jonah rebels against the command, now, better prepared and humbled, he is tried again, God doth give him the gift of prophecy, and by that signifies his reconciliation to him, and admits him into his old station.

Ver. 2.

Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city; see **#Am 1:2**; great in extent of ground, in strength of its fortifications, height and breadth of its walls, and multitude of its towers; great in the multitude of its numbers, and riches of its citizens, and every whit as great in the multitude of its sins: but let nothing retard or discourage thee, arise and go.

Preach, publicly, plainly, boldly; cry, **#Am 1:2**.

Unto it, i.e. against it, publish the near approaching ruin of it, preach to them the necessity of their repentance, and awaken them to it by the terrors of the Lord.

The preaching that I bid thee; either which I did bid thee at first, as **#Am 1:2**, or what I shall suggest and communicate to thee when thou art come thither.

Ver. 3.

So, Heb. *And*; as God commands and directs, so Jonah with ready, resolved, and obedient mind sets about the work.

Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh; though it was a long journey, yet three weeks' or three months' travel by land is more eligible than three days in the belly of hell.

According to the word of the Lord; every way complying with the command of God, speeding thither resolved to preach whatsoever sermon God should put into his head, encouraged with assurance that God who did send would be with him whithersoever he was sent.

An exceeding great city; the greatest city of the known world at that day; it was then in its flourishing state greater than Babylon, whose compass was three hundred and sixty-five or three hundred and eighty-five furlongs, but Nineveh was in compass four hundred and eighty, her walls a hundred feet in height, and broad enough for three coaches to meet and safely pass by each other; it had fifteen hundred towers on its walls, and these towers two hundred feet high; and one million and four hundred thousand men employed continually for eight years to build it, if our author be not mistaken. There is some difference in accounting how this city was

three days' journey: if we account the length of it at one hundred and fifty furlongs, this will amount to eighteen miles and three quarters; this seems too little to be three days' journey, unless it be supposed the prophet accounts his leisurely progress, and takes in the many stops that would necessarily and unavoidably retard him in his walking and preaching such strange news; if we consider this, it is not unlikely six miles would be as far as he could go in a day, preaching to all and discoursing with many. Others will account it three days' journey to go through the streets and lanes of this city; but on the supposition it was eighteen miles in length, and eleven miles in breadth, it will be more than three days' journey, or a week's journey; for supposing in a mile's breadth but eight streets, from end to end, through eighteen miles' length, it will amount to four hundred and sixty-four miles. Others account by the compass of the walls sixty miles, and allow twenty

miles to each day's journey, too far for any one to walk, preach, dispute or reason, and account for himself: the first account seems most probable.

Ver. 4.

The former verse gives us intelligence of Jonah's arrival at Nineveh; now, so soon as come, he preacheth.

Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said; to walk through and to preach the dreadful threats of God against Nineveh, and he proclaimed openly and plainly what God commanded; he feared not to tell all what concerned all; he did it with earnestness, as deeply affected with what he spake from God against this mighty city.

Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown; a very short time, some might think, for this great city; but it is more time than God was bound to give, or than they could deserve, or than God gave to Sodom and Gomorrah, the sins of which cities were no doubt found in Nineveh now Jonah preached, and grew ripe by that time Nahum came to foretell their ruin; see Nahum. The threat is express and peremptory in its form and words; though there be a reserve with God on condition of repentance, which operated in due time, and manifestly proved that God intended mercy to repenting Nineveh, though he threatened an overthrow to impenitent Nineveh. How it should be overthrown is not expressed; some conjecture by a foreign enemy, which carrieth unlikelihood with it; others guess by fire from heaven: but since it was not destroyed we need not inquire how it should have been, and had they not repented the event would have informed us fully.

Ver. 5.

So, Heb. *And,*

the people of Nineveh; the inhabitants who heard; they first believed who first heard, and successively others as soon as they heard.

Believed God, speaking by his prophet; they knew their own sins. Though Jonah were a stranger to them, yet because, coming in God's name, he did very particularly, fully, and to the life enumerate, decipher, and lay open their sins, with what they deserved, what might be expected, what God threatened from

heaven, all which concurring wrought them to believe their danger, God's mercy, and the possibility of escape if they repent. Whether the fame of Jonah's deliverance came to Nineveh before him appears not, nor is it likely it should come so far and so fast, though it were known on the Syrian coast, and about Tyre and Zidon; possibly Jonah might publish it in Nineveh.

Proclaimed a fast; every one called upon other to fast, of cried out it was high time to fast, repent, and supplicate God, so some think; but this passage is an anticipation, tells us what was done, and will tell us afterwards on what grounds, authority, and example it was done.

Put on sackcloth; a ceremony very usual in mournings, private or public, in those countries, and a token of their true mourning; this all did, great and small, rich and poor.

Ver. 6.

This now accounteth for the people's proclaiming a fast, **#Jon 3:5**, they did it because it was commanded, and they had the king's example herein.

Word came to the king; whether Jonah did particularly speak to his hearers to send word to the king, or whether the strangeness of the thing might move some or other to report it to the courtiers, and they to the king, is not specified; certain it is that the king had word brought him, and it was considered by him: nor is it said who this king was; Sardanapalus seems too early, Pul-belochus is with more probability thought to be this king.

Arose from his throne; came down from his royal seat.

Laid his robe from him; put off his rich, gorgeous, and luxurious apparel.

Covered him with sackcloth; put on the rough and uneasy garments of a mourner.

And sat in ashes, as **#Es 4:3 Job 2:8 42:6**.

Ver. 7.

And he, the king, caused it to be proclaimed; took a particular care to have speedily a fast ordered, and notified to the people by

those public officers who were wont to proclaim the decrees and edicts of the king and his council.

And published: this ingemination confirms the thing, and adds somewhat for showing the deep sense the king had both of his oral and his people's sins, danger, and duty in this exigent.

By the decree of the king and his nobles; it was an act of the king and council, and that which passed them with good liking, they relished the thing, as the Hebrew phrase importeth.

Let neither man: men have sinned and provoked God to this high displeasure, it does most principally concern them to repent, fast, and mourn for their sins, that God may pardon and spare them.

Nor beast: these, comprised ill the threat, and likely to be involved. in the common danger, are put under a fast; this the general, which is afterwards expressed more particularly,

herd and flock; let none of these, whether at home in the stall, or abroad in the fold and herd.

Taste any thing: this is referred by some to the strictness with which men were bound to keep this fast; but this may be a general prohibition, explained by what follows, let all, man and beast, forbear to eat or drink, that the fast might be most solemn, that the cry of man, seconded with the cry of hungry cattle, might enter the ears of God, who preserveth man and beast.

Ver. 8.

But let man, every man, from the greatest, the king on the throne, to the least, the beggar on the dunghill, put off his usual and softer habit, and afflict himself in coarsest garments.

And beast; their horses, in which they gloried much, their camels also, both which they adorned with rich and costly clothing in their stables, and with as rich furniture for saddles, bridles, and trappings when they were used abroad, now all, in testimony of a hearty repentance, must clothe with sackcloth; the clothing of beasts must witness for men.

Cry mightily unto God: beasts in distress and starving cry to God, as the young ravens and hungry lions, and so here beasts of the herd and flock cry. But it is to be referred to men lamenting

their sins, deprecating judgments. imploring mercy with all earnestness and vehemency Of desire, called here a crying mightily to God, as **#Am 1:5**.

Let them turn; the inhabitants of Nineveh, whether traders, or who live at their ease and pleasure there, let them reform and amend their doings. Every one: the edict for ceasing from violence is as full and particular as the edict for fasting, all are commanded to be just and righteous.

From his evil way; not cease from single acts only, but change the course and habitual manner of life, called here their way: every one was vicious, and each one almost had some particular method of sin, which was his way of sinning; this must they turn from. Violence: oppression and rapine, as a chief sin, is here particularly mentioned: compare this with **#Na 3:1**.

That is in their hands; which acted by them is still in their hands, both in the guilt of it, the effects of it, and as publicly known as what is seen in a man's hands: see **#Ps 7:3**.

Ver. 9.

Here is the ground of the Ninevites' fasting and praying, there is a possibility that they may escape; there is fairly argued a probability, for why should the ruin beforehand be threatened, but to give warning so many days ere it come: unless it be to try us, whether we will fast, pray, repent, and amend? and though Jonah had no commission to promise them a deliverance, yet it is very like he acquainted them with the merciful and gracious nature of his God. This speech of theirs see **#Joe 2:14 2Sa 12:22** includes both faith and doubt, yet faith prevailing to the use of means.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent? if we return by repentance, to which God would now call us by this minatory admonition, he may perhaps return to us in mercy, and by the event show it was not an irrevocable sentence passed against us.

And turn away from his fierce anger; forbear to execute that terrible menace of overthrowing us in his just and hot displeasure against our sins: this explains that which he had called repenting before, which being here, as elsewhere it is, attributed to God after the manner of man's speaking, must be interpreted as becometh his immutability and majesty.

That we perish not; suddenly, exemplarily, temporally, and eternally, all which impenitent sinners deserve, Ninevites were in danger of, and the provoked justice of God would have brought upon them if they had not repented.

Ver. 10.

God saw; not only with naked and single intuition, but he saw and approved, was singularly well pleased with that he saw.

Their works: works, not words, are sure signs of what men are humbling themselves to the dust, extraordinary fasting, and crying unto God, these were some of their works; but God saw more than these external, professing works.

They turned from their evil way: see **#Jon 3:8**: they did heartily, presently, and universally turn from the ways of impiety against God, of injustice against man, from the ways of luxury and pride, from all their violence against man; without this all the rest had been not worth the observing, nor would God have regarded it. God repented: this is spoken as before, **#Jon 3:9**, (and as his seeing is attributed to him,) after the manner of man, and must be applied unto our unchangeable God so as may not reflect any blemish upon his truth, constancy, or immutability. Though he is said to repent, it is not as man doth, who may, through frailty of his nature, lie; but our God is not a man, or as the son of man, that he should change or lie.

Of the evil of punishment,

that he had said, threatened by Jonah's mouth,

that he would do unto them; to sinning Ninevites, who did rightly conjecture that it was possible this dreadful message might be a minatory warning and might be big of a merciful condition of pardon if they repented, and there was no other way to make the discovery of this but that they took. For he will not deal with penitent sinners as with impenitent; though his justice would not have spared unrepenting citizens, his mercy is so great he will not destroy repenting sinners.

JONAH CHAPTER 4

Jonah, repining at God's mercy, **#Jon 4:1-3**, is reproved by the type of a gourd, **#Jon 4:4-11**.

Ver. 1.

But, Heb. *And, it*, the Divine forbearance sparing the great and sinful Nineveh,

displeased Jonah; was very disagreeable to Jonah's hasty and fierce temper, to his love of his own credit, and it afflicted him to see Nineveh survive the forty days limited for their continuance.

Exceedingly; it was a great affliction to him, so highly distempered is Jonah at God's goodness to a repenting city.

And he was very angry: this kindled a fire in his breast which was made up of envy, indignation, and grief, for that it was not done, and desire that yet it may be done. Jonah would yet have Nineveh a sacrifice to God's justice, and an eternal monument of his truth who foretold its ruin.

Ver. 2.

And he prayed; in a strange distempered humour sets about this work, and accordingly manageth it; when he designs to pray, his turbulent affections hurry him into unseemly contests and quarrels with God, yet since he fell on his knees with purpose to pray to God, the Scriptures report it as his prayer to the Lord.

And said; either spake it out in words, or else thus reasoned within himself, and now leaves it recorded what were his words, or his thoughts.

I pray thee, O Lord: this begins his complaint, or quarrel against the Lord.

Was not this my saying? did I not think of this? was I not apprehensive that it would be so I should preach avenging justice, and thou wouldst exercise pardoning mercy; thy pardon would contradict my preaching?

In my country; either in Canaan, or Galilee, or in Gath-hepher, where had I died, and never been a prophet to Nineveh, I had ever

had the reputation of a true prophet, but now at Nineveh I shall be reported a false dreamer.

Therefore I fled; there was reason for what I did when I declined the message, and fled away from thy presence: he seems to justify that flight which God condemned in him by a miraculous punishment inflicted on him,

Unto Tarshis: see #Jon 1:3.

For I knew; he might know it by God's dealings with so exorbitantly passionate a man as Jonah himself was, but he knew it from God's account of himself, #Ex 34:6,7, and many other places of the Scripture.

That thou art a gracious God, who hath bowels of compassion, a heart that is a fountain of tender mercy.

And merciful; readily expressing his compassions toward sinners that need and sue for mercy.

Slow to anger; who dost wait long for the sinner's return, and dost not hasten thy executions.

And of great kindness; and when provoked thou art yet of an infinite goodness lenity, and kindness, and forgivest the sinner that repenteth.

And repentest thee of the evil: see #Am 3:9,10.

Ver. 3.

Therefore, Heb. *And now*; now presently, let no time slip. O Lord, who art, as the only Author, so the great Arbiter of life; the mighty and eternal God. His sovereignty was enough to command Jonah's reverence, but Jonah forgets himself and his God.

Take, I beseech thee, life from me: in a peevish humour Jonah is weary of his life, and prays for death; yet in this request some mixture there is of grace with passion; somewhat of mercy from God to Jonah, in that he doth not give him up to his own passion; and Jonah, as weary as he is, yet will live till God will take away his life.

It is better for me to die; it is more desirable to me to die and be buried, for then my prophesying that never came to pass will be

soon forgotten; however, I shall never more blush at the rebukes the world will cast upon me.

Than to live, disgraced and upbraided by atheists and hardened sinners, who will reflect the lie upon me or on my God.

Ver. 4.

Then, so soon as Jonah's haste had sinned against his God and his own life, said the Lord; either by voice audible to Jonah, or rather by his Spirit; that Spirit which gave Jonah order to go and preach, now takes order to debate the case.

The Lord, who is now, as Jonah needed he should be, gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness toward Jonah, else he had not lived a moment longer to repent him of his last sins in this matter.

Doest thou well to be angry? is thy vehement anger warrantable? or will this anger of thine do good to thyself or others? Think well of it, whether thou dost act like a prophet, like one that feareth God, or like a man, in this thine anger?

Ver. 5.

So, when the Lord had taken notice and reproved the passions of Jonah, and made some impression on his mind for the present,

Jonah went out of the city; discontented in himself, and doubtful of the issue whether God would be more tender of the life of multitudes or of Jonah's credit, the prophet withdrew himself, and waits; how long we have not any ground of conjecture.

And sat; put himself into a posture of waiting, and therefore, to repose himself, rather sat than stood.

On the east side of the city; which in likelihood was some higher ground, the city standing on the east banks of Tigris; the further he went east, the higher the ground was, and the safer, from the uncertain manner of the city's overthrow.

Made him a booth; some small and mean shed for shade and shelter, usually made of green boughs.

And sat under it in the shadow; these boughs, thus pitched and made into a booth, afforded some shadow, in which Jonah reposed him.

Till he might see what would become of the city: by this passage it should seem the forty days were not fully expired, nor yet wanted much of expiring, and Jonah seems resolved there to expect the event of the city.

Ver. 6.

Prepared; commanded that in the place where Jonah's booth stood, this herb, or spreading plant, should spring up to be a shade when the gathered boughs are withered.

A gourd: it is not certain what this was; some say ivy; others say it was palma christi, or five-leaved, whose leaves are so set as to resemble a man's hand, or a wild vine or colocyntha; nor is it very material we should search further into the nature of this Nzyqyq in the text, it was some wild plant with long and broad leaves, which suddenly grew, spread itself, and made a good shade.

Made it to come up; God gave it a speedy growth, and directed the growth that it should cover the top of the booth, and be a shade to Jonah against the vehemence of the sun, which did shine very parchingly hot in those countries.

To deliver him from his grief; to give some ease to his mind, refresh his natural spirits, much discomposed by the violence of his passions and by the violent heat of the sun. It is probable this grief was some extreme fit of continued head-ache.

Exceeding glad; as vehement in his joy now as in his grief before; he was a man of great affections, whatever moved them.

Of the gourd; his ease by the gourd made him glad of it, and I observe that here is no mention made of Jonah's seeing God in it.

Ver. 7.

But God, by the same power which caused the gourd suddenly, and to Jonah's great joy, to spring, grow, and spread itself as a canopy,

prepared also a

worm, what, is not said, some contemptible grub that was not seen by Jonah; which early next morning, i.e. by break of day, bit the root, so that the whole gourd suddenly withered.

Ver. 8.

And it came to pass, after all these passages both in chastising and refreshing Jonah, and after all Jonah's deportment under them, but more immediately after the withering of the gourd and the loss of the shadow.

When the sun did arise; with the rising of the sun, so early in the morning as the sun arose.

God prepared; by a particular command from God.

A vehement east wind; a dry, scorching, blasting wind wherever it blows, but more than ordinarily so in those climates, and most so when sent out on such an errand by the Lord. *Silent*, saith the Hebrew. Ruffling winds usually cool the air, but the silent, which blow with even tenor, rather increase the heat of the air. However, this wind was sent to do so, and certainly did it.

The sun beat upon the head of Jonah; did perpetually and vehemently shine, or point its burning beams, upon the undefended head of Jonah: no wind to cool, no shade to cover, scorched Jonah.

He fainted; overcome by the heat, he was no longer able to stand, but as a fainting man fell down ready to die. His strength of body and his courage of mind also failed him.

Wished in himself to die; in this weakness and pain, in this perplexity of body and mind, he comes once more to a downright impatience and weariness of life.

It is better for me to die than to live; and here he will justify his passion, it is best of the two; but Jonah must be wiser, and humbler, and more merciful too ere he die. Before God hath done with him, he will teach him to value his own life more, and to be more tender of the life of others.

Ver. 9.

Doest thou well to be angry? see #Jon 4:4.

For the gourd: God adds this to the same question before proposed, that Jonah might be his own judge, and at once condemn his own passions, justify God's patience and mercy, and submit himself with satisfaction in that God had spared Nineveh.

And he, Jonah, said; passionately answers for himself: whereas he was silent, **#Jon 4:4**, now he is out of all patience, and quarrels highly against God, who had spared Nineveh, which Jonah thought should have been consumed as Sodom, or as the old world; but he feels in himself a heat almost as devouring as he wished to the Ninevites; thus unexpectedly crossed he flies out against God himself.

I do well to be angry, even unto death; if in the violence of this passion I should die, (as we know some have,) yet I were not to blame: thus he tacitly chargeth God with hardly using Jonah, and breaking his heart, though he had come a long journey to deliver a message he would fain have been excused from. So exorbitant and unreasonable is Jonah's anger.

Ver. 10.

Then, when Jonah had showed his affection of love and pity to the gourd,

said the Lord; showed Jonah the little reason he had to concern himself for the gourd, and the great reason God had on his side in pitying and sparing Nineveh.

Thou, a man, of narrow and uneven compassions,

hast both

had and showed pity on the gourd, a common and worthless weed.

For the which thou hast not laboured; it was not the work of thy hand to set it.

Neither madest it grow; nor didst thou water, and give growth to it; it was not thine.

Which came up, as a mushroom, was the birth of one night,

and perished, died, and was only fit for the fire when withered, in a night; with equal suddenness withered.

Ver. 11.

And should not; may not by virtue of my sovereignty, pity, spare, or pardon if I will? or is there not good reason to incline me to do it, and to justify my doing it?

I; God of infinite compassions and goodness.

Spare Nineveh, a mighty city: Jonah, thou hast pity on a sorry shrub, and shall thy God be by thee confined that he should not have pity on a vast and mighty city?

That great city; a stately structure, which cost immense treasures, was the labour of almost one million and half of labourers, through eight years, the great wonder of that world. Thy gourd, Jonah, may not be named in the day with this; only in a passion this must be ruined to please thee, and thy gourd must not lest it displease thee. Is this equal? wouldst thou have me less merciful to such a goodly city, than thou art to a weed?

Wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand: it was a single gourd Jonah pitied, and is angry that it was smitten; here are many hundred thousands of men and women, which I have pitied and spared. Here are more than sixscore thousand innocents who are infants, who are my creatures made for eternity, who grow slowly under my care and charge, whom I value as my own; and, peevish Jonah, wilt thou not allow me (who can) to show pity to mine own invaluable creatures, when thou pitiest what is neither thine nor valuable? Had it been thine, this might have required thy affection; had it been of worth, this might have excused thy earnestness for it; but all this aggravates thy fierce and cruel passion against Nineveh.

And also much cattle: beside men, women, and children who are in Nineveh, there are many others of my creatures that are not sinful, and my tender mercies are and shall be over all my works. If thou wouldst be their butcher, yet I will be their God. I know what becomes me, God of prophets; and though once I hearkened to Elijah to send fire from heaven on contemptuous sinners, yet it is not meet to send fire from heaven upon repenting Nineveh. I know how to impress their minds with a continued belief that Jonah came from God to preach repentance, and that it was their repentance prevented their overthrow; I can salve thy credit, Jonah, and yet not humour thy cruelty. Go, Jonah, rest thyself content, and be thankful: that goodness, mercy, and kindness which spared Nineveh, hath spared thee in this thy inexcusable

frowardness. I will be to repenting Nineveh what I am to thee,
God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness,
and I will turn from the evil thou and they deserve.

MICAH

THE ARGUMENT

IT is by custom become necessary, in writing the arguments on the several prophets, to tell of what country the prophet was; and where the Holy Ghost observes it we may not slight it. Our prophet was, no doubt, of the tribe of Judah, but of what note his family was for riches, authority, or credit appears not to us; these might be eminent for any thing I know, but not mentioned, because his call to, his abilities for, and his discharge of the prophetic office, needed no credentials or countenance from any such external advantages. It is unquestionable he came from God; and his whole prophecy is of Divine authority; Jeremiah gave testimony to it, and cites some considerable authority from the opinion of certain elders of that time who held him to be a prophet sent of God, **#Jer 26:17-19**. He was not, as some were, confined to one kingdom, but had his commission enlarged to preach to the kingdom of Israel and Judah, which were now grown old in sin, and universally corrupted with idolatry and impiety, with inhumanity and cruel oppression, with falsehood and deceits, ingratitude to God and forgetfulness of him, vain confidences in the lying promises of false prophets and in their ceremonial services; all which Micah doth (as faithful in his office) openly, severely, and impartially discover, reprove, and threaten in princes, prophets, and all the people of both kingdoms; which are so closely joined by the prophet, that it requires a very steady and quick eye to discern which of the two is most directly concerned in the prophet's discourse, or whether both are equally intended, yet so as in order of time Israel first, and Judah next. His phrase, and connexions, and transitions are many times obscure, and fairly capable of different accounts, as every one will see, who can and will read the Hebrew text, and the paraphrases or commentaries of men learned in that kind of learning. The prophet's style is very lofty, as is his contemporary Isaiah, many times, and I little doubt they were acquainted and conversed with each other: his discourses have a very particular respect to the temper of those times he lived in, and will be clearest understood by those that do distinctly read over and digest the history of Israel and Judah, as

they are reported in 1 Kings and 2 Kings from the first apostacy of Israel from God and their revolt from the house of David. But more especially the stories of Judah, through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and of Israel: through the times of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea; in which most of the sins here reprov'd and threatened did reign, and which were, whilst Micah lived, punished according to his word with sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity: he lived to see Israel made a desolation and a hissing, and survived this dead kingdom about ten years. Judah's calamity followed surely, and not slowly, for within one hundred and thirty or one hundred and thirty-three years Jerusalem was ruined and the Jews carried captives to Babylon. Many passages of our prophet have both their literal and historical reference, and their spiritual and mystical: in this latter I have been sparing, because the design of the present work was to give the plain literal sense, yet I have seldom (if ever) omitted to point out the mystery. If any one see more into this, and be larger in it than the author, let such one know, the author had his reasons why he said so little, though he saw more, of the mystical reference of the words to the Messiah, his birth, his kingdom, the redemption of the elect, the calling of the Gentiles, and other evangelical truths contained in our prophet, who did certainly preach the gospel as well as the law to his hearers.

MICAH CHAPTER 1

The time when Micah prophesied, **#Mic 1:1**. Micah showeth the wrath of God against Israel and Judah for idolatry, **#Mic 1:2-9** A lamentation for them, **#Mic 1:10-16**.

Ver. 1.

The word of the Lord that came: thus Hosea begins his prophecy, **#Ho 1:1**, and **#Joe 1:1**, and **#Jon 1:**, and **#Zep 1:1**, which see.

Micah: though Hierom, Epiphanius, and Dorotheus are said to report this Micah to be the same with the son of Imlah, **#1Ki 22:8**, yet R. Sol. Jarchi's reason why this could not be is satisfactory, for one generation and almost a half intervened between Ahab and Jotham; Ahab died about A.M. 3046, Jotham began to reign about A.M. 3190, by which it appears there were one hundred and forty-

four years between Micaiah the son of Imlah and Micah our prophet.

The Morasthite: whether Mareshah, rebuilt by Rehoboam #2Ch 11:8, (called also Beth-gebarim in after-time,) of which #2Ch 11:14 of this chapter, or whether Moresheth, of which #2Ch 11:15, gave him this surname, and whether because Micah was born there or else did dwell there, is not easily resolved, nor material if it were resolved.

In the days of Jotham: it is not said what year of Jotham this prophet begun, it is probable it was about the beginning of Jotham's reign, A.M. 3190, of which we have this character, #2Ki 15:34,35, *He did right, &c., yet the high places were not removed.* Religion was not wholly corrupted as in Israel, yet was it exceedingly abased with their own mixtures.

Ahaz; the very worst of all Judah's kings, all things considered; he brought the Baalitical idolatry into Judah.

Hezekiah; the best son of the worst father, who reformed Judah. How long Micah prophesied during his reign we can but conjecture, possibly till the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. So this prophet may be supposed to have prophesied sixteen years in Jotham's time, as many under Ahaz, and fourteen under Hezekiah, in all forty-six years, and survived the captivity of Israel ten years, which he lamented as well as foretold.

Kings of Judah; Judah only named, but Benjamin is included.

Which he saw: see #Am 1:1.

Concerning Samaria; the metropolis of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and by a well-known figure put for the whole kingdom, as Jerusalem, chief city of Judah, is, by the same figure, put for the whole kingdom. As both had linked together in sinning, God doth link them together in suffering, and commands Micah to do so.

Ver. 2.

Hear: the prophet here by proclamation requires earnest attention to his word. So Moses, #De 4:26 30:19 32:1; so the psalmist, #Ps 50:1,4; and so Isaiah, #Isa 1:2 34:1.

All ye people; either all the people of both kingdoms, all Israel and Judah, or else universally all people of all kingdoms whatever, both of that present age and all of future ages. *Hearken, O earth:* it may be taken for the meaner sort of people, the commonalty; but I rather incline to interpret it as both a tacit reproof of the deafness of this sinful and hardened people, with whom Micah now contends, and an appeal to the senseless creatures, or a summons to bring them in evidences for God against those kingdoms.

All that therein is; animate or inanimate creatures, all that are on the earth. If we interpret earth for the meaner sort of people, then this fulness of the earth will be the whole multitude of the people. It is a lofty strain, such as those of Moses, **#De 32:1**, David, **#Ps 1:1, isa 1:1,2**, and **#Jer 6:19**.

Let the Lord God; the mighty, holy, gracious, and faithful God, Lord of heaven and earth; who knows all your ways, who is a just judge, and a severe avenger of obdurate sinners.

Be witness against you, by his word, the voice of his law, by his prophets whom he hath sent, by the judgments he doth execute according to his menaces; as by his sovereignty he is supreme judge, so by his omniscience and truth he is an authentic witness against you, O house of Jacob.

From his holy temple; either from his temple at Jerusalem, or else from heaven, as **#Ps 11:4 Hab 2:20**.

Ver. 3.

For, behold; there is great reason for my earnestness with all people, and therefore once more I advise you to consider it well. Behold, attend to what is said.

The Lord cometh forth; who is Judge himself, **#Ps 50:1,4**, whose holy majesty you have provoked to displeasure, who is a jealous God, and hath an almighty power to dash his enemies into pieces. He cometh forth as a judge prepared to hear, determine, and punish. Now when God, who is in all places at all times, is said to come forth, it is not to be meant of his leaving a place where he was, to come to a place where before he was not; but it is to be understood of his discovering his presence by some effects of it, which before in that place were not, discovered.

Out of his place; heaven, the place of his glorious throne.

Come down; show by the effects of his power, justice, and wisdom that he is more eminently present there.

Tread upon; trample under foot, stain, abase, and break.

The high places of the earth; all that is high, excellent, and matter of your glorying, whether the flourishing state of your kingdoms, or the power of your kings, or strength of your fortresses, temples, and altars, or cities and palaces. In that day the haughtiness of man shall be laid low, and the pride of man shall be brought down, **#Isa 2:17**. Your sins will procure this to you, O Samaria and Jerusalem, of which God is my witness I have plainly told you.

Ver. 4.

The mountains shall be molten: if literally understood, we know it hath been so: when God will kindle that fire which shall burn up the earth, and the works of it, as he will when he cometh finally to judge the world, it shall be done again. But figuratively mountains are mighty states and kingdoms, flourishing with prosperity, and which do think the foundation of this sure as mountains. So **#Am 6:1,2 Hab 3:6 Isa 2:14**, Or possibly these mountains may be, by a synecdoche, put for those who dwell on them, mountaineers, who were usually more fierce, secure hardy, and of difficult access, and therefore less regardful of threats and punishments.

Shall be molten under him: which way soever you take mountains, yet the effect of God's powerful anger and justice shall be this, they shall be no more able to bear his indignation, or withstand it, than that which like wax melts before a strong fire.

The valleys; which either are emblems of the lower sort of men, or the men that dwell in the valleys with their cities built there, which might hope to escape the storm, lying more under covert. But such shall be the sweeping, searching, and rapid storm of God's judgments, that no places, no persons shall either withstand or divert them.

Shall be cleft; or rent in sunder, broken up, as the word **#Ge 7:11**, and slide away.

As wax, which doth easily and speedily dissolve, and run before the fire.

And as the waters that are poured down a steep place; which immediately spreads itself and runs down the precipice, not able to keep together in one body, but scattered one part from other, loseth itself without remedy; so shall the glory and strength of Samaria melt away before the fire of God's displeasure executed by Shalmaneser, and by Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar on Judah.

Ver. 5.

For the transgression; the singular for the plural, the many transgressions committed amongst them; but especially that flood of iniquity which, springing up in Samaria, did overflow the whole kingdom, idolatry, pride, luxury, cruelty, and oppression.

Of Jacob; the sons of Jacob: the ten tribes most likely are here meant by Jacob.

Is all this; all these, many and great, inevitable and irresistible, judgments of God foretold. and which will overtake and utterly ruin these sinners.

The house of Israel; the people of the kingdom of Judah, called here by the name of Israel. Or else this and the former phrase may comprehend the twelve tribes, which were fallen from God's law and worship, and be an elegant ingemination to confirm the thing spoken.

What is the transgression? or, *who is*, i.e. the spring and cause of that overflowing transgression? who brought in the abominable idolatry?

Of Jacob: here is meant the kingdom of the ten tribes, (the head of which was Samaria, where the kings of that kingdom had their royal residence, where they worshipped idols, whence they issued out their edicts, and which became example to the rest of the Israelitish kingdom.

What are the high places? or, *who is*, i.e. cause of the high places, and the idolatry there practised?

Jerusalem; which was chief city of that kingdom, and place where their kings dwelt; had the same influence on that kingdom as Samaria had on the ten tribes; there was the example they imitated, thence the laws they obeyed contrary to God's law.

Ver. 6.

Therefore; for these sins of Samaria, and the kingdom of Israel.

I will make; not by an immediate hand from heaven, but by the Assyrians under the conduct of Shalmaneser, they shall do it as my servants, saith the Lord.

Samaria as a heap of the field; much like #Isa 25:2; that beautiful city shall be made, and so left, as a ruinous heap in the field.

And as plantings of a vineyard: in planting vineyards, they did dig up the earth, and cast it up in hillocks, cast out all the stones; so shall they make this city.

I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley: the city was built on a high hill, and a deep valley beneath it; now when it was sacked by the Assyrians, they pulled down the buildings, and cast the stones thereof into that valley; so God did by them throw down the stones of Samaria.

And I will discover the foundations thereof; raze the walls, fortresses, and public buildings of this city to the very foundations of it, nor leave one stone upon another, as #Mt 24:2 Lu 19:44 desolation upon Samaria for her sin such a desolation as shall not leave the least footsteps of Samaria in the place where once it stood.

Ver. 7.

All the graven images; erected in honour to the idols they worshipped, which usually were the images or similitudes resembling their idols, their gods of silver, gold, or stone and brass, or wood.

Shall be beaten to pieces; pulled out of their chapels, shrines, or repositories by the conquering Assyrians, who would as was customary with such nations, deal with the gods as with enemies conquered, trample upon them, and use them most contemptibly; and when they break into pieces idols of rich materials, it was to

carry them away with them as their booty; others were broken in contempt of them.

All the hires, or rewards, or gifts, which idolaters thought their idols gave them, as **#Ho 2:5**; or the rich gifts given for the honour and service of the idols by deceived idolaters; or all the wealth Israel got by leagues with idolaters.

Shall be burnt with the fire; when their cities or temples are burnt, as no doubt many were burnt by the Assyrian before he could reduce them to obedience, in which conflagrations many rich donatives belonging to idols were consumed to ashes, or melted down.

And all the idols thereof will I lay desolate; thus shall the idols of Samaria be made desolate, i.e. their temples burnt, their images either beaten in pieces in contempt, or to be carried away (if the materials they were made of were worth the carriage); however, they shall neither remain, nor be worshipped any more in Israel or Samaria, but be carried away captives with their captive worshippers.

For she, the kingdom of the ten tribes, or Samaria, gathered it, their wealth, or the rich presents made to their idols, or both, of the hire of a harlot; as harlots get rich gifts of their lovers, so did this deceived people think, and say, that their idols gave them the wealth they had; or else as impudent adulteresses, that hire lewd men to come in to them; so this hire was that these blind idolaters (like shameless adulteresses) gave to their idols.

And they, these rich presents,

shall return to the hire of an harlot; shall be either turned by the Assyrians to the service and honour of their idols, presented as gifts in acknowledgment of their greatness and prosperity, to be the blessings their idols have. given to them, as **#Ho 10:6**; or else thus, as what is got by harlots brings shame and a curse with it, and never continues long, but is as basely wasted as it was gotten, so shall it be with all the ill-gotten goods of these Samaritan idolaters, and all their wealth.

Ver. 8.

Therefore, because of those dreadful slaughters and devastations made in Israel and Samaria,

I will wail, solemnly, as when they who are skilful in lamentation do at funerals bewail in most affective manner to stir up the like sorrow in others: see **#Am 5:16**.

And howl; the same in a word of like sense, to ascertain the thing, and to intimate the doubled sorrow, the multiplied miseries of this people.

I will go stripped and naked; as one spoiled of his clothes by force, or as one that in bitterness of passion hath cast off his upper garment, or as if discomposed in mind through the greatness of his vexations; now this the prophet either speaks as fellow sufferer with them, or as intimating what they should be reduced to at last: so **#Isa 20:2,3**: whether of these, or whether both, I determine not.

Dragons: see **#Mal 1:3**: rather *jackals*, which haunt desolate places, and make great and hideous noise by night, by their wailing, or doleful cries, in which it is said they answer one another, and fill the air with the sound and travellers with fear: these creatures are between a fox and wolf for bigness, and seem somewhat like each in qualities, and probably their noise may be as mixed of the barking of the fox and howling of the wolf. It is possible the prophet by this kind of wailing would intimate the near approach of the Assyrian lion, hungering and thirsting, and pursuing the prey; as the jackal runs a little before the lion, so this wailing of the prophet should be followed very suddenly with the roaring of the lion.

Owls; a melancholy creature, and loves night, and makes a most unpleasant noise, haunts desolate places, and so fitly is an emblem of Israel's doleful, desolate state: others render it ostrich, which makes a doleful cry in the deserts: either will fit the place.

Ver. 9.

Her wound is incurable; the wounds of Samaria and the ten tribes; her own sins, God's just displeasure, and the enemy's rage have deeply wounded her, she is senseless, impenitent, and furious against her Physician, and she shall at last die by sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity.

It is come unto Judah; the contagion of her sins, and the indignation of God against it, and the enemy's successes, viz. Sennacherib's, or Nebuchadnezzar's, like a flood have reached to Judah also; and this is the reason why the prophet foretells such mourning, and is willing to personate it to awaken both kingdoms to repent and turn to God.

He is come; the insulting, conquering, and cruel enemy, or, in the neuter gender, it, i.e. the evil, is come, i.e. in the prophetic style, will certainly and suddenly come.

Unto the gate of my people; either signifying the Assyrians besieging Jerusalem, as Sennacherib son of Shalmaneser did some few years after the sack of Samaria, or else by

gate of my people is meant the city where the sovereign court of judicature to the whole kingdom is, denoting the victories of the Assyrian over the rest of the kingdom of Judah, or else the victories of Nebuchadnezzar.

Even to Jerusalem: this seems added to explain the former phrase.

Ver. 10.

Declare ye it not at Gath; do what you can to keep your griefs to yourselves, let them not be public, that the Philistines, your bitter enemies, should know how sad it is with you and rejoice at it. Gath was a principal city of the Philistines, and though this only is mentioned the rest are understood: such phrase you have #2Sa 1:20. Weep ye not at all; you that are of Israel or Judah, make no public weeping, that your cries and tears should inform your enemies in Palestine how deplorable your state is, let not your griefs be their joys.

In the house of Aphrah: we render it as a proper name of some city or town; though of no great note, yet we meet with one, #1Sa 13:23, in the tribe of Benjamin; a second we find in Manasseh's lot, and was the place where Gideon's father dwelt, #Jud 6:11: these towns were somewhat remote from the Philistines, and there the prophet does direct then, to weep with the greatest expressions of it, and to keep it private from the Philistines. Others account the word to be a common name denoting

dust, and so give the sense, in the house of dust roll thyself in *dust*. Roll thyself, or, I have rolled myself, viz. in compassion to the miserable Israelites, or as a pattern to which they shall conform; so the word as written, but as by direction of the Masorets it is read, and as there it is rendered,

roll thyself, it directs and foretells; it foretells what they shall do at last, and directs what they should do at present. They shall be brought to sit, nay, to wallow in the dust, and in foresight of this it would become them to sit in the dust now.

Ver. 11.

Pass ye away: the imperative is here put for the future, and the prophet does here foretell and threaten what shall befall this people, they shall go before the enemy into captivity. *Saphir* denotes either the beautiful and pleasant habitation, and so may be applied to any pleasant seat, such as were many in Judea; such were Samaria and Jerusalem, which perhaps are here intended. Or else it is the proper name of some particular town or city: who read Eusebius will meet with such a village in the mountains between Ashkelon and Hebron, or (as later it is called) Eleutheropolis.

Having thy shame naked; stripped by thy conquering enemy, so that thou shalt not have so much left as shall cover thy nakedness; with shame shalt thou be thus led into captivity, and change all thy beauty into shameful nakedness.

Zaanan; a place rich in pastures and sheep, say some; others take it for the proper name of a particular place in the tribe of Judah; it is likely at this time it might be some considerable garrison full of people and soldiers.

Came not forth; neither sent out succours to relieve their neighbouring besieged town Bethazel, but stood on their own guard, nor yet durst send out any to condole the captive state of their neighbours.

Bethazel; a strong town taken and wasted by the Assyrians, the people carried captive under the eye of the inhabitants of Zaanan, who mean time dare not stir or make many signs of sorrow.

He; the invading enemy, say some, others say it is the inhabitant of Zaanan.

Shall receive of you his standing: who refer this to the enemy make this the sense, viz. That the enemy should make his stay among them till he had conquered, spoiled, and captivated them; or, that he should by severe dealing make them pay dear for their obstinacy in defending their town against his forces, that he should strip them of all to recompense his expenses of treasure, time, and blood in taking them. But they that refer this to Zaanan and its inhabitants make this the sense, That they should take their measures, and judge what the enemy would do against them by that which he had done against Beth-ezel their neighbour.

Ver. 12.

For; yet, or certainly, as the Hebrew particle is often to be rendered.

The inhabitant; one put for all, because all should fare alike.

Maroth: some say it is by transposing the letters put for Ramoth; others say it is, as the word imports, the *grieving*, embittered cities; others take it for the proper name of some lesser place in Judah.

Waited carefully; long, earnestly, and patiently.

For good; for peace, prosperity, and what might make them happy.

Evil; of trouble, sword, famine, and pestilence, all sorts of evil comprised in this one:

Came down, in mighty tempests, or as a sweeping rain.

From the Lord; by his special command and charge, and as a punishment inflicted on them from heaven.

Unto the gate of Jerusalem; the flood of affliction by the Assyrian swallowed up other towns and cities, and swelled high to the head city Jerusalem, as partly by Sennacherib's invasion, but more fully by Nebuchadnezzar's besieging and taking Jerusalem, and carrying the citizens captive to Babylon.

Ver. 13.

Lachish; a very strong fortress on the confines of Judah towards the kingdom of the ten tribes, and which, as it did to the last stand out against Sennacherib, so it is very probable they did boast of their strength and valour.

Bind the chariot to the swift beast; either to flee from the sword of the enemy, and to seek safety in-another country, forsaking their own; or else by way of derision, You will be besieged and cooped up by the Assyrian, and then you may harness your horses or mules to carry you in chariots about your own streets; or else the prophet foretells Sennacherib's commanding post-chariots to carry his messengers to summon Jerusalem to yield up all to him.

She Lachish, is the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion; from thence idolatry spread itself into Judah and Jerusalem. Lachish, nearest to idolatrous Israel, took the infection of them, and conveyed it to Judah, or Jerusalem, here called

the daughter of Zion.

For the transgressions, not only the idolatry, but other sins also, **of Israel,** of the ten tribes,

were found in thee; thou didst receive and worship the same idols that Samaria did.

Ver. 14.

Therefore; forasmuch as thou hast imitated Israel in sin, and been at least an occasion to Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah to commit the same sins.

Shalt thou, Lachish,

give presents: though I do not remember the sacred story reporting this in matter of fact, we read not what presents were given, or by whom sent, or when; yet as it was foretold by the prophet, so no doubt it was fulfilled, and the inhabitants of Lachish courted the assistance of the Philistines against the Assyrian, and possibly against the Babylonian.

Moresheth-gath; a known city or town of the Philistines, called here Moresheth-gath to distinguish it from a town of the same name in the tribe of Judah and in the valley of Zephathah, where

Asa smote Zerah, the Ethiopian king, who invaded Asa with a million of men.

Achzib: this was also a city of the Philistines not far from Mareshah, Ashkelon, and Gaza; it was a maritime town and strong. There was another city of that name toward Tyre also, but of this the prophet doth not speak in this place.

A lie; a lying refuge, or a prop that should break under them that leaned upon it, as Egypt proved a broken reed to Judah when trusted to: in the Hebrew there is an elegant allusion, which the translation cannot express.

To the kings of Israel; some say it is meant of the kings of Judah, but we find not that Hezekiah made any use of the houses of Achzib when Sennacherib invaded him. It is more probable the kings of the ten tribes are meant, and that Hoshea did rely on Gath. Achzib, &c., and on the friendship of the rest of the Philistines, to join with the Egyptians, or to give them a quiet passage through their country to help Israel against the Assyrian.

Ver. 15.

Yet will I bring; the Lord will cause the Assyrian to rise up and prosper in his wars, to the subduing and possessing of the cities of Israel and the Philistines.

An heir; the Assyrian, who in the right of conquest shall possess, and account himself heir of what he possesseth.

Mareshah; most think the prophet speaks of Mareshah in his own country, but I think the Assyrian did not inherit that, though he might inherit that of the Philistines.

Adullam; famous for its strength, say some; but I rather think it better known for the cave where David lay hid, #1Sa 22:1. It was made a town of defence by Rehoboam, #2Ch 11:7. It was once a royal city, and had several villages belonging to it, #Jos 12:15.

The glory of Israel; ironically (say some) called thus, minatorily threatening that the glory of Israel should be brought as low, into as mean condition, as Adullam. Others think it should be read, *and to the glory of Israel*, that is, Jerusalem; so there should be an ellipsis of (duw) the particle conjunctive. Others think it is the prophet's deep sigh at the thoughts how the glory of Israel is laid

in the dust. Others think it was then considerable enough at that time to be called the glory of Israel, though we know not how.

Ver. 16.

Make thee bald; O Judea and Israel, in token of sorrow for these wasting judgments, tear off thy hair with thine own hands.

Poll thee; shave off with the razor and by others' hand what thou canst not tear off.

For thy delicate children; for the loss of them, some being slain, others starved or swept away with pestilence, and the residue carried captive; express thy deep sorrow for these miseries conformably to the custom of bitter mourning, **#Job 1:20 Isa 3:24 15:2 Jer 7:29.**

Enlarge thy baldness; make thy baldness greater than usual, for the occasion does require and will justify it.

As the eagle; which loseth at once her strength, courage, and beauty, and languisheth in her baldness.

For they, thy delicate children,

are gone into captivity from thee; never to return more: or not till a long captivity expire.

MICAH CHAPTER 2

God's judgment against oppression, **#Mic 2:1-3.** A lamentation for the removal of his people, **#Mic 2:4-6.** A reproof for their injustice and delight in false prophets, **#Mic 2:7-11.** A promise of restoration, **#Mic 2:12,13.**

Ver. 1.

The prophet now denounceth judgment against oppressors in particular, of which sort of men Judah had too many, and Israel had many more at that day.

That devise iniquity; contrive and frame mischiefs to others, how they may be ruined, as appears **#Mic 2:2,** and all the gain that can be made of their fall may be brought into the hand of the contrivers; which was the sin of the great ones in Israel, who for near forty years together were plotting to undo one another. And work evil: here is a dislocation of the words, unless the prophet

would intimate to us, that in God's account the resolving to do evil is doing it.

Upon their beds; when they should rest from making trouble to others, as well as rest from their labour and troubles of the day, when they should praise God for their own ease, safety, and rest, then their inhumanity and cruelty is forecasting how to grieve, vex, and swallow up others.

When the morning is light; so soon as they rise, and that is early; when such practices are in design, these cannot sleep till they make them fall on whom they fix their designs.

They practise it; finish or execute their mischievous purposes. Because it is in the power of their hand; they care not whether there be either justice or reason for what they do; if they have power enough to do, they will take confidence to do it, and never blush.

Ver. 2.

And they, who devised mischief, **#Mic 2:1,**

covet fields; first set their minds upon their meaner neighbour's estate, think how convenient it lieth to theirs, as Ahab thought Naboth's did for him.

And take them by violence; by power wrest the estates out of their hands, at their own rate; or, if they will not so part with them, these mischievous oppressors will act a Jezebel's part with Naboth, which was no hard matter to do in Israel, during the times that ran parallel with those of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Houses, in which their poorer and innocenter neighbours dwelt; but perhaps these houses spoiled a prospect, or straitened the great ones, who, right or wrong, will have them, that they may enlarge their own houses, orchards, or gardens.

Take them away; they tear, devour, and swallow up the poor man.

His house; his family, which by this means is left to poverty and beggary.

His heritage: this explains the former, and addeth somewhat to the greatness of their sin, that this is done against ancient right and

possession, which the oppressed plead, nay, in a case where God hath forbidden them to sell their heritage, #Le 25:23 Nu 36:7 1Ki 21:3.

Ver. 3.

Therefore; for this great, inhuman, cruel oppression. Thus saith the Lord; the Lord by his prophet declareth what he will do, and adviseth them to consider it, for it is a most manifest retaliation or punishing the offenders, so that every one may see God deals with them, as they dealt with their oppressed neighbours.

Against this family do I devise an evil; they devised, now God will devise; theirs was evil against others, God will devise evil against them; theirs was evil of sin, God's is an evil of just punishment, against their family, as they devised evil against the family of their poor neighbours. God will bring the Assyrian power upon them.

From which ye shall not remove your necks; they laid snares where open force would not suffice, so that the poor could not get out of their hands, but were impoverished and enslaved; so God will deal with them by the Assyrian, from whose power they shall not escape.

Neither shall ye go haughtily; you have made others hang the head, so shall you now. For this time is evil; you great ones have made it all evil time, evil for sin against me and the innocent, and for cries and griefs to the poor; I will make it an evil time, full of penal calamities and miseries on the whole family or posterity of Jacob.

Ver. 4.

In that day; when God shall retaliate, as #Mic 2:3, when he shall by the Assyrian captivity fulfil what here is threatened by the prophet.

Shall one take up; there shall be taken up, or be in common ordinary use among those that know what is befallen you.

A parable; or taunting, scorning proverb; this tells them how their Assyrian conquerors should reflect reproach and shame upon captive Israel, much like that #Ps 137:3, which the Babylonians used toward captive Judah.

Lament with a doleful lamentation; your friends for you, and you for yourselves, shall mourn most bitterly, as the import of the Hebraism is, *lament with a lamentation of lamentations*. So though all are not alike affected, yet every one shall carry it towards miserable Israel according as they are affected, condoling their sad state, or insulting over them.

We be utterly spoiled: this is the sum of their mournful lamentation over their own state; Our land wasted, our friends slain, our cities taken, plundered, and sacked, our houses and goods either taken away from us or burnt, and our persons no more our own, but captives, under the power and will of our enemy; thus spoiled, nothing is any longer ours.

He; the Assyrian, say some; God, say others; indeed God did it by the Assyrians. Hath changed the portion; the estate, wealth, plenty, freedom, safety, joy, and honour, into poverty, famine, servitude, danger, grief, and dishonour. The land of Canaan was the inheritance, and all the conveniencies it afforded were part of the portion of Israel; but, O doleful change! these all taken away from Israel, and given to others.

My people; it is either the prophet, who calls them his people, or rather, every one of Israel that useth this lamentation, Who saith

my people. How hath he removed it from me! how dreadfully hath God dealt with Israel! removing their persons into captivity, and transferring their right and possession to enemies!

Turning away he hath divided our fields; either, thus turning away from us in displeasure, God hath divided our fields among others, given them to the enemy, and he hath divided them to whom he pleaseth, to his own people and soldiers; or else this word turning away may be rendered returning, and be spoken of the enemy, when he returned he did divide our fields; or, as the margin of our Bibles, *instead of restoring* our fields, which we hoped, and our mistaken leaders promised, God hath given the enemy success and power to divide our fields, and to allot them to others.

Ver. 5.

Therefore; because your sins, so great, universal, and incorrigible, have provoked God to frame and design this

desolation against you, and because he will punish you according to your ways.

Thou; either oppressor, spoken thus as to one, that it might comprehend every one of them, who are described #Mic 2:2, or else this thou is the whole family, spoken of #Mic 2:3; perhaps both these may best be meant here.

None that shall cast a cord by lot; none that shall ever return to this land, to claim an inheritance there, or to see it allotted by line, and given to them to possess it. The prophet here alludes to the manner of dividing fields and inheritance of old in use among them, as in Joshua's time. So both the whole family in general, and the great ones, oppressors and extortioners, are more particularly menaced with an utter and perpetuated exclusion out of the land in which they sinned, and whence they are carried captives; whoever do, neither they, nor their posterity, shall possess inheritances in it.

In the congregation of the Lord; they should no more be the congregation of the Lord, nor should their children be so, or stand in the congregation of the Lord at any time hereafter, to claim their portion among God's people. Thus they are rejected and disinherited, and this to this day is verified on the main body of this people.

Ver. 6.

Prophecy ye not; it is manifest that our version here intends this as an interdict, or prohibition, laid upon the true prophets, whose hearers were so far from amending and turning unto God in compliance with his counsel, and obedience to his commands given out by his prophets, that rulers and people agree to silence the prophets, and expressly forbid them to distil or drop their severe predictions against the kingdom.

That prophesy faithfully, as Isaiah, Hoses, Joel, and Micah now did.

They, or my true prophets, saith God,

shall not prophesy to them; shall cease from further troubling and terrifying these people, who fear not my judgments, and will not by repentance prevent their miserable captivity and shame. So

God doth in his displeasure grant their desire, and gratify the interdict in judgment against them.

That they shall not take shame; that they may, as they seem resolved to put off all blushing and shame, go on without checks or rebuke, till they be utterly ruined: they are impatient of that shame they should take to themselves for their sins, and therefore would not hear the truth; so it shall be, and they shall not be shamed to repentance, but they shall be ashamed in their ruin. This seems the meaning of the words in our version, and I will not add any other, though there are several versions which somewhat vary from ours.

Ver. 7.

Named; you are in name, not in truth, you call yourselves, and would be called by others, the seed and posterity of Jacob.

The house of Jacob; you glory in Jacob, whom God blessed, guided, and preserved, and you think he should so bless you; but you nothing think how Jacob feared, obeyed, and worshipped God, you are not honest, plain-hearted, and upright with God as he.

Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? the power, goodness, wisdom, and kindness of God is not less now than formerly, he is as merciful to design good, as gracious to promise, as great and good to perform his word; but the reason he doth not promise good to you, but threatens punishment upon you by his prophets, is all from yourselves; it is for your sins; you do the things that must be discountenanced, and if you would hear better things by the prophets, you must do better, you must do what God requires by them.

Are these his doings? are these severer proceedings against you the doings your God delighteth in? Doth he choose to take this way? Doth not mercy better please him? He would be more pleased to speak comfortably to you: do you as Jacob did, and God will deal with you as he did with him.

Do not my words do good? my words promise all good, and my prophets declare good to those that are indeed the house of Jacob. All the ways of God are in an even tenor, mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and testimonies to do them, as **#Ps 25:10**.

To him that walketh uprightly; that with honest hearts walk in the ways of God; but froward sinners, and dissembling hypocrites, cannot with reason expect the same usage from God, who will give peace and show mercy to Israel, whilst the workers of iniquity are led out to punishment. This whole verse is excellently cleared by the prophet Isaiah **#Isa 59:1-3**, &c.

Ver. 8.

This verse to me seems to be designed as a proof of the perverseness and iniquity of this people, and consequently a justifying of God, and his prophet, threatening severity against them: they flattered themselves, and were angry with the prophet; but God doth in these words convince them that they could not with reason expect better tidings. For from a long time since they have revolted from me, and

of late they have renewed, with addition of new violence to their old. All of them have

risen up, and acted hostilities among themselves; Israel against Judah, and Judah against Israel, and of late the ten tribes have conspired against one another, subjects against their kings, and great ones against the meaner sort; all places' are full of the sins and woeful effects of civil seditions, and the treasonable practices of violent men.

Ye pull off the robe with the garment, you strip those to their skin, take away their clothes, and leave them naked,

that pass by securely; that in peace, and fearing no evil, go about their private affairs,

as men averse from war; disliking such rebellious, bloody, and oppressive-courses, and wishing every one might enjoy his right without plunderings, sequestrations, confiscations, and decimations, for not being of their party. All which we may easily believe attended the factious and rebellious times which succeeded after Jeroboam's death, briefly mentioned **#2Ki 15:8**, &c., which read with this verse, and diligently consider how it paints out those times of Israel's sinning.

Ver. 9.

The women; the poor disconsolate widows, whose husbands you had first slain with the sword of war, or unjustly condemned to death; or else the wives of husbands whom you had oppressed, and by perverted judgment had condemned to forfeit their estates.

Of my people: this aggravates the sin, that this was done against Israelitish women, not strangers, against those that were by peculiar provision of God's law to be tenderly and mercifully dealt with, #Ex 22:22.

Cast out; disseised, and turned out, as if unworthy to dwell longer in their old habitations, which they pretend forfeited, as Paradise by Adam, who was therefore in this very word east out, #Ge 3:24, or as Hagar out of Abraham's family, #Ge 21:14.

Pleasant houses; either pleasant for situation, such seats were to these as dangerous as Naboth's vineyard was to him, or else pleasant to them because they were their own, where they enjoyed their husbands and children, and wished no more preferment, content with their beloved habitation, and domestic conveniencies,

From their children have ye taken away; you have by your violence and oppression ruined their posterity, turned their children out of houses and estates, which were secured by the law of God from any legal alienation and sale beyond the jubilee; you have confiscated them for ever.

My glory; which was the glory of my bounty to them, in use of which they did give glory to me, and by continuance of which they might have lived above contempt.

For ever; either continually you have done this, or what you have done you intend to stand for ever.

Ver. 10.

Arise ye, and depart; you inhabitants of Israel, especially you oppressors, bestir yourselves. and prepare for your departure out of this land; for, will ye nill ye, so it is, you shall be carried away: the words also may fairly be applied to the oppressed, to lessen the troubles they were under, and to advise them to retire out of this land.

This is not your rest: though it was given this people for a rest under God's wing, yet it was on condition of continued obedience; but since they do not observe the condition, they shall never find the expected rest; one trouble shall succeed another, until the captivity sweep them all away, both oppressors and oppressed; these therefore should grieve the less at their present trouble, nor grudge to transplant themselves.

Because it is polluted, with many, and great, and old sins,

it shall destroy; spew them out as a burden intolerable to the earth that bears them, as **#Le 18:25**; this polluted land shall be destroyed.

A sore destruction; such as may well require a lamentation; such as **#Mic 2:4**; a grievous desolation, such as never shall be repaired.

Ver. 11.

This people were weary of true' prophets, and silenced them, **#Mic 2:6**, but they were fondly taken with the false prophets, and what these promised them; and these, as here described, are by a dreadful judgment on this people permitted, or left to deceive them.

If a man walking in the Spirit and falsehood; a prophet that pretends to walk in the Spirit, i.e. to have the Spirit of prophecy, and on that pretence takes the boldness to promise pleasing things in God's name, whereas he never received such promises of good from God.

Do lie, against God, and to the people.

I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink: Micah, and his real-contented brethren, foretell scarcity, war, dismal calamities, and an Assyrian captivity of all for ever; I tell you these are idle dreams, you shall have plenty, and good days, and may eat, drink, and be merry; such times of evil you shall never see.

He shall even be the prophet, by a just and dreadful judgment from God, as well as by an unhappy and fatal choice of the people, **#1Ki 22:6,10-12**, with **#1Ki 22:34 Eze 13:3,10**.

Of this people; doomed to unparalleled misery by God for their sins, and pulling it upon themselves by their obstinate impenitence and blindness.

Ver. 12.

There are three different interpretations of this verse, of which it is hard to say which is most agreeable to the intent of this scripture; I will propose all three, and leave each reader to choose for himself. First, Some will that these words be a continuation of the false prophet's preaching prosperity and good days. So the words are a promise made to them contradictory to the menaces of the Lord by Micah; he foretold all would end in destruction; the false prophet foretells the assembling of all the seed of Jacob into their land and cities, and bringing back the remnant of the captive Israelites carried away by Tiglath-pileser, and their safety in their own fold as the flock of Bozrah, and should make great noise of joy and rejoicing in their multitudes. All which, spoken by the false prophet, Micah refutes in the 13th verse. Secondly, Others make it an evangelical promise of the restitution of Israel by the Messiah, and many Jews agree with Christian expositors herein, though, the Jews refer it to a temporal restitution, not yet fulfilled: the Christians refer it to a spiritual, partly fulfilled, yet more fully to be accomplished hereafter; and suitably to this hypothesis they interpret all the passages of this text and the 13th verse; both which will very fairly bear the sense by these put upon them, and may be the mystical sense of the words, but we, who inquire into the literal meaning, think it advisable not to swell the volume by long digressions. A third opinion ought to be considered ere we can choose which we shall adhere to. Now the third opinion, in expounding the text, makes it a commination or dreadful threat against this people, and thus suits it:

I, i.e. God, offended with them. Will surely assemble; by his providence will cause to come together.

O Jacob; he calls to the house of Israel to consider it.

All of thee; all who were fleeing, upon hope of what their false prophets promise, to return to their own land and cities.

I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; the same thing in little different words, repeated to assure us the truth of the thing.

I will put them together; all that remain of the ten tribes (for some were before carried away by Tiglath-pileser) shall most assuredly be gathered together, that they may all be in one covey covered with the Assyrian net.

As the sheep of Bozrah; in multitudes like those flocks.

As the flock in the midst of their fold; whence none of the sheep can get out and make their escape: so should this people be enclosed and taken.

They shall make great noise of cries and lamentation for their distresses and lost condition.

By reason of the multitude of men; such great multitudes cooped up, shall hideously lament. their own condition, like multitudes that suffer shipwreck together: all this God will bring upon them by the multitude of the Assyrian soldiers which come up against them.

Ver. 13.

In the opinion of those who account the 12th verse to be part of the flattering discourse of false prophets, this verse is the prophet Micah's reply to those false teachers; so far is it from truth that God will restore the remnant, and establish them, that he assures them the contrary will surely and suddenly befall them; and these do in the same manner expound the words as they of the third opinion, mentioned #**Mic 2:12**, thus:

The breaker; the Assyrian with his mighty host, i.e. Shalmaneser and his army.

Is come up; the *present* put (after the style of the prophets) for the future, because the thing was near, and very certain.

Before them; the people of Israel might see them, would they open their eyes; the preparations for this expedition are visible to all that will observe what is doing abroad. The mighty army of the Assyrian king shall ere long approach the confines, enter the land, invest the cities, yea, the metropolis of Israel.

They have broken up; no frontiers shall be strong enough to keep them out of the land.

Have passed through the gate; no cities so strong with walls and gates, which the Assyrian shall not take and possess, and enter in through the gates, as of his own cities.

And are gone out by it; and securely go out too.

Their king, Shalmaneser,

shall pass before, in triumphant manner,

them, his own army, and the captive Jacob.

And the Lord, offended with the Jews,

on the head of them; leading and succeeding the Assyrians in this war.

MICAH CHAPTER 3

Micah reproveth the cruelty of the princes, **#Mic 3:1-4**, and the falsehood of the prophets, **#Mic 3:5-7**. His zeal in showing the sins of the princes, priests, and prophets, and their illgrounded security, **#Mic 3:8-12**.

Ver. 1.

And I said: in further discharge of his prophetic office, and his direction from the Lord, the prophet proceeds to preach.

Hear; attend diligently, and give good ear. I pray you: being to address to governors, he entreats their attention, as we have the Hebrew particle here rendered, which might have been rendered now, and so the Gallic version doth render it, and the particle signifieth both.

O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; you that are by birth heads of the families, and by office princes and rulers in Israel and Jacob, i.e. in the kingdom both of the ten tribes, and more particularly the two tribes, as appears from the last verse of this chapter.

Is it not for you? are you not bound by office? do not men expect? doth not God require? doth not the public weal engage you to be well skilled in the laws of God?

To know judgment; understand, approve, conform to and rule by equity, and the just laws of your God. You, princes,

magistrates, and ruling officers, ought to know and do judgment and justice; you of all men should know and do right.

Ver. 2.

Who hate the good: in practice and affection these rulers were directly contrary to what they should have been and done, they hated not only to do good, but they hated the good which was to be done, and those that did it; and what kind of men may we judge they were who hated good men, and what was good, and by consequence hated also God himself?

Love the evil; choose, embrace, encourage, delight in, and prefer both evil works and evil workers, and take pleasure to do evil yourselves: the worst character that can be given of any sort of men.

Who pluck off their skin from off them: you by office are shepherds, and should feed, guide, heal, protect, and love the flock, but you use them as cruelly as the shepherd, who, instead of shearing of the fleece, would pluck off the skin, and flay them.

And their flesh from off their bones; another proverbial speech of the same import, and chargeth highest injustice and inhumanity upon these princes and rulers: see **#Eze 22:27 Zep 3:3**.

Ver. 3.

Eat; maintain themselves and their followers, nay, live in luxury and excess, revelling in banquets and feasts, as the word is many times used, **#Am 6:4**.

The flesh; the estates, goods, and livelihood of their subjects, neighbours, and brethren.

My people; whom I have chosen, maintained, and allotted an inheritance unto, of whom I once said, Who toucheth them toucheth the apple of mine eye, **#De 32:10 Zec 2:8**.

Flay their skin from off them; with barbarous cruelty and unheard-of injustice strip off (as butchers strip the sheep they kill) the very skin; or as hunters, which having taken the prey, wearied and worried first by their dogs, do strip off the skin to sell, and eat the flesh in feasts and riotous banquetings.

They break their bones; an allusion to wolves, boars, or lions, which devour the flesh, tear the skin, and break the bones of the innocent, weak, and defenseless lambs or sheep; thus our prophet tells these rulers plainly what they were, did, and how barbarously cruel and wicked.

Chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron: these bloody murderers, princes, and chieftains are here compared to cooks, and the subjects, weak neighbours, are compared to the bare bones which the cook doth by his art prepare for the pot, and to the flesh cut small for the caldron, that all might be boiled and extracted out to make pottage, and delicious broths or jellies: thus the great ones used the meaner sort, who lived under their jurisdiction. Possibly the prophet may aim at the bloody, cruel, and devouring times under Shallum, &c., or to that reported of Menahem, #2Ki 15:16, when probably much of this was done according to the very letter.

Ver. 4.

Then; when that time and those miseries which Micah foretells shall come upon them, #Mic 1:6-8 2:3, when God shall retaliate and pay these great ones in their own coin. They; the cruel oppressors, these tyrannical judges, that pitied none, devoured all, and feared not the Divine vengeance.

Cry unto the Lord, as if they were his, and as if he were bound to deliver; they then shall own he can, and none else can deliver them, and they will expect a saving hand after all their rebellions against and contempts of God.

But he will not hear them; as they heard the cry of the oppressed, but would not hear; so God will hear the cry of their distresses, but not hear the requests they make; he will do no more for them than as if he did not hear them, he will be as a stranger to their case.

He will even hide his face from them; they turned away their face from beholding and pitying the poor, now God will turn away his eye from them, and, as if unconcerned, leave them to their own distresses, and their enemies' rage and cruelty. At that time: this is added to assure them they should have least respect from God

when they need it most; so they shall receive what they gave, judgment without mercy, as it is #Jas 2:13.

As they have behaved themselves ill in their doings: this speaks both the reason why, and the manner how, God will thus leave them to the oppressor; the greatness of their sin deserved this, and such was the quality of their sins, that nothing fitter than a retaliation to punish the sin, convince the sinner, teach the world righteousness, and to vindicate God.

Ver. 5.

Thus saith the Lord: now Micah in the name of the Lord foretells what shall become of false prophets, he had frankly dealt with the seculars, now he deals as plainly with the ecclesiastics.

Concerning the prophets that make my people err: though he give them the title they assume to themselves, yet he doth very fully describe them, and shows they are false prophets; they err, and make others to err with them. Israel is too apt to mistake his God, and his ways; these false prophets make them err more, both concerning their former ways of religion and civil policy, and concerning their present danger and duty, and concerning future judgments and punishments.

That bite with their teeth, when they are furnished with gifts, and well fed.

And cry, Peace; they promise great prosperity, they pretend to give assurance from God that all shall go well with Israel, and none of the dismal woes threatened by Micah and such-like prophets should ever be verified on them.

And he that putteth not into their mouths; but those who will not feed these false prophets, that bid them not welcome to their tables, nor make good cheer for them,

They even prepare war against him; they do threaten with war, and all calamities that attend it; or else, as enemies prepared, they work them all the mischief they can, and show what god they serve, even the god of this world, and their own bellies.

Ver. 6.

Therefore; because of their irreligious and atheistical pretences to Divine revelations, and to come from heaven with promises

directly contrary to God's purpose and word, even when their consciences told them they did lie herein. Night of ignorance, and loss of gifts; but since they had none such as they pretended to, I see not how they could lose them. I rather take this night to be a night of distresses, a time of great calamities upon these prophets more than ordinary, and upon all the people they seduced. Unto you; deceivers, and false prophets.

Ye shall not have a vision; you shall no more pretend to have a vision, you shall not dare any more to foretell any thing to this people.

It shall be dark unto you; a very calamitous time to all, but most to you who lived upon lying visions, and now shall starve for want of them.

Ye shall not divine; have neither skill nor will any more to set up for yourselves in that trade; being found great impostors, and such as have seduced this people into sin first, and misery next, they will be enraged against you, and you shall not safely appear among them.

The sun shall go down over the prophets; a proverbial speech, and contains much the same that night and dark do contain. Perhaps this intimates the visible hand of God extraordinarily against them, and making their sorrows the more dreadful, as darkness by the sun going down at noon, would speak itself an extraordinary judgment, and most terrify the world.

The day shall be dark over them; the best circumstances any of them shall be in shall be so sad and woeful, that they shall not know which way to take for themselves or direct for others.

Ver. 7.

Then; in the days of this calamity, which shall confute all the flattering promises of these prophets.

The seers, who called themselves, were accounted by others, and were advised with as men that had visions from God, were prophets in name and repute with the deceived people.

Be ashamed; their impostures being detected, they shall be covered with shame, the people shall talk what they are, and tell them to their faces wherever they meet them that they are false

and lying varlets, not worthy to live, and the very consciences of these men shall then fly in their faces and upbraid them.

The diviners confounded; diviners here are seers, slid being confounded the same with ashamed; this ingemination adds to the thing spoken, at least a fuller verification of it.

They shall all cover their lips; so lepers did, #Le 13:45; and men ashamed and mourners did thus, #Eze 24:17,22. So these shall mourn and pine in their shame.

For there is no answer of God; God doth not answer them; rather, because the answer they had formerly given and pretended to be from God now appears not to have been from him, they should therefore by the sentence of the law be stoned, #De 13:10 Zec 13:3: so Elijah dealt with Baal's prophets, and it is like these false prophets detected might fear the like from those they had deceived.

Ver. 8.

But truly, notwithstanding this shame and silence covering these false prophets, yet, saith Micah,

I am full of power; courage, vivacity, and ability, becoming a prophet of God.

By the Spirit of the Lord; not from himself, but from the Spirit of God given to him, and duly qualifying him to the faithful discharge of the prophetic office; and without fear, flattery, by-respects, or self-seeking, I have already, and still do, and will declare the sins, duties, and dangers of this people, that they may repent and be saved, or my God may be justified when he judgeth, and this people may know the difference between a false and true prophet.

And of judgment; a spirit of judgment to discern aright times and seasons, to discern right from wrong, truth from lies, and pure worship of God from idolatry, and what are the consequents of all these to a people who decline from the way of truth and purity, or adhere to it.

And of might; resolution, undaunted in speaking God's word to the greatest of men; as I have dared, I still do dare to tell the heads

of Jacob and princes of Israel what they do against God, and what God will do against them.

To declare unto Jacob his transgression; with impartial reproofs, with severe menaces from God, to preach against Jacob's transgressions.

And to Israel his sin; the same repeated. All the twelve tribes have sinned, and God will visit.

Ver. 9.

This verse is word for word the same in the former part of it with the former part of the first verse of this chapter; we refer thither for explication of it. The prophet having asserted his Divine call, and avowed his faithfulness in the prophetic office, #Mic 3:8, he here gives us one more proof of it, dealing roundly with the magistrates in both kingdoms, Israel and Judah.

That abhor judgment; whereas judgment should be their great delight, as it is of every good magistrate, these had hearts that detested it, were weary of the directions of God's law in their polity, and hated to be controlled by it.

And pervert all equity; where you can, you wrest the law to countenance your unequal proceedings, and wrong those you should right, and acquit those you should condemn. And there is many a woe denounced against such.

Ver. 10.

They; heads, princes, judges, and great ones among them.

Build up; enlarge or beautify, and fortify.

Zion; the houses in Zion, or perhaps may be meant the temple and its buildings, and the royal palace of the kings of Judah.

With blood; with wealth and gifts which these builders made themselves masters of by violence, taking away the life of the owners, or else fining and amercing them. By this course they wrested part of their estates from them, by the other they seized all; they also for gain sometimes acquitted the guilty, and freed them in capital cases, and so sold the blood of the innocent.

And Jerusalem with iniquity; by such injustice Jerusalem was brought to ruin at last, though some particular persons and

families did raise themselves, their houses and palaces, to a present largeness and stateliness.

Ver. 11.

The heads thereof judge for reward; whereas the judges were God's deputies, to hear and determine causes, as the merit of the causes were found, without respect of persons, they should have been careful to give such judgment as God would give; for the judgment is the Lord's, and he sits in the midst of the judges. These corrupt judges attended little to the cause, but much to rewards, and with them the greatest bribe made the justest cause, and he was most guilty who was poor and could not, or honest and would not, give the expected reward. This was most directly against the law of God, #Ex 23:8 De 16:19, and expressly cursed, yet it was the common course and practice with them.

The priests thereof teach for hire: these men should have impartially declared the law of God to all, told them what was clean or unclean, what was prohibited, what permitted, what commanded; what was safe to them, being pleasing to God, and what dangerous to them, being offensive to their God: but these for hire would direct them how to please themselves, and though they broke the law, not be guilty; to extort, yet not be guilty of usury; to kill an enemy, yet not be guilty of murder, nor break the sixth commandment; to be unnatural to parents, yet not sin. Who paid them well, should find them most excellently skilled in the casuistical divinity the Jesuits at this day are masters of.

The prophets thereof divine for money; which being extraordinary persons raised of God, and sent by him to deliver his message impartially to all his people, to all ranks of men among them, without fear, flattery, prejudice, or any by respects; there were in this people at this day a sort of men called prophets, but were indeed mere fortune-tellers, as we call a vagabond sort of persons among us, and these made a trade of divining, and as if it were in their power to frame future things to the mind and humour of men, for a good round sum of money they would sell prosperity to them; for they never told great good to come to any but such as gave a great reward, and little money with them never purchased the news of a great advantage; and whoso had first the misery to be poor, that they could not buy, or else were wiser than to believe

these impostors, these were sure to be told a sad story of troubles and afflictions. There were many disciples of Balaam, #2Pe 2:15, they loved the wages of unrighteousness.

Yet will they lean upon the Lord; whilst magistrates, priests, and prophets are thus abominably corrupt, yet they will presumptuously lean upon the Lord, and flatter themselves that he is present with them, that he owneth them as his peculiar people. *And say;* yea, they boast so.

Is not the Lord among us, as our God, our Shield? whereas he was among them, but provoked to be their enemy, though they will not believe it.

None evil can come upon us; so they do falsely conclude, against all the word of God, and against all his true prophets' admonitions, no evil of affliction, such as war, famine, and captivity, can come upon them. Thus far these corrupt Jews.

Ver. 12.

By this it appears that this sermon was preached to Judah and its governors, priests, and prophets, who were thus wicked in Ahaz's time, and probably continued so in the beginning of Hezekiah's time. Jeremiah puts this out of all doubt, #Jer 26:18, saying that Micah spake these words to all Judah. As for the time, it was in all likelihood before the thirteenth year of Hezekiah, say some; I rather think it was in the very beginning of Hezekiah, and that this might awaken them of that age to comply with Hezekiah in the reformation. Zion here is threatened as endangered, nay ruined, by the sins of magistrates, priests, and prophets: they thought that Zion should be their safety, however they sinned; God by his prophet assures them the quite contrary, their sins should be the danger and destruction of Zion.

For your sake; because your sins are so great and many. God would have spared Sodom for the sake of righteous men, these may be safety to a city; but God will not spare the wicked for any place's sake, nor shall a temple be more security to a wicked people than heaven was to sinning angels. Though these flagitious men cried out against Micah, and suchlike men, as a public danger, truth is, the injustice, idolatry, and inhumanity of public persons were the great danger.

Ploughed as a field; either by the enemy and conqueror, thereby forbidding it to be ploughed without his leave, or by such as remained after the body of the people were carried captive. Jerusalem, one of the goodliest cities of the world, proud in its lofty and beautiful buildings, the city of the great King, shall become heaps; shall all lie in rubbish, its stately buildings shall be demolished and lie buried in their own ruins.

The mountain of the house, holy mountain, on which the temple, one of the wonders of the world, did stand, beautified with rarest buildings,

as the high places of the forest; shall lie so long waste as to be run over with wood as a forest, and be a lodge of wild beasts.

MICAH CHAPTER 4

The establishment of Christ's kingdom, #**Mic 4:1,2**; the peace of it, #**Mic 4:3-5**. The restoration, #**Mic 4:6-10**, and victory of the church, #**Mic 4:11-13**.

Ver. 1.

But: this particle, which ushers in the following promise, doth also bid us look to somewhat before spoken, of a very different complexion; that was news of a total and a long-continued desolation, but this is of a happy restitution, which doth refer both to a temporal deliverance out of Babylon's captivity, and to a spiritual deliverance out of ignorance, superstition, and all other ways of false worship. This latter is the principal, the former is typical, and so shall we consider them.

The last days; or the latter days, at the expiring of the seventy years' captivity, (near two hundred years from Micah's time,) as type of the days of the Messiah's kingdom, which are most usually called the last days.

The mountain of the house of the Lord; the city Jerusalem; or, more particularly, the mountain on which the temple did stand, called *the house of the Lord*; the hieroglyphic of the church of Christ in gospel times.

Shall be established; literally, and in the type, fulfilled when the second temple was built by the Jews returned out of captivity.

Spiritually, and in the antitype, accomplished when Christ did establish his church by the preaching of the gospel, and laid the foundations of it so that the gates of hell should never prevail against it, and made it this promise.

It shall be exalted above the hills; as the mountain or hill on which the temple stood was by this honoured above other mountains and hills, so shall it, after desolation and reproach of seventy years, be honoured with the temple rebuilt upon it for God's true worship, whereas on other hills the heathens worship idols. So the gospel church and the way of worship to God shall excel all modes of religion.

People; the Gentiles as antitype, those who came up with Israel out of Babylon, said to be servants and maids, **#Ezr 2:65**, above seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, many, if not all, of them proselyted to the Jewish religion, and a type, as well as first-fruits, of the Gentiles to be converted in the times of the Messiah. This number we are sure of; as for that Josephus reports of four thousand and seventy four of a mixed multitude, we look on with no more credit given than to his report of four million six hundred and twenty-eight thousand of Judah and Benjamin, Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 4.

Shall flow unto it; come in freely, continually, and in multitudes, which in the type was fulfilled, partly at the return out of Babylon, and partly in after-days when Darius Hystaspes favoured the Jews and encouraged them, as Josephus reports, Antiq. lib. II. cap. 4, consonant with **#Ezr 6:3-12**; and we have reason to believe that God so disposed Darius's mind to favour them, that it might occasion some to embrace the Jewish religion. But all this type was eminently fulfilled in the conversion of those multitudes we read of brought in to Christ by the preaching of the gospel in the apostolical times.

Ver. 2.

This was in part, and as a type, fulfilled when so many proselyted and circumcised servants of several nations, amassed in the Babylonish kingdom, left their native country, and in love to their Jewish masters, and more to the God of the Jews and his law, came up with them to Jerusalem and the temple. Afterwards,

when the wonderful deliverance of the Jews, and the advancement of their countryman Mordecai in the Persian court, brought the people and their religion into request and credit, many turned Jews, through the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, #Es 8:17, were circumcised, became-proselytes of righteousness. And in the times succeeding through the reigns of five kings, for ninety years, the Jewish affairs and religion continued in a tolerably good condition. In Alexander's time, and under the Maccabees, also, this prophecy was partly fulfilled, when Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumeans submitted to the Maccabees, and by Hyrcanus's command, and with their own consent, the Idumeans were circumcised; as Josephus, Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 17. This, notwithstanding the words, had a fuller accomplishment, and still shall have, under the gospel days in these times of the Messiah, to which, as to the antitype and principal mark, they are levelled, no doubt.

Come; so the captive Jews, by the decrees of Cyrus and Darius released from captivity, did certainly call, persuade, and encourage each other to leave the strange lands in which they had been captives, and to go up to Jerusalem, and to build that and the temple, and to restore the worship of God; and zealous proselytes did, as the eunuch lord treasurer to queen Candace came up to Jerusalem to worship. So that we meet many proselytes at Jerusalem, #Ac 2:5,10,11, whither they were wont to come before the gospel was published. Now as this was a fulfilling of this prophecy in part, so the conversion of the multitude of the Gentiles to Christ Is much more eminently a fulfilling of it.

To the mountain of the Lord; to the temple at Jerusalem, type of Christ and the gospel church.

To the house of the God of Jacob: this explains the former passage, and doth, as that, respectively look to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and in gospel days. He will teach us of his ways, out of his law, both in points of worship and judicature, by such as Ezra and Nehemiah, by such as Zechariah and Haggai, and by scribes acquainted with the law of God; this to last till Elias, forerunner to Christ, should prepare his way, and the Messiah should come to teach his people, and publish the gospel of the kingdom, by apostles and succeeding preachers.

We will walk in his paths; as was the duty of returning captives, and as, indeed, many of them did after their return walk more exactly in the ways of God, and especially kept themselves from idolatry; yet this was a fulfilling of this prophecy in type, presignifying what hath been done this one thousand six hundred years and more, under the preaching of the gospel; before Jacob only, now all nations see the salvation of God.

For the law shall go forth of Zion; in Jerusalem and Zion is declared the only way of worshipping God before Messiah comes, and from thence the only law of right worshipping God shall go forth. when Messiah is come.

And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; an elegant ingemination of the same thing in somewhat different words, which as they respect both type and antitype, so must be applied to each respectively.

Ver. 3.

And he; God, by those governors, high priests, and prophets (taking his word for their rule) set up of God, types and servants of the Messiah, who in due time and in a fuller accomplishment of this prophecy shall by himself, during the days of his dwelling in flesh, and by his Spirit, and word, and officers he hath appointed, unto the end of the world.

Judge; rule persons, determine controversies, appoint ordinances, enlighten minds, convince sinners, and convert them, as **#Ps 2:8**.

Among many people; as the knowledge of God, and the worship of God, after the restitution of the captivity, was somewhat more extended by the coming in of many proselytes, as is noted **#Mic 4:1,2**, and this as a type prefiguring the largeness of the kingdom of the Messiah or the gospel church, so when Christ set up his visible kingdom, and commissioned his apostles, it was to teach all nations, **#Mt 28:18,19**.

Rebuke strong nations afar off; by the captive Jews he did convince some of those mighty nations among whom the Jews did live seventy years; and though they were far off from God, his law, his temple, and true worship, he brought them over, they were made proselytes to the true God; so now much more is this fulfilled in the turning the mighty nations, the Roman empire and

many other nations, from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, **#2Th 1:9,10**.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; all that do heartily embrace the gospel shall be of a peaceable disposition both in their private and public capacities, and shall, as much as in them is, follow peace with all men. They shall gladly see wars cease, and turn their weapons of war and slaughter into instruments of husbandry, **#Isa 2:4**.

Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation; those which receive and obey the gospel shall not, unless necessitated to it, enter into a course of war and bloodshed.

Neither shall they learn war any more, to make it the employment of their life for their maintenance, or the chosen way to riches and honour.

Ver. 4.

But they, the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed from Babylonish captivity, and brought back into their own land, the type of a greater redemption by Jesus Christ,

shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree: the planting vines and fig trees was one part of that husbandry which the Jews made great profit by; to this husbandry they were much addicted in times of peace, **#1Ki 4:25**, and when peace, security, and riches or plenty are promised, among other ways of expressing it, this is one: so **#Zec 3:10**. So in the type, the Jews returned (whilst they walked in the ways of the God of Jacob) did enjoy safety and plenty, as **#Eze 34:25-28 36:8,9**, &c. This was made good in the gospel days more universally and fully, both in outward and inward peace under the Messiah.

None shall make them afraid; those that were once enemies shall be friends; the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, **#Isa 11:6-9**. These proverbial allusions do assure us that they who were redeemed out of Babylon, and the servitude of sin, should enjoy their own with great safety and security, which literally was performed to the returned, resettled captives, and spiritually or mystically is made

good among those that are redeemed by Christ, and who embrace the gospel.

For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it: this gives us the greatest confirmation and assurance of the future accomplishment of the prediction and promise; the merciful, wise, faithful, and almighty God hath spoken it; he hath promised it, whose word spoken, commanding it should be, can make their state what he saith it shall be.

Ver. 5.

For: this is either a reason why they should be so safe, or else a declaration of their resolution to take this course, that it may be so with them, and so the Hebrew particle may certainly be rendered.

All people will walk every one in the name of his god; it is a received rule that they ought, and it is a constant practice with the nations, they will pray to, depend on, and serve their gods, and think by this course to receive their expected blessings; they are constant to their gods, **#Jer 2:11**.

We will walk in the name of the Lord our God; seek the Lord, embrace his law and worship, wait on him as the Fountain and Giver of all good: as he is the Lord who can give us vines and fig trees, and can give us safety under them; as he is our God, and engaged by promise to do all this for us; in his name we will walk, and so shall we be safe and enjoy all good from him; we will have no other lovers, nor go after them, though we have done so, **#Ho 2:6,7**. This was in letter and in part fulfilled, when upon their return out of captivity they did abandon all false gods, and worshipped God alone. And it is fulfilled more eminently in all the Israel of God, who turn from dumb idols to serve the living and true God.

For ever and ever; unchangeably, through the succession of ages, among the restored Jews and the redeemed Gentiles.

Ver. 6.

In that day; called last or latter days, **#Mic 4:1**; in the day wherein I shall restore my captived people, and in the day I shall redeem mine elect. *I will assemble*; first, and in part, by the edicts of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, for the release of the captives, their return to Jerusalem, and for the rebuilding the temple, and

for restoring the worship of God; but more fully by the preaching of the gospel, publishing salvation by Christ, to whom the gathering of the Gentiles was to be, #Ge 49:10.

Her that halteth; see #Zep 3:19; weakened with the hard usages of oppressing conquerors; who were as lamed ones, unable to walk: such were the impoverished Jews in the Babylonish captivity, utterly unprovided for so long a journey; and it is likely they were unresolved, too, whether to go or not go, halted between a desire of going and a fear of the difficulties that would unavoidably attend their poverty. Now the bounty and favour which God moved in the Persian kings toward the Jews was such, that these poor were encouraged to set forward on the journey. This word is to this day fulfilled, in that Christ doth by the power of his Word and Spirit make his people a willing people, determines their resolution, and enables them to perform it, and to give up themselves to God.

I will gather her that is driven out: in this phrase,

I will gather, does God by Ezekiel, Eze 28:25, promise the recovery of his people from captivity; and so does Jeremiah, #Jer 31:8, almost in the same manner promise the restoring of captive Judah. Here they are said to be

driven out, i.e. of their own land, into a strange land, where they are captives, #Jer 8:3,16:15 23:24:8,9 29:14 Eze 4:13. The Lord will by his power and goodness gather those whom Nebuchadnezzar scattered through his kingdom, and Christ will much more gather to his filled those who were captives to Satan.

Her that I have afflicted: this in the letter refers to wasted and impoverished Israel, on whom God laid an affliction of seventy years.

Ver. 7.

Her that halted: see this phrase opened, #Zep 3:19, and in this chapter, #Mic 4:6.

A remnant; which, as they were preserved for a seed, so they should as fruitful seed take root and increase, and continue to the coming of the Messiah.

That was cast far off; that was cast off by God, and by the hands of Babylonians were carried away captives into remotest parts of the Babylonish kingdom.

A strong nation; so the Jews did grow up in multitudes and strength, as appears by the Jewish wars which were by them waged in the days of the Maccabees.

The Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion; the true God, Lord of heaven and earth, shall be their God alone, him they shall obey in his worship, law, and temple in Jerusalem.

From henceforth, even for ever, i.e. to the end or period fixed for the Mosaic and legal institutions, for a very long time, not simply for ever. This was partly fulfilled to this people in their return, and reestablishment in their own land and in Jerusalem; but the final, full, and eternal accomplishment hereof is now fulfilling, and shall continue so, under the Messiah, till fulfilled in the gathering all the elect to Christ in grace on earth, and in glory in heaven.

Ver. 8.

O tower of the flock: some refer this to that tower Edar, in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, built there for the shepherds' more convenient watching over their flocks. The prophet may possibly allude to this. In the church, Christ's flock, there is a tower built for defence of his flock, but it is that name which is a strong tower, to which the righteous run, and are safe. But there was a tower of this denomination in Jerusalem, through which tower the flocks of sheep were driven into the sheep market; this one tower, by synecdoche, put for the whole city Jerusalem.

The strong hold; Ophel, as it is in the Hebrew, and perhaps were better rendered a proper name of that impregnable fort, #2Ch 27:3; another considerable part put for the whole.

The daughter of Zion; or, O daughter of Zion; so it will be an explication of what the prophet before meant by the tower Edar and Ophel, i.e. O Zion, O Jerusalem, both in the typical and in the mystical sense.

The first dominion; the former dominion, not in outward splendour, but because the government and supreme dignity

among this people was restored (after seventy years' captivity) to the former royal family, and continued in it till Shiloh came. This in the type was fulfilled upon the settlement under Zerubbabel and his successors; but the whole antitype concerns the Messiah's kingdom, and the gospel Jerusalem, and is fulfilled in the spiritual glory of it. Christ's kingdom is the ancient, supreme, and most glorious kingdom; and by his redeeming us from the bondage of hell, is set up, and shall be continued firm and unmovable, more than Edar, Ophel, *Zion*, or Jerusalem typical, as #**Lu 1:32,33**, and more large than ever David's or Solomon's kingdom, #**Da 7:14**, and therefore greater in glory, for Christ is King of kings, #**Re 17:14 19:16**. This spiritual kingdom came first to the Jews, #**Ac 13:46**. It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you. The gospel was to be preached first to the daughter of Jerusalem. There the preachers of repentance and remission of sins were to begin, and thence they were to publish it to all nations, #**Lu 24:47**. This text, and such like, the blinded Jew doth take in a literal sense only, as if it promised a temporal dominion over all nations, and worldly kingdom to the Messiah, in which they expect a large share; but what is literal, and concerned the Jews alone, was limited to them that came out of the Babylonish captivity, and hath been fulfilled to them.

Ver. 9.

Now; now that I have from the Lord promised such great good things to you, after the seventy years' captivity, and in the days of the Messiah,

why dost thou cry out aloud? as if this case were desperate, or as if it would be ever night with thee, or as if thy hopes would not outweigh thy fears, or thy future joy would not counterbalance thy present griefs.

Is there no king in thee? thou hast lost thy king Zedekiah, and now art become tributary, but thy God, thy King, is with thee. and will be with thee to preserve, restore, establish, enlarge, enrich, and beautify thee with salvation, and to reign over thee in Mount Zion for ever, #**Mic 4:7**. Thy loss at present is great, but thy future advantage may well stop these outcries.

Is thy counsellor perished? hast thou none among thy wise counsellors left in thee? Hath Nebuchadnezzar cruelly slain all he took of them, and are the rest fled? Yet the wonderful Counsellor is with thee, doth consult and resolve that thou shalt not be undone, and perish for ever. Messiah, the wisdom of his Father, hath the conduct of thy sufferings, deliverance, and re-establishment, in which thou mayst at last glory.

For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail: this great distress of spirit appears by thy outcries, like those of a woman in travail; of which no great reason can be given, all things considered, no more than of those of a woman at her full time, and bringing forth the fruit of her womb, to the present increase and future honour of the family; whose pains end in joy, #Joh 16:21.

Ver. 10.

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth; it may be read, *Thou shalt be in pain, and thou shalt labour*, &c.; so it will be a prediction of the troubles, sorrows, and dangers that they shall meet with in the wars against the Babylonians, and in their captivity under them.

O daughter of Zion; all the house of Judah, particularly you that dwell in Jerusalem and near Mount Zion. *Like a woman in travail;* whose sorrows are very sharp, but somewhat mitigated by expectation of a good delivery, and the birth of a living child: let your hopes so mitigate your sorrows too.

For now; ere long, within a few years, you will see or hear that Israel is carried captive (which Micah lived to see): this may be an admonition, it is certainly a token that you shall be captives too; and this came upon them one hundred and thirty years after, when in Zedekiah's time the daughter of Zion was deplorably wasted, conquered, and captivated by Nebuchadnezzar.

Thou shalt go forth out of the city; forced thereto by the prevailing power of the Babylonians, who took Zedekiah and those that accompanied him when they stole out of the city: these did go out when they could keep in it no longer.

Thou shalt dwell in the field; as conquered, made prisoners, and held so in the fields under a strong guard, until all the conquered were brought together, that they might in one body be led away.

In their journey to Babylon they were forced to lodge in the fields, also exposed to all the inconveniencies of heat in the day and of cold in the night, weary, hungry, thirsty, and faint near to death.

Thou shalt go even to Babylon; O daughter of Zion, thou shalt certainly be carried captive to Babylon, where thy dwelling shall be little bettered, thou shalt dwell by the river, without the city.

There shalt thou be delivered; by Cyrus first, and by Darius Hystaspes next, and by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah's time; all this as type of a greater deliverance.

The Lord; the everlasting God, thy God, whose servants the Persian kings that favoured the Jews were, and by whose motion they did incline to release them. Shall redeem; the Hebrew word points out a redemption by the next kinsman, and so fairly minds us of the Messiah, the great Redeemer of the church. And to him, and the redemption of the church by him, do these deliverances ultimately and principally point.

From the hand of thine enemies; who would have detained the people of God longer in slavery, or who would have hindered the rebuilding of the temple, and the re-establishment of the worship of God. Proportionably to this type doth the antitype answer, #**Lu 1:74,75**.

Ver. 11.

Now, i.e. ere long, the time is near at hand. Many nations; many for number and great for name, mighty in power, all that were at that time confederate with or feudatory to Sennacherib king of Assyria, or else to the king of Babylon.

Are gathered against thee; the present tense for the future, in the prophetic style, to express the certainly and the nearness of the judgment; they will all of them assemble and come up against Judah and Jerusalem, as Sennacherib did when he besieged Jerusalem, or as Nebuchadnezzar did when he took it.

That say; propose it as their design, hope for it as their end, and boast of it as easy.

Let her be defiled; let us use her contemptuously, tread her under foot as a common and polluted thing, let us destroy her with such spite and scorn as a defiled thing deserveth: so the phrase

#2Ki 23:8: let her be polluted with blood, and without respect to her former holiness let us enter, sack, and destroy her temple and palaces.

Let our eye look, delighting ourselves in the ruin; let us feed our envious, revengeful eye.

Upon Zion; upon Jerusalem, the royal palace, and the sacred temple, buried in their own rubbish.

Ver. 12.

But they, the gathered confederate nations, Zion's enemies,

know not, neither discern nor consider, the thoughts of the Lord; the design of the holy, just, gracious, and faithful God, who is the God of his people, of Israel; who will humble, but not extirpate; who will purify by, but not consume in, the furnace; God's thoughts to Israel are, to give him an expected end.

Neither understand they his counsel; the same thing in somewhat different phrase: this elegancy is ever added to confirm the thing foretold.

He shall gather them; by his secret, just, and effectual providence disposing all things to facilitate their gathering together, that they shall do, and yet God also shall do it; he as the first cause, they as the second; he moves according to his own pleasure, they move as they are second and dependent agents; they shall as a fire purge out the dross, or as a wind blow away the chaff and lightest corn, which is that God intendeth; but they consult only to extinguish the people, to cut them off that they be no more a nation.

As the sheaves into the floor; a plain and very intelligible simile. The husbandman gathers the sheaves into the floor to thrash them; so God gathers, i.e. in due time he will do this, and bring his enemies and his church's enemies together, that they may be bruised, broken, and destroyed utterly, This seems to look to Sennacherib's gathering his power against Jerusalem, and the circumstances well enough suit this; yet is not this to be confined or restrained to Sennacherib, but perhaps to the slaughter made on the enemies in one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in Esther's time, looking to somewhat that is further off indeed

running through all ages of the church, and shall be finally accomplished in the ruin of the antichristian kingdom: then shall that of **#Zec 12:3** be fulfilled, when though all nations gather themselves against Jerusalem, yet it is that they may be cut in pieces; when the vine of the earth shall be gathered into the wine-press of God's wrath, **#Re 14:19,20 19:15-21**.

Ver. 13.

Arise: this imperative may be read in the future tense, and so be an express promise; it is, however, an implicit promise made to the daughter of Zion, the Jewish church, type of the gospel catholic church, that she shall be raised out of a captive, low, and oppressed state, and this shall be by the reviving power of her God.

Thresh; so in a decorum to the metaphor, **#Mic 4:12**, used to express the gathering of the enemy into the floor to be broken: the future strength of the church, employed successfully (more by the arm of her Redeemer than her own) in the subduing and breaking her enemies, is here foretold and promised, as it is also **#Isa 41:15**. Christ will thus punish his enemies. So Babylon typical, as threatened **#Jer 2:33**, was beat to pieces; and so shall antitypical Babylon in due time be broken as straw that is thrashed into smallest pieces like chaff.

I will make thine horn iron: some taking this for the horny part of the hoof of the ox which did tread out the corn, make it to be in sense the same with the hoofs made brass; but they that take it as our version doth, for the horn properly taken, with which the horned beasts do push and thrust down, break, or wound, do express the power and strength of the church firm as iron to beat down her enemies. I will make thy hoofs brass: by this figurative speech is the strength of Zion expressed, by which she treads under foot, and breaks the power of enemies into pieces that it shall never be repaired, as straw that is thrashed in the floor and broken like chaff.

Thou shalt beat in pieces; in the times after the rebuilding of Jerusalem the Jews grew to such strength, that in their wars they did, especially in the Maccabees' time, break their enemies in pieces. But here is a mystical and spiritual sense of these words,

as they refer to the Messiah's kingdom, in which he will break hard hearts by the power of his word, and convert sinners to himself; and by the power of his almighty arm will defend and support his own subjects, whilst he doth by invincible strength throw down and trample into dust his and their enemies. And this power he hath sometimes evidently exercised already, in the various deliverances he hath wrought for his people, which stand recorded in the church histories. Of this strength you may truly say what is reported of the inscription in the cross appearing to Constantine, *In this thou shalt conquer*.

Many people; such as were enemies in disposition and carriage towards the Jews though neighbours in their situation; these were both many and mighty enemies: such Christ's church hath to contest with, and such Christ will conqueror for his church, for he it is who goeth *forth conquering and to conquer*, #Re 6:2; and all his enemies shall be made his footstool, #Ps 110:1.

I will consecrate: some refer this to the church, and so it may well enough be applied: the redeemed of the Lord should by their own act and deed become the Lord's. Others refer it to the Lord, he will consecrate; this is best: but both together, the Lord will, and therefore the church will; God requires it, they consent to it.

Their gain; the spoils of their conquered enemies, what they get out of their hand. So the tabernacle was enriched with the spoils of Egypt, and the temple built with that which David did dedicate of the spoils of enemies; and Persian bounty built the second temple.

Unto the Lord; to the true God, for his honour and in his service.

Their substance; their power, glory, and wealth, all they have and are.

Unto the Lord of the whole earth; with humility and low thoughts of all we do, as done to him that doth not need it, being Lord of all.

MICAH CHAPTER 5

The birth of Christ foretold, #Mic 5:1-3; his kingdom, #Mic 5:4-7; his complete conquest over his enemies, #Mic 5:8-15.

Ver. 1.

This verse is, say some, a sharp sarcasm against Israel's enemies. Others will have it to be a repetition of the evils, and a description how far those evils should prevail, that were ere long to come upon Judah and Jerusalem, by either Sennacherib and his Assyrians, or by Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonians, to where God's people seem thus to speak: We have heard what we must suffer for a time, and how we shall be delivered and triumph at last; and since that is the order, first afflictions, afterwards salvation, delay not, O thou enemy, but now gather thyself in troops; summon in thy forces, appoint thy rendezvous, bring thy spoiling, wasting troops, thy merciless and bloody troops, and form thy army, O Assyrian: of whom much like this doth Isaiah prophesy, #**Isa 8:6-10**. And this passage of Micah may also further refer to the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar, under the violence of both which they were to suffer, and from both which the Jews should have a glorious deliverance ere long. *O daughter of troops*; O Nineveh, daughter of troops: from her first founder she was a city full of troops, that spoiled, Cut off, and destroyed, and had been more than ordinarily so under Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib for ninety-five years together, in the successive reigns of these four monarchs. Babylon also in her time was as troublesome to Judah, and must be this daughter of troops also. *He*; that is, the enemy, either Assyrian, which had taken all but Jerusalem, and did invest Jerusalem too; or Babylonian, which afterward besieged and took Jerusalem, sacked the city, burnt the temple, and captivated the people.

Hath laid siege against us; hath in prophetic style, certainly will lay siege against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the only people of God at that time; both king, judges, and citizens were all enclosed in the siege.

They, the proud, successful, and oppressive enemy,

shall smite the judge, the king, supreme judge,

of Israel; not the ten tribes, though they are usually called by this name, but the two tribes that adhered to David's family.

With a rod upon the cheek: this is a proverbial speech, expressing a very contemptuous usage of the person spoken of, and it was fulfilled partly when Sennacherib's general Rabshakeh did so vilify good Hezekiah, and not content herewith vilified the God of, Israel also, as #2Ki 18:19, &c.; #Isa 37:23. It was more fully and literally accomplished when Zedekiah, his children, his counsellors, and his officers of state, were most barbarously used by the insulting Babylonians, #2Ki 25:6,7 2Ch 36:13,17,18, &c.; #Jer 52:6, &c. Since all this must be done against us, make haste, O thou proud enemy, and do it, for it will end in our deliverance and thy ruin.

Ver. 2.

But, Heb.

And. Beth-lehem; not in the tribe of Zebulun #Jos 19:15, but in the tribe of Judah, styled therefore Beth-lehem of Judah, Matt. it. 1,

6.

Ephratah; so called, say some, from Caleb's wife; but that is not probable, for it had the name long before Caleb's wife was thought of, as appears, #Ge 35:19. It is more likely to be called Ephratah from the richness and fruitfulness of the land where it was situate, the Hebrew word whence this is derived importing fruitfulness, whence also it was called Bethlehem, the house of bread.

Though thou be little: some read this as an interrogation, Art thou little? which ought to be resolved by a negative, Thou art not little, and so reconcile #Mt 2:6 to this of the prophet. Some read it in the neuter gender, *It is a little thing for thee to be among the thousands,* to have a captain, or ruler of a thousand in Judah; it is much greater honour, which shall be put upon thee; out of thee shall come he that is to be chief Ruler and Head of all the people of God, the Messiah. Much like phrase is, that #2Ki 20:10 Isa 49:6; there is an exposition of the word *Tsair* in the text, as denoting the contrary to our usual notion of it: so #Jer 48:4. The Chaldee paraphrase explains it by sultans or princes, but I question whether one instance from the Scriptures can be given in which *Tsair* signifies great, notable, or chief; our translators have

better rendered it with supplying the adversative *though*, and make the sense plain and easy: As for Beth-lehem Ephratah, she is so little that she is scarce to be ranged among the cities of Judah which go out by a thousand, or are led out by one that is head, prefect, or captain of a thousand.

Among the thousands of Judah: this was the royal tribe from which the Messiah was to rise; this (as other tribes) was divided into thousands, and a head appointed to each thousand; and of these the thousand, or, in our language, the regiment, of Bethlehem was one of the least to the eye.

Out of thee shall he come forth; out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the city Bethlehem, shall he come, i.e. be born.

Unto me; for to do that great work God hath designed to do by the Messiah.

That is to be ruler, King and Sovereign, in Israel; amidst the Israel of God, the whole Israel, as well that after the faith as that after the flesh. Christ the Lord in the midst of them, **#Mic 4:7.**

Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting; whose generation, as he is the Son of God equal with his Father, is eternal: this asserts the eternity of his Divine nature.

Ver. 3.

Therefore, or nevertheless, as the particle will bear,

will he, God, the God of Israel,

give them up, to the Chaldeans, to be wasted by them, and to be led into captivity, and to be afflicted there for their sins committed in their own land against God, until the time, until seventy years be expired, the time appointed for the punishing the Jews,

that she which travaileth, the daughter of Zion, compared here to a woman in travail,

hath brought forth; be delivered out of captivity, compared here to a woman's bringing forth, as **#Mic 4:9,10.**

Then the remnant of his brethren, i.e. the brethren of the Messiah, those of Judah and Benjamin who were carried captive, shall return unto the children of Israel; being set free by Cyrus,

shall return to their own land, and be there established; and they shall return with Israel rather than to: all this referring in the letter to their redemption out of Babylon, (which was the effect of the Messiah's power and mercy towards them, as **#Mic 4:10 5:2**) hath a further reference to a more glorious redemption, and to intervening afflictions which should fall upon the Jews, from after their restitution and resettling in Canaan. unto the coming of the Messiah in the flesh when born of the Virgin; and that of **#Isa 7:14** shall be fulfilled, when Messiah, Ben David, shall set up his kingdom, and deliver the whole Israel of God from their captivity under ignorance, sin, and hell, and shall bring in the Gentiles, that remnant of his brethren, and unite them to the true Israel, and make them one church to God.

Ver. 4.

He, the Ruler born in Bethlehem, the Messiah, shall stand: sometimes this posture denoteth the ministry of a servant, but here it speaks the readiness, cheerfulness, firmness, and stability of both the ruler, his government, and kingdom.

Feed; as a Shepherd that does diligently watch over, guide, preserve, and feed his sheep, or as rulers are called shepherds. Christ is that good Shepherd, **#Joh 10:14**; and he is the righteous and holy Governor, and his government shall have no end, **#Isa 9:7**.

In the strength of the Lord; in the assistance which God shall give him, for Christ-man was carried through this great work, redeeming, setting up, establishing his church by the power of the Father, who was with him, and upheld him, as was promised, **#Isa 61:1-3**. All power in heaven and earth was given to Christ our Mediator, who being eternal God, of equal power with his Father, doth in his own strength overcome all enemies, removeth all difficulties, gathereth and governeth his church, and will do so to the end of the world; such visible, convincing tokens of a Divine power and glory working in him, and with those he sendeth to preach the gospel, I mean apostles, and all managed to the glory of God.

In the majesty of the name; by commission from the Lord, in whose name Christ came, preached, wrought miracles, and instituted his gospel church.

Of the Lord his God, i.e. God the Father.

They shall abide; his sheep, his subjects, his redeemed Israel, his church made up of converted Jews and Gentiles, shall continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

For; the church is so redeemed and established, that Christ the Messiah might be glorified; God will give him a glorious name, therefore these things are disposed in this manner.

Now, either ere long, or in due time, at the set time,

shall he, Messiah,

be great unto the ends of the earth; whose redeeming grace shall be published to the ends of the earth, said his dominion, his spiritual kingdom, shall be enlarged wide as the world itself. All here spoken in this verse is too great any way to be applied to Zerubbabel, as some Jews themselves confess.

Ver. 5.

This verse, as the former, is abstruse, and the particulars are not easily accommodated to times and things.

And this; so the Hebrew, and it may be read as the neuter gender, and be referred to time, or thing, or both, following in the text, thus: At that time this thing shall be our peace, viz. when the Assyrian shall invade us, we shall raise by our prayers sufficient strength against him, here expressed by seven shepherds, &c. Our version supplies the defect of the substantive with

man, i.e. the Messiah the Ruler, who stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord. Shall be the peace, which is promised to and expected by the people of God, all their preservation and deliverances are not only for the sake, but effected by the power, of the Messiah.

When the Assyrian shall come into our land; as Sennacherib did within a few years after this prophecy was delivered; and then by the power and authority of Messiah was Sennacherib and his army defeated, and Judah's peace was secured.

When he shall tread in our palaces; which the Assyrian did in all the cities of Judah, except Jerusalem, against which he could do nothing, because God-man the Messiah was with Hezekiah and Jerusalem, as foretold. #**Isa 8:8-10 37:32-35**.

Then, shall we; Hezekiah, and with him the prophets and people, by prayer to God, shall prevail with God to send deliverance and salvation to them.

Raise against him seven shepherds: the number is certain, but put for an uncertain; and the quality of those raised is expressed by shepherds, in a decorum to the representation of the people of God by the metaphor of sheep, or flock, of which shepherds do particularly take care.

And eight principal men: here again a determinate number is put for an indeterminate, and for a sufficient number, that the effect may be sure. God will raise a sufficient number of deliverers for his people: this is the import of this phrase, as elsewhere six troubles and seven, #**Job 5:19**. Thus in the letter and historical reference I suppose the words do look to the wonderful deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the Assyrian, but I doubt not they have a mystical and spiritual reference, and contain a prediction of that peace Christ did make, and doth maintain, for his churches against all enemies, typified by the Assyrian. Besides this exposition given, I must not pass over that note, viz. The word rendered peace signifieth also recompence, and so might be rendered: This shall be the recompence of the Assyrian by the seven shepherds, rendered for his invading and spoiling Judah, and for attempting against Jerusalem.

Ver. 6.

And they, the seven shepherds and eight principal men, i.e. those great, wise, and successful instruments of God's revenge, and of his church's deliverance,

shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword: this passage seems to point to the Babylonians, who did invade, waste, and subdue the Assyrian kingdom under the conduct of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, called also Berodach, #**2Ki 20:12**. He sent the congratulatory embassy to Hezekiah, newly by miracle cured of his mortal disease and delivered from the Assyrian, #**Isa**

39:1,2. This Merodach taking the opportunity of the weakness of the Assyrian kingdom, partly by the great slaughter of Sennacherib's army, and the murder of that mighty, daring monarch, and partly by the civil wars which ensued between the regicides and Esarhaddon, took arms, and succeeded in the attempt, subduing the Assyrian kingdom with force and bloodshed enough.

The land of Nimrod; the same, say some, with the land of Assyria but others, perhaps with better reason, refer this to Babylon, and the kingdom thereof, which by Nebuchadnezzar's hand destroyed the Jews, Jerusalem, and temple, and was afterwards destroyed by the Medes and Persians, whom God raised to punish Babylon and release the Jews.

In the entrances: as we read, it denoteth the fortified frontiers, the garrisons which keep all the entrances of the kingdom; it denoteth also their cities, through the gates of which was great entrance, or their courts of judicature, which were kept in the gates: both their military power should be reduced and their civil power also by the prevailing conqueror.

Thus shall he; in this manner shall he, i.e. the Messiah,
deliver us, the Jews his people,

from the Assyrian; both as type of all other enemies, and he an enemy to the people of God.

When he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth in our borders: see this explained #Mic 5:1. I add, that what is rendered when might be rendered *because*, and note the reason why the Lord Messiah doth so deal with Assyria first and Babylon next.

Ver. 7.

The remnant of Jacob; both the remnant which surviveth the sacking and burning of their city and temple, and, carried captive, live in a scattered condition; and the whole remnant, according to the election of grace, whether of Jacob after the flesh or after the Spirit.

In the midst of many people; either among the several people under the Babylonian dominion, which may well be called many, when it is said of Nebuchadnezzar, that God gave him all nations

and kingdoms, **#Jer 27:6-8**; or else, amidst the nations, their neighbours, after their return and reestablishment in their own land. This remnant, wherever they are,

shall be as a dew; either subsisting and multiplying as the dew; or else, as the dew refresheth the grass, and is beneficial to it, so where this remnant is, it should be a blessing to those about them that use them friendly; so **#Ho 14:5**.

From the Lord; it shall be the peculiar work of God; as dew hath no other father or fountain, so the blessings on Jacob, and the blessing by him on others, shall be from the Lord. So God blesseth those that bless Abraham's seed, **#Ge 12:3**. So Cyrus received his blessings, and his Persians with him, **#Isa 45:1-4**.

As the showers upon the grass; the same thing in a different, but very apt expression; nations kind to Jacob should for this spring and flourish, as the grass doth by the dew and showers.

That tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men; it shall be the only work of God, he shall by his immediate hand bless such, as he alone, without the help of man, giveth dew and showers. As this was fulfilled in the type, before the gospel of the kingdom was preached to all nations, so it hath been, now is, and ever shall be fulfilled in ages to come. God's remnant shall be a blessing to the places they live in, and the persons they live with, as Jacob was to Laban, **#Ge 30:27**, and Joseph was to Potiphar, and to the keeper of the prison.

Ver. 8.

In the midst of many people; see **#Mic 5:7**; who are enemies, that do injure them.

As a lion for strength and courage, which *the beasts of the forest* dare not oppose: and cannot resist, so Should this remnant; much like that **#Le 26:8**.

As a young lion among the flocks of sheep; a second allusion of the same import, but yet with some greater emphasis; in the former comparison, the greater cattle, called behemoth, in this sheep, much lesser and weaker cattle, are compared with the lion and young lion.

Treadeth down; overbeareth, and throws down by his strength, and treads under foot with as much ease as a man would tread on worms, or tread down straw for the dunghill.

Teareth in pieces; to devour, satisfy his hunger, and repair his strength for a new assault on his prey.

None can deliver; that dares attempt a rescue; but the prey is left under the lion's paw, to satisfy the hungry beast: so shall Israel be after their return out of captivity, and while they keep the ways of the Lord; so they were in Esther's time, against such as would have destroyed them; so in the Maccabees' time, when they subdued the nations about them. But the conquering power of the word, the rod of Christ's strength, doth greater wonders than the sword of the Maccabees ever did. It is the mighty conquering power of the gospel that is here shadowed forth to us.

Ver. 9.

Thine; Messiah, or a people of God, nay both, forasmuch as whatever these can do, they do it, not in their own power, but in Christ's power.

Thine hand; thy strength and power, for so does the Scripture usually express strength or might.

Shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries; shall be greatly exalted, and shall be wonderfully successful against enemies, who in great multitudes did set upon the people of God; such were those who fought the Maccabees, and were defeated by them.

All thine enemies, who do obstinately hold on in the enmity of their natures, ways, and doings,

shall be cut off; finally, certainly, eternally, and dreadfully perish. This hath a partial fulfilling now, but its full completion will be when Christ will appear the Judge of quick and dead, when all his enemies shall be made his footstool, **#Ps 110:1.**

Ver. 10.

In that day; when the threats against the enemies, and the promises to the people of God, shall be made good.

Saith the Lord: this is added for assuring the performance of the things foretold.

I will cut off thy horses; not in judgment, but in mercy, for there shall be no such need of them, nor shall the church of God any more rely on them: so **#Ho 14:3**, *We will not ride upon horses*; though we have put confidence in them, we will do so no more.

I will destroy thy chariots; warlike chariots, prepared for war: as God alone is, so they will make him, their only trust.

Ver. 11.

And I, the Lord thy God, and thy Saviour, will cut off the cities; cut off the occasion of thy fortifying thy cities as heretofore thou hast done, thou shalt dwell in unwalled towns, and need no other defence than what I am to thee.

And throw down all thy strong holds; demolish all thy forts, and watch-towers, and frontier guards. These here mentioned are means of defence against enemies' assaults, in which Israel had too much trusted; the others before mentioned, **#Mic 5:10**, are offensive preparations for annoying the enemy; but in the day of that peace here spoken of, there should be no enemy should invade the people of God to put them on their defence; nor should they have any need to attempt upon their enemies; and though these means are lawful to be used, yet shall it be the happiness of God's people not to need them, for their God, their Lord, is their Saviour in the midst of them, and he will cut off enemies round about them; so that virtually this is a promise to Israel that his adversaries should be destroyed, and so his fears disappear.

Ver. 12.

In this verse the Lord foretells the downfall of all unlawful arts which had been in use, though forbidden by the law of God, **#Le 20:27**. Though Israel should have consulted with God alone, yet they did consult with sorcerers. So did Manasseh, and before him, **#2Ki 17:17**.

Thou shalt have no more soothsayers; the very art shall be out of use, and none shall openly, as formerly, consult with them, or they make profession of foretelling events, or what a lucky day or hour to set upon an enterprise, or to curse, as Balaam would have done, an enemy to make way for victory; no more of these; the oracles ceased when Christ was born: much to this purpose **#Zec**

13:2 Mal 3:5. God will, in mercy to his people, take away these stumbling-blocks, these occasions of sin.

Ver. 13.

Thy graven images; which were for the matter of them made of wood or stone, smoothed, and fashioned to the images, which the blind idolater thought did well represent his god.

Standing images: statues erected in places chosen for the purpose, fixed that they move not, had this different name from their posture, the matter still the same.

Out of the midst of thee, O Israel, in the type, and, O Israel, antitype: this is verified among the Jews, who to this day hate images for Divine uses, and learnt this in their captivity; and it is verified in the church of Christ, which condemns all religious use of images.

Thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands: it was once the great sin of the Jews to worship and rely on idols; but when God shall by the Messiah redeem both his Israels, they shall no more sin thus, **#Ho 14:3**, for they shall know he is the only true God, and there is no Saviour beside him.

Ver. 14.

I will pluck up thy groves: the groves where some of them abused in downright idolatrous worship, others of them used superstitiously, thus beside the word; the other way, quite against the word: but after the return from Babylon, there was a great reformation in this point, and after the appearing of the Messiah there hath been a greater eradication of idolatry.

So will I destroy thy cities, or thine enemies; for the word, here used indifferently, signifieth both, and they will either agree to this place. If cities, they are those devoted to idolatry, which, **#De 13:15**, were to be destroyed; if you interpret it enemies, it is either an argument to confirm them that they shall not need horses and chariots, or defenced cities, or a further blessing promised upon the reforming fresh idolatry; this an effect or fruit of it, God will destroy their enemies when they have destroyed these idols which are his enemies.

Ver. 15.

I will execute vengeance: God speaks to our capacity, he will proceed, or act, as the Hebrew word signifieth. He is supreme Judge, to whom vengeance belongeth, and when he hath passed the sentence, and his instruments execute it, he takes it to himself: so when the Babylonians avenged the wrongs by the Assyrian done to the Jews, and when Cyrus with his Persians and Medes avenged the injuries of Babylon, this prophecy was partly fulfilled, and in succeeding times it was further fulfilled, and is now fulfilling, and so will be, until the final destruction of the wicked.

In anger and fury: this spoken after the manner of man; it includes the greatness of God's just displeasure, and the effects of it, which are resembled to what we do when furiously angry, act with utmost strength, and in the most terrible manner we can; so God will, with as great severity and terror as flesh and blood can bear, proceed against these heathens.

Upon the heathen; literally, the nations under the Assyrian monarchy first, next the nations under the Babylonish kingdom: in the full import of the words, all the nations that are enemies to the Lord, to his Christ, and to his peculiar people, who know not God, nor obey the gospel.

Such as they have not heard; with unparalleled terror; and so they shall be made warning-pieces to others.

MICAH CHAPTER 6

God's controversy with his people for ingratitude, #Mic 6:1-5. What service is acceptable to him, #Mic 6:6-9. He reproveth them for their injustice, #Mic 6:10-15, and idolatry, #Mic 6:16.

Ver. 1.

Hear ye: see #Mic 1:2.

Now; whilst the Lord is willing to debate with you, before it be too late for you.

What the Lord saith: though it is a man like yourselves who speaketh, yet he comes from the Lord, and with the Lord's message, and it is the Lord who speaketh by Micah.

Arise: this is God's command to Micah, who is bidden to arise; so Jonah, **Mic 1:2**, See Poole "**Jon 1:2**". Prophets, as other men, could be content to sit at ease, and neither be troubled by others or troublesome to others; and perhaps the little success of Micah's preaching had occasioned him to retire and sit down; now God rouseth him, Get up, prepare thyself, contend thou; plead, Micah, the present cause, argue the case that is between thy God plaintiff, and thy people delinquents.

Before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice; plead openly, vehemently, let there be witnesses to hear the case, which is so clear on God's side, and so full against thy people, that the very mountains and hills, on which they have sinned against me notoriously, on which I have blessed them abundantly, had they eyes, and ears, and voice, would testify that I have planted them with vines, olives, fig trees, and clothed them with grass and flocks, and stored them with springs, and beautified them with cedars, oaks, and all pleasant trees of the forest; this I have done upon the mountains and hills for my people, and there they have made their groves, set up their idols, sacrificed to devils, and committed other lewdnesses not to be named. O Micah, speak as if thou wouldst make mountains hear thee to testify for me, **#De 32:1 Isa 1:2**.

Ver. 2.

Hear ye, O mountains: in the first verse God directs Micah to take the mountains and hills for witnesses; now in this verse he doth call upon those mountains to hear: it is a prosopoeia, an elegant personating of hearers and witnesses, as **#De 32:1 Isa 1:2 2:2**. Some by

mountains understand princes and nobles, and by

strong foundations of the earth inferior magistrates, as **#Ps 75:3**; but it may as well, or better, be an appeal to these creatures in so just a cause for their Creator.

The Lord's controversy, whose sovereign Majesty may well command what he pleaseth, and expect to be obeyed, and whose unparalleled goodness to Israel ought to have been uncontroverted motives to obey him in all things; yet the sovereign goodness is

slighted and disobeyed; on which he now impleads his people, brings his action against them.

Ye strong foundations of the earth; called before hills: it is an explanation of the former, mountains; or it may be an appeal to those deep foundations which are hid from any eye, and which seem most remote from what is done on earth; but the ill carriage, the disobedience, and sin of Israel is so notorious, that the whole creation may be subpoenaed witnesses against them.

The Lord hath a controversy with his people; covenant, redeemed, and only people, as **#Am 3:2**.

He will plead with Israel; no longer put off the cause, nor forbear to punish them and right himself, he will bring the cause to hearing judgment, and execution too.

Ver. 3.

O, my people; you whole house of Israel, my people chosen in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, multiplied in Egypt, and by many miracles owned, redeemed, and carried through the wilderness, and settled in the Promised Land.

What have I done unto thee? If I have done only good, why art thou weary of me? if thou know any evil I have done, declare it, say what iniquity hast thou found in me, as **#Jer 2:5,31**.

Wherein have I wearied thee? what grievous or burdensome impositions, that thou mightest justly groan under?

Testify against me; speak, declare, spare not; thou who canst not recount all the good I have done for thee, and who canst not find out one evil I ever did to thee, declare what it is hath caused thee to be weary of me.

Ver. 4.

Look as far back as thy coming out of Egypt, near seven hundred and forty years ago;

for I brought thee up, with an out-stretched arm, out of the land of Egypt, where by servants thou wert oppressed, where thy oppressors did plot thy utter extirpation, where thou servedst in the iron furnace.

Redeemed thee; delivered thee by mighty power, and gave Egypt for thy ransom; I made them pay dear for their detaining thee, and ill using of thee.

Out of the house of servants; being offspring of Canaan, they were in their father's curse doomed to be servants, and were (as servile minds are) most barbarously cruel to Israel, as appears by the bloody edict against the male children, and by requiring brick without straw; their bondage was a cruel bondage under which they groaned.

I sent before thee Moses; a man excellently qualified to be a conductor to them, a very learned, martial, and experienced man; he improved his forty years by the advantages of a royal education first, and next by the great employments which such persons are called to: for his wisdom and learning, his might and valour, you have witness, #Ac 7:22; the Hebrew tradition is, that he fought and got many battles, in which he commanded as generalissimo for Pharaoh. Moses was beside this admitted to extraordinary consults with God: by this means their model of polity was made very exact.

Aaron; a person called to the exercise of the highest office in the priesthood, to offer sacrifice, and make atonement for the sins of the people, and to be a type of the great Intercessor.

Miriam; a prophetess, to be assistant to her brothers last mentioned, to be example and counsellor to the women: God furnished them with magistrate, priest, and prophet.

Ver. 5.

O my people, remember now; O Israel, think well of it, what I did then was worthy of a grateful remembrance to this day.

What Balak king of Moab consulted: this man, though a great and warlike prince, yet would not adventure by plain force to set upon Israel; he wished their ruin, he contrived it, and had he succeeded in his first attempt to bring Israel under a curse, he was resolved next to attack them by force.

And what Balaam, a man accounted to be a prophet and a holy man, able to blast any by his curse, and able to advance any affairs by his blessing, but really he was a soothsayer, and a man of

pernicious counsels, answered him; forced against his interest and inclinations to bless Israel, **#De 23:4,5 Jos 24:10**, and to confess he could not prevail with God to curse Israel; so also remember how Balaam counselled Balak to draw your fathers to sin, how this snare took, and how it cost twenty-four thousand lives. The story at large you have **#Nu 22 Nu 23 Nu 24**.

From Shittim: this the place where Balak began by fair but lewd women of Midian to debauch Israel as Balaam had counselled, and so continued to Gilgal all along the borders of his dominion: or else thus, Remember, O my people, how I spared thee in the matter of Baalpeor, for which thou deservedst to be destroyed at Shittim; remember also the mercies I gave under the conduct of Joshua after Moses's death, which fell out whilst you abode at Shittim, **#Jos 3:1**.

Gilgal; where Israel first took possession of the Promised Land, and saw visibly the faithfulness of their God.

That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; the mercy, justice, uprightness, veracity, as it signifies; but here it rather denotes the right on God's side in this controversy with his people.

Ver. 6.

In the foregoing part of the chapter you have God's resolution to have a hearing, **#Mic 6:1,2**, and his plea for himself against an ungrateful people, **#Mic 6:3-5**. Now in this verse you have the result, which is either an unfeigned submission, and justification of God's just proceedings, made by some of the best of this people, or else an inquiry made by men among them, who did yet retain some opinion of their own integrity; much like those **#Isa 58:3**, they were ready to say, We have offered sacrifices as required, &c.; what would God have us do more? Or else it is an inquiry what the prophet would further direct them to do in this case, with an intimation that they were ready to offer any sacrifices God should require of them. Or else this verse is the prophet's supposition, that some among them would be ready to inquire how they should in this case behave themselves, and so this prosopoeia fairly makes way for further direction to this people.

Wherewith? Heb. *With what?* what preparation shall I make for a due and right address unto God?

Shall I, in the person of all the people, or else in the person of the most thinking among them: this *I* is the people of the Jews.

Come before the Lord: it is a temple phrase, and contains the solemn attendance on God in his worship; well paraphrased in the Chaldee paraphrase, With what shall I serve before the Lord?

And bow myself before: this is exegetical to the former phrase, When I come to bow myself and worship the Lord, with what shall I appear?

The high God; such was the God of Israel, heaven his throne, the earth his footstool; idols are dunghill gods, our God alone is the God who dwells on high.

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings? shall these suffice for testimony that I owe my all to God, or appease his displeasure, which justly might devour me as the fire the sacrifice?

With calves of a year old: it is probable this repeats (as is usual in Scripture, to confirm and affect us the more) the thing before mentioned.

Ver. 7.

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams? the law did direct the offering of rams, single beasts for single sacrifices; if this be too little, they shall be multiplied, we will give many, very many; for the phrase is a hyperbole.

With ten thousands of rivers of oil: oil was required too in their sacrifices, in the meat-offerings of them, but in no great quantities, a log, or hin, i.e. half a pint, or three quarts; but we know such gifts are infinitely short of the Divine goodness bestowed on us; he who is our God is worthy of rivers of oil, multiplied to thousands; had we such store it should be all his. Such-like hyperbole you meet with in **#Isa 40:15-17**.

Shall I give my first-born? this is proposed not as a thing practicable by any rule of reason or religion, but as a proof of their readiness, as Abraham, to offer up their first-born, as he did offer

up his Isaac to God. It is much to part with any of our children, but it is more to part with the strength, and glory, and hope of our families; yet, like hypocrites, or like unnatural heathen, this they would do, rather than what would please the Lord.

For my transgression; to appease the anger of the Lord for my sins; would these be expiatories?

The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? the question is repeated to affect us the more: the words would bear this reading, Shall I give my first-born? *This would be* my sin. The fruit of my body? *These would be* the sin of my soul.

Ver. 8.

The prophet answers the inquiry made #**Mic 6:7** otherwise than these inquirers did expect: You who make this inquiry might have spared this pains.

He, God himself, hath already plainly enough told you this.

Thee, O Jews, every one of you, might from the law of God know what would please your God, and with what you ought to come before him; you might have read, #**1Sa 15:22**, that he delighteth in your obeying his word; and more early, #**De 10:12 13,20**. the same practical rule was laid down.

What is good in itself for you, and well-pleasing to your God; from his own mouth your holy and righteous fathers did know, and so might you, what is that good with which you should appear before God.

What doth the Lord require of thee? what so much? or what without? or doth he require any thing without? It is a question that must be resolved in a negative, comparative, or absolute; the Lord doth not require sacrifice without moral duties, nor doth he require sacrifice so much as such duties after mentioned.

To do justly; to render to every one what is their due, superiors, equals, inferiors, to be equal to all, and oppress none, in body, goods, or name; in all your dealings with men carry a chancery in your own breasts, and do according to equity.

To love mercy; be kind, merciful, and compassionate towards all that need your kindness, do not use severity towards any; though

the laws of man did not require you to remit of your pretences, and if you exacted all your right you did not break the laws of men, yet you should have respect to the law of love, and show mercy with delight in showing it, #Ro 12:8 2Co 9:7 Heb 13:16.

To walk humbly with thy God; in all duties which immediately refer to the precepts of the first table, in all religious exercise and deportment toward God, keep the heart sincerely humble toward God; think highly of him, his laws and determinations, murmur not against the final determinations God by his providence makes, complain not of any of his precepts; know and own it, thou art an unprofitable servant if thou hast done all, #Lu 17:10.

Ver. 9.

The Lord's voice; either by his judgments, each of which is the Lord's voice, he speaks by them; or rather by his prophets; and whether people hear it, or forbear, the Lord himself is concerned in it.

Crieth, as to deaf or to sleepy and secure men, who will not hear the milder and softer calls; the prophet must cry to them in the loudest manner he can speak.

Unto the city; to every city in Israel and Judah, but principally to Jerusalem and Samaria, places of greatest concourse, and where the men of greatest sense may reasonably be supposed to dwell, who should hear and consider.

The man of wisdom: man is supplied to make the sense entire, but without that supply the sense might have run plain, and wisdom will hear, which must have been resolved some way like to our translation, and I know none that better fits than that our learned translators have supplied. I know not but that the abstract, used here for the concrete, may express a superlative degree, wisdom, i.e. the wisest, will hear, &c.

Shall see my name; rightly apprehend and duly reverence the holiness, justice and necessariness of the proceedings of the Lord with his power and majesty in the execution of his just displeasure on brutish, hardened sinners.

Hear; consider well and discern.

Ye; citizens both of Jerusalem and Samaria, and every other city in the twelve tribes.

The rod; the punishments that God is now sending, by which he will plead his cause. These are called *the rod*, either because they are from God, who once was, and still would be, a Father to them, or because it is a comprehensive word, which takes in the various punishments inflicted.

And who hath appointed it; hath commissioned it, handleth the rod, hath chosen it out, and strikes with it, whether it be Assyrian, or Babylonian, or both, at several times. This is the plain literal sense; others there are, which are omitted because they suit not the design of this work.

Ver. 10.

Are there yet? after so many express laws peremptorily forbidding, so many examples of punishments on such, after so many reproofs, menaces, and exhortations by so many prophets, dare you still do so unjustly?

Treasures of wickedness; gotten by injurious, oppressive courses, ill-gotten wealth; the wickedness wherewith they raked their wealth together is laid up with their wealth, as the like is said, #Jas 5:3.

In the house of the wicked: none have thought of restoring their ill-gotten goods; the wicked fathers, who heaped them together, laid them up in their houses, and the children retain them; the house, i.e. family, of these do as their fathers, store up violence, and so do directly contrary to the first rule, #Mic 6:1, *to do justly*.

The scant measure, which is less than standard; see #Am 8:5; by which these unrighteous ones did both offend against God, and cozen their chapmen.

That is abominable; God abhors such injustice, #Pr 11:1 20:10,23 De 25:13-16. It is most hateful in his sight.

Ver. 11.

Shall I? it may have some reference to the prophet, as speaking of himself, appointed of God to be a reprover and impartial censurer of the sins of this people; When I am so to judge of them

by their doings, shall I flatter them, and say they are better than they are? but it better refers to God himself.

Count them pure; approve, justify, or acquit them, as if they were righteous, and not worthy to be punished? Shall I let them escape who are such unjust persons? This question implieth a strong negation.

The wicked balances: this kind is put for all the rest, wherewith things bought and sold were apportioned, and by which buyers and sellers were ascertained how much they bought.

The bag; in which they both kept their weights at home, and carried them about with them.

Deceitful weights, Heb. *stones of deceit*; they did (as in many places with us men do) use stones for weights, and this unjust people did cheat both at home and abroad, both the balance and its weights were deceitful, and condemned, #Le 19:35,36 De 25:13-16.

Ver. 12.

For: this is given as an evidence of the truth of the charge, and of the justness of the resolution God had declared to punish them.

The rich men; who of all men had least temptation to deal unjustly; they were so well provided for, that without a trade they might live, and in trading they should have been content with honest gain; they should have been examples of charity and bounty, but these are the men deepest in this guilt.

Thereof; of Jerusalem, Samaria, and of every traded city in the land.

Full of violence; full of principles, practices, and fruits of violence and rapine, their minds inclined to cheatings and dishonesty, their practices managed with fraud and falsehood, and their riches heaped up through violence.

The inhabitants: the disease is universal, not some few rich men, but they that dwell in the city, are wholly oppression; or perhaps thus, who come to dwell among them, soon catch the disease, and learn these ways.

Thereof; of all the cities of the land of Canaan.

Have spoken lies; have accustomed themselves to speak falsehood, there is no truth in their affirmations or negations.

Their tongue is deceitful in their mouth; there is not a man of plain-heartedness, integrity, and honesty among them. So David complains of his times, **#Ps 12:1,2.**

Ver. 13.

Therefore, for these many sins of violence, frauds, and lies,

also will I make thee sick in smiting thee; some read, I have begun to smite thee, so it suits well with the history of the wars, rapine, captivity, or desolation by the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, &c. brought upon Israel and Judah, which were the beginnings of their sorrows, and God's just punishments; but as we read it

sick in smiting; it will as well suit with the grammatical construction of the words, with the history too, and thus it will give the greater emphasis to the words; God will ere long so smite, that the strokes of his rod should reach the very heart, and make Israel heart-sick of his wounds, inflicted on him by the Lord.

In making thee desolate: this was fully accomplished, when the kingdom of the ten tribes was overthrown by Shalmaneser, and the kingdom of the two tribes captivated by Nebuchadnezzar.

Because of thy sins; multiplied, aggravated, obstinately retained, and not repented of.

Ver. 14.

Thou shalt eat; both literally and figuratively taken, for using what they have. So God threatens, **#Le 26:26.** So God did punish the Jews, **See Poole "Hag 1.6"**. But not be satisfied; not be filled with sweetness or strength in the eating, or using of what thou hast; thy sins shall bring either bitterness or insufficiency upon all thou hast, by both all shall be made useless to thee.

Thy casting down; thy destruction, partly by thy dissensions, conspiracies, and violences within thyself, and partly by the enemies breaking in upon thee, and bringing the war into thine own bowels.

Shall be in the midst of thee; thou shalt be weakened at home by thine own hands, and be wasted utterly by thine enemy, besieging thee in thy cities, and taking them.

Thou shalt take hold: though there is some variety of readings here, yet the plainest and most obvious sense is as we render it, whether you refer this laying hold to persons, as wife, children, or friends, whom (though they endeavour to save out of the enemies' hand, yet) they shall not be able to save; or if referred to things, goods, their most valuable and most portable goods and wealth: as men in distress and fleeing out of the reach of enemies, pack up their best movables, lay hold on their children, and carry them away into some remoter place, or strong hold; so it is likely this people did when invaded, #Jer 35:11.

But shalt not deliver: where thou lodgest thy children, and layest up thy wealth thither the enemy shall pursue thee, there besiege thee and thine; or if thou flee into other countries, it shall not be a safe refuge to thee.

That which thou deliverest; which thou dost for a little while, for a few weeks or months, preserve from the enemy, that thou thinkest is safe.

Will I give up, by unexpected and unthought of accidents to you, yet guided by the unerring and irresistible hand of Divine wisdom and power; shall be given up, fall into the hands of enemies, so that any considerate eye may see God's hand in it.

To the sword; to be cut off by either domestic and civil wars, or by the invading, conquering, and wasting troops of the Assyrians.

Ver. 15.

Thou shalt sow, be at great pains and cost in tilling and sowing,

but thou shalt not reap; it shall either not thrive to a harvest, or, if it does, an enemy shall reap it.

Thou shalt tread the olives, lay out thy labour and weary thyself in it, plant the tree, gather the fruit and tread it,

but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; when thus prepared to use it, an enemy shall rob thee of it. Oil in those countries was

much in use, because of the great refreshment it gave to the whole body.

And sweet wine: here is an ellipsis, and must be thus supplied, thou shalt tread the grapes which afford sweet wine.

But shalt not drink wine; in this, as in the other two, thou shalt be disappointed, thou shalt not enjoy thy labour, nor shall thy heart be cheered with new wine, nay, thou shalt be sick with vexing, to see thine enemies' hearts glad with the wine thou hadst prepared for other guests.

Ver. 16.

The statutes of Omri; of which you read, #1Ki 16:25-28. He built Samaria, to be a royal city, and seat of religion brought in by Jeroboam; thus he both strengthened and put more credit upon the idolatrous worship, which was set up by Omri in a royal city. whereas by Jeroboam it was set up in places of meaner account.

Are kept; diligently, very much. All the works of the house of Ahab; summed up, in establishing Jeroboam's idolatry, introducing the idolatrous worship of Baal, #1Ki 16:31-33, cutting off the prophets of the Lord, #1Ki 18:4 19:10,14, and abolishing the true worship of God; besides the barbarous contriving the death of the innocent, and seizing the estate, #1Ki 21:8,9, &c.

And ye, of the house of Israel, though under the government of families which had no great reason to value the house of Ahab, yet you have done their works of idolatry and oppression, and you also of the house of Judah have degenerated and done like their works.

Ye walk in their counsels; literally fulfilled in Jehoram's reign, acts, and counsels, #2Ki 8:17,18; and in Ahaziah's, who was son of Jehoram, and grandson of Jehoshaphat, #2Ki 8:27; and so did Jehu, and his successors, all persist in the idolatry of the calf-worship, and in oppression of the poor: thus instead of walking humbly with God, they did openly depart from him, contrary to what God required of them.

That I should make thee, &c. eventually this was the end, or in necessary tendency it could not end otherwise, though they did not intend this, nor did God will them to do so that it might so end.

A desolation; an utter waste, such as should astonish those that saw it.

The inhabitants thereof, of the city or land, a hissing, in token of abhorrence and derision, #De 28:37 Jer 25:9,18 29:18.

Therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people; the reproach threatened in the law, if my people forsake me; or, Jerusalem shall be as much reproached as Samaria; or as #Eze 36:20.

MICAH CHAPTER 7

The church, complaining of the scarcity of good men, #Mic 7:1,2, and the general corruption, #Mic 7:3,4, putteth not confidence in man, but in God, #Mic 7:5-7. She triumpheth in hopes of restoration after affliction, #Mic 7:8-13. She prayeth to God, #Mic 7:4. God answereth her with promises of confounding her enemies, #Mic 7:15-17. God's mercies to his people, #Mic 7:18-20.

Ver. 1.

All are agreed in the scope and meaning of these words, that they are designed a complaint for the great scarcity of men that feared God, did justice, and loved mercy; and so the prophet begins with a pathetical complaint,

Woe is me! ordinarily this phrase is minatory, but here it is lamentation, as every eye may see who discerns the propriety of the Hebrew.

For I; either the prophet in his own person, or else in the person of the good man; or, by a usual figure, the land may be brought in, complaining, that whereas it was once well stored, now it hath few right good in it.

Am as when they have gathered the summer fruits; all the fair, goodly, and ripe fruit gathered, none left, or none but evil fruit, such as the labourers thought not worth gathering up. So is the

harvest of Israel and Judah too; though I and other prophets have sown good seed abundantly, yet goodness comes up very thin and scarce: so **#Isa 24:13,16**.

As the grape-gleanings of the vintage, the same complaint in a like elegant metaphor, drawn from the vintage-gatherer, who leaves but few scattering single grapes. So Israel and Judah, which in bringing forth good men should have been as a fruitful vine full of clusters, but barren they have been, and are; and good men, i.e. just, compassionate, and humble men, are as grapes after the vintage is gathered.

There is no cluster to eat; such good men's converse would as much delight, refresh, and encourage me, as a fair cluster of grapes doth a thirsty and hungry person, but there is not one such cluster.

My soul desired; it speaks a vehement desire.

The first-ripe fruit; it is an ellipsis or aposiopesis, and to be supplied thus, *but there was, or I found, none*.

Ver. 2.

The good man; who loves and is kind to men in need, and is so from the sense of God's goodness, and in a designed imitation of God, is godly in the frame of his heart and course of life towards God, and beneficent to men for God's sake.

Is perished; is dead and gone, and left no heir of his godlike virtues.

Out of the earth; out of Israel and Judah too, though Hezekiah was (probably) now their king.

None upright; an honest, plain-hearted man, who thinketh no deceit, but speaketh the truth, that is, without crooked and perverse designs; such a one may possibly, but not easily, be found among the people of the ten anti of the two tribes.

They all lie in wait for blood: this proves the prophet's charge against this people, for the good and upright man imagineth not evil against any, but it is evident that in Israel (and Judah too) the temper of the most was sly, designing, and watching to do

mischief, to the ruining of families, the murdering of innocents, and seizing their estates, Ahab like, #1Ki 21 Pr 1:19.

They hunt; they proceed with all diligence, craft, and power, as a hunter that hath set his toils, and is now by all his arts endeavouring to bring the prey into the toils, that he may make his advantage by it.

Every man his brother; were they strangers they so hunted it were barbarous, but this is inhumanly barbarous, these bloody men hunt and destroy their brethren, the seed of Jacob, the worshippers of the God of Jacob, their own circumcised brethren.

With a net; which is spread beforehand, and laid close; so it is secret, premeditated cruelty and rapine they do universally exercise against each other.

Ver. 3.

That they may do evil with both hands earnestly: as we render the words, their plain sense will be, that all their diligence, that with both hands they can use, is to set forward evil and mischief. Possibly this clause might bear this reading, *Both hands are towards evil*; and then the following clause thus, *To do good the prince asketh. The prince*; the chief ruler, who commissioneth the judge, and should awe him from perverse judging, who should charge the judges as Jehoshaphat did, #2Ch 19:5,6; but, contrarily, here the prince set a price upon his own act in evil.

The judge; the inferior magistrate, commissioned to be judge.

Asketh for a reward: shameless injustice! to sell the innocent, and condemn their cause and persons, and to acquit the guilty, and pronounce them just! for a bribe to make God's authority which is in them to act so directly against itself, is abominably wicked, for God's authority to them is given that they might relieve the poor oppressed, and acquit innocency, but here innocency must buy its safety, or else is sold to danger.

The great man; either the advocates in their courts of judicature, or the great man of interest at court, who can do what he will there.

He uttereth; is bold to speak plainly what bribe he will have, he makes his own demand, whereas they did (whilst a little modest)

treat by others, and a servant or under-officer must make the bargain.

His mischievous desire; his unjust, oppressive design and purpose, knowing that his greatness and interest will bear him out in whatever violence he attempts against poor, weak, and unbefriended innocence; he dares for gain set any thing forward.

So they, all three, prince, judge, and great man, wrap it up, or twist it together, consent each to other, and jointly promote violence and bloody cruelty.

Ver. 4.

The best; among all naught, who is least naught passeth for best; and so must it be here, not one good, but the least evil man is by the prophet called the best.

Of them; of people, prophets, judges, great men, and princes.

Is as a brier; mischievous and hurtful to all that meddle with them; and perhaps the prophet alludes to briars infolded in each other, that shall so be devoured at last. The most upright; in the same sense upright as they are said to be best.

Is sharper than a thorn hedge; the same in different words, i.e. hurtful and mischievous to all.

The day of thy watchmen; literally taken for such as on the watchtowers observe whether enemies approach; the day in which they shall give the affrighting intelligence, and sound the alarm. Or else figuratively, watchmen, i.e. governors, prophets, and teachers, either good and faithful, or evil and unfaithful. The day which the true prophets foretold would come, which faithful teachers confirmed, good governors believed, feared, and, as Hezekiah, endeavoured to prevent, will certainly overtake you, that day of evil which your sins have provoked God to appoint. Or else, that day of good, which your false prophets have promised, your corrupt princes, judges, great men do expect and hope for, shall be a day of visitation, grievous punishment, by which the falsehood of flattering prophets shall be discovered, and the truth of Micah, and Isaiah, &c., true prophets, be confirmed.

Cometh, i.e. surely, speedily, and unavoidably on impenitent ones, how many or how great soever.

Now; when the day is come as to Samaria in its captivity by the Assyrian tyrant, and to Jerusalem in the Babylonish captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and in many other *nows* intervening between the time of Micah's minatory predictions and the full accomplishment of them.

Shall be their perplexity; the astonishing, overwhelming sorrows, fears, and confusions which shall wreck these great, notorious, and impudent oppressors, hunters, and sellers of justice. They shall be perplexed because the sore evils foretold by the true prophets of God shall overwhelm them, and because the peace and prosperity promised by the false prophets is unexpectedly turned into troubles, desolation, and utter ruin to their state, cities, and families.

Ver. 5.

Trust ye not in a friend; most prodigiously treacherous were the people of that age, and since none upright, all lay in wait for blood, and were turned hunters of brethren, it is but necessary caution that they trust no friendship.

A guide; either a governor, who ought to guide; or equal, who being of intimate familiarity usually do guide; or a husband, as the word imports.

Keep the doors of thy mouth; watch thy words, let not thy tongue discover any secret or utter any words which may be danger to thyself, or give an advantage to thine enemy.

From her that lieth in thy bosom; a periphrasis of a wife in honest times; but whether in debauched times, as these are of which the prophet did speak, it may not import somewhat like that **#Pr 5:20**, I will not say: a wife, one may rationally suppose, will never disclose a husband's secrets to ruin him; yet such were the treacheries of that corrupt age, that it would be imprudence to trust a with.

Ver. 6.

For: the prophet here gives us a reason of his advice to be wary how and whom they trust.

The son; who received his being, maintenance, education, and inherits the honour as well as estate of his father; the son, obliged by most inviolable laws to please, preserve, and honour his father,

dishonoureth, seeks to accuse, vilify, endanger, and ruin

the father; whose dishonour and loss, or ruin, is also the son's dishonour and ruin; yet unnatural treachery will be so rife in those times, that the father had need keep his guard upon his very son.

The daughter, whose love and affection are usually more tender than the sons' towards parents, yet will forget their duty.

Riseth up against her mother, that bare them, that nursed them, that, more than fathers, tend, indulge, and bear with them. So monstrous shall the perfidiousness of that age be.

The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: in consanguinity there was not any faithfulness, in affinity much less may you expect it.

A man's enemies, the worst and most perilous enemies, who will be most ready and most able to do them mischief,

are the men of his own house; among relations and retainers, who by law of God and nature should have been faithfulest friends. So it fell out through the civil wars of the Jews, in their seditious and in their calamitous days. Much like to this is that of Christ, #Mt 10:21,35,36.

Ver. 7.

Therefore, since times are so calamitous, and all sorts of men are so perfidious, since no sure comfort or relief from those that are nearest relations, and should be dearest friends,

I will look; as one set in a watch-tower looks round about, and diligently observes all that stirreth; so will the prophet, speaking in the person of the faithful, the Israel of God; so did they who in Israel and Judah feared the Lord and walked with him;

unto the Lord, the God of mercy, power, truth, and wisdom, who can and will help.

I will wait for, though he do not presently appear for me, saith the church, I will with patience expect,

the God of my salvation; who only can, and who graciously hath promised to save his church.

My God will hear me; he doth hear my cry, and will deliver me.

Ver. 8.

The prophet in this verse personates the church, and brings her in bespeaking the enemy in this manner:

Rejoice not; let it be no pleasure or matter of glorying to time, that the day of calamity hath overtaken me.

Against me; Israel of God, the remnant, the faithful, which are the church of God.

O mine enemy; O Assyria, Edom, or Babylon. *When I fall*, into a low condition, into deepest distresses, I shall arise; I shall not always lie in them, God will raise me out of them.

When I (the prophet intends the good, the few righteous ones among those degenerate multitudes) sit in darkness, when affliction, war, famine, and captivity, as a dismal cloud, shall cover us, and benight the daughter of light, when fallen as low as a captive,

the Lord shall be a light unto me; shall support, comfort, and deliver me, his presence and favour shall, as the sun rising, dispel the darkness of the night. This is spoken more especially concerning Judah.

Ver. 9.

I will bear, patiently and submissively, the indignation of the Lord; the just and chastising anger of the Lord, in the effects of it upon me.

Because I have sinned against him, greatly, continually, both against his law and the precepts thereof, and against his love and the effects thereof. Judah was guilty of idolatry, ingratitude against God; and of injustice, unfaithfulness, and unmercifulness against one another; and these sins deserved sorer punishments than they suffered, therefore the righteous ones here justify God, and humble themselves.

Until he plead my cause against mine enemy, for that he will ere long do, as well as now he doth plead his own cause against me.

He will be as well a just judge against mine enemies, to avenge me on them, as he is a just God, by my sins provoked to chastise me.

And execute judgment for me; when that day comes, he will certainly and evidently declare his judgment to be against mine insulting adversaries, my cruel enemies, and that he doth so punish them for my sake, as **#Ps 137:7 Isa 10:5,12 Jer 30:8 Zec 1:12,15.**

He, the great and glorious, the holy and just God, who now chastiseth me,

will bring me forth to the light; as a prisoner brought out of a dark prison or dungeon into the light, is set at liberty, advanced and beautified, so shall the church be delivered and made to prosper.

I shall behold his righteousness; the truth and riches of his promised salvation. This made good, partly in the restitution of the captivity, rebuilding of Jerusalem by order of Cyrus and Darius, and partly before this in Hezekiah's rescue from Sennacherib's pride and rage.

Ver. 10.

Then; in the time of this hoped deliverance, when God shall, as I expect he will, plead my cause.

Mine enemy; what nation or people soever, whether Assyria, Edom, or Babylon, or whoever.

Shall see; as they did when Hezekiah was miraculously saved, and Jerusalem with him, out of the hand of the Assyrian, and as in the return out of Babylon, when the heathen said among themselves,

The Lord hath done great things for them, #Ps 126:2.

Shame, reproach and confusion, self-condemning reflections,

shall cover her; shall on all sides be cast upon her for her pride, cruelty, and inhumanity against the Israel of God.

Which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? which with insulting pride and atheism derided my faith and my God. So the

heathen either denied the omnipresence and omnipotence of the true God, or preferred their idols above him, and as if he had been a conquered and captive God, as well as his people were a captive people. So **#Ps 115:2 Joe 2:17**.

Mine eyes: the church speaketh assured of the truth of God's avenging her upon her enemies.

Shall behold her; with delight, or well-pleas'dness, the people of God shall see their enemies laid as low for their cruelty against them, as ever God suffered the enemy to lay his people low for their sins against him and his mercies. See the like expression, **#Ps 59:10 Mic 4:11**.

Now shall she; either shortly she shall; or else, when that time of full deliverance is come, the church shall in that day rejoice in her God, and say

Now. Be trodden down as the mire of the streets; be accounted and used as most contemptible and useless, the conquering enemy shall then tread the Babylonians in the dirt, and use them despitefully, and without more regard than that we have for the dirt under our feet; and this was accomplished by the Medes and Persians in their conquest of Babylon.

Ver. 11.

These words are variously expounded, but the plainest and most suiting with the letter and history to me seems to be this:

In the day that thy walls are to be built; O Jerusalem, the days shall certainly come, that thy walls, overthrown and razed by the Babylonians, shall be rebuilt; which was first in part fulfilled under Cyrus, but more fully under Darius Hystaspes, and Darius Longimanus, who commissioned Nehemiah to repair the walls of Jerusalem.

Shall the decree; either the decree of Artaxerxes, who is also called Cambyses, and who forbade the building of the temple, or else the decree of Darius Hystaspes, reviving Cyrus's decree for the return of all the Jews that would return.

Be far removed; for ever cease; if referred to Cambyses's decree, this shall no more hinder; or else, shall be dispersed far

and wide among all the provinces, if you mean Cyrus's decree that all may return.

Ver. 12.

In that day, after the Jews' return out of captivity, and Jerusalem rebuilt, he who is of Jewish race, and proselyted Gentile,

shall come even to thee, O Jerusalem, seat of God's solemn worship, type of the gospel church, restored to thy promised glory.

From Assyria; in which many Israelites were found captives when the Babylonian kingdom swallowed up the Assyrian, and were continued in that servitude by the Babylonians till the Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonians, and proclaimed a release to all captive Jews; then from Assyria did captive Israel, i.e. some of them, go up to Jerusalem.

From the fortified cities; in which it is probable many Jews were kept for servile works: Shalmaneser did place the captivity of the ten tribes in the cities of the Medes, which, for aught I know, may be the cities here spoken of.

From the fortress: one mentioned for all the rest, and I suppose these fortresses might be frontier garrisons made for defence of the country, where the Jews were in policy placed by the Assyrian; from these places, and through all the country,

even to the river; to Euphrates or Chebar, where also were of the captive Jews.

From sea to sea; from the Caspian to the Persian and to the Midland Sea.

From mountain to mountain; on which many of the dispersed Jews did in all likelihood settle themselves in process of time for security and retirement, as the persecuted Waldenses and Albigenses settled in the mountainous parts bordering on France, Savoy, and Italy. Or from Mount Taurus to Mount Libanus or Carmel. In brief, from all parts of their captivity they shall return to their own country, a singular type of the redemption of the church by Christ, the bringing in the Gentiles, and enlarging the Messiah's kingdom.

Ver. 13.

Notwithstanding, Heb. *And*, but well rendered here *Notwithstanding*, viz. these promises of restitution, and gathering in the dispersed Jews, &c., which took not place till more than two hundred years after they were first made by the Lord to his people; accounting thus, one hundred and thirty-three years from the captivating of Samaria to the captivating of Jerusalem, seventy years the Babylonish captivity lasted, to which add the years to Darius Hystaspes ere the temple was built, and the years to Darius Longimanus ere the city was built and the walls repaired, it will amount to a considerable sum of years.

The land, of Canaan, shall be desolate; laid so by Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar in the ruins of this last seventy years.

Because of them, the sinful Jews, that dwell therein; which now in Micah's time did, or hereafter shall dwell in it, in Canaan.

For the fruit of their doings; as punishment for their evil doings.

Ver. 14.

That this verse contains good tidings to the people of God, both to his ancient people, type of his church in gospel days, and to the church of the converted Gentiles, is agreed on all hands, for they are either a direction and command to those God doth appoint by office to be shepherds over his flock, or a prayer to God that he would please to take the care of them, which doth include somewhat more than the bare petition for the blessing. Or it is a prediction of what shall be done for them after their return out of the Babylonish captivity, or a promise made to assure and comfort them during their captivity.

Feed; so Christ directs his officers, or God appointeth Christ to do this; or so the prophet for the people, or the people for themselves, pray to God that he would be their shepherd and feed them. Or the prophet doth in the imperative, instead of the future, tell them what shall be, which is a promise express enough for their support and comfort.

Thy people; literally, Israel after the flesh, returned out of captivity; mystically, the whole Israel of God, redeemed out of a

worse captivity; both a people peculiar to God through grace by covenant, and through Christ.

With thy rod; in allusion to the usage of shepherds, who guided their sheep by a pastoral staff: the peculiar and gracious providence of God over his sheep is hereby expressed, and desired or promised.

The flock of thine heritage; they are as sheep, weak, not able to defend or provide for themselves, a flock of innocent ones compared with their enemies; and, however they have been scattered, they are thine heritage still, which thou, O Lord, hast purchased of old: let them be so still, and do thou both possess, rule, feed, and preserve, #De 4:20 32:9 Ps 100:3.

Which dwell solitarily in the wood; feed, graciously protect and guide, those that in their present captive state are solitary, compassed with dangers from wild beasts; so thy people are in danger by cruel enemies, worse than wild beasts.

Carmel; a fruitful place and well inhabited, whether you take it for Carmel which Elijah frequented, or where Nabal dwelt, and where was rich pastures and safe feeding. *Bashan;* a place of note for fruitfulness in Canaan.

Gilead; equal with any of the others for plenty and safety.

As in the days of old; before the sins of the people caused their captivity; own them for thine and prosper them, O Lord, in their own land: a much like promise or prediction you have #Jer 1:18,19 Eze 34:25.

Ver. 15.

These words are by all looked on as the answer made to the prayer made in the 14th verse. You Jews do often reflect on the wonders your fathers saw in Egypt some hundreds of years since, and some of you think that such wonders would both establish your hope and engage your obedience for ever to God, you pray that you may be fed as in days of old; it shall be so, according to what I have done I will again do. There I slew the first-born ere they would let thee go free; that stroke of the angel I will parallel with the destruction of Sennacherib's host in one night, and so I will preserve my people and city. Pharaoh and his host were

drowned in the Red Sea, and the Babylonish kingdom shall be swallowed up by Medes and Persians to make way for my ransomed ones.

Show unto him; the person changed, as is usual in Scripture.

Marvellous things; as indeed the rescuing Jerusalem from the Assyrian power was marvellous, and the bringing Israel out of Babylon was a marvellous work of God, stirring up the spirit of Cyrus and Darius and others to release, and set free, nay, to furnish this captive people with necessaries for their journey, and for the work they were to do. So **#Ps 126:2**, it was a work all wondered at; by those passages, **#Jer 16:14,15 23:7,8**, it seems more wonderful; but the great redemption by the Messiah here typified is a most wonderful fulfilling of this.

Ver. 16.

The nations; the heathen, enemies to the Jews, as **#Ps 126:1-3**.

Shall see and be confounded; amazed at what they see and know done amongst these nations for the deliverance of his people. The enemy shall neither be able to bear the sight, nor deny the certainly of the thing; it will make them enviously look on the prosperity of the good and godly among the Jews.

They shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf: as men seldom fail to hear the first report of what they desire, and as seldom open their ears to that they like not; so shall, it be here, though they will not speak of it, nor desire others should speak of it, yet they should, to their great grief, see their poor captives raised out of depth of shame to the height of honour, from a contemptible remnant to a mighty nation. As this had its typical complement in the reduction of Israel out of Babylon, so it had its antitypical completion in our redemption by Christ. As **#1Co 2:9**.

Ver. 17.

They, the proud and cruel enemies of Israel, the Babylonians, shall lick the dust; in the most submissive, servile manner testify their subjection, promise to serve and honour the Jews released out of captivity: it is an expression which alludes to the servile manner of those Eastern complimenters, **#Ps 72:9 Isa 49:23**, and was fulfilled in the days after the return. when the kings of Persia

favoured the Jews, and (as the manner of courtiers is) in compliance with their kings the grandees forwarded the prosperity of the Jews, as may easily be conjectured from the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra.

Like a serpent; condemned to eat the dust and perpetually to crawl on the dust; it seems to intimate. the perpetuity of slavery and subjection that the enemy should fall under, and that it should be on them as a curse like that on the serpent.

They shall move out of their holes, so the strong holds and fastnesses of the Babylonians, who kept Israel in captivity, are called, like worms of the earth; which do with trembling and haste wriggle themselves out of their holes when the earth is shaken about them, or as when ants tumultuously in their fright run about from the ant-hill scattered with the foot; so should these enemies of Israel flee out of their holds, and leave them to conquering Persians, as Isaiah foretold, **#Isa 45:1-4.**

They shall be afraid; a panic fear, expressed by the loosening of the loins of kings, **#Isa 45:1;** so did the conquering Cyrus proceed in the course of his victories, as **#Isa 41:2,3,** God strengthened his arm, and left the heart of Babylonians sinking within them.

Of the Lord our God; who did powerfully work for Cyrus in order to the delivering us out of captivity. It was our God, (saith the prophet in the person of Israel,) for his promise' sake made to us, who did those great things by Cyrus and for us.

And shall fear because of thee; so that the name of Jews, their power and greatness shall be terrible to their enemies.

Ver. 18.

Lest what hath been spoken of this wonderful change in the affairs of the Jews should on one hand be thought to be made for the righteousness or worthiness of this people, or else on the other hand should seem too great to be done for a sinful people, and so any should doubt whether it should be done at all, the prophet, in this and the two following verses, proposeth the ground of all this, laid on the unparalleled grace of God toward his people, who pardoneth their unrighteousness, and then of free mercy delivers them from their afflictions and distresses, changing their darkness into light.

Who is a God like unto thee? some observe that *El* here used signifieth the mighty God, and so render it thus, the French, *le Dieu fort*; none but the sovereign, mighty God can or doth forgive iniquity, it is a flower of the crown of Heaven, **#Ex 34:6,7 Nu 14:18 Mr 2:7**. This interrogatory and admiration is a strong negation.

Pardoneth iniquity; taketh away the guilt and punishment too by his pardon.

Passeth by; a from of speech used amongst us when we promise not to pursue an offence, or not to exact the punishment of it, or as if we either saw it not, or voluntarily winked at it, being resolved that we would not make it a cause of quarrel or breach.

Transgression: it will not suit our brevity to inquire the difference between iniquity and transgression, or whether they are here synonymous. and explicatory of each other; God passeth by the forfeits we make, and strips us not of our mercies.

Of the remnant of his heritage: this intimateth the reason why God doth, as well as to the person to whom he doth, pardon sin; that grace which made them his heritage, and reserved them to himself in the common destruction, the same grace doth as freely pardon and pass by, that it may do them good. No worthiness in them to whom it is done, and yet greatest certainty it shall be done, as **#Ro 4:16**.

He retaineth not his anger for ever; though in his just displeasure God did send them into captivity, yet because he doth not retain his anger for ever, their captivity shall not be for ever, he will chastise his remnant, but not consume them, **#Zec 1:3**.

Because he delighteth in mercy; all from the exceeding riches of his mercy; it is his delight to show mercy, and we need inquire no further: our God is so wonderfully merciful that it is his pleasure to show mercy, and if a man sometimes may give this as a reason why he doth a thing, surely our God may well expect that we should acquiesce in this account of his doing so. He delighteth to do it, **#Ps 103:8,9 Isa 43:25 57:16 Jer 3:5,12 Re 4:11**.

Ver. 19.

He will turn again; spoken after the manner of man, who in his anger went away resolved to right himself, but on second thoughts, laying aside his anger, turns again to be reconciled and forgive. So the next words explain these.

He will have compassion upon us; with tender bowels he will show himself gracious to us, **#Jon 3:9**.

He will subdue our iniquities; as our enemies and his, God will break the power, abolish the dominion of sin, which whilst it reigned provoked God and undid us, it polluted and ruined us; but God will pardon the guilt and abrogate the law of sin, and so restore his people, suitable to that **#Eze 36:29-34**.

Thou wilt cast: here is a hypallage of the person from the third to the second person, yet without any lessening the sense in strength or clearness.

All their sins; a usual expression in Scripture to set forth the full and eternal pardon of sin; here it is emphatical, all their sins.

Into the depths of the sea; whence ordinarily we account things can never rise or be found more.

Ver. 20.

Thou, O God of mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, whoever are honoured with being thine instruments and servants in doing somewhat herein, the work is thine, thou wilt raise up a deliverer, Cyrus shall be thine anointed to do this great work.

Wilt perform, Heb. *give*, actually bestow what thou hast in mercy promised.

The truth; nothing so certain as the word of God, it is the truth by way of eminency, his promise is yea and amen.

To Jacob; the posterity of Jacob; he was that plain-hearted man who now gives name to all the upright and honest among his seed, which God will never finally cast off; though now carried captive, they shall be restored, rebuilt, and re-established, shall flourish, as **#Mic 7:10-12**, and this as they are a type of a more gloriously redeemed people.

The mercy: it was mere grace in God to promise Abraham and his seed such excellent privileges, which Abraham's natural seed did inherit; but both this seed and this mercy looked beyond the natural descendants of Abraham, and beyond their return to the land of Canaan whence they were carried. The mercy to Abraham was, that in his seed all nations should be blessed and holpen, **#Lu 1:51,55,68.**

To Abraham; not only as father to Israel after the flesh, but to him as father of the faithful.

Which thou hast sworn; not that there was on God's part any need of such confirmation, but that on our part all doubt might be removed, and we by the immutable things of God might have strong consolation, as **#Heb 6:18.**

Unto our fathers; because this mercy was frequently repeated in the promises to the fathers after Abraham's time, by which promises a mercy to be perpetuated in Abraham's seed, till the redemption of the Israel of God by the Messiah, (of which all temporal deliverances of Israel were figures,) should be effected. *From the days of old;* ever since Abraham's days, and God's gracious adopting his seed to be the peculiar people of God: into this we do, as Israel did, resolve our assurance of final deliverance. Amen.

NAHUM

THE ARGUMENT

THE prophet Nahum is one of those prophets whose family and country are concealed, and it would be more labour than profit to spend time on the inquiry after the one or other. He is styled the Elkoshite, and possibly born and bred in Elkosh, a town of Galilee, an obscure place, of which perhaps we had heard no more, had it not been written that this man was born there, to allude to that of the psalmist, **#Ps 87:5**. The time of his appearing in public to discharge his prophetic office is much more material, being a key to the whole prophecy. Now it is certain that Nahum was a prophet in office whilst the kingdom of Assyria was not only standing, but whilst it was standing in its glory and entire strength, whilst it was dangerous and terrible to its neighbours. It is to me evident that Nahum prophesied before the destruction of Sennacherib's army, for he foretelleth the death of Sennacherib, **#Na 1:14**. It is certain also he appeared after Hoshea and the ten tribes were carried captives by Shalmaneser. This was either in A.M. 3229, as Helvicus, or 3283, as Archbishop Usher and Doctor Lightfoot, in the ninth year of Hoshea, which was the sixth of Hezekiah, **#2Ki 18:10**, and some few years before the death of Shalmaneser, whose son Sennacherib succeeded, and invaded Egypt and Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, eight years after Samaria was taken and the ten tribes were captivated; within which time, and probably toward the fifth of those eight, Nahum is sent a prophet to quiet, support, and encourage Hezekiah and his subjects against all the threats and power of the Assyrian tyrant, who threatened to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, from accomplishing whereof the tyrant shall be so far that God will turn it to his ruin; and here, as a very fit season, the prophet declareth the final and utter ruin of the Assyrian empire and its capital city Nineveh, as a just revenge for all their oppressions of their neighbours, but especially in revenge of their reiterated violence against Israel and Judah: on account of which good tidings the prophet hath his name Nahum, which in the Hebrew is from a word signifying to comfort; and also to repent; indeed repentance is preparatory to comfort; and though his preaching against

Nineveh be the comfort of Jerusalem, no doubt he called Jerusalem to repent, which is probably collected from #Na 1:15, O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows. This whole prophecy, except the 15th verse of this chapter, is directed against Nineveh, head city of the Assyrian kingdom, and against the whole kingdom; which, with all sorts of men and women in it, are threatened with very sore and heavy judgments, with final desolation, or captivity, for their sins; all which was fulfilled by the Lord, using the Babylonian and Median power to overthrow this power of Assyria, and particularly by the joint forces of Nabopolassar and Astyages, as is by the most learned Archbishop Usher observed, in A. M, 3378. Yet others tell us the final ruin of the Assyrian kingdom, foretold by Nahum, came much sooner, and that in the death of Esarhaddon, or Assaradinus, the Assyrian monarchs did expire. But though I determine not the number of years during which this threatened monarchy did stand, yet, be they fewer or more, Nahum's prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Nineveh and the subversion of the Assyrian monarchy, and the Jews were no more infested by the Assyrian though they were by the Babylonian kingdom. The things then spoken of by Nahum do in the letter and historical part of them concern the times between the twelfth or fourteenth of Hezekiah and the end of the Assyrian monarchy. And a skilful observer of the histories of those times would be best able to interpret this prophet, nor shall any do it tolerably well without recourse to those histories, which, though not cited here at large, (which brief annotations admit not,) yet have not been quite neglected; and what errors in applying the histories and computation of times are here committed, all will candidly excuse who know the obscurity and uncertainty of those times.

NAHUM CHAPTER 1

The majesty of God in goodness to his people, and severity against his enemies.

Ver. 1.

The burden: when the prophets were sent to denounce future judgments against a nation or city, the word was usually called the burden of that nation or city; as, the burden of Moab, #Isa 15:1; of

Egypt, **#Isa 19:1**; of Babylon, **#Isa 13:1**; of Damascus, **#Isa 17:1**. So here the calamities foretold are called the burden of Nineveh. Nineveh was the mother city of the Assyrian kingdom, and so, by a synecdoche, is here to be interpreted as including the whole kingdom, which is threatened with destruction in the destruction of Nineveh. It was a city very ancient, built by Asshur, son of Nimrod; repaired and enlarged by Ninus, giving name to the city he repaired, Nineveh, A.M. 1905, or 1908.

The book; either because written and sent to Nineveh, or else because written and left to be read by posterity. The vision, or prophecy, for prophets were of old called seers, **#1Sa 9:9**, and their prophecies were called visions; or it may include the manner in which Nahum was informed what was coming upon Nineveh, God revealed, and the prophet foresaw the things.

Nahum; his name speaks *a comforter*, but it is to God's people, to whom he gives notice of the destruction of their oppressors. His family, place of birth, and time of prophesying, are somewhat uncertain; perhaps he might prophesy in the time of Hezekiah, when the ten tribes were carried captive by Shalmaneser.

The Elkoshite: whether this speaks Nahum's family, or town where born or his country in general, is not certain, but probably it is the village Elkosh in Galilee, by which he is here called.

Ver. 2.

God; the mighty God, so the French version, and the Hebrew la implieth it.

Is jealous; his love is fervent for his people, his displeasure hot against his and their enemies, whose idolatries he will not long bear against himself, nor their cruelties and rage against his people; but, as jealous for his people's good, and for his own glory, he will appear and act: so **#Isa 42:13 Eze 39:25 Zec 1:14 8:2**.

The Lord; Jehovah, the everlasting and unchangeable God, the same always towards his people. *Revengeth;* as supreme Governor, who by office is, and accounts himself, bound to right the oppressed, and to punish the oppressor; so vengeance is the Lord's, and he will repay.

The Lord revengeth; it is repeated for confirming the truth, and to affect the wicked with terror, and to awaken them to a timely repentance; to affect God's own people with joy and hope, that they may wait on him till they see the vengeance from God, mighty, judge, zealous, unchangeable, and eternal.

Is furious, Heb. *is Lord or Master of fury*; not like furious men, who cannot command or govern their anger, but grow suddenly furious, and as suddenly pour it forth, whether seasonably or unseasonably they regard not; but God, who here threatens enemies, and comforts his friends, is as much Lord of his anger, as he is Lord of power and wisdom to execute his displeasure in fittest time.

Will take vengeance; when it is most seasonable he should do it he most certainly will do it.

He reserveth wrath: this explains the former phrase,

Lord of fury; God restrains and keeps in his own anger, which grows greater by the sufferings of his people and sins of his enemies.

Ver. 3.

The Lord is slow to anger; not slack, as some count slackness, #2Pe 3:9, either in performing promise, or executing threats; but very wisely patient and long-suffering, which is ever tempered with great mercy, and both are joined together in his providence and in his word: see #Ex 34:6 Nu 14:18 Ne 9:17 Ps 103:8 145:8 Joe 2:13 Jon 4:2.

Anger; just displeasure conceived and expressed: the Lord doth not presently entertain resentments of displeasure, nor make sinners feel them; he doth now, as he long hath, forborne you, O sinful Ninevites, O cruel Assyrians! but consider it, his slow anger will be the heavier when it falls on you.

Great in power; most mighty in power, which restrains the rage of enemies, defends and supports his oppressed ones, and in a moment can destroy those that have deserved, yet fear not his anger: that the Assyrians are not yet destroyed is the effect of patience, not of impotence, in the God of Israel.

And will. This is spoken to awaken the secure kingdom, in which many, it is like, were as the scoffers, #2Pe 3:4, ready to say, All things do continue as they were, there will be no change, no judgment against the wicked. But our prophet assures such, that as there is great power with God, he can, so there is exact justice and stedfast resolution, he will judge.

Not at all acquit; neither pronounce them innocent by sentence of judgment, nor let them escape as if innocent by a perpetuated forbearance in the course of his providence; but, sooner or later, in due season the wickedness or righteousness of them shall be upon them.

The wicked; the incorrigible, hardened, and persisting sinner.

The Lord hath his way; either the methods of his providence, his usual path; or else his way, intimating the unerring steadiness of providence, the straight and known path; however to us it may seem, yet certainly God knows and keeps the right way.

In the whirlwind; which riseth suddenly, and with violence beareth before it all things that stand in its way; which none can prevent, which no man can calm, which is attended with terror and amazement, #Job 27:20 Isa 17:13 29:6 Am 1:14: so will destruction from the mighty and just displeasure of God come upon his adversaries, and on you Ninevites and Assyrians, when you shall fall before his whirlwind and tempest; so all impenitent sinners perish, #Pr 1:27.

In the storm; the Hebrew speaks a dreadful tempest, which makes men full of horror; it is an elegant ingemination of the same thing, to affect hearers the more.

The clouds are the dust of his feet; though he be surrounded with darkness, yet as an army afar off is discovered by the dust that their feet raise, so will God at last appear as an enemy with great power marching against his enemies, and from above, as well as from the darkness of clouds, destroy them. This is spoken after the manner of man, and must be applied as beseems God.

Ver. 4.

He rebuketh: he once did rebuke, as **#Ex 14:21**; he still can, as a lord rebuketh his servant, or a general rebukes his soldier, by word or look, **#Isa 1 Isa 2**.

The sea; literally understood, or figuratively, it imports still that he can deliver his people, and destroy his adversaries, as of old he did.

And maketh it dry; his word or will doth as speedily do this thing, as it doth proceed from God; he commands, and it is done.

And drieth up all the rivers: so Jordan saw or heard the rebuke of our God, and fled, or was driven back, **#Jos 3:15,16 Ps 114:3**; and what he once did upon Jordan, that he can do on all other rivers: and so are we to understand the words.

Bashan; it lay eastward of Jordan, was the kingdom of Og; it was famous for oaks, **#Eze 27:6**; for cattle also, as bulls, **#Ps 22:12**, and rains, **#De 32:14**; and was given to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Languisheth; grows barren, as if under a consumptive languishing, is not longer sufficient to feed the cattle that were wont to feed and grow fat upon it.

Carmel; a very fruitful mountain, either in the confines of Zebulun and Asher northward, **#Jos 12:22**, where Elijah by fire from heaven contended with and convicted the Baalites; or else this Carmel might be that where Nabal dwelt, **#1Sa 25:2**, famous for its rich pastures; this was more southward than the other, and not far from Hebron.

The flower; whatever flourished and was beautiful, trees, their blossoms, and the flowers which were wont to be the glory of it.

Lebanon; a mountain that runs from the coast of the Phoenician Sea westward, for one hundred and twenty-five miles more or less eastward; and verging toward Arabia, it is the north boundary of Judea, and divides it front Syria; famous for its fruitfulness, as for its height.

Languisheth; loseth its strength and virtue; both the product, and the very soil that produceth too, soon fall into a consumption.

Ver. 5.

The mountains; the more known mountains of that country were mentioned #Na 1:4, now the prophet doth extend his speech to all mountains, how great soever, and how fast soever their foundations are laid.

Quake; tremble at his rebuke; not only are shaken by earthquakes from natural causes, disposed by God's power and wisdom, but are shaken and tremble under the effects of his extraordinary presence, #Jud 5:4 Job 9:5 Ps 29:6 Jer 10:10.

At him; by his power, or at his displeasure, or indeed at his presence, #Ps 68:8, and so the Chaldee paraphrast.

The hills; the lesser hills, distinguished from mountains, or else it is a confirming ingemination of what he had said.

Melt: God's rebuke is as fire; mountains and hills, like wax, melt down before it, #Ps 114:6-8.

The earth, which seems to be secure against the fury of the fire, yet proves combustibile under the fire of God's wrath.

Is burnt; or else, is taken away, withdraws itself, lifts up itself, as sometimes in earthquakes; or, as the Gallic version, mounteth up in fire; the Hebrew imports all these.

The world; the habitable world.

All that dwell therein; whether they be far off or near to Israel; both men, and all the rest of the creatures, whose abode is on earth, are wonderfully shaken, affrighted, and overwhelmed at the tokens of God's rebuke.

Ver. 6.

Who can stand before his indignation? since God can do all this, who among the Assyrians, who among the Ninevites, what kingdom or monarchy, is mighty enough to resist or defeat the counsel and power of this God, who will ere long rebuke, and pour out his indignation upon them.

Who can abide; be able to endure, or continue in flourishing, peaceful, safe, or joyful state? It is much the same with standing, before mentioned.

The fierceness of his anger; this explains the former; the heat of his anger is his indignation, and no creature can bear it.

His fury: fury in man speaks somewhat culpable and blameworthy, but in God it cannot be so, it is the intenseness of his just and wise displeasure.

Is poured out, with most righteous and wise direction by God himself who is as #Na 1:2, which see.

Like fire; not in the unsteadiness and unruliness, but in the vehemency, spreading nature, and irresistible force of it; as in Sodom's overthrow.

The rocks are thrown down by him; though foundations do support other things, yet they cannot support themselves against their God when once angry.

Ver. 7.

The Lord is good; though so terrible to his enemies, to obstinate sinners, yet he is as gentle, kind, and good to his people, to Israel; so the Chaldee paraphrast.

Is good; in his just severity he continueth to be good. None of that consuming anger comes from any want of goodness in God; yea, it is as much an effect of his goodness, as just punishments on incorrigible malefactors are the effects of goodness in a judge or magistrate. But here the prophet intends rather the kindness and grace of God towards his people, to whom he doth good, and will do more. #Ps 73:1 119:68.

A strong hold; it might have been rendered, good to be a strong hold, as the Hebrew affix imports, and is sometimes rendered. Though Israel seems to be exposed to the violence of enemies, and to be without any munition or fortress, yet verily the Lord their God is for a defence and fortress to them, #Ps 31:3 61:3 Pr 18:10, and is their strength also in that fortress.

In the day of trouble; at all times of affliction and danger, when outward pressures fill us with anguish and fears.

Knoweth; discerneth, approveth, owneth, and will make it appear that he doth preserve, that he may deliver his peculiar ones. He

knows the wicked, and will restrain, rebuke, and destroy them; he knows the good, and will protect, rescue, and save them.

Them; whether you consider them in a body and community, or by themselves apart, or singly.

That trust; believe, depend, and wait on God, they that depend by faith, and wait with hope.

In him; on God, or on Christ, or on the word and promise of God. So God was to those that trusted in his word of promise in Hezekiah's time.

Ver. 8.

But, or *And,* or *Therefore,* since God is so good to Israel oppressed by Assyria, and so terrible, just, and mighty to punish oppressors.

With an overrunning flood; his judgments, like a mighty flood that overfloweth all banks, and scorns all that might check it, shall swallow up Assyria and Nineveh. which was in part effected by Phraortes about A.M. 3312, and in part by his son Cyaxares, who broke the Assyrian kingdom, and took Nineveh.

He, the Lord, by the Medes, will make an utter end, will destroy, so that it shall never recover or be rebuilt,

of the place thereof; of Nineveh, that is, Nineveh itself. So in Scripture sometimes the place is said to perish when the thing itself doth, as **#Da 2:35 Re 12:8 20:11.**

Darkness: troubles, desolating afflictions, extreme evils. in Scripture style, are called darkness, **#Job 15:22 17:12 Ps 35:6 55:5 Ec 5:17 Isa 42:7 59:9, &c.; #Joe 2:2.**

Shall pursue; not a single calamity, which is soon at an end, but indeed a succession of calamities, a continued course of them, shall pursue: so Phraortes began, Cyaxares continued, Scythians helped on, and Astyages finally, with four hundred thousand men, finished the pursuit in the sack and ruin of Nineveh after two years' siege.

His enemies; the Ninevites and Assyrians.

Ver. 9.

Having declared the dreadfulness of God's power and anger against the wicked, his goodness towards his people, and denounced future destruction against the Ninevites and Assyrians, he doth now expostulate with them, would know what it is they think of God, what it is they design against him, and on what ground they flatter themselves into such an attempt.

Against the Lord, the God of Israel; for however you, O Ninevites and Assyrians, will look only upon a poor, afflicted people, (weakened by many wars,) and design to swallow them up, yet they are the people of the Lord, and you design against him what you design against them.

He will make an utter end; he will make your utter desolation to be the issue of your projects, and the punishment of your sins: see #Na 1:8.

Affliction shall not rise up the second time; when that storm which shall overthrow you is past, no other shall arise, because you shall be no more; as if the prophet had said, God will at once and for ever destroy your empire and city.

Ver. 10.

This gives us account how this desolation shall be effected.

While they be folded together as thorns; they should be like thorns easily burnt, and like thorns folden together, which burn together, and help to destroy each other, or are all together cast into the fire.

While they are drunken as drunkards; as men drunken, and unable to help themselves, are easily destroyed, so shall the Assyrians be; or, drunk with pleasures and pride, they shall be surprised, and ruined, and easily overthrown.

They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry: this fully expresseth the speedy, irresistible, and total destruction that the anger of God will bring upon them; as the fire burns up all the dried stubble, so shall the wrath of God destroy the enemies of Israel and of Israel's God.

Ver. 11.

There is one: this is a very usual dialect to express an uncertain number; several are contained in such one; though if you will determine it to one single person, it is very like it may be Sennacherib or Rabshakeh. Come out: from Nineveh he set forth on that expedition against Judea in the days of Hezekiah.

Of thee; Nineveh. That imagineth evil against the Lord; consulteth, hath formed, and resolved upon it. So it is evident by his blasphemies against the Lord, **#Isa 36:7,18,20 37:10,24,29 2Ch 32:14,15,17,19**. And he imagined evil against the people of the Lord, **#2Ch 32:1**.

A wicked counsellor; one whose counsels and projects are without any regard to right and equity, who by injustice and oppressions, who by frauds and deceits, by blood and slaughter, designs his own greatness, and the ruin of his neighbours.

Ver. 12.

Thus saith the Lord: this addeth weight to his prediction, it comes under the great seal of Heaven.

Though they be quiet, and likewise many; or, If they would have been quiet and peaceable towards my people, Israel, they, i.e. the Assyrians, should have been many, &c.; but I think it is nearer to the intent of the place to retain our version. Though they, citizens of Nineveh, and people of Assyria, be quiet, be secure, and fear no danger, because of their strength and victories, and likewise many; as appears by the mighty army with which they besieged Jerusalem, in which one hundred and eighty-five thousand were cut off in one night.

Yet thus, irresistibly, suddenly, and universally, as is foretold **#Na 1:10**,

shall they be cut down: the prophet varieth his phrase, for, **#Na 1:10**, he speaks of it as done by fire, here he speaks of cutting down, intimating that it was the sword which should cut them off.

When he shall pass through; either God, the mighty and terrible One, passing over as a flood, as it is **#Na 1:8**; or else the angel of the Lord, as **#2Ki 19:35**.

Though I, the Lord, who am good to my people,

have afflicted thee, O Israel,

I will afflict thee no more; chastised by the Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, hast thou been, O my people, but I will no more use that rod; for they should soon cease to be a nation that ruleth, and be conquered and oppressed by others.

Ver. 13.

The Lord confirms the prediction, by declaring how it should be done.

Now; ere long; and in few years after this was done, though we cannot precisely determine how soon it was.

I will break, as that which is broken into pieces,

his yoke, Sennacherib's, or rather the tyranny and oppression of the Assyrian kingdom,

from off thee, O Israel, and Jerusalem.

And will burst thy bonds; those unjust impositions and edicts, which, as strong bonds, fastened his heavy yoke upon thy neck. They are the bonds of Assyria, as laid upon Israel; they are Israel's bonds, as borne by Israel.

Ver. 14.

The Lord, God of Israel, against whom thou imaginest evil, hath given a commandment; determined with himself, and given charge to the Medes, which in due season they will observe, and, with assistance of the Chaldeans, will fitly execute.

Concerning thee, or against thee, Sennacherib; thy royal family, and the whole kingdom of Assyria. That no more of thy name be sown: though Esar-haddon, son to this Sennacherib, did succeed his father, yet may it be rather said he was never sown. he never took root, but was like seed that, falling on the surface of the earth, there withers and dies; or else, none shall bear thy name and title, but hereafter thy kingdom shall be swallowed up by the power, and silenced in the name, of the Babylonian or Chaldean monarchy.

The house of thy gods; temples built for their heathenish worship.

Gods; idols, intimating the number of them, and the chiefest of them.

I will cut off; destroy and abolish; so idolatrous conquerors were God's servants to cut off idolatrous worship and idols of the conquered nations: so did this Sennacherib destroy the idols of the conquered, #2Ki 18:33,34 Isa 37:19; so should they do against the Assyrian idols, who were appointed of God to waste Nineveh.

Cut off the graven image: either it respecteth the universal destruction of the idols, all cut off, not one left; or rather some one more noted, depended on, worshipped, called *Nisroch*, #Isa 37:38, by some thought to be the sun; but nothing in particular is elsewhere recorded of this idol, or its worship.

And the molten image: added either to intimate that all idols should fall in the future ruin of the kingdom, or to let us know that neither the worth of the metal of which the image was made, and the curiosity of the work, nor yet the pretext of sacred as a god, should be any safeguard to it.

I will make thy grave; thou shalt not have a royal, magnificent tomb made by thy successor, or such as honour thee, but thou shalt be either buried in obscurity, or else thy tomb shall relate thy vileness, as it is reported it did by this inscription under Sennacherib's statue in an Egyptian temple, Eiv eme orwn eusebhv estw, Learn to fear God who lookest on me.

For thou art vile; despised since thy defeat before Jerusalem; or rather hast been a vile, profane despiser of God, whom thou hast blasphemed and reproached, and an oppressor of men, whom thou hast slain or enslaved, unworthy of life, and unworthy of a grave when dead.

Ver. 15.

Behold: as this speaks some unexpected thing, so it calls for our heeding and minding of it.

Upon the mountains; over which he must needs come that either came from the Assyrian camp, where the miraculous slaughter was made, or from Nineveh, where the fugitive defeated tyrant was slain; many mountains environing Jerusalem, and lying dispersed in Judea, over which the messengers came, who brought

news of Sennacherib's death, or downfall of the Assyrian kingdom.

Good tidings; good news indeed to an oppressed and weakened people, at which they might well rejoice indeed, if it be considered what this tyrant intended, see **#Isa 10:5-31** now he is dead who designed the mischief.

Publisheth; proclaimeth, and tells to every one he meets.

Peace; not by league or friendship with the Assyrian, but as the consequent of his death, and overthrow of his kingdom.

Keep thy solemn feasts; be careful to serve God and worship him, ye that are his people. Perform thy vows, made in thy deep distress, when all seemed lost and forlorn. The wicked; that wicked counsellor, **#Na 1:11**, the violent oppressor, proud Sennacherib, who shall fall by the sword, or rather is fallen by it, in his own land, when this messenger of glad tidings came, **#Isa 37:7,37,38**.

Shall no more pass through thee; neither as a conqueror who beareth all down before him, nor as a triumpher glorifying in his acquists which in progress he takes view of.

He is utterly cut off; murdered by his sons, his kingdom shaken by intestine troubles arising on the slaughter of his army, and an anarchy, or interregnum, whilst the two brethren parricides warred with the third for the crown, and all three were in that juncture, as in an opportune season, invaded, subdued, and destroyed by Merodach-baladan king of Babylon: see **#Isa 10**.

NAHUM CHAPTER 2

The fearful and victorious armies of God against Nineveh.

Ver. 1.

He: some by mistake refer this to Sennacherib; it is more rightly referred to the Medes of Scythians or to the Chalthians, all which did somewhat against the Assyrians.

That dasheth in pieces; that as a heavy and strong hammer breaks into pieces. and then with his arm scattereth the broken pieces; so shall the destroyer of Nineveh do, as a maul, (so the

word #Pr 25:18) or as the wind scatters smoke, so the word #Ps 68:2.

Is come up before thy face, against thee, and is within sight, from thy watch-towers on thy frontiers thou mayst descry his avant-guards.

Keep the munition: the prophet derides Nineveh, and foretells all will be to no purpose; she shall never be able to withstand, so as to conquer; re-enforce thy garrisons, yet they shall fall.

Watch the way; know which way he comes, that thou mayst barricade the way, or set ambushes.

Make thy loins strong; encourage thy soldiers, and make them valiant as thou canst, choose out the ablest and most undaunted. Fortify thy power mightily; gather up all thou canst for the war, increase thy armies, fill up thy companies, engage assistance from abroad; nothing shall avail thee.

Ver. 2.

This confirms the prophet's threat, either declaring that now, since God had sufficiently punished Jacob and Israel, he would next punish the proud Assyrian, as #Isa 10:12; or else it is a confirmation by argument from the greater to the less; Israel and Jacob were more to God, yet he did punish them, much more will he punish Nineveh. Turned away; laid low, or captivated, as no doubt Sennacherib did when he took so many fenced cities, he did not slay all, he sent many into captivity, and threatened Jerusalem's citizens with the like, #Isa 36:17.

The excellency; the wealth, the valiant men, the wise men, all that Jacob could, (with any colour of reason,) and had (with sin more than enough) gloried in.

Of Jacob; the two tribes.

As the excellency of Israel; the ten tribes spoiled, conquered and captivated by Shalmaneser.

The emptiers; Assyrians, who invaded, plundered, and robbed them, both Israel and Jacob. Have emptied them out; quite exhausted them.

Marred; either corrupted them in religion and manners, as #2Ki 17:24, &c.; or destroyed and cut up the race of Israel, to destroy them utterly.

Their vine branches: it may literally be meant that the Assyrians did cut up the vines to impoverish the vine-dressers, or else figuratively for the nation, which is often compared to a vine, so the branches are men and women.

Ver. 3.

The shield; one part for the whole of the armour and furniture, or harness.

Of his, Medes or Chaldeans', mighty men; soldiers, more particularly the brave and stout ones, who were the choice men of the army.

Is made red; either coloured red by the dyer, or else dyed red with the blood of the slain.

The valiant men are in scarlet: this explains the former; they used this colour much, either to terrify the enemy, or to conceal their own wounds when the blood on other colour would have disclosed them.

The chariots; much used in the wars of those countries, and the great men usually fought in them in those days.

Shall be with flaming torches; either because they did force fire out of the stones by their swift motion over them, or rather because there were torches always carried in them, to light them that rode in them by night, and to be in readiness to fire the houses of cities or tents in the camp they did break into.

In the day of his preparation; when he shall muster his armies, and bring together his magazines, and prepare his engines.

The fir trees shall be terribly shaken; by axes cutting them down for several uses in the war, for torches, for lances, for building forts, and many other uses. This is parallel with #Isa 14:8. Whole forests were sometimes destroyed by great armies, which cut them down for their service.

Ver. 4.

The chariots of the Chaldean army, or the riders in the chariots, by their fierceness and carriage, by their cries and calls, heartening one another, and threatening the Assyrians.

Shall rage; shall seem to be more like madmen than well-ordered soldiers, and act as if they avert possessed with fruits, do more than man can do.

In the streets, either of the towns they pass through, or rather of Nineveh when taken.

They shall jostle; by reason of their multitude, haste, and fury, they shall hit one against another.

In the broad ways; where is most room, shall be most of these chariots, and yet scarce room for them to move in.

They shall seem like torches; what with sparkling fire, caused by their horses and chariots shod with iron, and what with the glittering of the polished irons about the chariots, and what with the light of flaming torches carried in them, the chariots shall look like so many great flambeaus, very dangerous and terrible.

They shall run like the lightnings, both for speed, irresistibility, and terror, against which no defence, from which no flight or hiding.

Ver. 5.

This verse may indifferently refer either to Nineveh and its king making their defence, or to the Chaldeans and their king maintaining the siege; both act with rigour and diligence. *Recount*; muster, and give orders.

Worthies; approved officers and commanders.

They shall stumble; show such forwardness, make such haste, that they shall not stand to pick their way; and there shall be so many, that they shall stumble for want of room.

They shall make haste to the wall; the Assyrians to defend, the Chaldeans to assault, the walls of Nineveh.

The defence; what might defend the besieged, and what might defend the besiegers; all shall be ready on both sides, and what men can do, both will do.

Ver. 6.

The gates of the rivers; of the city toward the river. Rivers, for river, or because of the greatness of Tigris, upon which Nineveh stood.

Shall be opened: it is reported by Diodorus Siculus, Biblioth. 1. 3. c. 7, that when the Chaldeans besieged Nineveh, a mighty deluge of waters overthrew the walls of Nineveh, by the space of twenty furlongs, or two miles and half, through which breach the besiegers made their entrance, so **#Na 1:8**. Usher Annal. ad A.M. 3257. The overrunning flood may be literally understood: here the prophet expressly declares how Nineveh shall be ruined.

The palace; either the royal stately palace of the Assyrian monarch; or the more stately temple of Nisroch, or Jupiter Belus, or some mighty bulwark raised there for defence.

Shall be dissolved, as if melted; it shall drop to pieces, and they that were in, whether servants of the court, or votaries to the idol, or soldiers for defence of the fort, shall in haste, with fear of the danger, flee away.

Ver. 7.

Huzzab: this is variously taken, but the most probable guess is, that it is meant of the queen, who kept close in the palace, or temple, as where she might be most safe in the strength and supposed sacredness of the place.

Shall be led away captive; without due respect to her royal dignity, shall be hurried into a strange land with other captives, and (as they) be exposed to danger and insolence.

Her maids, ladies that waited on her in her royal state, now shall be her companions in captivity.

Shall lead her; support their sorrowful, weary, and fainting queen, spent with such travel as she had not been used unto.

As with the voice of doves; sighing out the complaints they durst not speak out.

Tabering upon their breasts; these maids of honour should now in captivity strike on their breasts, but with such caution and fear of being discovered in their lamenting their state, as should be but like the noise of a taber lightly struck; or else, instead of musical instruments on which they were used to play, and to which they were used to sing, now they strike their own breasts, and sigh out their sorrows.

Ver. 8.

Nineveh is of old; a very ancient city, of great renown and strength.

Like a pool of water; very populous, like a pool of water which hath been long breeding of fish, and is full of them.

Yet they, yet these multitudes, shall not be a safety or protection to Nineveh, they shall flee away discomfited and terrified.

Stand, stand; as officers call to fleeing soldiers, and it is doubled to show the earnestness of the commanders desiring the soldier to stand and fight.

Shall they cry; the chieftains, and most valiant among the Ninevites. But none shall look back; a panic fear shall so possess them, that none of them shall dare to turn again, nor to look back upon the enemy.

Ver. 9.

Take: God speaks by his prophet, commanding that it be done, and foretelling that it certainly shall be done; and Scythians, Medes, and Chaldeans, or whoever else did associate in the war, and sacking of Nineveh, may be supposed to encourage one another in the plundering of the city.

Ye, conquering soldiers, you that come together in hope of this booty.

For here is enough for you all; Nineveh hath been long gathering, and hath gathered much treasure, it is uncountable; therefore take all you can lay hands on: possibly it may be the foretelling of the chief commander, his giving his soldiers leave to take what they could, forasmuch as after all they would leave enough, a great treasure for him.

Store of all sorts, both for use and luxury, both for necessity and superfluity.

Glory; splendid and rich furniture in their temples, palaces, public edifices, and private houses; their rich vessels, costly hangings, and gaudy apparel in their wardrobes, in their closets, and in their shops; all delightful to the eye, and rich in the real value.

Ver. 10.

She, Nineveh, taken, and under the proud insultings of the barbarous soldiers,

is empty though once full of all store, yet now she is empty enough, many hands have been employed to spoil her, and void, citizens are either slipped away, or carried captives, and waste, desolate, and shall continue so. Here is a threefold expression, to ascertain the thing, and to intimate the greatness of Nineveh's desolation.

The heart melteth; this devastation hath broken the hearts of the Ninevites.

The knees smite together; not able to go steadily, ready to fall through weakness and faintness of spirits.

Much pain, acute pains and griefs, caused by their troubles, losses, dangers, and frights,

is in all loins; which, in those that are well, are their strength, and which, to diseased and broken bodies, are the seat of pains and griefs.

The faces, which were wont to be haughty and scornful, and as it were sparkle with briskness of spirit,

all gather blackness; now are clouded, sorrowful, and dejected, every one may see their desperate state in this symptom.

Ver. 11.

This is the insulting or deriding speech of all that see and note it.

The dwelling of the lions; Nineveh, compared to a lion's den.

Lions; tyrants and bloody warriors, as Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser.

The feeding-place of the young lions; Nineveh.

Young lions; princes, the children of those tyrannical kings.

The old lion, the king of Assyria, walked in his pride, in safety, and his princes with his rapines about him, which none durst disturb.

Ver. 12.

The prophet continues the metaphor; this lion is the king of Assyria.

Did tear in pieces; formerly did fall upon his neighbour nations, broke their strength, and robbed their treasuries and store-houses, and broke them in pieces.

For his whelps; the young brood of the Assyrian royal family.

Lionesses; queens, concubines, or ladies in the Assyrian court.

Filled his holes; his treasuries, magazines, and royal seats, called dens in a decorum to the speech he had used.

And his dens; ingeminating what was before spoken.

With ravin; spoils which his ravenous mind and hand could lay hold on; all was prey that he could take.

Ver. 13.

Behold: this calls for our attention.

I, the God of Israel, whom thou hast despised and blasphemed, am against thee, Assyrian kingdom, and Nineveh,

saith the Lord of hosts, whose command all must obey.

I will burn her, Nineveh's,

chariots in the smoke; in wrath, or suddenly; or what if, when the city, first plundered, then burnt, these chariots were burnt in that smoke.

The sword, of the conquering enemy,

shall devour thy young lions; young princes, that either are found in arms, or else are cut off in the places of their retirements for safety.

I will cut off thy prey; cause thee to cease from making a prey any more, or destroy all thou hast gotten by thy prey.

Thy messengers; either ambassadors sent forth, or tribute-gatherers, or muster-masters to enlist soldiers, or heralds to proclaim edicts.

Shall no more be heard; none shall concern themselves with one or other of them. None obey or fear thee.

NAHUM CHAPTER 3

The miserable ruin of Nineveh.

Ver. 1.

Woe! a comprehensive threat of many and great calamities coming.

To the bloody city; Nineveh, the chief city of the Assyrian kingdom: see #Na 1:1.

It is all; every part, officers and rulers, traders, both buyers and sellers, shops, houses, judicatories, all filled with falsehood and lies.

Lies; cheating in their trades, and false witnesses before the judges.

Robbery; their gain, though they count it honest, is no better in God's account than robbery or rapine, as is that the lion taketh, teareth, and devoureth, as the word in the Hebrew implies.

The prey; unjust acquits by fraud and force; extortions and violent taking away what was not theirs.

Departeth not; as they did so long since, they continue still so to do, no change from injustice to justice.

Ver. 2.

The French reads this verse with a negative distributive, and so links this and the next verse with the former negative, #Na 3:1; thus, The prey departeth not, nor the noise of the whip, nor, &c., intimating the long continuance of the Chaldeans insulting over the Ninevites.

The noise of a whip, with which the charioteer roused and animated the horses which drew the warlike chariots.

The noise of the rattling of the wheels, by the swift motion of the horses,

and of the prancing horses, in the chariots proudly and stately trampling, and of the jumping chariots, made to jump by the swiftness and strength of the horses which drew them.

Ver. 3.

The horseman; the Chaldean and Mede, or their confederates in the war.

Lifteth up; hath his sword not only drawn, but in a posture ever ready to smite, wound, or kill. The bright sword: these warriors kept their weapons in such manner, that they were fit both to cut and kill, and also to dazzle rite eye and affright.

And there, in Nineveh, and the streets of it,

is a multitude of slain, by the sword of the prevailing besiegers.

A great number of carcasses; the slain lay in the streets unburied.

There is no end of their corpses; none knew the numbers of the slain.

They, both invaders and invaded, all within the city, stumble upon their corpses, are ready to fall at them, not able to avoid them.

Ver. 4.

Because, &c.; God is just, Nineveh hath deserved all this.

The multitude of the whoredoms; her crafts and her policies, in which she resembled those lewd women; as they by their wiles abuse and deceive men, so did Nineveh, or the Assyrian kingdom, deceive, impoverish, and enslave nations by state policies: so **#Isa 23:17 Re 17:2**. Or else, by whoredoms here may be meant idolatries, which were multiplied by the many people that served the Assyrian idols, or by their multiplying of idols, which probably they did by taking into the muster-roll of their gods those idols which the conquered nations worshipped: or whoredoms literally understood; for this sin undoubtedly did abound where

wealth, luxury, ease, and long continuance of these, were to be found.

Well-favoured; the glory of their state and government, or the splendour of their idols, temples, and sacrifices, or the comeliness and beauty of the lewd and whorish women among them.

Witchcrafts; bewitching policies, and enchanting counsels, confederacies, and promised favours; or it may be literally taken for witchcrafts or necromancies, which sin abounded no doubt among the Assyrians.

Selleth; disposeth of them as imperiously and absolutely as men do slaves which they buy; or else, drawing them into the wars for pay, exposed them to slaughter by the enemies' sword, as if they had bought their persons to sell their lives, that thereby their own countrymen and citizens might be spared and escape. Or

selleth, i.e. occasioneth them to abound in sin, for which God in his just judgment selleth them into the enemies' hand.

Nations; whole kingdoms.

Whoredoms: see above.

And families through her witchcrafts: either it is an elegant illustration of the former passage, or perhaps it may intimate the seducing of some particular and eminent families to engage themselves in a hereditary and perpetual service to the Assyrian idols, or to witchcrafts, in which the devil imitated God's institution, in taking a family to his service; so the chief families had the authority of ruling, and the burden of all idolatrous priesthood. Gr. Tholosun. de Rep. lib. 4. sect. 9, and lib. 8. c. 2. sect. 6,8.

Ver. 5.

Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts: see #Na 2:13.

I will discover: Nineveh as a harlot had been proud, and appeared beautiful and gay in the gifts of her lovers; but now God will deal with her according to her ways, and (as men provoked use to do with harlots) strip her naked, and expose her to greatest infamy, or deal with her as inhuman soldiers do deal with captive women: see Annot. in #Eze 16:37.

The nations, which once did reverence thy greatness, shall now abhor thy nakedness which they behold. Thy nakedness; thy vileness and thy shame, as in the next words.

Ver. 6.

I will cast, by the Chaldean and Medish army, which God will stir up against the Assyrian monarchy,

abominable filth upon thee; as is done to lewd women.

Make thee vile: Nineveh had made herself morally evil and vile by sinning; now she shall be made penally rite.

And will set thee, O Nineveh, as a gazingstock; at which they shall wonder and be astonished, some shall take warning too: so Sennacherib's tomb was a standing monument to put men in mind that God is to be feared, and that men looking on it may reflect on their insolence, and decline it. So Sennacherib's tomb-stone with his statue, of which **#Na 1:14**.

Ver. 7.

It shall come to pass; it will most certainly be. All they that look upon thee, so soon as ever thou art seen and discovered, O Nineveh, in thy vileness,

shall flee from thee, with hatred, loathing, and abhorrence for thy former pride and wickedness. and for thy present miseries.

And say, with wonder, scorn, rejoicing, and spreading the news,

Nineveh is laid waste; taken, sacked, emptied of inhabitant, yea, utterly subverted, that it may be no more a rival with Babylon: it is certain that it is not now where it once stood.

Who will bemoan her? whose bowels will be moved for her that had no bowels for any one; who will move foot or, hand toward her relief?

Whence? from what place? She hath wronged all her neighbours, and ruined, some of them; from amidst these surely not one may be fetched to speak comfortably to her; these do with reason upbraid her former cruelty and pride, and rejoice in her present calamity and ruin, and strangers will not be concerned for her.

Ver. 8.

Art thou, O Nineveh,

better than populous No? it is generally supposed that this was what we now call Alexandria, a city full of people, and as full of luxury and uncleanness, the sins whereof had brought it to ruin, though the history of it do not specify time, person, or means, &c. Art thou greater, stronger, and wiser, more able to resist, an enemy, and preserve thyself? Yet all her power was broken, her riches spoiled, and her glory buried in ruins. This, known in those days, was a fit example to be set before the Ninevites; and though some conjecture the prophet foretells what should befall populous No, to awaken the Ninevites, yet it seems incredible that the prophet should take an instance to terrify secure Ninevites from somewhat to come to pass in after-ages.

Situate among the rivers; in a place where the seven streams of Nilus very fairly might be accounted so many rivers, and near to one of these streams, toward the sea, was this mighty and rich city seated.

The waters round about it; though at some distance, yet at no great distance.

Whose rampart, or defence of its walls on one side,

was the sea; that part of the Midland Sea which was *Mare Egyptiacum*, and was northward from the city.

Her wall was from the sea; a mighty strong wall built from the sea, on the parts landward, where need was.

Ver. 9.

It is not very probable that this Ethiopia should be that remote country that lay south of Egypt, though in truth it is possible, and while Egypt was in friendship with No Amon, or Alexandria, the aids might in length of time come from Ethiopia, or Abyssinia. But there was a Cush, an Ethiopia, in Arabia, near to Egypt and Alexandria, whose people were likeliest to undertake the assistance of Alexandria their neighbour. See **#2Ch 14:9 Eze 30:4,5 Hab 3:7**. This No, or Alexandria, was either a city subject to, and was part of Egypt, or if (as some conjecture) it was a free city, it was in league with Egypt.

Were her strength; furnishing soldiers and warlike assistance on all occasions to Alexandria, which relied on these confederates.

It was infinite; they never made an end of their confederacies and warlike provisions. It is reported, that when Amasis reigned Egypt reckoned twenty thousand cities, and when Zerah king of Ethiopia came against Asa it was with an army of ten hundred thousand men, and three hundred (thousand) chariots; these were the associates of Alexandria.

Put, or Phuteans, or the Moors, who lie along westward of Alexandria.

Lubim; the people that inhabited the parts of Africa, and thought to be that which is now called Cyrene: see **#Eze 30**.

Were thy helpers, O Alexandria.

Ver. 10.

She was carried away; it is probable this might be about thirty years before; for about A.M. 3207, as Calvisius, or 3277, as Archbishop Usher, Sabacon king of Ethiopia invaded Egypt, took Bocchoris, and burnt him, which was not likely to be done without slaughter of men and sacking of towns, among which time No might be ruined. Now, as Calvisius and Helvicus account, about A.M. 3238, or as Usher, 3307, Nahum appears and flourisheth. She went into captivity: this ingemination confirms the certainty of the thing, and intends to affect the Ninevites the more.

Her young children; their innocent age was no safeguard to them.

Were dashed in pieces; first barbarously murdered, and then trod under foot in the streets, as was usual with those cruel, bloody soldiers, **#2Ki 8:12 Ps 137:9 Isa 13:16**.

They cast lots; either to put a scorn upon them, or else to prevent any contest about them, being taken among many others together, and none could say, This is my prisoner.

Honourable men; citizens of note, or some officers or governors.

Great men; great in place, strength, valour, wisdom, and so likely to do the conqueror a displeasure, should they not be secured.

Were bound in chains of iron, or manacled, used as worst slaves.

Ver. 11.

Thou, O Nineveh,

shalt be drunken; not only taste, but drink deep, yea, be drunk with the bitter cup of God's displeasure and thine enemies' rage, **#Isa 29:9 Ob 1:16.**

Thou shalt be hid; either hide thyself, or be so weakened and diminished, that thou shalt no more appear; or else be as contemptible, laid by in some obscure place; fear and shame shall cover thee.

Thou also, O Nineveh, as well as Alexandria,

shalt seek strength, shalt sue for and entreat assistance,

because of the enemy, or from the enemy; i.e. either thus, in thy distress thou shalt seek for strength from such as are really thine enemies, though they make a league with thee; or thus, thou shalt beg protection from thy enemy that hath captivated thee, and rely on the mercy of him against the rage of others.

Ver. 12.

All thy strong holds, castles and fortified places, not one or two, but all of them,

shall be like fig trees, easily shaken,

with the first-ripe figs, whose weight and ripeness will bring them quickly to the ground.

If they be shaken, if but very lightly touched. they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater; into the hand of devouring and hungry ones.

Ver. 13.

Behold; this may seem strange, but attend diligently, thou shalt see how this will be.

Thy people; those thou hirest, and are thine for pay; those that are born thine, all thy warriors.

In the midst of thee; where very cowards use to be valiant, or where necessity makes cowards valiant, where they should show most valour.

Are women; weak, afraid, flee away, and hide themselves, **#Jer 48:41 41 30.** God would fill them with terror, and they shall not dare to keep their gates shut against the enemy.

The gates of thy land, the cities, but especially the strong fortified frontiers which should keep out the enemy,

shall be set wide open; shall either through fear or treachery be opened, wide opened to admit the enemy.

Thine enemies; Chaldeans, and their confederates.

The fire shall devour; when the enemy is thus admitted, he shall burn either the city or the gates and bars, he will never trust nor spare thee.

Bars; with which the gates were both shut and strengthened, **#1Sa 23:7 Ps 147:13.**

Ver. 14.

Draw thee waters, fill all thy cisterns, and make more that thou want not for drink, yea, draw the waters into the ditches about every fort,

for the siege, which thine enemies will lay against thee.

Fortify; repair all decays, and strengthen all that is weak.

Go into clay, and tread the mortar; set thy brick-makers on work to prepare store of strongest bricks.

Make strong the brick-kiln, that the materials for thy fortifications may be firm and good. All this is spoken with an irony, or derision of their fruitless labour.

Ver. 15.

There; in the very fortresses.

The fire; either literally, or figuratively, the wrath of the enemy hot as fire, or the pestilence, or all together.

The sword of the Chaldeans, their wars, (after all that the Scythians have done against thee,) these shall utterly destroy thee.

It shall eat thee up: this tells us the manner how the Ninevites shall be destroyed, they shall be eaten up.

Like the canker-worm; either the enemy shall as easily eat thee up as the cankerworm eats the green herb, or thou shalt as soon be devoured as canker-worms are destroyed by storms, rain, fire, or change of weather.

Make thyself many as the cankerworm; they are innumerable, be thou so if thou canst be, all will be to no purpose.

Make thyself many as the locusts: the same irony repeated: when Ninevites have done all they can, they shall as fully and suddenly be destroyed as these vermin are.

Ver. 16.

Thou hast multiplied for number; and, as the word may import, thou hast greatedened them, thou reliest on their purse and interest.

Thy merchants; either literally, or figuratively, thy great men, princes, and rulers, which sold and bought, #Na 3:4; or thy confederates, who by virtue of such leagues have free commerce with thee; and this is most likely to be the meaning.

Above the stars; proverbially taken for a very great number.

The canker-worm spoileth, and fleeth away: this seems an abrupt speech, and may be thus made up: Whatever thou thinkest of these, which thou both multipliedst and magnifiest, I tell thee, O Nineveh, they are like the canker-worm and locust, which spoil wherever they come, and do the greater mischief where they are greater in number, for they come for spoil; while they get by thee they continue with thee, and when no more is to be gotten, they take wing and fly away, leaving waste and stench behind them: so will these serve thee, O Nineveh.

Ver. 17.

Thy crowned; thy rich and wealthy citizens, or thy confederate kings and princes, or thy tributary princes;

thy captains; hired, or homeborn, rather the former, commanders and officers; for number and briskness, are like locusts and great grasshoppers, but it is all for show, nothing for help to thee.

Which camp, as if they would guard the grounds about which they settle.

In the cold day; this lasts while the season suits them.

But when the sun ariseth, when trouble, war, and danger, like the parching sun, scalds them, they flee away; they shift from the hedge they eat up.

Their place is not known; thou shalt never know where to find them when thou needest, and they should help thee.

Ver. 18.

Thy shepherds, subordinate magistrates, rulers, and counsellors, or officers set over the kingdom, slumber; are remiss, or mistake, or are heartless or dead, they cannot or will not mind the public concerns.

O king of Assyria; his name I meet not with; Asaradinus, or, as the Scripture calls him, Esarhaddon, may possibly be the name and man intended.

Thy nobles, the brave, valiant, and famous men,

shall dwell in the dust; either be buried as dead, or lie in the dust as faint and weary, or be trampled on as worthless and useless.

Thy people, thy citizens and subjects in their great numbers, is scattered, partly through fear, shame, and astonishment, partly by violence of the invading enemy, upon the mountains, where is neither safety, nor provision against danger and want.

No man gathereth them; no one that will concern himself to preserve thy dispersed ones; so thou and they are left hopeless and ruined, for the shepherds are some dead and cannot, the rest slumber and will not, lay to heart their condition.

Ver. 19.

There is no healing of thy bruise; in a word, thou, Nineveh, must die, thy bruise he will not heal. who gave it, and others

cannot. God by the Chaldeans hath wounded thee, and thy friends cannot bind up the wound.

Thy bruise; shivered and broken state.

Thy wound is grievous; hath brought a weakness on thee, thou art sick with thy wound, and faintest, not able to bear a cure.

All that hear the bruit of thee, of thy former carriage and present calamities,

shall clap the hands; insulting and rejoicing over thee.

Upon whom hath not; no kingdom, state, city, or family almost round about thee; not one can be named.

Thy wickedness; thy sins, thy idolatry, luxury, &c.; thy tyranny, pride, oppression, and cruelty; thy illegal, unprecedented violence.

Passed, without any bounds, and in most vehement and fierce manner.

Continually; either always treading down and trampling upon those whom thou hadst subdued, or else having conquered and spoiled one state, didst forthwith fall upon some other. Thus all suffered by thee, and all rejoice at thy utter downfall; and as none have cause to befriend thee, so none will find hearts to pity thee, or hands to help thee, but every one is ready to wish, that all who are, as thou wert, enemy to mankind and justice, may, as thou, perish without help or pity.

HABAKKUK

THE ARGUMENT

The prophecy of Habakkuk seems to be an exact stating of that perplexed case, touching the seeming unequalness of the proceedings of God in the government of the world, in which the good suffer evil, and the evil rejoice in prosperity; the more righteous are afflicted, and the more unrighteous prosper; nay, the worst domineer over the best, among men. This case baffled the wise among philosophers, and it much troubled David and Jeremiah, **#Ps 73:2,3**, &c.; **#Jer 12:1,2**; and hath ever been matter of some wonder. to the best and wisest of men, as here it was to Habakkuk, who lived in the times of great impieties against God, and of great injustice amongst men. It is most probable he lived and prophesied in the days of Manasseh, when the wicked devoured the man that was more righteous than himself; and this is the subject of his complaint, **#Hab 1:1-4**. Those grievous sins which then abounded, he declareth shall be punished by the Chaldeans, at which he again wondereth: it grieveth him to see, in Judah, the best afflicted by the worst; and it is as much grief to him to foresee the wicked nation of the Chaldeans prosper in the ruins of a more righteous nation, (from the 5th to the 11th verse of the first chapter,) which God commandeth him to foretell. On this he proposeth the case expressly, from verse 12 to the end of the chapter, and which God resolveth for him in the second chapter, where the sins of Judah and the sins of the Chaldeans are enumerated, and at once both are threatened with punishment; when the Chaldeans have punished Judah's sins, the Medes and Persians shall punish the same sins in the Chaldeans. In all which the unspotted righteousness and the admirable wisdom of God is seen, in the government of his church, chastised for her sins against God; and in his government of the world, sinning highly against God, and with greater wickedness acting the same or worse things than those for which by their means God had before punished his church. In fine, the prophet, with steady faith and fervent prayer, addresseth to God, and in most elegant manner recounting God's mercy and faithfulness to his people, **#Hab 3**, leaves it both a foundation to our hope and pattern for our

practice. He doth resolve, as we should, to wait for, rejoice in, and submit to the Lord, in greatest distresses and darkness of providence. An excellent subject for our meditations at this day, as well as in the days of our prophet, whose name seems to imply his wrestlings with these difficulties, or his laying hold, embracing of God; our safest course in such circumstances being to adhere to God. We can but guess at the time of his prophesying, and that we think is rather in the time of Manasseh, than of Hezekiah, or Josiah, though possibly he might live and be a prophet in the first part of Josiah's reign. What tribe or what family he was of we pretend not to tell you, since we cannot pretend to know; but we are sure he was not the pretended messenger that carried a mess of broth out of Judea into Babylon, for Daniel's dinner; and we think it a wonder any thinking man should now believe it, as it would at that day have been, if really done.

HABAKKUK CHAPTER 1

Unto Habakkuk, complaining of the iniquity of the land, **#Hab 1:14**, showed the fearful vengeance by the Chaldeans, **#Hab 1:5-11**. He complaineth that vengeance should be executed by them who are far worse, **#Hab 1:12-17**.

Ver. 1.

The burden; see **#Na 1:1**; to which we may here add, as proper to this time and place, that the prophet seems to speak of the grievous things here intended as a burden to himself, a trouble he did feel and groan under.

Habakkuk: here we might, as others, guess at his country, parentage, and tribe; but no certainty appears in these: his name may perhaps intimate somewhat, either actively one that embraceth, or passively one embraced, and so may refer to God, or to his people, and intimate good to a people, whom God will ere long embrace; or it may speak one that is puzzled with the intricacy of affairs, and therefore expostulateth, as **#Hab 1:2,3**.

The prophet; not he that is mentioned in the apocryphal book, but a prophet called and sent of God.

Did see; not only in the future certainty of it on others, but did also feel in the present trouble and perplexity wherewith it affected him.

Ver. 2.

O Lord: unto God alone he makes his application, as only able to redress all grievances.

How long! it may be some years he had preached, and in preaching had complained and cried out against wickedness.

Shall I cry, unto men in thy name, and unto thee in prayer and supplication.

And thou wilt not hear; give answer by correcting or punishing the bad, and by rescuing and delivering the good; by appearing a just Arbitrator and Judge of both.

Cry out, with submission, not murmuring, not impatient, not distrusting the justice or mercy of God. Unto thee, who art more displeased than I or any one else can be disquieted with that I complain of, who art by office and word bound to restrain violence, &c.

Of violence; the unjust and wicked oppressions which I see, others feel, and all good people are endangered by.

And thou wilt not save; by changing the bad, or restraining them, or by overthrowing them, and setting up just and upright men in their room, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and every where else.

Ver. 3.

Why dost thou show me? it is a most displeasing sight, and that which troubles me and every good man, to see unjust and injurious men without control, and unpunished, to act their iniquity; and yet, O God, thou not only permittest it to be done, but to be done in sight, and to the grief of thy servants: thus God showeth it, and it is not without just cause, though the cause be hidden.

Iniquity; men of iniquity and vanity, unrighteous toward men, and vain in their thoughts and practices of religion toward God.

And cause me to behold: this explains the former. Grievance: so it is in regard of the effect it hath upon beholders, and such as suffer by this iniquity; it is grief and sorrow to them, it is a grievance they groan under.

For spoiling, such as wasteth, and undoeth them that fall under it, **and violence,** perverting judgment, and turning it into wormwood; or else it is a Hebraism, spoiling and violence, that is, most violent robbing and spoiling each other.

Are before me; every where I see it, to the breaking of mine heart.

There are that raise up strife; or, and there is strife, that is, little else but strife among men, occasioned by these oppressive practices.

And contention: so it will be a Hebraism, expressing endless contentions. It would bear, *and judgment is taken away*, which suits the next verse.

Ver. 4.

Therefore; because the wicked go on with impunity, and the punishment they deserve is deferred.

The law of God, given to this people by the hand of Moses, the whole law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Is slacked; is slighted, weakened, and little studied, and less obeyed by all sorts.

And judgment; not only private men neglect the law, but magistrates, judges, and public officers pervert, or divert, or obstruct it also.

Doth never go forth, Heb. *to the end*, or, unto victory, with prevalence to restrain the unjust, and to protect the innocent, which is the end of magistracy, **#Ro 13:3**.

The wicked; the unjust and violent man. Doth compass about; as it were besiegeth, surroundeth, with design to oppress and ruin by false witness, interest, or bribery.

Wrong judgment; perverse judgment, wherein innocence is condemned and the guilty are acquitted: so the judges are swords

in the bowels, when they should be shields over the bodies of the righteous.

Ver. 5.

Behold ye: here God begins to answer the prophet, and calls for a very particular and exact consideration of the thing; see and ponder.

Among the heathen; what judgments, what punishments have been executed upon the heathen, for like sins.

Regard; weigh it well in all its tendency and consequence, for it is a warning to you, it assures you judgment will overtake you also. Wonder marvellously; as astonished at judgments, too great to be expressed in words, and so strange that it will seem too much to be believed.

For I, the great and glorious God, the just and supreme Judge,

will work a work; begin, continue, and finish a work; a work I am working, a work of equal severity and justice.

In your days; it shall no more be deferred, **#Eze 7:5**, &c.

Ye will not believe; you wicked violent oppressors will not believe, though the Lord by his prophets foretell it.

Told you; described how, and by whom, and when.

Ver. 6.

For lo: now the prophet declares particularly what it is that the Lord will work.

I raise up; awaken to action, animate them in it, and strengthen them to accomplish their design.

The Chaldeans, who had subdued other nations, and had already ruined the Assyrian monarchy.

Bitter; cruel, and without mercy, **#Jer 6:23 21:7**.

Hasty; speedy and quick in executing their merciless purposes, as **#Isa 5:26,27**.

Which shall march, Heb.

walk without fear, and in order, as a conqueror doth in his conquests.

Through the breadth of the land; through all parts of the land, no corner shall escape his search or cruelty.

To possess; not to spoil and be gone, but to take and keep possession, as lord and proprietor in the right of conquest.

The dwelling-places; houses, towns, cities, Jerusalem itself, which they had no right to, till Jewish sins gave occasion for the dispossessing of the Jews, and the introducing of the Chaldeans.

Ver. 7.

They are terrible and dreadful: to affect the incredulous Jews with greater fear, it is doubled, they are of all nations most terrible; in the fierceness wherewith they assault, and cruelty with which they use their captives. Their judgment, the law they observe, is their own will, and what they please you must submit unto, nor complain of wrong done, forasmuch as they do it.

Their dignity; their authority and superiority, for which you must reverence them; the lordliness of their deportment toward you, or the right they assume to send you captives; all is from themselves, without respect to any other law or rule whatever. How miserable are you like to be, when enslaved to such a barbarous cruelty, and unbounded pride!

Ver. 8.

Their horses also are swifter; they will be sooner upon you than you think, and when once among you, they will be swifter than you can flee from, **#Isa 30:16 La 4:19.**

Than the leopards; a fierce creature, ravenous as the lion, and much swifter, a watchful and sly beast, from which it is very hard to shift.

More fierce, more eager after, and more cruel to the prey, than the evening wolves; which with long fasting in the day, do come out in the evening more fierce on every thing that may be a prey for them: see **#Jer 5:6 Eze 22:27 Zep 3:3.**

Their horsemen; excellent riders, that can manage the speed and fierceness of these horses.

Shall spread themselves all over the land, so many shall they be, and so active, and all strong and hale, as some think the word implieth.

Shall come from far; as far from liking your customs, pitying your persons, or understanding your language, as they are far remote from your country; men that will make you pay the charge of their long and tedious journey.

They shall fly as the eagle; lest you should dream of escape by flight, your enemies (O miserable Jews) shall be so swift, you will think they flew on wings, on eagle's wings, the swiftest of flight, and quickest in espying her prey.

That hasteth to eat; hunger makes her flight the quicker, and her seizure of the prey more bold and daring, #Job 9:26 Eze 17:3: so shall your enemies be to you.

Ver. 9.

They, Chaldeans, and in particular these fierce and swift horsemen, shall come all, with one purpose, on the same design, to enrich themselves by making a prey of all.

Their faces shall sup up as the east wind: either thus, their very countenances shall be as blasting, pestiferous, and dangerous as is the east wind in those countries; or thus, all they can sup up, or lay hold on, they will carry eastward; or thus, when you are devoured, they shall set their faces eastward to devour others in those coasts.

They shall gather the captivity; prisoners or captives, called here the captivity, to express the extremity thereof.

As the sand, both for easiness of gathering, and the multitudes of captives gathered.

Ver. 10.

They, both the king of Babylon and his soldiers, shall scoff, deride and contemn,

at the kings, which either confederated with the Jews, or else opposed the designs of the Chaldeans; as the kings of Egypt, of Tyre, &c.; or the kings of the Jews, as Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.

The princes, governors, counsellors, valiant commanders, and officers, shall be a scorn unto them, to the whole army of the Chaldeans.

They shall heap dust, and take it; by mighty mounts cast up, or by filling up the trenches about your cities and fortresses, shall master them.

Ver. 11.

Then: it notes both the time and cause of what happened; extraordinary successes, and a continued series of them, attending the designs and attempts of the Chaldean kings, at last made them so haughty and proud, as to trample on kings, **#Hab 1:10**; and when their pride was at this height, it stops not here.

His mind; the spirit or wind, as the Hebrew, and so some think the prophet does foretell the change of his prosperous gales, his downfall; but it is more natural to understand it of the change of mind in the prosperous Chaldean, he will think other thoughts of himself. his affairs, and of other men.

He shall pass over; break over the bounds of all sober and modest sentiments, exceed in his value of himself, and of his achievements, as Sennacherib first did, **#2Ch 32:17-19**, and next Nebuchadnezzar, surnamed the Great, **#Da 4:29,30**.

Offend: this pride was a great sin, and highly provoked God; for the insolent tyrant idolized himself.

Imputing this his power, the strength by which he had done all this great exploits, or the might and power to which he had advanced himself, unto

his god: this at first seems a little tolerable, it seems to savour somewhat of religion, yet it is a great offence thus to ascribe his grandeur to a dumb idol, but it is worse to reckon his strength to be his god, as the words will express it in the Hebrew. See **#Da 4:29,30**.

Ver. 12.

Art thou not from everlasting? in being, thou art that God who art not like the gods of the nations, upstart and novel, but before the mountains were brought forth thou wast God; thou hast permitted, borne with, restrained, overthrown, and punished such

proud, bloody, and sacrilegious wretches. In thy works of old, before this proud Chaldean monarch was thought of, thou wert as now, wonderful, just, and good, and thy saints found support in the remembrance thereof, **#Ps 74:12 77:5,11 143:5 Isa 45:21**. In covenant with thine Israel, which covenant is not of late years, it is an ancient covenant, and as it hath, it still shall be kept for our good.

O Lord; the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of the world, who only art Jehovah.

My God; Judge and Vindex by office; as Judge, engaged to defend, rescue, and avenge the oppressed; and my God or Judge. Whether the prophet speaks only in his own, or in his people's name, he hath a respect to that peculiar relation he or they had to God, much like that **#Isa 63:19**. He refers to the ancient covenant relation which God had taken them into, and implies his hope and expectation of help from God, their Judge and Vindex.

Mine Holy One; holy in thy nature, law, and government, in thy mercies, and in judgments, who dost intend to make thy holiness appear in due time by saving us; though thou seem to forget, or at least to delay the work, yet thou art the Holy One in the midst of us, **#Isa 12:6**, and we wait for thee.

We, who are thine, and oppressed, threatened, and exposed to the avarice and cruelty of the Chaldean,

shall not die; be utterly cut off and destroyed, for the death of a nation is the destruction or desolation of it. Thou who hast made us thine by an everlasting covenant of mercy, wilt show us such mercy that we shall outlive the rage of our enemies.

O Lord: with humble veneration he doth look towards God, and discerneth what quieteth his spirit, and confirms his faith and patience.

Thou hast ordained, set up, maintained, and designed, them, the Chaldean kingdom, as **#Hab 1:6**.

for judgment; to execute this judgment, which is ever attempered with mercy, which ever betters, never destroys thy people: see **#Isa 10:5**, &c. Babylon, as Assyria, was the rod of God's indignation, &c.

O mighty God: this he repeats for confirmation and illustration, and intimateth God to be his people's rock and refuge.

Thou hast established, strengthened and fortified, them for correction; to chastise and discipline, not to destroy.

Ver. 13.

Thou, O Lord, who hast raised and increased the Chaldean kingdom.

Art of purer; of infinite purity and holiness.

Eyes, ascribed unto God to express his knowledge; so his eyes run to and fro, and his eye is upon the righteous.

Than to behold: his omniscience doth behold all things, and so David expresseth it,

Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it, #Ps 10:14; but he doth not, will not, cannot, see with delight, with approbation, evil, of sin and violence.

And canst not look on iniquity; the same thing repeated to confirm us. All this the prophet doth lay down as most undoubtedly true, and on which he stays himself (though he be amazed with the darkness of providences); and by this he will repress all undue murmurings, when he debates with God about his providences: most just and holy; but why thus or thus?

Wherefore lookest; seest all the violence done, and bearest with them that do it; why doth not thy hand remove and avenge what thine eye is offended at, and thy heart abhorreth?

Them that deal treacherously; the Chaldeans, who were a perfidious nation, and ruined many by their treacheries; fraud and force were both alike to them. And it is likely they dealt very falsely with the Jews.

Holdest thy tongue; seemest unconcerned in such a degree as to be silent and say nothing.

When, or whilst; it might seem a fit season to speak, when the violent are about their violence, when the prey is between the teeth and not swallowed.

The wicked; the Chaldean, an oppressor, bloody and treacherous against men, an atheist or idolater against God.

Devoureth; swalloweth down whole, as the word imports, #Nu 16:30 Ps 124:3. The man; the Jew, or almost every one of us, as the phrase imports.

More righteous than he: though the Jews were a very corrupt nation, yet, compared with the Chaldeans, they were the better, and of the two the Jew was the less evil. Now this riddle he desired might be unfolded, Why is the juster oppressed by the unjuster?

Ver. 14.

Makest; not infusing cruel, ravenous, and unsatiable appetites, but permitting them to act according to such appetite which was already in them.

Men; who should be just to all, and wrong none, who were once framed for mutual help in civil societies, and whose life should be beneficence.

As the fishes; of which the greater live on the lesser, and do greedily and all the day long feed on the smaller fry.

Of the sea; where the devourers are more for number, of greater bulk, and swallow greater numbers of the lesser.

As the creeping things; which in the waters are food for the lesser fry; so the world, like the sea, is wholly oppression.

No ruler; none to defend the weak, to restrain the mighty, and to give law to all.

Ver. 15.

They; either more generally oppressors every where, or else particularly the Chaldeans.

Take up; draw them out slyly and craftily, when they are taken by his bait.

All of them without distinction, all alike, good or bad.

With the angle: it may refer to the delight these oppressors took in these courses, or to the more private way of destroying.

They catch them in their net; another method of the Chaldean rapine, like catching of fish, not singly and one by one, but destroying many together.

And gather them; as if they could never have enough, these Chaldeans do, fisher-like, drive men into their nets and snares. In their drag: this is a third way of destroying fish. The Chaldeans would use all ways to devour the Jews.

Therefore they, the greedy and cruel Chaldeans, rejoice, both in their own gain and in the Jews' ruin.

And are glad: it is doubled to show the certainty of the thing, and probably to intimate the double joy they took in their prosperous oppression.

Ver. 16.

Therefore, because they prosper and thrive, in which they should see and acknowledge thy wise and mighty providence,

they sacrifice, idolize and pay Divine honours, ascribe the praise of their victories and acquired glory, unto their net; to their own contrivances, diligence, and power, as if the fisherman should make his net his god, and offer sacrifice for a good draught of fishes taken to the net that took them.

And burn incense, another part of Divine honour, and mostly used in giving thanks and praises, to their drag; to their policy and power, their own counsel conduct, and arms, expressed in the metaphor of a fisherman's drag.

Because by them their portion, State, condition, or interest,

is fat; great and flourishing.

Their meat; the revenues of the kingdom in general, and the revenues of particular subjects, especially of the commanders and military officers, those who help to spread, draw, and empty the net.

Plenteous; abundant, that it might seem a sufficient provision, as well as a pleasant mess, sufficient for quantity as sweet in quality. It is likely these self-admirers did not only eat the fat of the land they wasted, but laid up in store for themselves.

Ver. 17.

Shall they? the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies.

Therefore; shall former success be pledge of future? they have prospered, and they think they shall; wilt thou confirm this to them?

Empty their net; as fishermen empty the full net to fill it again, and cast out what they had taken to take in more; shall these proud and cruel Chaldeans do so still?

And not spare continually; shall they as endlessly as mercilessly waste?

To slay, murderer-like, kill,

the nations; not single persons, but whole kingdoms and people at once: wilt thou, O most just and mighty God and Judge, suffer these things always? The prophet by the question intimates to us that God most certainly will not suffer it always. The Lord will in fit time arise and break the oppressors' arm, and save the oppressed church and people of God.

HABAKKUK CHAPTER 2

Unto Habakkuk, waiting for an answer, **#Hab 2:1**, is showed that he must wait in faith, **#Hab 2:2-4**. The judgment of the Chaldeans for insatiableness, **#Hab 2:5-8**, ambition, **#Hab 2:9-11**, cruelty, **#Hab 2:12-14**, treacherous dealing, **#Hab 2:15-17**, and idolatry, **#Hab 2:18-20**.

Ver. 1.

I will stand: the first chapter ended with that difficult and perplexed question, why God suffers the wicked So long to prosper in their oppressions of the righteous? This chapter represents the prophet waiting and musing, studying with himself what account he might give to himself, and waiting what account God would give him of it. He will stand in a posture of meditating, observing, and waiting.

Upon my watch: possibly the prophet may have respect to the manner of the Jews, who in their solemn prayers and waiting on God had their stations and watches (as Buxtorf observeth in verbo

me;) in their synagogues, or at Jerusalem. But I rather think the prophet resolveth to be like one that is to be a watchman, as prophets are, #Eze 3:17, for the people of God. Or passively, in my watch, i.e. where my adversaries, like besieging enemies, observe and watch me. It contains his diligent and persevering expectation and observing.

And set me; fixedly and with resolution not to leave my station, as the Hebrew implieth; it is the same thing more emphatically expressed than in the word stand.

Upon the tower; either watch-tower, or besieged tower, or within a circle, out of which I will not stir till I receive an answer.

And will watch, most attentively observe, to see what he, the Lord, #Hab 1:12, will say unto me, or signify unto me; waiting for mine own satisfaction, and for the information of others.

And what I shall answer: there are many that are perplexed at the intricacy of providence, and some inquire to be instructed; some propose doubts and fears; and others do quarrel and perversely wrangle with God and his prophets; and how I may answer these from the word of God is that I wait for, saith our prophet.

When I am reproved; when called to give an account of the mysteriousness of providence; when either to satisfy doubters, or to silence quarrellers.

Ver. 2.

And the Lord, on whom he waited, and who ruleth all affairs, answered me; did hear my desire, and gave direction what I should do.

Write; what is only spoken is soon forgot, but what is written is more lasting, therefore write thou the vision showed to thee.

The vision; the things thou seest, or which thou shalt see.

Make it plain; make the writing very plain, engrave it, as was their manner, upon tables; what was of public concern, and therefore to be published, was anciently written or engraven upon tables, smooth stones, or wood, and then hung up in a public place to be read.

That he may run that readeth it; that none may need to make a stop, but hold on his course; in the greatest haste of business, every one may plainly and clearly discern what is written.

Ver. 3.

For; the reason why it must be written is because it should not be forgotten, whilst the appointed time is somewhat afar off; write it that it may be preserved in memory.

The vision; the accomplishment of the things showed unto thee, what thou seest is coming, and what thou foretellest to them, will take effect.

For an appointed time; determined and fixed with God, though unknown to men.

At the end; when the period appointed of God shall come, then, and not till then, it will be accomplished.

It shall speak; be accomplished, and fully made good.

Not lie; not disappoint your expectation.

Though it tarry, from the time of the prophet's seeing it, which was about Manasseh's time, or from about the time of captivating the ten tribes, until Cyrus's time.

Wait for it; expect it, then it will speak out, that every one who hath an ear may hear it.

It will surely come, when the ruin of Babylon, never to be more, built, shall proclaim the justice of God against his and his church's enemies, and what difference there is between corrections on his people and destruction upon enemies.

It will not tarry; not beyond the appointed time, which, reckoned from the captivity of the ten tribes, was one hundred and sixty years, or from Manasseh's captivity, was about one hundred and twenty years, more or less, to the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, when the riddle was fully unfolded.

Ver. 4.

Behold; note it: there are two sorts of persons who concern themselves in this puzzling question of the Divine providence; some object. and quarrel contest with God, proudly,

discontentedly, and impatiently; others inquire humbly, submitting themselves to God, and waiting for him.

His soul, the heart and mind of every such one, which is lifted up; that proudly contests with the justice and wisdom of the Divine Providence, that slights promises of deliverance at so great a distance, and provides for his own safety by his own wit;

is not upright; is very corrupt and wicked, full of (not only distrusts, but) positive conclusions against God's future punishing the wicked: such a one is so wicked that he thinks God will not punish the violent and bloody, the superstitious and idolatrous Babylonian.

The just; the humble, upright, and comparatively righteous one, who adores the depth of Divine providence, and is persuaded of the truth of Divine promises, and doth approve the season God chooseth.

Shall live; supports himself, and quiets his own heart, whilst he foreseeth the approaching deliverance of Zion.

By his faith; his well-grounded dependence on a persuasion of the truth of God's promises touching the relief of the faithful servants of God, whose deliverance he believes to be certain, and so waits for the performance of promises made to him and them.

Ver. 5.

Yea also, or

moreover, furthermore, because he, the king of Babylon, or every one of them,

transgresseth by wine; which vice destroys kings and kingdoms, and in the excesses of luxury the Babylonian king Belshazzar, his city and kingdom of Babylon, fell a prey to Darius and Cyrus.

A proud man; insolent in his behaviour towards all, both retainers, subjects, strangers, and conquered enemies: such pride shall have a fall.

Neither keepeth at home; is ever abroad warring upon some or other, which though it enlarge his countries, it weakeneth his kingdom and gives advantage to malcontents and conspirators, besides that it exposeth him to imminent and continual dangers.

Enlargeth his desire as hell; is most insatiably greedy to devour all, as far from saying It is enough as the grave is.

Is as death; as pernicious and ravenous.

Cannot be satisfied; all is too little for him, and there is no possibility to satiate his appetite. Gathereth, addeth one after another, unto him, to his kingdom, all nations, that are round about him; all he knows are designed upon, and he purposeth to engross them.

Heapeth unto him all people; another expression of the same import. Now all this, foretold of the future temper of the Babylonish kings and kingdoms, is a sure presage of their no long continuance in grandeur, but that shortly Divine vengeance will overtake them. This might be an answer to disputers.

Ver. 6.

Shall not? the prediction is moulded thus in a question, to give it emphasis, and make it more affective.

All these, who have been oppressed, contumeliously used, and perfidiously deceived; all the people who have feared the power and policy of Babylon.

Take up a parable; turn him and his state into a by-word and scorn.

Against him; the king of Babylon, awhile since the terror, now the scorn of nations.

Taunting; short, but smart, wounding scoffs; and whereas men usually bewail and condole the mishaps of great, brave, and just kings or kingdoms, all people shall exult and triumph in the miseries of this oppressive, luxurious, and base kingdom.

Woe! either it is a threat of like vengeance on all such transgressors, or it may be a publishing the miseries come upon Babylon.

To him that increaseth; by rapine, frauds, and injurious dealings multiplieth his treasures, as the king of Babylon did.

Not his; it was not his though he had it; it was not his right though it was in his possession. Or else thus, one misery of the

Babylonians shall be, they increase wealth, but not for themselves, but for the Medes and Persians.

How long? this seems to be the sigh of the oppressed, who think it long ere the oppressor fall.

To him that ladeth himself; woe to him that is a burden to others, while he burdens himself with amassed treasures gathered by extortion and grievous, unjust taxes!

With thick clay; gold and silver, so called to lower the over-value of them, and perhaps to mind the tyrant of a clay-bed.

Ver. 7.

Shall they not? this question doth more fully ascertain the thing. Rise up; either grow up, or else, as men who resolve to do a thing thoroughly, get upon their feet and stand to it. The Medes and Persians were growing to power, and would ere long rise up to ruin Babylon.

Suddenly; and surprise it in security, so they were down ere they did perceive themselves falling; and such sudden ruin is most dreadful.

Bite thee; devour and eat thee up.

And awake; thou, O Belshazzar, (and Babylon with thee,) wilt in drunken slumbers (unable to resist) fall into the hands of the awakened Medes and Persians.

Vex thee; as thou hast been, O Babylon, vexation to others by thy proud and insolent behaviour, by scoffs and cruelties, so others shall now be a vexation unto thee.

Thou shalt be for booties; not only your lands, houses, and goods, but your persons, and those of your relations, shall be booties, taken and sold for slaves, to the profit of them, Medes and Persians.

Ver. 8.

The prophet proceeds to give account of the reasons on which the Divine nemesis moves in this affair, and these may convince and confirm us in it.

Thou hast spoiled many nations; slain their people, sacked their cities, robbed their treasuries, led captive the subjects, and deposed kings, and done this to many nations, whose cry is come up to heaven. #Jer 25:9, and #Jer 27:3, recounts some six or seven nations. It is likely all the nations that lay round about this kingdom were spoiled by it. Now shalt thou be paid in thine own coin. The remnant of the nations unspoiled by thee, shall combine against thee, and execute the Lord's just sentence, and spoil the spoiler.

Thee, O Babylon.

Because of men's blood; either shed by private murders which cried to Heaven for vengeance, or shed by ill application of the sword of justice, or continual needless wars upon her neighbours.

And for the violence, injustice and oppressions, of the land; of the whole land of Chaldea, if you understand it actively, or else, if passively taken, it is the violence done by Babylon to the land of Judea especially.

Of the city; either Babylon, which oppressed Jerusalem, or Jerusalem, oppressed by Babylon.

And all that dwell therein: this also, as understood actively or passively, is applicable to either Babylon's or Jerusalem's citizens and inhabitants.

Ver. 9.

Woe! it is a general and comprehensive threat against all tyrants and oppressors. To him; every one that is guilty of the sin.

That coveteth an evil covetousness; or driveth a trade of oppression, to gain by what means soever, right or wrong. This is evil of sin, and will end in evil of trouble.

To his house; his family, which he would enrich and greaten by raising it on the ruins of oppressed innocents.

That he may set his nest on high; a proverbial speech, in allusion to birds of prey, which build their nests in the greatest heights, #Ob 4. Greatness and an advanced estate gotten by rapine and prey may seem, but never can be, a security to any monarch.

On high; higher than God and justice set him.

That he may be delivered; kept secure, and out of danger from all below him.

From the power of evil, Heb. *from the palm of the hand of evil*, that no evil may fasten on, though it may attempt against them.

Ver. 10.

Thou, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,

hast consulted shame; hast mistaken thy measures, thoughtest to advance thy glory, and to illustrate thy name; but it is in very deed the shame of thy reign that it hath been bloody.

To thy house; or family, thy royal family.

By cutting off many people; destroying and impoverishing multitudes of men and cities.

Hast sinned; it was thy sin, whatever thou didst think of it.

Against thy soul; or life of thy person, and posterity, this blood and cruelty will surely ruin thy house.

Ver. 11.

For the stone, the strength of thy house, accuseth thee.

Shall cry out; as if it had a voice, it crieth to God for vengeance.

The beam, on which thy chambers are laid,

shall answer it; confirms the charge against thee; and that fabric cannot be long a safe or a beautiful habitation, whose stones and beams are shaken with the strong cries of innocent blood, and families ruined by the oppression of the builder.

Ver. 12.

Whosoever he be that lays foundations in blood, is here threatened, and none so great as to keep Off the woe, deserved and menaced.

A town, Heb. *city*.

With blood; in the guilt and with the cruelty of murdering the innocents it is the worst cement which is tempered with blood of murdered men, women, and children.

And stablisheth; goeth about or thinketh to establish the foundations of a city.

A city; Babylon in particular.

By iniquity; by force and fraud, by riches extorted from the just possessor.

Ver. 13.

Behold: the prophet calls for attention, and that we observe who it is will execute vengeance on bloody cities and kingdoms. Babylon is a mighty city, and the kingdom is over-match to any kingdom, and perhaps it may be thought none can give Babylon blood to drink, or kindle a fire in her, that shall consume her.

Is it not of the Lord of hosts? though men cannot, the Lord of hosts can; and is not this vengeance his? will not he repay?

The people shall labour in the very fire; either Babylonians and their confederates labour for that the fire shall consume; or the adversaries of Babylon shall be able to endure a service for God against Babylon hot as if they laboured in the fire. Either literally taken or figuratively will well consist with the text.

The people, either Medes and Persians against Babylon, or the Chaldeans for Babylon, shall weary themselves, spend their strength and life, for very vanity; the one to preserve what shall never profit them, which they laid up in vain, the other to destroy all (though they lose their booty by destroying it) in the fire; yet all this from the Lord of hosts, justly punishing Babylon for all her cruelties.

Ver. 14.

The earth; the land of Chaldea, of the Medes and Persians, and their confederates, the lands oppressed by the Chaldeans, but Judea more particularly.

Shall be filled; every eye shall see, or ear hear, or tongue speak what they know.

With the knowledge, sight and sense,

of the glory, just and glorious proceedings of God against Babylon; for when God shall appear to execute his just judgments upon his own and his church's enemies, he will appear glorious indeed.

The Lord; the God of Israel, their Holy One, as #Hab 1:12.

As the waters cover the sea: it is a proverbial speech, expressing the general notice and deep sense all should have of God's justice, truth, power, and zeal against mighty oppressors, such as Babylon was full of.

Ver. 15.

Another public and crying sin of this Chaldean kingdom was excessive drinking, and making one another drunk, and for this God will severely punish.

Puttest thy bottle to him; forcing them by importunity or threats to drink by greater measures than they can bear.

Makest him drunken also; never givest over till thou hast made him vile and loathsome, as well as senseless in his drink.

That thou mayest look on their nakedness; designing to put the greatest abuse on them, exposing them to view, scorn, and derision, or to beastly or not to be named uncleanness, which vice the Babylonians are charged with by Herodotus and Ctesias.

Ver. 16.

Thou, O king of Babylon,

art filled, shortly shalt be, and it is as sure as if already done, with shame for glory; as much filled with shame by the contempt they shall cast upon thee whom thou didst once vilify and contemn; thy shame shall be greater than ever was thy glory, as the Hebrew seems to import.

Drink thou also: thy sin was that thou didst drink, and madest others drink to shameless excess too; now thy punishment shall be to drink of the cup of God's wrath, which will fill thee with astonishment and calamities.

Let thy foreskin be uncovered; let thy shame be laid open before all; this retaliation is just and necessary.

The cup; a Scripture phrase, expressing the just judgments and corrections of sinners.

Of the Lord's right hand; it is said to be in his right hand here, and in his hand, **#Ps 75:8.**

Shall be turned unto thee: they turned the cup of pleasure about, God will carry the cup of indignation about also, and make them drink deep of it, they shall not escape.

Shameful spewing shall be upon thy glory; then shalt thou be as much loathed as a shameful drunkard is in his vomit.

Ver. 17.

The violence of Lebanon shall cover thee: this is added to all the rest, that God's people might know this was the time of recompences for Zion, that the violence by Babylon done to Judea and its inhabitants should be avenged and no longer deferred, but now should overwhelm Babylon, in which should be made as great devastations as ever she made in the fruitful and beautiful mountain Lebanon, supposed, in **#De 3:25**, to express the land of Canaan; or else by Lebanon may be meant the temple, and house of the sanctuary, (as the Chaldee paraphrast,) because it was built of the cedars of Lebanon.

Thee; Babylon.

The spoil of beasts; such spoil as by hunters is made among wild beasts, when they endeavour to destroy the whole kind of them, such havoc, and by all the ways and methods that art and subtlety can invent to extirpate them, such wastes shalt thou suffer; for thou art to be destroyed: Or else thus, such desolations shall thine enemies make in thee as wild, ravenous, and insatiable beasts make where they prevail, they shall tear and devour all they seize, and seize all that peep abroad, and this shall make all men afraid continually.

Because of men's blood, &c.: see **#Hab 2:8**.

Ver. 18.

Here the prophet removes the confidences of Babylon; she would boast of her gods, and depend on them, but this will be vain and unprofitable, it is not imaginable that these idols should help these persons.

The graven image; carved in wood, or stone, for of such materials did these idolmakers sometimes make their gods.

The maker: it is brutish folly in any one to value, or desire to be helped, by such lifeless idols, but it is greatest folly for him that

makes the image, that remember how it was hewed, plead, tumbled about, and all this without the least degree of sense or feeling of what it suffered; and can that be sensible of my sorrows which feels not any thing itself?

The molten image; idols made of gold or silver, or any other rustle metal, were framed out of the metal first melted, and are therefore called molten images.

A teacher of lies; but whether graven or molten, yet all such images are but teachers of lies, **#Jer 10:8,14**. They withdraw the mind from God, our true and only helper, and bewitch men to trust to idols, in which is no help, which ever proved lies to all that trusted on them.

That the maker; who knows, for he saw that there was no life, strength, or wisdom in one or other; it is shameless in any, but most in him that made the idol, to worship his own work, and rely upon that which he knows hath no eyes, or hands, or ears, but what his tool framed for it.

His work; his own work, and yet his god! the product of his art, and yet the hope of his soul! O brutish folly, self-contradiction!

Trusteth therein; resteth confident of defence, and rescue from evil, by it.

Dumb idols; which neither can answer a question, nor give a direction in a strait; can neither promise good to a friend, nor denounce a threat against an enemy.

Ver. 19.

In the former verse the prophet declared the uselessness and unprofitableness of the idols of Babylon, now he threatens the idolaters. They sinned greatly by placing their confidence in them, and they should suffer the more for it.

The wood; whatever shape art may give it, or whatever veneration blind idolaters may bear to it, it is still wood, no better; a log, a worthless block.

Awake: this expresseth the idolater's prayer to his idol. Awake; what! is he a sleepy god? No, not so much, it is a lifeless log, and its eyes never did see.

The dumb stone; another sort of their useless idols, senseless as the stones, and still as unable to rise or help as before they were graven and carved; it is a stone, no god.

Arise; another form of praying to this idol; and when the idol can rise Babylon shall be helped, till then it must abide its sorrows.

It shalt teach: sottish men! in misery to hope that lifeless idols shall counsel and direct. What! dumb, and without sense, and yet teach!

Behold; look, ye selfdeceiving idolaters, consult your own senses, see what matter they are made of.

It is laid over with gold and silver; see the facings or plates are different from that which is under, and can that be a god that is made up of such different materials? it were more like men to pull off the gold and silver, and with these to purchase your safety.

There is no breath at all; not so much as the soul of a brute in them.

Ver. 20.

But the Lord: what idols are. he had already showed, a doctrine of lies, impotent and lifeless statues; but the God of Israel is not like them. He is Jehovah, fountain of being, life, power, and salvation to his people; he can do all he will for or against a people.

Is in his holy temple, or palace of his holiness: he is in his temple and in heaven, every where at all times; though his people be in Babylon, yet he is where he doth hear, see, and discern their state, and whence he promised to relieve and help them.

Let all the earth; both Chaldea the oppressive, and Judea the oppressed, and Medes and Persians and all their confederates, let all these nations

keep silence before him; fear, submit, pray, wait for, and depend on him: let his enemies be silent, fear, make their peace, and prevent his displeasure; let his people be silent, reverence, hope, pray, and wait for him. who will arise and have mercy on them, and destroy their enemies; who will make it to be well with the righteous, and again will make it ill with the wicked; who will

fully and satisfactorily solve the doubts and unfold the riddles of his own providence.

HABAKKUK CHAPTER 3

Habakkuk's prayer, **#Hab 3:1,2**. He describeth God's majesty, and wonders wrought in his people's behalf, **#Hab 3:3-16**. He professeth his unshaken trust in God, **#Hab 3:17-19**.

Ver. 1.

A prayer: the prophet required the earth Should be silent before God, and now gives them example; he waits on and prays to God in his holy temple: some say it is a prayer of intercession, and that the word carrieth it so. Habakkuk the prophet: see **#Hab 1:1**.

Shigionoth; a musical note, say some, and such note as the Jews have no certain knowledge of. Others say *Shigionoth* is ignorances, which the prophet doth confess, and sueth for the pardon of; both he and the people had erred, were offended at the darkness of Divine providences, and needed pardon as well as instruction: or it may be a prayer on occasion of the many and great changes Providence wrought in the affairs of the world and the church.

Ver. 2.

I have heard; received answer to the inquiry made **#Hab 1:13-17**, whether by voice from heaven, or by inward illumination or irradiation of the mind, or any other way of impression from the prophetic Spirit, needs not be inquired.

Thy speech; the report or declaration God made to him concerning the future corrections of his own people, and the devastations Babylon would make among them; and next, the destruction which should fall upon the Babylonians by the Medes and Persians, which is summarily set down, **#Hab 2**.

Was afraid; trembled at the apprehension of these sad things, which both we and they were to suffer; he saw them as certain and grievous.

Revive; not only keep alive, but somewhat refresh, renew, give some new strength to thy church and people, who wait for thee.

Thy work; thy church, called, #**Isa 45:11**, as here, God's work, in an eminent manner, above other people; so the apostle, we are his workmanship, #**Eph 2:10**: or else by work may be meant, the returning of the captivity, and restoring them to their own land, which was the great thing God did promise to do for them; and the prophet prays for some kindness from the Lord, that may be a revival of the hope, assurance, and joy of it.

In the midst of the years: it is not needful we report the different account of these years, and the precise midst of them assigned by some; perhaps it may point to that time when Evil-merodach exalted Jehoiachin out of prison, which, #**2Ki 25:27**, was in the 37th year of their captivity; but I rather think it is more vulgarly to be taken for any time within the term of the sad and troublesome days which would last seventy years.

Make known: it is an affectionate request, and (as such often are) somewhat abrupt; make known either thy truth, or wisdom, or power, or compassion, or all; make it known that thou art our God, and we thy people, that thou still hast a care of us: or what next follows makes the sense full.

In wrath, whilst thy just displeasure burns against us for our sins, **remember mercy;** make it appear thou hast not forgotten to be gracious, let thy people see thou rememberest mercy towards them.

Ver. 3.

God, the God of our fathers, our God, came; appeared, discovered himself, for that is his coming, who, since he fills all places at all times, cannot be said to come by any change of place.

Teman; either appellatively, the south, or else as a proper name of a mountain or country. so called from Teman, son of Eliphaz, and grandson of Esau. It is also called Seir, or is one particular hill among those many which make up Mount Seir. It was not far from Mount Sinai, where the law was given, and the prophet hath respect to that #**De 33:2**, where God appeared in a manner equally glorious and terrible,

The Holy One of Israel.

Mount Paran; which was a name to wilderness, plains, and a mountain, of which the prophet here speaketh, and in #De 33:2 it is said God shined thence. This the prophet mentions as a support of his faith, as an encouragement to others, as a motive why God should renew his work among them, since he so gloriously appeared among their fathers, and made a covenant with them.

Selah: to the argument he addeth this to awaken us to attention.

His glory; lightnings and thunders, and fire and smoke, tokens of the power, majesty, and greatness of God, at the sight whereof Moses himself trembled. Covered, overspread, intercepted, and obscured, the heavens; that part of the visible heavens under which Israel then encamped.

The earth, that part of the earth where this was done,

was full of his praise; of works which deserved then, and still do deserve, to be had in remembrance, with praise to God who did them.

Ver. 4.

His brightness, that lustre in which God appeared, that unparalleled splendour which shined from him, was as the light; pure, clear as the sun, but much more dazzling and overcoming.

Horns: some read it beams or rays of light, and so the Hebrew will bear, and thus it is plain.

Out of his hand: our God is all glory and light; Moses's face shined; the face, yea hands, of our God shine with glorious light; he dwelleth in light.

There; either in that place where he thus appeared, or in that light wherewith he appeared.

Was the hiding of his power: one would think his brightness should have discovered, not hid his power; it did both, it discovered much of it, but hid much more; it was light inaccessible, and therefore a hiding light.

Power; strength or might: by what was there done it did evidently appear, God, who was there, could do much more, but it could not appear how much he could do.

Ver. 5.

Before him: when God was leading the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan, he made the pestilence to go before him, so preparing room for his people.

The pestilence, which wasted the inhabitants of Canaan, swept them out.

Burning coals; burning fevers, and other distempers of fiery and destructive nature, which destroyed the accursed nations.

Went forth; as sent, and observing the way he directed.

At his feet; kept even pace, or waited on him, were his immediate forerunners. All this mentioned as arguments to prevail for somewhat like these for Israel, and against Israel's enemies. O God, revive some such work amidst us.

Ver. 6.

He stood; gave his presence with Joshua and others, as one that stood by while the work was done.

Measured: he divided to them their inheritance, and did this without toil or difficulty, his very presence with his people was enough to make it known what he allotted to them. The earth; the Promised Land.

He beheld; looked with a frowning countenance, with anger in his eye.

Drove asunder; cast them out, or caused them to flee, as many did out of that country; his eye did this, for he looked on them and did this.

The nations; the cursed nations.

The everlasting mountains were scattered; either literally understood, as #Na 1:5, and may relate to that the psalmist minds, #Ps 114:4,6, when the whole mount, all the mountainous parts of Sinai, tremble, #Ex 19:18, &c.; or figuratively, the state of these nations, seeming as immovable as mountains, yet soon shook and dissolved, before the rebuke of the Lord.

The perpetual hills did bow; an elegant immutation of the phrase, to illustrate and confirm the same thing.

His ways are everlasting; the wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness, faithfulness, and power of God, which he showeth in the methods of his governing his church and people, are everlasting, they are the same, and where the same circumstances concur the same effects of his power may be hoped for. So the prophet pursueth the argument; they are everlasting loving-kindnesses with which he embraceth his church.

Ver. 7.

I saw; not with the eye, but with his mind and understanding, in reading the history of Israel's travels.

The tents, for the people that dwelt in them. *Of Cushan;* some say of Cushen-rishathaim, in Othniel's time, and under his victories over them; but I rather think it is meant of the Ethiopians, on the confines of Arabia, that land of Cush, near whose borders Israel's march through and encampings in the wilderness had very often lain.

In affliction; in fear and pain, lest that mighty people, under the conduct of their general, (famed for miracles,) should, as a violent storm, fall on them and despoil them.

The curtains, for those that dwell within them; these people dwelt in tents, and these made up on the sides with curtains.

The land; people of the land. Midian; a people sprung from one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, who gave his name Midian to the land, as well as to the people.

Did tremble; were sore afraid of the arms of Israel, which at last, by God's express direction, were employed against Midian, and cut off five kings, and destroyed the country. These terrible things our God, whose ways are everlasting, hath done to carry our fathers from Egypt to Canaan: let him, who is our God, still revive his work, &c.

Ver. 8.

The prophet recalls to memory the miraculous dividing of the Red Sea and Jordan, when God divided them to make a passage for his people, when by a miracle he made the devouring element to be a safeguard to his people, when it was not displeasure against the sea or the river, but favour to Israel, that moved him to

do this. The prophet repeats the question, to impress the mind of the captive Jews with deeper apprehensions of the mercy of their God.

The rivers: see #Na 1:4.

The sea; the Red Sea.

Didst ride, as a general at the head of his army, leading them forward on some great exploit. Upon thine horses; alluding to the manner of men, with whom horses are of greatest, strongest, and stateliest preparations against an enemy; but these were not designed against the sea as against an enemy.

Thy chariots of salvation: but with these horses are joined (for the decorum of the figure) chariots, that are chariots of salvation for his people: cheer up then, the Lord hath the same love and power still.

Ver. 9.

Thy bow; one part of armour put for the whole; or else the Lord here is represented as armed, in readiness to smite through all enemies, having his bow in his hand.

Was made quite naked; the case taken off, that when it was to be used there might be no delay.

According to the oaths of the tribes; in pursuance of his oath made to our fathers: he promised, and confirmed the promise by oath, that he would drive out the Canaanites, and this oath is here called

oaths, because repeated and renewed at several times; and it is *oaths of*, i.e. to, the tribes, to raise their hope in their present low condition not Abraham here mentioned, lest they should be upbraided with degenerating and losing the right to the promises; but it is

tribes, the right is in them.

Even thy word of promise.

Selah; note it well.

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers: when they were to march through a dry and thirsty land where no water was, how

should they subsist? What good to be defended from perishing by the sword of an enemy, and be left to perish for want of refreshing waters? This then is added to complete the mercy; our God made rivers in the desert for them, and satisfied them with streams out of the flinty rock.

Ver. 10.

The mountains; literally taken, it is an elegant hyperbole, expressing to us the glorious effects of God's power and presence; and thus Sinai and the contiguous hills, the whole mount, **#Ex 19:18**, are intended: or if you take it figuratively, these are kings and states, whose hieroglyphics in Scripture are mountains.

Saw; were sensible of, showed they were sensible of his approach and presence.

Trembled; were grieved; so it will well suit to mountains metaphorically taken, it was grief to the kings and states to see God own, conduct, and prosper Israel, **#Nu 22:3**; Josh. it. 9-11: or

trembled, i.e. were shaken as with an earthquake, **#Ex 19:18 Ps 68:8 114:4,6**; so it suits the letter of the text.

The overflowing; the inundation, which at that season was wont to be very great, the mighty floods on Jordan.

Passed by; passed away, i.e. at the word of God the waters below flowed and ran away from those above, which stood on a heap, to make a path for Israel.

The deep; either the deep channel in which Jordan flowed, the very bottom of the river, appeared; or the deep, i.e. the Red Sea.

Uttered his voice; with dreadful roaring, like a mighty voice, parted its waters; divided, but with great and terrible noise, in this unusual commotion.

Lifted up his hands; testified its obedience to the command of God, as by lifting up the hand one doth at distance signify his ready compliance with the command, or direction: or

hands, i.e. sides; so when the upper waters stood on a heap, both in Jordan and the Red Sea, they appeared as with sides or flankers unto the Israelites.

On high; like a mountain, visible and conspicuous to all.

Ver. 11.

The sun and moon stood still: though the sun rejoice as a giant to run his race, and had constantly come out of his chamber to run it about two thousand five hundred years past, yet now he stops his course, and with his stay puts stop to the motion of moon and stars, at the command of God's minister and Israel's captain, **#Jos 10:12,13.**

Habitation; so the psalmist, **#Ps 19:4,** speaks of a pavilion or tabernacle pitched for the sun, where at Joshua's word, seconded with the word of Joshua's and Israel's God, he makes a halt as it were, stands at the door of his tabernacle to behold and forward the strange work, the miraculous overthrow of the five conspiring kings.

At the light of thine arrows they went: as we read the words they seem somewhat obscure and perplexed, yet very intelligible in this paraphrase: at the light, according to the light which thine arrows gave by their glittering heads, polished shafts, and bright feathers; in their flight thine arrows, O God, for these were the arrows of Israel and thine arrows too, as the sword of Gideon was the sword of the Lord.

They, i.e. sun and moon, went, directed their course, and took their way compliant with the flights of these arrows, not hastening to the place of their going down whilst Israel had arrows to shoot, or enemies that day to discomfit, whilst they were to lift up a spear against any enemy that day. The marginal reading of these words is much plainer:

thine arrows walked in the light, (which was miraculously continued,) and thy spears walked in the brightness of the lightning (as I venture for once to read the words from the Hebrew); so dreadful was that day to the enemy, so joyful to Israel. O let some such day arise on captive Jews, revive thy works of old: so the prophet prays.

Ver. 12.

Thou, our God,

didst march, as the victorious Conqueror leading still thine armies, the tribes of Israel, through the land of Canaan, to subdue the remainders of thine enemies and theirs, and to give thine Israel possession of the Promised Land.

In indignation against them for their sins.

Thou didst thresh, break to pieces,

the heathen, the nation: devoted to destruction; these were cut in pieces by the sword of Israel.

Ver. 13.

Thou wentest forth: pursuant of his metaphor, the prophet speaks of God as marching on before his people; or it may refer to the ark, a token of God's presence before the people.

For the salvation; to complete the salvation begun in bringing them out of Egypt, and carrying them through the wilderness, and to be finished in settling them in Canaan.

Of the people; thy chosen people, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Even for salvation: it is repeated for confirmation, and to affect us with the greatness of the mercy.

With thine anointed; or, for thine anointed, i.e. all Israel; or under the conduct of thine anointed, Joshua, type of the Messiah, by whose hand all these great things were done.

Thou woundedst the head; gavest a deadly wound to the princes and kings of Canaan, enemies to Israel, who were cut off, and their families utterly destroyed.

Out of the house; royal palaces, or ancient dwellings, and settled habitations; of which slaughter of Canaanitish kings, see **#Ps 136:17-20**.

Of the wicked; the courts of these kings were houses of greatest wickednesses, for which they were destroyed.

By discovering the foundation unto the neck: razing the foundations of their power, and destroying all from foot to head.

Selah: all which is to be heeded, and well minded.

Ver. 14.

Thou, O God,

didst strike through with his staves; either meant of the staves or arms of the Canaanitish kings which they lifted up against Israel, thereby provoking Israel to fight, in which being overcome, they perished by their own arms taken from them; or it may be meant of the weapons of Joshua and Israel, called staves, for that they were arrows and spears, which are armed staves: or it might be translated tribes; so with the tribes of Israel, the tribes of God's anointed, or by them, were these Canaanites destroyed.

The head of his villages; all the cities, and all the unwallied towns; for so Israel destroyed the daughters with the mothers, i.e. the villages with the cities.

They; the inhabitants of Canaan, but particularly the five kings, #Hab 3:11; of whose conspiracy you read #Jos 10, which see.

Came out as a whirlwind; with violence invading every side; a tempest made up of contrary winds and exhalations, moving as violently as irregularly.

To scatter; to disperse and drive away from the earth.

Their rejoicing was as to devour; the joy they took was such as is the joy of men who take the spoil of enemies, and come to feast, not fight; they dreamed of nothing else but eating up God's people as they would eat bread.

The poor; helpless and friendless as they seemed to be, poor Israel.

Secretly; either by secret conspiracy, or by secret execution of the plot they laid against Israel.

Ver. 15.

Thou, O God, or thou, O Israel, notwithstanding all plots and opposition,

didst walk; heldest on thy way, and walkedst from thy entering on the east of the land to the west thereof; from Beth-el, Jordan, and Jericho on the east, where they entered the land that lay within Jordan.

Through, rather to, (as Junius, Tremellius, and Grotius,)

the sea, the most western parts Of all the land God gave; they took possession from east to west, to the great sea, the western sea, the mightiest sea the Jews of that time knew, called here by way of eminency

the heap of great waters; called

the great sea, #Eze 47:10,15,19,20, as #Jos 9:1. So was fulfilled what was promised, and they took possession of that was estated on them, #Jos 1:3,4. I rather refer this 15th verse in this manner, than, with most interpreters, to the Red Sea, which is to me a repetition unseemly for so short and elegant an enumeration of God's wonderful deliverances and blessings to Israel, from their leaving Egypt to their settling in Canaan.

Ver. 16.

When I heard, what dreadful desolations God threatened against Israel, #Hab 1:5-11, for of those he now speaketh and meditateth, having finished his elegant description of God's wonderful works of mercy toward Israel of old, and left them as a foundation of comfort and hope.

My belly, or heart, or bowels, or inward parts, #Pr 20:27, trembled; another effect and sign of surprising fears and astonishment.

At the voice; at the mere report. Rottenness entered into my bones; a consumption and decay of all my strength; a languishing of my spirits, and a declining of my rigour: a very usual effect of great fears.

I trembled in myself; I was all shaken, as with an earthquake, no part was free or unshaken. That I might rest in the day of trouble; these fears awakened my remembrance of that God, and those wonders which I have recounted; these fears have occasioned my search into this mystery of Providence, that, understanding it I might, as I do, betake myself to God, and his covenanted mercies, that I may rest in him, who will make it go well with the righteous, even with those righteous who shall live to see and feel the troubles of those days.

When he cometh up; the king of Babylon, with all his bitter and cruel nations, bent on violence and rapine.

Unto the people; against the Jews, my people, saith the prophet.

He will invade them with mighty force, and cut in pieces, make most bloody work among them.

With his troops; with numerous armies, and spoil in troops, where what one leaves another will take; where none escape the fury of some or other in the troops: see this accomplished #2Ki 25.

Ver. 17.

To war foreseen the prophet supposeth famine, and describeth the most grievous, as indeed it fell out.

Although the fig tree, which was in that country a very considerable part of their provision to live upon,

shall not blossom; not give the least sign of bringing forth fruit.

Neither shall fruit be in the vines, which were also the riches and provision of those countries.

The labour of the olive; either labour bestowed upon the olive, or the fruit which the olive brings forth, called here labour by an allusion to our labour.

Shall fail; disappoint the expectation of both dresser and eater.

The fields, ploughed and sown, shall yield no meat; corn for bread.

The flock of sheep, kept out in the field, shall be cut off, either by wolf, murrain, or by the wasting Babylonians,

from the fold; where they were wont to be safe. now they are in greatest danger, and that because they may be swept away all at once.

No herd in the stall; greater cattle kept in the stall for labour, or for feeding.

Ver. 18.

As for my part, I will, saith the prophet, rejoice; look for joy, expect matter of rejoicing

in the Lord, who will preserve a remnant and redeem them, who will rebuke Babylon, and will very strangely destroy it.

I will joy in the God of my salvation: the prophet renews his own faith, and confirms ours. All shall end in salvation to him and believers.

Ver. 19.

The prophet had in his own, and in the name of all the godly, made a full profession of his faith, and resolution to behave himself with joy in midst of troubles, **#Hab 3:17,18**; now he gives us account on what ground he speaks so, it is not in his own strength he can do it, but it is because the Lord God is his strength.

He will make my feet like hinds' feet; that I may escape to God my refuge to that safe mountain of salvation, that I may at last flee from Babylon to Judea, to Jerusalem.

He will make me to walk upon mine high places; to my native country, to my beloved city, and thy more beloved temple, which were built like high places to that munition of rocks, &c., **#De 32:13 Isa 33:16**. My God will return my captivity, and when I am set at liberty, as I shall be, by Cyrus, my God will be my strength, that, as a hind let loose, I may hasten to the mountains of Israel.

To the chief singer; let this be kept on record for public use, this be a pattern for others as well as it is a declaration of my faith, hope, desire, and prayer.

ZEPHANIAH

THE ARGUMENT

This prophet, by a somewhat larger account of his pedigree, gives us ground to guess of what family he might be; the last named may possibly be the good king Hezekiah; the names are the same in **#Zep 1:1**, and **#2Ki 18:1**. By his freedom with princes and the king's children, reprovng them and threatening them, **#Zep 1:8**, with the loftiness of his style, may fairly be admitted a conjecture at somewhat more than ordinary in his descent: but whether of royal blood or not, he came with a Divine warrant, and with a prophetic spirit, sharply reprovng all ranks of men for their sins; of which in particular idolatry, apostacy, and neglect to inquire for the true religion and the true God, and the sinful fashions as of great ones in their habits, and the violent oppression of the great ones, are named, **#Zep 1:5,6,8,9**; which sins, and many others which then abounded amongst them, are threatened with severe punishments, and with utter desolation, which had already befallen some of the neighbouring nations named; and proposed as examples to the Jews, to move them to consider, repent, amend, and prevent the threatened judgments, which, unless they repent, will come suddenly. The prophet therefore affectionately exhorteth and presseth them to repentance, **#Zep 2**, by examples of those he mentioneth, whose impenitence, added to their sins, ruined them. By promises, and encouragements to expect mercy upon their hearkening to his counsel, he foretells the coming of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentiles, the preserving of a remnant of them amidst all the troubles and wasting judgments that should follow them, and a return out of captivity, with the re-establishing them as the church and people of God; which promise closeth his prophecy, and for which he calls on them to be thankful to and rejoice in their God, who in the midst of their sins, and his wrath for those sins, yet remembered his own mercies and covenant for them.

The time when Zephaniah prophesied, **#Zep 1:1**. God's severe judgment against Judah for divers sins, **#Zep 1:2-18**.

Zephaniah 1:1 ZEPHANIAH CHAPTER 1

The word; the declaration of the purpose of God, either spoken audibly, or clearly manifested by signs.

Of the Lord, God of Israel; here is the Divine authority of this prophecy with which the prophet's word is seconded.

Which came: the precise manner how it came we need not inquire into;

Zephaniah did not hammer out of his own brain any such news, he received from God what he communicated to them. Zephaniah; by derivation of the name. it is one hidden of the Lord, whom God doth hide, or God's secretary; or else one that is God's Watchman, whom God hath set over the house of Judah, as Ezekiel is said to be, Eze_3:17.

The son of Cush, & c. his pedigree here gives us no certainty what his progenitors were, whether prophets, or only eminent known men; or whether he were, as some think him, the great-grandson of Hezekiah, the name being the same.

In the days of Josiah; before the captivity; he was then contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel. prophesied before the captivity, and foretells much like what Jeremiah or Ezekiel did.

Amon; whose reign was very full of impiety and idolatry, and hastened the captivity upon Judah. This Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which Manasseh had made, 2Ch_33:22.

Zephaniah 1:2

I will utterly consume, Heb. *Gathering up I will gather up* , or take up, intimating particularly the manner how all should be consumed, i.e. swept away as a prey to the Babylonians.

From off the land of Judah, the two tribes.

Saith the Lord: this is added to confirm and assure the truth hereof.

Zephaniah 1:3

The former verse denounced the future desolation in general terms. This verse specifieth what desolation in particular God would bring upon the land.

I will consume man and beast; man shall be consumed for his own sin, and the beasts consumed for man's sake; men by the pestilence and famine, the beasts by murrain, and devoured by multitudes of hungry soldiers, that shall make greater havoc than any murrain ordinarily doth.

The fowls of the heaven; either by some unknown disease among them, or else by a distaste at the stench of putrefying carcasses, they fled away, so that none, or very few, appeared, insomuch that it looked as if all were consumed.

The fishes of the sea: by sea, some understand ponds, lakes, or smaller seas, such as that of Gennesareth and Tiberias, the waters whereof might be made noisome to the fish by the streams of blood and carcasses which might possibly be east into them; or God might destroy the fishes by some consuming disease too. He hath ways to do it, who hath once said he will do it.

The stumbling-blocks; the idols.

The wicked; the idolatrous priests, and others who worshipped them.

I will cut off man, all shall disappear,
from off the land of Judah.

Zephaniah 1:4

I will also, Heb. *And I will, or, And I have* ; so prophets speak of what shall most certainly be as if already done.

Stretch out mine hand: this seems to intimate. some immediate stroke from God, he speaks so in Jer_51:25 Eze_6:14 **14:13 25:13.**

Upon Judah; Benjamin is included, though Judah only is named.

Upon all the inhabitants; it will be universal destruction of them, either by sword, famine, pestilence, or captivity; both citizens and sojourners, all shall perish, or suffer by some or other of these ways.

Of Jerusalem: though it was the holy city, beautified with the temple of God, yet all should not secure it, Jer_7:4 Eze_9:6.

I will cut off the remnant of Baal; whatsoever remains of the idolatry of Baal, both the idols, their temples, sacrifices, priests, ornaments, and worshippers: whether this refers to times after the reformation by Josiah, or to times before it, needs not scrupulously be inquired into.

From this place: this idolatry had filled Jerusalem itself.

The names; both the persons, and the memory of them also, for names includeth both.

The Chemarims; either called so from their black garments they went in, or from their swarthy colour accustomed by the black smoke of incense, which they were almost continually in; or door-keepers, sextons of Baal; or voluntary servants; or such as the popish monks, some ministers of Baal distinct from the priests.

The priests; either the priests of Baal, or the apostates of Aaron's house, who (though priests by birth and office) should have been stedfast to, but had fallen from the true God and his worship to Baal and his worship.

Zephaniah 1:5

And them that worship; those among the people that adhered to this idolatry.

The host of heaven; the sun, moon, and stars, frequently in the Scripture called the host of heaven.

Upon the house-tops; openly, as the manner of those idolaters was, either because they thought those deities they imagined to dwell in the body of those stars better saw them, or were better pleased thus, or because these places were nearer heaven. On the flat roofs of their houses they were used to have their altars and worship.

That swear by the Lord, or, to the Lord, (as the Hebrew bears,)

and by Malcham; persons that mix idol worship and the worship of the true God; that devote themselves to God and Baal, or Malcham; called Milcom, and Molech, and Moloch, Amo_5:26; probably it was their chief idol, fancied to be king of gods and men.

Zephaniah 1:6

Them that are turned back; apostates, who have forsaken the Lord and his worship, or that are turned atheists, or that in matter of religion have taken up not what is purest and truest, but what is nearest and most in fashion.

That have not sought the Lord; sluggishly neglected to examine pretended religions, according to the law, which they might and ought to have done, and who have embraced a fall religion instead of the true.

Nor inquired for him: though the prophets have preached against this apostacy, and called the priests and people to forsake the idols, and inquire after God, yet they would not inquire; these also are here doomed to destruction.

Them that are turned back; apostates, who have forsaken the Lord and his worship, or that are turned atheists, or that in matter of religion have taken up not what is purest and truest, but what is nearest and most in fashion.

That have not sought the Lord; sluggishly neglected to examine pretended religions, according to the law, which they might and ought to have done, and who have embraced a fall religion instead of the true.

Nor inquired for him: though the prophets have preached against this apostacy, and called the priests and people to forsake the idols, and inquire after God, yet they would not inquire; these also are here doomed to destruction.

Zephaniah 1:7

Hold thy peace; thou that murmurest in discontent, or disputest out of frowardness against God, his worship, and his government, that thinkest of him but little better than of Baal or Malcham, cease all thy quarrels and dispute, stand in awe.

At the presence of the Lord God; who is almighty, omniscient, who ruleth and will avenge.

The day of the Lord; a day of vengeance from the Lord. The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice; the wicked among the Jews, whom he will sacrifice by the Chaldean's sword.

He hath bid his guests; summoned in beasts of the field and fowls of the air, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of slain Jews, whom the Babylonians slew.

Zephaniah 1:8

It shall come to pass; it shall most certainly be fulfilled what I threaten I will most surely execute.

In the day of the Lord's sacrifice; of slaughter to be made by the Babylonians, called here a day of sacrifice, that we might see clearly the just and exemplary proceedings of God; these people sinned in sacrificing to strange gods, and God will punish them, making them a strange sacrifice to his anger.

I will punish; the punishment shall appear to be from my hand, as he threatens often by Ezekiel.

The princes; nobles about the court, the great ones, who dreamed of shifting better than others, but fell with the first, 2Ki_25:19-21.

The king's children; sons and grandchildren too of good Josiah. Jehoahaz died a captive in Egypt, 2Ki_23:34. Jehoiakim died on the way, or in Babylon, buried with the burial of an ass, Jer_22:18,19. Jeconiah, carried to Babylon, sped somewhat, yet but little, better; there he died a captive. As for Zedekiah and his children, these were slain before his face, then his eyes put out, and he led into miserable captivity.

Clothed with strange apparel; some say the strange apparel of idolatrous priests; others say, and more likely, the garb of foreigners, imitated by the wanton Jews.

Zephaniah 1:9

In the same day; not to be taken for a single day, but more largely for that time wherein God would visit and punish.

That leap on the threshold; insolently, and with rage, break open the doors of such whose goods they seize, upon pretence of forfeitures or fines; a sin that Ezekiel both taxed and threatened, Eze_8:17 **12:19 45:9.**

Their masters; either the oppressing kings, whose officers these were, or public officers and judges, whose servants thus did (to enrich their masters) spoil the poor and the oppressed.

With violence; goods taken away by force, and kept as much against right, as at first taken away without right;

and deceit, by false accusations, and by suborned evidence for proof, and by perjuries.

Zephaniah 1:10

In that day: see Zep_1:9.

Saith the Lord; to assure us of the certainty of the thing.

The noise, Heb. *the voice, of a cry*, i.e. a very great outcry and lamentation, from the fish-gate, which was on the west side of Jerusalem, through which gate they brought in fish from Joppa and other sea towns on the west sea, or great sea, now the Mediterranean, at which gate the Babylonians are said first to enter into the city when they took it: thus it will be a prediction at what gate the enemy should enter.

A howling, the great, horrid, and confused lamentations of desperate and undone multitudes, crying out and bitterly bemoaning themselves, from the second gate, which was in the second wall of Jerusalem, which on that side was fortified with three walls; or second part of the city, or the middle city, for it was divided into three parts. Others read second as a proper name, and make it the school, college, or university, and so render, the howling of the university, i.e. of students either slaughtered or captivated by Chaldeans.

A great crashing; breaking in pieces, or the noise of what is broken into shivers; possibly the noise of doors, windows, closets, and chests broken up, or burning, in the houses of nobles, likened here to hills; or, more literally, in

Gareb and

Goath, on which the fleeing Jews, pursued by the Chaldees, lost what they carried with them, and their life too: so all places were full of miserable slaughter and outcries.

Zephaniah 1:11

Howl, cry aloud, and bitterly,

ye inhabitants of Maktesh: some read it appellatively: the mortar in which of old, before the corn-mill was known and used, they

did pound and beat their corn for bread; they also pounded spices. Others say it is the lower town, or valley of Cedron in Jerusalem, a deep valley that surrounded the mountain of the temple, to which, fancied like a deep mortar, they gave the name Maktesh.

All the merchant people; who were wont either to lodge in this place when they came to trade, or, if Jewish merchants, dwelt there, which was much to the advantage of the place; but now, by the invasion of the land, and by the siege, all trade is cut off, and many merchants either slain or made slaves.

All they that bear silver, that brought it with them to pay for what they bought up, and so enriched the inhabitants of this Maktesh, all that traded and paid ready money,

are cut off. Others say the money-changers or bankers are here meant by them that bear silver, persons that furnished all sorts of people with silver for goods laid to pledge or bartered.

Are cut off, i.e. shall be as surely as if it were already done.

Zephaniah 1:12

At that time; it was

day. Zep_1:10, which see.

I will search Jerusalem with candles: God speaks after the manner of man, who searcheth dark places with candles in hand. God's omniscience seeth all things, and-needs no help for discovery, but by this expression he foretells how fully he would both discover and punish. It is like enough this was literally fulfilled when the Chaldeans did search the vaults, and cellars, and sewers of Jerusalem for men or goods hidden in them.

Settled on their lees; in allusion to liquors, which, not being poured out from vessel to vessel to refine them, grow thick and settled; so men that have known none or little changes settle in security, and fear no menaces.

Say in their heart; entertain an opinion, or begin to flatter themselves into thoughts.

The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil; no Providence to countenance the good, or to punish the bad; no God, or none that regardeth what is done on earth; or as they, Eze_8:12,

think God hath forsaken the earth. These atheists God will punish severely, as the sin well deserveth; they shall see it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked.

Zephaniah 1:13

Therefore; as a punishment for other sins, so for this secure, atheistical denial of Providence; though they have denied, they shall feel, and confess, that the evil they suffer is both just, and from my hand too.

Their goods; stores in their shops and warehouses, furniture in their chambers, and wardrobes.

A booty; a prey divided among the Babylonish soldiers, invading, prevailing, wasting villages and cities.

Their houses a desolation; that they may remember the curse threatened in the law, executed on them, and acknowledge that he who gave the law rules by it.

Build houses, but not inhabit them, & c.; according to that Deu_28:30,39.

Zephaniah 1:14

The great day; not the day of general judgment, but the day in which the great God will bring his great armies against Judah and Jerusalem, and do great things by those armies.

Of the Lord; appointed, foretold, and now actually brought on them by the Lord.

It is near; very near; it is doubled to show the nearness of it, and to assure us it is so.

And hasteth greatly; your enemies' eagerness for the prey, your sins and security, and the Lord's justly provoked anger, hasten this day.

The voice; it is within hearing, the sound of it is in mine ears, methinks you might hear it also.

The mighty man, the valiant and stout-hearted among the Jews, they who should support others, shall be really to sink themselves, and as much need a cordial themselves.

Shall cry there bitterly; their courage broken, they shall cry out most vehemently, or like hopeless women.

Zephaniah 1:15

That day, great day, Zep_1:14,

is a day of wrath, from the Chaldeans; and from the Lord, actively, upon the Jews, passively.

A day of trouble and distress: here the prophet heapeth up words of much the same sense, to express the grievousness of the troubles of those times which shall suddenly come upon them; most distressing trouble, none knowing how to bear it, or where to hide from it.

Of wasteness and desolation; most desolate wasteness in city, villages, and fields; every where the spoiling soldier shall lay waste, carrying away all he can, and destroying what he cannot carry away,

Of darkness and gloominess; possibly it might be so as to the temper of the air, dark and gloomy, but figuratively I am sure it was so.

Of clouds and thick darkness; either literally, from the heavens clouded over them, or (if it refer, as it may, to the day of sacking Jerusalem, and effects of it) darkness, gloominess, clouds, and thick darkness, arising from the smoke and fire of the city every where fired by the enemy; but metaphorically these speak the most unparalleled calamities.

Zephaniah 1:16

The trumpet; God's trumpet calling the Chaldeans, the Chaldeans' trumpet also gathering together their troops.

Alarm, threatening and affrighting, against the fenced cities of Judah.

The high towers; stately palaces and strong munitions, fortified with high towers, built at the angles of walls, and therefore the Hebrew calls them high corners; it may mean also the great men, which, as corners well built are the strength and beauty of a wall, so they of a state, Jud_20:2 Zec_10:4.

Zephaniah 1:17

I will bring distress; cast them into, and surround or besiege them with distress, calamities which shall greatly trouble and perplex.

Upon men; the chiefest among them, the richest, and who think themselves safest; the mighty men, as Zep_1:10,

like blind men, shall neither know what to do nor where to flee, neither be fit for counsel nor action.

Because they have sinned against the Lord; all this for their great sins against the Lord; these men of note have been as much greater in sin as in state above others, and shall be as much deeper in distress.

Their blood shall be poured out as dust; as freely, abundantly, and as contemptibly, as dust in the highway.

And their flesh as the dung; shall be spread as dung on the face of the earth to fatten and improve it; their life shall be of no more value than dust, their honour no more regarded than dung, and they shall be so used after death.

I will bring distress; cast them into, and surround or besiege them with distress, calamities which shall greatly trouble and perplex.

Upon men; the chiefest among them, the richest, and who think themselves safest; the mighty men, as Zep_1:10,

like blind men, shall neither know what to do nor where to flee, neither be fit for counsel nor action.

Because they have sinned against the Lord; all this for their great sins against the Lord; these men of note have been as much greater in sin as in state above others, and shall be as much deeper in distress.

Their blood shall be poured out as dust; as freely, abundantly, and as contemptibly, as dust in the highway.

And their flesh as the dung; shall be spread as dung on the face of the earth to fatten and improve it; their life shall be of no more value than dust, their honour no more regarded than dung, and they shall be so used after death.

Zephaniah 1:18

Neither their silver nor their gold: sometimes these have purchased friends, and redeemed a life at the hand of greedy soldiers, who have spared on promise of money; but now it shall not be so, neither silver nor gold shall help.

Shall be able to deliver; to pacify the enraged sultan of Babylon, who had been formerly appeased with presents and tribute money, but will no more. Nor shall his soldiers dare to spare or save any when they are charged to slay man, woman, and child, as in the taking of Jerusalem it is probable they were charged, Psa_137:7-9.

The Lord's wrath: were it the wrath of man only, gifts might appease it; but it is the wrath of God, who is a righteous Judge, and receives not gifts.

Shall be devoured; utterly ruined, its wealth carried away, its provisions eat up, its stores exhausted, and its stock (which should continue their provision) utterly destroyed, as Zep_1:2.

By the fire of his jealousy; to which their sins provoked the Lord, which their sins enkindled, and now it burns that none can quench it; see Deu_28:15, to the end of the chapter; all which God will now make good against them.

For he shall make even a speedy riddance: though he had with wonderful patience waited and forborne, now he would wait no longer, but with speedy executions fulfil his threats and accomplish his wrath; which he did within less than twenty years after this prophecy, as is most likely, on the accuratest computation we can make of the times of Zephaniah's prophesying and Nebuchadnezzar's taking the city.

Zephaniah 2:1 ZEPHANIAH CHAPTER 2

An exhortation to repentance, Zep_2:1-3. The judgment of the Philistines, Zep_2:4-7 of Moab and Ammon, Zep_2:8-11, of Ethiopia, Zep_2:12, and Assyria, Zep_2:13-15.

Gather yourselves together; call a solemn assembly, as Joe_1:14, proclaim a fast. Let all have notice given to meet on this work, and, being gathered together, search yourselves, your hearts and ways, and repent.

Gather together; repeated to affect them the more, and to hasten them to it, and make them serious in it.

O nation of the Jews, yet a people, yet my people, though next door almost to being no people.

Not desired; neither desirous to return, nor desirable in your return; foolishly unwilling to return, and utterly unworthy to be received on your return: yet gather together, search your ways, and try what you may do for your safety.

Zephaniah 2:2

Before the decree, the Word of the prophet which declares the purpose of God against this sinful people, bring forth: the degree is pregnant, nay, hath gone a great while, but is now like a woman near her full time, ready to bring forth: be you speedy in your repentance, lest your miseries break forth of the womb of Divine vengeance and destroy you. Before the day, the day of your calamities, Babylon's rage, and God's just displeasure,

pass as the chaff; carry you away as the wind carrieth chaff away for the fire, while the good grain is gathered and preserved.

The fierce anger; the heat of anger. It was jealousy like fire, Zep_1:18, and here it is the heat of that fire, intimating the greatness of the anger. Come upon you; as a storm from on high, with violence irresistible and destructive; and the warning is doubled to make them take it.

Zephaniah 2:3

Seek ye the Lord; turn to him with sound and true repentance, pray for pardon, engage in new obedience, inquire in the law what is your duty, and do it; fear, worship, depend on the Lord alone.

All ye meek; ye humble ones, who have not hardened yourselves with the stubborn, proud, idolatrous hypocrites, but have trembled at the word of the Lord.

Of the earth; of Judea, which is here spoken of, as Zep_1:2.

Which have wrought his judgment; obeyed his precepts; so doth the Scripture express obedience to the law of God by doing judgment, Deu_4:5 Psa_119:121.

Seek righteousness; inquire and know the righteousness which God commandeth, which you ought to persist in, and continue ye in it.

Seek meekness; carry it humbly towards God, and patiently under his corrections; so wait on the just and merciful God.

It may be: this is sufficient to raise hope; if it be not sure, if it be hard, yet it is not impossible.

Ye shall be hid; under the wing of Divine protecting Providence kept safe from, or in, these troubles they shall be either averted or abated.

Zephaniah 2:4

For; it is time to seek some refuge, high time to seek it in God, for your neighbours, as well as you, shall be destroyed, there shall be no refuge for you among your neighbours.

Gaza; a chief city of the Philistines, very strong by its situation, and by art fortified; a frontier toward Egypt, and not full three miles from the sea.

Shall be forsaken; when the conquering army of the Chaldeans shall come against it, shall be forsaken either by the flight or captivity of the inhabitants.

Ashkelon; another of the strong cities of the Philistines, which fell to the tribe of Dan, and was a maritime town.

A desolation; utterly wasted, so the abstract doth imply.

They; Babylonians: see Eze_25:15-17.

Shall drive into captivity, cast them out of their own and force them into a strange land. Ashdod; a strong fortified city of Palestina, called in aftertimes Azotus.

At the noon-day; it shall be taken by force at noon, or the citizens led away captive in the heat of the day, and under parching heats.

Ekron; famous for its infamous idolatry, where Baalzebub was worshipped, the chief seat of devil-worship.

Shall be rooted up; utterly extirpated, no more to spring up: see

Jer_47:4,5: it shall be as a tree pulled up by the roots; or maimed, as horses that are houghed, as Jos_11:9.

Zephaniah 2:5

Woe unto the inhabitants! now all the Philistines are threatened, whereas before he named only those four cities.

Of the sea-coasts; the coasts of the great or western sea, now the Mediterranean, on which the Philistines of old did dwell.

The Cherethites, or destroyers, men that were stout, but fierce, and perhaps terrible to neighbours and foreigners that had the hard hap to be forced on their coasts by violence of sea. They were great soldiers, and lived Switzerlike, guards to David, it may be to other kings also.

The word of the Lord; his purpose, his threats too by his prophet.

Canaan; that part that the Philistines did by three keep from the Jews.

I will even destroy thee: though the Chaldeans be the men that shall destroy, yet the Lord will do it also; they his servants, he chief, in doing it.

There shall be no inhabitant; no more cities, nor citizens to dwell therein.

Zephaniah 2:6

This confirms the former, tells us what shall be in those parts; instead of cities full of rich citizens, there shall be cottages for shepherds watching over their flocks.

Zephaniah 2:7

The coast, the sea-coast, the land of the Philistines,

shall be for the remnant, either that escaped, as some did, or else survived the captivity;

of the house of Judah; the two tribes, one named, both included.

They shall feed thereupon; their Rocks.

In the houses of Ashkelon, in places where houses of Ashkelon formerly stood,

shall they lie down in the evening; both shepherds and flocks too.

The Lord, the everlasting Jehovah,

their God, from their fathers by covenant,

shall visit them, in mercy remembering his covenant with them,

and turn away their captivity, or shall send to receive their prisoners or captives; or return their captivity, and by the command of Cyrus give them liberty of returning into their own country.

Zephaniah 2:8

I have heard: either the prophet for himself, or for the people, speaks this; or else, more likely, in the name of God, assures the Jews that God had heard, observed, resented, and was highly displeased with that he heard.

The reproach of Moab; a people of near kin to the Jews, born of Lot's daughter, seated eastward of Canaan, upon the Dead Sea and Jordan, a powerful people, and as proud; whose pride broke out on all occasions against the Jews, as appears from first to last: Isa_16:6, and Jer_48:29,30, brand them as very proud.

The revilings of the children of Ammon; a people as near as Moab to Jewish blood, and as bitter against them, Neh_4:2,3, bitter scoffers and jeerers.

Whereby they have reproached my people; either in the war, or at the taking of Jerusalem, or when the captive Jews were led by their borders into captivity: Eze_25:3 puts these all together.

Magnified themselves; either boasting what they themselves were, or what they would have done, or what they will do against Israel, recovering their old pretended right and estate.

Against their border; invading their frontiers, and spoiling them with insolence.

I have heard: either the prophet for himself, or for the people, speaks this; or else, more likely, in the name of God, assures the Jews that God had heard, observed, resented, and was highly displeased with that he heard.

The reproach of Moab; a people of near kin to the Jews, born of Lot's daughter, seated eastward of Canaan, upon the Dead Sea and Jordan, a powerful people, and as proud; whose pride broke out on all occasions against the Jews, as appears from first to last: Isa_16:6, and Jer_48:29,30, brand them as very proud.

The revilings of the children of Ammon; a people as near as Moab to Jewish blood, and as bitter against them, Neh_4:2,3, bitter scoffers and jeerers.

Whereby they have reproached my people; either in the war, or at the taking of Jerusalem, or when the captive Jews were led by their borders into captivity: Eze_25:3 puts these all together.

Magnified themselves; either boasting what they themselves were, or what they would have done, or what they will do against Israel, recovering their old pretended right and estate.

Against their border; invading their frontiers, and spoiling them with insolence.

I have heard: either the prophet for himself, or for the people, speaks this; or else, more likely, in the name of God, assures the Jews that God had heard, observed, resented, and was highly displeased with that he heard.

The reproach of Moab; a people of near kin to the Jews, born of Lot's daughter, seated eastward of Canaan, upon the Dead Sea and Jordan, a powerful people, and as proud; whose pride broke out on all occasions against the Jews, as appears from first to last: Isa_16:6, and Jer_48:29,30, brand them as very proud.

The revilings of the children of Ammon; a people as near as Moab to Jewish blood, and as bitter against them, Neh_4:2,3, bitter scoffers and jeerers.

Whereby they have reproached my people; either in the war, or at the taking of Jerusalem, or when the captive Jews were led by their borders into captivity: Eze_25:3 puts these all together.

Magnified themselves; either boasting what they themselves were, or what they would have done, or what they will do against Israel, recovering their old pretended right and estate.

Against their border; invading their frontiers, and spoiling them with insolence.

I have heard: either the prophet for himself, or for the people, speaks this; or else, more likely, in the name of God, assures the Jews that God had heard, observed, resented, and was highly displeased with that he heard.

The reproach of Moab; a people of near kin to the Jews, born of Lot's daughter, seated eastward of Canaan, upon the Dead Sea and Jordan, a powerful people, and as proud; whose pride broke out on all occasions against the Jews, as appears from first to last: Isa_16:6, and Jer_48:29,30, brand them as very proud.

The revilings of the children of Ammon; a people as near as Moab to Jewish blood, and as bitter against them, Neh_4:2,3, bitter scoffers and jeerers.

Whereby they have reproached my people; either in the war, or at the taking of Jerusalem, or when the captive Jews were led by their borders into captivity: Eze_25:3 puts these all together.

Magnified themselves; either boasting what they themselves were, or what they would have done, or what they will do against Israel, recovering their old pretended right and estate.

Against their border; invading their frontiers, and spoiling them with insolence.

Zephaniah 2:9

As I live; the most solemn oath, fit for none but God himself to use: see Eze_14:16.

Saith the Lord of hosts, who have all things at my disposal, and can arm all creatures against these proud revilers.

The God of Israel, who by covenant am Israel's God, and Israel is my people, in whose reproaches I am reproached.

Shall be as Sodom: this is a proverbial speech in Scripture phrase to speak great destruction, as Isa_1:9. Moab and Ammon were not destroyed by fire, as Sodom and Gomorrah; but the next words are an explication of these.

The breeding of nettles; not cultivated, but run over with nettles, as if it were only to breed them.

And salt-pits; a salt, dry, barren earth, fit only to dig salt out of.

A perpetual desolation; never more to be manured and inhabited, or not for a long, a very long time.

The residue; either the few left with Gedaliah, or the remnant that returned out of Babylon.

Shall spoil them; provoked by the injuries of Moab and Ammon, shall take arms, overcome, and spoil them.

Shall possess them; settle upon their lands, and dwell in those parts that are fit for habitation.

Zephaniah 2:10

This shall they have; this grievous ruin like Sodom's, this just retaliation; they insulted over Israel, Israel shall tread on them.

For their pride; haughty mind and carriage: see Zep_2:8.

Reproached; defamed, spoken lies and scandals against the Jews, lessening them.

Magnified themselves; their persons and exploits.

Against the people of the Lord of hosts; against the only people of the Lord of hosts, who suffered reproach with his people and in them, for Moabites and Ammonites, as others, boasted of their gods above the true God:

Zephaniah 2:11

The Lord will be terrible; or, the Lord, who is to be feared, is against or above them, and will make it appear that he is terrible in his doings.

Unto them; Moabites and Ammonites, and their gods, of whom they gloried.

He will famish; starve; though now their altars are filled with sacrifices, and their bowls run over, as if they designed to make their gods fat; but they shall want their sacrifices and drink offerings, these shall be few or quite cease, and their priests grow lean. There shall be a consumption among them all.

All the gods, idols, heathen gods,

of the earth; of those lands, Dagon, Chemosh, Molech, &c., that are gods no where else but on earth, and among the deceived; or gods of the earth., as sons of the earth, vile, spurious gods.

Men shall worship him; men of that country whose gods are undone, or all men, shall know, own, and worship the God of Israel.

Every one from his place, where he dwelleth, not only at Jerusalem, or in this mount, but every where.

All the isles; either literally, as we now see it fulfilled, or as the Jews interpret isles to be transmarine places. So they wait for his law, as foretold Isa_42:4.

Of the heathen; of all nations in all parts of the world. This is eminently fulfilled by the prevailing of the gospel.

Zephaniah 2:12

The prophet doth not speak of the African Ethiopians, south of Egypt, but of the Arabian Ethiopians, much nearer to Canaan, whose country was called Cusaea, with the addition Ethiopia Cusaea. See Hab_3:7.

Ye shall be slain, punished by war, and your people cut off,

by my sword; Nebuchadnezzar and his Chaldeans, called here God's sword, for God employed and prospered them.

Zephaniah 2:13

And he, the Lord God of Israel, or the Chaldean monarch as God's servant herein,

will stretch out his hand, engage all his power, and use it to the utmost, against the north, i.e. as follows, Assyria, which lay northward of Judea, but more due north from Babylon, if I mistake not.

Destroy Assyria; overthrow that great and ancient kingdom of Assyria. of which more at large in Nahum. Nineveh; chief city of that kingdom. See Nah_1:1. A desolation; most desolate, Nah_3:10-12.

And dry like a wilderness; will turn those well-watered places into dry, thirsty, and barren land, as a wilderness.

Zephaniah 2:14

Nineveh shall be so razed that flocks of cattle shall lie down in the midst of it, as before of the Philistines, Zep_2:6.

All the beasts of the nations; all sorts of beasts which are found in those countries, the tame under the girard of watching shepherds, and wild ones seeking their prey, will attend about those places.

The cormorant and the bittern; birds that are solitary, and delight in desolate places, in reedy fens, where they seek their food, and are looked on as unlucky birds.

Shall lodge in the upper lintels; shall either make their nests there, or seek and choose their lodging there; they shall roost there in the night upon the pillars, or turrets, or pinnacles.

Their voice shall sing in the windows; these doleful creatures shall make a more doleful noise, that shall be all the music to be heard in their desolate windows.

Desolation shall be in the thresholds, the lowest part of their houses; from top to bottom nothing but wastes and ruin; instead of beautiful ladies looking out at windows and doors and singing, now cormorants and bitterns, and their doleful notes.

For he shall uncover the cedar work; or, when the Babylonian hath burnt the houses, or beat down the curious roofs and coverings of cedar, the beauty and the defence of their houses.

Zephaniah 2:15

This is the rejoicing city: we may suppose the prophet, or the Jews, or all passengers, standing still and wondering, nay, upbraiding Nineveh, all mirth and jollity once, but now all sorrow and grief.

That dwelt carelessly; in so great confidence and security, as if it had been impossible she should ever have fallen from her glory.

That said in her heart; persuaded herself into an opinion very ill becoming any but God himself.

There is none beside me; none that can contend with me, that will be so hardy as to attempt against me, none able to overthrow me. Somewhat like Tyre, Eze_28:12, &co.

How is she become a desolation! she thought none was like her in glory, power, and wealth. now there is none like her indeed, but it is for misery and desolations. It may be either the speech of one that laments and wonders at it, or of one that rejoiceth at it.

A place for beasts to lie down in: where palaces for princes stood, now are places for beasts; where nobles dwelt, now do ignoble cattle couch.

Shall hiss and wag his hand; deride their arrogance, and condemn their ungodly pride and security, yet with some pity toward this desolate city.

Zephaniah 3:1 ZEPHANIAH CHAPTER 3

A sharp reproof of Jerusalem for divers sins, Zep_3:1-7. An exhortation to wait for the restoration of Israel Zep_3:8-13; and to rejoice for their salvation by God, Zep_3:14-20.

The prophet showed us Nineveh in ruins for her sins; from this doleful spectacle he brings us to take a prospect of what would come upon Jerusalem, which ere long will be full of woes, because now full of sin.

Filthy; loathsome in her sins, so foul they are, and so abominably acted. A city, that, like an infamous woman, is branded for her impudence in sin. Or, Woe to the great *craw* ! as pointing out the gluttony of Jerusalem literally, and their swallowing the poor who were a prey to the great ones.

Polluted; greatly polluted by this means.

To the oppressing city; or the city foolish and seduced, as a silly dove; so the Hebrew will bear: but our version is to be preferred; it is come to that pass, Jerusalem is a city that doth nothing but oppress, Jer_6:6 **Eze 22.**

Zephaniah 3:2

She obeyed not the voice, of the law, her prophets or her faithful priests, (which were too few, yet some there were.) nor of God, by his mercy and judgments crying loud, warning, inviting, persuading to return.

She received not correction, or instruction, did not learn, would not be instructed; there is a meiosis in the words, she hated instruction, as that wicked one, Psa_50:17 Pro_5:12 **13:18**.

She trusted not in the Lord; put her confidence in Egypt and Asshur, in any carnal refuges, rather than in her God; in her kings, princes, counsellors, warriors, and confederates, &c.

She drew not near to her God; when revolted did not return, when in distress did not seek him, did not draw near with prayer, &c.

She obeyed not the voice, of the law, her prophets or her faithful priests, (which were too few, yet some there were.) nor of God, by his mercy and judgments crying loud, warning, inviting, persuading to return.

She received not correction, or instruction, did not learn, would not be instructed; there is a meiosis in the words, she hated instruction, as that wicked one, Psa_50:17 Pro_5:12 **13:18**.

She trusted not in the Lord; put her confidence in Egypt and Asshur, in any carnal refuges, rather than in her God; in her kings, princes, counsellors, warriors, and confederates, &c.

She drew not near to her God; when revolted did not return, when in distress did not seek him, did not draw near with prayer, &c.

Zephaniah 3:3

Her princes; persons of principal place and authority about the king, chief officers in civil matters. and, which is worse, her own princes, born and bred among them, who should have been most tender and just.

Are roaring lions; which hunt for prey, are ever tearing or threatening, affrighting or devouring. Such the Assyrian princes were, Nah_2:11,12. Such, and no better, are the princes in Judah and Jerusalem.

Her judges; elders of cities, magistrates of lower rank; or it may be the sanhedrim.

Evening wolves; most hungry, insatiable, and cruel, like wolves of the evening whetted with hunger and fasting, Hab_1:8.

They gnaw not the bones till the morrow; they leave nothing to be eat or the morrow, they devour all presently. **Her princes;** persons of principal place and authority about the king, chief officers in civil matters. and, which is worse, her own princes, born and bred among them, who should have been most tender and just.

Are roaring lions; which hunt for prey, are ever tearing or threatening, affrighting or devouring. Such the Assyrian princes were, Nah_2:11,12. Such, and no better, are the princes in Judah and Jerusalem.

Her judges; elders of cities, magistrates of lower rank; or it may be the sanhedrim.

Evening wolves; most hungry, insatiable, and cruel, like wolves of the evening whetted with hunger and fasting, Hab_1:8.

They gnaw not the bones till the morrow; they leave nothing to be eat or the morrow, they devour all presently.

Zephaniah 3:4

Her prophets; by education, profession, and unwarranted practice called so, false prophets; such Zedekiah, and probably Chenaanah, &c., were. Are light; unstable and inconstant, ready to comply with humours which they should have reprov'd, 1Ki_22:13.

Treacherous persons; men of treacheries, whatever pleasing temper they seem to be of, yet still they design treachery; the Hebrew seems to run it higher, treacheries in the abstract.

Her priests, of the house of Levi, of the stock of Aaron,

have polluted the sanctuary; bound by office to keep holy the sanctuary, have defiled it, and all that is holy.

Have done violence to the law; wresting it by perverse interpretation to what sense best serveth a corrupt mind.

Zephaniah 3:5

The just Lord is in the midst thereof: though unjust princes, judges, prophets, and priests do not think so, yet the Lord who is most just is in the midst of them; possibly the sanhedrim; he observeth all, condemneth their violence and injustice, he is sovereign as Lord, and just as Judge. he will not do iniquity; to

him it appertaineth to judge all, therefore the unjust shall be punished as well as the just approved.

Every morning doth he bring his judgment to light; daily he discovereth his displeasure against the wicked, and punisheth them.

He faileth not; lets not one fit season slip to convince and awaken secure sinners, by public and visible punishments, or judgments.

But the unjust knoweth no shame; but the wicked Jews proceed impudently, without shame, and without fear or amendment: there is no hope of better where is no shame for worst of doings, Jer_3:3.

Zephaniah 3:6

I have cut off the nations; of old the Canaanites, lately the ten tribes, later yet the Assyrians and others, have been cut off for their sins.

Their towers; either metaphorically, magistrates and great men, as Zep_1:16; or literally, strong towers built on the angles of walls or palaces.

Are desolate; razed and demolished. I made their streets waste; I overthrew their houses, that there were no streets.

None passeth by; or none walked through them. Their cities, small or great, capital or not capital, are destroyed; taken, plundered, burnt, and ruined.

There is no man; all fled, or slain, or starved, or swept away with pestilence, or carried into captivity, not an inhabitant left in the places.

Zephaniah 3:7

I said; I thought, (speaking as man would,) I concluded what was likely, what I might expect.

Surely thou, O Jerusalem, O Judah, wilt fear me, for the many and great judgments executed upon others in thy sight; thou wilt fear, by sinning still, to provoke me.

Thou wilt receive instruction; wilt learn thy duty, to do it; thy danger, to prevent it; thy sins, to repent of them; thy ways, to amend them.

So their dwelling, houses, villages, Jerusalem,
should not be out off, sacked and burned,

howsoever I punished them; whatever I had done against them, however I had chastised them, had they been bettered, humbled, and amended, I would have spared, not destroyed utterly.

But they rose early; but they grew worse, more eager in the pursuit of their vile courses; as if the day would be too short for their sins, they rise early, and begin betimes.

Corrupted all their doings; designedly and out of set purpose did worse and worse, when smitten they revolted more and more, Isa_1:5.

Zephaniah 3:8

Therefore, since you will not be amended by all, sines you grow worse and worse, wait ye upon me; ye refractory and incorrigible Jews, rulers, and people, attend my resolution, for I am resolved what I will do, and have set a day for it.

Until the day that I rise up to the prey; until I, as an enemy, rise up to destroy first, and next to take the spoil: you by your sins continue to be mine enemies, and I will by my judgments, by the Chaldeans, who shall rise up against you, and destroy and spoil you, show myself in arms against you, as all enemy to you.

My determination my fixed purpose, that which I have unalterably resolved upon.

The nations; all that are subjects to the Chaldean monarchy.

The kingdoms, which are confederate with or tributary to the Chaldeans: these thus gathered, listed, and marshalled in a mighty army,

to pour upon them mine indignation; upon the obstinate, incorrigible, and impious Jews first; (afterwards I will punish Babylon;)

even all my fierce anger, which by their sins they have kindled against themselves.

All the earth, the whole land of Judea and her cities, shall be devoured, consumed as if burnt up,

with the fire of my jealousy; that jealousy wherewith God is jealous for his own glory, for his ordinances and statutes, which Jewish people, princes, and their prophets and their priests had notoriously violated.

Zephaniah 3:9

For then, or, then,

afterwards, i.e. when my judgments have been executed, and have cut off the wicked,

will I turn to the people a pure language; I will give them a pure way of worshipping me, in prayer, praises, and the issue of a purified heart, Eze_11:17-20 **36:26**.

Call upon the name of the Lord; perform all religions service, all religion being expressed thus by calling on the name of the Lord.

To serve him, the Lord their God, not idols, with one consent; with one heart, and according to his own law and will; with one

shoulder shall they bear the yoke of the law, alluding to porters that join shoulder to shoulder in carrying great burdens.

Zephaniah 3:10

From beyond the rivers; the coasts which lie beyond the rivers of India, saith the Chaldee paraphrast, but I doubt whether the captive Jews were carried so far.

Of Ethiopia, in Arabia, bordering on Egypt, whither it is easy to conceive many Jews might betake themselves, who are here called

dispersed, or dispersion, somewhat distinguished from captives.

My suppliants; praying to me, saith one version.

The daughter of my dispersed: this explains who the suppliant is; the praying remnant of the scattered Jews, who had gotten into those parts of Arabia that were coasting along the rivers which divided Ethiopia Cusaea from the rest of Arabia.

Shall bring mine offering; shall return to their land and bring themselves an offering unto the Lord, which was done when Cyrus, in league with these Ethiopians, procured their favour for the dispersed Jews, that they might return to Jerusalem, meet their captive brethren, and offer a gift to God.

Zephaniah 3:11

In that day; when pardoned captives and dispersed ones shall return and serve the Lord with one consent, mourning for their sins, and seeking the Lord.

Not be ashamed, with a shame of reproach and confusion: when sin is pardoned, and sinful hearts are purified, reproachful shame may well cease, Isa_54:4,5.

Thy doings; which are expounded in the following words: the prophet speaks of the sins they formerly committed against the Lord.

Them that rejoice in thy pride; hypocrites, proud formalists, that placed all religion in the gaudy outside; these removed, and those that worship the Lord doing it in sincerity gathered together, the Lord will accept and beautify them.

Thou shalt no more be haughty; thou, O nation of the Jews, formerly full of haughty thoughts of yourselves, your sacrifices, and your privileges; but you shall no more boast, or glory, or vaunt yourselves herein.

Because of my holy mount; either the city, or rather the temple, on which proud hypocrites did bear themselves high formerly, when they lived in notorious sins, and yet cried,

The temple of the Lord, & c., Jer_7:4, with Jer_7:9,10.

Zephaniah 3:12

I will also leave: the Chaldeans had spared none if the Lord had not preserved a remnant; it is he, rather than they, which did leave a remnant.

In the midst of thee; to return and dwell in Judea and Jerusalem.

An afflicted people; or a people of a broken spirit, a meek, humble, spirited people, instead of that proud heart which was

once among them. Poor; not so much in outward respects as poor in spirit, such a people as the Lord can delight in.

They shall trust in the name of the Lord; not in city or temple, but in the Lord, and in his mercy, faithfulness, and power.

Zephaniah 3:13

The remnant of Israel, preserved in captivity and dispersion, purified in the furnace of affliction, and now returned to their own land, shall not do iniquity; shall not commit the sins they formerly committed, not provoke God with their abominations as before; it is not a prediction of a sinless, but of a reformed state; they shall be righteous, and taught of God, no more idolaters.

Nor speak lies; they shall love truth, and speak truth, or, in a larger sense, shall be honest and upright amongst men.

A deceitful tongue; a false accuser or witness, like Doeg, or Jezebel's evidences against Naboth; according to that, Psa_15:2 **24:4.**

For they shall feed; or, they shall feed also, &c.; so it will be a blessing added as a crown of their piety and truth. Or if you read it,

for they shall feed, & c., it gives you a reason why they shall not by frauds and lies, as formerly, sin against one another; they shall have a sufficiency by honest ways, and from God's blessing, and shall not be under any great temptation to dishonesty and lying.

None shall make them afraid: frights made David, Abraham, and others to forget truth; here none should fright them, and they should not fear to speak the truth: their lips pure, Zep_3:9; they trust in the Lord, Zep_3:12; therefore shall not lie. Here is a cluster of spiritual promises with the temporal.

The remnant of Israel, preserved in captivity and dispersion, purified in the furnace of affliction, and now returned to their own land, shall not do iniquity; shall not commit the sins they formerly committed, not provoke God with their abominations as before; it is not a prediction of a sinless, but of a reformed state; they shall be righteous, and taught of God, no more idolaters.

Nor speak lies; they shall love truth, and speak truth, or, in a larger sense, shall be honest and upright amongst men.

A deceitful tongue; a false accuser or witness, like Doeg, or Jezebel's evidences against Naboth; according to that, Psa_15:2 **24:4.**

For they shall feed; or, they shall feed also, &c.; so it will be a blessing added as a crown of their piety and truth. Or if you read it,

for they shall feed, & c., it gives you a reason why they shall not by frauds and lies, as formerly, sin against one another; they shall have a sufficiency by honest ways, and from God's blessing, and shall not be under any great temptation to dishonesty and lying.

None shall make them afraid: frights made David, Abraham, and others to forget truth; here none should fright them, and they should not fear to speak the truth: their lips pure, Zep_3:9; they trust in the Lord, Zep_3:12; therefore shall not lie. Here is a cluster of spiritual promises with the temporal. **The remnant of Israel,** preserved in captivity and dispersion, purified in the furnace of affliction, and now returned to their own land, shall not do iniquity; shall not commit the sins they formerly committed, not provoke God with their abominations as before; it is not a prediction of a sinless, but of a reformed state; they shall be righteous, and taught of God, no more idolaters.

Nor speak lies; they shall love truth, and speak truth, or, in a larger sense, shall be honest and upright amongst men.

A deceitful tongue; a false accuser or witness, like Doeg, or Jezebel's evidences against Naboth; according to that, Psa_15:2 **24:4.**

For they shall feed; or, they shall feed also, &c.; so it will be a blessing added as a crown of their piety and truth. Or if you read it,

for they shall feed, & c., it gives you a reason why they shall not by frauds and lies, as formerly, sin against one another; they shall have a sufficiency by honest ways, and from God's blessing, and shall not be under any great temptation to dishonesty and lying.

None shall make them afraid: frights made David, Abraham, and others to forget truth; here none should fright them, and they should not fear to speak the truth: their lips pure, Zep_3:9; they

trust in the Lord, Zep_3:12; therefore shall not lie. Here is a cluster of spiritual promises with the temporal.

Zephaniah 3:14

For all these mercies the church is enjoined to be thankful, and to rejoice, and it is trebled,

Sing, shout, and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, Israel, and daughter of Jerusalem: the same persons, the same duty, but differently expressed, but the whole heart required in all.

Zephaniah 3:15

The Lord; who kills and makes alive, acquits or condemns, and none can reverse the judgment.

Hath taken away thy judgments; abolished and put an end to thy sufferings, the judgments thy sins brought upon thee; he hath pardoned thy sins and ended thy sorrows.

He hath cast out; cast the Babylonian out of the throne, and placed the Persian in it.

Thine enemy; the Babylonian who held thee captive; and placed in his room Cyrus mine anointed, and thy friend, who shall let thee go free, Ezr_1:1.

The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thus it is evident that the Lord, who is thy King, O Israel, is with thee; that he taketh thy part, is returned to redeem and govern thee.

Thou shalt not see evil any more; no more such great evil as thou hast seen; whilst thy carriage is as becometh thy mercy received, and my presence with thee, thou shalt neither fear nor feel like evils.

Zephaniah 3:16

In that day; the day or time of restitution, when the captivity returned shall be settled in their land.

It shall be said; by prophets, or by friends, congratulating them, or by each to other.

To Jerusalem; inhabitants of Jerusalem, the place being put for the people.

Fear thou not; disquiet not yourselves with fears, though you may apprehend some dangers from Sanballat and Tobiah, &c., though troublous times. as Neh_4:1,2 Da 9:25.

Let not thine hands be slack, in the work of the Lord, building the city and temple, and restoring the worship of God; take heart, O ye returned captives, for God your King is with you.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord; the everlasting One, who changeth not.

Thy God; thine in covenant, never to be forgotten or repealed. Is mighty; can do all he will, can restrain and destroy enemies, can support and defend his own people. *He will save* , from thy fears, and thine enemies' rage.

Will rejoice over thee with joy; will greatly rejoice in thee. Will rest in his love; will take content and satisfaction in this his love. The love he showeth to thee shall be rest to him; not thy loveliness, but his own love shall satisfy him.

Will joy over thee with singing; will show greatest love and joy in most affectionate manner: all expressions borrowed from the entirest love of man toward dearest relations, Psa_103:11,13 Isa 62:5.

Zephaniah 3:18

This promise removes an objection which might be made by dispersed ones: How can we return? I will gather you, saith God.

That are sorrowful for the solemn assembly; mourn in their distance from the solemn worship of God, as David, Psa 42; that are troubled more for want of God's ordinances than for any thing; which three times every year in great solemnity they celebrated, but now for seventy years had wanted them.

Are of thee; these longing mourners are thy children indeed, Israelites in whom is no guile.

The reproach; the taunts of enemies and triumphs over God and religion, such as Psa_42:3,10.

A burden; heaviest burden, or a sword in their bowels.

Zephaniah 3:19

Behold; mark well.

I will undo; I will deal with them, do their work for them, as we say, I will break their power and dissolve their kingdom.

All that afflict thee; Babylonians who afflicted the Jews. and who were undone by Cyrus and his Persians.

I will save her that halteth; who is in great trouble and ready to fall, as Psa_38:16,17; who is under greatest distress, and hath least strength to bear, or get out.

Driven out; by force of the enemy, carried away captives, and scattered into far remote countries.

Get them praise and fame; vindicate them, as a people that are not rejected of their God, as the people of the great God of heaven and earth, as Psa_121:2.

In every land; among all people with whom they dwelt as strangers.

Where they have been put to shame; were scorned and reproached as slaves and abjects, whose God could not, or would not, help them, or had cast them off, and none other would take care of them. But now, gathered together by the Lord, they shall appear to be still his peculiar people and his delight.

Zephaniah 3:20

This verse is a repetition of the promise for the greater assurance of it, and seems to add but little to what was before promised, unless it be the speediness of what God doth for them, and the comprehensiveness of it; he will turn back their captivities, Heb. plural, whether under Manasseh, or Jehoiakim, or Jeconiah, or Zedekiah; all which is confirmed with the broad seal of Heaven,

Thus saith the Lord. Believe, then, and rejoice in it.

HAGGAI

THE ARGUMENT

Haggai is the first prophet that appears in the name of the Lord of hosts, to awaken, reprove, direct, exhort, and encourage both the governor, high priest, and people, returned out of captivity, to the restoring and settling the worship of God, to the rebuilding the temple, whose foundations, together with the altar of burnt-offering, had been laid seventeen or eighteen years ago; but the finishing of the temple prohibited by Cambyses all the time of his being viceroy to his father Cyrus, and during his own reign; and neglected near two years in Darius Hystaspes's time, through the covetousness of many, the coldness of some, and the cowardice of others among the Jews, who were all bent on their own private concerns, and pleaded it was not time to set about the building of God's temple, and who in all probability would have deferred it much longer had they been let alone: now therefore the Lord doth, in zeal for his own glory, and in mercy to his people, send his servant Haggai to awaken them to their duty, which was this, the building the temple, and restoring the pure worship of God. He reproves them for neglecting this; tells them this sin was the cause of the penury and scarcity which afflicted them these fifteen or sixteen years past; assures them that, so soon as ever they begin the work, their ground, their cattle, their vines and olives, should wonderfully increase their store; promiseth God's presence with them, and with it a supply of gold and silver, which are his, and he will, as he did by the bounty of Darius and the contributions of others, bring in to them; and though the external glory of this temple were less than that of the first temple, yet this second temple should exceed the first in glory for so much as their expected, longed-for, and the blessed Messiah should appear in it. All which, as they were weighty arguments in themselves considered, so, through the co-operation of the Spirit of God, they prevailed with his hearers, who set about the work; and when opposed by their enemies, who sent to Darius to solicit him to renew the prohibition, he on the contrary confirms and enlargeth their charter granted by the grand Cyrus, and annexeth severe penalties on all that dare hinder this work; all which particularly,

and at large, are set down in the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. And so in four years' time the temple is finished, the feast of dedication is celebrated, and the final issue answers to the name of the prophet who, sent of God, set it forwards, Haggai, who hath his name from the word that signifieth a feast, as if we should call him Festivus. He closeth all with a close prediction of many and long wars and seditions to come among the Gentiles, to the overthrow of the enemies of the Jews.

HAGGAI CHAPTER 1

The time when Haggai prophesied, #**Hag 1:1**. Haggai reproveth the people's delay in building the temple, #**Hag 1:2-6**. He inciteth them to set about it, #**Hag 1:7-11**. He promiseth them, being forward of themselves, God's assistance, #**Hag 1:12,13**. The work is set forward, #**Hag 1:14,15**.

Ver. 1.

Darius: of this name there were seven, Darius Medus, Hystaspes, Longimanus, Nothus, Ochus, Arsames, Codomanus; one before Cyrus, viz. that Darius which is distinguished from the other by Medus, the Mede; the next Darius was son of Hystaspes, and third king of Persia, (if we leave out Smerdis the cheat, who on Cambyses's death counterfeited the true Smerdis, slain by Cambyses's order, got into the throne, but was discovered and slain at seven months' end,) of whom the text speaketh; unless you can think Joshua high priest through one hundred and forty-four years, and some considerable number of Jews to have lived one hundred and ninety-six years, and the returned captives to have wanted a temple for one hundred and twelve years at least, which incredible things attend them who will have this Darius to be Nothus.

The king; as being the greatest of that time, and by way of eminency above others.

In the sixth month; Elul, answering to part of our August and September.

The word of the Lord; the command or direction what they should do, and reproof for what they had omitted to do.

Haggai: we read nothing of his parentage or country in the Scripture; he doted that thought him an angel.

The prophet; inspired, sent, approved, and assisted of God in his office.

Zerubbabel; whose name speaks either his birth in Babylon, or his interest and power there as some conjecture: probably his birth in Babylon might be ground of trusting him with the government of Judah, to which he had right.

Son of Shealtiel; adoptive son to Shealtiel, being of the royal line, probably he was the chief branch thereof, uncle to him; but by nature, or by generation, son of Pedaiah; or else there were two Zerubbabels, sons of two brothers, Pedaiah and Shealtiel.

Governor of Judah; appointed to this by the Persian king, under whose power the Jews were now fallen, and at whose pleasure governors were placed or displaced over the remnant returned out of Babylon, and once at last settled in the land of Judah.

Joshua; a type of the great Deliverer; one Joshua leads them into Canaan, another restores the temple.

Josedech; whose name did portend good to this people, and bespoke God's righteousness; his father Seraiah was high priest and slain by Nebuchadnezzar.

The high priest, by lineal descent according to the law, chief of power in church matters, as Zerubbabel was chief in civil things: to these the prophet is sent to stir them up to the building of the temple.

Ver. 2.

Thus speaketh, by way of reproof, and to awaken the drowsy Jews; he who knew their heart tells them what they both thought and spoke.

This people, whom mercy preserved in, redeemed out of Babylon, and brought into their land on purpose to build the temple. This people, whom Cyrus by proclamation sent to do this, who seemed to long for a temple when they were in Babylon.

Say; discourse thus among themselves, and discourage all that were forward. The time is not come; the proper season of

rebuilding the house of God seems to be not come, for since the prohibition by Cambyses in the days of Cyrus, and through all the time of Cambyses, and in the first year and part of the second of Darius, we have no commission to do it, but are required not to do any thing in this affair without further order, #Ezr 4:21.

Ver. 3.

Then; when the people were thus sluggish, made excuses, and delayed doing their duty, then at that time came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet: see #Hag 1:1.

Ver. 4.

Is it time? you think it full time to build your own houses, you judge it seasonable enough to lay out much cost on adorning them, what pretence can you make that it is not seasonable to build my house?

For you, Jews, who were by a king (that knew not your God) sent to build my house, you unthankful and forgetful ones.

To dwell; to settle yourselves securely, and for continuance with stateliness.

Ceiled; searched and with cedar wainscot, curiously carved and covered, and as richly adorned as if you were full of treasures.

Houses: it seems to intimate some of them had more than one house, a city and a country house, and whilst God's house lay waste; they thus lavish out their wealth on private worldly conveniences, but grudge the charge on God's house. Can you thus live without a temple, an altar, a sacrifice, and yet cannot live without stately houses? Do you owe so much to yourselves, and so little to your God? so much to your bodies, so little to your souls?

Lie waste; in its rubbish, or in bare, naked foundations without any superstructure.

Ver. 5.

Now therefore; or,

And now, or, *But now*, Heb.; it is time for you to consider, to set your heart to that I propose.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the great God speaks, hearken therefore.

Consider your ways; ponder well the course you have taken and the success of it, what you have designed, how you have succeeded, what care, and what disappointment, what labour, and how fruitless your labour hath been; consider how you have carried it toward God, and how God hath carried it toward you.

Ver. 6.

The prophet doth help them, or directs them what in particular they ought to consider, and so debateth it with them: Your labour, care, and charge hath been great in ploughing and sowing, that you are sensible of; but what harvest have you had? O, your barns have been far from full, you have reaped and brought in little; this is evident to all.

Ye eat, you feed on the fruit of your labour and product of the earth,

but ye have not enough; but what you eat doth not nourish you, it doth not suffice; you are hungry and meagre still.

Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; the like emptiness and unprofitableness in your drink; your water quencheth not your thirst, your wine does not refresh your heart or revive your spirit; or you dare not eat or drink sufficiently for fear you should not have enough, lest your store should fail you.

Ye clothe you, but there is none warm; your wool and flax is not what it used to be, sufficient to defend you from the cold, it will not warm you.

He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes; who labours or trades to gain and lay up loseth all his labour, it runs from him as money put into a purse or pocket that hath no bottom, that cannot hold it. This fruitless labour you will soon discern, if you consider your ways: and what think you may be the cause of this?

Ver. 7.

See **#Hag 1:5**. Debate it with yourselves, both as to what is already past, and what will be for time to come; it hath not been a

chance, or an evil which none can tell whence it proceeds, it is from your neglect of God, his temple and worship.

Ver. 8.

Go up, delay no longer, speed ye up to the mountain; Moriah, or Zion, better Lebanon, where best and greatest store of cedars were to be had, whence came the goodly cedars which built Solomon's temple, #1Ki 5:14,15, and where they had (before the building was forbidden) furnished themselves, #Ezr 3:7.

Bring wood; provide all sorts of lumber for this future edifice.

Build; go on with the work, the foundation whereof hath been laid some years, but the superstructure omitted.

The house of God, the holy temple.

I will take pleasure in it: this a very gracious promise revived, an assurance that God will dwell in it, and afford his presence there; I will meet you there, and there I will bless you, there I will accept your offerings, hear your prayers, forgive your sins, and satisfy you with the fatness of my house: much the same promise with that, #1Ki 8:29 9:3.

I will be glorified; show my majesty, and account myself glorified by you also.

Ver. 9.

Ye, O Jews, you toiled, and were at great cost, as #Hag 1:6.

Looked for much; expected, hoped, promised yourselves a great increase, a plentiful harvest.

And, lo, it came to little; but you saw, discerned, and were sensible that it answered not expectation; all dwindled into a very little, you were losers by all, went backward still.

I did blow upon it: had your little been as the righteous man's little, you might have lived on it, and rejoiced in it; but it had not such a blessing upon it; it was blasted, and so was weak, and empty, and heartless, it profited little.

Because of mine house that is waste; all this curse on your estate and labour was for your ungodly neglect of my house, leaving it waste.

Ye run; did with eagerness carry on your own particular buildings, spared not care or cost for them; you stir not a foot about my house, you run with greatest earnestness about your own.

Every man to his own house, domestic affairs and concerns, in which not one or two, or some few, but every one is culpable, scarce any free from this fault.

Ver. 10.

Therefore; for your great intolerable neglect of God, his house and worship.

The heaven, Heb. *heavens.* is stayed; shut up, sealed, prohibited; God, whose they are, hath forbidden them, they drop not one pearl of dew; and the earth must be barren, when dry without the fructifying influences of heaven.

Ver. 11.

This verse is a particular narrative of what was more generally expressed in the former verse, and all things mentioned herein are very plain.

I, your God whom you neglected, called for; commanded or willed, which is call powerful enough to bring together any of his armed soldiers, to punish rebellious and contumacious sinners.

Upon the land; either the whole land, or, in distinction to mountains. the lower grounds and valleys.

Upon the mountains; which in Canaan were fruitful in pasturage, and rich in vines, and olives, and corn; all which, for want of rain, dried up and withered, languished and came to nothing; so the condition of these people was very desolate, a just punishment for a temple desolate by their negligence.

Upon men; the very blood, humours, and constitutions of men were strangely changed hereby, and many diseases afflicted them.

Upon cattle; murrain, leanness, and death among the brute beasts.

Upon all the labour of the hands; whatever man's industry planted, as trees and plants, were under this curse, and languished, died, and were burnt up.

Ver. 12.

Then; so soon as they heard this convincing and awakening sermon.

Shealtiel; who is called *Salathiel*, #1Ch 3:17 Mt 1:12.

Joshua the son of Josedech: see #Hag 1:1.

The high priest; the twenty-fourth from Aaron, as some reckon, (Alsted. Chron.,) but the first after the captivity.

With all; either none were deaf to the Lord's reproof and counsel, or else none durst appear so, when the chief rulers in state and church were so forward in obeying the prophet.

The people; the common people, the meaner sort.

Obedied the voice of the Lord; acknowledged that it was the sovereign Lord who spake, who ought to be obeyed, because he is the Lord.

Their God; and therefore they ought to do his will, that they might receive the blessings which he, as their God, had promised to them. As God made this an argument to obedience, so do these now; We are thy people, thou art our God.

The words of Haggai: this interprets the former, the voice of the Lord was the words of Haggai, he added nothing of his own to them.

As the Lord their God had sent him; according to all for which the Lord had sent and commissioned him, or particularly in all that concerned the speedy building of the temple.

The people did fear before the Lord: this speaks the right religious frame of heart in this people at this time.

Ver. 13.

Then; when the people showed their obedience, and the willingness of their minds, then God encourageth them by his prophet.

Messenger; legate or envoy, the Hebrew word signifieth also an angel; but this is not surf, clout to prove their opinion, who dream that Haggai was not a man, but an angel in the form of a man; the word here used (arising from a word that signifieth to send, and

paraphrased by a word that primarily signifieth to send as messengers are sent) doth speak an angel from his office and work, as he ministereth before the Lord, and runneth swiftly on his errand; it speaketh not the nature or essence of angels, as they are spirits. The French version (which I use, printed at Rochelle, 1616) reads it, like ours, ambassador. So Haggai was God's messenger or ambassador to his people; no angel.

In the Lord's message; as becometh an ambassador. in the words of his master, so Haggai delivered the Lord's message.

Unto the people; not excluding the governors; but the people are only mentioned, for that the prophet spake to the whole assembly, or because the Lord would encourage them most, who most needed encouragement.

I am with you; a great promise, and which contains all they can need or desire; it insureth God's presence always with them, and his assistance always to them, and his blessing always upon them. He will be always for, as well as always with them, and then Tatnai, Shethar-bozhal, Sanballat, and all other conspirators with them, shall not prevail to hinder the work. Such a promise as this, see #Ex 3:12 4:11-13 Mt 28:20 Ro 8:31 2Co 12:9.

Saith the Lord: this solemn attestation addeth weight to the promise.

Ver. 14.

The Lord stirred up: this is the first notable effect of God's presence with them, a sensible performance of his promise. God inclined their minds, fixed their resolutions, and inspired them with courage for this work; whereas the stoutest of them before had no mind to set on this work, now the weakest are forward to it, and bold in it.

The spirit; the heart, mind, or inclination.

Shealtiel: see #Hag 1:12.

Governor: see #Hag 1:1,

Josedech: see #Hag 1:1,12.

The remnant: see #Hag 1:12.

They came, immediately, without delay, and unanimously, without any visible dissent.

Did work; every one set their hands to it in such manner as was fit for them; governors did oversee, direct, and encourage the workmen; artificers framed and prepared, and the people all laboured. *In the house*; which was now to be built upon the old foundations, laid some seventeen years before, when Cyrus gave the Jews leave to return and build their city and temple.

The Lord of hosts; by which name he delights to be known among the returned captives; and it was a name best suited to their present state, compassed on all hands with enemies, and in perpetual danger by them.

Their God: see #Hab 1:12.

Ver. 15.

It appeareth then that Zerubbabel and Joshua, with the people, did resolve on the matter quickly; for in three weeks and three days they are at the work, as is evident; on the first day Haggai preached, #Hag 1:1, on the twenty-fourth day of the month the people are at work, #Hag 1:15.

Darius: see #Hag 1:1. Now this Darius was not Darius Nothus, but Darius Hystaspes, as will appear by considering well the following scheme of years, from the captivity to the particular years of each of these two Dariuses. Suppose we therefore the computation of these years, according to either of these schemes, it will appear that there is no likelihood this Darius in the text should be Darius Nothus.

| | Helvicus. | Usher. |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Captivity | 3350 | 3398. |
| Temple burnt | 3360 | 3416. |
| Cyrus's decree | 3420 | 3468. |
| The decree of Darius, Nothus | 3529 Hystaspes | 3485. |

This latter account begins the captivity at the fourth year of Jehoiakim. the former begins it at the first of Jeconiah's reign, as Ezekiel also doth, #Eze 1:2 40:1. Hence that difference which is

in the account of the years between the beginning of the captivity and the burning of the temple; the former account makes it eleven years, the latter makes it eighteen, for it begins seven years sooner. In what follows, we shall find both agreeing well enough to clear the unlikelihood of Darius Nothus being the king intended here.

Both accounts make the captivity to end in the seventieth year, according to the Scripture. But now the former account makes it one hundred and nine years between Cyrus's decree and Darius's decree; all which time the temple by this account lay desolate, without a prophet to stir them up to their duty of building the temple. Now is this probable? can it be reasonably supposed that the temple should so long lie waste after they were sent out of Babylon purposely to build it? or that they should be so long in that condition without a prophet? But now the latter account reckons seventeen years between Cyrus's and Darius's decree for building the temple, a space of time easily conceived likely to pass while the Jews did not build; nay, were forbidden by Cambyses, (in Scripture called Artaxerxes,) viceroy to his father Cyrus, (engaged in foreign wars,) all the time Cyrus lived after he gave out the decree, which some make more, some less, but those who make the likeliest guess, for aught I know, make it five years. Whether Cyrus, taken up with these wars, did know of this prohibition, or thought not good to take it off till he returned conqueror, I know not; but he died and left this bar on the work, which continued all Cambyses's reign, and unto the second year of his successor Darius Hystaspes. Now if this were seventeen the most, some say but fifteen, others but twelve years, it is very probable, whereas one hundred and nine years is utterly improbable. Besides this, let us view what age those many or few were of, by these different accounts, who lived to see the temple re-edified. If in Darius Nothus's time, they could be no less than one hundred and eighty-five, allowing them to be sixteen at the burning of the temple, thus; sixteen when the temple was burnt, thence sixty to Cyrus's decree, and thence one hundred and nine to Darius Nothus's decree. But by the latter account their age amounts but to ninety-five years, which appears thus; sixteen at the time the temple was burnt, thence sixty to Cyrus's decree, thence seventeen to Darius Hystaspes's decree; in all ninety-five,

which though a great age, yet not improbable at that time, though the other (one hundred and eighty-five) be improbable. Besides, how few through one hundred and sixty-nine years can distinctly remember what they saw and took notice of at sixteen, or could make that judgment of the disproportion between the two temples! **#Hag 2:3**. Or can it be supposed that Zecariaiah **Zec 1:12**) would have accounted but seventy years' desolation, when he might have more than doubled the years, and have reckoned one hundred and sixty-nine years? would not the argument thus have been more moving?

HAGGAI CHAPTER 2

Haggai encourageth the people to the work, by promise of greater glory to the second temple than was in the first, **#Hag 2:1-9**. Under the type of things holy and unclean he showeth that their sins had kept back God's blessings, which he promiseth them from that time, **#Hag 2:10-19**. God's promise to Zerubbabel, **#Hag 2:20-23**.

Ver. 1.

The seventh month, which the Hebrews called Tisri, and Ethanim, and it answers to part of our September and to part of October.

The one and twentieth day; some seven weeks after the first, mentioned in the first chapter, and about one month after they began to build, or at least prepared for building the temple.

Came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai: see **#Hag 1:1**.

Ver. 2.

Speak now; once again acquaint them with what I now impart for their encouragement.

To Zerubbabel, &c.: see **#Hag 1:1,12**.

Ver. 3.

Who is left among you? there are surely some that are of that age as to have seen the temple which our father's sins, God's just displeasure, and the Chaldean malice burnt; who are they? and where may they be found? This question implieth there were such,

and by **#Ezr 3:12,13** it appears there were many, for the cries and sobs of them equalled the shouts of the younger, who rejoiced to see the foundations of the second house laid.

That saw; took notice of it then, and remember it now, that were of such age and knowledge as to remember what was standing in its glory one hundred and fifty years ago, if some conjecture aright, but, what is nearer to truth, who remember some fourscore years past, who are about one hundred years of age.

This house; the house of God, the temple built by Solomon.

In her first glory; in the stately structure of it, in the rich adornings of it, in the unparalleled skill and curiosity of its workmanship, when it was the glory of the world.

How do ye see it now? do you see the same glorious structure going forward? have you expectation of one equal to the former temple? You cannot but recall the former to mind, and make your judgment of this by that.

Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? do you not judge this second nothing comparable with the first? you are ready to say, (in proverbial speech,) It is nothing to it.

Ver. 4.

In this juncture, though old men weep for the disproportion of the two temples, yet now be strong; be of good courage yourselves, O Zerubbabel, and thou, O Joshua, and encourage others by your example, animate each other, that all the people of the land may take heart with you.

And work; forthwith set about the building of the temple.

For I am with you, both to defend you from enemies, to supply you with necessaries, to bless and accept you: see **#Hag 1:1**.

Ver. 5.

The word; either the word of promise to give them his presence, and to carry them through all opposition, or, the Word, the Son of God, promised to them and us; so it refers to Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

That I covenanted with you; in solemnest manner reduced to the form and model of a covenant, that it might be sure and firm to

you, as to your fathers, in whose time I made this covenant, and with you in them.

When ye came out of Egypt; when I brought you out of Egypt, the house of bondage.

My spirit, of strength and courage, of wisdom and understanding, of zeal and fervency, to carry you through this work, remaineth among you; still doth dwell in you, shall be continued to you, and give direction and success.

Fear ye not; let no discouraging surmises settle in your mind or weaken your hands. There were as many improbabilities lay in bar to your getting out of Egypt, yet my word, covenant, and Spirit overcame all; fear not therefore, I am the same, and with you, as with your father's.

Ver. 6.

Yet once; after many repetitions and confirmations of the new covenant, one more repetition, and but one more, rests to be made.

It is a little while; comparatively it was little; though five hundred and seventeen years from the second of Darius Hystaspes to the incarnation of Christ, a long time to us, who are short-lived, and short-sighted, but a little time compared with that between the first promise to Adam and Christ's coming; or take any other shorter period, as between Abraham or David and Christ, this last period is short, a little while.

I will shake; whether it be metaphorical or literal, it was verified at the time of Christ's coming into the world. After the return of the captivity, what with the commotions among the Grecians, Persians, and Romans, which began soon after this time, (the prophet points at this,) it was metaphorically fulfilled, all states were shaken either with invasions from abroad, or intestine dissensions among themselves: literally it was fulfilled by prodigies, and earthquakes, &c., as some have observed and recounted, at the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

The heavens; either states and governments of the world, or church affairs, which in Scripture are called the heavens; or the material heavens, and the firmament.

The earth, which, either figuratively or literally taken, will agree well with the text, and the history of times.

The sea; one part of that which is called earth, this lower globe.

The dry land, the other part of this inferior world; and both may, as former words, be literally or figuratively taken, and which better I do not undertake to determine.

Ver. 7.

I will shake all nations; which was literally fulfilled in the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by the Grecians, in the civil wars and succeeding troubles among Alexander's successors, the growth of the Roman power by the subduing their neighbours, and their dissensions and homebred wars, all hushed by Augustus a little before Christ's birth. These convulsions began a little after this prophecy, and continued long, in which the Jews, under the Maccabees, had their share.

The Desire of all nations shall come; Christ, the most desirable, because the most helpful to all nations, which some proselytes in all ages did come to the knowledge of, and did earnestly desire; and who was desired by all that knew their own misery. and his sufficiency to save them, who was to be the light of the Gentiles as well as the glory of his people Israel. The Messiah's coming (the Jews do own) is foretold in this text, yet will they not see how this

yet a little while is long since past, and the true Messiah long since come.

I will fill this house, which you now build, this second temple. The first had a fulness of glory in its magnificent structure, rich ornaments, and costly sacrifices, but this was a worldly glory; that which is here promised is a heavenly glory from the presence of Christ in it. He that was the brightness of his Father's glory, who is the glory of the church, appeareth in this second temple.

With glory, of my presence, preaching, healing, and comforting, saith the Messiah, the King of glory, who entered these everlasting doors, **#Ps 24:7,8**. This was before the desolation of this temple by the Romans, a demonstration that the Messiah

should come whilst this second temple stood. But now the hardened Jew seeks to evade this text.

Saith the Lord of hosts: this is a solemn sealing the certainty of the thing in this prophet, and Zechariah, and Malachi, who style him Lord of hosts near a hundred times.

Ver. 8.

The right as indisputable, the treasures of both as full and large, doubt not therefore but I will give enough to build this house; and I could beautify it with these as much as the first temple, but I intend a greater glory. I am the Proprietor, others but trustees; I have the full disposal of all.

Ver. 9.

The glory, which God intends to put upon this temple. Solomon. and a rich people, with incredible spoils taken from conquered nations, gave a glory to the first house, but God himself will give the glory of this house.

This latter house, which poor captives and feudatory governors do build, this second temple: the prophet speaks of it as if it were already a house, whereas it was now to be built. What God accounts a glory, must be somewhat better than silver and gold.

Greater than of the former; more truly glory, and in higher degrees; the least of Christ is greater glory than all the magnificence of Solomon. There were no more but two houses built by God's appointment, into the latter of which the Messiah was personally to come, as **#Mal 3:1**: therefore he came before that latter temple was destroyed, that is, 1684 years ago, when at two months old he was presented in the temple, embraced and confessed by Simeon, some seventy years before the temple was burnt by the Romans.

In this place; in my house, type of Christ, and who is the glory of it.

Will I give peace; a spiritual, internal, and heavenly peace, in pardoning guilt and destroying sin, which displeaseth God, and disquieteth man himself. Christ made peace on his cross, preached or published it to the world, and gives it to them by the power of his Spirit.

Saith the Lord of hosts; solemnly avowed by the Lord of hosts, who cannot deceive, or be deceived.

Ver. 10.

This tenth verse is an introduction to the fourth solemn discourse or sermon the prophet makes to this people, and there is nothing difficult in it but what hath been opened already.

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month; two months and two days after the third sermon, **#Hag 2:2.**

The ninth month, Heb. *Casleu*; part of our November and December. *Darius*; which Darius this was, see **#Hag 1:1,15.** Haggai: see **#Hag 1 3.**

Ver. 11.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: the prophet comes with his double parable, or problem, but not of his own head, but in the name of the Lord of hosts.

Ask; consult with, desire the solution of the following case.

The priests; whose office bound them to study the law, and to answer all cases of conscience, their lips should retain knowledge, **#Mal 2:7.**

Concerning the law; what the law saith in the case; not what the church, but what the Scripture saith.

Ver. 12.

If one, any one, bear, carry away from the altar, or the priest's hands,

holy flesh, part of the sacrifice, legally and ceremonially sanctified, or made holy by the altar on which the whole was sanctified, of which a part is supposed to be carried away

in the skirt of his garment, in the lap of his garment, or in any other cloth or napkin, and this cloth touch any common thing,

as bread, &c., shall that common thing by such contact become legally or ceremonially holy?

The priests answered: who these priests were is not mentioned, but it is likely that there were some among the people who did by the prophet's persuasion go and propose the case, and they

received the answer as here in the negative, for neither mediate nor yet immediate touch of holy things could make common things or unholy persons holy.

Ver. 13.

Now the second case is proposed for resolution, &c.

If one that is unclean; ceremonially or legally polluted, and unclean.

By a dead body; for such touch, though at unawares, did pollute, #Nu 19:13.

Touch any of these; bread or pottage, wine, or oil, or meat.

Shall it be unclean? shall that which the unclean (by touch of the dead) doth touch become unclean, or no? Though a mediate touch of what is holy will not make holy, yet will not a mediate touch of what is polluted defile whatsoever it toucheth?

It shall be unclean; it is resolved affirmatively, It shall be polluted.

Ver. 14.

Now is the case applied. As common things touched by holy things are not sanctified, and as polluted persons touching what is clean pollute it; as holy things did not by touch and bodily application make him legally holy who was common, but a polluted person made all he touched and handled unclean; so unsanctified and polluted Jews polluted God's ordinances, while the outward performing of legal and ceremonial duties, such as bringing, offering, eating, dragging about their legal sacrifices, left them as unholy in themselves and as unacceptable to God as they were before. Somewhat more then is to be done. The soul is first to be purified, that they and we may offer up a pure offering.

So is the people; the body of the Jews, or the most part of them.

So is this nation: this ingeminateth the same thing, to intimate to us how God resenteth it, and how we should be affected with it.

Before me; in God's account, or in his sight, who seeth indeed what men are, and what their actions are.

So is every work of their hands; whatever they do in sacred or civil matters, they make a shift to pollute all by polluted hands, by leprous touches.

That which they offer there, what they do bring to the altar with impure hearts and hands, is more polluted by them than sanctified by the altar.

Is unclean; really impure; though it seem externally clean and holy, it is unsuitable to the purity of a holy God. In sanctified actions all is spoiled by unsanctified hearts. Thence it is that uncleanness is derived on their best works, and consecrated rites do not, cannot sanctify profane spirits.

Ver. 15.

And now; furthermore consider.

I pray you: he affectionately entreats them to observe.

From this day; this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, #**Hag 2:10**. And upward, through past years; trace year after year, and your successes and disappointments in them, observe all years past before you would set upon the rebuilding of the temple after you had intermitted it; some years passed, ten, or fifteen, or twenty, or forty, (or more say some,) between your surceasing from the work and beginning to rebuild.

Before a stone was laid upon a stone; the prophet meaneth either before they began to lay one stone upon another in the foundation laid in Cyrus's time, or before they began to lay the foundation of the walls of the courts and outward edifices.

In the temple; either strictly taken for the house of God, or more largely for the rest of the buildings about the house: this tacitly reproves their sloth; it was the temple they neglected, which they did long for in Babylon.

Of the Lord; so much the greater their sin, for that it was the Lord's temple was slighted.

Ver. 16.

Since those days; all that while the temple lay neglected, and you were contented with maimed and half worship, men were disappointed half in half.

When one came to a heap, which he expected would prove twenty measures, ephahs, or bushels, or what other measure you please,

there were but ten; it proved but half your hopes; thus your corn failed: but your oil much more failed, and you found but two where you expected five: this barrenness you cannot be ignorant of.

Ver. 17.

I smote; my hand was visible in your losses, scarcity, and disappointments.

You; the persons put for their labours, their corn, vines, and olives.

With blasting; burning and scorching winds, that blasted all.

With mildew; with too much clammy moisture, that like glue cleaves to fruits, and turns to a corrupting of them.

With hail; which in these colder countries many times by its violence destroys corn, fruits, and trees, but in those countries doth it oftener. Now here was in these somewhat more of the hand of God, and so the punishment was, as more grievous, so more visible.

All the labours; in your ploughing and sowing for harvest, in planting of olives and vines for a vintage.

You turned not to me; you did not see my hand, though you felt it, you did not repent of your sinful neglect of me, my worship, and temple, nor thought of building my house.

Saith the Lord; this attested with God's own hand for witness hereto.

Ver. 18.

See **#Hag 2:15**. Make your observation from the day when you began to build on the old foundation laid many years ago in the time of Cyrus.

Consider it; let that be the precise day from which you begin your reckoning. By this the prophet excites them to believe and wait, since he doth in the name of the Lord so expressly promise a

blessing, and tells them when it shall begin to come unto them, and would have them observe how truly he speaks.

Ver. 19.

Your seed for the next harvest is yet in your barns, unsown, and no one can make any conjecture yet, whether next year's increase shall be great and blessed, or whether it shall be blasted and little; I do not speak, saith Haggai, on conjecture, but in the name of the Lord foretell and promise you, that it shall be a plentiful harvest to you. Nor have your fruit trees yet put forth, no sign yet appears what vintage you shall have, what store of wine, oil, figs, and pomegranates, which are your choice and rich fruits; but in the word of God I tell you, you shall be blessed in them all, and have a large produce, a joyful vintage.

From this day: see #Hag 2:10,15.

I will bless you, in all your labour; as before you were blasted in all because you neglected, so now you shall be blessed in all because you diligently build, the temple of the Lord.

Ver. 20.

See #Hag 2:10,15.

Ver. 21.

Speak my word, and in my name, saith the Lord.

To Zerubbabel governor of Judah: see #Hag 1:1,12.

I will shake the heavens and the earth: see #Hag 2:6.

Ver. 22.

I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms: now Babylonians are subjected to the Persian power, and this standeth on the strength of many kingdoms, and seems to be one throne secured by all the power of the known world, and can hardly be hoped to be hereafter better than an enemy and opposer of the Jews, and their restoring of the worship of God: for comfort in this case here is foretold God's overthrowing them, in case they oppose.

I will destroy the strength: this seems an explaining of the former, and a confirming it too. Though the Gentiles of many kingdoms united in all their strength, set to hinder this work, this shall succeed so contrary to their expectation, that not you, but

they shall find destruction as the end thereof; which was verified in the successive ruin of the Persian, Grecian, and Syrian kingdoms, all which oppressed the church, and were destroyed for it.

Every one by the sword of his brother: this passage foreshows that God will, by suffering civil wars to arise among these nations, ruin them by themselves, as in truth they did: now whilst those commotions and overthrows perplex and hurt the Jews, yet they were an occasion sometimes of some respite to them; their enemies were engaged on other designs, and could not mind mischief to the Jews.

Ver. 23.

In that day; during those days of troubles, wars, and destruction, and particularly towards the end of them. **I will take thee;** advance, honour, defend, and own. O Zerubbabel: personally understood it respecteth the beginning of those days. Politically understood, it refers to all those times in which God promiseth he would, and indeed did, preserve, guide, and honour such governors of his people, who were as Zerubbabel was; somewhat of which promise and performance you may observe in the times succeeding unto, and through, the Maccabees' times. Typically this refers to Christ, and the setting up of his kingdom, shadowed out by the government of Zerubbabel. My servant: the style changed seems to point to him who was God's most beloved servant, **#Isa 42:1 52:13**. The son of Shealtiel, who was one of the progenitors of the Messiah, **#Mt 1:12 Lu 3:27**. Will make thee as a signet: which is very highly valued, carefully kept, and used to confirm and ratify gifts, edicts, and patents, **#Da 6:17**. So shall the antitypical Zerubbabel, the Messiah, be advanced, loved, and inviolably preserved King, and supreme over his church, for he is the chosen One, the beloved One, in whom God was well pleased, as the Chaldee paraphrast, and **#Mt 3:17**.

ZECHARIAH

THE ARGUMENT

Zechariah is the second prophet who cometh from God to the returned captives, and his errand to them was both to second Haggai's exhortations, and to reveal more fully than he doth all the future revolutions and events; to the final desolation of Jerusalem and the second temple by the Romans, and the rejection of the Jews for their sins against all the mercies of their God, and for their rejecting and murdering of the Messiah; who, rejected of the Jews, taketh in the Gentiles, and establisheth his church amongst them; which is revealed unto Zechariah, and communicated to the Jews by him; with a declaration of the future ruin of the Persian kingdom by the Grecians, and also of the wars of the Seleucidae and Lagidae, and their overthrow by the Romans; during the series of which times, the Jews shall be grown numerous, wealthy, and powerful, and, so long as they keep their covenant with God, shall do wonderful things, and be eminently owned of God, and be either wonderfully secured amidst these troubles, or more wonderfully victorious over those that trouble them. And indeed what Zechariah foretold, or promised to them, was in its time made good amongst them; his predictions were punctually fulfilled; if the promises were not, it was because the Jews by their sins cut themselves off from the promises, which may be observed in those intervals of times between Zechariah's prophesying and the coming of the Messiah. Now the first interval was above two hundred years, to the death of Alexander the Great; during which time the Jews enjoyed the common peace with the subjects of the Persian empire, and the particular favour of Alexander the conqueror during his life. These years were years of growth to the Jews. The next interval, through the wars of Alexander's divided captains, and between the Seleucidae and the Lagidae, was an interval of some great trouble, and yet of greater preservation to the Jews. The next interval is that of the Maccabees, during which those victories were gotten which do almost exceed our belief. But whilst thus times were changed, the Jews continued much the same, unthankful to God, cold in religion, and added to their sins daily; till at last God delivered them into the hands of the Romans,

whose general, Pompey the Great, deposed Hyrcanus from the throne, and restored the high priesthood to him. From henceforth the Jews' sins and miseries grow together, till that was accomplished, Zec_14:2, the city Jerusalem taken, the houses rifled, &c. Thus by various intermixture of providences, God did try the Jews, whether they would, as became his people, repent of former sins, amend their future doings, believe his promises, and obey his precepts, that he might bless them; so should all the good foretold by this prophet have crowned them. But if they failed (as they did) in those points of duty, then all the evil threatened should (as it did) overtake them, and, as Zechariah foretold, continue on them, as it doth to this day. This prophecy then contains the revolutions of the Jews, and the empires of Persia and Greece, and the Romans; in whose times the Jews, by killing the Lord of life, filled up their measure, and by whose hands God punished them, destroying their polity, razing their city, burning their temple, and captivating the people, which lasteth to this day. The better to represent all these at once to your view, take this following scheme.

Zechariah Doth

1. Exhort to present repentance and reformation, chaps. 1, 2, 7, 8
2. Promise
 - A. Present blessings, chap, 1, 2, 8:9-15
 - B. Future Mercy, and that
 1. Under Persian government, Zec_8:3-7
 2. Alexander and the Grecians, Zec_9:9
 3. In the Maccabees' times
3. Encourage
 - A. Joshua, Zec. iii
 - B. Zerubbabel, chap iv
4. Threaten
 - A. The enemies of the Jews, chap i.21; ii:9, ix:1-8, 12:1-4,9
 - B. The sinful and impenitent Jews, chap iv; xi:1; xiv:1,2
5. Foretell
 - A. The Jews' rejecting him, Zec. xi:10-12, &c
 - B. Gods'
 1. Avenging the sin on the Jews, chap 14:1,2
 2. Calling the Gentiles, Zec. viii:20-23; xii:10, iii:8,9; vi:12,13

3. Continued protection of the church of Christ among the Gentiles, chap 14:3, to end

All which, either in dark, yet significant, types or emblems or else in plain and easily intelligible words, is represented to us by this prophet.

Zechariah 1:1

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 1

Zechariah exhorteth to repentance, *Zec_1:1-6*. His vision of the horses and their angelic riders, *Zec_1:7-11*. At the prayer of the angel comfortable promises are made to Jerusalem, *Zec_1:12-17*. The vision of the four horns, and the four carpenters, *Zec_1:18-21*.

In the eighth month; called both Marchesvan and Bul by the Hebrews, and answers to part of our October and November. Two months after Haggai began to encourage the Jews to build the temple.

Darius; son of Hystaspes, and the third Persian monarch: see *Hag_1:1*; and again *Zec_1:15*, at large.

Came the word of the Lord: here is his warrant and Divine call, the Lord communicated to him what he was to communicate to, others.

Zechariah: his name bespeaks him a remembrancer of God, or it may speak God remembering him, and the rest of this people.

The son; the Jew called the descendants in right line sons, though they were grandsons, or great-grandsons; and in this sense some say Zechariah is the son of Baruch, and the son of Iddo. This Zechariah is not he that is mentioned *2Ch_24:20*, this is too early by many years; nor is this Zechariah the father of John Baptist, this is as much too late; but most likely it is that Zechariah whom the Jews slew between the temple and the altar, *Mat_23:35*.

Berechiah: this name is expressly mentioned **Mt 23**, and his time exactly suits the time pointed at by the evangelist.

Iddo: one of this name you have *2Ch_9:29*, but this is too old to be this in the text, for there will be found (as Wolphius in Ezram

notes) four hundred and fifty years' distance between Iddo the seer and this Iddo mentioned in the text.

The prophet; whether Zechariah or Iddo I determine not.

Zechariah 1:2

The Lord, the holy, the mighty One, your God, the just Governor of the world, hath been sore displeased; so long provoked, that his displeasure at last enkindled within his breast, and broke out into that flame which hath consumed your land, city, and temple.

With your fathers; all that were progenitors, forefathers to the returned captives, from their entrance into Canaan, but especially since the apostacy in Jeroboam's time; for many hundred years your predecessors have provoked God by their notorious sins, even to the days of their captivity.

Zechariah 1:3

Therefore, Heb.

And. Say; command and require.

Unto them of the captivity who are returned to their own land.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; in my name, by the authority I have over them as Lord of hosts, require they hear and obey.

Turn ye unto me; repent ye of all your sins, leave them, set your hearts on my law to obey it, on my worship to give me it, on my temple to re-edify it.

Saith the Lord of hosts; who can punish your refusal, who can protect you in your return, and reward your obedience.

I will turn unto you, with blessings, with all blessings, which my presence brings to a repenting people. It was woe with you, and your fathers, when I departed from them, but it shall be as well with them when I return unto them.

Saith the Lord of hosts; that you may be assured hereof, I promise it to you, and will be engaged to perform, as Lord of hosts, as having all things at my disposal.

Zechariah 1:4

Be ye; you who have seen the sorrows of a long captivity, who are wonderfully brought back, who are under the teachings of rod and staff.

The former prophets; all the former prophets, 2Ch_36:15,16.

Cried; preached earnestly, frequently, and compassionately.

Turn ye now from your evil ways; now, to-day, yet before it is too late, O turn from vicious, sinful courses and ways; from your atheism, idolatry, murders, oppressions, and adulteries.

And from your evil doings: it is repeated that it might be more impressive upon them. The prophets importunately entreated them to cease from evil, Isa_1:16 **31:6** Jer_3:12 Eze_18:30 Hos_14:1.

They did not hear; they did not because they would not, they regarded not what I said by my prophets, neither could they be persuaded to it.

Nor hearken unto me: this obstinate disobedience is twice together charged on them, to make their sin appear in its greatness.

Zechariah 1:5

Your fathers, where are they? but where are your disobedient fathers? Are they not buried in a strange land? Did they not die of those diseases? Were they not consumed with famine and the sword, as was menaced against them?

And the prophets: some apply this to the false prophets who promised peace, but where are they now? But it is better understood of the true prophets, who died as others; they do not nor must live always to warn you.

Zechariah 1:6

But my words, the dreadful menaces which I spake by my prophets, and my statutes, the decreed judgments which my provoked justice resolved to execute on them, which I commanded my servants the prophets; which by my prophets as my heralds I proclaimed and published.

Did they not take hold of your fathers? overtake as a pursuing enemy overtakes and seizeth on his enemy and spoileth him; have

not my judgments thus taken hold both on your fathers and on you?

They returned and said: by this it should seem that Zechariah gave them time to consider what answer to give.

So hath he dealt with us; it is true, as God said he would do, so he hath done against us, our fathers, our families, our cities and temples. God's words have not failed, they died not, though our fathers did. This may be an abstract of their repentance.

Zechariah 1:7

Sebat, which answers to part of our January.

Darius. see Hag_1:1,15.

Came the word of the Lord, & c. see Zec_1:1. The first sermon Zechariah preached was three months before this, and that sermon was reproof, which probably had good effect, as Zec_1:6.

Zechariah 1:8

I saw: in a vision God communicates his word, mind, or will to the prophet.

By night; either literally, it was by night that Zechariah had this vision, or with this it may note the obscurity and mysteriousness of the vision, for it may be emblematical, as the myrtles and the bottom are.

Behold; mark well what I saw, as now I relate it to you.

A man; one in human shape, Christ Jesus in shape of a man so he appeared to Ezekiel, Eze_1:26 **40:3**, and to Daniel, Dan_7:13.

Riding; in a posture of readiness, speed, and resolution to help his people, and to appear for them in some tokens of greatness and majesty, Psa_45:4.

Upon a red horse: both the beast is noted, a horse, bold, strong, speedy, and gallant; and the colour is noted also; in the same colour he appeared to Isaiah, see Isa_63:1-3 Rev_6:4. This colour is a symbol of his coming to avenge his own just quarrel, and the unjust dealings of his and his people's enemies.

He stood among the myrtle trees; he posteth himself in a convenient place to observe and be ready, (as needful,) among

humble, verdant, fragrant, pleasant, and much-valued trees, emblem of the flourishing, fruitful, and excellent saints and servants of God.

In the bottom: this bottom or low valley, in which the myrtles grew, (probably on some river's bank,) is an emblem of the church in a low, mourning, afflicted state; then it is most verdant, and fragrant as these trees, or as spices bruised in a mortar.

Behind him; Christ was, as beseems a captain, in the head; the rest, as his soldiers or servants, are behind attending on him.

Red horses; horses of the same colour, not without their riders, though they are not expressed; but it is a synecdoche, horses and horsemen are both intended, and these are angels, Zec_1:10. Now the colour of these horses is,

1. **Red,** denoting probably the bloody condition of states and kingdoms by wars one against another, either when God punisheth his church, or when he avengeth himself and his church on his enemies and hers; which will appear on a survey of the times past, when Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, or Roman empires did successively by wars do God's work, his strange work, &c.; **Isa 10 Isa 14.**

2. **Speckled;** a mixed colour, made up of white, red, and black, as some guess, an emblem of affairs of different complexion; not all prosperous, nor all unprosperous; not all dark, nor all light, as the day the prophet describes neither day nor night; such times did the Jews know, during the seventy prophetic weeks, from the beginning of them to the Messiah's coming.

3. **White;** an emblem of the best days and state the church should be in, so Rev_19:11,14, and the empire too with it.

Zechariah 1:9

Then; so soon as he had seen and observed. Said I; Zechariah.

O my Lord: this was Christ the Lord of hosts.

What are these? what is the meaning of these appearances or visions?

The angel; Christ, the Angel of the covenant; so I take this Angel, that promiseth to inform the prophet, to be the same that appears, a man on the red horse among the myrtles.

Then; so soon as he had seen and observed. Said I; Zechariah.

O my Lord: this was Christ the Lord of hosts.

What are these? what is the meaning of these appearances or visions?

The angel; Christ, the Angel of the covenant; so I take this Angel, that promiseth to inform the prophet, to be the same that appears, a man on the red horse among the myrtles.

Zechariah 1:10

The man that stood among the myrtle trees: see *Zec_1:8*.

Answered; gave answer to what I asked.

These; horsemen.

They whom the Lord hath sent; a periphrasis of angels, who are servants and ministers of the Divine Providence in the government of the world.

To walk to and fro through the earth: God is pleased after the manner of men to speak of his managing the affairs of the world; men must employ others, because they need them, God will employ angels, though he needs them not.

The earth; the empires which his churches were either helped or injured by: these were, partly by the pride of their emperors, partly by the flattery of their servants and ministers, and partly by the ignorance of the world at that time in matters of geography, thought to be the whole earth; and the Scripture sometimes useth phrases used and well known among men, though there be some impropriety in them. ‘

The man that stood among the myrtle trees: see *Zec_1:8*.

Answered; gave answer to what I asked.

These; horsemen.

They whom the Lord hath sent; a periphrasis of angels, who are servants and ministers of the Divine Providence in the government of the world.

To walk to and fro through the earth: God is pleased after the manner of men to speak of his managing the affairs of the world; men must employ others, because they need them, God will employ angels, though he needs them not.

The earth; the empires which his churches were either helped or injured by: these were, partly by the pride of their emperors, partly by the flattery of their servants and ministers, and partly by the ignorance of the world at that time in matters of geography, thought to be the whole earth; and the Scripture sometimes useth phrases used and well known among men, though there be some impropriety in them. ‘

The man that stood among the myrtle trees: see Zec_1:8.

Answered; gave answer to what I asked.

These; horsemen.

They whom the Lord hath sent; a periphrasis of angels, who are servants and ministers of the Divine Providence in the government of the world.

To walk to and fro through the earth: God is pleased after the manner of men to speak of his managing the affairs of the world; men must employ others, because they need them, God will employ angels, though he needs them not.

The earth; the empires which his churches were either helped or injured by: these were, partly by the pride of their emperors, partly by the flattery of their servants and ministers, and partly by the ignorance of the world at that time in matters of geography, thought to be the whole earth; and the Scripture sometimes useth phrases used and well known among men, though there be some impropriety in them.

Zechariah 1:11

They; the ministerial angels, signified by the horses and horsemen.

Answered the angel of the Lord; or rather, the Angel the Lord, the uncreated Angel, who sent them out, and receives account what they had done.

We have walked to and fro; as men who would give an exact account, survey every part, so we have searched all nations and kingdoms, walked the length and breadth of them.

Through the earth; the world, but chiefly through the Babylonish empire, which accounts itself lord of all the earth.

Behold; it is wonderful to be seen, and therefore we beseech time, O Lord, to behold and consider this.

All the earth sitteth still; as having ended their toil, or weathered the storm, composed their differences, and sheathed their swords; are full of peace, and sit still to take their ease.

And is at rest; either the same thing repeated, to heighten the quiet of these states, or to confirm the truth of the thing, or to express the inward quiet of mind the people had with their outward quiet. The public peaceable, and every one's mind satisfied, this is the state of the earth, the empire which at that time ruled all.

Zechariah 1:12

Then, when the surveying angels had made their report of the prosperity of the heathen, the angel of the Lord, the Angel, the Lord Christ, Mediator of the church, and Head of the church, answered and said; prays as one interceding.

O Lord of hosts: Christ speaks to his Father, speaks as one much affected with the state of his afflicted church.

How long wilt thou not have mercy? it is the expostulation that well befits a praying soul; it is not the inquiry of a discontented mind, but the request of one longing for mercy. So David, Psa_13:1,2; and the souls under the altar, Rev_6:10.

On Jerusalem, thy chosen mountain, heir of promises to be re-edified; and on Judah's cities too, of whose rebuilding, peace, and prosperity thou hast, O Lord, spoken great things, **Jer 30 Jer 31 Jer 32 Jer 33,** and **Eze 36 Eze 37,** &c.

Thou hast had indignation; they have felt thine anger and hot displeasure, it was just, and is so still; but it is not to be perpetual. Thine anger hath smoked against the sheep of thy pasture.

These threescore and ten years; the term prefixed for the captivity is fully come, it is the seventieth year of their miserable captivity; now show mercy, build Zion, and glorify thyself in doing it, for the set time is come. It is now seventy years since thy temple was burnt, and Jerusalem sacked; and full eighty years since Jeconiah with many of thy people were carried captive into Babylon, and somewhat more since many were carried with Jehoiakim, from which to the second of Darius are much about eighty-eight or nine years. ‘

Then, when the surveying angels had made their report of the prosperity of the heathen, the angel of the Lord, the Angel, the Lord Christ, Mediator of the church, and Head of the church, answered and said; prays as one interceding.

O Lord of hosts: Christ speaks to his Father, speaks as one much affected with the state of his afflicted church.

How long wilt thou not have mercy? it is the expostulation that well befits a praying soul; it is not the inquiry of a discontented mind, but the request of one longing for mercy. So David, Psa_13:1,2; and the souls under the altar, Rev_6:10.

On Jerusalem, thy chosen mountain, heir of promises to be re-edified; and on Judah’s cities too, of whose rebuilding, peace, and prosperity thou hast, O Lord, spoken great things, **Jer 30 Jer 31 Jer 32 Jer 33,** and **Eze 36 Eze 37,** &c.

Thou hast had indignation; they have felt thine anger and hot displeasure, it was just, and is so still; but it is not to be perpetual. Thine anger hath smoked against the sheep of thy pasture.

These threescore and ten years; the term prefixed for the captivity is fully come, it is the seventieth year of their miserable captivity; now show mercy, build Zion, and glorify thyself in doing it, for the set time is come. It is now seventy years since thy temple was burnt, and Jerusalem sacked; and full eighty years since Jeconiah with many of thy people were carried captive into Babylon, and somewhat more since many were carried with

Jehoiakim, from which to the second of Darius are much about eighty-eight or nine years.

Zechariah 1:13

The Lord, God the Father, answered the angel; Christ, the uncreated Angel, Lord of angels and Redeemer of Israel.

That talked with me; who had first talked by signs and visions, and next by explaining the mind and meaning of them, and answering the inquiries Zechariah made.

Good words; suitable and seasonable.

Comfortable words: the words ministered comfort to Jerusalem and the captives, the words imported deliverance and blessings. ‘

The Lord, God the Father, answered the angel; Christ, the uncreated Angel, Lord of angels and Redeemer of Israel.

That talked with me; who had first talked by signs and visions, and next by explaining the mind and meaning of them, and answering the inquiries Zechariah made.

Good words; suitable and seasonable.

Comfortable words: the words ministered comfort to Jerusalem and the captives, the words imported deliverance and blessings.

Zechariah 1:14

So, i.e. when the Father had heard the Son and answered him; this is spoken to our apprehension, and so must be understood.

The angel of the covenant, the Lord Christ. That communed with me: see *Zec_1:13*.

Cry thou; now publish what thou hearest, preach by commission from me, and assure my poor captive, impoverished church, that God, my God and her God, will do good for her.

Saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; publish what God, Lord of hosts, and Father of his people, promised to do for them.

I am jealous; I have been jealous against, but now am jealous for Jerusalem; my love is now heightened to a very high degree of compassion for my people, and of indignation against her enemies and oppressors.

For Jerusalem; the city called by my name.

For Zion; where my temple stood; those gates of Zion, which I loved more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

With a great jealousy; that zeal I bear, and now will, show for them, is great to a wonder; it is the zeal of a God who infinitely loves and pitieth his people. ‘

So, i.e. when the Father had heard the Son and answered him; this is spoken to our apprehension, and so must be understood.

The angel of the covenant, the Lord Christ. That communed with me: see Zec_1:13.

Cry thou; now publish what thou hearest, preach by commission from me, and assure my poor captive, impoverished church, that God, my God and her God, will do good for her.

Saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; publish what God, Lord of hosts, and Father of his people, promised to do for them.

I am jealous; I have been jealous against, but now am jealous for Jerusalem; my love is now heightened to a very high degree of compassion for my people, and of indignation against her enemies and oppressors.

For Jerusalem; the city called by my name.

For Zion; where my temple stood; those gates of Zion, which I loved more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

With a great jealousy; that zeal I bear, and now will, show for them, is great to a wonder; it is the zeal of a God who infinitely loves and pitieth his people. ‘

So, i.e. when the Father had heard the Son and answered him; this is spoken to our apprehension, and so must be understood.

The angel of the covenant, the Lord Christ. That communed with me: see Zec_1:13.

Cry thou; now publish what thou hearest, preach by commission from me, and assure my poor captive, impoverished church, that God, my God and her God, will do good for her.

Saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; publish what God, Lord of hosts, and Father of his people, promised to do for them.

I am jealous; I have been jealous against, but now am jealous for Jerusalem; my love is now heightened to a very high degree of compassion for my people, and of indignation against her enemies and oppressors.

For Jerusalem; the city called by my name.

For Zion; where my temple stood; those gates of Zion, which I loved more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

With a great jealousy; that zeal I bear, and now will, show for them, is great to a wonder; it is the zeal of a God who infinitely loves and pitieth his people.

Zechariah 1:15

And I; the Lord of hosts, God of Israel,

am very sore displeased with the heathen; exceedingly angry, and will show it, that they may see and feel it, my displeasure is grown up to the highest against them.

At ease; secure in their strength, sing a requiem to themselves and trouble to Israel. See Zec_1:11.

I was but a little displeased with mine own people, i.e. in comparison with the anger I bear against the heathen it was little, **Psa 137**

And they, the heathen, Babylonians, helped forward; attempted to destroy whom I would but correct, **Isa 10 Isa 14.** I whipped to smart, you wounded to blood; I did wound to bind up, you did wound to kill, &c. It is an anthropopatheia.

The affliction: it was more than they could do to provoke me here against them than their own sins did; but what I permitted for a while they did, and added to the affliction of Israel. I would prune, but they struck at the root.

Zechariah 1:16

Therefore; because the enemy hath so barbarously and inhumanly added affliction to the afflicted, it is time to save and relieve.

I am returned: when I was departed, and had withdrawn my presence, thus cruelly were my people handled; but now I will return, I will be with them, my presence shall restrain the violent and protect the innocent.

With mercies; with tender, abundant, and promised mercies now they shall be comforted indeed.

My house; the temple of God, the excellency of Jacob.

Shall be built in it; shall be finished, the impediments shall be removed, what glory I have promised by Hag_2:9, I will put upon this house of mine in Jerusalem.

Saith the Lord of hosts: this confirms the promise, and establisheth our faith, if we know the import hereof.

A line, the builder's measuring line, shall be stretched out, to mark out walls, gates, palaces, streets, and houses in Jerusalem, that they may be built again in beauty and strength, with skill and art; and shall be once more the glory of the earth, and joy of Israel. ‘

Therefore; because the enemy hath so barbarously and inhumanly added affliction to the afflicted, it is time to save and relieve.

I am returned: when I was departed, and had withdrawn my presence, thus cruelly were my people handled; but now I will return, I will be with them, my presence shall restrain the violent and protect the innocent.

With mercies; with tender, abundant, and promised mercies now they shall be comforted indeed.

My house; the temple of God, the excellency of Jacob.

Shall be built in it; shall be finished, the impediments shall be removed, what glory I have promised by Hag_2:9, I will put upon this house of mine in Jerusalem.

Saith the Lord of hosts: this confirms the promise, and establisheth our faith, if we know the import hereof.

A line, the builder's measuring line, shall be stretched out, to mark out walls, gates, palaces, streets, and houses in Jerusalem,

that they may be built again in beauty and strength, with skill and art; and shall be once more the glory of the earth, and joy of Israel.

Zechariah 1:17

Cry yet: the prophet's commission is either enlarged, or more full instructions given to him, to raise the hope and stablish the faith of the people of God.

My cities: Jerusalem and the cities of Judah are mine, saith the Lord, and as mine I will build, beautify, enrich, fortify, defend, and enlarge them.

Through prosperity, through increase of families and persons, they shall send forth colonies, and plant new towns and cities; and through increase of wealth and cattle be able to build their cities, and stock their colonies.

Be spread abroad; swarm as bees, and send out their young ones.

The Lord, their God, shall yet comfort Zion, Zion his church, with comforts fit for a church.

Choose Jerusalem; type of the civil state as here joined with Zion; the kingdom shall be blest in itself, and be a blessing to others, much like that Hos_14:5: all this an effect of my choosing it, and dwelling in it.

Zechariah 1:18

Then; after I had seen those things, and heard those comfortable words, and received commission to publish all the good news I had heard.

I lifted up mine eyes: he was so intent before, that he looked on nothing else; now he lifts up his eyes.

Saw; clearly, certainly, and distinctly.

Behold four horns; emblems of the enemies of the Jews, for strength, fierceness, and pride, and for their number, from all parts of the world.

Zechariah 1:19

The prophet prays for information from the Angel, from Christ, who is the best Teacher.

What be these? what may be the meaning of these horns, which I see, and know to be horns, and four in number?

These are the horns, powers, states, and kingdoms, which have from all sides pushed at, broken, and tossed my people, sorely bruised some and destroyed others: these horns are probably, on the north, the Syrians, Assyrians, and Babylonians; on the east, the Moabites and Ammonites; on the south, Edomites and Egyptians; on the west, the Philistines; all which had many a time spoiled the Jews.

Judah; the two tribes, which were the kingdom of Judah.

Israel; the ten tribes, carried away by Shalmaneser; or the relics of Israel, which adhered to the house of David.

Zechariah 1:20

The Lord; Jehovah, who before is the Angel, i.e. Christ, he is the eternal One, the great God.

Showed me; both proposed the thing to be seen, and gave eyes to see and discern it.

Four carpenters; known by their garb and tools to be carpenters, or smiths, as the Hebrew bears it. ‘

The Lord; Jehovah, who before is the Angel, i.e. Christ, he is the eternal One, the great God.

Showed me; both proposed the thing to be seen, and gave eyes to see and discern it.

Four carpenters; known by their garb and tools to be carpenters, or smiths, as the Hebrew bears it.

Zechariah 1:21

Then, so soon as I could propose the question, immediately upon sight of the carpenters,

said I, Zechariah,

What come these to do? he saw they were men, inquires not who they were, but what was their business and design; perhaps it is fittest for us to rest also in the knowledge of what they are to do, and inquire no further who they were.

And he spake; the Lord Christ informed the prophet.

These are the horns which have scattered Judah: Christ doth in order to satisfy the inquiry first point to the four horns, of which Zec_1:18,19, as if he should have said, Look you, there are four horns which have done mischief to Judah.

So that no man did lift up his head; kept them so under, none had either strength or courage to lift up the head, and thus these horns proudly and cruelly destroyed my people.

But these, these carpenters, or smiths, are emblems of those instruments God will employ in breaking these destroyers. Here are four carpenters to break the four horns.

To fray them; to strike a fear into them first; these kingdoms, signified by horns, shall lose their courage.

To cast out the horns; then their authority and power shall be cast out easily.

The Gentiles; heathen round about Judea.

Which lifted up their horn over, have employed their arms and strength against,

the land of Judah, the whole kingdom of Judah, God's people,

to scatter it, to drive them out of God's inheritance, See Zec_1:19.

Zechariah 2:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 2

The vision of an angel sent to measure Jerusalem, and its flourishing state under God's protection foretold, Zec_2:1-5. The people warned to quit Babylon before its fall, Zec_2:6-9. The promise of God's presence, Zec_2:10-13.

I, Zechariah,

lifted up mine eyes again: this is the third emblem or vision he had seen. *Looked very diligently and intently* .

A man; one in form of a man; some say it was Christ, others say a type of Nehemiah; it was an emblem of some master-builder to be sure, and it is probable the prophet took him for no more than a man.

With a measuring line in his hand; he appeared ready and prepared to lay out the platform of Jerusalem for extent, form, and beauty, ‘

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 2

The vision of an angel sent to measure Jerusalem, and its flourishing state under God’s protection foretold, Zec_2:1-5. The people warned to quit Babylon before its fall, Zec_2:6-9. The promise of God’s presence, Zec_2:10-13.

I, Zechariah,

lifted up mine eyes again: this is the third emblem or vision he had seen. *Looked very diligently and intently .*

A man; one in form of a man; some say it was Christ, others say a type of Nehemiah; it was an emblem of some master-builder to be sure, and it is probable the prophet took him for no more than a man.

With a measuring line in his hand; he appeared ready and prepared to lay out the platform of Jerusalem for extent, form, and beauty,

Zechariah 2:2

Whither goest thou? it is evident the prophet did not in so bold a manner inquire before, which may possibly be for that he apprehended this man to be one lesser than an angel; nor doth he ask the meaning of this hieroglyphic, but, understanding what it meant, the prophet inquires only where the platform was to be laid.

To measure; to take the exact dimensions of it, that it may answer God’s promise, and be capable to receive its inhabitants.

Jerusalem; the city, which was to be built hereafter, but first the temple is to be built.

Zechariah 2:3

The angel that talked; the great and glorious Angel, i.e. Christ Jesus himself, which had so long talked with Zechariah.

Went forth, from the midst of the myrtle trees, where he was first seen: whither he is going is not said; perhaps to standby, direct, and encourage the person that was going to measure Jerusalem.

Another angel went out to meet him; a created angel, or a ministerial angel, as became his office, offers his service to Christ, who is Lord of angels.

Zechariah 2:4

And said unto him; or,

And he said; or, as the French, *Lequel lui dit, Which said unto him* : so it is plain that the Angel which now was going forth spake to that angel which came to meet him, or gave him orders what to do.

Run; since you came so seasonably, hasten with all diligence, and from me tell that young man, Zechariah.

Jerusalem, which hath so long lain in rubbish, which I once delighted in, which now seems desolate and hopeless,

shall be inhabited, filled with inhabitants,

as towns without walls; the suburbs of it shall be as towns unwall'd for greatness of extent, and for safety and freedom from enemies and danger: their own multitudes of men shall be some safeguard to them; and they shall have my presence, a better safeguard.

Cattle, brought thither for sacred uses, for sacrifices.

Zechariah 2:5

What was promised or foretold in the former verse is ratified in this by an account how it should be performed.

For I, saith the Lord; that a thing so much above the hope of a present dejected people, so much too great for so weak and so few a people, might be believed and expected, God engageth he will perform the word.

A wall of fire; which cannot be scaled, it would consume them that attempt it; nor undermined. none could come so near it: such a wall as once was Elisha's guard, 2Ki_6:16,17, to which this place may possibly refer. Or it is an allusion to the manner of

shepherds and travellers in those countries full of wild beasts, to make fires in the night to secure themselves.

Round about; no part shall be unguarded, or open to the enemy.

And will be the glory in the midst of her; my presence and favour shall make her glorious, Isa_4:5,6. ‘

What was promised or foretold in the former verse is ratified in this by an account how it should be performed.

For I, saith the Lord; that a thing so much above the hope of a present dejected people, so much too great for so weak and so few a people, might be believed and expected, God engageth he will perform the word.

A wall of fire; which cannot be scaled, it would consume them that attempt it; nor undermined. none could come so near it: such a wall as once was Elisha’s guard, 2Ki_6:16,17, to which this place may possibly refer. Or it is an allusion to the manner of shepherds and travellers in those countries full of wild beasts, to make fires in the night to secure themselves.

Round about; no part shall be unguarded, or open to the enemy.

And will be the glory in the midst of her; my presence and favour shall make her glorious, Isa_4:5,6.

Zechariah 2:6

Ho, ho: since Jerusalem shall be safe, rich, and glorious by the presence and blessings of her God, the prophet calls to the sleepy Jews, as men that need be awakened.

Come forth; set upon your journey for your own country and city, come out from your captive prisons.

And flee; make all the haste you possibly can, and flee as men do who are pursued with danger, as men that are earnestly bent to get out of harm’s way, as the manslayer to the city of refuge. The Hebrew hath only *and flee* , but our translators have by that guessed at what might fill up the expression, and read, *come forth* , &c.

From the land of the north; Babylon, which lay north to Canaan.

For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven: as I executed my threats in scattering you, so I will perform my promise, and gather you from all quarters of the world; arise, come away, therefore.

Zechariah 2:7

Deliver thyself: the proclamation for free return is published; up, then, and be gone.

O Zion; O ye people who should dwell in Zion, ye daughters of Zion.

Dwellest; keepest in Babylon when thou mightest go to Jerusalem.

With the daughter of Babylon: perhaps this intimates that which kept many Jews in Babylon, wives or mistresses.

Zechariah 2:8

Some refer this to what went before, as a reason why the Jews should return, for God hath commanded it. I think it is an encouragement to the Jews to return, because God had promised to make them a glory, and now assures them that he will take a very particular care of them, therefore sends his Son, as a Judge or Vindex against the nations that had spoiled the Jews; or God sends his Son to them to inform them that it is their interest to unite with the Jews, and become the people of God, and be partakers of the glory and safety of God's Israel; however, to let them understand that it will be dangerous to do violence to Israel, as it would be dangerous to any one to violate what is most dear to him that can destroy the offender; to tell them Israel is the apple of God's eye.

Zechariah 2:9

I will shake, or lift up, mine hand, my power and strength, upon them; against the nation and kingdom that doth violence to the people who are my glory, and I am theirs, saith the Lord.

They, those people who comply not with him whom God sendeth, **shall be a spoil,** shall be overthrown and spoiled, and become a prey, unto their servants; the Jews, who were first spoiled by and then made servants to the nations who conquered, captivated, and hardly used the Jews; and indeed this was fulfilled in Esther's days, and in the Maccabees' times.

And ye, either Jews, or heathen, or both, shall know, be convinced and own it,

that the Lord of hosts, the great and faithful God,

hath sent me, hath commissioned Christ to inform them, who are to make their choice what to do herein. ‘

I will shake, or lift up, mine hand, my power and strength, upon them; against the nation and kingdom that doth violence to the people who are my glory, and I am theirs, saith the Lord.

They, those people who comply not with him whom God sendeth, **shall be a spoil**, shall be overthrown and spoiled, and become a prey, unto their servants; the Jews, who were first spoiled by and then made servants to the nations who conquered, captivated, and hardly used the Jews; and indeed this was fulfilled in Esther’s days, and in the Maccabees’ times.

And ye, either Jews, or heathen, or both, shall know, be convinced and own it,

that the Lord of hosts, the great and faithful God,

hath sent me, hath commissioned Christ to inform them, who are to make their choice what to do herein.

Zechariah 2:10

Sing and rejoice: now Christ calls them to rejoice in the goodness showed to them, and to sing forth the praises of him who showed it.

O daughter of Zion; the whole nation of the Jews, the peculiar, redeemed, and restored people of God; they that had been in great and long captivity.

I come, to execute judgments on thine adversaries, to complete thy deliverance and salvation; I come as foretold and promised, in the dispensations of Providence among the nations, in the performance of promises to you my people.

I will dwell in the midst of thee; pitch my tabernacle, nay, build my habitation and house, and reside in it, give you my ordinances, my blessing, and my presence. This was fulfilled in part presently,

and so through near five hundred years till Christ came, and ever since to his gospel church.

Zechariah 2:11

Many nations, and *great*, Heb; it implieth both multitudes and greatness of nations; or, heathen and Gentiles, as the word beareth.

Shall be joined to the Lord; become proselytes, inquire for, adhere to, and worship the God of Israel.

In that day; when God shall lift up his hand for his people against their enemies, as Est_8:17; when Christ shall be come in the flesh, and Shall take down the partition wall.

Shall be my people; covenant people, to love, fear, worship, and obey Christ.

I will dwell in the midst of thee: see Zec_2:10.

Thou shalt know: see Zec_2:9,

The Lord of hosts, the sovereign Lawgiver, and Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, hath sent me, the Messiah, and Zechariah his servant, unto thee, Jew and Gentile.

Zechariah 2:12

The Lord; Jehovah, the God of Abraham and of his seed, who had cast off Judah, and seemed to quit his claim in his ancient inheritance, by a disseisin of seventy years.

Shall inherit; claim, recover, possess, and delight in, as a man doth in his paternal inheritance.

Judah; all his Israel; this tribe mentioned, but all the rest included.

His portion; his treasure and peculiar people, his lot and part.

In the holy land, Heb. *upon*; holy, not by any inherent holiness, but holy and selected, and set apart for a holy people consecrated to God.

Shall choose Jerusalem again; the Lord will, as of old, choose Jerusalem for his seat.

Zechariah 2:13

Be silent; murmur not, you that love not Zion; dispute not, you that, think these promises are too good, too great; but, in silence, reverence and adore God in all his excellences and ways; wait, and expect the accomplishment of all by him who never utters more than he can and will do for his people. O all flesh; both Jew and Gentile; you are weak, short-sighted, and worthless; you are flesh, be silent and wait.

Before the Lord; the wise, mighty, gracious, and faithful One; who never suffered a word of his to fall unfulfilled, nor will let any of these promises to fail.

He is raised up: he speaks to our capacity; God is said to be raised in allusion to men who get up, or rise up, and set about what they will do; so here God is on this work already.

Out of his holy habitation; either heaven, or his temple. ‘

Be silent; murmur not, you that love not Zion; dispute not, you that, think these promises are too good, too great; but, in silence, reverence and adore God in all his excellences and ways; wait, and expect the accomplishment of all by him who never utters more than he can and will do for his people. O all flesh; both Jew and Gentile; you are weak, short-sighted, and worthless; you are flesh, be silent and wait.

Before the Lord; the wise, mighty, gracious, and faithful One; who never suffered a word of his to fall unfulfilled, nor will let any of these promises to fail.

He is raised up: he speaks to our capacity; God is said to be raised in allusion to men who get up, or rise up, and set about what they will do; so here God is on this work already.

Out of his holy habitation; either heaven, or his temple.

Zechariah 3:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 3

Under the type of Joshua the high priest receiving clean garments, Zec_3:1-5, and a covenant of promise from God, Zec_3:6,7, Christ, the Branch and Corner-stone, is foretold, Zec_3:8-10.

And he; the Lord of hosts, whose servant Zechariah was, and in whose name he spake.

Showed me; in vision represented to me, Zechariah.

Joshua the high priest; for that office was by hereditary right descended on him, and how mean soever his state was, yet still he was that great officer of the church.

Standing; either as accused, and to make his defence; or rather ministering in his office, according to his duty.

Before the angel: this angel was Christ, whose minister, or servant, the high priest was, as well as type of him. Satan; that adversary, as we might render the word, either Satan the devil, or some instrument of his stirred up by him, Sanballat, or, &c.

Standing at his right hand; either because the accusation was true, or to hold his working hand from its work.

To resist him; Joshua.

Zechariah 3:2

The Lord said, i.e. Christ, the great Redeemer, Restorer, Lord, and Mediator of the church.

The Lord; the great God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who as Mediator rather chooseth to rebuke him in his Father's name than in his own, though this he could have done.

Rebuke thee; he who was accused was God's high priest, and to minister in the temple at Jerusalem, the city which God had chosen, in which respect it was sure that God would take cognizance of the matter and judge aright; he would prohibit Satan's attempts.

Is not this, this man, this Joshua,

a brand plucked out of the fire? like a brand half burnt, or all smutty with long lying in the fire of affliction? Reject him not for this. ‘

The Lord said, i.e. Christ, the great Redeemer, Restorer, Lord, and Mediator of the church.

The Lord; the great God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who as Mediator rather chooseth to rebuke him in his Father's name than in his own, though this he could have done.

Rebuke thee; he who was accused was God's high priest, and to minister in the temple at Jerusalem, the city which God had chosen, in which respect it was sure that God would take cognizance of the matter and judge aright; he would prohibit Satan's attempts.

Is not this, this man, this Joshua,

a brand plucked out of the fire? like a brand half burnt, or all smutty with long lying in the fire of affliction? Reject him not for this.

Zechariah 3:3

At the time Zechariah saw this vision he saw also in what a mean, dirty, and tattered garb he was who represented the high priest. It was the hieroglyphic of Joshua, not Joshua himself.

Filthy garments; emblem of a poor or sinful state, or both.

Stood: see Zec_3:1.

Before the angel; the Lord Christ, called the Angel.

Zechariah 3:4

And he; the Lord Christ, who purifieth his church, who purgeth away her sin, and clothes her with rich and clean garments.

Answered; so the Hebrew, and so this prophet speaks, though no question went before. It is an idiom of that language.

Spake; commanded.

Those that stood before him; some of the attendants, those ministerial angels, who were Christ's servants, and as such are represented standing before him.

Take away the filthy garments; remove, or cause them to be removed, from him, as altogether unbecoming his person, office, and employments. These filthy garments those angels took away, but another hand takes away what is signified by this emblem.

From him; from this high priest Joshua.

He, Christ, the Lamb of God, said,

Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee: what angels could not take away, Christ did; he removed the filth of sin, the guilt and stain of it.

I will clothe, adorn and beautify,

thee, O Joshua, with change of raiment; clean and rich, emblem of graces and spiritual excellencies given to him.

Zechariah 3:5

And I said: Zechariah takes the boldness to desire that for Joshua which might add to his veneration and authority; and he asks the thing of Christ, or rather Christ commandeth this be done. *Let them*, who minister before Christ,

set a fair mitre; a rich and beautiful ornament for the head of the high priest; not a crown, which is for royal heads, but a tire, a pontifical ensign.

So they set, as they were commanded by Christ at the request of the prophet.

And clothed him with garments; all the garments which did appertain to the high priest, of which you read Exo_28:4, which probably were put on, though they are not expressly mentioned here.

The angel, who is the Lord Christ himself,

stood by; withdrew not till all this was done.

Zechariah 3:6

The angel of the Lord, the Lord Christ,

protested; solemnly declared and averted it, gave him to know.

Zechariah 3:7

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the Father, whose will Christ reveals to us.

If thou Joshua, wilt walk in my ways; obey the precepts and holy commands of the law.

Wilt keep my charge; the special charge and office of the high priest.

Thou shalt also judge my house: be chief and ruler in the temple, and in the things that pertain to the worship of God there.

And shalt also keep my courts; not as a door-keeper or servant, but as the chief, on whom others may wait and give attendance; and at last shalt have place among glorious angels, Heb_12:22. ‘

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the Father, whose will Christ reveals to us.

If thou Joshua, wilt walk in my ways; obey the precepts and holy commands of the law.

Wilt keep my charge; the special charge and office of the high priest.

Thou shalt also judge my house: be chief and ruler in the temple, and in the things that pertain to the worship of God there.

And shalt also keep my courts; not as a door-keeper or servant, but as the chief, on whom others may wait and give attendance; and at last shalt have place among glorious angels, Heb_12:22.

Zechariah 3:8

Hear now; hitherto thou hast been entertained with emblems and hieroglyphics, but now, O Joshua, hear what these mean.

And thy fellows; the other priests, thy associates in the priestly office, though inferior to thee.

That sit before thee; as assessors or coadjutors in a council or assembly; the high priest as president, the other as members of the council sat with him; to let them know what these types mean.

They are men wondered at; the worldly, profane, unbelieving, and ignorant sort of Jews wonder at them, and their hopes; at their labour and expenses in attempting to build such a house, with so little helps to raise such a structure out of rubbish.

I, God the Father, will bring forth a much more wonderful work.

My servant the Branch; Christ, Messiah, the Branch, Isa_4:2 11:1 Jer_33:15. ‘

Hear now; hitherto thou hast been entertained with emblems and hieroglyphics, but now, O Joshua, hear what these mean.

And thy fellows; the other priests, thy associates in the priestly office, though inferior to thee.

That sit before thee; as assessors or coadjutors in a council or assembly; the high priest as president, the other as members of the council sat with him; to let them know what these types mean.

They are men wondered at; the worldly, profane, unbelieving, and ignorant sort of Jews wonder at them, and their hopes; at their labour and expenses in attempting to build such a house, with so little helps to raise such a structure out of rubbish.

I, God the Father, will bring forth a much more wonderful work.

My servant the Branch; Christ, Messiah, the Branch, Isa_4:2
11:1 Jer_33:15.

Zechariah 3:9

Here is an ellipsis, and to make it up we must repeat that of the 8th verse,

Hear now, & c. For behold, (pointing to a particular stone,) that stone which I have laid, saith God, in the sight of Joshua, or which he saw laid in the building of the temple; on that one stone are seven eyes; and Joshua and his fellows are commanded to observe it, the meaning of which the angel will suggest to them presently. It is not improbable this one stone might be a corner-stone, and a principal corner-stone, and the eyes engraven on it so placed that they might look many ways; so it will be a more exact emblem of Christ the chief Cornerstone, and of his perfect knowledge and wisdom, fitting him to govern his church and provide for it.

I will engrave the graving; the engraving engraved, i.e. most artificially, lively, and with excellent contrivance.

And I will remove; or, and I have removed, I have pardoned the iniquity of this land at once. Thus the emblem or type, which I shall once more set before you in plainer words than those of our version. Hear now, O Joshua, thou and thy fellows, for behold there is one stone, and on that stone seven eyes, most curiously engraved, and this laid in thy sight, and in the sight of thy fellows: this learn by it, that the temple, founded on such a corner-stone, built by the wisdom of the chief Builder, guarded and watched over by all-seeing Providence, is the blessing and honour of that

people, whose sins are all forgiven. The further spiritual meaning discovers the Messiah the chief Corner-stone, the gospel church founded thereon, guided by perfect wisdom, and preserved by never-erring Providence, and blest with the pardon of all her sins, taken away in one day, by the meritorious death of her Redeemer.

Zechariah 3:10

In that day of building my temple, when it is finished, and in the day of removing the sins of my people, literally referring to the returned captive Jews; mystically, to the whole church in gospel days, when Christ, the chief Cornerstone, shall have purged away sin, and established his church.

Shall ye call every man his neighbour; invite with love and peace, such as becomes neighbours, who are partakers of the same grace of God, and blessings of a Redeemer.

Under the vine; to feast or refresh themselves under the pleasing shadow, and with the sweet, delicious fruit of the vine and fig tree, of both which there were ever greatest store, and of choicest taste, when the people of God, the Jews, did obey, worship, and fear the Lord, and long for the Messiah, and loved each other.

Zechariah 4:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 4

By the golden candlestick is foreshowed the good success of Zerubbabel's foundation, Zec_4:1-10; by the two olive trees the two anointed ones, Zec_4:11-14.

The angel that talked with me; Christ, who for some time had left Zechariah, and bestowed some time on new dressing, and cleansing, and adorning Joshua, the high priest.

Came again: this is the fourth time of Christ's revealing his mind to this prophet by vision.

Waked me; either roused him out of a drowsy fit and bodily sleep, or out of an ecstasy, or wonder, that surprising him, he was as if asleep; or shook him out of a sluggish negligence, or an observance of these things. ‘

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 4

By the golden candlestick is foreshowed the good success of Zerubbabel's foundation, Zec_4:1-10; by the two olive trees the two anointed ones, Zec_4:11-14.

The angel that talked with me; Christ, who for some time had left Zechariah, and bestowed some time on new dressing, and cleansing, and adorning Joshua, the high priest.

Came again: this is the fourth time of Christ's revealing his mind to this prophet by vision.

Waked me; either roused him out of a drowsy fit and bodily sleep, or out of an ecstasy, or wonder, that surprising him, he was as if asleep; or shook him out of a sluggish negligence, or an observance of these things.

Zechariah 4:2

What seest thou? what dost thou discern, of that thou didst before, half asleep half awake, see, but didst not observe?

I have looked; since awakened and roused, I have very diligently viewed and observed, and I see.

A candlestick: by God's appointment there was a candlestick to be made, as an utensil and ornament of the temple, Exo_25:31.

All of gold; so was the candlestick to be for the temple, all of pure gold, Exo_37:17.

A bowl, or basin, or round and large oil cruet, capable of so much oil as would suffice to feed all the lamps in the candlestick.

Upon the top of it; on the highest part of the candlestick, on the top of the candlestick on the top of the shaft, or on the head of the candlestick.

Seven lamps; either so many, because the temple candlestick had just so many, or because of some perfection supposed to be in this septenary number.

Seven pipes; one pipe to each lamp, the mouth of which pipe joined to the bowl or basin, and received oil from it; the other end of the pipe fastened to the lamp conveyed oil into the lamp.

To the seven lamps; so each of the seven lamps had a pipe reaching from it to the bowl or basin.

On the top thereof: these lamps were so set as to stand somewhat higher than the body of the candlestick.

Zechariah 4:3

Two olive trees; some say branches; better trees, which, well rooted, will continue, and perpetually supply the bowls, and that will supply the lamps.

One; not more, or fewer than two.

Upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof; so placed that the candlestick stood between them, and each tree stood at distance from the candlestick, on the right and left hand thereof, that they might distil their oil into the bason or bowl: all which is an emblem of the church, both what it is made of, pure gold; what made for, to be light in the world; to shine as lamps that continually burn, maintained with pure oil, distilled from the olive trees, not pressed out by man, but continually, freely, and abundantly dropping or flowing from these olive trees.

Zechariah 4:4

So, after that I had seen and discerned,

I answered: see Zec_3:4.

Spake to the angel that talked with me: see Zec_1:19 2:3.

What are these? see Zec_1:9. ‘

So, after that I had seen and discerned,

I answered: see Zec_3:4.

Spake to the angel that talked with me: see Zec_1:19 2:3.

What are these? see Zec_1:9.

Zechariah 4:5

Then; when the prophet had inquired into the meaning of these emblems.

The angel that talked with me: see Zec_1:19.

Knowest thou not? it is not a question either to upbraid the prophet as an ignoramus, Christ doth not reproach his for not knowing deep and dark mysteries at first sight of them; nor is it the question of one that was uncertain about the thing inquired

into, Christ knew the prophet's ignorance though he ask the question; but it is to excite him to attend and learn.

And I said, No; Zechariah freely confesseth he knew not, he pretends not to know what indeed he did not know.

My lord: he owns the greatness and sovereignty of Christ.

Zechariah 4:6

Then; so soon as Zechariah had owned his nescience.

He; Christ.

This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel; or, This word of the Lord is to Zerubbabel, it is particularly designed to him, and in an emblem prefigureth what a church, how precious as gold, how full of light; how framed, how maintained it should be by God himself. This hieroglyphic is a representation of what the church should be.

Zerubbabel; the governor, on whose hand much of the care and trouble of building the temple did lie; yet let him not be discouraged, for this work lieth on God.

Not by might; or, by an army, as the word bears, Hebrew; you may think you shall need all army to defend you in carrying on this building, which ill-will of neighbours about you hindereth, but I tell you there is no need of an army.

Nor by power; courage and valour, all which make, arms considerable; no need of this neither. Or might and power here may be of the same import, and added only for elegancy and assurance of the thing.

But by my spirit; which garnished the heavens and can beautify the church; which moved upon the darkness in the creation, and brought forth a beautiful and mighty structure, and can do as much now. By spirit we may understand either the Third Person of the Trinity engaged in building the church, with the Father and the Son; or by spirit you may understand the power of God. Either is encouragement enough, and secureth the future effect, and promiseth a future state of the church, pure and precious as gold, full of knowledge in the doctrines of God, as this candlestick with seven lamps, full of holiness from abundant measures of grace;

persevering in it by continued supplies from the Spirit of grace in ordinances, &c.

Zechariah 4:7

Who art thou, O great mountain? the angel having resolved the question about building the temple, either himself doth deride all the power of opposers, or the prophet doth triumph over it, Who art thou? Sanballat and confederates, or Satan, or Babylon, or all put together, what are you all, compared with the power of God, the Lord of hosts, who by his Spirit will finish this work?

Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: thou standest in the way of my servant, and thinkest his weakness and poverty cannot remove thee; but if he cannot surmount thy height, I will bring it down and make thee as a plain, and my servant shall as easily go on with my work as a traveller goeth over a way plained before him.

And he, Zerubbabel, as the servant of Christ, shall bring forth the head-stone; shall, as is usual, assist at the laying of the last finishing stone, as well as he saw and assisted when the first foundation stone was laid.

Thereof; of the second temple.

With shoutings; with loud acclamations, the signs of great joy and satisfaction in the thing done.

Crying, Grace, grace unto it; praying, and wishing all prosperity, and a long continuance of it, to the temple, and those that are to worship God in it; as grace and favour of God began, and finished, so may the same grace ever dwell in it, and replenish it.

Zechariah 4:8

Either at another time, or else at the same time, was added what now Zechariah declares.

Zechariah 4:9

The hands; perhaps (as is customary) he did lay the first stone with his own hands; or rather, his direction, and command, and under his conduct.

Have laid the foundation, in the second year of Cyrus, perhaps forty years ago, likelier seventeen, but be those years more or less,

he shall finish it: thus the prophet expressly promiseth from the Lord, both continuance of Zerubbabel's life, care, and power, as also his success in this work, to encourage both him and the Jews.

And thou, whoever thou art that dost hear me, both Zerubbabel and all among the Jews, shalt know, shall be fully assured, and certainly know,

that the Lord of hosts, God of truth and mercy, our God from our fathers, who remembers his covenant, hath sent me, commanded me to preach these things, unto you, returned captives and poor builders of this stately and magnificent house.

Zechariah 4:10

And now for those that despised small beginnings; who they are is well known, and to them I say, and promise what they expected not.

Despised the day of small things; of which Hag_2:3.

For, or

but, notwithstanding they so much undervalued the meanness of the second temple, yet when finished they shall, with many others, rejoice in it.

The plummet; the perpendicular with which Zerubbabel shall try the finished work, or the work near finishing.

With those seven; in subordination to and co-working with the Divine Providence, expressed emblematically by the seven eyes, which were on that stone, of which Zec_3:9. Though Zerubbabel were prudent in managing all the affairs of the Jews, Jerusalem, and the temple, yet not his prudence, but the infinite wisdom of God, gave success; and when the success appears in the finishing of the temple, then shall it be acknowledged an admirable work of the Divine wisdom, and the Jews shall confess that

the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth, have been upon them in this work for good, and that God hath showed himself on their behalf.

Zechariah 4:11

In this verse the prophet proposeth a question to which no answer is given, but he doth immediately proceed to ask one more question, though somewhat, yet not much, different from the former, and in the answer of this latter question the prophet acquiesceth. The explication of this verse you have Zec_4:3.

Zechariah 4:12

I answered; I went on to discourse, which is the signification of the Hebrew phrase here used.

Again, Heb. *a second time. Said unto him* , the angel that talked with the prophet.

What be these two olive branches? two principal branches, one in each tree, fuller of berries, higher than the rest, and hanging over the golden pipes.

Which through the two golden pipes: these were fastened to the golden bowl, on each side one, with a hole through the sides of the bowl, to let the oil that distilled into them from those olive branches run into the bowl, and out of that bowl it was, through so many golden pipes, conveyed into the seven lamps.

Empty; freely, without any violence offered, drop the oil out of themselves, yet so that still they are full of oil for perpetual supply to the lamps.

Golden oil, because of its preciousness, or from its colour.

Out of themselves: a supernatural work, and, emblem of supernatural grace: these branches, filled from the true olive tree, ever empty themselves, and are ever full; so are the gospel ordinances, filled by Christ, always filling his members, true Christians, and ever full for all believers.

Zechariah 4:13

See Zec_1:4.

Zechariah 4:14

Not Enoch and Elias, nor the two witnesses, nor Peter and Paul, nor the two churches of Jew and Gentile; nor principally Zerubbabel and Joshua, though perhaps the exposition may glance

upon them, and the two orders, magistracy and ministry, in them; as these are types of Christ in his two offices. King and Priest, or Christ and the Comforter: in this I determine nothing.

Zechariah 5:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 5

By the flying roll is showed the curse of thieves and of false swearers, *Zec_5:1-4*. By a woman in an ephah, pressed under a weight, and carried away to Shinar, is denoted wickedness, and the judgment of it, *Zec_5:5-11*.

Then, or *And* , Heb. i.e. after I had seen those comfortable visions, and been instructed in the true meaning of them.

I turned; changed his posture, though the occasion of it be not mentioned, nor the posture into which he put himself.

Lifted up mine eyes; looked up into the air where the vision appeared.

Looked, very diligently, and discerned clearly.

A flying roll; a volume, or book, which in those days were not written as now our books are printed and bound, but were written, as deeds are now, on large or long parchments, and rolled up upon a neat round stick, or else rolled upon themselves; such the roll here seen: much as our large geographical maps are rolled upon rollers, sad lodged in a convenient cavity, so were their books of old. But probably here now the roll was spread out at large, flying in the air swiftly, perhaps with some noise, that might make the prophet look about him.

Zechariah 5:2

And he; the angel, *Zec_4:1,5*.

What seest thou, O Zechariah?

The length thereof is twenty cubits; that is, ten yards long; by this it appears the roll was spread out, for had it been rolled up he could not have seen the length, though he did the breadth, five yards.

Zechariah 5:3

Then said he; the angel, which instructed the prophet.

This is the curse; this roll or book containeth the curse, the menaced punishment due to sinners, of which too many were still among the Jews.

That goeth forth; that goeth speedily, for it flieth.

Over the face of the whole earth; either the whole land of Judea, or over all the world; wherever these sins are found, this curse will come upon the sinners, unless they repent.

Every one that stealeth: theft is here first mentioned, a sin that had abounded among them, and front which they were not free then; they robbed one another, and they robbed God, they were sacrilegious.

Shall be cut off; shall be punished with an extermination of his house, as well as with cutting off his life.

According to it; according to the just threats of the law.

Every one that sweareth, profanely, or falsely, the perjured person,

shall be cut off too.

Zechariah 5:4

I will bring it forth; so exemplarily will I execute this judgment, that it shall appear I do it, my hand, saith God, shall be seen in it.

It shall enter, none shall be able to keep it out, this curse shall come with commission from me,

into the house of the thief, where he laid up that he got by theft, and thought to rejoice in it; or by house understand all his estate and goods, with his family and posterity. *The thief*; the robbers of God and of their neighbours, and every other notorious transgressor of the precepts of the second table.

And into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: this doth explain that of the third verse, and it is plain that the perjured person is here threatened, every one that dares call God to witness to a falsehood, and imprecate themselves if they speak not truth.

It shall remain; this curse shall be a long curse, it shall stick close to them and theirs, like Gehazi's leprosy.

In the midst of his house; as in the heart and centre of their house, like a sword in the midst of the bowels, or like a disease that seizeth the heart.

Shall consume it; though it do not destroy suddenly, it shall destroy surely.

With the timber thereof, and the stones thereof; the strength of it, nothing shall remain, as when both timber and stones of a house are consumed and wasted. Such execution shall be done on those, whose name and place shall be blotted out.

Zechariah 5:5

Went forth; or went on, proceeded, or, as we read it, went forth from some more retired place, though he do not tell us what it was, or where he was with the prophet when the last vision appeared.

Lift up now thine eyes: now the prophet was come forth with the angel, he is commanded to look up and observe what he seeth going forth from Jerusalem or the temple.

Zechariah 5:6

And I said, What is it? Zechariah knew not what this was he saw, so far was he from knowing what it meant.

And he, the angel, said,

This is an ephah; the greatest, say some, of measures with the Hebrews, but their corus was much greater: it was a great measure, and many times taken for any measure; when strictly taken, it held some three bushels.

That goeth forth, out of the temple of Jerusalem.

He said moreover; having told the prophet what the thing was, the angel addeth once and above,

This is their resemblance through all the earth; this, how dark soever it may seem to be, is a clear emblem of this people every where. Thus there is a limited time and measure for them; whilst they sin and are filling up the ephah with their sins, they will find that the ephah of wrath is filled up also to be poured out upon them. Or as the Hebrew, This their eye; as the Gallic version, This the eye I have upon them, &c.: i.e. God's eye observes how they

fill their ephah with sin, that he may suitably punish, that his ephah of wrath may fill also. ‘

And I said, What is it? Zechariah knew not what this was he saw, so far was he from knowing what it meant.

And he, the angel, said,

This is an ephah; the greatest, say some, of measures with the Hebrews, but their corus was much greater: it was a great measure, and many times taken for any measure; when strictly taken, it held some three bushels.

That goeth forth, out of the temple of Jerusalem.

He said moreover; having told the prophet what the thing was, the angel addeth once and above,

This is their resemblance through all the earth; this, how dark soever it may seem to be, is a clear emblem of this people every where. Thus there is a limited time and measure for them; whilst they sin and are filling up the ephah with their sins, they will find that the ephah of wrath is filled up also to be poured out upon them. Or as the Hebrew, This their eye; as the Gallic version, This the eye I have upon them, &c.: i.e. God’s eye observes how they fill their ephah with sin, that he may suitably punish, that his ephah of wrath may fill also.

Zechariah 5:7

Here is another part of this vision.

There was lifted up, either lifted up from out of the ephah, or brought thither to cover it,

a talent of lead; a large piece of lead of a talent weight, large as the mouth of the ephah.

This is a woman; a woman, the third in the vision or emblem.

That sitteth, secure, shameless, and resolved of her way in increasing in sin.

Zechariah 5:8

And he said; the angel unfolds the riddle.

This, this woman that sits in the ephah, represents the sinful nation of the Jews, is emblem of their wickedness.

Is wickedness, in the abstract, to express the greatness of the Jews' wickedness, they will grow up to be most wicked.

He cast it; the angel cast down this woman, wickedness, from the seat she sat on, *Zec_5:7*.

And he east the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof; and now she is down the weight of lead, which she can never lift up, or remove, is laid upon the mouth of the ephah, she is shut up, as in a prison, to suffer the punishment of all her sins. This is their resemblance.

Zechariah 5:9

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked: see *Zec_5:1*.

There came out, from the same place whence the ephah came,

two women: the sinful nation was resembled to a woman, and now, to keep a decorum in the vision, they who are to be God's executioners, to punish that wicked woman, are called women: it is like enough to be meant of the Romans, a warlike and stout nation.

The wind was in their wings: they are set forth as having wings like the wings of storks, large and strong, and as flying before the wind with great swiftness; so should Divine vengeance swiftly follow and certainly overtake the Jewish nation, when, after their return out of captivity, they shall corrupt themselves, and fill up the measure of their sins.

They lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven; the judgments came thus flying, and so bare away with them those that are to be punished: it is a secret intimation of a future deportation or carrying the Jews into captivity again for sin.

Zechariah 5:10

Then, when I saw the ephah, woman imprisoned, and lead too, on the wings of those two women in motion,

said I, Zechariah, Whither, to what place, and how far, do these bear the ephah? not as a nurse carrieth the child, but as criminals are carried to punishment.

Zechariah 5:11

The angel gives him an answer fuller than his question, and first tells the prophet what was to be done with it.

To build it a house, not in mercy, but in judgment, as intending the next deportation should not be, as the first, for seventy years, but for ever. they should never return.

In the land of Shinar; of Babylon, whither many of the Jews fled, and so by voluntary exile fulfilled this prophecy; Whither other's of them were forced by the Romans.

It shall be established, and set there; there they shall be confined without hope of release.

Upon her own base; not on the foundation of God's promise and covenant, but the base of their sins.

Zechariah 6:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 6

The vision of the four chariots, Zec_6:1-8. By the crowns of Joshua the high priest are showed Christ the Branch, and his church and kingdom, Zec_6:9-15.

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes: see Zec_5:1.

There came four chariots: the appearance or emblem is plain enough, we can easily conceive that; but the things signified hereby are most difficultly found out, and perhaps not found when we think they are: here then, if any where, all are bound to write modestly, and all are bound to read carefully, and to judge candidly. Whether by these chariots are meant,

1. The various changes made by wars in the nations; the chariots, as some say, were chariots for war, and drawn by several-coloured horses, and thus wars and mutations thereby might be signified: or,

2. The four monarchies, of different temper and carriage toward the Jews and others, whom they ruled, as very many learned expositors think: or,

3. The four Gospels, with the apostles and preachers of the gospel sent by Christ, as others.: or,

4. Angels, who are sometimes styled chariots of God, and who are by the prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and by the Apocalypse, introduced as great ministers and servants of Christ in the affairs of his church, ÑI determine not; though perhaps all these might fairly be woven into one web, in which angels, as employed in the affairs of church and empire, act their part in the revolution and changes of things, be these of what temper soever they will in both, till the gospel be preached by the Messiah and his apostles.

Out from between two mountains; out of a deep; shady, and dark valley, which here is laid between two mountains; so God's *judgments are a great deep* , whilst his *righteousness is as the great mountains* , Psa_36:6.

The mountains were mountains of brass: these mountains appear to the prophet very wonderful; for they were of brass, to denote the immovable decrees of God, his steady executions of his counsels, the insuperable restraints upon all empires and councils, which God keeps within the barriers of such impregnable mountains, whence not one can start till he open the way: and possibly it may import the pressures, difficulties, and distresses of the times signified hereby. ‘

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 6

The vision of the four chariots, Zec_6:1-8. By the crowns of Joshua the high priest are showed Christ the Branch, and his church and kingdom, Zec_6:9-15.

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes: see Zec_5:1.

There came four chariots: the appearance or emblem is plain enough, we can easily conceive that; but the things signified hereby are most difficultly found out, and perhaps not found when we think they are: here then, if any where, all are bound to write modestly, and all are bound to read carefully, and to judge candidly. Whether by these chariots are meant,

1. The various changes made by wars in the nations; the chariots, as some say, were chariots for war, and drawn by several-coloured horses, and thus wars and mutations thereby might be signified: or,

2. The four monarchies, of different temper and carriage toward the Jews and others, whom they ruled, as very many learned expositors think: or,

3. The four Gospels, with the apostles and preachers of the gospel sent by Christ, as others.: or,

4. Angels, who are sometimes styled chariots of God, and who are by the prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and by the Apocalypse, introduced as great ministers and servants of Christ in the affairs of his church, ŃI determine not; though perhaps all these might fairly be woven into one web, in which angels, as employed in the affairs of church and empire, act their part in the revolution and changes of things, be these of what temper soever they will in both, till the gospel be preached by the Messiah and his apostles.

Out from between two mountains; out of a deep; shady, and dark valley, which here is laid between two mountains; so God's *judgments are a great deep* , whilst his *righteousness is as the great mountains* , Psa_36:6.

The mountains were mountains of brass: these mountains appear to the prophet very wonderful; for they were of brass, to denote the immovable decrees of God, his steady executions of his counsels, the insuperable restraints upon all empires and councils, which God keeps within the barriers of such impregnable mountains, whence not one can start till he open the way: and possibly it may import the pressures, difficulties, and distresses of the times signified hereby. ‘

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 6

The vision of the four chariots, Zec_6:1-8. By the crowns of Joshua the high priest are showed Christ the Branch, and his church and kingdom, Zec_6:9-15.

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes: see Zec_5:1.

There came four chariots: the appearance or emblem is plain enough, we can easily conceive that; but the things signified hereby are most difficultly found out, and perhaps not found when we think they are: here then, if any where, all are bound to write

modestly, and all are bound to read carefully, and to judge candidly. Whether by these chariots are meant,

1. The various changes made by wars in the nations; the chariots, as some say, were chariots for war, and drawn by several-coloured horses, and thus wars and mutations thereby might be signified: or,

2. The four monarchies, of different temper and carriage toward the Jews and others, whom they ruled, as very many learned expositors think: or,

3. The four Gospels, with the apostles and preachers of the gospel sent by Christ, as others.: or,

4. Angels, who are sometimes styled chariots of God, and who are by the prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and by the Apocalypse, introduced as great ministers and servants of Christ in the affairs of his church, ÑI determine not; though perhaps all these might fairly be woven into one web, in which angels, as employed in the affairs of church and empire, act their part in the revolution and changes of things, be these of what temper soever they will in both, till the gospel be preached by the Messiah and his apostles.

Out from between two mountains; out of a deep; shady, and dark valley, which here is laid between two mountains; so God's *judgments are a great deep* , whilst his *righteousness is as the great mountains* , Psa_36:6.

The mountains were mountains of brass: these mountains appear to the prophet very wonderful; for they were of brass, to denote the immovable decrees of God, his steady executions of his counsels, the insuperable restraints upon all empires and councils, which God keeps within the barriers of such impregnable mountains, whence not one can start till he open the way: and possibly it may import the pressures, difficulties, and distresses of the times signified hereby.

Zechariah 6:2

There is no distinction made between chariot and chariot, nor any mention made of the drivers of these chariots, though these are included in the chariots. Now by the different colours of the

horses doth the prophet distinguish the chariots, and possibly that is all intended by the various colours, though generally interpreters do guess by the colour of the horses what should be the quality and temper of the times pointed at; of which a little: red horses may signify bloody times, a fiery execution of wrath, Rev_6:4; black, a time of mortality, and wasting diseases, Rev_6:5.

Zechariah 6:3

White horses; joyful and prosperous affairs: see Zec_1:8.

Grisled and bay; state of affairs mixed of good and bad: see Zec_1:8.

Zechariah 6:4

See Zec_1:19 **5:6**.

Zechariah 6:5

These are, signify, or are the emblems of, the four spirits, Heb. *winds* , to which the empires are compared, Dan_7:2, and for the bustlings of them may be well compared so; and forasmuch as they are raised by the Lord, and are under his command, may properly enough be called

winds of the heavens, which blow as God orders. Or,

spirits, i.e. angels of heaven, who have, as ministers of the Divine Providence, a great share in the management of affairs both of church and states. Or, the impulses of God's Spirit moving as he pleaseth in the kingdoms of men, and in his church. Indeed this is the great spring which moves angels, and sets them on work about what is to be done by them, either for or against states and kingdoms, especially in reference to the church of God.

Of the heavens, which, as they reside in heaven till employed, so go thence when employed, and observe the will of their God in heaven; and, having done their work, return thither again.

Standing before; they stand as servants attending the will and command of their Lord.

The Lord of the whole earth, their God is Lord of all, and their business, to do his will in all the earth, not in one part only, but every where, whithersoever they are sent.

Zechariah 6:6

The angel signified by the

black horses the executioners of God's just displeasure against sinners.

Which are therein; in the second chariot, for nothing is said more of the first, (the red horses,) say some, because that bloody and cruel state was expired; but the sad things portended by the black horses are to come next on the scene.

Go forth into the north country; Babylon, the whole kingdom of Babylon, which lay so much north from Judea, and because the metropolis lay north the whole kingdom is called the north country; which must feel the effects of these black horses, which was executed by the hands of the Medes and Persians, assisted by that squadron of angels which appeared in the second place.

The white go forth after them; ministers of goodness, mercy, and kindness, went after the black, and their business was, say some, to dispose affairs for the benefit and joy of God's people in Babylon, whither these were sent to preserve them, to conduct them, and bring them back; and here was great work in this, for many staid behind till Ezra's and Nehemiah's time.

The grisled go forth; the angels signified by these, and whose business, as some guess, lay in managing the Roman power, which was a mixture of many different people, and which were sometimes favourable, sometimes fierce and severe, to those they had to do with.

Toward the south country; Egypt and Arabia, which lay south of Judea, and which the Romans did, though late, subdue; it may perhaps point at their invading Africa too, whose punishments were mixed somewhat with kindness and mercy more than the punishments of Babylon were.

Zechariah 6:7

The bay went forth, from the place where the prophet saw them at first standing as at the starting-place,

and sought to go, either asked commission or waited for it, *that they might walk to and fro through the earth* : they had a larger commission, say some, the whole earth; or a particular

commission to keep their rounds in the land of Judea, and to take care of their affairs for the comfort of that people.

He said, Christ, who hath all power in heaven and on earth,

Get you hence; stay no longer here, hasten to your charge; as you have desired, so do.

So they walked to and fro through the earth; they obey immediately, and do his commands. These bay horses are here represented as attempting, or making essay, which at first seems to take little effect, though at last, by a full commission empowered, they do succeed in the attempt. This might give ground to suppose here is some kingdom aimed at, which made some attempts to enlarge itself through all the earth, but failed in its attempt, which no wonder, since the angels which were to assist were not commissioned to walk through the whole earth, and they keeping to their commission gave no further help, for want of which the design failed. How far this may concern Goths and Vandais, or any more late empires and kingdoms, I have neither skill nor will further to inquire. Nor yet to inquire whether these bay horses were not emblems of angels employed by the Lord, in the government of the rest of the kingdoms of the world remote from Judea, but not remote from God's wise and sovereign providence governing all the earth. The known empires here are supposed to have been managed by particular angels, represented according to the analogy between the colours of the horses and the complexion of the kingdoms. And it may seem likely that the rest of the world was not left without some to have care of them.

Zechariah 6:8

Then, when the prophet had been informed about the former vision,

cried he; the Angel that talked with the prophet, i.e. the Lord Christ, spake aloud. and called to him.

These that go, or are gone, for he speaks of what was already past; it is likely he meaneth the red horses.

Toward the north country; into Babylon.

Have quieted my spirit; either by doing what I appointed them against the cruel Chaldeans, in revenge of my people's injuries, or bringing my people back out of Babylon into Canaan.

Zechariah 6:9

And: it appears not that this next thing hath any necessary connexion to that which the prophet last saw.

The word; the direction or command for the prophet to do something out of hand. ‘

And: it appears not that this next thing hath any necessary connexion to that which the prophet last saw.

The word; the direction or command for the prophet to do something out of hand.

Zechariah 6:10

Take, gold and silver, of those that are come out of Babylon lately, to make their oblation to the Lord, or to bring the oblation of them who yet were in Babylon, but remembered Jerusalem and the temple.

And come thou; go fetch them if they lodge elsewhere, and bring them in thy company.

The same day; the same day in which they come, or else in the same day that I speak unto thee, delay not.

And go into the house of Josiah: some say he was a goldsmith, others, that he was treasurer for the temple, and that these persons before named had brought a rich present to him for the temple and the service of the Lord.

Zechariah 6:11

Then take silver and gold: this reiterating the command both confirms and explains the former command.

Make crowns; two, the one of silver, the other of gold.

Set them, put both of them, i.e. one after the other,

upon the head of Joshua, who now in this circumstance stands a type of Christ, King and Priest for ever for his people, and this extraordinary act was to represent something extraordinary in the Messiah.

Zechariah 6:12

Speak unto him; Joshua, but in hearing of others, and in the name of the Lord.

Behold; consider thoroughly the import and meaning of this unusual ceremony.

The man; thou, Joshua, art the type or figure, but he that is the man signified by thee, is that great person God hath promised, and you do expect, and who shall come.

Whose name is the Branch; whom you know by the name of the Branch, who was called so long since, Messiah Ben David; this wonderful person is the man that is crowned, as King and Priest, by proxy, or in effigy: thou, O Joshua, art the portrait; he is the Branch itself, Zec_3:8.

He shall grow up; though you may perhaps suspect the root dry or dead, yet assuredly it is not, the Branch will spring up, Messiah, King and Priest, shall be born in due time.

Out of his place; of the same tribe and family, and in the same place, foretold.

He shall build the temple; he it is, though unseen, that stands by you, that builds the material temple: neither Zerubbabel nor Joshua, nor all the Jews, could do any thing without Christ in the present building, which is yet far inferior to the spiritual temple, which Christ will build, beautify, and preserve, and dwell in for ever. ‘

Speak unto him; Joshua, but in hearing of others, and in the name of the Lord.

Behold; consider thoroughly the import and meaning of this unusual ceremony.

The man; thou, Joshua, art the type or figure, but he that is the man signified by thee, is that great person God hath promised, and you do expect, and who shall come.

Whose name is the Branch; whom you know by the name of the Branch, who was called so long since, Messiah Ben David; this wonderful person is the man that is crowned, as King and Priest,

by proxy, or in effigy: thou, O Joshua, art the portrait; he is the Branch itself, Zec_3:8.

He shall grow up; though you may perhaps suspect the root dry or dead, yet assuredly it is not, the Branch will spring up, Messiah, King and Priest, shall be born in due time.

Out of his place; of the same tribe and family, and in the same place, foretold.

He shall build the temple; he it is, though unseen, that stands by you, that builds the material temple: neither Zerubbabel nor Joshua, nor all the Jews, could do any thing without Christ in the present building, which is yet far inferior to the spiritual temple, which Christ will build, beautify, and preserve, and dwell in for ever.

Zechariah 6:13

Even he shall build: the promise is repeated to settle the Jews in the assured expectation of the thing.

The temple of the Lord; your material temple as type, and the spiritual temple as antitype.

He shall bear the glory of both kingly office and priestly, the glory of both those crowns shall abide on him, the only person worthy of it.

He shall sit; which speaks both his royal magnificence and the perpetuity of it.

And rule; though he shall have many attendants and officers, yet he shall rule, give laws, distribute rewards, and punish offenders.

Upon his throne; his by birth, by donation, by purchase, and by conquest, his most undoubtedly by best right.

He shall be a priest; the great High Priest, to offer the great sacrifice to God, to make reconciliation, to intercede for his people: this is that meant by the crowns set on thy head, O Joshua.

The counsel of peace shall be between them both; the peace made for God's people shall rest upon these two, the kingly and priestly office of Christ: by his priestly office he shall make their peace with God, by his kingly office he shall deliver them from

spiritual enemies; by priestly operation he shall expiate our sin, by the power of his kingly office he shall extirpate sin; as Priest he makes, as King maintains, peace; purchase as a Priest, protect as a King.

Zechariah 6:14

The crowns; those two crowns before mentioned, made of the gold and silver brought from Babylon, Zec_6:11.

Shall be to Helem, & c.: these persons we know no more of with any certainty but their names.

For a memorial, of their incredulity, say some, of their liberality, say others; but these crowns were certainly to be memorials of the Messiah's certain and speedy coming, and to be reserved in the temple as a memorial of this solemn typical inauguration of Joshua, or Messiah in him.

Zechariah 6:15

This verse hath certainly a double reference, one to the Jews, and the building of the material temple, which is the literal and historical sense; the other mystical, and refers to the bringing in of the Gentiles.

They that are far off; such Jews as do now abide in Babylon and Persia, or other remote parts. It is also the character of the Gentiles, Act_2:39 Eph_2:13,17.

Shall come and build in the temple; the Jews did so with their gifts, came to Jerusalem and built with their brethren; the Gentiles are come in and build the spiritual temple.

Ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you; the accomplishment of this shall prove my words to be God's word, and that I am sent of him.

This shall come to pass; the literal part shall come to pass in your day,

if ye will obey the voice of the Lord your God speaking by me. The mystical part shall come to pass also; and, if you will believe and obey, the Gentiles shall come in and be your brethren, make up one church with you, and help to build the temple, the spiritual

temple; but if you obey not, you shall be cast out, and the Gentiles be taken in, to be God's people, and to build his temple.

Zechariah 7:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 7

The Jews having sent to inquire concerning the set fasts, *Zec_7:1-3*, Zechariah reproveth the hypocrisy of their fasts, *Zec_7:4-7*. They are exhorted by repentance to remove the cause of their calamity, *Zec_7:8-14*.

It came to pass; a most usual form of speech, introductory to what shall afterwards be spoken.

In the fourth year; when the Jews had now been two years in building the temple, and probably it was in good forwardness.

Of king Darius; son of Hystaspes, about A. M, 3487, as Arch. bishop Usher in his Annals.

In Chisleu; part of our November and December, when half the time of building the temple was spent.

Zechariah 7:2

When they, either the captives which still continued in Babylon, or the Jews returned out of captivity, but who dwelt in the country at distance from Jerusalem,

had sent unto the house of God; the temple, which now, half built, began to be frequented by priests and people, and where Haggai and Zechariah might be found true prophets.

Sherezzer and Regem-melech: it appears not who these were, but no doubt they were eminent in dignity and piety,

And their men; a train either of friends that accompanied them, or of servants that waited on them.

To pray before the Lord, in most solemn manner, and with sacrifices no doubt, for the altar was set up long ago. Now these come to entreat the face of the Lord by prayer, in the house of prayer, for pardon of what was past, and acceptance of them at present, and for answer to their inquiry.

Zechariah 7:3

To speak unto, to consult with, the priests: they were to be the ordinary casuists, and ought to be able and ready to answer all cases of conscience, as Mal_2:7.

Which were in; had their residence in or about the temple.

And to the prophets: these were extraordinary casuists, who, might be supposed able to satisfy the inquiry, if the priests could not. These prophets were Haggai and Zechariah.

Should I weep, i.e. fast, of which weeping was a part, 1Sa_1:7 Mat_9:15.

In the fifth month; in sad remembrance of the burning of the temple on the 10th day of that month.

Separating myself from worldly cares and designs, and afflicting myself. *As I have done* : this intimateth their former practice, and seems to include in it some little boasting of it.

These so many years: it had been easy for them to have reckoned up the exact number of years, but they choose rather to express it thus, to greaten their performance.

Zechariah 7:4

Then, when these men had proposed their case, and expected the priests' answer,

came the word of the Lord; an answer from God, which follows in the 7th and 8th chapters of this book at large.

Zechariah 7:5

Speak unto all the people, i.e. either by their messengers who came in their name, or to all the Jews that were at Jerusalem.

Of the land; by which it seems to be not the loiterers in Babylon, but the returned in Judea, that sent.

And to the priests: some of these perhaps doubted; and others might overvalue and dote on these voluntary services, and needed, as well as deserved, a reproof.

When ye fasted and mourned: who prescribed this your fast? and since you needs would, (as it was at liberty you might fast and

mourn,) who was better for it? or did you do it to please me, when you displeased me by other, your sinful courses?

In the fifth month: see Zec_7:3.

And seventh; for the murder of Gedaliah, slain by Ishmael, Jer_41:1.

Even those seventy years; so many they were since Gedaliah's death to this time of inquiry, which is made now as many years after the return as Gedaliah was slain after the beginning of the captivity.

Did ye at all fast unto me? whatever was in it, there was very little in it from me, no command, no honour; as you ordered it, you pleased yourselves in it, not me; you wept more for the inconveniences of the thing than the sinfulness of it. Had you fasted to me, you would have abstained more from sin, which I forbade, than from meats, which I did not forbid.

Even to me; as if God had said, I put it once more to you, did you indeed fast to me?

Zechariah 7:6

I was as little minded by you in your fasts as in your feasts, and I was as little pleased with your fasts as feasts; self was all in both, you looked no higher. Such fasting commends none to God; you had not been the worse if you had forborne such fasts, nor are you the better for such ill-managed abstinence.

Zechariah 7:7

Should ye not hear the words? you needed not have thus inquired had you heeded the word written. Should you not remember, or have you not read, what Isa_58:3-7, determines in this very case? *Which the Lord hath cried* , openly and loudly spoken,

by the former prophets; who have given you the true value of obedience to the great and momentous precepts of the law, who have called for repentance and sincere love to God and man, and have on just balance showed how light and under weight formal services have been.

When Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity: did such observances preserve Jerusalem in its prosperity? Did they prevent the desolation of the cities round about her? Were they sufficient to save the men, the multitudes, that inhabited the south of the plain? Did they, or could they, do no good when things were all safe and well? and do you fondly imagine they can profit you now all is in ruins? Can they restore a fallen state that could not support it falling?

Zechariah 7:8

See Zec_7:4

Zechariah 7:9

Thus speaketh, or did speak, i.e. to your fathers, and thus he doth speak to you now.

Execute true judgment: God required former judges, and he requireth present judges, without hatred, prejudice, partiality, or bribery to give true sentence.

Show mercy and compassions; be kind and beneficent to such as need; wrong none if you could; do good to all you can with tenderest and most abundant pity, with a heart that feels their miseries.

Every man; as this is every man's duty, let it be every one's practice.

To his brother, i.e. to every one that needs you.

Zechariah 7:10

Oppress not; do not first misreport their persons, their actions, and their cases, and on that pretence do them wrong, and oppress them: it is double oppression, to oppress by false information, and then condemn; the first is an oppression of righteousness, the next is oppression of the righteous.

The widow, i.e.: a catalogue of helpless ones, who are under the peculiar tutelage of God, Exo_22:21,22 **Deu 10:18,14:29 24:17,19 Isa 1:17,23**, &c.

Let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart; neither think ill of, nor wish ill to, nor plot evil against, one another.

Zechariah 7:11

But they refused to hearken; they wilfully were ignorant, and would not consider nor understand.

Pulled away the shoulder; next they shift from doing their duty, withdraw their shoulder from the yoke of the law, Neh_9:29 Hos_4:16.

And stopped their ears; and to make it highest contempt, they act the deaf man, stop their ears, and so turn their backs on God.

That they should not hear; all this out of an obstinate resolution to be unacquainted with God's will and their own duty.

Zechariah 7:12

They made their hearts as an adamant: though the heart of itself is far from taking impressions, and receiving kindly the law of God, yet these desperate sinners think it is too pliable, they study how to harden it, and this was the fault of many of them. An adamant; the hardest of stones.

Lest they should hear the law; which was peremptorily required of them, and they as peremptorily resolved against it.

The law of God by Moses, of whom they boasted, whilst they despised his law.

The words, counsels and commands, which the Lord of hosts, their God, spake; nay, though they knew he spake they would not hear.

In his spirit; by his Holy Spirit, in clear evidences, piercing convictions, powerful operation, and dreadful threatenings; yet they opposed and resisted. and sinned against his Spirit.

By the former prophets: all of them acted by the same Spirit, pressing them to the same duties, and foretelling the same miseries, and promising the same blessings, but all would not prevail.

Therefore, for this great obstinacy, came a great wrath, which consumed the whole land, and burned against them seventy years together in Babylon.

From the Lord of hosts; in all which the hand of the Lord was most evidently seen, dealing to them according to their ways. Such were your fathers, such their ways, such their sufferings, all which is well known to you who start such queries, and meanwhile run away from the great commands of the law.

Zechariah 7:13

Therefore it is come to pass; this is the very cause, and it is just too.

As he cried; my Spirit by the prophets called, warned, entreated, and urged them to repent, obey, and live, but they would not; so they cried, by fasting and howling in their deep but chosen distress, in the miseries they fell under after Gedaliah's death, yet

I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts. Is it not most just I should disregard their tears for Gedaliah, when after his death they pretended to inquire that they might obey my word, Jer_42:2,3,5,6, yet then they gave my prophet the lie, and contemptuously resolved to do contrary to my word by him, Jer_43:4? Thus you know my resentments of your fasts held on with your sins, saith the Lord.

Zechariah 7:14

But I scattered them; when they had so provoked me, I cast them out of their habitations, pursued them with the tempest of wrath that scattered them as I threatened.

With a whirlwind; irresistibly, suddenly, and tearing all into pieces, as whirlwinds do.

Among all the nations; all the heathen, that hated them and their ways.

Whom they know not; where they could have no pity, nor any relief, nor common commerce; but as barbarous usage as fierce and unintelligible enemies can give them.

Thus the land, once flowing with milk and honey, once full of cities, men, and cattle, now waste as a wilderness,

was desolate after them; either the Jews cast out, or the Chaldeans who cast them out.

No man passed through nor returned: it was not fit to make a road through a land so void of all necessaries, so full of wild and ravenous beasts, so unwholesome as to the air, &c.

For they, sinful Jews by their sins, fierce Chaldeans by their sword, and God by his just displeasure, laid the pleasant land most desolate and waste.

Zechariah 8:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 8

The restoration of Jerusalem, Zec_8:1-8. The people are encouraged to build the temple by a promise of God's blessing, Zec_8:9-15. Truth and justice required of them, Zec_8:16,17. Joy and enlargement of the church promised, Zec_8:18-23.

Again, or *And* , Heb.; as the word of reproof in the former chapter, so the word of consolation in this chapter, was from God.

The Lord of hosts: hereby God assureth the Jews that what he promiseth he can perform, and therefore in this chapter, where so many things, so great, are promised, this name is very many times repeated, viz. eighteen.

Zechariah 8:2

I was; I have been in time past, in days of old before the captivity, and I have been so since the captivity for some years past.

Jealous for Zion: properly it is the passion of a lover or husband, mixed of love, care, and anger in their highest degrees for the beloved, and against all that is hurtful to it; so God had greatly loved Zion, had been careful of her honour and welfare, and displeased with her sins, which first hurt her, and then with the Chaldeans, which violated her.

With great jealousy; with great care that she should not, as formerly, sin against my love and her own welfare, and with a great love to do her good now, and to rescue her from her enemies.

I was jealous for her; on her behalf, and not as formerly against her, I am jealous in favour to her, as the Hebrew phrase importeth.

With great fury; with heat of anger against her enemies, as Zec_1:14,15, **See Poole "Zec_1:14", See Poole "Zec_1:15"**.

Zechariah 8:3

I am returned; I did in anger depart from sinful, and incorrigible, and unhumbled Israel, and sent them into a long captivity, and a far distance from my house; but now I am pacified, they punished, and I will be no longer absent from them; I am returned, not by change of place, but by change of my dealings with them.

Unto Zion; literally, to my place of ancient residence, where the temple and city of David stood; spiritually, to the church, wheresoever it was humbled in distresses.

And will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; once more, as of old, I will fix my residence and afford my presence there, as 1Ki_6:13 Psa_68:16, according to promise repeated to my people. Jerusalem shall be my dwelling-place.

Jerusalem shall be called, it shall be, for I will make it, a city of truth; her citizens shall love the truth and speak it, shall worship me in truth of heart as well as in the true manner prescribed to them, and they shall inherit the truth of my promises too: much like to this is that of Eze_37:23-28.

And the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain; either Jerusalem shall be called

the mountain of the Lord of hosts; or Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, shall be called, and be, the holy mountain, for that the temple is rebuilt there, and the holy worship of God restored there; impure idols, which were worshipped there by your impure fathers, and thereby was the mountain defiled, shall now be cast out, and none but the holy God worshipped in his holy temple.

Zechariah 8:4

Old men; very old men, and very old women: formerly war, or famine, or pestilence and wasting disease, or wild beasts, did cut off men and women before they grew to old age; but now it shall be otherwise, I will bless with health and long life in a peaceful state.

Old women; though naturally the weaker, though by child-bearing further weakened, yet there shall be many of these very old; or possibly it may intimate a very long life with their beloved mates, and so old men will be ancient husbands, old women their ancient wives. However, this old age shall be a crown of honour to this city.

Every man, every one, as the Hebrew will bear it,

with his staff in his hand for very age; through multitude of days; it shall not be from weakness and diseases that they lean upon their staff, but very age shall bring them to it.

Zechariah 8:5

The streets; every street.

Shall be full of boys and girls; have many young ones healthful, strong, brisk, and lively, the present joy and future hope of all; so will I fulfil the promise of multiplying your children.

Playing in the streets: Jerusalem shall be in that peace, health, and plenty, that parents shall neither fear danger to their children abroad, nor need their labour at home. So shall that **Psa 128** be fulfilled to them.

Zechariah 8:6

If it be marvellous: these things promised may perhaps seem very strange and difficult, if not impossible.

In the eyes; in the judgment and opinion, or rather, to the unbelief of this people.

The remnant of this people: few in number, exceedingly poor, and perpetually surrounded with dangers.

In these days; which are days of small things.

Should it also be marvellous, impossible, or so much as difficult, to me?

Saith the Lord of hosts: the Almighty God will do this.

Zechariah 8:7

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: here again God engageth his almighty power to make good his promise.

Behold; consider well what power is to do this.

I will save my people, bring them safe,

from the east country; Persia and Media, which lay east from Jerusalem, and, being now masters of Babylon and the captive Jews, they are said to be brought out of the east, though otherwhiles they are brought out of the north; both very consistent.

And from the west country: no doubt some of the Jews were carried westward; the trade of selling men was known in those days, and Tyre is noted and threatened for it by Ezekiel, Eze_27:13, beside other sea-towns west of Canaan, which would be ready to buy captive Jews, and convey them westward. But if this promise should look to the Roman empire, and secure the Jews a return from that captivity, it is plain how their empire lay west from the Jews. Or perhaps it is a synecdoche, these two parts of the world mentioned, but all parts intended, as Psa_1:1 **113:3** Mal_1:11.

Zechariah 8:8

I will bring them; though many things interpose to hinder, none shall keep them from returning; I will lead the way, I will guard them in it, I will supply their necessities, I will give strength to the weak and cheer up the dejected, I will gather and carry too.

They shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; settle their habitation in Jerusalem. They shall be my people; a peculiar people to obey and honour me; it contains very much, Jer_30:22 **31:33 32:37,38 Eze 11:20.**

I will be their God; I will own them, perform all my promises to them.

In truth and in righteousness, both on God's part and on their part; on God's in truth, on theirs in righteousness, in obedience to God's righteous law.

Zechariah 8:9

Let your hands be strong; be of good courage, and hearten on each other to the expectation of God's promise, and the doing your duty.

Ye, you returned captives, that hear: this is an argument to revive their courage, they hear God by his word very fairly proposing great things.

In these days; in these days of Darius Hystaspes, some twelve, or fifteen, or perhaps eighteen years since the time I point at. In these days of hope from Darius favourably helping, but most from God assisting and blessing.

These words, promises, exhortations, and counsels, by the mouth of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah.

In the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid; in the second year of Cyrus, which if reckoned from his succeeding of his father Cambyses in the Persian crown, and his father-in-law Cyaxares in the crown of Media, which happened near about A.M. 3167, unto the second of Darius Hystaspes, A.M. 3485, that is eighteen years ago, will make it likely that Haggai and Zechariah are intended there: but to lay it so that this re-edifying of the temple be in the second of *Darius Nothus* , is to make these two prophets either to be silent one hundred and twelve years together, or to preach with little success and less complaint, for I do not remember that either of them chargeth this people with this particular fault.

That the temple might be built, according to God's command and your duty.

Zechariah 8:10

For before these days, for eighteen years together, there was no hire; reward or recompence, no profit by the labour of man or beast, sowing or planting: see Hag_1:6-11 **2:15-17** Mal_3:10,11. Or else, though the poor Jew laboured and received wages, it profited him not, God blasted it.

Neither was there any peace; no safety, or content, and rest, at home or abroad; nothing prospered as might be hoped, in field or house; if they went out it was trouble to see all unprosperous there, if they came home it was not one whit better: perhaps it may intimate troubles by war, but I incline to interpret Mwlv Nya as I have done, with respect partly to the Hebrew, partly to the 12th verse.

Because of the affliction; distress, or straitness, and want, through such great barrenness as attended all their labour.

For I; God just and holy.

Set all men every one against his neighbour; let out or took off the restraints which kept men in some order; and when they were thus let out, they did discompose all, fell into seditions, and taking of parties, and breaking their own and others' peace. ‘

For before these days, for eighteen years together, there was no hire; reward or recompence, no profit by the labour of man or beast, sowing or planting: see Hag_1:6-11 **2:15-17** Mal_3:10,**11**. Or else, though the poor Jew laboured and received wages, it profited him not, God blasted it.

Neither was there any peace; no safety, or content, and rest, at home or abroad; nothing prospered as might be hoped, in field or house; if they went out it was trouble to see all unprosperous there, if they came home it was not one whit better: perhaps it may intimate troubles by war, but I incline to interpret Mwlv Nya as I have done, with respect partly to the Hebrew, partly to the 12th verse.

Because of the affliction; distress, or straitness, and want, through such great barrenness as attended all their labour.

For I; God just and holy.

Set all men every one against his neighbour; let out or took off the restraints which kept men in some order; and when they were thus let out, they did discompose all, fell into seditions, and taking of parties, and breaking their own and others' peace.

Zechariah 8:11

But now; since this people go about building the temple and restoring my worship with some cheerfulness.

I will not be unto the residue of this people: God changeth not, his not being what he was to this people is a change of his providence and his dealings with them. Our affairs will be to us as God is to us.

As in the former days: see Zec_8:10.

Zechariah 8:12

For the seed, which before brought nothing, or very little, forth, shall now prosper into a plentiful harvest, such as Mal_3:10.

The vine shall give her fruit: this was very much the wealth and support of that people; this had been blasted, as Hag_1:11, now it shall be blest, and bring forth her expected fruit.

The ground shall give her increase; summarily, the ground you plant shall abundantly bring forth her fruit to your satisfaction.

The heavens shall give their dew; the heavens, which before were as brass, and made your earth as iron, hard, barren, shall now drop down their rain, and make the earth fruitful. Much like that Psa_72:3 Hos_2:18.

I will cause, by my special, singular providence, and blessing on them.

To possess; to enjoy, have the things, and the comfort of them; whereas before, though they ate, they were not satisfied, had not enough, Hag_1:6.

Zechariah 8:13

As ye were a curse; as threatened Deu_28:37 Jer_24:9 **29:18**, all which came upon them in this seventy years' captivity, and the miseries that preceded.

Among the heathen; nations who knew the misery which they heaped on the Jews, nations among whom they were scattered.

House of Judah; two tribes.

House of Israel; ten tribes, or rather some of them which escaped Shalmaneser's hand, and adhered to Judah; or some that from the division of the tribes did keep close to the house of David, and the temple worship.

So will I save you; in such a manner will I save you. so wonderfully, so graciously.

Ye shall be a blessing; a form or model of blessing, as Zep_3:19,20.

Fear not, but let your hands be strong; be not discouraged, neither slack your hands, in the building of the temple, and restoring the

worship of God, for God will be with you, and finish all by and for you.

Zechariah 8:14

As I thought, determined first, then declared my resolution, in my threats and many warnings given,

to punish you, Jews, the body of that nation; you, one with your fathers.

When your fathers provoked; highly, obstinately, and till there was no remedy, my wrath being kindled and continually increased by increase of your fathers' sins and yours.

I repented not; I did not fail to do as I said I would, I neither changed my mind, for I am not a man, nor changed the course of my providence, but executed my threats.

Zechariah 8:15

So again; so with like steadiness of mind with an equal unchangeableness, I have purposed and promised to do well to you, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and house of Judah.

Fear ye not; for if in punishing, which I love not, I was constant, in blessing, which pleaseth me, I cannot but be constant. ‘

So again; so with like steadiness of mind with an equal unchangeableness, I have purposed and promised to do well to you, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and house of Judah.

Fear ye not; for if in punishing, which I love not, I was constant, in blessing, which pleaseth me, I cannot but be constant.

Zechariah 8:16

These are the things that ye shall do; you to whom I am returned, whom I have promised to bless, you have something to do that the blessing may come upon you, and look you do it. Beside building the temple and restoring public worship in sacrifices, these things ye must do.

Speak ye every man the truth; be true of your word, and lie not one to another, as becomes such a people, Psa_24:4 Pro_12:19 Hos_4:1.

To his neighbour; to all men: it hath been the sin of your fathers, they have lived, deceived, and cheated, not strangers, but brothers and neighbours; but do not ye so; every one you deal with is your neighbour, do you speak truth to every such one.

Execute the judgment of truth: see *Zec_7:9*.

And peace; that may restore, settle, and promote peace among you, as righteous judgments will do.

In your gates; either referring to the places of judicature, where the judges sat; or more generally and comprehensively through the whole land, *Exo_20:10*.

Zechariah 8:17

Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour: see *Zec_7:10*.

Love no false oath: see *Zec_5:4*: you that must not lie to a man, must not swear to a lie before God, *Psa_15:4 Eze_17:18,19*.

For all these are things that I hate; so that I cannot be reconciled to them; so that I must not, will not let them go unpunished. If your will be blest as I promise, look you do as I prescribe. This is reason enough why you should not do them.

Zechariah 8:18

No text from Poole on this verse.

Zechariah 8:19

This 19th verse is a final decision of the proposed case, and the whole of this verse stands on a proviso or condition, that they do those things required, *Zec_8:16,17*; then shall their fasting cease, and turn into joy and feasts.

The fast of the fourth month; wherein the city was taken by the Babylonians, who on the ninth day of this month broke into the city, *Jer_52:6,7*.

Of the fifth; of which on the tenth day the temple was burnt.

Of the seventh; wherein Gedaliah was killed, *Jer_41:1*.

Of the tenth; on the tenth day whereof the king of Babylon's army sat down before the city and besieged it.

Shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness; good days, in which they shall rejoice for all the goodness that God hath showed them in their private affairs.

And cheerful feasts, for public; these days of fasting shall be turned into solemn and public festivals, days of thanksgiving to the Lord, for turning back their captivity, and restoring church and state.

Therefore love the truth and peace; let your hearty affection be set on truth in all concerns of religion, and on peace in all converse with your neighbours.

Zechariah 8:20

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: this solemn attestation, that it is the Lord of hosts who will do that great thing next promised, calls both for our heeding and believing of it.

It shall yet come to pass; how low soever the state of my church doth appear, and really is, yet a time shall come when it shall be more considerable.

There shall come people; that is, multitudes of people, for they shall be inhabitants of many and great cities, which is added to explain what was more obscure in that one word,

people. The Gentiles shall be added to the church, and increase her greatly.

Zechariah 8:21

The inhabitants of one city shall go to another; great was the zeal and forwardness of primitive converts to bring others into the church, and to acquaint them with the doctrine of Christ; and this is here foretold under the zeal and forwardness of the Jews to gather one another, and to ascend thus to the temple.

Let us go speedily; in going let us go, set forth presently, hold on constantly and cheerfully, Isa_2:3 Mic_4:2.

To seek the Lord of hosts; to call upon his name, entreat his favour, or face, as it is in the Hebrew, one part of religious worship put for all, and explained by seeking the Lord for counsel and supply, for grace, comfort, and glory.

I will go also: this foretells a readiness in the invited, they shall with as much zeal embrace the motion as others made it.

Zechariah 8:22

This verse is both confirmation and illustration to the former; there it was people, here it is many people, and mighty, or great; not the poor, and contemptible. and few, but people of a greater figure in the world. The gospel first spread itself through the Roman empire, and triumphed in Rome the lady of the world.

Strong nations submitted to the gospel.

Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem; literally understood you have the firstfruits Of them mentioned in Act_2:9-11. Mystically, Jerusalem is the church of Christ, or the state of it in the times of the gospel, Psa_110:2 Isa_2:3.

To pray; to perform all gospel worship to the Lord.

Zechariah 8:23

The Lord seems delighted with the reporting what should be done in those days of the building up his Jerusalem, and therefore he bids his prophet report it again, as he doth in this last verse of the chapter.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: once more the Lord avows this as his design, so his work as his purpose, so he would effect it.

In those days it shall come to pass; in the days which shall be the shadow of better, that shall be brought to pass which shall be proportioned to them: thus in the deliverance of the church from Haman's conspiracy, many in the provinces of that mighty kingdom became Jews; but in the gospel days it shall be more full.

Ten men, that is, many men,

shall take hold; as children lay hold on the nurse's or mother's skirt to go with them.

Out of all languages; no nation any longer excluded.

Of him that is a Jew; to whom the gospel was first preached, nay, who were the first preachers of it, as the apostles, and the seventy disciples.

We will go with you; we will go, that we may learn your religion, and be of it.

For we have heard, and now see, believe, and are assured,

that God, the true God, the only true God, whom to know is life eternal,

is with you. Our gods are vanity, a doctrine of lies, and a pernicious cheat; we will cast them off. and no more trust to lies: God is with you only, and we must be with you, and of you, that God the Saviour may be with us too: having hold on you, we will not let you go without us; we seek your God and our God.

Zechariah 9:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 9

Amidst the judgments of the neighbouring nations God will defend his church, *Zec_9:1-8*. Zion is exhorted to rejoice for the coming of Christ, and his peaceable kingdom, *Zec_9:9-11*. God's promises of victory and defence, *Zec_9:12-17*.

The burden, i.e. the heavy, sad, and grievous, the menacing prediction of future evils coming upon a people; so burden in prophetic style, *Isa_13:1* **15:1** *Nah_1:1* *Hab_1:1*, signifieth.

The word; in which from God's own mouth Zechariah threateneth. This might be read in apposition thus, The burden the word, for when the word of the Lord threateneth sad afflictions, they will come as a heavy burden, which they cannot decline without repentance, nor shake off by their own strength.

Of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, who determines what he will do against Israel's enemies, and none can alter his purpose.

In, or, *on, against*, Heb.,

the land of Hadrach; not Messiah's land, as some, nor the land of an idol called Hadrach, i.e. the sun, as others, nor yet the land or countries that lie round about Judea, as others, nor yet is Arabia here meant, as others; but it is the name both of a city in Coelosyria, and here signifieth the country also. This town was not far from Damascus, and about twenty-five miles distant from Bostra, a sea town of Phoenicia, which is not far from Byblos, now called Giblee, or Gibelletto, says my author; no further

mention is made of it in Scripture. It was likely all enemy to the Jews, and had sinned therein, and now must account for it and be punished.

And Damascus; chief city of that part of Syria; and whether Abel were slain there or not, or whether that murder gave it the name, or whether the etymology be rightly given, (*dam* , blood, *sack* , a bag,) I say not; but it was no friend to God's people, **Isa 7**, and here it is threatened among other their enemies: the country is intended here as well as the city.

Shall be the rest thereof; this burden shall lie long as well as heavy on Damascus.

When; rather, *for* , Heb.

The eyes, Heb. *eye* : as we read it, it is of some difficult interpretation, but more easy if read, as it may be, thus, *for unto the Lord is the eye of man, and of the tribes of Israel* ; i.e. unto the Lord it belongeth in look to, and by his providence to dispose of, all men as well as of Israel, and all men's appeals in cases of wrong are to Heaven; so they who have been wronged by Syrian injustice look to Heaven for right, and to be avenged, and God will do it.

Zechariah 9:2

Hamath; a principal noted town of Syria, once called Epiphania; it was near neighbour to the Jews, for it was a boundary of the Land of Promise.

Shall border thereby; shall be so near to this storm which cometh, that they shall be the. worse for it. The country called by this name, in which Riblah was, and where the barbarous murder of many nobles of the Jews, the murder of Zedekiah's children, and his eyes were put out; all which cruelty and such-like Hamath must suffer, for now God rides his circuit, and judgeth.

Tyrus; a famous mart as ever the world had, on which Ezekiel bestows his 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters, which see.

Zidon; another mart, and on the same sea, more ancient than Tyrus, and as much an enemy to the Jews; threatened, as here, so by Ezekiel, **Eze 28**, Tyrus, *Eze_28:2*, Zidon, *Eze_28:21*, which see.

Though it be very wise; each of them, i.e. the people, the governors, and counsellors of both these cities are subtle, and think by craft to save themselves, but this shall not be, God derides their wisdom, Eze_28:3.

Zechariah 9:3

Tyrus; which was naturally a strong hold, situate on a great rock in the sea.

Did build herself a strong hold; fortified herself mightily, and then thought herself impregnable.

Heaped up silver; gathered treasure, and laid it up, so that there was no end of it.

As the dust: it is a proverbial speech, and speaks the very rich stores of their gold and silver, by which they might buy their peace, or maintain their war. So that here is wisdom, strength, and treasure, the master sinews of war, yet all these cannot profit them in the day of their calamities approaching.

Zechariah 9:4

Behold; observe it, for I tell you truth; though strange, it will be so.

The Lord will cast her out; the Lord will do this, he will eject and cast her out of her inheritance, as the word in the Hebrew, and he will inherit her, as the word also bears. God will do both, he will seize into his hand by some or other, and so put them out of all. Her fortifications shall not be able to secure her possession.

He will smite her power in the sea; the Lord declares how he will do what he threatens against Tyre, where their strength lieth; he will break them, take away their shipping, and then both treasures will waste, trade will fail, and auxiliaries will not be gotten.

And she, Tyre, probably Zidon with her,

shall be devoured with fire; that is, by the enemy in the siege, or at the taking of her. All which was done about A.M. 3672, one hundred and eighty-five years after this prophecy, when Alexander the Great mastered Tyre at sea with a fleet of one

hundred and ninety or two hundred ships, took the city, slew many thousands of them, and, as Curtius reports, burnt the city.

Zechariah 9:5

Ashkelon, threatened by Zephaniah, Zep_2:4, which threat was executed by the Babylonians soon after the Jews' captivity, when Nebuchadnezzar wasted the seacoast, and besieged and took Tyre; but this threat of Zechariah was fully executed by Alexander the Great, as is most likely.

Shall see it; as cities see the fall of neighbouring cities, they shall have the news of it, and know it; perhaps some Ashkelonites may be there, and see the siege, and tell it.

And fear; as men that have no power to defend themselves, nor means left of fleeing from the enemy.

Gaza; another strong town, a principality of the Philistines, enemy to Israel; which in Nebuchadnezzar's time suffered with Tyre, Zep_2:4, and shall again so suffer in Alexander's time, as here foretold.

Be very sorrowful; at the news of Tyre's fall shall take a fright, and fall into sorrows of a travailing woman, as the word imports.

Ekron, a city famous for idolatry, see Zep_2:4, shall as much fear and grieve as Ashkelon or Gaza.

Her expectation, her hope that Tyre would break Alexander's power, or hold out against it, and be a refuge to her citizens, who could not hope to withstand the conqueror,

shall be ashamed; turned into shame and confusion.

The king shall perish from Gaza; the government be overthrown; and perhaps this literally was fulfilled when Alexander the Great took Gaza after two months' siege, and two slight wounds received, and finding Boetis, the king or roitelet, advanced to that dignity by Darius, thought good to put him to a cruel death, as Curtius, l. 4.

Ashkelon shall not be inhabited, i.e. for some years it shall be as waste, or as it was laid by the Babylonian, according to Zep_2:4.

Zechariah 9:6

A bastard; some say Alexander the Great was by Olympia's confession declared to be a bastard, and that he is here pointed at; but I think rather strangers, who have no right of inheritance, yet did dwell here, are meant, called bastards because not the rightful heirs, but intruders.

Ashdod; Azotus, now a strong town, a city of the Philistines, but still of the same temper with the rest against the Jews, and now, as before, Zep_2:4, must suffer with them.

I will cut off the pride of the Philistines, in these strong cities did the Philistines glory, and boast themselves as having been too hard for the Jews, even at their first coming to Canaan, who could not take their cities from them; but now the fatal change is foretold, God will cut off this pride of theirs, as he did in the times of the Grecians, the Seleucidae, and the Maccabees.

Zechariah 9:7

I will take away his blood out of his mouth; though proud and warlike nations have delighted to shed blood, nay, (if some judge aright,) to eat the blood of their slain enemies; yet now God will restrain, nay, overthrow their power, and take the prey out of their mouth, they shall neither breathe out slaughter, nor act it with their hands.

And his abominations from between his teeth: this may possibly be explanatory of the former, but I think it rather is meant of their abominable sacrifices which they offered and feasted on: so the word in Deu_7:26, with Deu_5:25 1Ki_11:5,7 2Ki_23:13; and by Hoses, Hos_9:10. God will punish for these sins, idolatries, and by his destroying the people and cities of those abominations will remove them for ever.

He that remaineth, even he; the remnant, even that (so it might be read): if so read, it points out that small select number who escape the sword, and are reserved to be for God, to worship, obey, honour, and love him; such a remnant as Isa_4:3, or as Isa_17:6, or Isa_24:6.

Shall be for our God; those few Jews whom God preserved from the rage and cruelty of these bloody idolaters shall be the Lord's peculiar ones. As a governor, for respect and honour which shall

be given to them; it is not said they shall be governors, but they shall be as like governors.

And Ekron as a Jebusite; the city for the people, and this one city and people for all the other: all the Philistines shall be as Jebusites, servants to the people of God, or slain.

Zechariah 9:8

I will encamp about; pitch, not the tents of travellers and shepherds. but of an army, God in the midst of his own hosts, and angels among them, guardians, too.

Mine house; this material temple, but as it is an emblem of the church.

Because of the army; of the Persian and Grecian army, whose march lay either through or near to Judea and Jerusalem. Armies are very troublesome, costly, and dangerous in all their marches; the people of God, his city, and temple, shall be as garrisoned and fortified, as if secured by an host; God will have angels pitch their tents round about those that fear the Lord. Judea was a thoroughfare to the Egyptian and Syrian armies, to the Grecian and Persian; an unadvised attempt to stop Pharaoh-necho in his passage through once cost Josiah his life; but God will be a guard to his people, whilst their enemies are moving. All this was accomplished in the times of Alexander and his successors; in midst of those wars, though the Jews suffered somewhat, yet they were mightily defended by their God.

No oppressor shall pass through them any more; as formerly, when they had ingress, egress, regress at their pleasure, as if lords of the soil, and of the people too.

For now have I seen with mine eyes; I ever saw it, but now I manifest that I take notice of it purposely to redress it: I see how vilely they use my people; they shall do so no more. I behold

mischief and spite, to requite it, as Psa_10:14.

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly: the prophet calls for such a joy as expresseth itself in outward gesture, as indeed the daughters of Zion did in their hosannas, when this had its accomplishment.

Daughter of Zion; Jerusalem's inhabitants, or the church.

Shout; proclaim aloud your joy at the news I now tell you. Before it was

daughter of Zion, now it is daughter of Jerusalem, both the church and state among the Jews had great cause to triumph at this.

Thy King; the Redeemer, expected, promised Messiah, Son of David, the only restorer of your lapsed state.

Cometh unto thee; Christ cometh to thee, to redeem and save thee; he cometh for thee, as well as to time. He is just; the righteous One, who cometh to fulfil all righteousness, and to be our righteousness.

Having salvation; designs to save, and hath that in his eye, that he can save, it is in his power; he can save us as he did save himself, by raising himself from the dead.

Lowly; low and mean of state, and meek or lowly of mind.

Riding upon an ass; a beast of no state or price, an emblem of his outward state.

And upon a colt the foal of an ass: in this some footsteps of sovereignty appeared in the colt's taking and bearing him quietly, Luk_19:35.

Zechariah 9:10

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim: when the Messiah comes and sets up his kingdom, he will need no external force, he will do that by the power of his Spirit; chariots of war are for other kind of kings and kingdoms, but in promoting of his own kingdom he will make no use of such force.

And the horse from Jerusalem; either literal or typical.

The battle bow; another instrument of war, but not useful to the Prince of peace; neither bow' nor sword brought salvation to him, nor shall they be mentioned in the day of his conquest.

He shall speak peace unto the heathen; make peace for them, and then publish it to them; that on the cross, this in the gospel;

the Gentiles shall through him be reconciled unto God and one another, Eph_2:16.

His dominion; how mean soever on the ass, yet he hath a large dominion, is King of the universe.

From sea even to sea; from the Red Sea, and from the Arabian Gulf, to the Syrian Sea.

From the river, Euphrates, utmost bound east,

to the ends of the earth; to the utmost end of Canaan, toward the Mediterranean sea; a type of all the world to be the inheritance of Christ. These things promised here are of a spiritual nature, and are blessings of a spiritual kingdom.

Zechariah 9:11

As for thee, O Zion, and Jerusalem, thou Jewish church: these words are Christ's words to her, not the prophet's words to Christ, though papists would have it so, to countenance a *limbus patrum* .

By the blood, by my blood, saith Christ,

of thy covenant, in which thy covenant is confirmed: it is God's covenant as made by him, it is Zion's covenant as made for her, it is Christ's also as made in him.

I have sent forth thy prisoners; I have delivered and released. Cyrus indeed by his edict sent the Jews home, but in this he was Christ's servant, and Christ was mindful of the covenant, and, to perform this, brought them up.

Out of the pit wherein is no water; Babylon, compared to a pit in which no water was, wherein the Jews must have perished, had not mercy from Christ visited them; here is no *limbus patrum* , though some say so among the popish commentators.

Zechariah 9:12

Turn you: the prophet exhorts the Jews, both those in Babylon still, and those already in Canaan, to hasten up to

the strong hold; to Jerusalem, say some, which had been a strong hold, and which was now to be built again, as the high places of the earth; or to Christ, who is the salvation and high tower of his church.

Ye prisoners of hope; captives in Babylon, yet under a promise from God, and under an edict from Cyrus, that you shall return; this gives you hope, this maketh you prisoners of expectation.

Even today, in this day of lowest distress,

I declare that I will render double unto thee; either more than thy fathers ever received, or double, that is, twice as much, good enjoyed as ever was thy evil suffered, as Isa_40:2. ‘

Turn you: the prophet exhorts the Jews, both those in Babylon still, and those already in Canaan, to hasten up to

the strong hold; to Jerusalem, say some, which had been a strong hold, and which was now to be built again, as the high places of the earth; or to Christ, who is the salvation and high tower of his church.

Ye prisoners of hope; captives in Babylon, yet under a promise from God, and under an edict from Cyrus, that you shall return; this gives you hope, this maketh you prisoners of expectation.

Even today, in this day of lowest distress,

I declare that I will render double unto thee; either more than thy fathers ever received, or double, that is, twice as much, good enjoyed as ever was thy evil suffered, as Isa_40:2.

Zechariah 9:13

When I have bent Judah for me; in the days when Judah shall have recovered strength and courage, and be in my hand as a strong bow, ready bent.

Filled the bow with Ephraim; Ephraim, the remainder of the ten tribes, (which returned with Judah,) shall be for supply of warriors; as the quiver filled is supply of arrows to the bow-man.

And raised up thy sons, O Zion; explicatory to the former.

Against thy sons, O Greece; against the Grecians, or Ionians, the sons of Javan, who had formerly oppressed the Jews, and bought them for slaves, and did again oppress them in the reigns of the Selucidae and the Lagidae, against whom the Jews took arms and courage under the conduct of the Maccabees, to whom Christ made good much of this promise.

And made thee, O Zion, or Jerusalem, you, O Jews,

as the sword of a mighty man; a sharp sword of a mighty man or giant, who cuts down all that stands in his way, as the Maccabees did.

Zechariah 9:14

The Lord, the Almighty God, the God of Israel, Lord of hosts,

shall be seen over them; shall manifestly appear for them by his works of power against their enemies.

His arrow; alluding to warriors, that then used the bow: God's judgments, which slew his church's enemies, were swift, irresistible, and sudden in striking and killing them.

Shall go forth as the lightning; which breaks forth with violence, and runs from east to west in a moment, which is very terrible many times.

The Lord God; their God, the God of Israel,

shall blow the trumpet, give the alarm to them to provide for the war, sound the call to bring them together, and the march also for their moving, and sound the charge too; God will infuse new courage, and give directions.

And shall go, in the head of them as Captain-general,

with whirlwinds, with fury and strength like that of whirlwinds,

of the south, in which the mightiest whirlwinds are raised; or whirlwinds of Teman: some think the prophet alludes to the tempest about Sinai at the delivery of the law, when all Israel, and Moses too, quaked for fear, Deu_5:23-25; yea, quaked exceedingly, and desired to see no more such sight.

Zechariah 9:15

The Lord of hosts shall defend them; in the most dangerous attempts the Jews, under their captains in the wars against the Grecians, were preserved to a miracle, according to this promise.

They shall devour; a few of them destroy many of their enemies.

Subdue with sling stones: as we read this passage, it seems to refer to the slaughter of Goliath with a sling, by David, a stripling; so weak means, in the hand and trader the blessing of the great

God, shall do mighty things: others read the words, they shall subdue the sling-stones, that is, conquer the Grecians, who in their wars used the sling, and that with great dexterity and success.

They shall drink, in their festivals, when they offered sacrifices of thanksgiving for their victories.

Make a noise, shout with shouts of triumph, make a great noise, as through wine; as men do whose hearts are glad with success, and cheered with wine.

They shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar; rather, they shall fill, i.e. with the blood of the sacrifices they offer, both the bowls and corners of the altars, all shall be full of the blood of eucharistical sacrifices. ‘

The Lord of hosts shall defend them; in the most dangerous attempts the Jews, under their captains in the wars against the Grecians, were preserved to a miracle, according to this promise.

They shall devour; a few of them destroy many of their enemies.

Subdue with sling stones: as we read this passage, it seems to refer to the slaughter of Goliath with a sling, by David, a stripling; so weak means, in the hand and trader the blessing of the great God, shall do mighty things: others read the words, they shall subdue the sling-stones, that is, conquer the Grecians, who in their wars used the sling, and that with great dexterity and success.

They shall drink, in their festivals, when they offered sacrifices of thanksgiving for their victories.

Make a noise, shout with shouts of triumph, make a great noise, as through wine; as men do whose hearts are glad with success, and cheered with wine.

They shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar; rather, they shall fill, i.e. with the blood of the sacrifices they offer, both the bowls and corners of the altars, all shall be full of the blood of eucharistical sacrifices.

Zechariah 9:16

The Lord their God, as in covenant with them, not only as Lord of hosts by his power, but as their God in mercy and faithfulness,

shall save them, fully deliver them, i.e. the sons of Zion, in that day, in the day of their contest and wars with the sons of Javan,

as the flock of his people; as a shepherd saves his flock, as David saved his.

For they shall be as the stones of a crown; or, seeing that they are precious, and of value with me, as the stones of a royal crown, or as the stones of trophy set up in memory of some noble achievement;

lifted up as an ensign upon his land; which are as an ensign lifted up, to which whoso repair may give thanks and rejoice in their deliverance; a form of which, for aught I know, may follow.

Zechariah 9:17

For how great is his goodness! infinite goodness is the fountain of all that good done for this people; the prophet admires it, and suggests what is fit to be done by those that come and view those stones set up for trophies.

How great is his beauty! how wonderful the beauty of Divine Providence in all the great effects of it in Israel's deliverance and salvation!

Corn shall make the young men cheerful; plentiful harvests shall make the young men cheerful in sowing, reaping, labouring in harvest work, as well as in eating the fruits thereof.

And new wine the maids; such plenty of wine, that all, young and old, shall be cheered with it.

And now these are the sweet fruits of temporal salvation, but the fruits of spiritual, shadowed out by these, are much more glorious, refreshing, and worth our praise and wonder.

Zechariah 10:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 10

God is to be sought unto, and not idols, Zec_10:1,2. As he visited his flock for sin, so will he save and restore them, Zec_10:3-12.

Ask: it was a time of great scarcity with the Jews while the temple and city lay waste, and the prophets from God assure them it is for neglecting to rebuild the temple, to which work the Lord does earnestly call by Haggai and Zechariah, with promises of great

blessings, which forthwith God would give to them, if they set to this work, and seek the Lord by prayer, to which duty he doth direct them in this chapter: to the building of city and temple they must add prayer, for the blessing is prepared, and shall be given when asked.

Ye Jews, returned from Babylon, settled in your city, and returned to the worship of God, and to whom many excellent promises are made; you must pray.

Rain in the time of the latter rain; which usually came about spring to fill the eared corn, and to bring forth the grass, to make the trees and plants with their fruit to be full and large: this latter rain made plenty of all provision, and is proverbially used to signify a great blessing, Hos_6:3.

The Lord shall make; by making the vapours ascend from the earth, he will cover the heavens with clouds: see how Job, Job_38:28, doth elegantly describe this work of God. Bright clouds; clouds which bring rain, and pour it out abundantly, when they are opened with thunders and lightnings, which do as it were broach the clouds; they unstop these bottles: and they are bright clouds through the lightnings which break from them, Job_28:26 **38:25,26.**

And give them, the Jews, his people, showers of rain; plentiful showers of rain, that shall fatten the earth, and make it fruitful.

To every one grass in the field; none shall miss it, nor the effect of it on corn or grass; corn for man, and grass for the beast.

Zechariah 10:2

The idols; images which before the captivity they venerated, and at them consulted their idols about plenty or barrenness, and concerning future events, Jud_10:14 Isa_19:3.

Have spoken vanity; their predictions were vain, nothing of certainty in them.

The diviners, soothsayers, and consulters with familiar spirits, have seen a lie; foretold good, when all issued in evil, no good came.

And have told false dreams; they pretended a revelation from heaven, but it was a dream of their own head, or a cheat put on them by the father of lies.

They comfort in vain; their lies for the present comfort the deceived, but the vanity of these comforts soon appears in the disappointment which followeth.

Therefore they; either they that consulted, or those who sent them, indeed almost all the Jews were thus foolish in consulting and believing these liars, and so, confounded at last, fell into all the misery, they thought to escape.

Went their way; they went into captivity into Babylon.

They were troubled, miserably oppressed and afflicted, because there was no shepherd; without guide or protection; without ecclesiastical or civil governors, that would faithfully do their duty; and this was one reason that they were so afflicted and captivated.

Zechariah 10:3

Mine anger was kindled; though it was justly kindled against all, yet it was more hot and fierce against the chief sinners among them.

Against the shepherds; officers in church and state, who neglected to keep the flock from straying, who were ringleaders in idolatry and soothsaying.

I punished the goats; the wanton, lustful, and petulant officers among them, which, like he-goats, push and wound, and trample under foot the feebler cattle, as Eze_34:16,17: these were more grievously punished, Jer_29:22 **39:6.** *Hath visited his flock*, in favour and mercy.

Hath made them as his goodly horse; with change of state hath changed their sheepish weakness and cowardice into strength, courage, and gallantry, like that of a goodly horse: this appeared in the Maccabees' wars.

In the battle; when all his courage is stirred up, and he appears, as Job brings him forth, with neck clothed with-thunder, Job_39:19-26. ‘

Mine anger was kindled; though it was justly kindled against all, yet it was more hot and fierce against the chief sinners among them.

Against the shepherds; officers in church and state, who neglected to keep the flock from straying, who were ringleaders in idolatry and soothsaying.

I punished the goats; the wanton, lustful, and petulant officers among them, which, like he-goats, push, and wound, and trample under foot the feebler cattle, as Eze_34:16,17: these were more grievously punished, Jer_29:22 **39:6.** *Hath visited his flock*, in favour and mercy.

Hath made them as his goodly horse; with change of state hath changed their sheepish weakness and cowardice into strength, courage, and gallantry, like that of a goodly horse: this appeared in the Maccabees' wars.

In the battle; when all his courage is stirred up, and he appears, as Job brings him forth, with neck clothed with-thunder, Job_39:19-26.

Zechariah 10:4

Out of him, or out from him, from Judah, rather from the God of Judah,

came forth the corner, which in buildings is strength and beauty; here it is the prince or ruler, which is in a polity as a corner-stone in buildings.

Out of him the nail; from God the nail which fastens the tents of war, or fastens the timber together in a house.

The battle bow; all warlike provision both of men and arms, synecdochically expressed by bow.

Out of him every oppressor, or officer, exactor, collector of tribute. It was from God that Nebuchadnezzar mightily prevailed, and in the course of his victories oppressed Israel; and it is from God also that Judah is at last made free, grows up to such power as to be able to cope with his adversaries, to beat them, and to impose tribute on them. He sets up and pulls down as he pleaseth, **Psa 9.**

Zechariah 10:5

They, the Jews under the conduct of their captains, such as the Maccabees, shall be as mighty men; shall be valiant, mighty warriors, shall take cities, and beat down those that oppose them, and, as usual in such cases, tread the conquered as mire in the streets:

they shall fight thus valiantly and successfully,

because the Lord is with them, fighteth for them and against their enemies.

The riders on horses shall be confounded: this is the character of the Jews' enemies, they came with armed men, and a mighty cavalry, as Antiochus and others did, in which they trusted; but this availed little, these horsemen were confounded, beaten, or fled away from a beating: when God was with Judah's enemies, so they behaved themselves, and trod down Judah; now he is reconciled to Judah and fighteth for Judah. Judah shall behave himself, and succeed against his enemies, as before they did against him.

Zechariah 10:6

I will strengthen the house of Judah: God will give both courage and strength, courage to attempt, and also strength to go through and finish the attempt; in this they of the house of Judah were famous in the wars of the Jews against the Seleucidae, in which wars they had wonderful difficulties, and as wonderful courage and success.

I will save the house of Joseph; the remnant of the kingdom of Israel, the residue of the ten tribes, called the house of Joseph, for that Ephraim and Manasseh, part of that kingdom, were the sons of Joseph.

I will bring them again, both Judah and Joseph, out of Babylonish captivity, to place them; to settle them in their own land, and in their own cities: how far this doth warrant the expectation of a universal gathering of this people I do not undertake to determine.

I have mercy upon them; I pity them in what they have already suffered, and my mercy is not clean gone from them; I have yet

rich mercy for them, and will show it when they have built city and temple, and restored religion.

They shall be as though I had not cast them off; in every respect they shall so multiply, thrive, and prosper, that though they remember it with grief and shame, yet the generations to come shall discern no sad marks of a rejected people.

I am the Lord their God, in a perpetual covenant, which I never can nor will break: I am and will be their God; they should, yea shall, be my people, as Zec_8:8.

And will hear them: they will pray, and I will hear, for they are mine, they will seek me as their God, and I will save them as my people.

Zechariah 10:7

Ephraim: see Zec_10:6. Shall be like a mighty man, see Zec_10:5.

Their heart shall rejoice as through wine; which warmeth the blood, cheereth the spirits, and adds life greatly, where a good and joyful success concurrereth, as here it doth.

Their children shall see it, and be glad; either thus, in the days of your children this shall be; or rather, when the time comes for these things they shall continue through your generations to children that shall be born.

Their heart shall rejoice in the Lord; the goodness, power, wisdom, and faithfulness of God shall be the cause of this joy, and many of these people shall indeed rejoice in the Lord, and in the Messiah.

Zechariah 10:8

I will hiss for them; though they are now scattered far off, I will cause them to return; I will whistle, as a shepherd, and they, as scattered sheep, shall run with speed back to the flock: I called their enemies so once, and they came, Isa_5:26 **7:18,19;** and

my people will come when thus I call to them.

And gather them; this shall be enough to bring them together; or it shall be done as soon as spoke, so soon as I whistle they shall return.

I have redeemed them; I have been at the care and charge of redeeming, I raised Cyrus to do it; I bestowed all nations and kingdoms on him, and afterwards on Darius Hystaspes, to do this, to restore my exiles, to replant Judah, to rebuild the city and temple; and I will do this also, which is much less, I will, as a shepherd with his pastoral whistle, call them in.

They shall increase as they have increased; a promise made Jer_33:22, and Eze_36:1,**11,37,38**, which see.

Zechariah 10:9

I will sow them: it might seem impossible the Jews should so increase, but to satisfy us herein God promiseth to sow them, so their increase should be like the increase of rich soil that hath much seed cast on it, Jer_31:27 Hos_2:23; that land shall soon be full of men and cattle, when God sows both.

Among the people; the heathen; where dispersed, there they should multiply.

They shall remember me; there they shall think of me, and long for me, and desire to return to Jerusalem, and to my temple.

In far countries; whithersoever they were driven in the farthest parts of the Persian empire.

They shall live with their children; though captives and poor, yet they nor their children shall starve; nay, their children born to them shall live, and grow up with them; this young fry shall fill the earth.

Turn again to me, my temple, their city, and country. That this may also refer somewhat to the conversion of the Jews to the gospel, and to their spreading the gospel unto others for multiplying of the seed of Israel according to the faith, as I doubt not, so neither shall I particularly inquire, since the letter so fairly suits with history and matter of fact, as is evident from the multitudes that were gathered to the passover, when Titus Vespasianus cooped them up in a close siege.

Zechariah 10:10

I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt; into which doubtless some hasted by an early flight from the Babylonians before they wasted Canaan, and others fled though

forbidden, **Jer 43**; where also in after-days some Jews sought a repose, and where they wonderfully increased, if Josephus's story be true, of one hundred and twenty thousand Jews set at liberty by Ptolemy Philadelphus, when he procured the seventy-two elders to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek. These Egyptian Jews shall be brought back.

And gather them out of Assyria; in which many yet did linger, loth to depart, but when God hisseth for them they shall come.

I will bring them into the land of Gilead, which was the eastern frontier of the land of Canaan, and Lebanon; this was the north frontier of the land, and both fruitful and pleasant: they are here mentioned as part for the whole, as before, **Zec_8:7**.

And place shall not be found for them; the land should be too narrow for them, so **Isa_49:20 54:2,3**, which was in part fulfilled according to the historical and literal part, but fully in the spiritual part.

Zechariah 10:11

The former part of this verse might be read in the preter-perfect tense, reporting what God hath done, and perhaps more agreeably with the context and design, which is no doubt to confirm the promise, and make it credible, though so many and great difficulties render it unlikely to reason: I will, saith God, **Zec_10:10**; I promise, who am he that hath passed through the sea, the Red Sea, and brought my people through: who hath clone this call do what he now promiseth. I am he that dried up the deeps of Jordan (when at deepest by the floods, which were then upon the river); I can remove obstacles were they as great as these, and as easily lay low the pride of enemies, or remove their sceptres, as I did to Assyria and Egypt. So the whole verse is an allusion to what God had done in the two famous deliverances of his people under the hand of Moses and Joshua, bringing them out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and through Jordan, and destroying the Egyptians; and delivering them out of Assyrian bondage, and in order thereto destroying that kingdom.

Zechariah 10:12

I will strengthen them: see **Zec_10:6**.

In the Lord, their God, in Christ, say some; and it is true enough, whether these words so mean or no, God and Christ are the strength of the church, and of all believers.

They shall walk up and down, shall manage all their affairs, civil and military, secular and ecclesiastical, in his name; by authority derived from him, by power received of him, by wisdom given from above, to the glory of our God and our Redeemer. Thus far the great things promised to the Jewish church, and which were to be fulfilled in the time from the rebuilding the temple and city to the coming of Christ, through some four hundred and ninety years; in which times if aught fell short of-promise, it was because the sins of the people provoked God-to alter the course of his providence toward them.

Zechariah 11:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 11

The destruction of Jerusalem, Zec_11:1-3. Under the type of Zechariah is showed Christ' s care for the flock, the Jews; and their rejection for ingratitude and light estimation of him, Zec_11:4-14. The type and curse of a foolish shepherd, Zec_11:15-17.

This chapter is minatory, and foretells the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple, this second temple, by the Romans, and the captivity of the Jews under them, for their rejecting of Christ; so the times of this chapter must be laid about the death of Christ and downwards.

Open thy doors, O Lebanon; either the temple, because built with cedars of Lebanon, so the temple is called, Eze_17:3 Hab_2:17; or Jerusalem, or Judea, whose boundary northward this mountain was: if all these do not fully suit with the text and context, perhaps this added may. Lebanon, a high and great mountain, boundary between Judea and its neighbours on the north, is here spoken to open its gates, its fortifications, raised to secure the passages, which through the hollownesses of the mountain, the deep and dismal straits, lead into Judea, and would be first attempted by the enemy that first invades the northern parts of Judea. These garrisons or fortresses are foretold like to be

easily taken, as if they opened of themselves, and the Romans would have easy entrance by this means into Judea.

That the fire; either figuratively, the rage of the enemy, or the wrath of God; or literally, fire by the enemy kindled in the houses and buildings in Judea, and in Lebanon itself.

May devour thy cedars; palaces built with cedars, or else figuratively nobles, princes, and eminent men.

Zechariah 11:2

Howl, fir tree; either mean men, or houses and towns built with firs.

For the cedar is fallen; the greater and better escape not, much less shall the meaner and worse.

Because the mighty is spoiled; howl because the mighty men, cities, fortresses, and munitions are taken, sacked, and ruined; or else held by enemies, which is worse, and of defences and safety to us, are become our greatest annoyances and dangers.

Oaks of Bashan; oaks either literally, as they were used in that country, for building palaces, cities, towns, and fortresses; or else figuratively, the great men of that country, a land very fruitful and pleasant, of which Nah_1:4.

The forest of the vintage; either all strong places which were for guarding and defending the vineyards; or Jerusalem itself, compared to a forest in regard of the many and tall houses in it; this best pleaseth most interpreters. In short, all are called to weep, and cry, and howl for the miseries that will come upon all sorts, high and low, on-them and theirs.

Is come down; is laid desolate.

Zechariah 11:3

There is; it is as certain as if present, as sure all these shall howl, as if the things for which they do howl were already acted.

A voice of the howling, a most bitter, loud, passionate, and dismal howling, of the shepherds: literally thus; The enemy having broken in hath driven away or eaten up their flocks of sheep, their herds; and they, undone, howl most bitterly on the mountains, where the echo more doubles the horror than the noise.

Or figuratively, shepherds are governors, magistrates, and civil officers, together with priests and prophets, who are over the people as shepherds over the flocks.

For their glory is spoiled; what was their honour, their safety, their joy, is spoiled, taken from them and given to others.

A voice of the roaring, the dismal outcries, of young lions; of men in authority among the Jews, who should have been shepherds to defend, but were as lions to tear and devour, and which lurked in Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judea, wheresoever they could lie in wait to tear the poor and weak.

For the pride of Jordan is spoiled; the great forests on the banks of Jordan, called here *the pride of Jordan*, either because of the stately situation of them; or, because the prophet would keep the decorum of his allegory, he calls these

the pride of Jordan, for that the young lions were wont to walk proudly, to range over it without fear. So did these men-lions securely prey in Jerusalem and its fellow cities; but these are cut down, and now they must no more range through to seek a prey: so all from the north to the east of the land of Canaan is represented as made a spoil.

Zechariah 11:4

Thus saith the Lord my God; God the Father.

Feed; O Zechariah, feed, comfort, rule: but rather the Father speaks to Christ the Son, and appoints him who is the eternal Shepherd to feed his sheep.

The flock of the slaughter; appointed to the slaughter by different hands, and for different causes. It speaks of the people of the Jews, who were killed by many hands; during four hundred and fifty years they were a flock of slaughter to the Egyptians, Chaldeans, &c.; afterward to the Romans, who ruined their commonwealth, slew their citizens, and burnt their city.

Zechariah 11:5

Whose possessors slay them; either their own governors, or the Romans who in right of conquerors are their possessors; which

way soever they got them into their hands, they ruined them, destroyed them both in body and estate.

And hold themselves not guilty; think they do not sin in doing this; so low thoughts they had of this people, such extravagant thoughts they had of their own power and authority.

They that sell them; betray their persons, or liberty, or estate for profit, or sell them for slaves to foreigners; say,

Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich; with profane, ungodly hearts do give God thanks that they thrive by the most barbarous methods of cruelty and oppression, by bloody murders, as if these were ways of his appointing to gain wealth as if he blessed them.

Their own shepherds pity them not; who by birth, call, and office were their proper shepherds, the governors of this poor people, the princes, the priests, had no pity on them in their slavery or blood; looked on as unconcerned, it may be glad, that either they got a booty, or were rid of a disaffected subject.

Zechariah 11:6

For I will no more pity: their great sins have turned away God's compassions from them, and men show no mercy where God withdraws his.

The inhabitants; the generality of the nation, the body of this sinful people.

I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand; leave to a turbulent, cruel, seditious, and fraudulent temper one against another, to make parties against each other, to rob, imprison, banish, or kill each other, as in the latter times of their state it is known they did.

Into the hand of his king; the Roman Caesar, called here the Jews' king, for that they had chosen him to be so. Or else the head of the faction.

They shall smite the land; their king and his armies shall destroy the land: it may point to Vespasian and Titus, who sacked Jerusalem, burnt the temple, captivated ninety-seven thousand persons, and slew six hundred thousand at least, though Josephus reckons eleven hundred thousand.

Out of their hand I will not deliver them; they shall never more be by my hand delivered, or I will cast them off for ever; and so their captivity under the Romans continueth to this day.

Zechariah 11:7

And, or *But* , as the Hebrew particle is sometimes read: As for the greatest part, they are so corrupt and obstinately disobedient, I will cast them off;

but I will feed, & c. O therefore, so then, because it is the will of God that the flock of slaughter should. be fed, I will feed, &c.: the French version seems this way inclined. *Je me suis donc mis a paître les brebis exposes tuerie* : I am sent then to feed the sheep that are exposed to slaughter.

The flock of slaughter; either by the violence of their enemies, or by the monstrous negligence of their shepherds.

O poor of the flock: this is explicatory of the former, and by the ingemination of it shows us that God doth in his charge to the prophet typically, and in his charge to Christ antitype, distinguish clearly between people and people among the Jews, between those that were poor and forlorn, and those that were tyrannical, proud, cruel, and made a prey of them; these are left out of the pastoral charge, the other are taken care of.

I took unto me two staves: thus he enters on the actual exercise of his office, and takes two staves to himself, at the meaning whereof we can but guess. Two, say some, to signify the twofold way of Christ's governing his people, by lenity and severity. Or, say others, to note his singular care and diligence in his office; when other shepherds content themselves with one, Christ takes two. Or what if hereby Christ would be provided with one to guide the flock, with another to repel such as would slaughter them, to protect against violence and to direct such as are meek. Christ hath his golden sceptre for his loyal and obedient subjects, and his iron rod for refractory rebels and violent enemies.

The one I called Beauty; or pleasantness, sweetness, and loveliness; this lay in the holiness of his precepts, the excellency of his comforts, the glory of his reward. This is the first, and answers to the character of the ways of wisdom, Pro_3:17; they are pleasantness. The ordinances of God, and the enjoyment of

them, are the beauty of the Lord, and our beholding it, as David, Psa_27:4.

The other I called Bands; either alluding to the lines wherewith the portion of the Holy Land was meted out to every one according to their lot; or referring to the obligations Christ lays on men to hold together in peace and unity. The beauty of grace and glory, the bands of love and peace.

And I fed the flock; with these in hand the shepherd undertakes to feed and rule this flock.

Zechariah 11:8

Three, put for many, a definite for an indefinite number.

Shepherds, negligent or greatly faulty.

I cut off; put out of office, or, by discovering their faults, made them lie hid and conceal themselves. In one month; in a little time.

My soul loathed them; hated their treachery and idleness.

Their soul also abhorred me: disgraced and turned out, they hated him; in which these shepherds had too many of the Jews that sided with them, and that bore a hatred to the true Shepherd and to his impartial executing severity on the wicked shepherds.

Zechariah 11:9

Then; after that time of his patient and vigilant feeding the flock, and after his cutting off the three unfaithful shepherds, and after the ill resentment he met with for it; when he deserved love and thanks for it, he is repaid with disdain and hatred by the people, as well as by the shepherds; when he saw all this, *then* , &c. Thus they rejected Christ, the true Shepherd.

I will not feed you; next he rejecteth them, he will no more take care of them, or provide for them.

That that dieth, let it die; that which is ready to die, and will not be cured, but hath rejected the Shepherd's love and skill, let it die; it is like that.

If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins. That that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; either the same repeated, to confirm and affect them more, or else it intends to leave them naked and

unguarded to their enemy, to cut them off by the sword or famine, &c.

Let the rest eat every one the flesh of another; either live to be besieged till hunger and famine make the living eat the dead, or cruelly kill that they may eat, as threatened, Deu_28:52-58; or else by seditions and bloody intestine quarrels destroy each other: all which happened to them in the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Zechariah 11:10

And I took my staff, even Beauty; which I gave that name to, which was the beauty and glory of them, the covenant of God with all the blessings of it, his presence with them, his love to them, and his protection of them, and his blessing on them.

That I might break my covenant; signify and declare that they had rejected God and his favour, and refused his covenant, and that now God would hold it for nulled, and not obligatory to him. This somewhat illustrates the staff Beauty, which while unbroken the covenant between God and the Jews was whole and unbroken; and it is to be noted, Christ calls it his covenant, for he was the Mediator of it, to bring us to God in duty and holy walking, and to reconcile God to us in mercy and grace, which is the most beautiful and sweetest object we can see.

Which I had made with all the people: here again

all the people, that is, the generality, in distinction to the poor and meek, the little remnant, with whom the covenant stood firm, though the body of the nation were rejected and cast off, for God nor Christ have either of them ever cast away his people whom he foreknew, Rom_11:1,2.

Zechariah 11:11

It was broken; the covenant was abrogated by the Jews' obstinate refusal of it, and the Mediator of it.

In that day: it is not to be wondered it was done in one day at last, for the unthankful, unbelieving Jew had been through many generations breaking it: now a day doth it, when it came to that,

Not this man, but Barabbas; and, *We have no king but Caesar ;* and, *Crucify, crucify him. The poor of the flock that waited upon*

me ; who knew the Messiah, believed in him, and obeyed him, observed his doctrine, miracles, and life.

Knew that it was the word of the Lord; saw and owned God in all this; that he had justly cast off the nation of the Jews for their sins, their bloody murder of the Lord of life, and refusing his government: they saw' God would by the Roman power punish the Jews, and lay waste their land, city, and temple for this and their other sins; all which was both according to his wise counsel and express word: these understood what among others this prophet had four hundred and ninety years before written of these things.

Zechariah 11:12

And I said unto them; upon parting, Christ seems after the manner of men to mind them of his pains and care for them, and would have them reckon with him.

If ye think good: he puts it to them whether they thought he deserved aught at their hands, and what it was.

Give me my price; though I need not your money or pay, I deserve more than you will give, and therefore do in this as liketh you.

So they, the rulers of the Jews, the high priest, chief priests, and Pharisees,

weighed, which was the manner of paying money in those days,

thirty pieces of silver; which amounts to thirty-seven shillings and sixpence, the value of the life of a slave, Exo_21:32: this was fulfilled when they paid Judas Iscariot so much to betray Christ, Mat_26:15 **27:9.** ‘

And I said unto them; upon parting, Christ seems after the manner of men to mind them of his pains and care for them, and would have them reckon with him.

If ye think good: he puts it to them whether they thought he deserved aught at their hands, and what it was.

Give me my price; though I need not your money or pay, I deserve more than you will give, and therefore do in this as liketh you.

So they, the rulers of the Jews, the high priest, chief priests, and Pharisees,

weighed, which was the manner of paying money in those days,

thirty pieces of silver; which amounts to thirty-seven shillings and sixpence, the value of the life of a slave, Exo_21:32: this was fulfilled when they paid Judas Iscariot so much to betray Christ, Mat_26:15 **27:9.**

Zechariah 11:13

The Lord, God the Father, with detestation of so vile an affront and undervalue of his Son, said unto me; to Zechariah, in this theatre personating Christ sometimes.

Cast it unto the potter; as being so little it would hardly purchase any thing but what was cheapest among them, a little earthenware.

A goodly price that I was prized at of them: in an irony God upbraids the shepherds of his people, who prized the great Shepherd no higher.

I took; Zechariah, who in this part now emblematically doth what Judas will with horror do when he hath sold innocent blood and betrayed it.

Cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord; or rather, east them into the house of the Lord for the potter, all which the Jewish rulers act over in their prosecuting Christ unto death.

Zechariah 11:14

Then; so soon as I saw what value they put upon me, or presently after the casting them off from the covenant, and unchurching them.

I; Christ did it really, the prophet did it in the type.

Cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands; took no further care to keep them in civil peace among themselves, but left them to their seditious humours and inhuman animosities. Religion, which is true, is the best bond of peace, friendship, and love; when the Jews cast off religion, and murdered their Lord, next they fall to murdering one another.

That I might break; declare it broken, leave them to show it was broken.

The brotherhood; that friendship which had been among them.

Between Judah, the two tribes, and Israel, the remnant of the ten tribes, which fell into most unnatural seditions after the death of Christ, till the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Zechariah 11:15

Take unto thee, O Zechariah.

The instruments; put on the garb and personate once more a shepherd, quite different from him thou hast represented.

Of a foolish shepherd: this foolish people have rejected the wisest and best shepherd; let them see what one they will choose, in seeing what part thou now actest.

Zechariah 11:16

I will raise up a shepherd; as a just punishment of their sin in refusing Christ, the wise and good Shepherd; his government they would not accept to their salvation, that they choose shall be to their ruin.

Which shall not visit those that be cut off, or, that are hidden; it is a foolish shepherd who seeks not out those that are lost to bring them home.

Neither shall seek the young one; which are aptest to perish through weakness.

Nor heal that that is broken; but leaves it to die of its wounds.

Nor feed that that standeth still; either not able to go forward, or, hungry, stops to eat, but the shepherd will not wait while this is done.

But he shall eat the flesh of the fat, will feast on the fattest of the flock and tear their claws in pieces; and with cruelty extort all from them, tear off their skin to the very nails. In brief, a sluggish, negligent, covetous, riotous, oppressive, and cruel government, shadowed out by a foolish shepherd, is the punishment of the sins of the Jews.

Zechariah 11:17

Woe to the idol shepherd! to every one of them that are but the images of shepherds, worthless and useless.

That leaveth, casts off the care of,

the flock, Jer_23:1 Eze_34:2.

The sword, of the enemy, shall be upon his arm, to break his strength, and upon his right eye; blind and befool his counsels.

His arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened; power and policy shall fail him: such shall be their governors.

Zechariah 12:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 12

Jerusalem a cup of trembling, and a burdensome stone, to the confusion of her adversaries, Zec_12:1-5. The victorious restoring of Judah, Zec_12:6-9. The repentance of Jerusalem, Zec_12:10-14.

The burden of the word of the Lord: see this whole passage Zec_9:1.

For Israel; or touching, concerning, as the Gallic version; upon, against, the Hebrew bears it; and some take it in one, some in the other sense, though I think the main of the chapter persuades it is to be rendered, for, in the behalf of Israel, i.e. the church of Christ among the Jews until their rejection, and among the Gentiles ever since their vocation; both have their concern in the things here foretold.

Saith the Lord; who giveth out promises of great things to a people in a very low state, and therefore to raise their hope tells them by his prophet what he hath done.

Which stretcheth forth the heavens, as a curtain, saith Isaiah, Isa_40:22; who did more easily spread abroad the heavens, than any creature can spread forth a curtain about your bed, or a canopy over your head; by an almighty power going along with the act of his will, saying, Let it be, all that immense body of the material, visible heavens immediately spread forth itself.

And layeth the foundation of the earth, upon his own almighty word; on that the chief corner-stones thereof do lie, Job_38:4-6 Isa_51:13.

Formeth; in admirable wisdom, and with more especial artifice, framed, so the Hebrew imports, as Isa_43:7 **46:11**.

The spirit; the immortal soul, that spiritual being which animateth us. Who hath done all this he can do all that is here promised for Israel, and threatened against Israel's enemies.

Zechariah 12:2

I will make Jerusalem; that weak, unwalled, poor, and thinly inhabited city, type of the church; and much more the church, which is antitype to Jerusalem.

A cup of trembling; they shall drink their own bane whose swords be drinking the blood of the inhabitants of this Jerusalem; there is poison mixed in the cup of the wrath of God, which he will put into the hands of such wicked ones, and they must drink it off.

Unto all the people round about; to the heathen round about, to all of them; all have more or less at one time or other molested Jerusalem, and God remembers it, and hath provided for them a cup of astonishment against the day in which they besiege her, thinking then to finish all their attempts against Jerusalem.

When they shall be in the siege: strange siege laid against a whole country, and mighty powers will be little enough to do this, it requires a most extraordinary provision; now when all this is in readiness and no visible means of escape, then will God make them drink the wine of astonishment and cast them into a dead sleep.

Against Judah; the land of Judah.

Against Jerusalem; typical and mystical, the church of Christ. ‘

I will make Jerusalem; that weak, unwalled, poor, and thinly inhabited city, type of the church; and much more the church, which is antitype to Jerusalem.

A cup of trembling; they shall drink their own bane whose swords be drinking the blood of the inhabitants of this Jerusalem;

there is poison mixed in the cup of the wrath of God, which he will put into the hands of such wicked ones, and they must drink it off.

Unto all the people round about; to the heathen round about, to all of them; all have more or less at one time or other molested Jerusalem, and God remembers it, and hath provided for them a cup of astonishment against the day in which they besiege her, thinking then to finish all their attempts against Jerusalem.

When they shall be in the siege: strange siege laid against a whole country, and mighty powers will be little enough to do this, it requires a most extraordinary provision; now when all this is in readiness and no visible means of escape, then will God make them drink the wine of astonishment and cast them into a dead sleep.

Against Judah; the land of Judah.

Against Jerusalem; typical and mystical, the church of Christ.

Zechariah 12:3

In that day; in the times of the heathens afflicting the church, from the repair of Jerusalem till Christ's coming in the flesh, and in succeeding times since; but the day of the full accomplishment of this prophecy is a day known to the Lord. A burdensome stone; too heavy for them, though many join together to remove it.

For all people; though all people of this known world should burden themselves with her. Shall be cut in pieces: they would be crushed to pieces, as a man that falls under a weighty and massy stone.

Though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it: many nations have been confederate, now if you would suppose all through the whole world in league against Jerusalem, yet they could not stand under the weight of his displeasure, who is provoked by such attempts, he would grind them to powder.

Zechariah 12:4

In that day: see Zec_4:3.

I will smite every horse: horses are of very great use in wars; they were the main strength of Antiochus Epiphanes, his best

preparations. With astonishment; a dull, sottish fear and perplexity.

And his rider with madness; an impotency of mind both in the understanding, which is folly and imprudence, and in the will and resolution, which is either cowardice or unconstancy, like madmen that neither know how to resolve or act. God will turn all their counsel into foolishness, their strength into weakness, their courage into fear, and so overturn them all.

I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah; a while I seemed as one that slept or winked at the proceedings of my church's enemies, yet now I will open mine eyes, and see all that is going forward against them, and I will watch over my people for good; against their enemies, to confound and destroy them and their enterprises: this eye of God open upon his people is his wise, powerful, gracious providence for them, Psa_31:22 Jer_24:6.

I will smite every horse of the people with blindness; all their warriors in their projecting and consults shall be as full of improvidence, and have as little foresight, as a stark blind man hath of sight to see by.

Zechariah 12:5

The governors of Judah, the counsellors and rulers at home, and the leaders and captains abroad, the Maccabees and others, every one for himself,

shall say in their heart; shall think, believe, and reckon upon it, and be hearty in it.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, though but few and poor, yet they shall be my strength: and these shall be ready and forward to go forth against their enemies, with a handful of men to encounter mighty and numerous armies, because their strength and help lieth in the name of the Lord of hosts; not in their own power, but in the power of the almighty sovereign Lord of all, who can save by few as by many. And because

their God he will give them victory. ‘

The governors of Judah, the counsellors and rulers at home, and the leaders and captains abroad, the Maccabees and others, every one for himself,

shall say in their heart; shall think, believe, and reckon upon it, and be hearty in it.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, though but few and poor, yet they shall be my strength: and these shall be ready and forward to go forth against their enemies, with a handful of men to encounter mighty and numerous armies, because their strength and help lieth in the name of the Lord of hosts; not in their own power, but in the power of the almighty sovereign Lord of all, who can save by few as by many. And because

their God he will give them victory.

Zechariah 12:6

The governors: see Zec_12:5.

Like a hearth of fire; a hearth on which fire is thoroughly kindled.

Among the wood; the more is laid on, the more is consumed and burnt up: so the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem shall be, their multitudes shall no more save themselves than much wood cast on a great fire in the hearth can preserve itself.

Like a torch of fire in a sheaf; which immediately sets the whole sheaf on fire, and it is consumed.

They shall devour, & c.; the governors of Judah with their handful of men shall thus surely and speedily consume their enemies which set upon them.

Jerusalem shall be inhabited again; as indeed it was, and continued so till Christ's death, and forty years after; for of these times doth the prophet speak, and not of times still to come.

In her own place; not built as Nineveh, Tyre, Babylon, or Rome, in some place near to the old cities of that name, but in the very same place where old Jerusalem did, shall re-edified Jerusalem again stand.

Even in Jerusalem; so you shall find Jerusalem in Jerusalem; or thus, spiritual Jerusalem shall be that Jerusalem in which you ought to look, and where you shall find the old typical Jerusalem, which though it lie waste, and I fear must never be built, yet is in more ample manner built up in the church, spiritual Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12:7

Shall save; rescue from the power and rage of the Antiochuses, nay, subdue their armies, and put them to flight before the Jews.

The tents; the unfenced places, the open country, the shepherd-like cottages or tents of Judah.

Of Judah first; before he saveth Jerusalem, before he put Jerusalem into arms, or bring her inhabitants into the field, to fight, and help the country and its inhabitants; first the weaker are saved, next the stronger.

That the glory of the house of David, that the illustrious house of David, and so the glorious citizens of Jerusalem,

do not magnify themselves against Judah; boast of their power, policy, courage, and forwardness, and how much Judah owed to these for their deliverance: this would exasperate Judah, and provoke God, who would do all this: so that all might magnify their God, none think greatly of themselves.

Zechariah 12:8

In that day: see Zec_12:3.

Shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem: as he had defended and saved Judah, anti the tents thereof, so will he also defend Jerusalem and its inhabitants against all their enemies, during the Persian, Grecian, and beginnings of the Roman empire, during which days many wars were raised against the Jews; but most visible was this, when the Maccabees succeeded so far, as to restore religion, and cleanse the temple.

He that is feeble, reeleth through weakness,

shall be as David: a mighty man of valour was David; so these, through faith, of weak became strong, as Heb_11:34.

The house of David shall be as God; those of the royal line shall be, for prudence and prowess in the conduct of the armies of Israel, most excellent, expressed here in a hyperbole.

As God; or, as angels, so *Elohim* is translated Psa_8:3; and so I find the French reads it, *cornme des anges* . Nay, like the Angel of the Lord, which is head of principalities; like Christ, who is Captain of our salvation. In these exploits and in this deliverance

of the church they were types, and so must have somewhat in them which may be sufficient to resemble them to him.

Before them: these excellent ones of the royal line were to be leaders and commanders in these wars, and in their conduct they should show prudence and valour like that of an angel, rather than that of an ordinary man.

Zechariah 12:9

And it shall come to pass; this also shall certainly come to pass.

That I; God, the Defender and Saviour of Israel.

Will seek: this speaks not any difficulty to God in the work, as with men, who sometimes do seek to do what they cannot do; but this implieth God would thoroughly do it, his right hand should find out these his enemies, he will hunt them out.

To destroy; not to restrain, but to overthrow and destroy.

All nations; without partiality, every nation that sets itself to oppress and destroy Jerusalem; God, will pay them in their own coin: they said, Blot out her name; but God will blot out theirs. Let us, say they, cut them off from being a nation; but this God will turn upon their own heads.

That come against; combine, and attempt to destroy her; and this was evidently seen upon those that sought to destroy Jerusalem and the second temple before Christ's incarnation; for by the Romans God destroyed the Antiochian power which had often mischiefed the Jews, and destroyed the other kingdoms which had been enemies to the Jews, who were never in danger of being cut off from being a nation, till their horrid murdering of the Lord of life.

Jerusalem; literally and historically the city which the captives returned from Babylon did build; but mystically the catholic church, which God will never suffer to be destroyed, he will rather destroy all nations than suffer them to destroy his church.

Zechariah 12:10

And I; God the Father, so Act_2:17,18 Isa 44:3.

Will pour, in plentiful measures, as a plentiful rain is poured forth on a thirsty ground: this was fulfilled on Christ's exaltation, when

he received gifts for men, and, being glorified, gave the Spirit, sent the Comforter to his disciples and believers; this is daily performed to the children of God, and will be continually performed till we all are made perfect, and are brought to be with Christ for ever.

Upon the house of David; on some of that royal family; or, typically considered, it is the whole family of Christ, his house, who was the seed of David, and who is called David their king, Eze_37:24 Hos_3:5. Upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; literally understood it was fulfilled extraordinarily, Act_2:4,5; and, no doubt, in the ordinary manner to many of whom no mention is made: mystically, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are all the members of Christ, all believers of all ages.

The Spirit of grace; which is the fountain of all graces in us, and which makes us lovely in the eye of our God; grace to purify us and to beautify us, that God may delight in us.

And of supplications, or prayer, which is an early, inseparable fruit of the Spirit of grace: by the Spirit we cry, Abba, Father, and are helped to perform this duty, Rom_8:26.

They, all those who have received this Spirit, shall look upon me, with an eye of faith, and turn to Christ, love, obey, and wait for him.

Whom they have pierced: every one of us by our sins pierced him, but many of the Jews nailed him to the cross, and actually murdered the Lord of life. This, as foretold, so was very punctually fulfilled, and recorded in the account of his death given by John, Joh_19:34,35,37; this hath then a particular respect to the Jews, though not confined to them.

They shall mourn for him; grieve, and heartily lament the crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as the sinful, cruel act of their fathers, but as that in which their sins had a great share.

As one mourneth for his only son; with a very great and deep, with a long and continued sorrow, with an unfeigned and real sorrow, such as is the sorrow of a father in the death of an only son; they shall retain it inwardly, and express it outwardly, as in the funeral mournings on such occasions.

Shall be in bitterness for him: this speaks the inwardest affection of the mourner; there may be tears in some cases without grief or bitterness in the spirit, but here both are joined; true repentance will bitterly lament the sins which brought sorrows and shame upon our Lord.

As one that is in bitterness for his first-born: this bitterness is compared to the grief of one who loseth his first-born, to confirm and illustrate what he had just before spoken of Christians mourning for Christ.

Zechariah 12:11

In that day, when the Jews shall know, own, and mourn for their sins and for that great sin in crucifying the Lord of glory, shall there be a great mourning; a very great mourning, which is expressed by the greatest the Jews ever were acquainted with. and which for its greatness grew up into a proverb:

The mourning of Hadadrimmon, or the mourning for Josiah slain at Hadadrimmon, a town in the valley of Megiddon. Of this mourning see 2Ch_35:24,25.

Zechariah 12:12

The land; land put for the inhabitants of it, the land in general for the land of Judea, or that where the Jews dwelt, who should every where bear a share in this mourning. Thus some of the Jews from every country where they dwelt, being met at Jerusalem, were pricked at heart, and did mourn over the crucified Messiah, Act_2:5,37,41.

Every family apart; or family by family, expressed in Hebrew, families, families. The royal family in both branches of it, Solomon's and Nathan's. This family, as having greatest portion in Christ, should have been most tender of him, who had been heir on the throne if his kingdom had been of this world, and by descent from David: but since they forgot him, neglected to do their duty to him alive, they remember him, and do their duty towards him, dead; they mourn really and truly.

Their wives apart: the manner of the Jews in mourning was by shutting up themselves, retiring from company and pleasure; here families retire, nay, in the family, wives retire to bewail their sin and their fathers' sin in rejecting Christ. Some there were of this

family who believed in Christ, and mourned, when the gospel was first published to the Jews before it was carried to the Gentiles.

Zechariah 12:13

The sacerdotal tribe were the most bitter and fierce persecutors of Christ, they hired the traitor, they sought witness; the high priest (head of that family) condemned him to die; for all which they shall one day reckon with God, and therefore above other tribes they are particularly named as chief mourners for their injustice and cruelty to Christ. Here is one particular branch of Levi's family mentioned, the family of Shimei, of whom 1Ch_6:17 **23:10**. These two families had been deeply guilty; now they do as eminently concern themselves to mourn for him, to lament the sin, deprecate the fierce wrath of God, and submit to his kingdom, which their fathers did not, would not do. In this family, where most were bitter, bloody enemies to Christ, some had other thoughts of him, and mourned for him. ‘

The sacerdotal tribe were the most bitter and fierce persecutors of Christ, they hired the traitor, they sought witness; the high priest (head of that family) condemned him to die; for all which they shall one day reckon with God, and therefore above other tribes they are particularly named as chief mourners for their injustice and cruelty to Christ. Here is one particular branch of Levi's family mentioned, the family of Shimei, of whom 1Ch_6:17 **23:10**. These two families had been deeply guilty; now they do as eminently concern themselves to mourn for him, to lament the sin, deprecate the fierce wrath of God, and submit to his kingdom, which their fathers did not, would not do. In this family, where most were bitter, bloody enemies to Christ, some had other thoughts of him, and mourned for him.

Zechariah 12:14

It would be somewhat tedious to repeat every family and their wives once, therefore a general comprehensive account may serve; some of every family of the whole remnant of Israel mourn, believe, look to, and obey Christ the Messiah. So the mourning for Christ bears Some proportion to their violent dealing against Christ, and they through faith live by the blood they did spill, and get to glory by him whom they loaded with reproaches. What will

not grace do, when it converteth, accepteth, comforteth, glorifieth such offenders!

Zechariah 13:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 13

The fountain of purgation for Jerusalem, Zec_13:1. The extirpation of idolatry and false prophecy, Zec_13:2-6. The death of Christ, and the saving of a third part after a severe trial, Zec_13:7-9.

In that day; when the Lamb of God shall be offered up a sacrifice for mankind, and the gospel shall be preached in which the glad tidings of our redemption are published.

A fountain: by water and ceremonial washings was legal pollution in many cases purged away, and much of the legal service stood in divers washings; but all these were shadows and types; here is that they typified, the matchless healing and purging fountain, i.e. the blood of Christ; here is the true Siloam, which never failed to heal any that rightly used it; it is Christ.

Opened: the spouse is to Christ a fountain sealed, but Christ is to sinners a fountain opened: under the law he was as the waters of the temple, for the Jew; but now he is opened to us Gentiles, free to all, and of easy access, and of sovereign virtue to heal.

To the house of David; he was every where nearest to them, and though his own kindred did some of them slight him, and not believe in him, yet some others did, and it may intimate to us the first tender of grace made to his own, to whom he came, though they received him not; or the royal family some of them will be benefited by it, and all of them need it; no outward privilege can secure us against the poison of sin, grace alone, this fountain only, can purge it away in great and noble, or mean and base.

To the inhabitants of Jerusalem; to all the Jews before the Gentiles,

To you first, saith the apostle,

God hath sent his Son; but in that it is opened, it is to us Gentiles also. Jerusalem, as image of the whole church, takes in the

Gentiles; so inhabitants of Jerusalem are all to whom the gospel is preached, all penitents.

For sin and for uncleanness; for purging away of all manner of sins and uncleannesses, of which men repent, and from which they depart, according to that Pro_20:9 1Jo_1:9.

Zechariah 13:2

In that day: see Zec_13:1.

I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land; utterly destroy idols and idolatry.

Satan fell from heaven like lightning, as Christ tells us, when the gospel was preached by those he sent; and it is known the birth of Christ silenced the devil, that he could no more give answer to those that inquired at his oracles: the light of the gospel is such, that none of the idols can bear it. The devil put it into the heads of the Romans to keep Christ from being received by public allowance for a God, because he would turn out all the rest of them.

They shall no more be remembered, with veneration, sacrifices, gifts, erecting of temples, depending on or consulting with them; they shall be remembered and abhorred, whereas before they were remembered and adored.

The prophets; either those that, being priests to idols, did consult with them, and pretend to foretell future events; or more likely the false prophets among the Jews, who are prophets as idols are gods.

The unclean spirit, i.e. the devil, which sets the false prophets on work. Christ cast many out of persons possessed, and by his doctrine still doth east out Satan.

Zechariah 13:3

When any shall yet prophesy; whosoever he be that shall pretend hereafter to prophesy through the instigation of that unclean spirit, for it can be from no other, when the Lord shall have fully revealed his mind to us.

His father and his mother that begat him; his dearest friends, they who are by nature/nearest to him, who begat him.

Shall say unto him; shall discourse to him, and inform him what the law of Moses directeth in this case.

Thou shalt not live; which I take to be not the sentence condemnatory, for, being private persons, they could not condemn him; but it is a repetition of the law which saith such shall not live, and then it amounts to this: A false prophet ought not to live, Deu_13:6,8; what then dost thou do to break this law, and endanger thy life? Their oughtest to die for this by the law. The father and mother thus should admonish and show the matter of law and danger, but not judicially pass sentence, and determine what shall be done.

Thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord; thou fallest under that law, Deu_13:6.

Shall thrust him through; or, wound, chastise with stripes that may leave their marks behind them; or rather, shall sharply reprove him, and with cutting words terrify him from the like practice. You read of words that are piercing words, Pro_12:18, words that run through as a sword; and the Chaldee paraphrast on this of our prophet allows the father and mother to deal sharply with their son, they shall rebuke cuttingly. Besides, if it were to be understood of killing, the law directs to stone such a one, Deu_13:10, not to run him through with lance or sword.

Zechariah 13:4

It shall come to pass; by this means it will come to pass, such sharp reproofs, such impartial threats, such convincing arguments, will have a good effect.

The prophets shall be ashamed; these prophets will see their error, and be ashamed, and give over what they blush at, and is their shame.

Neither shall they wear a rough garment: such garments the true prophets were wont to wear, and these cheats had used them for a cover to their juggling hypocrisy; but when thoroughly convinced, none shall need pull, they will themselves cast off those garments.

To deceive; by first seeming to be more holy and strict than they are; and next, on such ill-grounded opinion of the holiness of their

persons, draw them into their opinions, religion, and practice. It is an excellent work of the grace of God to recover deceivers, and to make them turn off the deceiver, and deal plainly and faithfully with others and themselves.

Zechariah 13:5

This verse is this reclaimed man's recantation, or renunciation of his former course, and his solemn promise to take up his own calling, and become a plain honest man, and live upon his labour, to which he was trained up from his youth, and is sorry he ever left it.

This verse is this reclaimed man's recantation, or renunciation of his former course, and his solemn promise to take up his own calling, and become a plain honest man, and live upon his labour, to which he was trained up from his youth, and is sorry he ever left it.

Zechariah 13:6

This verse continueth the account of the reclaimed prophet, and supposeth, what is usual, that some will inquire what was the meaning of the marks or impressions on his hands, whether they were not such as appropriated him to an idol, or declared him a professed diviner.

Then he shall answer, plainly and fully, Not such as you imagine, but

those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends; the scars of the wounds my stubbornness deserved, and the love of my friends gave me under a severe discipline, to recover me from mining myself and others by impostures and lies.

Zechariah 13:7

Many words are spent by interpreters to show what they think to be the connexion of the words; it is easier to say what are the contents and design of them. It is possible they are subjoined to the former to vindicate Christ from the suspicion of an impostor, though he was wounded, for this his Father did foretell by Zechariah four hundred and ninety years, more or less, beforehand, so that these wounds are not marks of an impostor, but testimonies of his truth, and that he is the Messiah.

Awake: it is God commission, or rather prediction, the imperative put for the future.

O sword; i.e. afflictions, persecutions, and the cross.

Against my shepherd; who is my faithful Shepherd, and will lay down his life for my sheep; who became man, that he might be my servant and die.

My fellow, or my equal, who was ever with me, and my delights, Pro_8:30. Man my fellow speaks Christ man with us and God with his Father, God-man in one person. Smite the shepherd; this great and good Shepherd shall be smitten, i.e. die for my sheep, and before he dieth shall suffer much for them.

The sheep shall be scattered; as affrighted, destitute of one to look after them, and which must be partakers in sufferings with their Shepherd.

I will turn mine hand: God will, say some, turn his hand against the little ones, smite them too; but others say this turning the hand is in favour, and for protection; it is a hand turned over them, as if he would keep the blow off them, while others, fitter to bear it, do suffer.

Upon the little ones; new, and therefore weak converts and disciples.

Zechariah 13:8

This verse may be a prediction of the great slaughter Titus made among the Jews, and also an emblem of the multitudes of them that perish, and paucity of them that are saved.

In all the land of Judea, or the whole world.

Two parts; not precisely two, but, more largely, the greater part by far.

Shall be cut off and die, a temporal death, by the sword of Titus, or an eternal death under unbelief and rejecting Christ.

But the third, i.e. a remnant, the lesser part, yet as many as are chosen, *shall be left therein* ; shall escape or be preserved and saved. ‘

This verse may be a prediction of the great slaughter Titus made among the Jews, and also an emblem of the multitudes of them that perish, and paucity of them that are saved.

In all the land of Judea, or the whole world.

Two parts; not precisely two, but, more largely, the greater part by far.

Shall be cut off and die, a temporal death, by the sword of Titus, or an eternal death under unbelief and rejecting Christ.

But the third, i.e. a remnant, the lesser part, yet as many as are chosen, *shall be left therein* ; shall escape or be preserved and saved.

Zechariah 13:9

I will bring the third part through the fire; that part that is preserved shall be brought into afflictions, hot as fire.

And will refine them as silver is refined; these afflictions shall purify them, and so better them, as silver and gold are bettered by the furnace, made fitter to be vessels of honour.

They shall call on my name; pray to me, and own me for their God.

I will hear; I will answer them, and own them for my people, my purified people, &c.

Zechariah 14:1 ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 14

The destruction of Jerusalem, Zec_14:1,2. The coming of Christ, the graces of his kingdom, and the restoration of Jerusalem, Zec_14:3-11. The plague of Jerusalem's enemies, Zec_14:12-15. The remnant shall turn to the Lord, Zec_14:16-19. The holiness of all that belongeth to them, Zec_14:20,21.

Behold: here are things of very great importance, and of very mysterious nature, proposed by the Lord to us, and therefore we are called upon to attend to them.

The day of the Lord, the day which the Lord hath appointed for punishing the sins of his ancient people, day of his sacrifice, Zep_1:8, of vengeance, Joe_2:1,2.

Cometh; hasteth, or will soon overtake you, O sinful, unthankful, bloody Jews, who first despised and next murdered the Messiah!

Thy spoil, all thou hast, O Jerusalem, shall become a prey to thine enemy.

Shall be divided in the midst of thee: thy conquering enemies shall be such absolute masters of thee, that in greatest security they shall divide among themselves what they take from thee, in the very place where they take it: Jerusalem is their own, and all in it, and where they find their own they will take it; so they reckon.

Zechariah 14:2

For: this gives not the reason why, but introduceth an account how, this thing shall be done.

I will gather: God will summon and bring together his army. They do it themselves by their own counsels, for their own works and ends; God also hath his work for them to do, and by his counsel and at his call they shall come.

All nations; the Romans, with the power of their empire, which at that time had the rule over all the known world, or over all the Nations of that part of the world.

Against Jerusalem to battle; to make war with the Jews, which lasted some years, and cost many thousand lives, and ended at last as our prophet foretold.

The city shall be taken, by assault and force, whereby all lay at mercy of the soldiers, who showed little to those who first refused the mercy of their God, and, justly given up by God to their own blind, obstinate wills, refused the mercy of their enemy also.

The houses rifled; all houses pillaged, and all in them Worth taking was taken away.

The women ravished; wives, widows, and virgins barbarously violated.

Half of the city; a certain part for uncertain, or, in common speech, many; were it one half precisely it would be but a sixth part of what were before the wars; two-thirds being cut off, as

Zec_13:8, and one-third remaining, of which one half is for captivity.

The residue of the people; that small number of the Jews which fled to Pella, and who were spared by Titus.

Shall not be cut off from the city; literally, were not forbidden to dwell in or about the city; mystically, were not cut off from the church, nor ceased to be a church; this the more likely, for Titus utterly ruined the city.

Zechariah 14:3

Then, after that he hath sufficiently punished Jerusalem and the rest of the Jews,

shall the Lord go forth, out of his holy place, (spoken after the manner of men,) as a warrior prepared for battle.

Fight against those nations, which had sacked Jerusalem, and oppressed his people.

As when he fought in the day of battle; as in any of those days past, when God fought for his people and gave them great victories.

Zechariah 14:4

Zec_14:3, the Lord is said to come forth to fight for his people, this 4th verse tells us where he will take his post, or make a stand, viz. on Mount Olivet, which for its situation, in its height, and nearness to Jerusalem and the temple, might appear a convenient post for succours to post themselves on. God (speaking after the manner of men) promiseth succours to his church, and assureth her of his nearness to her, and of the prospect he hath over all that is about her, or in her; that she might be encouraged to wait on God, who is so near to her.

Before Jerusalem on the east; a geographical description of the situation of this mountain with respect to Jerusalem.

Shall cleave in the midst thereof; as if it were sensible of the majesty of God, who stands upon it: this cleaves, Sinai melted, at the presence of the God of the whole earth.

A very great valley; the consequent of this dividing of the mountain, a mighty valley appears running straight from east to

west; so there should be plain and easy access from the place of the feet of the Lord unto Jerusalem.

Half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south; as if it knew how to comply with the design of God, and withdraw on each hand far enough out of the way, and be no hinderance to the intended relief of the church. So I judge (if these things were not by vision represented to the prophet, which I will not avow, though I may think so) the prophet doth parabolically set forth the future preservation and deliverance of the church of Christ: and suppose we then what wonderful effects the presence of God wrought of old whenever he appeared to rescue his people; how mountains fled, or melted, or sunk into plains, or, as here is said, divided, and made a deep and large valley, i.e. how every obstacle removed, that the relief might be sure and easy; so shall it be with the church of Christ, the gospel Jerusalem, in all times of its troubles; and though Jewish Jerusalem, that ancient city, be ruined, never to be built, yet a more excellent city, the Christian Jerusalem, shall be built, guarded, rescued, and never ruined; for the feet of the Lord shall stand so near to her, as Olivet to Jerusalem, and the way plain and easy before him on purpose to save her. In this manner I understand somewhat of the text, but I cannot suit it with particular accommodation of the events here mentioned, if I look on it as a prediction of what shall be done according to the letter, or be matter of history. Nor do I meet with any that do tell me any such thing hath been done between the time of Zechariah's prophesying and Titus wasting and sacking Jerusalem, nor shall any such thing ever be if material Jerusalem never be built.

Zechariah 14:5

And ye, you that are members of the church, and whom God doth in wonderful power and majesty come to save,

shall flee; filled with apprehensions of such strange things, and troubled at the convulsions and strugglings of nations against God and you, shall, as in a great fear, flee to some place of safety and repose; you will flee the valley itself which God maketh: by terrible things in righteousness doth God answer, and his people tremble before him when he cometh to save them. So here are represented to us a people wonderfully saved, and astonished at

the methods of it; God makes valleys in the midst of mountains, and they (for whose good they are made) flee those valleys. So the words were better read; our marginal readings and the Gallic version do so read it.

For, or *although* , or

notwithstanding, this

valley reach unto Azal, which speaks, say some, a separate place, i.e. provided of God for their safety a Zoar for Lot, or Pella for the citizens of Jerusalem. They shall, as is usual in great frights and consternation of mind, not see how safe they are, or whither to go, but some will run for a while from or beyond their refuge.

As ye fled from before the earthquake: this was some dreadful earthquake, and put the people into a mighty fear, and made them flee in all haste; it is mentioned Amo_1:1; and the prophet tells us, that when God shakes the kingdoms of his enemies, to make a plain and level way for his ransomed ones, it shall make them flee for fear too.

The Lord my God shall come: as thus rendered it gives reason of this commotion of mind and this hasty flight. But it would be plainer if it were, as it may be, I think, read, *and* , or *yet* , *O Lord my God, come, and bring all the saints with thee* . As if it were said, Though it will, O Lord, put us into such fears; yet without such wonderful works we shall not have our hopes, nor see thy salvation; therefore, O Lord my God, come, and bring thy saints, holy ones, angels, with thee: and so will this be like that of St. John, Rev_22:20, shutting up the visions of the new heaven and the new earth, and the appendages of them, with,

Come, Lord Jesus.

Zechariah 14:6

In that day; whilst God is fighting with the enemies of his church, the nations that fought against Jerusalem.

The light; good estate, peace, and welfare.

Shall not be clear; unmixed good, all light, it will not be so well with the church.

Nor dark; not so sad as all darkness, there shall be a temper of both, some peace with some trouble; some prosperity with some adversity; some mercy in midst of judgment to allay the bitterness of judgment, and some judgment with our mercies to allay their sweetness.

Zechariah 14:7

It shall be one day; one continued day, no setting of the sun to make it quite night; God will always act in order to the full salvation of his spiritual Jerusalem.

Known unto the Lord; the Lord knows when it shall begin, how long last, and how and when it shall (not as other days, end in a night, but) end in glorious light; till then it is enough for us that our God knows this day that is mixed of trouble and of peace.

At evening time, when other days end,

it shall be light; this shall be all light and glory, Isa_58:8
Psa_97:11.

Zechariah 14:8

In that day; when the gospel shall be preached, and the days of dark ceremonies among the Jews, and darker ignorance and idolatry among the heathen, shall end.

Living waters; not only such as springs and fountains afford, living waters in opposition to standing, muddy, and dead waters; but such as give life, Eze_47:1,6,7; the quickening, saving truths of the gospel, with all its ordinances in purity.

Shall go out, spread themselves or flow down as currents from good springs,

from Jerusalem; the church of Christ, the true Jerusalem.

Toward the former sea, or eastern sea, so far eastward as the sea will give leave; and who knows that sea?

Toward the hinder sea, or western sea. Synecdochically it is both east, west, north, and south: so from Jerusalem, i.e. the church. the doctrine of the gospel is preached abroad, and runs down as doth living water.

In summer and in winter shall it be; perpetually, without intermission or interruption, these waters should never dry away, nor ever lose their healing virtue.

Zechariah 14:9

The Lord; God, Father, Son, and Spirit,

Shall be King; acknowledged to be, men shall confess, that as he only is, so he ought to be owned, only true God, and King of his church.

Over all the earth; over the heathen. the Gentiles or Roman empire, as well as once over the Jewish state.

In that day of deposing idols, and advancing the true God, all his churches shall east off idolatry, and agree in worshipping one God, in one way of spiritual worship and hearty obedience.

Zechariah 14:10

All the land; the whole land of Judea, here, is type of the whole earth, seat of the catholic church, filled with the knowledge of God. and abounding in multitudes of converts.

Shall be turned as a plain; all high, uneven places, all high thoughts and imaginations, all rocky and barren ground, changed into fruitful vineyards. So the church of Christ shall be fruitful, humble, and lovely. as pastures rich in sheep, and rich for sheep.

From Geba, the north boundary of the land, to Rimmon, the south boundary of Judea.

Jerusalem; which taken here not literally, but mystically, is the church of Christ in gospel days; and by the repair of all parts of this Jerusalem, as were described, is shadowed out the full and complete building of the church on all sides, north, south, west, and east.

It shall be lifted up; raised out of the dust and rubbish to which enemies had brought her, through God's permission; but never should be able to keep her in that low state, since God was resolved to raise her.

And inhabited in her place: still it is emblematical of the Christian church.

Benjamin's gate north-east,

corner-gate north-west,

Hananeel's tower south, wine-presses north; that is, in brief, completely round the city.

Zechariah 14:11

Men, i.e. many for number, or eminent for worth,

shall dwell in it: as it was type, this was verified, say some, when in league with Bacchides and succeeding kings. But in the antitype, to which Zechariah looks, it is now, as it hath been, fulfilled, and more fully shall be, when the fulness of the Gentiles cometh in.

There shall be no more utter destruction; there may be afflictions and troubles, but no utter wasting of Jerusalem; the gates of hell shall not prevail.

But Jerusalem, the antitype, the gospel church,

shall be safely inhabited; not secure from troubles, but secure enough from total destruction.

Zechariah 14:12

That have fought against; maliciously to destroy, and waste, and extirpate Jerusalem; the ringleaders, especially such as Antiochus, Herod, &c.

Their flesh shall consume away; when they are fat, fleshy, and strong, their flesh or strength shall utterly perish.

While they stand on their feet; either in arms ready to fight, or so suddenly they shall not have time to sit down; a very sudden death is threatened to them.

Their eyes shall consume away in their holes; a dreadful and exemplary blindness shall seize them.

Their tongue shall consume away in their mouth; in which member, by strange judgments on them, some persecutors also have felt God's hand.

Zechariah 14:13

In that day; when God punisheth those that invaded and wasted Jerusalem, his church.

A great tumult; confusion, vexation, and inclination to turn all upside down.

From the Lord; from the just displeasure of God, and in revenge on them for troubling his people.

Shall be among them, the bloody, cruel, and insatiable enemies of Jerusalem.

His hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour; from murmurs and grudgings one against another, they shall at last run into civil wars, and fight one with another, and so destroy themselves, and revenge Jerusalem. As they did, Jud_7:22 **9:23**.

Zechariah 14:14

Judah; the Jews, and particularly those of the tribe of Judah, and possibly Judas Maccabeus might be intended too, as those who in that day were valiant warriors, and successful: against the church's enemies. And many such have been among the Christians too since those days.

Shall fight, with courage, good conduct, and success.

At Jerusalem; both in the land of Judea, and also at Jerusalem.

The wealth of all the heathen; the nations round about them, who having by foreign war peeled and robbed many nations, had brought it herod, and now God gave it to the Jews; and in like manner have many Christians spoiled those that spoiled them. ‘

Judah; the Jews, and particularly those of the tribe of Judah, and possibly Judas Maccabeus might be intended too, as those who in that day were valiant warriors, and successful: against the church's enemies. And many such have been among the Christians too since those days.

Shall fight, with courage, good conduct, and success.

At Jerusalem; both in the land of Judea, and also at Jerusalem.

The wealth of all the heathen; the nations round about them, who having by foreign war peeled and robbed many nations, had brought it herod, and now God gave it to the Jews; and in like manner have many Christians spoiled those that spoiled them.

Zechariah 14:15

Those creatures which the enemy in the wars made use of against the church, shall by the hand of God be suddenly and strangely either destroyed or made useless, neither fit to annoy the church nor to benefit their owners. As God destroyed much of the cattle of the Egyptians by hail, and murrain, &c.; so now shall it be with the cattle of these persecutors, they shall perish with their masters. The horses, as the horsemen, were drowned in the Red Sea. ‘

Those creatures which the enemy in the wars made use of against the church, shall by the hand of God be suddenly and strangely either destroyed or made useless, neither fit to annoy the church nor to benefit their owners. As God destroyed much of the cattle of the Egyptians by hail, and murrain, &c.; so now shall it be with the cattle of these persecutors, they shall perish with their masters. The horses, as the horsemen, were drowned in the Red Sea.

Zechariah 14:16

Every one that is left; such as escape the stroke, and are by mercy reserved, very many of them, among all the nations, shall consider God’s hand, repent, and submit themselves to his law; they shall, (as many did,) on sight of God’s hand for the church, and against the church’s enemies, convert, become proselytes and Christians.

Shall even go up from year to year to worship: by a ceremonial phrase and usage, which shadowed out a better worship, the prophet foretells, the constant zeal and care the converted Gentiles should have to worship the Lord.

To keep the feast of tabernacles; one solemn festival, by a figure, put for all the days consecrated to God for holy worship, and this perhaps with an eye to Christ’s tabernacling with us, and may point to the Christian sabbath. ‘

Every one that is left; such as escape the stroke, and are by mercy reserved, very many of them, among all the nations, shall consider God’s hand, repent, and submit themselves to his law; they shall, (as many did,) on sight of God’s hand for the church, and against the church’s enemies, convert, become proselytes and Christians.

Shall even go up from year to year to worship: by a ceremonial phrase and usage, which shadowed out a better worship, the prophet foretells, the constant zeal and care the converted Gentiles should have to worship the Lord.

To keep the feast of tabernacles; one solemn festival, by a figure, put for all the days consecrated to God for holy worship, and this perhaps with an eye to Christ's tabernacling with us, and may point to the Christian sabbath.

Zechariah 14:17

Whoso will not come up, if there be any more remiss than they ought herein, and neglect to worship the Lord, even upon them shall be no rain; they shall be punished with want of rain, and with want of the blessings which plentiful and seasonable rain produceth, their land shall be barren.

Zechariah 14:18

Egypt should think, though they had no rain, they should not be much losers by that, having the Nile to water their ground and make it fruitful. God by his prophet answers them, they shall fall under penury and famine, the very selfsame punishment which shall fall on other nations, if they neglected his worship. The Lord hath more ways than one to withhold the fruits of the earth, and send famine among people.

Zechariah 14:19

And what he saith of Egypt, he saith of all contemners of his law and worship; their sin is the same, their punishment shall be the same, for with God is no respect of persons.

Zechariah 14:20

In that day; when the nations are converted to God, as it is Zec_14:16.

Shall there be upon the bells of the horses; written as it were on every common thing; such as the bells, bridles. or collars, or stables of horses; in these very things, i.e. the use of them, they should make it appear they were for God and for his worship, wheresoever these things may serve or promote it.

Holiness unto the Lord: this was the inscription on the rich mitre of the Jewish high priest, denoting the great holiness of his office,

and how he was dedicated to God, and that he ought to keep himself holy in all things, especially in things of Divine worship. Now in these days of the gospel, when Gentiles are converted to Christ, made priests unto God, are made holy nations, a royal priesthood, the grace of God shall so abound and prevail, that common, ordinary things in the hands of Christians, much more their persons, shall hear the dedicating inscription of

Holiness to the Lord, and by their study of holiness they shall make good their motto.

The pots; which were used in the kitchens of the temple, for the use of the priest, and were not accounted so sacred as the utensils nearer to the sacrifices and altar.

Shall be like the bowls; which received the blood of the sacrifices, and retained it, until the ministering priest had finished his service, and sprinkled it as commanded: now these, as appropriated to be used nearer to the altar, were more esteemed as more holy; so should holiness in these days spoken of exceed the holiness of those former days. ‘

MALACHI

Zechariah 14:21

Every pot; the utensils of private houses shall be so dedicated to God’s service, that without scruple they shall on occasion be used, or might be used, in the worship of God.

In Jerusalem and in Judah; the types, but the gospel church is the antitype; in the times hereof every family shall be a temple in which God shall be worshipped, and their house-pots in the worship of God shall be in extraordinary cases used without scruples.

Holiness unto the Lord of hosts: see Zec_14:20.

All they that sacrifice: in allusion to sacrifices, the prophet expresseth all religious affections, practice, and worship, which shall be as pleasing to God as were the sacrifices of his people offered up with Divine warrant and approbation.

Shall come and take of them, freely, without scruple,

and seethe therein; seethe that part of the sacrifice which pertaineth to the priests and to the offerer to feast on, in their house-pots.

There shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts; any of the accursed nation, or one who makes merchandise of religion. In a word, by allusion used here, we understand that time will come, when scrupulous adhering to ceremonies shall not be, as formerly it was, deemed so necessary, so material in the worship; but all shall know that the Lord hath greatest pleasure in upright, hearty, and sincere love and holiness.

MALACHI

THE ARGUMENT

Concerning this prophet, some have thought (but without good and sufficient ground) that he was an angel in the form of a man; others think him to be Ezra; but as it is the plainer, so the surer, opinion that he was a prophet of that name, and a man distinct from Ezra, and sent the last of all the prophets. His time of appearing among the Jews cannot be determined precisely, but it is best guessed to have been about the times of Nehemiah's reforming the strange marriages, **#Ne 13:23,28**, with **#Mal 2:11**, and when he reformed the sacrilegious detaining of tithes, **#Ne 13:10,11**, with **#Mal 3:8**, as Doctor Lightfoot observeth. Now this reformation of Nehemiah was about A.M. 3519, as Doctor Lightfoot, or 3545, as Helvicus, or 3589, as Archbishop Usher's Annals. Whatever was his time of appearing, it is certain he lived in a very vicious age, in which priests as well as people were leavened with either perverse thoughts of the Divine Providence, or brutish atheism, denying the Deity and Providence, contemptuous thoughts of the worship of God, sacrilegious practices, robbing God of tithes and offerings, shameless justifying these their practices, boundless or monstrous unfaithfulness to their wives, casting off Jewish to marry Gentile wives, or else superinducing the Gentile women, and enslaving the Jewish to them; casting off the law of God, or, which is equally bad, if not worse, wresting it to their own sinful sentiments. All which he doth severely reprove, and requires them to reform, and foretells the day of the Messiah's coming to sit as a refiner and purifier; whose appearing such sinners and sins would not be able to bear; and tells them of his forerunner, who in the spirit and power of Elias should come, and prepare a people for the Messiah: till then, (as their duty was,) he commands them in the name and by authority from God, that they remember the law of Moses, which God commanded in Horeb; hereby intimating some great change in the law at the coming of the Messiah; and intimating also, that they should expect no more prophet till the Great Prophet himself should come unto them.

MALACHI CHAPTER 1

Malachi 1:1

God by Malachi complaineth of Israel's ingratitude, Mal_1:1-5 and of the profane disrespect shown to God's worship, Mal_1:6-13. The curse of corrupt offerings; Mal_1:14.

The burden: see Zec_9:1 Nah_1:1. Usually it imports sad threats against those concerned in it, though sometimes it may be no more than the message of God.

Of the word of the Lord: the authority was Divine on which this prophet spake.

Malachi: my messenger, (saith the Lord,) so the Hebrew sounds. My angel, as some, though they err who take him to be an angel conversing with Jews in the form of a man; but angel, taken in the grammatical sense, i.e. messenger, he was, and God's messenger, the last of the prophets sent to Israel before the great Prophet Messiah came. That he was Mordecai, or Ezra, as some conjecture without good ground, or who he was, of what tribe or family, the Scripture gives us no account, and we make no guess. His prophecy is of Divine authority, and so cited by three of the four evangelists, Mat_11:10 Mar_1:2 Luk_1:16; and by St. Paul, Rom_9:13.

Malachi 1:2

I have loved you: God asserts his ancient love, that which he had in many generations past showed: I have, time out of mind, yea, from before the birth of your father Jacob, and in truth before Abraham was, designed more kindness to you than to others, and from the time of Jacob I have undeniably showed it. And this deserved, what I have not found from you, a love corresponding somewhat to mine; but instead of such love, some are ready to say they saw no such thing, or to dispute perversely in what it appeared.

You; both personally considered and relatively, as you were in your fathers and progenitors.

Saith the Lord: their ingratitude extorts this solemn protestation, they should readily have owned, and not put God to avow the love he had shown them.

Yet ye say; or, and you do querulously and with ignorance enough object to me, and put me on it to vindicate my love, and expose your ingratitude.

Wherein? or, for what? is there not some cause? did not Abraham's love deserve a love for us his posterity? Most perverse pride!

Wherein hast thou loved us? who have been captives and groaned under the miseries of it all our days till of late; is this love to us? Since they are supposed thus to object, by cutting questions, God will give them answer:

Was not Esau Jacob's brother? had they not one and the same grandfather? was not Abraham as near to one as to the other? did not one father beget them, and one mother bear them? did they not lie together in the same womb? was there not as much of Abraham and Isaac in Esau as in Jacob? Or what of nature, consanguinity, and outward privilege was there in one more than in the other, whatever that was, Esau might claim, for he was the eldest. In Esau's person his progeny is included, as appears next verse.

Yet I loved Jacob; the younger brother, and your father, O unthankful Jews! I preferred him to the birthright, and this of free love, before any merit could be dreamed of; I did love his person, and have loved his posterity, with an unparalleled love, and showed it to all.

I have loved you: God asserts his ancient love, that which he had in many generations past showed: I have, time out of mind, yea, from before the birth of your father Jacob, and in truth before Abraham was, designed more kindness to you than to others, and from the time of Jacob I have undeniably showed it. And this deserved, what I have not found from you, a love corresponding somewhat to mine; but instead of such love, some are ready to say they saw no such thing, or to dispute perversely in what it appeared.

You; both personally considered and relatively, as you were in your fathers and progenitors.

Saith the Lord: their ingratitude extorts this solemn protestation, they should readily have owned, and not put God to avow the love he had shown them.

Yet ye say; or, and you do querulously and with ignorance enough object to me, and put me on it to vindicate my love, and expose your ingratitude.

Wherein? or, for what? is there not some cause? did not Abraham's love deserve a love for us his posterity? Most perverse pride!

Wherein hast thou loved us? who have been captives and groaned under the miseries of it all our days till of late; is this love to us? Since they are supposed thus to object, by cutting questions, God will give them answer:

Was not Esau Jacob's brother? had they not one and the same grandfather? was not Abraham as near to one as to the other? did not one father beget them, and one mother bear them? did they not lie together in the same womb? was there not as much of Abraham and Isaac in Esau as in Jacob? Or what of nature, consanguinity, and outward privilege was there in one more than in the other, whatever that was, Esau might claim, for he was the eldest. In Esau's person his progeny is included, as appears next verse.

Yet I loved Jacob; the younger brother, and your father, O unthankful Jews! I preferred him to the birthright, and this of free love, before any merit could be dreamed of; I did love his person, and have loved his posterity, with an unparalleled love, and showed it to all.

Malachi 1:3

I hated; I loved not Esau or his posterity as I loved Jacob and his posterity: this not loving, comparatively, is a hating, God showed not the same kindness to the twin brothers; the one was more enriched with the fruits of God's love, and had cause to be thankful; the other had no cause to complain, for God did him no wrong.

Esau; containing his posterity with him; for though the hatred or lesser love began towards Esau's person, yet the effects of it appeared more manifestly in Esau's posterity.

His mountains and his heritage; Mount Seir with the neighbouring mountains given to Esau Deu_2:5 Jos_24:4 for inheritance, as here it is said, and which he and his posterity did enjoy about one thousand two hundred years.

Waste, by Nebuchadnezzar's arms five years after the sacking of Jerusalem, as foretold by Ezekiel, **Eze 35**. The people were slain or captivated, or forced to flee from the sword of the enemy, their cities taken, plundered, and burnt. It is possible that they might meet with worse usage than the Jews met with herein; however, their state seems equal, and here is no token of unequal hatred; but what follows doth manifestly discover it, for whereas Jacob's captivity returned, and their cities were rebuilt, Esau's never were.

For the dragons; or jackals, or owls, for the word is so used and explained by some; or all these with dragons doleful creatures, which delight in desolate places; by which the utter desolation, and the perpetuity of the desolation, of Esau is signified.

Malachi 1:4

We are impoverished: here the prophet introduceth Edom reflecting on its present low condition, and taking up resolutions of bettering their condition: We are now, as the Jews were five years before, exceedingly spoiled by Nebuchadnezzar, who hath rifled our houses, burnt our cities, and captivated our citizens.

We will return; this speaks their insolence: or shall; this speaks their hopes of such a return as Jacob's posterity had after seventy years.

Build the desolate places; repair their cities, as Jerusalem was repaired by the returned captivity. They may do so for a while, but, saith God, I will throw it down; as he did in the times of the Maccabees.

They shall call them, The border of wickedness; they will be by their flagitious lives, after they a little recover themselves, a most wicked people, and so notorious that all their neighbours shall brand them for it, and presage a curse will follow them.

The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever; they will so highly provoke God, that his indignation will be kindled against them, and will burn for ever.

Malachi 1:5

You Jews who are now returned from captivity, and are blest with a rebuilt temple and city, who are settled in civil and sacred concerns,

your eyes shall see; some of you must needs, more will, and all might, observe what I have said, that my love is toward you, whom I plant, build up, and prosper, while I root up, pull down, and destroy your neighbouring kindred Edom.

Ye shall say; you should in point of duty, and some of you will take notice of it, and confess it.

The Lord will be magnified; or, Let the Lord be magnified, let his name be great and his praise great for his free love to Israel, for his great displeasure against the border of wickedness, for his truth in both.

From the border of Israel; let Israel from all his borders give God this praise. You Jews who are now returned from captivity, and are blest with a rebuilt temple and city, who are settled in civil and sacred concerns,

your eyes shall see; some of you must needs, more will, and all might, observe what I have said, that my love is toward you, whom I plant, build up, and prosper, while I root up, pull down, and destroy your neighbouring kindred Edom.

Ye shall say; you should in point of duty, and some of you will take notice of it, and confess it.

The Lord will be magnified; or, Let the Lord be magnified, let his name be great and his praise great for his free love to Israel, for his great displeasure against the border of wickedness, for his truth in both.

From the border of Israel; let Israel from all his borders give God this praise.

Malachi 1:6

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: this is a practical principle engraven on the hearts of mankind, a law which all own, a truth written with a sunbeam, and which is violated by none but unnatural, brutish men.

If then I be a father: this *if* no way doubts, but it is made a supposition grounded on a confessed, ancient, and peculiar adoption and redemption, by virtue whereof the seed of Jacob had God to their Father and Master; and this undisputed relation,

If I be, & c., doth more piercingly affect the mind when it is demanded, Where is your performance of duty, where the honour you give me?.

Where is mine honour? the internal, in high apprehensions and esteem with answerable affections; the external, in dutiful behaviour and carriage; where the ready, ingenuous, and delightful obedience, &c.?

If I be a master, where is my fear? servants do fear their masters, and this fear, though servile, yet is due to a master, it is a quality suiting the relation; and now where is either of them?

Unto you, O priests: had undutifulness and irreverence been found among the ignorant people who knew not the law, nor were in capacity of knowing me as you, it might have been a little excusable, yet a great sin; but you, O priests, nearest of any to me, whose business is to know me, who live upon my sacrifices, have me in a most peculiar manner your portion, you have, like Eli's sons, despised me yourselves, and made others do so too; thought and spoke contemptibly of what is most venerable.

My name; God, his sacrifices and oblations, his law and worship.

And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? proud and hardened, they dispute it with God and his prophets.

Malachi 1:7

Ye offer polluted bread; you through covetousness take any the people bring, whether such as the law requires or no. If it answer not the perfection of the law, yet you first make it serve me, through your contempt of me, and then to serve your turn to feed you and yours.

Polluted; either by ill-managing it, and misordering what is good and allowable, or accepting what is disallowed and forbidden, because of its blemishes.

Bread; either the shew-bread, of which Exo_25:30; or meat-offerings, Exo_29:41 **Le 2 Num 28:5**; or, in a more large sense, all that was to be offered unto God, sacrifices and oblations.

Upon mine altar: by this it appears bread is to be expounded here of sacrifices, and not to be confined to the narrow bounds of this one kind.

And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? they stand upon their own justification, and proudly contend with God, either implying they did not offer such polluted things, or if they were defective, and in law sense polluted, yet that this did redound to God, or affect him no more than the perfection of them could add to him.

In that ye say; perhaps in words, however by your deeds you speak your thoughts and judgment; you think so, and then act so.

The table; before it was altar, now it is table, not to be opposed each to other, but comprehending both, and all that was offered unto God on both.

Is contemptible; as if they measured sacrifice and oblation by the splendour and riches of the temple and altar; the first were more pompous than the second, and these priests probably thought they might abate in the qualities of the offerings, as this temple abated in its splendour; they contemned this, and then contemn those offerings.

Malachi 1:8

If ye offer the blind: this *if* implies they had done so, it chargeth them with somewhat in matter of practice among them; the lame and sick also they had offered.

Is it not evil? is it not against the express command of God, Lev_22:22-24 Deu_15:21? The living God should have living sacrifices, and God who is perfect should have perfect sacrifices. But the people bringing such, the priests accepting such, do in effect tell the world they thought such sacrifices good enough for

that God they were offered to: so great profaneness runs through this whole carriage.

Offer it now unto thy governor; not their king, for they had none; but governors they had, and these the Jews revered, and would not dare do that to them they do boldly with God daily.

Will he be pleased with thee? your governor would not thank you, he would be angry with you, and account it an affront; and shall not the Lord of hosts much more account it an indignity offered unto him? People in bringing, priests in accepting, these blemished oblations, which were not good enough for a man, did sin greatly, and spake their apprehensions of God to be contemptible and slight.

Malachi 1:9

And now I, Malachi,

pray you, O priests, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us; intercede with God for this sinful people, among which (with the modesty that is usual among God's saints) he rangeth himself; entreat they may find grace with God, and be pardoned.

This detestable contempt of God, his altar, and worship,

hath been by your means; you, O priests, have been great occasions of this, it is more your sin, though too much theirs; beg, then, that it may be forgiven, repent and pray, or you will not be regarded. Some think the whole verse to be an irony against those priests and their sacrifices.

Malachi 1:10

Some make this verse to be a kind of wish that there were some among them that would shut up the doors of the temple, and keep out such sacrifices and sacrificers; it would be less displeasing to God, it were better not done at all that so ill done, and so long as it is so ill done God can have no pleasure in it or them. Others make it a reproof of the priests upbraided for their profane contempt of God, and for their inexcusable negligence, while they are so well paid for all their service, be it ever so little and inconsiderable, as the lighting a fire on the altar, or shutting the doors of the temple: Inexcusable dishonesty, to receive large wages, and neglect your work!

I have no pleasure in you; I cannot be pleased with such servants and services: or it is a meiosis, I am very greatly displeased with you.

Neither will I accept an offering at your hand; whilst you are thus profane and contemptuous, I will never accept your gifts, but reject you and them.

Malachi 1:11

This verse is a very full and plain prediction or promise made on behalf of the Gentiles, that they should be a people to the Lord, and should exalt his name, and worship him in a pure way, and well-pleasing to the Lord. That when he casteth off ceremonial services and carnal ordinances, he will set up spiritual and heavenly, and all nations, from east to west, shall submit to them, and sanctify the holy and reverend name of God in them.

Incense; a law term for a gospel duty; and under this type is contained the prayers and praises, nay, the whole gospel worship is that incense which shall be offered unto God, which is in the verse called a pure offering.

A pure offering; both sincere, in opposition to hypocrisy, and holy, in opposition to impurity, and purged from superstition and idolatry. The sum of this verse is contained in that Joh_4:21-24.

Malachi 1:12

But ye, O priests, principally and first; the people next, by their examples;

have profaned it; used it as a common thing, and valued it at a strange undervalue, as if neither excellent nor useful.

Ye say; by your deportment you say so; perhaps you do not say so in words, this were two impudent indeed.

The table of the Lord is polluted; not a sacred thing, or to be revered.

His meat; either the meat which fell to the priests' share, and was for them to live upon, this they despised; or else the portion which did belong to God himself, and was laid upon the altar; they were neither pleased with that the Lord did reserve to himself, nor with that he gave to them, but they found fault with both.

Is contemptible; a poor, sordid allowance, scarce fit for meaner persons and less service.

Malachi 1:13

Ye said also; to those sins before mentioned, the priests chiefly, and the people with them, added this also, that they openly complained of God's service.

Behold, what a weariness! what a toil and drudgery is it to observe every point of the law about ordering ourselves and the sacrifices!

Ye have snuffed at it, in token of discontent, and that you thought it was all needless labour; would not examine your sacrifices as you should.

Ye brought that which was torn, & c.: for want of value for the ordinance, and patience in examining whether the sacrifice were perfect and according to law, you priests accepted and offered the torn, and blind, &c., which are expressly forbidden to be made sacrifices: see Mal_1:8.

Thus ye brought an offering; with such minds, snuffing at my service, and with such sacrifices, unfit for mine altar, have they wearied themselves somewhat, but their God more.

Should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord, i.e. it is not at all fit to be accepted, nor will our God receive it.

Malachi 1:14

Now comes a thunder-clap from heaven against sinners, who were before reprov'd.

Cursed be the deceiver; the hypocrite, that doth deceive man, and would deceive God; the false heart, that intends one thing and pretends another, would seem to offer a sacrifice of the best, but puts God off with the worst.

A male; a perfect male, such as God requireth and accepteth.

Voweth: in vows God required very perfect and unblemished offerings, Lev_22:18,19; but there are jugglers that vow corrupt things, when they have what is perfect, and should vow that.

And sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; solemnly sacrificeth the worst, wholly unfit for acceptance. Any thing but the best we have is this corrupt thing, for the best we have is justly commanded, and that only is acceptable to the Lord.

I am a great King; very full of majesty, and therefore will by no means be slighted.

My name is dreadful among the heathen: heathens reverence this name, and will do so when converted, and you Jews ought not to undervalue it. Now comes a thunder-clap from heaven against sinners, who were before reprov'd.

Cursed be the deceiver; the hypocrite, that doth deceive man, and would deceive God; the false heart, that intends one thing and pretends another, would seem to offer a sacrifice of the best, but puts God off with the worst.

A male; a perfect male, such as God requireth and accepteth.

Voweth: in vows God required very perfect and unblemished offerings, Lev_22:18,19; but there are jugglers that vow corrupt things, when they have what is perfect, and should vow that.

And sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; solemnly sacrificeth the worst, wholly unfit for acceptance. Any thing but the best we have is this corrupt thing, for the best we have is justly commanded, and that only is acceptable to the Lord.

I am a great King; very full of majesty, and therefore will by no means be slighted.

My name is dreadful among the heathen: heathens reverence this name, and will do so when converted, and you Jews ought not to undervalue it.

Malachi 2:1 MALACHI CHAPTER 2

The priests are sharply reprov'd for profaning the covenant which was given them, Mal_2:1-9; and the people for marrying strange wives, Mal_2:10-12, and treacherously putting away their former ones, Mal_2:13-16; and for impiety, Mal_2:17.

This commandment; either this which he had already minded them of about the sacrifices, what ought to be offered and what refused; if the people brought defective sheep or oxen, they who were priests ought not to have admitted, they ought not to have offered them upon God's altar: or this commandment he now brings from God to them, and which is contained in this chapter.

Is for you; by especial direction it is sent to you, and look to it that you obey it.

Malachi 2:2

If ye will not hear: this *if* to the prophet was dubious, but to God, who sent the prophet, it was not doubtful; but it was for monition to the priests and Jews, and implied a condition of mercy if they would yet hear, but an inevitable curse if they did not hear.

If ye will not lay it to heart; if you do not consider what you hear, to do the good, to forbear the evil.

To give glory unto my name, by a due and holy manner of sacrificing and offering incense; in neglect of which you have greatly sinned, and dishonoured me, and polluted my name and altar.

I will even send a curse: it is a comprehensive threat, many miseries in one word; it is a blast on their good hoped for, and it is poison in the good possessed, and when it is, as here, sent of God, it will surely do both, it will be a blast on hopes, it will be poison in what is possessed and should be enjoyed.

Upon you; all, both priests and people, but especially on the priests.

Your blessings; all the good, sweet, necessary supports of life, and comforts of yourselves and yours.

I have cursed them already; you have so long polluted my name, and would not reform, that I have already sent out the curse, and it is in part upon you, though you are not sensible of it, nor will feel it, and this is forerunner of greater curses yet coming, unless you repent.

Because ye do not lay it to heart: the sin was great in that you polluted my name, but it becomes much greater when you add

impenitence to it, and harden yourselves, and will not lay it to heart; therefore the curse is gone out with commission from God to seize you.

Malachi 2:3

Ver. 3 **Behold**; note it well, and consider.

I will corrupt your seed; take away the prolific virtue and strength of it, that it shall bring forth none or little fruit: your seed you make plentiful, but you cannot make your harvest so, nor will I, till you give me the glory I contend for, and will have ere I have done. I will rebuke or check your seed, which will surcease to grow thereupon: though your vices checked thrive still, your seed for harvest cannot grow up under my checks.

Spread dung upon your faces: it is an expression of greatest contempt cast upon a person; it is a token of utmost undervalue and scorn: so I will expose you, as you have exposed my name to contempt.

The dung of your solemn feasts; your most solemn days and feasts, which are by you accounted most holy, and in which you think you offer the most holy and acceptable sacrifices, shall be as loathsome to me as dung, and shall make you, who offer them illegally, as polluted, unclean, and loathsome as if I had thrown the dung of those sacrifices into your faces.

One shall take you away with it; you shall be taken away with it, removed as unclean as the dung itself, as unfit as that to be in the temple, as fit to be cast out to the dunghill; so contemptible shall you be, if you lay it not to heart.

Malachi 2:4

And ye, O priests,

shall know, by sense and feeling, by woeful experience; or, know ye, i.e. but what I speak now, and will do among you. I have sent this commandment; admonition, reproof, and exhortation, to look more carefully for the future, that you do not dishonour me, and make mine altar and sacrifices contemptible; but repent of what is past, and for time to come amend all; this I call for at your hands.

That my covenant might be with Levi; that you do not null the covenant of priesthood made with Levi, and which I would have continued in his posterity, in you, and yours after you, which I would not have your sins and high provocations should abrogate; but if you will not thus confirm, settle, and keep Levi's covenant among you, I will make it firm as to what is on my part to be done herein, to punish the violators of it.

Saith the Lord of hosts; God Almighty, Lord of hosts, hath spoken this, and will do it.

Malachi 2:5

Here is one covenant that is more particular than any, a covenant of priesthood between God and a particular tribe.

With him: Levi is named Mal_2:4, and I will rest there, though I know some would have it be Aaron, or Phinehas.

Of life and peace; of long life, and prosperous, by covenant under the provisoes therein contained, assured to the Levites in their due ministrations before God.

I gave them, both lives, (the word is dual,) or life and prosperity.

For the fear wherewith he feared me; religious fear, or that gracious qualification which appeared in the acts of it, for he feared before God.

And was afraid before my name; behaved himself with reverence and trembling before God. It is the same repeated for confirmation of the former, or perhaps it may imply the habitual name of reverence from a contrite heart, which is here pointed at, and commended in this person under the name of Levi.

Malachi 2:6

The law of truth; the law of God which is the truth, the doctrine of the law according to the true meaning thereof.

Was in his mouth; he did teach it to the people, he resolved all cases by this law; Aaron, Eleazar, Phinehas, or, as we must understand it, every one of those godly priests or Levites, in what age soever they lived, who, as Mal_2:5, feared God, and were humble. They taught the people (as was their duty) first to know the law of God, and then to obey it; this by their example, the

other by their instruction. The law of truth was in his mouth, he pronounced according to the law truly, pronouncing that unclean which the law determined unclean, and that clean which was clean.

Iniquity was not found in his lips; he judged not with respect to persons, nor for bribes perverted judgment, nor judged that lawful which was unlawful, or that unlawful which was lawful.

He walked with me; his whole life was a continual walking with God, as Enoch's was, and Noah's was, and as God required Abraham's should be, in holy fear of his majesty, in true love of his precepts, and reverent observing his ordinances; he lived with God, and to him.

In peace, with God, and with men; it was his aim to live peaceably towards others, that God might make them peaceable toward him, and God gave him much of that he desired.

And equity; in rectitude of mind, or in sincerity and uprightness, free from hypocrisy; or else in all righteousness among men.

And did turn many away from iniquity; by his instructions, and by his excellent example, he converted many from ways of sin.

Malachi 2:7

Those forementioned excellent priests did so teach, and so live, forasmuch as they did well consider it was their duty to be well acquainted with, and to have a great insight into, the law of God.

The priest's lips should keep knowledge; it is that their office binds them to; it is the duty of all God's people to know his law, but the priest's duty to know it more than others, Lev_10:11, for they were to teach Israel, Deu_33:10.

And they, the people of Israel, should seek the law at his mouth; in difficult cases, in controversies, &c., the people were to consult and advise with the priests, and inquire what the law said in the case.

For he is the messenger, interpreter, ambassador, or legate, of the Lord of hosts with the people, lieger among them, and who therefore ought to be advised with about his Lord's mind.

Malachi 2:8

But ye, priests that now are in office, now live, when I, Malachi, am sent to preach, are departed, have shamefully degenerated and turned away from your duty, are apostates,

out of the way of God's law, and of those holy priests your predecessors; out of the way of truth, holiness, peace, and equity.

Ye have caused many to stumble at the law; your expositions of the law, your manner of worshipping God, and your manner of living, all together were great scandals to very many; and too many of these, that were offended by these things, these faults of yours, fell to sinning with you.

Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, the covenant of priesthood, Neh_13:29, chargeth them with this sin, and therefore they have no reason to expect the blessings of this covenant, viz. life and peace, since their making the covenant void on their part had cut off all claim and right to the blessings promised in that covenant, and had exposed them to the curses God threatened them with.

But ye, priests that now are in office, now live, when I, Malachi, am sent to preach, are departed, have shamefully degenerated and turned away from your duty, are apostates,

out of the way of God's law, and of those holy priests your predecessors; out of the way of truth, holiness, peace, and equity.

Ye have caused many to stumble at the law; your expositions of the law, your manner of worshipping God, and your manner of living, all together were great scandals to very many; and too many of these, that were offended by these things, these faults of yours, fell to sinning with you.

Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, the covenant of priesthood, Neh_13:29, chargeth them with this sin, and therefore they have no reason to expect the blessings of this covenant, viz. life and peace, since their making the covenant void on their part had cut off all claim and right to the blessings promised in that covenant, and had exposed them to the curses God threatened them with.

Malachi 2:9

Therefore, because you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, and have dishonoured me, and made my sacrifices contemptible,

have I also made you contemptible and base; I have left you under the contempt of the people, who think basely of you, as you deserve; you have dishonoured me, and I have made, and will make, good my word, you shall be lightly esteemed.

Before all the people; there are none but account you an unworthy, unthankful, profane, and unjust generation, neither fit to serve God nor guide man.

According as ye have not kept my ways; your punishment is as your sin; you forsook the law of God, and made his table and his bread contemptible, now I make you contemptible; you were weary of my service, and the people are weary of such priests.

But have been partial in the law; you have perverted the law to please great men, or to favour yourselves; or, to speak all in few words, you have declined the true judgment of God's law to serve some unworthy design or other. so that none could be sure of a right interpretation, or of a just judgment, or of a safe and sure direction from you.

Therefore, because you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, and have dishonoured me, and made my sacrifices contemptible,

have I also made you contemptible and base; I have left you under the contempt of the people, who think basely of you, as you deserve; you have dishonoured me, and I have made, and will make, good my word, you shall be lightly esteemed.

Before all the people; there are none but account you an unworthy, unthankful, profane, and unjust generation, neither fit to serve God nor guide man.

According as ye have not kept my ways; your punishment is as your sin; you forsook the law of God, and made his table and his bread contemptible, now I make you contemptible; you were weary of my service, and the people are weary of such priests.

But have been partial in the law; you have perverted the law to please great men, or to favour yourselves; or, to speak all in few words, you have declined the true judgment of God's law to serve

some unworthy design or other. so that none could be sure of a right interpretation, or of a just judgment, or of a safe and sure direction from you.

Malachi 2:10

Ver. 10 **Have we**, we Jews,

not all one father? either Abraham, or Jacob, (not Adam here intended,) with whom God made the covenant by which the posterity was made a peculiar people, separated from other nations, and on very weighty reasons forbid to join and intermix with strange nations. Hath not one God created us? the prophet speaks of that great and gracious work of God, creating them to be a chosen people, a nation formed to show forth his praise, Deu_32:6, **18 Isa 43:1,7**; and so we Christians are created in Christ Jesus, Eph_2:10, and are in him new creatures, 2Co_5:17.

Why do we? the prophet was not guilty of the fault, yet speaks as one of the community, partly to take off the envy of the Jews, and to cut off all occasion of quarrelling against his word, and partly to insinuate the sense he had of this thing, and the affection he had for them, though he reprov'd them.

Deal treacherously; despise, so some, break our faith in the marriage contract engaged, so carry it disloyally, against the duty we owe to God's law, which equally binds us as our wives to mutual love, honour, and faithfulness; and why then do we take heathen wives, (it is bad if a Jew unmarried do it, but here now the case is worse,) Jewish wives being disliked, rejected, and so greatly despised? Why do we this against the bond of consanguinity? And do we sons of Abraham abuse thus the daughters of Abraham? Why do we so little regard the bond of religion? We are people, sons and daughters, of one God, who hath called us, separated us from the heathen to keep religion pure and unmixed; why then do we transgress thus?

Every man; the fault was very common, among the people and priests too, and since their return out of Babylon.

Against his brother: this wrong was done immediately against the wife, but the father, brothers, or kinsmen of the wronged wife are mediately, and by consequence, wronged; the whole family of

the wife thus used is perfidiously abused, but brothers, as principal of the family, are named.

By profaning the covenant; violating the covenant of God, the law, which approves no polygamy, and forbids marrying of idolaters.

Malachi 2:11

Judah: though Judah only is named, yet the rest of the returned captives are included.

Dealt treacherously: see Mal_2:10.

An abomination; such treachery is a very abominable thing, God and all good men abhor it, and yet here it is committed in Israel, who are God's peculiar people, and above others should have been holy.

And in Jerusalem; under the eye of the governors, the high priest and sanhedrim, nay, under the eye of God, who dwelt at Jerusalem; this could not but greatly provoke God.

Profaned the holiness of the Lord: profanely violated the necessary cautionary law of marriage, confining Israel to marry within themselves, and not to endanger themselves and religion by joining affinity with idolaters, who would draw them and their children from the holy law, worship, and temple of God, which are the holiness that he loved.

Which he loved; which he, i.e. Judah, once loved; so it was apostacy in Judah. Or which *he*, i.e. the Lord, loved above all; so it is a neglect of a main duty, it is slighting what God so greatly loved.

And hath married the daughter of a strange god: Ezc_9:1 10:2, mentions what nations they were whose daughters were by these Jews taken for wives, they were idolatrous nations, and the women were idolatresses when the Jews did marry them. This was bad; but these Jews had wives before, and they cast them off, or else took in these strangers and despised their former wives: this is the treachery and abomination that is here committed.

Malachi 2:12

The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this; the family of those who do this shall be destroyed utterly by the hand of God, he will punish this crime.

The master and the scholar; him that calleth and him that answereth; there shall be left neither any to teach nor any to learn, none to call nor any to answer, all the living cut off.

Out of the tabernacles of Jacob: this points to the people, or laity, who dwelt in the cities of Jacob, they shall be rooted out of the land.

And him that offereth an offering; the priests that are guilty of this fault shall be put out of the office of priest, and minister no more before the Lord.

Malachi 2:13

This have ye done again; beside that first fault, you have committed another, you slight, misuse, and afflict your Jewish wives, whom alone you should have loved and cherished, but you make them drudges and slaves to idolatresses, your new and illegal wives.

Covering the altar of the Lord with tears; your despised and misused wives flee to the temple, weep, and cry out unto God for redress of their injuries.

With weeping: this is added to show the abundance of their tears.

With crying out; with vehemency crying to God against such husbands.

Insomuch that he, the Lord, who seeth their tears and heareth their cries,

regardeth not the offering any more; valueth not such offerings made to him by such people and such priests; or receiveth it with good will at your hand; is not at all pleased with such offerings, whether expiatory or peace-offerings, none of them from such people shall ever avail them.

This have ye done again; beside that first fault, you have committed another, you slight, misuse, and afflict your Jewish wives, whom alone you should have loved and cherished, but you

make them drudges and slaves to idolatresses, your new and illegal wives.

Covering the altar of the Lord with tears; your despised and misused wives flee to the temple, weep, and cry out unto God for redress of their injuries.

With weeping: this is added to show the abundance of their tears.

With crying out; with vehemency crying to God against such husbands.

Insomuch that he, the Lord, who seeth their tears and heareth their cries,

regardeth not the offering any more; valueth not such offerings made to him by such people and such priests; or receiveth it with good will at your hand; is not at all pleased with such offerings, whether expiatory or peace-offerings, none of them from such people shall ever avail them.

Malachi 2:14

Yet ye say, Wherefore? though the fault was so great in the nature of it, and so notorious in the evidence of it, these impudent sinners will not see, but dispute what just cause God hath to reject their offerings.

Because the Lord hath been witness: the prophet answers them God was witness both of the matrimonial contract, when you promised other deportment and affections, and he is witness also of your violating this contract, and hath seen how false and perfidious you have been, what inhumanity you have showed against your wives.

Between thee and the wife of thy youth; whom in thy youth thou marriedst, and hast had the best of her time and strength, and in age shouldst love and deal kindly with.

Dealt treacherously: see Mal_2:10.

Yet is she thy companion; yet she is, what she was by the sacred institution of God made, thy companion, not thy drudge, or slave; thou art most unjust to her, thus to change thy affection and deportment when there is no change in her state and relation.

And the wife of thy covenant: covenants ought to be very exactly kept, and those especially which are of our own freest and most voluntary making, our covenants; such was this between the unnatural husband and his despised wife: all which, as they should have been arguments to his duty, so they are aggravations of his neglect of duty, and provocations to God. And now judge, ye disputing, quarrelling hypocrites, whether God hath not justest cause to reject your offerings.

Malachi 2:15

And did he, God our Creator, not make one, but one man and one woman?

Yet had he the residue of the spirit; yet he could have made more men and women; and if it had been good, and well-pleasing to him, he could have made many women for one man; but though by his power he could, yet in his wisdom, goodness, and holiness he would not make more; from the beginning marriage was ordained to be between one man and one woman alone at once. So Christ argued Mat_19:4-6.

And wherefore one, one couple, and no more?

That he might seek a godly seed; or, a seed of God; either an excellent seed, as the Hebrew expresses the excellency of a thing by the addition of the name God to it; or rather a holy seed, born to God in chaste wedlock, and brought up under the instructions and virtuous examples of parents living in the fear of God, and love of each other, which in polygamy cannot be expected.

Take heed to your spirit; keep your heart from wandering after strange wives, as you tender your life and souls.

Let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth; though many have done so, let none now do it any more.

Malachi 2:16

The prophet enforceth his former exhortation, Mal_2:15, with the arguments laid here close together from the odiousness of the thing he exhorts them to forbear. It is odious to the Lord, who changeth not, but resents this evil practice as much as ever. God, Judge of wrongs and the wronged, hates such wrong.

God of Israel by covenant, and in peculiar relation, and so much more engaged to punish it; and he now declares his hatred of these things.

Putting away; divorce, such putting away of wives as these petulant Jews used to make way for some new wives.

For one covereth violence with his garment; rather, and covering violence, &c., which God hates as much as divorcing or putting away. This superinducing of violence by a second wife taken in upon, or with, or over the first wife, called here a *garment*, God hateth. In sum, neither your divorces nor your polygamy may with safety be practised, for God hateth both.

Therefore take heed to your spirit, and therefore be advised, take heed, as you love your life, your souls, your peace, and welfare, that ye deal not treacherously; neither on dislike divorce, nor yet, with unbridled lust, take another wife in to the former; both are perfidious treachery against her, thy covenant, and thy God; and what canst thou expect from such courses that God hateth, but to be cut off. The prophet enforceth his former exhortation, Mal_2:15, with the arguments laid here close together from the odiousness of the thing he exhorts them to forbear. It is odious to the Lord, who changeth not, but resents this evil practice as much as ever. God, Judge of wrongs and the wronged, hates such wrong.

God of Israel by covenant, and in peculiar relation, and so much more engaged to punish it; and he now declares his hatred of these things.

Putting away; divorce, such putting away of wives as these petulant Jews used to make way for some new wives.

For one covereth violence with his garment; rather, and covering violence, &c., which God hates as much as divorcing or putting away. This superinducing of violence by a second wife taken in upon, or with, or over the first wife, called here a *garment*, God hateth. In sum, neither your divorces nor your polygamy may with safety be practised, for God hateth both.

Therefore take heed to your spirit, and therefore be advised, take heed, as you love your life, your souls, your peace, and

welfare, that ye deal not treacherously; neither on dislike divorce, nor yet, with unbridled lust, take another wife in to the former; both are perfidious treachery against her, thy covenant, and thy God; and what canst thou expect from such courses that God hateth, but to be cut off. The prophet enforceth his former exhortation, Mal_2:15, with the arguments laid here close together from the odiousness of the thing he exhorts them to forbear. It is odious to the Lord, who changeth not, but resents this evil practice as much as ever. God, Judge of wrongs and the wronged, hates such wrong.

God of Israel by covenant, and in peculiar relation, and so much more engaged to punish it; and he now declares his hatred of these things.

Putting away; divorce, such putting away of wives as these petulant Jews used to make way for some new wives.

For one covereth violence with his garment; rather, and covering violence, &c., which God hates as much as divorcing or putting away. This superinducing of violence by a second wife taken in upon, or with, or over the first wife, called here a *garment*, God hateth. In sum, neither your divorces nor your polygamy may with safety be practised, for God hateth both.

Therefore take heed to your spirit, and therefore be advised, take heed, as you love your life, your souls, your peace, and welfare, that ye deal not treacherously; neither on dislike divorce, nor yet, with unbridled lust, take another wife in to the former; both are perfidious treachery against her, thy covenant, and thy God; and what canst thou expect from such courses that God hateth, but to be cut off.

Malachi 2:17

Ye; ye priests and people, slight in your religion toward God. Unfaithful in your covenant with your wives.

Have wearied the Lord (after the manner of man this is spoken of God) with your words; your perverse reasonings, or impious quarrellings against God, among which, one most ungodly and atheistical does come to be remarked on.

When ye say; when your discourse and reasoning is managed to the overthrow (if it were possible) of all morality and goodness.

Every one, not one excepted by these illogical atheists,

that doeth evil is good; that is a wicked man, and doth wickedness, (as you prophets preach to us,) is misrepresented by you; such are good men, and what they do is good. Thus they call evil good: woe then to them!

In the sight of the Lord; in the account and judgment of God.

And he delighteth in them; as appears (say these atheists) by his prospering of them: did he not delight in them, would he so enrich and prosper them? Or,

Where is the God of judgment? or if they be evil, and their ways, designs, and doings be evil, and punishable, where is that God of judgment? or why doth he delay execution of his displeasure against such men and ways? I am apt to think that the irreligious sentiments of the priests, their superficial managing of the solemn worship of God, their adulteries, and multiplying of wives, hitherto unpunished, had brought them either to think there was no such thing as moral goodness or moral viciousness in men's actions; or that if there were, since no punishment was laid on the vicious, nor any encouragement or present reward bestowed on the virtuous, that God did not, nor ever would, concern himself to judge it; and so by an undue way of arguing, had concluded themselves into atheism, the very height of wickedness. That this is likely enough, our age confirms, in which unpunished enormities are atheists' arguments against God and his providence; and unless he damn them, they will not believe the being of a God. But such must remember, they shall know and believe it at last, if not too late.

Malachi 3:1 MALACHI CHAPTER 3

The forerunner, and coming of the Messiah to cleanse his church, and to judge the wicked, Mal_3:1-6. The people are warned to repent, and turn from their sins, Mal_3:7; particularly their sacrilege, Mal_3:8-12, and impious blasphemy, Mal_3:13-15. God's blessing promised to those that fear him, Mal_3:16-18.

The former chapter, as we have it cast, ended with an inquiry made by vicious and ungodly priests and people, who either doubted or denied the present government. or future judgment of God over the world. This being reproved ill the last verse of the second chapter, now God condescends to give a very full and particular answer to this question, for the instruction and consolation of the good, whatever use the evil will make of it.

Behold: this note in this place, and on this occasion, requires our best attention; consider it well, therefore, all ye that inquire with doubt, and all ye that inquire who belief, that he will come, who is God of judgment.

I will send; or, I am sending, I will shortly send: it is Christ who here speaketh, and who sendeth.

My messenger; John Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, as evidently appears from Mat_11:10 Mar_1:2 Luk_7:27,28. He is this messenger, whom some by mistake have taken to be an angel; but though the word so signifieth, it doth also signify a messenger, and so it is very fitly rendered in this place: see Mal_1:1.

He shall prepare the way before me, by preaching repentance because the kingdom of heaven was at hand, by baptizing, by calling them to believe on the Messiah, who should now ere long be revealed, &c.: so John Baptist made ready the people to entertain Christ, and to believe in him. This was he who came in the spirit and power of Elias, and such a one the Jews expected.

The Lord; Messiah, who is Lord and Christ, Act_2:36; Lord of lords, Rev_17:14 **19:16.**

Whom ye seek; you ungodly disputers seek, but not aright, for you seek, i.e. inquire whether there be such a God of judgment. Beside these, there are others also, who did seek, i.e. humbly, longing and praying that he would come, and waiting, assured that he will come: it is these chiefly intended.

Shall suddenly come, after the coming of his forerunner: this *suddenly* in the text is not very fitly interpreted of a time so long as between this prophecy and the coming of Christ, but it very well suiteth to the time between John Baptist's appearing to

prepare the way, and Christ's appearing now the way was prepared.

To his temple; that temple which was the second temple at Jerusalem, lately built by Zerubbabel and Joshua, into which the Messiah was to come; and so he did. There old Simeon met him, there he disputed with the doctors, thither he went to drive out buyers and sellers, and this according to what was foretold of him, Hag_2:7; and all the religious Jews, who lived and died before the desolation of this second temple, did believe, and did confess, that the Messiah would come whilst that house did stand. He is then come, for that temple hath been ruined long since by the Romans.

The messenger of the covenant; the Angel of the covenant, not Elias, but Christ, the Messiah, in whose blood the covenant of grace was confirmed, for whose sake it is performed to us.

Whom ye delight in; you Jews, among whom few there are who do not please themselves to think of his coming, for the expectation of the best among the Jews was fixed on salvation, as that they hoped for by Christ. Others expected great but worldly advantage by his coming and setting up his kingdom among them.

Behold; behold again, saith the prophet, consider thoroughly what is foretold.

He shall come, at the time, to the place, in the manner foreshowed.

Saith the Lord of hosts; all confirmed by the word of the great God.

Malachi 3:2

But, Heb. And. Who may abide the day of his coming? among the Jews were two sorts of inquirers after the day of the Messiah's coming: some inquired with doubt of the truth of the promises, that he should come to set all right, like them Mal_2:17,

Where is the God of judgment? Others inquired hoping for preferment in the kingdom of the Messiah: of these, who shall be able to endure, to abide this day, when the unparalleled afflictions of that time shall cut off so many Jews, when the sword of the God of judgment shall destroy the ungodly scoffers, when so many must, as in Zec_13:8,9,

be cut off, and so many must pass through the fire? This will be a terrible day to these ungodly ones. Nor will it be much better with those who, disappointed of the expected worldly grandeur of the Messiah, shall stumble and fall, and be snared and broken; who will reject that Messiah who appears in a character so extremely different from that they had preconceived; and when God shall punish for the rejecting the Messiah, it will be a dreadful day, as it is described, Mat_24:6-8, &c.; Mar_13:2,**8,12-14**: the righteous will scarcely be saved; what then will become of the sinner?

Abide; think of, as the Latin Vulgate: the forethought of those calamities would be a burden; who shall be able to stand under the heavy weight of those crosses which in that day will fall on all sorts of men?

The day of his coming: this day was from his preaching till the utter destruction of the city Jerusalem, about seventy years after the birth of Christ: days they were, had they not been shortened, which would have worn out all; but for the elect's sake they were shortened, Mat_24:22.

Who shall stand when he appeareth? an elegant ingemination, to confirm the thing, and to affect us with it.

For he is like a refiner's fire: some are like metals, which nothing but a fierce fire can purge; such fire shall the troubles of these days be.

And like fullers' soap; another allusion; though this may express the troubles of those times somewhat more tolerable, yet troublesome enough. The boiling waters into which spotted clothes are thrown, where they lie soaking ere they are taken out; the rubbing of them with the soap, by which the clothes are whitened and cleansed indeed, but withal fretted, weakened, and in time worn out: so that day of the Lord will prove to all a day of great trial, to purge and refine.

Malachi 3:3

And he, King Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord,

shall sit; as resolved to attend this work, he will set to it vigorously, and continue in it constantly, till it is finished.

As a refiner and purifier of silver; overlooking the furnace, that it be hot enough to melt down the silver and gold, and to consume the dross, and purify the best part of the gold.

He shall purify; the effect of this fiery trial, of this scouring, shall be the thorough cleansing of the persons that are to pass through it: these sufferings, together with his word, shall, by the power of the Spirit accompanying them, thoroughly purge the good, and they shall be a fire hot enough to burn up the wicked.

The sons of Levi; either the Jewish Levites, or all Christians, who are made priests unto God, to offer sacrifices to him, even prayers, praises, and alms, &c.; or such as should minister more immediately to God, in the services of the spiritual temple, as the Levites did in the material temple.

And purge them as gold and silver; that they may be vessels of honour, purified for holy employments.

That they may offer unto the Lord an offering: by the law phrase is set forth gospel worship, for it cannot be meant of legal offerings, which the Messiah did abolish at his coming.

In righteousness; in right manner, purely and uprightly.
And he, King Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord,

shall sit; as resolved to attend this work, he will set to it vigorously, and continue in it constantly, till it is finished.

As a refiner and purifier of silver; overlooking the furnace, that it be hot enough to melt down the silver and gold, and to consume the dross, and purify the best part of the gold.

He shall purify; the effect of this fiery trial, of this scouring, shall be the thorough cleansing of the persons that are to pass through it: these sufferings, together with his word, shall, by the power of the Spirit accompanying them, thoroughly purge the good, and they shall be a fire hot enough to burn up the wicked.

The sons of Levi; either the Jewish Levites, or all Christians, who are made priests unto God, to offer sacrifices to him, even prayers, praises, and alms, &c.; or such as should minister more immediately to God, in the services of the spiritual temple, as the Levites did in the material temple.

And purge them as gold and silver; that they may be vessels of honour, purified for holy employments.

That they may offer unto the Lord an offering: by the law phrase is set forth gospel worship, for it cannot be meant of legal offerings, which the Messiah did abolish at his coming.

In righteousness; in right manner, purely and uprightly. **And he,** King Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord,

shall sit; as resolved to attend this work, he will set to it vigorously, and continue in it constantly, till it is finished.

As a refiner and purifier of silver; overlooking the furnace, that it be hot enough to melt down the silver and gold, and to consume the dross, and purify the best part of the gold.

He shall purify; the effect of this fiery trial, of this scouring, shall be the thorough cleansing of the persons that are to pass through it: these sufferings, together with his word, shall, by the power of the Spirit accompanying them, thoroughly purge the good, and they shall be a fire hot enough to burn up the wicked.

The sons of Levi; either the Jewish Levites, or all Christians, who are made priests unto God, to offer sacrifices to him, even prayers, praises, and alms, &c.; or such as should minister more immediately to God, in the services of the spiritual temple, as the Levites did in the material temple.

And purge them as gold and silver; that they may be vessels of honour, purified for holy employments.

That they may offer unto the Lord an offering: by the law phrase is set forth gospel worship, for it cannot be meant of legal offerings, which the Messiah did abolish at his coming.

In righteousness; in right manner, purely and uprightly.

Malachi 3:4

Then; when the Lord, Messenger or Angel of the covenant, the King Messiah, shall be come, and set up his kingdom, framed his gospel church.

The offerings; the services and duties required of the church, and performed by it, expressed here in an allusion to the law services:

such are now fervent prayers, Psa_141:2, lively praises, thankful memorials of the death of Christ in the sacraments, attentive hearing the word, and giving up ourselves, soul and body, a holy, living sacrifice to God, Rom_12:1; and alms, Heb_13:15,16.

Of Judah and Jerusalem; the Christian church, expressed by the names of its type. Pleasant; delightful, as sweet odours to the smell, as savoury meats to the taste, as comely objects to the eye, every way acceptable to God.

As in the days of old, and as in former years; this acceptance God will give shall be as great and gracious as ever he gave to any of the services of his saints of old. We need not determine the precise times to which these expressions refer; it is certain God did greatly delight in the sacrifices and offerings of his people, when they offered them in right manner. He will give as gracious acceptance still, which implieth a continuance of these sacrifices which he will accept, and inferreth that this coming of Christ is not his coming to judge the world, his last coming.

Malachi 3:5

And I; either God the Father, or Christ the Messiah, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, Joh_5:22.

Will come near; you have spoken as if you thought I was far off, but by what I do you shall see I am near to you, and you shall feel my hand, that you may believe I am a God of judgment, and they happy who wait for him, and they miserable who fall under his judgments.

To you O Jews; not those very persons Malachi preached to, but those who should be then living when the Messiah cometh, which was more than four hundred years after Malachi's preaching, by which time his hearers were all dead.

To judgment, against the wicked, to whom he would be what fire is to the dross in the furnace; to the righteous what the fire is to purer parts of the gold: he will consume the wicked, he will refine the good, he will be terrible to both in doing this.

I will be a swift witness: in that he will be a witness, they may be assured that they should. not be quitted in judgment for want of evidence; and in that a swift witness, they may be sure he will

come in timely enough against them. And further yet, he that comes near as Judge to call them to an account, was always near them to observe all they did, all they spake, or thought, and he will be near as witness against them.

Against the sorcerers: sorcery was forbidden, and God testifies his detestation of the sin, and such as practise it, Deu_18:10-14: the people of God, who may consult with their God, his word, and prophets, do very abominably if they consult with the devil; a sin their fathers learnt among the Egyptians, a sin they had learnt among the Chaldeans during the captivity, and practised under the second temple.

The adulterers; who transgressed the law of nature and of God, Exo_20:14 Deu_5:18 **22:22**; and were by the law to die for it.

False swearers; perjury, against which Zec_5:3,4, and God hateth this sin, Zec_8:17.

Those that oppress the hireling in his wages; either detaining it, or lessening it, Jer_22:13 Jam_5:4.

The widow; who should be relieved, Deu_24:19-21, not oppressed, Isa_1:17.

The fatherless: such are not only those who have lost their fathers by death, but all friendless ones; God requires us to assist and help such, not oppress them, Psa_82:1-4.

That turn aside the stranger from his right; pervert judgment, or wrest the law, or admit false witness against a stranger. Not doing right is ill, though to an enemy, but it is a crying sin to do wrong to a stranger, and God will punish it when it crieth, as he did upon your fathers, Eze_22:7, with Mal_3:13-16.

And fear not me; neither reverence my precepts to keep them, not tremble at my threats to prevent the execution of them by declining the sins I threaten. Irreligion is the root of all these oppressions, and God will punish them.

Malachi 3:6

This introduceth the final and full confirmation of what hath been foretold in the verses before, the God of judgment will come, &c.

I change not: as he loved righteousness, and hath purposed to defend and reward it, yea, hath promised it shall be well with the righteous, so he now loveth righteousness, and purposeth to deal well with them that love and practise it; these may rejoice, I change not. And so on the other hand, I do, as I ever did, hate wickedness, and will, as I have threatened, punish it; I change not, my mind toward the things or persons that are wicked is the same.

Therefore ye sons of Jacob; either taken for all the natural branches of Jacob, or taken for such as are the sons of Jacob according to the faith, who did indeed fear God.

Are not consumed; since the same hatred of sin and resolution to punish is accompanied with the same longsuffering and patience, that you, sons of Jacob by nature, (but not by imitation,) who have provoked me, and deserve to be destroyed, might yet have time to repent and amend, since my long-suffering changeth not, you are not yet consumed in your sins. So for the good, though they are oppressed and suffer, yet not consumed, for God changeth not, he now doth love as he ever hath loved them, and preserveth them. In brief, God is the same in his wisdom to order the rewards of good and bad in fittest season, and therefore neither the one or other are consumed, but both preserved to the season appointeth of God, the just Judge, and then each shall be dealt with according to what they are.

Malachi 3:7

Even from the days of your fathers: we need not fix a particular time or age wherein this apostacy began; it is an old apostacy that is here charged on them, and they were notoriously guilty of it.

Ye are gone away; are turned away by the examples and by the corrupt doctrines of your fathers and false teachers; yea, you have voluntarily and of choice gone away.

From mine ordinances; which either directed my worship, or your dealings one with another; so that you have sinned greatly by polluting my temple with your own additions or diminutions, with idolatry, or corrupt manner of performing my service; and you have sinned against one another by injustice, unfaithfulness, and cruelty, since you have gone away from my laws, which direct the way of righteousness and equity.

And have not kept them: it is a further asseveration, confirming the truth of the charge, and added to make them more sensible of their sin. Some tell us that this chargeth on them their sins against negative precepts, as the other charged them with sins against positive precepts; so the whole law was now, and had long been, broken by their fathers and themselves.

Return unto me; it is the only course you can take, repent ere it is too late, return whilst there is hope.

And I will return unto you; I will yet pardon, accept you, establish, and bless you; amend your ways and doings, and I will soon amend the state of your affairs.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return? as to other, so now to this advice, they return a proud, shameless, and self-justifying question; Wherein, or what is the evil from which we should return to thee? what is our sin?

Malachi 3:8

Will a man rob God? among the many deviations from God's law (which they do not, because they will not, see) the prophet chargeth them with this kind of sacrilegious theft; they had detained his tithes, shortened him in that portion which he had reserved to himself and for his service, which is, as our version expresseth it, a robbing of God. And as the words lie in the original, they do, by arguing from the less to the greater, aggravate this sin; as they may be read, *Will a man rob a great man* , or, *a judge* ? for the word used will bear these notions. Or, *Will a man rob the gods* ? i.e. do not heathens abhor the foulness of such a fault, and fear the punishment of sacrilege, and therefore would not rob their idols? as another prophet asked once the question, Have any of

the nations changed their gods, which yet are no gods? Jer_2:11; so now, Have the nations robbed their gods? *Yet ye have robbed me* ; but blush, ye shameless priests and Jews, you have robbed not a great man, but the great God; not judges, but the Judge of judges; not an idol, but the living God! How great is your crime!

Wherein have we robbed thee? a question just like those Mal_1:7 2:17 3:7, which see.

In tithes: the people robbed God not paying the full tenth, which God appointed should be paid to him. The priests robbed God in tithes, while they took too much, or it may be all, for their own particular and family use, and did not distribute them to all that by God's law had a right to a proportion of them.

And offerings; either first-fruits, or other oblations and gifts, which were appointed to be brought to the temple for the service of God; in all which the people and priests had given him less than his due.

Will a man rob God? among the many deviations from God's law (which they do not, because they will not, see) the prophet chargeth them with this kind of sacrilegious theft; they had detained his tithes, shortened him in that portion which he had reserved to himself and for his service, which is, as our version expresseth it, a robbing of God. And as the words lie in the original, they do, by arguing from the less to the greater, aggravate this sin; as they may be read, *Will a man rob a great man* , or, *a judge* ? for the word used will bear these notions. Or, *Will a man rob the gods* ? i.e. do not heathens abhor the foulness of such a fault, and fear the punishment of sacrilege, and therefore would not rob their idols? as another prophet asked once the question, Have any of

the nations changed their gods, which yet are no gods? Jer_2:11; so now, Have the nations robbed their gods? *Yet ye have robbed me* ; but blush, ye shameless priests and Jews, you have robbed not a great man, but the great God; not judges, but the Judge of judges; not an idol, but the living God! How great is your crime!

Wherein have we robbed thee? a question just like those Mal_1:7 2:17 3:7, which see.

In tithes: the people robbed God not paying the full tenth, which God appointed should be paid to him. The priests robbed God in tithes, while they took too much, or it may be all, for their own particular and family use, and did not distribute them to all that by God's law had a right to a proportion of them.

And offerings; either first-fruits, or other oblations and gifts, which were appointed to be brought to the temple for the service

of God; in all which the people and priests had given him less than his due.

Will a man rob God? among the many deviations from God's law (which they do not, because they will not, see) the prophet chargeth them with this kind of sacrilegious theft; they had detained his tithes, shortened him in that portion which he had reserved to himself and for his service, which is, as our version expresseth it, a robbing of God. And as the words lie in the original, they do, by arguing from the less to the greater, aggravate this sin; as they may be read, *Will a man rob a great man* , or, *a judge* ? for the word used will bear these notions. Or, *Will a man rob the gods* ? i.e. do not heathens abhor the foulness of such a fault, and fear the punishment of sacrilege, and therefore would not rob their idols? as another prophet asked once the question, Have any of

the nations changed their gods, which yet are no gods? Jer_2:11; so now, Have the nations robbed their gods? *Yet ye have robbed me* ; but blush, ye shameless priests and Jews, you have robbed not a great man, but the great God; not judges, but the Judge of judges; not an idol, but the living God! How great is your crime!

Wherein have we robbed thee? a question just like those Mal_1:7 2:17 3:7, which see.

In tithes: the people robbed God not paying the full tenth, which God appointed should be paid to him. The priests robbed God in tithes, while they took too much, or it may be all, for their own particular and family use, and did not distribute them to all that by God's law had a right to a proportion of them.

And offerings; either first-fruits, or other oblations and gifts, which were appointed to be brought to the temple for the service of God; in all which the people and priests had given him less than his due.

Malachi 3:9

Ye, O priests, your sin, your sacrilege, of which you are guilty, hath provoked me.

Are cursed with a curse; are greatly cursed, and are likely still to be cursed, the curse shall continue whilst you continue in this your sinful course.

For ye have robbed me; this brought, increased, and multiplied your curse. Or, as some, *yet ye do rob me* ! Strange that you dare sin, whilst I am punishing for this very sin! Or by way of question, and *do ye rob me* ? will you go on thus to sin when you are under the curse for it? will you, as Ahaz, sin when in distress; or, Pharaoh-like, harden under the judgment?

Even this whole nation: like priest like people; the priests and Levites did unduly employ the tithes and offerings, and the people did unduly pay: it is like the people observed how much of the tithes were laid out otherwise than the law directed, and they were ready to think they might do well enough to keep that for a use better (as they did think) than the use the priests and Levites put it to, they thought it was ill spent by the priests, and well saved by them; but this, however seemingly excuse them to themselves, it leaves them guilty before God: the whole nation is sacrilegious, and the whole nation cursed for it.

Malachi 3:10

Bring ye: if these persons spoken of be the priests, then they are required not to detain the tithes in their own hands, but, as was their duty, to bring them into the public storehouse. If the people are the persons, ye, people, it requires them to make g punctual and full payment of all tithes of corn, wine, oil, &c.: about this did Nehemiah contend with the rulers, and made them honester, and all Judah obeyed and did the like, Neh_13:10-13.

The storehouse; which was one or more large rooms built on purpose for this use, to lay up the tithes, and to keep them for holy uses. It was some large and stately chamber, for we find that Eliashib had befriended Tobiah, letting him have it for an apartment to dwell in, Neh_13:5-7, &c.

That there may be meat in mine house, for the priests and Levites to live upon; that they flee not, as many had done, from the service of God in the temple, to take care of their country affairs, and by their industry provide maintenance for themselves and theirs, Neh_13:10.

Prove me now herewith; make the experiment. The prophet doth in the name of God offer to put it to a short trial: By doing your duty try whether I will not make good my promise, and give you a blessing instead of a curse.

Open the windows of heaven: this form of speech is used Gen_7:11, when those mighty rains that helped to drown the world were poured forth; and now here plentiful and fruitful rains are promised in the same phrase, in a kind of proverbial speech, to express great abundance of the thing intended.

Pour you out a blessing; first of rain, to water the earth, and to make it fruitful; next a blessing of corn, wine, and oil, and all other products of the earth, for the use of man and beast.

That there shall not be room enough; your barns and storehouses shall not be large enough to receive it all. Your

fats shall overflow, Joe_2:23,24. Or, as it is Amo_9:13, you shall have harvest work, and vintage work, and sowing work, as much, or more, than your labourers can well finish in their seasons.

Bring ye: if these persons spoken of be the priests, then they are required not to detain the tithes in their own hands, but, as was their duty, to bring them into the public storehouse. If the people are the persons, ye, people, it requires them to make g punctual and full payment of all tithes of corn, wine, oil, &c.: about this did Nehemiah contend with the rulers, and made them honest, and all Judah obeyed and did the like, Neh_13:10-13.

The storehouse; which was one or more large rooms built on purpose for this use, to lay up the tithes, and to keep them for holy uses. It was some large and stately chamber, for we find that Eliashib had befriended Tobiah, letting him have it for an apartment to dwell in, Neh_13:5-7, &c.

That there may be meat in mine house, for the priests and Levites to live upon; that they flee not, as many had done, from the service of God in the temple, to take care of their country affairs, and by their industry provide maintenance for themselves and theirs, Neh_13:10.

Prove me now herewith; make the experiment. The prophet doth in the name of God offer to put it to a short trial: By doing your

duty try whether I will not make good my promise, and give you a blessing instead of a curse.

Open the windows of heaven: this form of speech is used Gen_7:11, when those mighty rains that helped to drown the world were poured forth; and now here plentiful and fruitful rains are promised in the same phrase, in a kind of proverbial speech, to express great abundance of the thing intended.

Pour you out a blessing; first of rain, to water the earth, and to make it fruitful; next a blessing of corn, wine, and oil, and all other products of the earth, for the use of man and beast.

That there shall not be room enough; your barns and storehouses shall not be large enough to receive it all. Your

fats shall overflow, Joe_2:23,24. Or, as it is Amo_9:13, you shall have harvest work, and vintage work, and sowing work, as much, or more, than your labourers can well finish in their seasons.

Malachi 3:11

I will rebuke; lay a restraint upon, or prohibit, and the prohibition shall be effectual; if God so check, no creature is or dares be deaf to it; such a check not only quiets the unruly sea, but can dry it up.

The devourer; all kinds of devourers, the locust, the canker-worm, caterpillar, &c., pests of those countries very often; though they are in mighty armies and incredible multitudes, yet a rebuke from God will check them all at once as if they were but one.

For your sakes; not for merit in you, but for good to you.

He shall not destroy; consume and eat it, as those vermin always did wherever they came.

The fruits of your ground; corn sown by your hand, and grass springing up of its own nature, both which these locusts devour wheresoever they come, and leave penury or famine behind them.

Neither shall your vine cast her fruit; no blasting or burning winds shall make them drop, no frosts or hails shall destroy your vines. This was once the plague of Egypt, **Psa 105:33-36**.

Before the time; your vines shall carry their fruit till they are fully ripe.

In the field; where they had large vineyards and oliveyards planted, and God will make them prosper if this people will return to him.

Malachi 3:12

All nations, all that are about you, that know you, and see God's dealings with you, shall call you blessed; praise the state and condition you are in, and pronounce you to be a very happy people, whose God is the Lord, and whose mercies come thus from God.

Ye shall be a delightsome land; of delights, or desirable for its pleasantness; a land so good man would desire it; and when purged, it will be a land the Lord will delight in, and give it the name Hephzibah.

Saith the Lord of hosts; added as an assurance that it shall be according to this promise, forasmuch as he who is Lord of hosts hath engaged his word to do it, and his word will do it, can make all creatures co-operate for that purpose.

Malachi 3:13

Your words; your discourses concerning my providences over you and others, your reasonings, censures, and verdicts passed on your own ways, and on the ways of your God.

Have been stout; proudly justifying yourselves as deserving better usage from God, or insolently arraigning God for his kindness to others, who in your judgment are worse than yourselves, by such words as those Mal_2:17.

Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? you think you have spoken nothing so proudly and stoutly, and challenge me to tell you wherein, or with what words you have showed such insolence.

Malachi 3:14

Ye; ye that are the children of forefathers who had this good land given to them, and ever made fruitful while they feared and obeyed their God; you that have been well rewarded for your obedience, or you priests who have tithes, sacrifices, offerings, and first-fruits given you for your services.

Have said; have thought first, and next have discoursed it; unthankful to your God, you have atheistlike maintained it in disputes, that

it is vain to serve God; all is lost labour, no profit to God nor any to yourselves; therefore better sit still and do nothing, than to no purpose.

What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance? while what they have before their eyes is the fruit of God's goodness, and what they want is punishment of their not doing it better; whilst a very unsuitable observing the ordinances of God hath so much profit for you, dare you say there is no profit? *Sottish atheists* ! who will not try what a more agreeable service would do.

And that we have walked mournfully: so the hypocrites and ungodly object against God, Isa_58:3; yet their dissembled mournings, as Ahab's, had their reward, and infinitely better than they

Ye; ye that are the children of forefathers who had this good land given to them, and ever made fruitful while they feared and obeyed their God; you that have been well rewarded for your obedience, or you priests who have tithes, sacrifices, offerings, and first-fruits given you for your services.

Have said; have thought first, and next have discoursed it; unthankful to your God, you have atheistlike maintained it in disputes, that

it is vain to serve God; all is lost labour, no profit to God nor any to yourselves; therefore better sit still and do nothing, than to no purpose.

What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance? while what they have before their eyes is the fruit of God's goodness, and what they want is punishment of their not doing it better; whilst a very unsuitable observing the ordinances of God hath so much profit for you, dare you say there is no profit? *Sottish atheists* ! who will not try what a more agreeable service would do.

And that we have walked mournfully: so the hypocrites and ungodly object against God, Isa_58:3; yet their dissembled

mourning, as Ahab's, had their reward, and infinitely better than they

Malachi 3:15

And now, or now therefore; on these false reasonings of these deceived ones, they proceed to further impiety and audacious blasphemy.

We call the proud happy; we (say they) see before our eyes, and must pronounce what we see, that the proud contemners of God and his law are the flourishing ones; they are at present happiest, and there appears no sign of any change of affairs to them. They do boldly and despitely oppose God, and yet prosper. And could this be, say they, if there were a God of judgment to call men to account, and to deal with them according to their ways?

They that work wickedness are set up who contrive, and then work wickedness; who choose it, study it, and glory in it, as the whole of their life; are built up, are advanced to honours, and filled with riches, and have fair probability that all this will last to them and theirs. And could this be, say these priests and Jews, under the eye of a just and sovereign Judge? where is the God of judgment when such disorders are every where seen?

They that tempt God are even delivered; they that dare him to his very face, that do the highest affronts to God, purposely to prove whether he would or could punish the sinners amongst men. Those escape punishment though the law and prophets threaten them; and would you have us (say these men) believe there is such a God of judgment, when all is so disorderly carried in the world? Thus far the proud behaviour of these against God.

Malachi 3:16

Then; when atheism and bold contempt of God was grown so high, and was so plainly and smartly reproved by the prophet.

They that feared the Lord; those that were truly religious, that knew God's judgments were a great deep, and that his ways were as high above our ways as heaven above the earth.

Spake often one to another; discoursed aright of God's mercy, justice, patience, holiness, and wisdom in his government and manage of the souls of men; established one another against the

assaults of such proud, contemptuous disputers; encouraged each other to wait for God in the way of his judgments. Though it is not said what they spake, we have reason to believe it was as good of God and his proceedings as the discourse of the wicked was evil. The godly spake things that did as much become the ways of God, as what the wicked spake did disparage the ways of an omniscient, holy, patient, and just God.

The Lord hearkened: after the manner of man, the Lord is represented as if he did listen to hear more distinctly, and as if he did incline his ear.

And heard it; clearly, perfectly, and fully understood and observed, and what the godly spake of him and for him.

A book of remembrance was written before him; a registry was made of the persons and their discourses. This is after the manner of men spoken of God, whose omniscience seeth, knoweth, and remembereth all; but this book is written before the Lord, he will have every good man, every good word of such, and every good thought such have for him, entered under his eye, that they may be assured of a comfortable reward for it.

For them, on their behalf, that feared the Lord: see above.

That thought upon his name, with love, esteem, and holy admiration.

Then; when atheism and bold contempt of God was grown so high, and was so plainly and smartly reproved by the prophet.

They that feared the Lord; those that were truly religious, that knew God's judgments were a great deep, and that his ways were as high above our ways as heaven above the earth.

Spake often one to another; discoursed aright of God's mercy, justice, patience, holiness, and wisdom in his government and manage of the sells of men; established one another against the assaults of such proud, contemptuous disputers; encouraged each other to wait for God in the way of his judgments. Though it is not said what they spake, we have reason to believe it was as good of God and his proceedings as the discourse of the wicked was evil. The godly spake things that did as much become the ways of God,

as what the wicked spake did disparage the ways of an omniscient, holy, patient, and just God.

The Lord hearkened: after the manner of man, the Lord is represented as if he did listen to hear more distinctly, and as if he did incline his ear.

And heard it; clearly, perfectly, and fully understood and observed, and what the godly spake of him and for him.

A book of remembrance was written before him; a registry was made of the persons and their discourses. This is after the manner of men spoken of God, whose omniscience seeth, knoweth, and remembereth all; but this book is written before the Lord, he will have every good man, every good word of such, and every good thought such have for him, entered under his eye, that they may be assured of a comfortable reward for it.

For them, on their behalf, that feared the Lord: see above.

That thought upon his name, with love, esteem, and holy admiration.

Then; when atheism and bold contempt of God was grown so high, and was so plainly and smartly reproved by the prophet.

They that feared the Lord; those that were truly religious, that knew God's judgments were a great deep, and that his ways were as high above our ways as heaven above the earth.

Spake often one to another; discoursed aright of God's mercy, justice, patience, holiness, and wisdom in his government and manage of the sells of men; established one another against the assaults of such proud, contemptuous disputers; encouraged each other to wait for God in the way of his judgments. Though it is not said what they spake, we have reason to believe it was as good of God and his proceedings as the discourse of the wicked was evil. The godly spake things that did as much become the ways of God, as what the wicked spake did disparage the ways of an omniscient, holy, patient, and just God.

The Lord hearkened: after the manner of man, the Lord is represented as if he did listen to hear more distinctly, and as if he did incline his ear.

And heard it; clearly, perfectly, and fully understood and observed, and what the godly spake of him and for him.

A book of remembrance was written before him; a registry was made of the persons and their discourses. This is after the manner of men spoken of God, whose omniscience seeth, knoweth, and remembereth all; but this book is written before the Lord, he will have every good man, every good word of such, and every good thought such have for him, entered under his eye, that they may be assured of a comfortable reward for it.

For them, on their behalf, that feared the Lord: see above.

That thought upon his name, with love, esteem, and holy admiration.

Malachi 3:17

They shall be mine; though now they seem to lie unregarded, as if they were not worth the owning, they shall appear to be mine.

In that day; the day wherein God will sever between men and men, and between actions and actions, which day, though ye know it not, is well known to the Lord; and beside the great day of final discrimination, God hath several other days of visitation, which are times where. in he will own his, as the good figs, &c. **Jer 24.** The day that God hath appointed, and will and did bring upon this people in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasianus.

When I make up my jewels, or peculiar treasure, that which I highly value and keep most safely; now they are packed up among things of no great value, but when the casket is opened these jewels shall be laid up among the richest treasures: as when they were all sent to Pella, not one Christian left in Jerusalem; and which shall be fully made good in the last great day of final judgment, and in heaven to eternal ages.

And I will spare them; in the mean time they shall be spared, pitied, preserved, and loved: now their weaknesses covered and pardoned, their good-will approved and accepted; then their worth owned, published, and rewarded.

As a man spareth his own son that serveth him; as a tender father doth with his son, his own son, that serveth him, so will God spare such as in an atheistical world do speak for God, do

fear God, and highly value both his law and government, and so obey him.

Malachi 3:18

Then, when that day of the Lord punishing the Jews by the Romans shall come, and he shall do thus for his jewels, shall ye, the blasphemous scoffers, proud contemnors of God and religion, return; return to your reason, enforced by the convincing power of God's judgments to come to yourselves, or to change your opinion of God and his government.

Discern between the righteous and the wicked; clearly see, with envy towards them, with horror and grief in yourselves, the unexpected escape and happiness of the righteous who served God and your misery that served him not, but were wicked, and perish now in your wickedness.

Then, when that day of the Lord punishing the Jews by the Romans shall come, and he shall do thus for his jewels, shall ye, the blasphemous scoffers, proud contemnors of God and religion, return; return to your reason, enforced by the convincing power of God's judgments to come to yourselves, or to change your opinion of God and his government.

Discern between the righteous and the wicked; clearly see, with envy towards them, with horror and grief in yourselves, the unexpected escape and happiness of the righteous who served God and your misery that served him not, but were wicked, and perish now in your wickedness.

Malachi 4:1 MALACHI CHAPTER 4

God's judgment on the wicked, Mal_4:1, and his blessing on the good, Mal_4:2,3. He exhorteth to the study of the law, Mal_4:4, and telleth of Elijah's coming and office, Mal_4:5,6.

The words immediately foregoing (which, as we have the chapters divided, did end the third chapter) foretold a day to come then, though it is now long since past, in which such judgments should be executed upon the Jewish nation, as should make the stoutest contemnors of God to see and acknowledge his different respects and providences toward the good and toward the evil. Now in this

verse (which continueth the discourse) he accounteth how it should be.

Behold; mark well what now the Lord doth foretell

The day, before mentioned, the day of visitation and discerning of men, cometh; though it be at some four hundred years' distance from you, yet it is coming, and will overtake you, and overwhelm you too about that time; nay, you shall have some tastes of bitter cups before, some less and shorter troubles, the presage and assurance of that dreadful day I now speak of, saith our prophet.

That shall burn as an oven: the refiner's fire, Mal_3:2, is now represented to us as a fire burning more dreadfully, which really was more dreadful in the fulfilling than here it is in the prediction; when Jerusalem and the temple were on fire, and none could quench it; when the fire raged every where, but burnt most fiercely where the arched roofs did make it, as in ovens or furnaces, to double itself, and infold flames with flames, and with dreadful roarings increased its terrors. This day may well be an emblem of the day of judgment, and this place may be accommodated thereto, but it principally speaks of the times of vengeance on Jerusalem in its final desolation.

All the proud; such as are described Mal_1:13 **3:13-15**. All that do wickedly: this is another part of the character of these persons, and explicative of the former passage; proud men, such as the text mentions, will be wicked workers.

Shall be stubble; dried and cast into the oven, consumed as soon as cast in.

The day that cometh; of which already, Mal_3:17, and in this verse.

Shall burn them up; totally and speedily consume them.

Saith the Lord of hosts; added to confirm the certainty of the thing; the Lord of hosts hath said it shall be, and he can do what he saith he will.

It shall leave them neither root nor branch; in allusion to the utter extirpation of trees for the fire, whose branches lopped off, the body cleft, and the roots stocked up, and all cast into the fire;

so that nothing remains but the ashes, into which all is turned: and this was fully accomplished upon the irreligious Jews, when the Romans burnt their city and temple, and destroyed the people.

Malachi 4:2

You that fear my name; so are they described to us who were written in the book of remembrance, Mal_3:16; who loved the law of their God, and kept it; who believed his promises, and rejoiced in expectation of the good promised; who believed his threats and trembled at them, that they might rest in the day of trouble, as Hab_3:16; who walked humbly with their God.

The Sun; Christ, who is the day.spring from on high, Luk_1:78: or, as most elegantly described Isa_60:1-3, who is very fitly compared to the sun; Fountain of light and vital heat to his church, he enlightens and enlivens every one Joh_1:4,9.

Of righteousness; and of mercy and benignity, for the Hebrew word imports both, and neither may be here excluded. His justice is seen in executions of judgment on the proud and wicked, who are consumed in the fire of his wrath; and his righteousness and mercy are seen in the preservation and remuneration of those that fear the Lord: so greatly different shall this time be to the wicked and the godly; to these a day of benign light and kindly influences through the mercy of God, to the wicked a day of destruction. and utter extirpation.

Arise with healing in his wings; his beams and rays shall bring health and strength, with delight and joy, safety and security: it may be (as some have observed from the word) an intimation of the healing virtue that from Christ went forth to such as in faith touched the hem of his garment, Mat_9:20,21, and is as effectual for the healing of soul maladies and infirmities as of bodily diseases.

Ye shall go forth; go out of harm's way, out of Jerusalem, before the fatal siege, obeying the call from heaven, *Go hence to Pella*, and that of Christ, Mat_24:15,16.

And grow up, in strength, rigour, and spiritual stature, as calves of the stall; where they are safe guarded and well ordered. So will the Lord keep safe and look well to his preserved ones when the wicked are destroyed.

You that fear my name; so are they described to us who were written in the book of remembrance, Mal_3:16; who loved the law of their God, and kept it; who believed his promises, and rejoiced in expectation of the good promised; who believed his threats and trembled at them, that they might rest in the day of trouble, as Hab_3:16; who walked humbly with their God.

The Sun; Christ, who is the day.spring from on high, Luk_1:78: or, as most elegantly described Isa_60:1-3, who is very fitly compared to the sun; Fountain of light and vital heat to his church, he enlightens and enlivenes every one Joh_1:4,9.

Of righteousness; and of mercy and benignity, for the Hebrew word imports both, and neither may be here excluded. His justice is seen in executions of judgment on the proud and wicked, who are consumed in the fire of his wrath; and his righteousness and mercy are seen in the preservation and remuneration of those that fear the Lord: so greatly different shall this time be to the wicked and the godly; to these a day of benign light and kindly influences through the mercy of God, to the wicked a day of destruction. and utter extirpation.

Arise with healing in his wings; his beams and rays shall bring health and strength, with delight and joy, safety and security: it may be (as some have observed from the word) an intimation of the healing virtue that from Christ went forth to such as in faith touched the hem of his garment, Mat_9:20,21, and is as effectual for the healing of soul maladies and infirmities as of bodily diseases.

Ye shall go forth; go out of harm's way, out of Jerusalem, before the fatal siege, obeying the call from heaven, *Go hence to Pella*, and that of Christ, Mat_24:15,16.

And grow up, in strength, rigour, and spiritual stature, as calves of the stall; where they are safe guarded and well ordered. So will the Lord keep safe and look well to his preserved ones when the wicked are destroyed.

Malachi 4:3

And ye: see Mal_4:2.

Shall tread down the wicked: now the ungodly, proud, and atheistical despisers of God, providence, and future judgments. do tread down those that fear God and are godly, but it shall not be so always; that word, Psa_58:10,11, and that, Isa_66:24, and that, Rev_18:20, shall be fulfilled in the overthrow of the bad, and in the triumphs of the good. But, more particularly, this treading seems to be intended of those who, after the sacking and burning of Jerusalem, should return either to view the ruins. or to dwell there, and so should, in going lip and down. tread upon the wicked, either buried in the ruins or consumed to ashes.

For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet: by this it appears that these preserved ones did not barbarously tread upon the entire bodies of the wicked, but upon the ashes of those bodies, by the fire consumed and turned into ashes, and mixed with the ashes of their houses and goods.

In the day that I shall do this; burn Jerusalem and the temple, with the citizens and priests whose carcasses were slain by the sword, or their persons, surprised with the flames, shall be burnt up. And so both this and much of the first verse may be literally understood, and was so fulfilled by Titus and his soldiers, A.D. 73.

Malachi 4:4

Now take leave of all prophecy, for you shall have no more till the great Prophet, till Shiloh come; and attend ye diligently to the law of Moses, keep its precepts and directions.

The law; in the full extent: the moral precepts; rules of a holy and religious life for all. The ceremonial precepts; rules of your worship, so long as your temple shall stand a type of Christ to come. The judicial precepts; whilst you have any government, or power of judicatures. By a due keeping this you may escape future judgments and obtain future blessings, **Le 26 Deu 28:** besides, by this attending to the law, they might be enabled to see the Messiah, and own him of whom Moses wrote in the law. Now though the law only be expressed, the prophets are included, who also wrote of Christ, Deu_18:15 Joh_5:46,47 **Ac 13:27.** This was excellent advice to this people, who (had they taken it) had escaped the sins they ran into and the miseries they fell under;

they had not crucified the Lord of glory, nor rejected their own mercy, nor pulled fiery judgments on their own heads, to their utter ruin.

Of Moses; whose memory you venerate, in whom you glory, whose law therefore you ought to obey. My servant; who was my servant, and delivered my commands to you. I do therefore expect that my authority, and Moses's esteem among you, prevail with you to study most carefully this law.

Which I commanded unto him in Horeb, with most majestic circumstances, to awe you to the observance of all its precepts; and which was an emblem of that terror and majesty wherein the Lawgiver would appear to judge, to give rewards, or adjudge to punishments.

For all Israel; so long as they should be a people and church.

With the statutes and judgments; be not partial; statutes and judgments, i.e. the whole law, must you attend to, and remember it as God requires, not turn aside from any of its prescripts.

Malachi 4:5

I will send; though the spirit of prophecy cease for four hundred years, yet at the expiring of those years you shall have one sent, as great as Elijah, and therefore he is now called Elijah, that shall prepare Messiah's way.

Elijah; not the same in person who reproved idolatrous Israel, who destroyed Baal, though both Jews and many Christians would gladly have it so, in favour of some errors they have adopted and would maintain. But this person here called Elijah was John Baptist, as is clear from Mat_17:12 **13**,

Elias is come, and they have done to him whatsoever they listed. Then the disciples understood that he spake of John the Baptist. And he was that Elias, if they would receive him, Mat_11:14. Elias, was to come when Malachi lived; Elias was come, and the Jews had ill treated him, and Herod had beheaded him, when Christ here lived; this Elijah then was John the Baptist, who came

in the spirit and power of Elias, Luk_1:17, and therefore bears his name in this prophecy.

The prophet; who foretold Christ the true Messiah's sudden manifestation, who indeed was already among them, but had not yet discovered himself; on whom he persuades the Jews to believe, and receive his person and his law, Luk_1:15-17 Mar_1:7,8; who was greater than a prophet, Mat_11:9; nor doth John's denying himself to be a prophet, Joh_1:21, in their sense contradict this.

Before; that is, immediately before; so he was born six months before Christ, and began his preaching but few years before Christ began to exercise his public office.

Great: this day was great indeed, yet it is not the day of the last and great judgment, though the Jews perversely affirm it to evade the acknowledgment of Messiah's being already come. But this day of Messiah was great for the alterations he was to make in worship and church affairs, taking down the Mosaic ceremonies and enlarging the church; great for the miracles he wrought, and empowered others to do; great for the reconciliation between God and man, for the conquering of Satan, and casting him out of his throne. It was great too against the Jews his obstinate enemies.

Dreadful: it was a time of vengeance executed upon a people whose sins were full ripe; and such sufferings fell on the Jews at that time, as may very well be an emblem of the day of judgment, and which may be remotely meant hereby. But the first, the literal and plain, meaning of the words refer to the times of vengeance upon the Jews from either the birth, or first preaching, or death of Christ to the final desolation of the city and temple, and irrecoverable overthrow of their government, of which Christ speaks at large, **Mt 24 Mr 13**; which places point out first the sad and dismal miseries of the Jews, and next, by accommodation, the end of the world and last judgment. Such a description of this day, Joe_2:31, by St. Peter interpreted and applied to this day of Christ, Act_2:20, more fully clears this. *The Lord* ; Jesus Christ, preaching to the Jews, calling them to repentance, reproving their sins, encouraging their compliance, threatening their impenitence, and labouring to gather the children of Jerusalem together under his wings, but they would not, Mat_23:34-39; and therefore at last destroying by the Romans these obstinate and incorrigible sinners.

Malachi 4:6

And he; John the Baptist, who comes in the spirit and power of Elias.

Shall turn; it shall be his office and work to turn, as it is the office of every preacher. The success is of God, who also gives it as he pleaseth, and did give it to John's ministry; and so the words include the event of John's preaching, which did, as here it is foretold he should, convert many.

The heart of the fathers to the children: there were at this time many great and unnatural divisions and quarrels among the Jews, in which fathers studied mischief to their own children; they were divided and spitefully bent against them, in civil matters and on account of religion, and these turned their hearts from the dearest relations. Some by *fathers* and *children* understand Jews and Gentiles, whose souls being converted to Christ, their hearts were turned one to another.

And the heart of the children to their fathers; undutiful children estranged by the same means and on the same accounts from their fathers, but now, by obeying the call to repentance, embracing the doctrine of the Messiah immediately to be revealed, and baptized into it, religious quarrels cease, and both parents' and children's hearts unite to Christ first, and then to each other, and all to God.

Lest I; God or Christ, who indeed first tenders the blessings of grace and peace, and gives them to such as accept; but this the Jews would not, the rulers, the priests, the body of the people, refused them: the next thing Christ (Lord and King, rejected and disowned) will do, is to curse and destroy.

Smite the earth, the land of Judea, and the inhabitants of it,

with a curse; which brings with it and ends in utter destruction; as at this day we read in the story of the Romans invading, subduing, captivating the Jews, and razing their city and temple. That time is past now one thousand six hundred and forty-four years since a stone was not left upon a stone, as was foretold by Christ, Mat_24:2, since those unparalleled hardships and miseries befell the Jews, which no heart almost can read and not bleed at reading, (though at this distance of time,) and the sufferers so

deservedly endured such a curse as leaveth Jerusalem a desolate heap, and a perpetual monument of God's displeasure against a people that finally sin against his sovereignty and his mercy.

Matthew 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

The whole revelation of the will of God to the children of men is usually called The Bible, that is, The book, (for the word Bible derives from the Greek Βιβλος or Βιβλιον), with a note of eminency, being indeed the Book of books, so as Luther said well that he should wish all his books burned if he could know that men by them would be kept from reading the Scriptures. And to distinguish this from other books, we have (in the ordinary titles of our Bibles) added Holy, with respect to the authority, the matter, and end of it. This sacred book, with us Christians, is usually divided into the Old and New Testament: indeed the term Testament doth not so properly belong to the law and the prophets, as to the books of the evangelists, the Acts, and Epistles, &c. The title of New Testament in Greek is, *της διαθηκης απαντα*; that is, the whole of the new disposition, or new law, or new covenant, or new testament. The word originally and primarily signifieth a disposition of things. In regard that, amongst men, things are ordered, or disposed, by a law, or by contract, or covenant, or by will and testament, the word hath been used to signify any of these. But in regard that until a testator be dead a testament is of no force, Christ having not come nor died before all the law and the prophets were finished, (I mean the writings containing the law, and what other holy men wrote by inspiration from God, which the Jews call the prophets, or the holy writings), it is not so proper (but that use hath now obtained) to call those writings by the name of a Testament; especially considering, that a part of them (which contained the ceremonial law) was abolished by the Testator's death, and another great part of them fulfilled in his coming and dying. The name therefore of Testament doth most properly belong to the books of the evangelists, the Acts, and Epistles, which do not only contain the new law, (so far as it is new, either in respect of the full interpretation of the mortal law, or in respect of the law concerning the worship of God under the gospel, and the government of the church), but also the new covenant, which though made with Adam, first revealed to him, Ge 3:15, yet is more fully revealed in those books, and they are indeed the last will and testament of our blessed Lord and Saviour. These books do obviously divide themselves into the

Gospels, the Acts of the apostles, the Epistles of the apostles, and the Revelation. The evangelists, or Gospels, are four, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, whose books are called the Gospels, that is, books containing the good tidings (for so the word *εὐαγγέλιον* signifies) which was brought to all people by the coming, life, and death of Christ, the history of which, as also his resurrection and ascension into heaven, they relate. So as they are not called evangelists, as the term signifieth such an extraordinary officer as is mentioned Eph 4:2, such a one as Philip was, Ac 21:8, and Timothy, 2Ti 4:5; but as they were evangelical historiographers, writing the history, as well as publishing the mystery, of the gospel. Of these, Matthew and John were apostles, the other two only disciples to the apostles. In the account they give us of Christ, what he did, and what he said, we are not to expect either a full account of all he did or spake, (we are assured of the contrary, Joh 21:25) nor yet an exact account of every speech in any one sermon, or all the circumstances of any of his actions: we must conceive of them, not as exact notaries, but such who wrote from their memories (not without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit). Hence it is manifest, that although they do not contradict one another, (that indeed were incompetent with the Spirit of truth, their common guide), yet one evangelist hath what another hath not, and in the same piece of his history one hath more circumstances than another: and hardly any of them relate all things in the same order of time in which they were spoke or done, but set them down as their memory did serve them, keeping to the substance, and being less careful as to circumstances; so as where more evangelists relate the same history or sermon, what all say must be taken in to complete the history or discourse, so far as the Holy Spirit thought fit Christians should be acquainted with it; which is the method I have taken in my notes upon the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Matthew was the son of Alphaeus, Mr 2:14, called also Levi: by his employment he was a publican, that is, one who gathered custom for the Romans (which sort of people were generally hated, and perhaps none of the most honest men). Christ called him from the receipt of custom to be his disciple, Mt 9:10 Mr 2:14,15. He was sent out as one of the twelve apostles, Mt 10:3, so as he was both an eye and ear witness of what he wrote. What became of him after Christ's ascension I cannot tell, not knowing what credit is to be given to what ecclesiastical historians say in the case who wrote three or four hundred years after. The time of his writing this Gospel is as

uncertain; some say eight, some nine, some fifteen years after Christ's ascension. It hath been a question, also, whether he wrote in Hebrew or Greek: it is most probable that he (as the other evangelists) wrote it in Greek, though it hath been once or twice translated into Hebrew. Those who as to that question have a curiosity to know what is written on both sides, (not to mention other books), may read enough in Mr. Pool's Prolegomena to this Gospel in his Synopsis Criticorum. The matter of his Gospel is principally the history of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour. The passages after his resurrection and before his ascension are most fully related by St. John. Luke more fully relates the history of his birth, and what went before it. The history of the wise men coming from the east to inquire for Christ is related by Matthew alone; so are some parables, as that of the virgins, Mt 25:1-13, &c.

Chapter Summary

Mt 1:1-17 The genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph.

Mt 1:18-25 The miraculous conception of Mary: Joseph's doubts are satisfied by an angel, who declareth the name and office of Christ: Jesus is born.

Chapter Introduction

Ver. 1. *The book of the generation* signifieth no more than the writing containing the genealogy or pedigree; for the Jews called all writings books. Thus, Jer 32:10,11, *the evidences of a purchase* are called the *book*. So Isa 1:1 Mr 10:4, the writings called a *bill of divorce* are both in the Hebrew and the Greek called a *book of divorce*. Thus in ecclesiastical courts still, the term libel (which signifieth a little book) is used. So as these words are not to be looked upon as the title to the whole Gospel according to St. Matthew, but only to the following pedigree of our Saviour's ancestors.

Of Jesus Christ; of that person to whom the name of *Jesus* was given by the angel, as we shall hear further, Mt 1:20,21, because he should *save his people from their sins* (for Jesus, as also Joshua, signifies a saviour or deliverer); and who also was the

Christ, or the Messiah, prophesied of by Daniel, Da 9:25,26, expected by the Jews, as doth appear from Joh 1:41 (for Messiah and Christ denoted the same person, Joh 4:25); only Messiah was a Hebrew word, and Christ of Greek extraction, both signifying Anointed, and so God's designation of a person to the office of a priest, a prophet, or a king. *The Christ* signifieth a designation to all three.

The Son of David, the son of Abraham: not the immediate Son of either, but, by a long traduction, lineally descended from both. Abraham was long before David, but is here put after him, either because he was a king, or because the Jews expected Messiah was to be *the Son of David*; or because the evangelist's design was to begin the pedigree from Abraham, whom he therefore last mentions. Both are named, because both were concerned in the promise of Christ. It was made to Abraham, Ge 12:3 22:18; and to David renewed and enlarged, Ps 89:36,37. Hence it appeareth that the Jews looked that Christ should be *the Son of David*, Mt 22:42 Mr 12:35. Hence the evangelist puts David in the front. From Abraham the Jews derived themselves, they usually gloried they had Abraham to their father. The evangelist, by proving Christ to have descended from Abraham by Isaac, proveth him an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and to be descended from the seed to whom the promise was made; and by proving him the Son of David, he proves him *David's righteous Branch*, or *Branch of righteousness*, mentioned Jer 23:5,6 Jer 33:15, and so to have descended from the royal family.

Matthew 1:2

Ver. 2. The evangelist reckoneth the genealogy of our Saviour by three periods, reckoning thrice fourteen descents. The first period began in Abraham (Ge 21:2,3), and ended in David. The second began in Solomon, and ended in Jehoiachin. The third began with Jehoiachin, and ended in Christ. Luke (as we shall see in its place) fetcheth our Saviour's line from Adam. From Abraham to David there is no difference between Matthew and Luke, they both reckoned up the same fourteen persons, Lu 3:32-34. But Luke repeating our Saviour's pedigree by his mother's side, and Matthew by his supposed father's side, Joseph, after David they must differ, Mary descending from David's family by his son Nathan, Joseph descending from him by Solomon. All

interpreters agree that there are great difficulties about the genealogy of Christ, especially in reconciling Matthew and Luke; and the enemies of Christianity have in all times made their advantage of them, to weaken our faith as to the gospel: but Christians ought to consider,

1. That the Jews had without doubt perfect genealogies, and were more especially exact in keeping them as to the royal tribe of David, which was Judah, and the priestly tribe of Levi, that they might have a right king and high priest; and it cannot be expected that after seventeen hundred years almost we should make out genealogies as they could.
2. That they were very apt to make strifes about words and endless genealogies; as appears by the apostle's cautioning both Timothy and Titus against it, 1Ti 1:4 1Ti 6:4 Tit 3:9.
3. That it had been a sufficient exception against Christ if they could have proved he had not lineally descended from David.
4. That though they cavilled at Christ for many things, yet they never made any such cavil.
5. That we are forbidden strife and endless labour about genealogy. And therefore it is the most unreasonable thing imaginable for us to make such little dissatisfactions grounds for us to question or disbelieve the gospel, because we can not untie every knot we meet with in a pedigree.

But in this first period no such difficulties occur; both the evangelists are agreed, and the Old Testament agrees with both. That Abraham begat Isaac (when he was an hundred years old) we are assured by Moses, Ge 21:2,5; that Isaac begat Jacob he also telleth us, Ge 25:26. So also that Jacob begat Judah and his brethren, Ge 29:35. Judah was Jacob's third son by Leah, and that son of whom dying Jacob prophesied, That *him should his brethren praise, and to him should his father's children bow down. That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came; and unto him should the gathering of the people be*, Ge 49:8-10. Though Saul, who was the first king of Israel, (given them in wrath), was of the tribe of Benjamin, 1Sa 9:21; yet David was of the tribe of Judah, in whose line the kingdom held unto the captivity.

And his brethren: the brethren of Judah are here mentioned, being the heads of the Jewish nation: Christ descended from Judah.

Matthew 1:3

Ver. 3. That *Judas begat Phares and Zara* (they were twins begot of Tamar his daughter-in-law), the relict of his son Er whom God slew, Ge 38:7, appeareth from Ge 38:27-30. That *Phares begat Ezrom* appeareth from Ru 4:18 1Ch 2:5; and from the same texts appears also that *Ezrom begat Aram*, Ru 4:19 1Ch 2:9, where he is called *Ram*. Some may possibly be offended that amongst all the ancestors of Christ there are but three women named, and all of them such as had a great stain and blot upon their reputation. This *Tamar*, the mother of Phares and Zara, was blotted with incest, and Phares was one of the children begot in that incest. Rahab also is mentioned, Mt 1:5, whom the Scripture calleth an *harlot*, Jos 2:1; and Bathsheba was stained with adultery. But we ought to consider:

1. That (abating original corruption, which we indeed all derive from our parents) no man derives any intrinsic badness from the vice of his parents, though he may derive a blot upon his honour and reputation from it.
2. That this was one degree of our Saviour's humiliation.
3. That it was no way incongruous, that He who came into the world to die for great sinners, should be born of some that were such.

Matthew 1:4

Ver. 4. This exactly agreeth with the Old Testament, Ru 4:19,20 1Ch 2:10,11; only it is there said that *Naasson* was *prince of the children of Judah*, Nu 1:7 2:3, and *Salmon* is there called *Salma*.

Matthew 1:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 1:6".

Matthew 1:6

Ver. 5,6. This agreeth with Ru 4:22 1Sa 16:1,13. Here now ariseth the first difficulty we meet with in this genealogy, and it rather an appearance of a difficulty than a real one.

Salmon being the son of Aminadab, who was the prince of the children of Judah in Moses's time, *Salmon* cannot be imagined to have lived later than in the times of Joshua.

Boaz seemeth to have lived in Eli's time, which (if chronologers count right) was three hundred years after: here are but four men named to take up these years, *Salmon*, *Booz*, *Obed*, *Jesse*.

Answer. The world according to chronologers, wanted but five of two thousand five hundred years old, when the Israelites (under the conduct of Joshua) entered into Canaan: we will suppose *Salmon* to have then been a young man. *Eli* is by them said to have lived about the two thousand eight hundred and tenth. So that the distance is three hundred and fifteen years. *David* is said to have been born in the two thousand eight hundred and sixtieth. So as from *Salmon* to *David* are three hundred and sixty-five years. Admit *Salmon*, *Boaz*, *Obed*, and *Jesse* to have each of them lived a hundred years, or upward, in admitting this, if we consider the age and vigour of persons in that age of the world. *Moses* (though a man spent with travels and battles) lived one hundred and twenty years, De 34:7. *Caleb* at eighty-five years was strong and as fit for war as ever, Jos 4:11,12. If we allow these four men the life of *Moses* they might live four hundred and eighty years, which might allow to each of them fifteen or sixteen years apiece for the concurrency of their lives with their parents, yet three hundred and sixty-five years might be well allowed for all their time: nor is it unreasonable for us to suppose, that God might allow those whom he intended thus to dignify a something longer life than the ordinary sort of men lived in that age of the world. So as the thing being neither naturally impossible (for in our age we see particular persons live upward of a hundred years) nor morally improbable, and directly affirmed in three or four texts, they must have a great mind to quarrel with a Divine revelation who question the truth

of it upon such a pretence; especially considering that the lives of men in our declining and debauched age of the world, are no measures by which we can guess at the lives of extraordinary persons who lived near three thousand years ago.

David the king: possibly that term is added to distinguish the David here intended from others of the same name; or because he was the first king of the tribe of Judah, to whom the sceptre of Israel was promised, Ge 49:10; or the first king not given to the Israelites in wrath, as Saul was upon their murmuring against Samuel: or to show that Christ descended from that family, to whom the promise of the Messiah was made, Jer 23:5, and a kingdom established for ever, Ps 89:36,37. Thus our evangelist hath given us the names in his first period of fourteen generations: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judas, Phares, Esrom, Aram, Aminadab, Naasson, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David.

Solomon was not the eldest child of David by Bathsheba; that died, 2Sa 12:22,23. He was born after David had taken Bathsheba (who had been the wife of Uriah) for his wife, 2Sa 12:25, compared with 2Sa 11:27.

Matthew 1:7

Ver. 7. This exactly agrees with the history of the Old Testament, 1Ki 11:43 (where he is called *Rehoboam*); he reigned but seventeen years, and died. 1Ki 14:21,31. Abijam his son reigned in his stead; he is here called *Abia*; but we shall observe frequent alteration of names, both as to the final terminations, and where the quiescent letters in Hebrew fall into the name. Abia, or Abijam, reigned but three years, and was succeeded by Asa his son, 1Ki 15:2,8. Asa reigned forty-one years, 2Ch 16:13. So as these three princes reigned sixty years.

Matthew 1:8

Ver. 8. Jehoshaphat, here called *Josaphat*, in the Greek, (they having no letter to express the Hebrew י by), was the son of Asa, a good son of a good father, 2Ch 17:1,2; he reigned twenty-five years, 1Ki 22:42. Jehoram, here called *Joram*, succeeded him in his kingdom: he *slew his brethren; he walked in the ways*

of *Ahab*. 2Ch 21:4,6; he reigned but eight years, lived and died wickedly, and was buried infamously, 2Ch 21:19,20. But here ariseth another difficulty from what is said, *Joram begat Ozias*. It is certain that he did not beget him immediately, for Uzziah was the fourth from Joram. Jehoram or Joram begat Ahaziah, he was his youngest son; he lived but one year as king, 2Ch 22:1,2; then Athaliah usurped the kingdom for six years, not counting her usurpation. Joash the son of Ahaziah reigned forty years, 2Ch 24:1. He dies, and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ki 12:21. He was the father of Uzziah, 2Ch 26:1, called *Azariah*, 2Ki 14:21. So that when it is said, that *Joram begat Ozias*, we must only understand that Uzziah lineally descended from Joram: thus, Mt 1:1, Christ is called *the Son of David, the son of Abraham*. Thus the Jews said: *We have Abraham to our father*; and Elisabeth is said to be *of the daughters of Aaron*, Lu 1:5. But it is a greater question why the evangelist leaves out Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, who were all three lawful princes, and rightly descended from the family of David. To pass by various conjectures, the best account I find given of it is this.

1. It is manifest the evangelist had a design to divide all the generations from Abraham to Christ into three periods. The first of which should contain the *growing state* of the Jewish commonwealth, till it came at the height, which was in David's time. The second should contain its *flourishing state*; which was from David's time till the first carrying into captivity. The third should contain its *declining state*, from the first carrying them into captivity to the coming of Christ.
2. He designed to reduce all the generations in each period to fourteen; this appeareth from Mt 1:17. Now although the first period contained exactly fourteen descents or generations, yet in the second there was manifestly seventeen, so as the evangelist was obliged to leave out three to bring them to the number of fourteen: now though it be a little too curious to inquire why the evangelist chose to leave out these three, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, rather than any other three, yet there is a probable good account of it given by learned men, who have waded into these speculations. Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram by Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, 2Ch 21:6; Joash her grandchild; Amaziah her great grandchild. Now God had cursed the house of Ahab, and threatened to root out all his house, 1Ki 21:21. This (as is supposed) made the evangelist,

who was necessitated to leave out three to bring the generations to fourteen, rather to choose to leave out these princes, who were of Ahab's half blood, than any others. If any say, Why then did he not leave out more? Besides that he was not obliged any other way, (than as he would keep to his number to leave out these), he knew God's threatenings of children for the sins of parents usually terminate in the third and fourth generation.

Matthew 1:9

Ver. 9. That Jotham succeeded his father Uzziah, and reigned sixteen years, agreeth with 2Ch 26:23, and that Ahaz his son succeeded him, agreeth with 2Ch 27:9; he also reigned sixteen years, and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ch 28:27. Some here have cavilled at the truth of the history of holy writ, because it appeareth from 2Ki 16:2 that Ahaz died at thirty-six years of age, and that Hezekiah began to reign at twenty-five years of age doth also appear from 2Ch 29:1, whence it appeareth that Hezekiah must be born when his father was but eleven years of age, which they think improbable: but those who will question the truth of what we have so good a proof of as the revelation of holy writ is, are obliged not only to tell us of things in it that are improbable to their apprehensions, but either in nature impossible, or at least inconsistent with some other piece of Divine revelation. Of the latter sort, we hear of nothing objected in this case. Now though with us it be not ordinary for persons at that age to beget children, yet that it is not impossible in nature, nor more than hath happened in the world sometimes, Spanhemius hath largely proved in his *Dubia Evangelica*. Dub. 5, and that by no less authorities than those of Hierome amongst the ancients, and the learned Scaliger amongst the more modern writers. It is what may be. The Scripture telleth us it was so; that is enough for us, though it be not a thing very ordinary.

Matthew 1:10

Ver. 10. All this exactly agreeth with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. These three princes in a lineal descent immediately succeeded each other, Manasseh (2Ki 20:21 1Ch 3:13) reigning fifty-five, Amon two, and Josiah thirty-one years, altogether

eighty-eight years.

Matthew 1:11

Ver. 11. In this *Jechonias* (1Ch 3:15,16) (whoever he was) determined the evangelist's second period of fourteen generations. But there is much dispute, both about the Jechonias who is here mentioned, and the sons of Josiah as they are reckoned up 1Ch 3:15, where it is said: *The sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.* It is plain that Jehoahaz succeeded Josiah his father, 2Ki 23:31 2Ch 36:1. It is certain that amongst the Jews it was very ordinary for persons to have two names; thus king Uzziah in the Book of Kings is called *Azariah*, 2Ki 14:21. Most if not all of Josiah's sons had two names: it is plain that Jehoahaz his eldest son is the same who in 1Ch 3:15 is called *Johanan*; but he reigned but three months, probably set up by the people, and put down by Pharaoh-necho, in a battle against whom Josiah was slain; he pursuing his victory put him down and set up Eliakim his next brother, calling him Jehoiakim, as he is called 1Ch 3:15. He reigned eleven years, 2Ch 36:5. The king of Babylon puts him down, and setteth up Jehoiachin his son, who is also called Jeconiah, and Coniah. He reigned but three months and ten days, 2Ch 36:9; and the king of Babylon fetcheth him away, and sets up his uncle Zedekiah, called also Mattaniah. He reigned eleven years, as appeareth by 2Ch 36:11; then the whole body of the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon (2Ki 24:14-16 2Ki 25:11 2Ch 36:10,20 Jer 27:20 39:9 52:11,15,28-30 Da 1:2). We do not read, either in the Book of Kings or Chronicles, that Shallum (Josiah's fourth son) ever reigned, yet it should seem that he did, by Jer 22:11. Some think that he was set up instead of Jehoahaz, when he was carried away. But the Scripture saith nothing of it, nor is it very probable that the conqueror should skip over the second and third son, and set up the fourth. But it is not my present concern to inquire after Shallum, but only after Jechonias mentioned in this verse, and the other Jechonias mentioned in Mt 1:12, as the head of those generations which make up the last period. As to this Jechonias, the most probable opinion is, that it was Jehoiakim, who was also called Jeconiah, and that the Jechonias mentioned Mt 1:12 was Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim. In this I find some of the best interpreters acquiescing, nor indeed is there any great

difficulty in allowing Jehoiakim the father, as well as Jehoiachin the son, to be called Jeconiah (so near are the names akin, and the signification of both the same); but then the question is, how Josiah could be said to *beget Jehoiakim about the time of the carrying into the captivity of Babylon*; for it appeareth by 2Ch 36:5, that *Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years*; and in his time was the first carrying into Babylon; so that there must be thirty-seven years betwixt the begetting of Jehoiakim and the first transportation into Babylon. The margin of our Bibles tells us of another reading, *Josias begat Jakim*, (Jakim and Jehoiakim are the same), and *Jakim begat Jechonias* (that is, Jehoiachin). Beza thinks this the truest reading, taken out of an old copy of R. Stephens, magnified by Stapulensis and Bucer. But he thinks it should be thus, *Josias begat Jakim and his brethren*, (for we know that Josiah had four sons), and *Jakim begat Jechonias* (that is, Jehoiachin) about the time of the carrying into the captivity of Babylon. For Jehoiachin or Jeconiah was not nine years old when himself was carried away, and his father was carried away before. *About the carrying away into Babylon*: the Greek preposition $\epsilon\pi\iota$ doth not signify any determinate certain time, but doth include sometimes many and distinct times, as it must do here; for Josiah began to reign at eight years old, and reigned thirty-one years, so that he died at thirty-nine years of age, 2Ch 34:1. Jehoahaz (or Johanan) his eldest son succeeded him at twenty-three years old, so he must be born when Josiah was sixteen years of age; Jehoiakim began to reign at twenty-five years of age; Zedekiah at one and twenty; as appeareth from 2Ch 36:2,5,11. So that Zedekiah must be but about nine years old when his father died, which was not twelve years before, Jehoiakim was carried into Babylon, as appeareth by the history, 2Ch 36:1-23. Thus the persons in this period (which was the flourishing time of the kingdom of Judah) are fourteen: Solomon, Rehoboam, Abia, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoiakim; only here is no mention made of Jehoahaz's reign, who was Josiah's eldest son, who, it may be, is not mentioned by the evangelist, either because Jehoiakim (here called Jechonias) was a second son of the same father, or in regard of his short reign (for it was but three months and odd days); or, it may be, because in all probability he was tumultuously set up by the people, and not fixed in his throne before he was turned out by the conqueror Pharaoh-necho; nor do we read of any sons he left;

to be sure he left none who could succeed him in the throne, for Jehoiakim was set up, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him, as the history telleth us.

Matthew 1:12

Ver. 12. This *Jechonias* (1Ch 3:17-19) is generally thought to be Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakin; he is called *Jeconiah*, 1Ch 3:16, as well as *Jehoiachin*, 2Ch 36:8; so also he is called *Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim*, Jer 24:1. That this *Jechonias* *begat Salathiel* (Ezr 3:2 5:2 Ne 12:1 Hag 1:1) appeareth from 1Ch 3:17. It is here objected that God said concerning this Jeconiah, called also Coniah, *Write ye this man childless*, Jer 22:30 how then did he beget Salathiel? But it is easily answered, for that verse. Jer 22:30, will expound itself: *Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah*: so as that text is plainly to be understood, without a child that shall actually succeed in the crown; for the text itself supposes that he should have *seed*, but none that should *prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah*, which the Scripture, 2Ch 36:1-23 justifieth, for the king of Babylon set up Zedekiah his uncle in his stead, who was the last king in Judah, in the eleventh year of whose reign the Jews were all carried captive. This Jeconiah had eight sons, as we read, 1Ch 3:17,18. Salathiel is there reckoned as his second son; possibly Assir died young, or at least childless, so as the right of the crown was in Salathiel, who is the person alone here named. But how *Salathiel* is here said to have *begat Zorobabel* is yet a greater difficulty; for, 1Ch 3:19, it is said, *The sons of Pedaiah* (not of Salathiel) *were, Zerubabel, and Shimei*. If Zorobabel were the son of Pedaiah, how could he be the son of Salathiel? Several answers are given to this. Some think that Zorobabel, because he descended lineally from Salathiel, is called his son, which were a sufficient answer if the supposition were true, that Zorobabel were lineally descended from Salathiel: but that it is not, for according to 1Ch 3:18 Pedaiah was not the son, but the brother of Salathiel. Others think that Salathiel is here said to have begot Zorobabel, because Zorobabel succeeded him in the kingdom; but as that is a strange interpretation of the word *begat*, so neither was Salathiel a king, though possibly the title of the crown was in him as the great grandchild of Josiah, nor did ever

Zorobabel assume the crown that we read of. Whereas others say, that there were two Zorobabels, and that this son was the adopted son of Salathiel: both these things are suggested without proof. The most probable opinion, which I perceive the best interpreters acquiesce in, is, that Salathiel dying without issue, Pedaiah his brother married his wife, according to the law of God, De 25:5, and begat Zorobabel of her that had been the wife of Salathiel; and thence it is said Salathiel begat him, Pedaiah so raising up seed to his brother according to the law aforesaid. To this it is objected by some, that the law was, that the child should succeed in the name of the brother that was dead: so that if this were the sense, it should not have been, *Salathiel begat Zorobabel*, but Salathiel begat Salathiel. The answer to this is not difficult; for, to succeed in the name of the brother that is dead, doth not signify, to be called by the very name with which he was called, but to be denominated his son, as if begotten by him. And this is evident from Ru 4:10, where Boaz hath these words, *Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren*. Yet, Ru 4:21, Boaz, having a son by Ruth, did not call his name Mahlon, by the name of his father, but Obed.

Matthew 1:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 1:15".

Matthew 1:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 1:15".

Matthew 1:15

Ver. 13-15. Here are divers objections made to this last part of the genealogy, and in a great measure caused from the difference between Matthew and Luke; but I shall not attempt any reconciliation of those differences till I come to Lu 3:23-38. There is no *Abiud* reckoned amongst the sons of Zorobabel, 1Ch 3:19,20; and for the others named, we have no certain account of them in any part of the holy writ. From the time of Jehoiakim

were above five hundred years to the birth of Christ, of which seventy were spent in the captivity of Babylon. Zorobabel was alive at the end of the captivity, Ezr 5:2, and, as it appears, the ruler of the Jews, though not under the title and style of king. For *Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, and Jacob*, though we have no mention of them in any canonical books of holy writ but only this, yet Matthew's credit in the church of God ought to out weigh any other writings, pretending any thing contrary to what he saith; we are therefore obliged to believe they all lineally descended from David, but, living in a private state and condition, and holy writ not extending its history beyond Zorobabel's time, (the time when the Jews came out of Babylon), it is no wonder that we have no better means than we have from holy writ to know their lineal descent from the royal family. That Matthew in what he wrote was guided by the unerring Spirit, and that he had rolls of pedigrees which we want, we have reason to believe. This is enough for us Christians, who own the books of the New as well as the Old Testament to be wrote by persons Divinely inspired; so, as to them, we have nothing to do but to reconcile Matthew and Luke, both whom we own to have had the same infallible inspiration and direction. If Jews or pagans argue from any other topic than this, it is enough to tell them, that the Jews kept exact genealogies, and more especially as to the descents in the tribes of Judah and Levi, that they might never be at loss as to the Messiah, whom they expected as the Son of David, nor yet as to the true high priest. Though these records and rolls of genealogy be now lost, yet we have no reason to believe they were so in Matthew's time; of which genealogies (as to this part) doubtless what Matthew saith was but a copy, directed by that Holy Spirit by which he was inspired.

Matthew 1:16

Ver. 16. How Luke cometh to make Joseph the son of Heli we shall inquire (if God please) when we come to his third chapter: but from this verse ariseth a very grave question, viz. How, or wherefore, the evangelist, in deriving the pedigree of Christ, bringeth the line down to Joseph, from whom our Saviour did not descend, being no flesh of his flesh. Christ being the promised Messiah, the prophecy, Isa 7:14, must be and was fulfilled in him, *A virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and*

shall call his name Immanuel. Now if Joseph were not the true, but only the legal or supposed, father of Christ, what had the evangelist to do with his genealogy? Many answers are given to this. Some think that the evangelist accommodates himself to the vulgar opinion; they took him generally for the true and natural son of Joseph; they said, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* But then the Holy Spirit must have attempted to have proved a conclusion true from a medium that was false, which must by no means be allowed. Besides, neither could this be Matthew's design, who afterwards relates the mystery of our Saviour's incarnation plain enough; and tells us, Mt 1:18, that Mary was *found with child before Joseph and she came together*. Others therefore say that amongst the Jews the genealogies of women use not to be reckoned. How universally true that is I cannot tell; generally it is, (very probably), it being usual almost with all nations to reckon descents from the males. It is granted by most that Luke derives the descent of Mary. In the present case, it seemeth of high concern that the genealogy both of Joseph and Mary should be counted. Though our Saviour's being the Messiah could not have been proved from his being the Son of Joseph, for then he could not have been the Son of a virgin, yet (admitting the Jewish error in that case, not knowing the mystery of Christ's incarnation) Christ, by their own confession, was confirmed to be the Son of David because Joseph was so. On the other side, Luke deriving Mary's genealogy from David, and affirming Christ to be born of *a virgin espoused*, confirmed him to all the world to be both the Son of David, descending from Mary a virgin, that was a daughter to one who was the son of David, and also the true Messiah, in whom the prophecy was fulfilled, of a virgin's conceiving and bearing a Son. So that by the reckoning of the generation of two persons, both of which were lineally descended from David, he was proved to be the Son of David, both to the generality of the Jews, who could not deny but Joseph was so, and to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, to whom God should give to believe the mystery of the incarnation by the conception of the Holy Ghost. This to me seems a sufficient reason for the reckoning up our Saviour's descent from David both by father and mother. Which is advantaged by considering that Joseph was not only the *reputed* father, but the *legal* father of Christ; and although his being not the natural but the legal father of Christ will not prove him the Son of David, further than to the Jews who would have him to be the natural son of Joseph, yet the genealogy reckoned from Abraham to

Joseph will prove Joseph the son of David; (whom they judged Christ's natural father), so as they had nothing to say against that and the other parts of this Gospel; and this chapter indeed, with the genealogy of Mary, will prove that he was both the Son of David, and the true Messias, as a Son born of a virgin. Whereas some say that Mary was of the tribe of Levi, and think to prove it by her being cousin to Elisabeth, who is expressly called a daughter of Aaron, Lu 1:5; besides that Lu 3:23-38 plainly proveth her of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, the proof is by no means sufficient; for although the law, Nu 36:8,9, for the avoiding of a confusion of inheritances, commanded them to marry within their tribes, yet this law concerned not the daughters of the tribe of Levi, for that tribe had no inheritance as the rest. So as that kindred might easily be, though Mary was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, as indeed she was. But leaving this question, let us come to the words of the verse. *And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary;* that is, the espoused husband of Mary. Espousals make a marriage before God: the angel afterward saith to Joseph, (but yet espoused), *Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.* And he was soon after the legal, actual husband of Mary.

Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ; that person who was called Jesus is by the direction of the angel, as we shall by and by see, who was also called Christ, which, as we said, signifieth Anointed, and the same with Messias. It is observed by some that the name Christ was given to kings of Judah (because of their anointing) before the captivity, but to none after, till he came who was *the Christ*; God by that providence (if the Jews would have understood it) pointing out to them, that the person was now come who was promised them under the notion of the Messias, Da 9:25,26, and whom they expected, as appeareth from Joh 1:41 4:25, and no longer to be expected.

Matthew 1:17

Ver. 17. The evangelist, for reasons which we cannot fathom, reduces our Saviour's progenitors to *fourteen* in each period of the Jewish state; and in the first period, determining with David, there were no more. In the second, he leaveth out three kings descended from the daughter of Ahab. In the third, which was from the captivity to Christ, there were doubtless more; Luke

reckoneth up twenty-four, (taking in Christ for one), and agreeth in very few with Matthew, who was forced to leave out some to keep to this number of fourteen. Nor doth Matthew speak any thing false, or contradictious to Luke, in saying there were fourteen though there were more. Besides, there might be many more progenitors of Mary than of Joseph, whose pedigree Matthew deriveth.

Matthew 1:18

Ver. 18. The evangelist prefaceth this extraordinary birth of our Saviour in this manner.

Now the birth or Jesus Christ was on this wise; not in the ordinary course and manner in which children are conceived and brought forth into the world ('with child of the Holy Ghost' Lu 1:35), but in this wonderful manner.

*When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph. Betrothing, or espousing, was nothing else but a solemn promise of marriage made by two persons each to other, at such a distance of time as they agreed upon. It was a decent usage, approved of (if not ordained) by God, as appears by De 20:7. That we are obliged still to use it I dare not say; it might be a prudential order and constitution of that state. There was nothing in it typical, nothing to bring it under the notion of a carnal ordinance, as the apostle calls some of their ordinances relating to the worship of God. It seemeth equitable, that the parties to be married might have some convenient time to think seriously of the great change they are soon to make in their lives, and more solemnly seek unto God for his blessing upon them; as also that they might more freely discourse together about their household affairs, and the settlement of their families, than the modesty of the virgins of that age would otherwise have allowed them. It made them man and wife before God, though they came not together for some time after. The distance of time seemeth to have been left to the agreement of parties and parents. In this case we cannot certainly assert the distance, but it appeareth to have been such as that she was *found with child* before they came together. Mary knew what the evangelist here asserts, that it was by *the Holy Ghost*; for as she must know that she had not known man as she told the angel, Lu 1:34; so the angel had satisfied her, saying, Lu 1:35,*

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. It cannot be doubted but that she revealed this to some of her friends, but how it came to be found, or who found it, we are not told. Joseph as yet had no such revelation.

God would have his Son to be born of a virgin:

1. For the fulfilling of the promise, Isa 7:14.
2. Of the Holy Ghost, that the womb of the virgin being sanctified by the Spirit of holiness, there might be no tradition of original sin.

Of a betrothed virgin:

1. That he might not be under the reproach of illegitimacy.
2. Nor his mother subjected to the punishment of the Judaical law.
3. That Mary's stock might be by her betrothed husband.
4. That Christ might have a guard in his infancy.

Matthew 1:19

Ver. 19. It was found she was with child, possibly herself or some of her friends told it to Joseph her espoused husband; it is plain from this text he came to the knowledge of it, for upon it, the evangelist saith, *he was minded to put her away privily*. Had Joseph at this time heard and believed that the Holy Ghost had come upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, being a good man, he would not have entertained thoughts of putting her away. But though she had before received this revelation, and might possibly have communicated it to some of her friends, yet it is manifest that her husband Joseph had not heard it, or at least was not easy to believe a thing of so unusual and extraordinary a nature. That she was with child was evident, how she came to be so was as yet hidden from him in nature, and so incredible a thing, as it had argued too much of easiness of

belief for him to have believed, had not Joseph had (as afterward he had) a Divine revelation for it: he therefore receiving such a report, and finding it to be true, resolves to put her away in the most private manner he could, rather than to expose her to a public shame, or to be made a public example. Their being betrothed was a thing publicly taken notice of, and he could not put her away so privately but there must be witnesses of it; the meaning therefore must be, as privately as the nature of the thing would bear. Joseph in this case had the choice of three things:

1. He might, notwithstanding this, have taken her to his house as his wife, for the law of divorce, or putting away, was but a law giving a liberty in case of a discerned uncleanness to put away the wife, it did not lay any under an obligation so to do.
2. He might give her a bill of divorce, and leave her with her friends. Now those skilled in the Jewish writings tell us this might be done, either more privately before two or three witnesses, putting a writing of that import into her bosom; or more openly and publicly before the magistrate.
3. He might, according to the law, De 22:23,24, &c., have brought her forth to be examined, whether she had only suffered a rape, or had herself consented. If it was done with her consent, she was by the law to be stoned.

Of these Joseph, in his first thoughts upon the matter, and before he rightly did understand the thing, chooseth the second and the milder part, and resolves to put her away, but in the most private manner the law would in that case allow him. He did this (saith the evangelist) because he was *a just man*, where the term $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ signifieth equitable, in opposition to severity and rigour; nor ought any to say Joseph in this showed himself an unjust man, because by the law she ought to have been stoned to death; for that is a mistake. Supposing she had been with child by man, yet if she had been forced the man only was to die, De 22:25,26; or she might have been with child before her betrothing, in which case she was only obliged to marry him that had so abused her. A kind and equitable man always presumes the best, especially in a case where life is concerned; besides that, no doubt Mary had by this time told Joseph the truth, and what the angel had said to her, to which (it being so incredible a thing as not to be believed but upon a Divine revelation) though

Joseph was not obliged, having as yet no such revelation, to give a present easy faith, yet he might reasonably give so much credit as to resolve upon the mildest course he could take, though he was willing also to avoid the blot upon himself by taking her to him for his wife according to his contract. God will not leave so good a man long unresolved what to do.

Matthew 1:20

Ver. 20. What we have in this verse assures us, that Joseph was not only inclined, by the kindness and benignity of his own natural temper, and by his charity, to that moderate resolution he had taken up, but also more immediately influenced by God, who was now sending a messenger to him to tell him what he would have him to do in this case. Whether this angel was the angel Gabriel, who Luke tells us, Lu 1:26, was sent to Mary, to tell her that the power of the Most High should overshadow her, or some other angel, none can assert; an angel it was. He appeareth to Joseph while he was asleep, and in and by a dream. By dreams was one way by which God revealed his mind to people formerly, Heb 1:1; one of those ways by which God made himself known to prophets, Nu 12:6; and not to prophets only, but to pagan princes sometimes, as appeareth by the instances we have in Scripture of the dreams which Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar both had. Dreams are either natural, or supernatural, or preternatural. How to distinguish the former from the two latter is not my work in this place, and possibly a difficult task, especially in our times, when God, having spoken to us by his Son, and given us his word as a perfect rule, hath left off ordinary speaking to his prophets by dreams and visions, though not limited himself but that he may sometimes so speak. We are assured of the truth of a Divine revelation to Joseph by this way of dreams, while his head was full of thoughts what he was to do in this case. God thinks of us when we sleep, and one way or other will not be wanting to our inquisition in sincerity to know his will, in the difficult cases of our lives. The angel saith unto Joseph, *Joseph, thou son of David*; by which compellation he lets him know he was to be the supposed and legal, though not the natural, father of the Messiah, who was by the confession of all men to be the Son of David.

Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; she that is thy

betrothed wife, and so thy wife in my sight; thou hast espoused her, and called me to witness that thou wilt consummate this marriage with her in a due time, and take her to thine house. I see what hath happened which troubleth thy thoughts; possibly thou art afraid lest thou shouldest offend me, marrying one who appeareth unto thee to be defiled; or thou art afraid of bringing a blot upon thyself if thou shouldest consummate this marriage; but do not fear any of these things, but go on, and consummate thy marriage. She is not, as you supposeth, or mayest fear, defiled by man, *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. That holy thing,* (as Luke speaks), that human body which is in her womb, is created in her, and is of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, by his almighty creating power, hath supplied what is wanting from the help of the creature, as to ordinary productions of this nature.

Matthew 1:21

Ver. 21. When the usual time of women is accomplished, *she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.* He shall not be thy natural son, but he shall be her son, not begot by thee, but brought forth by her, so flesh of her flesh. His name shall be called Jesus by thee, or by his mother. It is the will of God thou shouldest give him that name.

For he shall save his people from their sins. It was the custom of the Jews (God's ancient people) to give names to their children, either expressive of the mercy which God had showed them in giving them their children, or of the duty which their children did owe unto God. This name was given by God, expressing the mercy of God to his people in giving them this child; *for he shall save his people from their sins,* saith the angel. Jesus comes from a Hebrew word, which signifies salvation. Joshua had his name from the same word, because he was to be a temporal saviour to save the Jews, the whole body of the Jews, from the Canaanites their enemies. This Jesus was to save his people, all that should believe in his name, whether Jews or Gentiles, from their sins. Hereby the angel hints the mistake of the Jews, in thinking the Messiah should be a temporal saviour, who should save the Jews from their enemies, minding them that he was to save them, not from their bodily, but spiritual enemies, from their sins; the guilt of them, and the power of them, and from the

eternal danger of them: and he alone should do it; *There is none other name under heaven given among men, neither is there salvation in any other, Ac 4:12.*

Matthew 1:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 1:23".

Matthew 1:23

Ver. 22,23. By these great acts of Divine Providence, that which was spoken and prophesied of by Isaiah, Isa 7:14, speaking by inspiration from God, was fulfilled. Though things are said in the evangelists to be fulfilled when the types have had their accomplishment in the antitype, and when something cometh to pass much like, or bearing some proportion to, something which before happened in the world, (as I shall show hereafter), yet I take the sense of being fulfilled here to be literally fulfilled; believing so much of that prophecy as is here quoted did literally concern Christ, and none but him. But we must take heed of interpreting the particle *that* as signifying the end of God's action in this great work of Providence; for the end for which God sent his Son into the world was before expressed, to *save his people from their sins*, not to fulfil a prophecy.

That here only signifies the consequent of that act of Divine Providence, and the sense is but only this, By all this which was done, was fulfilled that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, &c. But the Jews have so much clamouring against the application of that text Isa 7:14 to Christ, and some learned interpreters thinking the fulfilling mentioned to be no more than the fulfilling of a type in the antitype, it will be necessary that we make it appear that it was literally fulfilled. To which I know of but two prejudices:

1. That it could be no relief to Ahaz, nor to the Jews, against their sense and fear of their present danger, to tell them that Christ should be born of a virgin eight hundred years after.
2. That whereas it is added, Isa 7:16, *Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou*

abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Supposing those two kings to be Pekah king of Israel and Rezin king of Syria, who were at that time joined in a siege against Jerusalem, or at least preparing for it, and the child mentioned [Isa 7:16](#) to be the son of a virgin promised [Isa 7:14](#), it could be no relief to Ahaz, nor any great news for the prophet to have told Ahaz, that they should both leave the country before eight hundred years were elapsed. Let us therefore first consider the history to which that prophecy related. [Isa 7:1,2](#) we are told, that in the time of Ahaz, *Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it. And it was told the house of David, (that is, Ahaz), saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* The expedient which Ahaz thought upon in this distress, was to get Tiglathpileser, the king of Assyria, to join with and help him; which he afterward did, hiring him with *the silver and gold found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house,* as we find [2Ki 16:7,8](#). This conjunction with idolaters was what the Lord had forbidden, and had often declared his abhorrence of. To prevent it, he sends his prophet Isaiah to him: [Isa 7:3,4](#), *Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him, fear not, neither be faint hearted, &c.* In short, he assures him in the name of the Lord, that the counsel of these two kings should *not stand, nor come to pass, that within threescore and five years Israel should not be a people, &c.,* [Isa 7:7,8](#). Ahaz knew not how to believe this. Isaiah offereth him from God to ask a sign for the confirmation of his word, either *in the depth, or in the height.* Ahaz refuseth it under pretence that he would not *tempt the Lord,* as if it had been a tempting God to have asked a sign at his command. At this the Lord was angry, as appeareth by the prophet's reply, [Isa 7:13](#); *And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Then he goeth on, Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin, &c.* There was nothing more ordinary in the prophets than to comfort the people of God amongst the Jews in their distresses with the promise of the Messiah; this we find they often did with reference to the captivity of Babylon, and in other causes of distress and trouble. And certainly that is the design of the prophet here, in these

words: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.* Ahaz had refused to believe the promise God gave him, to defeat the counsel of these two kings; he had refused to ask a sign, for the confirmation of God's word. Well, (saith the prophet), God shall give you that fear him a sign, he shall in his own time send you the Messias, whose name shall be called Emmanuel, and he shall be born of a virgin. Nor yet doth he leave Ahaz and his people comfortless, as to their present distress, for saith he, Isa 7:16, *Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.* The Hebrew is **הַכֶּטֶר** which I think were better translated *this child*, than *the child*, for **הַ** seems not to be a relative, (referring to the child, mentioned in Isa 7:14), but a demonstrative, referring to the son of Isaiah, Shearjashub, whom God, Isa 7:3, commanded the prophet, going to meet Ahaz, to carry with him, who probably was a very young child. Saith the prophet: Here is a little child whom God hath commanded me to bring with me; before this child be much older, this land which thou art so much afraid of shall be quitted of both those kings who have now some possession of it; for at this time Rezin had taken Elath, a city of Judah, 2Ki 16:6; and doubtless he and Pekah had taken divers places, for they were come up to Jerusalem itself. And indeed, if this be not the sense, it is very hard to conceive to what purpose God commanded Isaiah to take Shearjashub with him when he went upon this errand. Isa 7:3. So that Isa 7:14 remains as a prophecy respecting the Messias only, and given not for any relief of unbelieving Ahaz as to his present distress, but for some relief to God's people among the Jews, with reference to their posterity. This will appear a much more probable sense than theirs, who think that Mahershalalhashbaz is the son mentioned Isa 7:14, whom we read of Isa 8:3, who was born to Isaiah of the prophetess, (who some think was at this time a virgin), and was a type of Christ; for the Scripture doth not tell us whether that prophetess was a virgin or a widow, neither was it any great wonder that a virgin being married should conceive, and bear a son. Nor had this been any relief to Ahaz, as to his present distress, for this virgin (if she were such) was yet to be married, to conceive, and bear a son; so that, according to that notion, we must allow three or four years before Ahaz could have expected relief. This is further advantaged by that passage, Isa 8:18, *Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath given me are for signs:* not the child, but *the children*. Shearjashub was for a sign

of God's deliverance of the Jews from those two kings; Mahershalalhashbaz was for a sign of the destruction of the Israelites within five years, and also of Syria, which fell out afterward. Thus Isa 8:14 remains a literal prophecy of Christ. For the Jewish interpretation of it concerning Hezekiah, (born fifteen years after), it is too ridiculous to be mentioned.

Matthew 1:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 1:25".

Matthew 1:25

Ver. 24,25. The will of God (as we heard) was revealed to Joseph in a dream. It is God that giveth a power to sleep, and a power to awake; therefore it is said, *being raised from sleep*, he showed both his faith and obedience; his faith in the Divine revelation, a certainty of which he had doubtless by some extraordinary Divine impression, and his obedience to the Divine precept.

He took unto him his wife, that is, he took her unto his house, (for betrothed virgins used to abide at their own friends' houses till the consummation of the marriage), and owned her as his wife, yet not fully using her as such, for the text saith he *knew her not* (a modest phrase used from the beginning of the world, as appears from Ge 4:1, to express the conjugal act) *till she had brought forth her firstborn Son*. Some make a great stir in determining whether he knew her afterwards, yea or no. Some of the ancients were stiff in their opinion that he did not, so are the popish writers, and many protestant interpreters. Mr. Calvin I think determines best, that none will move such a question, but such as are unwarrantably curious; nor contend for either part, but such as are unreasonably quarrelsome. For as, on the one side, none can conclude that she had more children from the word *till*, further than they can conclude, from Ps 110:1, that Christ shall not for ever sit at his Father's right hand, (the word *until* being a particle only exclusive of a preceding time, not affirming the thing in future time), nor doth the term *firstborn* conclude any born afterward; so, on the other side, there are no cogent arguments to prove that Mary had no more children by

Joseph. We read of the brother of our Lord, Ga 1:19, and of his mother and his "brethren", Mt 12:47; and though it be true *brethren* may signify kinsmen, according to the Hebrew dialect, yet that it doth so in these texts cannot be proved. The Holy Ghost had made use of the virgin for the production of the Messiah; why after this her womb should be shut up, and Joseph take her home to be his wife, and not use her as such I cannot tell, nor yet what reproach it could be to Mary or to our Saviour, marriage being God's ordinance, and the undefiled bed honourable: and those who think our Saviour would have been dishonoured in any others lying in the same bed after him, seem to forget how much he humbled himself in lying in that bed first, and then in a stable and a manger. We know he knew her not till Christ was born, whether he did afterward or no we are willingly ignorant because God hath not told us.

And he called his name Jesus: this is added to declare his obedience to the command received by the angel. We shall meet with more circumstances relating to the birth of Christ when we come to the two first chapters of Luke.

Matthew 2:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 2:1-2 Wise men from the east come to Jerusalem to inquire after Christ.

Mt 2:3-8 Herod is alarmed.

Mt 2:9-12 The wise men are directed by a star to Christ, and worship him, offering gifts.

Mt 2:13-15 Joseph, warned by an angel, fleeth with the young child and his mother into Egypt.

Mt 2:16-18 Herod's massacre of the children in Bethlehem and round about.

Mt 2:19-23 Upon the death of Herod Christ is brought out of Egypt, and dwelleth at Nazareth.

Ver. 1. That Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, was of Nazareth in

Galilee, appears from Lu 2:4, where we are told that he went from thence *unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David); to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife:* for, it seems, so was the emperor's decree, Lu 2:1, and Cyrenius the governor of Syria had ordered that every one should go to be taxed in his own tribe and city. Those words, *of Judea*, were added to distinguish the place from another Bethlehem, which was in the territories of Zebulun, Jos 19:15. The verse further tells us, that this was *in the days of Herod the king:* these words, *the king*, are added to distinguish him from Herod the tetrarch, Mt 14:1, or other Herods. This was that Herod the Great, commonly called the Ascalonite, the son of Antipater. There are three opinions of learned men concerning him. Some think that he was by birth an Idumean, and that his mother was an Arabian, and say he was the first foreigner that ever reigned in Judea; and that in him the prophecy was fulfilled, Ge 49:10, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came*. Others contend that he was a native Jew. A third sort say he was originally an Idumean, but that his predecessors had for some ages been proselyted to the Jewish religion: which last opinion is judged the most probable. Judea was at that time subject to the Romans, whose senate made him king over it. Christ being born at this time, it is said, *there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem*. How long it was after he was born that they came the Scriptures tell us not. Some think they came presently; some think within thirteen days; some think it was two years after. It is certain they were directed to find Christ at Bethlehem, Mt 2:8,9. There he was born, and circumcised the eighth day. There his mother accomplished the days of her purification, according to the law; which days were thirty-three, as may be seen Le 12:2,3, &c. Luke tells us, Lu 2:22, that after the accomplishment of those days, *they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him (as their firstborn) to the Lord, Ex 13:2, and to offer a sacrifice;* and he tells us there of his meeting with Simeon and Anna, and of their prophecies, Lu 2:25, &c.; and it is said, Lu 2:39, *When they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth*. It is not probable that these wise men came before our Lord was carried to Jerusalem, (which was about six weeks after he was born), for besides that they had a long journey to come, after such a noise made by the wise men's coming, it is no way probable that Joseph and Mary would have carried him to Jerusalem, where the inquiry was first made;

especially considering Herod's trouble about it, and his sending messengers presently to slay *all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof*, Mt 2:16. It is therefore most probable that it was near two years after the birth of Christ before they came; for though no such thing can be concluded from Herod's decree, which was for the slaying those that were *two years old and under*, yet one would think the following words signify some such thing, *according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*. He had then made inquiry about what time this child should be born; possibly they could not tell him the exact time, but if they said a year or a year and half before, Herod (to make sure) might make his decree for all to be slain from *two years old and under*; but had they said a month or six weeks, it is not probable Herod would have been so barbarous as to have slain all of two years old: so as, if we wisely consider the history of Scripture, it is no way probable that they came before Mary's purification was over, and their offering him to the Lord, &c. mentioned Lu 2:22.

But then how should they find him at Bethlehem? For he went to Nazareth, Lu 2:39.

Answer: God might order some motion of Joseph to Bethlehem (of which the Scripture is silent); it was a city within the tribe to which he related, where probably he had kindred. So as, though it were a year or more after the birth of Christ before these wise men came, yet it is possible they might find him at Bethlehem, his parents being as guests there, though inhabitants at Nazareth. This is enough to have spoken of the time when these wise men came, viz. at what distance from the birth of Christ, considering that nothing can be in the case certainly determined. It is yet a greater question who these wise men were, and from what part of the world (here called *the east*) they came. The uncertainties of men's conclusions in their points of curiosity, rather than profit, let us know how vainly men search for satisfaction when God hath hidden a thing from them. They cannot agree in the number of these men, some will have them twelve, some but three; and they undertake to tell us their names, though neither can they agree in it. Some will have them to be kings; and the papists make us believe they have their sepulchres with them to this day at Cologne; and by the number of the tombs they know their number; and that Church hath a festival for them, which is our Twelfth day. These and a hundred more fables there are about

them. The Scripture saith no more than *wise men*, and telleth us nothing of their number. Whether they were mere astrologers, or such as were skilled in magical arts, or more generally philosophers, is vainly disputed; only we have their observation of this extraordinary star, together with what the Scripture tells us of the use those Eastern nations made of astrologers, to guide us to think they were such as were famous in their country for astrology: though others think them persons skilled in Divine and human laws. The Scripture only calls them *wise men*. Whether they came from the eastern parts of the world, or that part of the world which lay eastward to the city of Jerusalem, is another unprofitable question: pagans they were, without doubt; whether Persians or Arabians, or of some other country, is of no great concern for us to know, and almost impossible to determine. These were the firstfruits of the Gentiles owning Christ as King of the Jews, whilst he came amongst his own, and they received him not; nor do I know any thing more worthy of our observation concerning them. Those that think it worth the while to read what more is said concerning them, may read enough in Spanhem, his *Dub. Evang.*, Heinsius, his *Exercitat. Sac. and Poli Critica*, which I rather choose to name than the popish writers, because in some of these he will find the antidote together with the poison of those fabulous discourses, and be taught a pious wariness of obtruding old wives' fables into canonical history, and lightly imposing upon the faith of ignorant people.

Matthew 2:2

Ver. 2. Jerusalem was the metropolis of Judea; thither they come, as to the most likely place where to receive satisfaction. Of whom they inquired the Scripture saith not, but it is observable that they took notice that there was a person born who was to be an illustrious King of the Jewish nation, they speak not at all doubtfully as to that. This information they doubtless had from a Divine revelation, for although there was an extraordinary star appeared, which might let them know that God had produced, or was producing, so extraordinary a work of providence in the world, yet without a supernatural interpreter they could not have made so true and particular interpretation of it, as upon the sight of it to have come with such a confidence to Jerusalem, affirming that there was a King of the Jews born, and

that this was his star, a light which God had put forth to direct that part of the world to the true Messiah. All guesses at the nature of this star, and the means how the wise men came to know that the King of the Jews was born upon the sight of it, and its motion, are great uncertainties; God undoubtedly revealed the thing unto them, and caused this extraordinary star, as at first to appear to confirm what he told them, so at last to appear directing them to the very house in which the young Child with his mother were.

And are come to worship him: whether worshipping here signifieth only a civil honour, which those Eastern nations ordinarily gave unto great princes, or that religious homage and adoration which was due unto the Messiah, is variously opened by interpreters. It is said, Mt 2:11, *they fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* This might be upon a civil or upon a religious account; and doubtless was according to the revelation which they had, concerning which nothing can be certainly determined.

Matthew 2:3

Ver. 3. Herod was hardly warm in his kingdom, and had taken Jerusalem by force, and was therefore much concerned to hear that there was a new King born; and supposing him to have been all his life acquainted with the Jewish writings and records, where were prophecies of the Messiah under the notion of a King, and not knowing that the kingdom of the Messiah was not to be of this world, but being possessed of the ordinary nation of the Jews, that the Messiah should restore a temporal kingdom to Israel, he could not but be troubled at the news of one born who was to be the *King of the Jews*, especially having a confirmation of it by such an extraordinary means, as persons coming from a far country, and being directed to their journey by some extraordinary impulse, upon the sight of a new star, which pointed to Judea, as the place to which it related: Herod upon this might justly think that his newly acquired kingdom would not last long. And though most people are quickly weary of conquerors, yet their former miseries being fresh in their minds, and the renewing of them likely upon a change in the government, it is no wonder if the generality of the people were

also troubled.

Matthew 2:4

Ver. 4. In this perplexity the king Herod calleth a synod or convocation, which was made up of the chief priests and scribes; the single question which he propounds to them was to resolve him *where Christ should be born*. It is most likely this was an extraordinary convention of such of these persons as the king thought fit, who were best skilled in the law, and other revelations of holy writ, not any orderly meeting of the sanhedrim; for the question propounded to them was of mere ecclesiastical concern, and to be resolved from the prophecies and writings of the Old Testament. The stating of the question to them, not where the King of the Jews, but where Christ should be born, makes it manifest, that although (that we read of) the wise men said nothing of Christ, yet Herod presently conceived that this King of the Jews, that was born, must be the Messiah prophesied of Ps 2:1-12 and in Da 9:1-27; he therefore desired to know of them the place in which, according to their received tradition, and sense of the prophecies of holy writ, the Messiah whom they expected (that is, Christ) should be born.

Matthew 2:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 2:6".

Matthew 2:6

Ver. 5,6. It was (as it seems) so received a tradition, and interpretation of Mic 5:2, that they gave him an answer without any hesitation, telling him he was to be born *in Bethlehem of Judea*; this they confirm by the prophecy of the prophet Micah, Mic 5:2; so confirming the Son of the virgin Mary (at unawares) to be the Messiah from the testimony of the prophet Micah. The words in Micah something vary from those here mentioned; they are thus: *But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* We must know,

1. That the writers of the New Testament, in their quotations out of the Old Testament, ordinarily quote only so much of them as makes to their purpose, and not always in the very terms in which they are found in the Old Testament: but keeping to the sense.
2. That it is more than probable that the evangelist keeps to the words in which the priests and scribes delivered in their answer to the king, for in this relation he is but reciting their answer.

The sole question propounded to them was: What the place was, where the Messiah, according to their records, was to be born? They answer: In Bethlehem Judah: they prove their answer from the testimony of the prophet. If any object that the prophet calls it Bethlehem Ephratah, not Bethlehem Judah, the answer is, that it is in sense the same, for Bethlehem Ephratah was within the tribe of Judah. It should seem by Ge 35:19 48:7 that it was formerly in Jacob's time called Ephrath. Some think that it was a town within Caleb's portion, and called Ephratah from his second wife, whose name was Ephrath, or Ephratah, 1Ch 2:19,50, if it were not the same place, only fortified anew. We read of another Bethlehem in Judah builded by Rehoboam, 2Ch 11:6; whether it had this addition from its old name in Jacob's time, or from Caleb's wife, or to distinguish it from Bethlehem belonging to the tribe of Zebulun, is hard to say: it is plain that that Bethlehem is meant, both by Micah and Matthew, which was in Judah; possibly in tract of time the addition Ephratah was lost.

But, say some, there is a contradiction between Micah and Matthew; Micah saith it was *the least*, Matthew saith it was *not the least*.

Answer: Here is no contradiction; consider Bethlehem itself, it was but a small city, (if it were in Caleb's lot it is not named), but in other respects it was not the least. It was of old famous for Ibzan, one of the judges, for Elimelech, Boaz, Jesse, David; and now last of all for the birth of Christ, where respect to which the evangelist calls it *not the least*; or if he reciteth the scribes' and priests' words, they might call it *not the least* upon the account of Boaz, Jesse, and David, all which were born or dwelt there;

and particularly with respect to Christ, who was born there. The prophet calls it *the least* with respect to its state in his time, the evangelist *not the least* with respect to its state then, its state being magnified by the birth of Christ. Micah saith *among the thousands*. Matthew, *among the princes*. It is the same thing, for, Nu 1:16, their princes were *heads of thousands in Israel*. The Jews would by no means have this text interpreted of Christ, but either of Zerubbabel or David: but as to Zerubbabel, he was born in Babylon, not in Bethlehem, and David was dead long before this prophecy; neither could the following words, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*, agree to Zerubbabel or David: Zerubbabel's name tells us where he was born, and we never read that Bethlehem was thus celebrated with reference to David, though he was born there, 1Sa 16:1 17:58, upon which account it is called *the city of David*, Lu 2:4. The prophecy certainly related to Christ, and him only, and so is interpreted by the Chaldee paraphrast, who some think was one of this council called by Herod in this cause.

Matthew 2:7

Ver. 7. Herod having heard the answer of the priests and scribes, did not think fit to make any noise of it amongst the people; he knew the Jews were apt enough to rebel, and being so little a conqueror had no reason to presume much of their goodwill towards him; he therefore calls the wise men privily, and takes no notice of any King they talked of, but only inquires the time when this new star first appeared. To what end he made this inquiry may be learned from Mt 2:16; only that he might be able to govern himself in his bloody decree, that he might neither destroy more children than would serve his present design, nor yet leave this Child behind.

Matthew 2:8

Ver. 8. He tells the wise men that Bethlehem was the place, wherein his wise men had informed him that the King of the Jews was to be born, and sends them thither with these instructions: That they should go, and *search diligently* there *for the young Child*, whom he doth not call King; thereby dissembling his bloody mind, and making as if he had no

jealousy of him; yet withal he suggests to them that he was like to be a great Prince, or else he would never have pretended that he had a design, when once he knew certainly where he was, to go and pay a homage to him. This text lets us see the malignity of Herod's heart, and indeed of all wicked men's hearts. Herod knew that the Messiah was born. The extraordinary star and the coming of the wise men, the priests' and scribes' answer to him, could not but confirm him that he was born, who was long since promised, as a King and Governor to Israel; yet could he not obtain of his wretched heart to comply with the counsels of God, but, contrary to his own convictions, shows the folly of his heart, in thinking it was in his power to frustrate the Divine counsels, and be too hard for God himself. Nor is his folly less remarkable, not sending any of his own courtiers with them, whom he might better have trusted than mere strangers to have come back and brought him an account; but whether it was that he durst not trust any of the Jews, or that he was over credulous in trusting to the innocent simplicity of these wise men, being not made acquainted with his intentions, he suffereth them to go alone upon this errand, whom he might possibly think would be least suspected of Joseph and Mary, so as at their return he should have a more full account of all circumstances concerning him, than he could have expected from one who had been taken notice of as one that belonged to his court.

Matthew 2:9

Ver. 9. *They departed* toward Bethlehem Judah; how long their journey was we cannot tell: some wonder that none of the Jews did attend them in their journey, coming out of their own country upon such a discovery, and impute it either to the Jews' fear of the tyrant under which they were, or to the blindness and hardness of their hearts, for St. John tells us he came amongst his own, and they received him not; but it is possible that the wise men's immediate applications were to the court, as thinking that the most probable place to hear of one that should be born King of the Jews; and it may be questioned whether Herod, though he called the scribes and the priests together, told them that his summoning of them was occasioned by the coming of the wise men, for the only question he propounded to them was where Christ was to be born, which they might understand without any relation to the wise men's question. Nor is it probable that Herod

should be more open than needed in publishing the coming of these wise men, or their errand. Yet the text saying that not only Herod, but all Jerusalem, was troubled, suggests to us, that both their coming, and the occasion of it, was noised abroad, more than probably Herod could have wished; but it is like their dismissal was so private, that if any of the Jews had had a heart and courage enough to have gone with them, yet they might not have had opportunity. It is more admirable that Herod sent none that he could securely trust with them. But the hand of God was in this thing. They shall be hid whom he will hide. The Lord had prepared them a better guide.

The star, which probably had disappeared for a good time while they were upon their journey to Jerusalem, (for they needed no star to guide them to so famous a place), as soon as they were out of Jerusalem it appeared again, *and went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was*: probably the star appeared in the lower region, and though it could not point so directly that they should know the very house, yet it might point so near as by inquiry they might easily find it, especially by the influence of God upon their spirits, which doubtless they did not want. Whether these wise men were of the posterity of Balaam, who prophesied of *a sceptre that should rise out of Israel, that should smite the corners of Moab, one that should have dominion*, &c., Nu 24:17,19, or this star had any relation to the star mentioned there, Nu 24:17 is very uncertain: it is more probable that these wise men came a much further journey, and that the star there mentioned was not to be understood in a literal sense, but better expounded by Simeon, Lu 2:32, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel*.

Matthew 2:10

Ver. 10. Joy is but the natural consequence of desire satisfied: they had in their own country seen an extraordinary star, which, according to the rules of their own art, they might guess to be an indication of a great Prince born, or, by a Divine revelation, they might know to be so. This kindled in them a strong desire to go and pay a homage to him; upon this they take a long journey to Jerusalem. When they come there they were more fully confirmed, from the answer of the priests and scribes, that there was a Christ to be born in Bethlehem Judah. Thither they go. In

their journey the same star they had before seen appears to them again, confirming both their former apprehensions, and, by its standing over Bethlehem, and a particular house in it, (to their apprehensions), they were fully confirmed that they had right instructions from Herod, and rejoiced in the satisfaction of their desires naturally, and possibly rejoiced spiritually in this matter of joy to all people, if they had (as is probable) a spiritual illumination, and believed that this Christ was also Jesus, one come to save both Jews and Gentiles from their sins.

Matthew 2:11

Ver. 11. How long the virgin Mary and her holy Child had been there is not expressed; those that think these wise men came within six weeks or two months, judge that Joseph and Mary came thither from Jerusalem after that he had been there offered, to the Lord, of which you read Lu 2:22; but they are forced, to uphold this, to interpret Lu 2:39, which saith that after *they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth*, of a considerable time after they had performed these things, which seemeth something hard and needless, especially considering Nazareth was Joseph's own city, i.e. the city where his fixed habitation was. It is most probable that they, after so long absence, went right home, and if the wise men (which is said) found them in Bethlehem, they were gone thither again to visit some relations.

They saw the young child with Mary his mother; under what other circumstances the Scripture saith not, but questionless they were very poor and mean, which is a very strong inducement to us to believe that they had a spiritual Divine revelation, that this was a King whose kingdom was not of this world, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; they would hardly else have treated a poor infant, in an ordinary house and no more attended, at the rate they did, for the text saith they *fell down and worshipped him;* a usual homage indeed which the Eastern nations paid to princes, but they used then to have better evidences of their royal state and dignity than these wise men seemed to have had, if they had not, besides the star, a Divine revelation what manner of King this was to be. We may therefore rather judge that their revelation extended not only to

the birth of a King, but of such a King as indeed he was, the eternal Son of God clothed with human flesh; and that their falling down and worshipping him is to be understood of a Divine worship they paid to him, as the Saviour of the world: and so they were the first fruits of the Gentiles, owning and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that their following offerings to him were upon that account, for opening *their treasures, they presented to him gold, frankincense, and myrrh*. The guesses of those who think that they offered him gold as to a King, frankincense as a High Priest, and myrrh to sweeten the place where he was, I take to be but the product of luxuriant fancies. It is most certain that those Eastern people seldom came to their princes without some presents, and that their presents were usually of the most choice things their country afforded. This is plain from Ge 43:11; and if what naturalists tell us be true, that myrrh was only to be found in Arabia, and frankincense in Sabea, (a part of Arabia) and that country also had gold, which it is plain that it had from 2Ch 9:14, it makes a very probable argument, that these wise men came from Arabia, which was full of men that were astrologers. The providence of God was wonderfully seen in these presents, by them providing for the sustenance of Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus in that exile which they were soon after to endure. For other allegorical and mystical significations of these presents, they are but conjectures, and the exuberances of men's fancies.

Matthew 2:12

Ver. 12. Now the wise God begins to defeat the crafty counsels of Herod, whose bloody hand he had stayed till he should from the wise men have had a perfect intelligence concerning this newborn King. God in a dream appeareth to the wise men, and warns them to go no more to Herod. The wise men came with no intention to serve Herod's bloody designs, but came in the simplicity of their hearts. This simplicity of theirs Herod would have abused, to have made them accessaries to his guilt. God will not suffer it: *He who walketh uprightly walketh safely*. Thus the integrity of Abimelech in taking Sarah protected him from guilt with reference to her, Ge 20:6. The word which we here translate *warned of God*, is used of persons whom God is pleased to honour, so far as to discourse with, either by himself or an angel, Lu 2:26 Ac 10:22 Heb 8:5 11:7. Thus hath God

honoured these wise men, whose hearts were inclined towards him and his Christ;

1. By giving them a star, to guide them.
2. Confirming their hearts by his word, from the mouth of the chief priests and scribes, that they were not mistaken concerning the star and its indication.
3. By speaking himself to them, to keep them from any guilt, or being so much as accessaries any way to that bloody tragedy, which upon their departure he knew would be acted. They take another way to go into their own country, so we hear of them no more.

Matthew 2:13

Ver. 13. How long it was before this apparition to Joseph the Scripture saith not, but admitting what is affirmed by some geographers, that Bethlehem Judah was but two days' journey from Jerusalem, it cannot be presumed long, for Herod had (doubtless) quick intelligence of the wise men's motions. Here was a second temptation upon Joseph, who was of no great quality, (a carpenter), and might have anxious thoughts how he in Egypt should maintain himself, his wife, and child; but Joseph knew that *the earth was the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*: though Egypt therefore was a land of idolaters, and he had no visible way of subsistence there, yet we shall hear that none of these things made him hesitate. Egypt was near to Palestine, and the dominions of another prince, within which Herod had nothing to do. Jeroboam fled thither, 1Ki 11:40, and stayed there till the death of Solomon. God's precept here did not only indicate his care and special providence for and over this holy Child, but included a promise of sustenance and support for it and its parents; and the Lord further assured Joseph that he should not die in that exile, for he would likewise tell him the time when he should come back. Christ's time to die was not yet come, and therefore he would have him out of the way, for he who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and knoweth the thoughts of man afar off, did know that *Herod would seek the young child to destroy him*: he should but seek him, for God had resolved to preserve him, but he would show the malice of his

heart in seeking of him, therefore God commands him to go away, and directeth him whither to go. The certainty of an issue, from the Divine counsels, or a Divine revelation, ought not to encourage us in the neglect of any rational and just means for the obtaining of it. Though God will provide for his church and people, yet it is his will they should use all just and lawful means for their own preservation.

Matthew 2:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 2:15".

Matthew 2:15

Ver. 14,15. True faith, or assent to a Divine revelation, always produces obedience to the precept of it. Thus it did in the wise men, thus in Joseph. Thus every where in holy writ. By which we may learn, that they indeed believe not the Scriptures to be the word of God, who take no care to live up to the rule of life prescribed in them. Joseph not only obeyed, but readily and presently obeyed: *When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother.* The poverty of our Saviour's parents is not obscurely gathered from this hasty motion of Joseph. His motion was not delayed for the packing up of goods, gathering in of debts, &c; if he lost any thing by his haste, yet he carried with him the promise and special care of God for him and his. Yet he moveth prudentially, and therefore he begins his journey *by night*, when least notice could be taken of his motion. We are not to put God upon working miracles for our preservation, though we have never so many sure promises, when it may be obtained in the use of means. They are God's security given to creatures, whom he hath endued with reason, and expressed that we should use it, while we yet trust in his word. We are not told into what part of Egypt Joseph went, nor how long he stayed there: some say six or seven years; others, but three or four months. The text saith he *was there until the death of Herod.* Some say that was before the paschal solemnity that year. But these things are great uncertainties. It is certain he stayed there till Herod died, but when that certainly was we know not, nor is it material for us to be curious in inquiring.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. That it might be fulfilled is a phrase we often meet with in the New Testament, to declare the harmony of Scripture, and the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the prophecies or promises of the Old Testament. Spanhemius tells us: "The Scripture is said to be fulfilled properly or improperly." Properly two ways, either literally or mystically. Improperly, secondarily, when some such like thing happeneth as was before foretold or spoken of, or an example is brought parallel to some former example. Literally the Scripture is said to be fulfilled;

1. When a thing before prophesied of, or promised, cometh to pass. Thus the prophecy, Isa 7:14, was literally fulfilled Mt 1:23; so Mic 5:2 was literally fulfilled Mt 2:6, by Christ's being born in Bethlehem; so Zec 9:9 was literally fulfilled Mt 21:5. Or else;
2. When the type is fulfilled in the antitype. Thus we read of many scriptures of the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ, several things about the paschal lamb, the brazen serpent, Solomon, David, Jonah, &c. Improperly the Scripture is said to be fulfilled, when any thing is reported as done, which bear a proportion to something before recorded in holy writ, as spoken or done: thus Christ applies the same thing to the hypocrites which lived in his time, Mt 15:7,8, which Isaiah spoke of those who lived in his time, Isa 29:13 so Mt 13:14 Isa 6:9: this divines call a fulfilling *per accommodationem, aut transumptionem*.

The question is, whether this scripture, which is Ho 11:1, was fulfilled in Christ's being carried into Egypt, properly or improperly. There is a great variety of opinions; those possibly judge best who think that the Israelites going into and coming out of Egypt, was a type of Christ's going into Egypt, being preserved there, and coming out again. Matthew saith the scripture was fulfilled, whether properly or improperly is not much material for us to know. I have only added thus much to shorten my discourse hereafter where we shall meet with this phrase.

Matthew 2:16

Ver. 16. Herod now expounds what he meant by his coming and worshipping Christ also, which he talked of Mt 2:8.

When he saw that he was mocked, &c; really mocked by their coming no more to him; not that they used any mocking language, or designed by their actions to deceive him, but probably intended to have gone back according to his desire, but that they were otherwise admonished by God in a dream.

He was exceeding wrath, as great persons used to be when they see any great design they have frustrated by their inferiors, *and sent forth, and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and in the coasts thereof, from two years old and under:* he sent forth soldiers, or executioners, and slew all the children. There is a tradition that amongst them he slew his own son, and that Augustus Caesar, hearing it, should say, "It was better to be Herod's hog than his child, because the Jews will eat no swine's flesh." Others say this is but a fable, for his son died very few days before himself.

From two years old and under: if we take these words as they seem to sound, they would incline us to think that Christ was near two years old before the wise men came; but some very learned men think they came within a year or little more, and that the term we translate "two years old", signifieth persons that had never so little entered upon the second year of their age: so as if a child were but a year and a week old, he was properly enough called διετης one of two years old, that is, who had began his second year. Hence they think that the star appeared some little matter above a year before they came to Bethlehem; and considering at how great distance some parts in Arabia were from Jerusalem, they think that a year might well be ran out in their deliberations about, and preparations for, and despatch of their journey. Thus they interpret the next words, *according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men,* that they had told them that it was something above a year since the star appeared first. This is now a middle way between those who (very improbably) think that they came within thirteen days, too short a time doubtless for such a journey, and those that think they came not till near two years, which to some seemeth as much too long. I leave it to the reader's judgment.

Matthew 2:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 2:18".

Matthew 2:18

Ver. 17,18. The text quoted is Jer 31:15. This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Judah was carried into captivity; there was then a great mourning in the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, for their children that were slain and carried into captivity. It was now fulfilled, that is, verified, a second time. There is no need that *Rama* here should be taken appellatively, as it signifieth a high place, from whence a noise is most loudly and dolefully heard. There were several places so named, one near Bethlehem, (formerly called Ephrath, Ge 35:16,19), Jud 4:5, a city in the lot of Benjamin, Jos 18:25. The slaughter was in Bethlehem and the coasts thereof; the noise reached to Rama, which was close by. Both Benjamin and Judah made up the one kingdom of Judah.

Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, a woman passionately desirous of children, therefore the fittest person to have her name used to express the sorrow of all those mothers who had lost their children in this slaughter. The slaughter of these children caused a lamentable mourning by tender mothers throughout Benjamin and Judah, such as the former captivity caused to be mentioned, Jer 31:15.

Matthew 2:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 2:20".

Matthew 2:20

Ver. 19,20. That is, as some say, within three or four months, for Herod, they say, no longer outlived this bloody act; and if we may believe historians, he was in his death made a dreadful example of Divine vengeance. But we cannot assert the just time how long he outlived this bloody act; when he was dead, God,

who had promised Joseph, Mt 2:13, to tell him by an angel, (as before), let Joseph know he might safely return. It is probable this apparition was not immediately upon the death of Herod, for Archelaus was reigning, who must be allowed some time to go to Rome, and to have this dignity conferred on him; but soon after he was dead this apparition was, with a command to him to return into the land of Israel, to which he soon yieldeth obedience.

Matthew 2:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 2:22".

Matthew 2:22

Ver. 21,22. The true King of the Jews being born, the singular providence of God so ordered it, that there was no more constituted governors of Judea under the title of kings, though they are said to reign, because the tetrarchs in their provinces exercised a regal power; for though Archelaus was by his father's will declared his successor in the kingdom, yet the emperor and senate of Rome was to confirm him, who made Archelaus tetrarch of Judea, as appears by this verse; Antipas, another of his sons, called also by his father's name, tetrarch of Galilee; Philip, another of his sons, tetrarch of Iturea; and Lysanias tetrarch of Abylene; and set a governor over Judea, which was Pontius Pilate; as appeareth by Lu 3:1. Of all the sons of Herod, Archelaus is said to be of the most fierce and bloody disposition, which made Joseph afraid to go thither. His brother Herod Antipas is reported of a much milder disposition, and more inactive temper. So Joseph, not without the direction of God, goeth into his own province, which was Galilee.

Matthew 2:23

Ver. 23. It appeareth by Lu 2:4, that Joseph dwelt in Nazareth before our Saviour was born; and, Lu 2:39, after Mary's purification it is said, *they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth;* and, Lu 4:16, he was there brought up. Hence, Joh 1:45, he is called by Philip, *Jesus of Nazareth*. But the following

words of this verse afford as great difficulties as any other in holy writ.

1. How Christ could be called a Nazarene, who apparently was born at Bethlehem.
2. How the evangelist saith that was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *He shall be called a Nazarene*; whereas there is no such saying in all the prophets.

There is a strange variety of opinions as to these questions. Spanhemius acquiesceth in that which seemeth least liable to exception, viz. That Christ was to put a period to that order of Nazarites amongst the Jews, whose rules we have Nu 6:2,3; of which order Samson was, as appears by Jud 13:7, and Joseph was called נָזִיר Ge 49:26, the very same word which is used Jud 13:7. Both Joseph and Samson were eminent types of Christ. And it was spoken of Christ by the prophets, (the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures), that Christ should be called נָזִיר *Nezir*, as it is in the Hebrew, in that it was spoken of those that were his types; who are both expressly so called. The word signifieth a holy person, one separated to God, and from ordinary converse with men. Christ was to be such a Nazarite, separated to God, for the accomplishment of our redemption, and, like Joseph, separated from his brethren: Isa 53:3, he was *rejected of men*: —*we hid as it were our faces from him, and we esteemed him not*. God by his singular providence so ordered it, that he who was the antitype to all the Nazarites, and the true *Nezir*, or person separated, should be educated at Nazareth, a poor contemptible town: Joh 1:46, *Nathanael said, Can there any good come out of Nazareth?* That while his education there gave the Jews an occasion to reproach him, as a Nazarene, because born at Nazareth, believers amongst the Jews might understand him to be the true Nazarite, understood in Joseph and Samson called by this name, as types and figures of him who was to come, separated by God to a more excellent end, and from men in a more eminent manner. So that what the prophets spake of this nature concerning Christ, they spake of those who were the true types of Christ. Those who will read Spanhemius, and *Poli Critica*, will find large discourses about the difficulties of this text, but this seemeth to be Spanhemius's opinion, improving the notion of Mr. Calvin.

Matthew 3:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 3:1-4 The preaching of John the Baptist; his office, and manner of living.
Mt 3:5,6 He baptizeth in Jordan,
Mt 3:7-12 and rebuketh the Pharisees.
Mt 3:13-17 Christ is baptized, and receiveth a witness from heaven.

Ver. 1. That is, in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, (as Luke expounds it, Lu 3:1) when John the Baptist and Christ also were *about thirty years of age*, Lu 3:23, for there was no great difference betwixt the age of Christ and John, as may be learned from Lu 1:31,41,57.

In those days, while Joseph and Mary, and our blessed Lord, dwelt in Nazareth. See Ex 2:11. This phrase *in those days* is the same with *in those years*. It is an ordinary thing in the Hebrew to confound the words signifying a day and a year, and the Greeks did the same, as appears by the seventy interpreters, 1Sa 1:3,7. The evangelists pass over with a great deal of silence our Saviour's minority, only mentioning his disputing with the doctors in the temple, Lu 2:46.

Came John the Baptist; John the son of Zacharias, Lu 3:2, called the Baptist, either because he baptized Christ, or because by him God instituted the ordinance of baptism, which before that time the Jews used in the admission of their proselytes.

Preaching according to his commission, Lu 3:2, where it is said the word of the Lord came to him.

In the wilderness of Judea; some parts of Judea, where houses and inhabitants were very few. None must think that the history of the second chapter is continued in this, there was a distance of twenty-eight or twenty-nine years; the evangelist designing not to satisfy men's curiosity, but only to give us that part of Christ's story which might be profitable to us to know.

Matthew 3:2

Ver. 2. The evangelist only gives us the sum and scope of the Baptist's doctrine, the other evangelists give us a more full account of his pressing also faith in Christ, Joh 1:29 3:29,36 so Ac 19:4. Repentance, faith, and new obedience ought to be the substance and scope of all our sermons. Repentance signifieth the change of the heart and reformation of the life, a turning from sin unto God. *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* that blessed state of the church (foretold by the prophets) under the Messias, wherein God will exhibit his Son as the King in Zion, and exert his power and kingdom, both extensively, subduing all nations to the obedience of his gospel, and intensively, in all the administrations of his government; *for the kingdom of heaven is not to be understood here of the kingdom of glory, but of the kingdom of grace, in all the administrations of it.* This passage containeth the argument upon which the Baptist in his sermons pressed, repentance and faith, and obedience to the will of God revealed.

Matthew 3:3

Ver. 3. It is not much material whether we understand these words as the words of the evangelist concerning John, as it should seem by Mr 1:3 Lu 3:4, or the words of John himself, for he thus spake, Joh 1:23. As the words of the prophet they are found Isa 40:3. The words are judged literally, but typically, to concern Cyrus and Darius, and either these princes, who were instrumental in the restoring of the Jews to their liberty from the captivity of Babylon, or those prophets who encouraged them to their return, or upon their return to build the temple and city. But they are confirmed by all the four evangelists, Mr 1:3 Lu 3:4 Joh 1:23, to have a special relation also to John the Baptist, who was to come more immediately before Christ, and with the fervency and in the spirit of Elias, Lu 1:17, crying, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* As the harbingers of great princes are sent before them to call to persons to remove things out of the way which may hinder their free passage, so John was sent before this great King in Zion, now coming forth to show himself, and to set up his kingdom in the world; to cry fervently to all people, by a true and timely repentance, to cast off those

sinful courses, and to reject those false opinions, of which they were possessed, the holding of and to which might hinder the progress of this spiritual kingdom.

Matthew 3:4

Ver. 4. There are great and insignificant disputes about the habit and the diet of John the Baptist. The evangelists doubtless designed no more than to let us know, that John Baptist's habit was not of soft raiment, like those who are in princes' houses, but a plain country habit, suited to the place in which he lived; and his diet plain, such as the country afforded. In vain therefore do some contend that John wore watered stuff, fine and splendid, as art in our days hath improved camel's hair; and others as vainly contend that he went in a camel's skin raw and undressed: but he was habited in a plain suit of camel's hair, such as ordinary persons of that country used, or else such a rough garment as is mentioned Zec 13:4, used by the prophets. Elijah had much such a habit, 2Ki 1:8. There is likewise a variety of opinions about these locusts which John did eat; the most probable is, that they were true locusts, for locusts might be eaten, Le 11:22. Nor is it to be thought that John did eat nothing else; all that is intended is, to let us know that John was a man not at all curious as to his meat or clothes, but was habited plainly, and fared ordinarily, as the men of that country fared; if there were any difference in his habit, it was to proportion himself to Elijah and the habit of prophets. In this the evangelist teacheth us what the ministers of the gospel should be and do. They should be men contemning the gaudery and delicacies of the world, and by their habit and diet, as well as other things, set an example of severity and gravity to others.

Matthew 3:5

Ver. 5. The preacher being described, the evangelist proceedeth to tell us what auditors he had. The term *all* here twice repeated, is enough to let us know, that it is often in Scripture significative no further than *many*, for it cannot be imagined that every individual person in Jerusalem and the region about Jordan went to hear John the Baptist, but a great many did. It is not to be wondered that there went out such a concourse of people to hear

John the Baptist,

1. If it be true, that from Ezra's time till now no prophet had appeared. Our Saviour speaking of John, *What went ye out for to see? A prophet?* Seems to hint that a prophet was a great rarity amongst them.
2. If we consider the severity of his life. Our Saviour saith he *came neither eating nor drinking*, that is, as other men.
3. If we consider the new doctrine he brought, and his fervency in the pressing it: he came to preach the Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected; to tell them his kingdom was at hand.
4. Especially if we consider the new rite of baptizing, which he brought in. For admit their washing of proselytes in use before, yet he baptized Jews. He was *sent to baptize with water*, Joh 1:33. So as from this time the institution of the sacrament of baptism must be dated, and he did baptize many.

Matthew 3:6

Ver. 6. A great part of those who went out to hear John were *baptized*, that is dipped, *in Jordan*; but from hence it will not follow that dipping is essential to baptism, the washing of the soul with the blood of Christ (the thing signified by baptism) being expressed by sprinkling or pouring water, as well as by dipping or being buried in water, Isa 44:3 Eze 36:25 Col 2:12. Whether they confessed their sins, man by man, by word of mouth, or by submitting to the doctrine of the gospel declared their renunciation of the righteousness of the law, and their engagement to a holy life, is not expressed; but it is most certain, that a profession of faith and repentance was ordinarily required before the baptism of adult persons. It may be wondered that this new practice of John (if it were wholly new) made no more stir amongst the Jews. Either (as some think) baptism was in use before that time, as an appendix to circumcision, (though circumcision only be mentioned), or they had some notion that Christ, Elias, and that prophet, when they came, should baptize; for, Joh 1:25, they asked John, *Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet*. That which seemeth to me most probable is, that before that time there was a

baptism in ordinary use amongst them after circumcising the child, beside the baptizing of proselytes. And as in the other sacrament Christ left out the typical part, and blessed the bread, used at last in that administration, and made use of that for the institution of the sacrament of the supper; so as to the ordinance of circumcision, he in the institution of that gospel ordinance left out circumcision, (which was typical also), and retained only the washing of the person with water, and so instituted the other sacrament of the New Testament. But yet there was so much new in the Baptist's practice, (for he did not baptize proselytes only, but Jews, nor did he use it as an appendix to circumcision preceding, but baptized adult Jews), that if the state of the Jewish church had not been declining, and their power of discipline very little, (if any), they would more than have sent to John to know by whose authority he baptized: but they were under the Roman power, and their ecclesiastical officers were more pragmatical than mischievous, God in the wisdom of his providence having so ordered it, that the change of worship should be at such a time brought in when it should be least potently opposed.

Matthew 3:7

Ver. 7. We shall often meet with the mention of these Pharisees and Sadducees; we will therefore inquire here a little more largely concerning them. There were three more eminent religious sects among the Jews. The Essenes, of whom we read nothing in Holy writ: their main doctrine was fate, they ascribed all things to it. The two others are here mentioned, and often in other parts of the New Testament we read of the Pharisees and Sadducees: the latter were most acceptable to the great men amongst the Jews; the former were more popular, and acceptable to the people. The Sadducees were directly opposite to the Essenes; they ascribed nothing to fate, but maintained the liberty and power of man's will in the most extravagant height: they denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection, angels, &c., all which the Pharisees owned: this we may learn from Ac 23:8 where Paul wrought his own escape by setting these two factions on quarrelling about these points. In short, these were no better than atheists, for what must they be less that deny spirits and the resurrection? The Pharisees, as to their doctrine, were much more sober; they owned spirits and the resurrection; and though they held much of the freedom of, and a power in, man's will,

yet they also ascribed much to the providence and grace of God. They were the interpreters of the law, and, as Mr. Calvin thinks, had their name from thence, not from their dividing and separating themselves from others, as some think. They spent much of their time in fasting and prayer; but,

1. They held a righteousness by the works of the law to be our righteousness for which we are accepted of God.
2. They made a very jejune interpretation of the law, as may appear from our Saviour's correcting it, Mt 5:17-48.
3. They held many unwritten traditions of equal force with the law of God.
4. They were very hypocrites in their practice, neglecting the weighty things of the law, making long prayers for a pretence for their wickedness, and doing all they did but to be seen of men.

Some of these Sadducees and Pharisees came to John's baptism, and no wonder, for, Mr 6:20: *Herod observed him, heard him, did many things, and heard him gladly*; but, Lu 7:30, it is said the Pharisees *were not baptized of him*. It is like they came out of curiosity.

He said unto them, O generation of vipers; the very language which Christ used to them, Mt 12:34 23:33. The viper, to which he compares them, is the worst and most dangerous of serpents. We need give no account of the Baptist's treating them so roughly, because our Saviour justifieth the term by applying it to them. Corrupt teachers are the worst of men, and of all orders of sinners, fewest of them repent and have their hearts changed.

Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? What comes in your mind, who think there is no resurrection, no hell, or who think you are so righteous that you need fear none, to do any thing that might testify you are afraid of wrath to come?

Matthew 3:8

Ver. 8. You come here and thrust yourselves into a crowd of

penitents, but this is not enough, true repentance is not a barren thing; neither are your leaves of external profession a sufficient indication of it, you must bring forth the fruits of holiness, fruits that may answer the nature of true repentance. The proper products of habits are called their fruits; thus we read of *the fruit of sin*, and *the fruit of righteousness*. Fruits meet (answerable to amendment of life) *for repentance* are works that are the proper product of repentance, or justly answering an external profession of repentance. As faith, so repentance, without works is dead.

Matthew 3:9

Ver. 9. All hypocrites bear up themselves upon something, upon which they promise good to themselves, and a freedom from the judgments of God. The Jews rested much upon their descent from Abraham, as appeareth also from Joh 8:39, by which means they entitled themselves to the covenant, Ge 8:10, extended to his seed as well as to himself, as also to the name of the church, Abraham's posterity by Isaac being all the visible church which God had upon the earth at that time. It is the great work of ministers to drive hypocrites from their vain confidences. This John doth here; as if he should say, I know what you trust to, you think with yourselves that, because you are the only church of God upon the earth, judgment shall not come upon you, God would then have no seed of Abraham to show mercy to, and to keep his covenant with; but mistake not, God, of stones, if he please, can raise up Abraham a seed. To keep covenant with papists and formalists have much the same presumption, though with this difference, the Jews were the true, the only church of God, these do but arrogate the name to themselves.

Matthew 3:10

Ver. 10. A prediction, as some think, of that dreadful destruction which within a few years came by the Romans upon the whole Jewish nation. The sense is, The vengeance of God is very near to be revealed, men must repent now or never, for *every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire*; judgment now is as nigh unto men, as the tree is to falling, to the root of which the axe is already applied: whether it be to be understood of the judgment common to all unbelievers,

all that *know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ*, as 2Th 1:8,9, or the particular destruction of this nation of the Jews. I shall not determine, though I rather judge the latter probable. The latter part of the text is made use of by our Saviour, Mt 7:19, in the latter part of his sermon upon the mount. It letteth us know, that it is not improper, nor dissonant to the style of John Baptist, and Christ, and others the most eminent first gospel preachers, to press repentance, faith, and holiness of life, from arguments of terror.

Matthew 3:11

Ver. 11. I am not the Christ, Mr 1:8 Lu 3:15,16 Joh 1:15,26, I am but the messenger and forerunner of Christ, sent before him to baptize men with the baptism of water, in testimony of their repentance; but there is one immediately coming after me, who is infinitely to be preferred before me, so much, that I am not worthy to carry his shoes, or unloose his shoe latchet. He shall baptize men with another kind of baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

With the Holy Ghost, inwardly washing away their sins with his blood, and sanctifying their hearts: the Holy Ghost working in their hearts like fire, purging out their lusts and corruptions, warming and inflaming their hearts with the sense of his love, and kindling in them all spiritual habits. Or, *with the Holy Ghost*, as in the days of Pentecost, there appearing to them *cloven tongues like as of fire*, as Ac 2:3: thus the term *fire* is made exegetical of the term *the Holy Ghost*. Or, *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*; changing and renewing the hearts of those that believe in him, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and consuming and destroying others, that will not believe, as with fire.

Matthew 3:12

Ver. 12. Judea is at present God's floor, the only church he hath upon the earth; but there is chaff upon this floor, as well as wheat. Now he is come who will make a separation between the chaff and the wheat; who by his preaching the gospel will distinguish between Israel and those that are of Israel, Ro 9:6;

between those who, living in the true expectation of the Messiah, shall receive him now he is come, and those who, by their not owning and receiving him, shall declare that they never had any true expectation of him: shall separate them into distinct heaps, raising up a gospel church, and shall at the last day make yet a stricter discrimination, and *thoroughly purge his floor*, taking true believers into heaven, and burning unbelievers *with unquenchable fire*, casting them into torments like unquenchable fire.

Matthew 3:13

Ver. 13. Christ, who now was about thirty years of age, Lu 3:23, cometh from Nazareth, a city in Galilee, where Joseph lived, Lu 2:4, and whither he went with, Joseph and Mary, Lu 2:39, and again after he had disputed with the doctors at twelve years of age, Lu 2:46; cometh from thence to Jordan, the great river, where John was baptizing disciples, offering himself to be baptized of him. He showed his humility by going to him, and also made the action public. If any ask to what end Christ, who had no sin, was baptized, himself gives us an account, Mt 3:15, *to fulfil all righteousness* (of which more in its place). He thus owned John's ministry and mission to baptize, and confirmed the institution of baptism by water, and offered himself to that testimony which he knew his Father would give of him. He thus initiated himself in the Christian church, as by circumcision he had made himself of the Jewish church, and so was the Head both of the believing Jews and Gentiles. He was not (as others) baptized in testimony of his repentance, or for the remission of sins, for he was without sin.

Matthew 3:14

Ver. 14. He did not absolutely repel him, but modestly excused himself for a time, knowing that Christ was already baptized with a more excellent baptism than he could administer to him, for God gave him the Spirit not by measure, Joh 3:34.

Matthew 3:15

Ver. 15. *Jesus said unto him, Suffer it to be so now.* The question is not whether thou or I be more excellent. It is thy duty to baptize, for my Father hath sent thee to baptize. It is my pleasure and duty to be obedient to my Father, whose will I know, though it be hidden from thee. Baptism is a new law of the gospel church, of which though I be the Head, yet I must be conformed to the members of it, concerning which my Father's will is, that they should be baptized with water, as well as with the Holy Ghost. Besides that, I am to put an end to the Jewish typical circumcision, and to put a new face upon the church, by instituting another sacrament of initiation. It is therefore both just and equal that I should be baptized (though not for those ends for which others, that are my members, are baptized, not for remission of sins, but) for the fulfilling of all righteousness, in obeying my Father's will.

Then he suffered him: he that erreth through ignorance will correct his error upon better information. We may learn from this example of Christ, that being baptized with the Holy Ghost will excuse none for contempt or neglect of baptism by water, because it is the revealed will of God, that all the members of his church should come under that ordinance; so as there is a fulfilling of righteousness in our case, as well as in Christ's, though in a different measure.

Matthew 3:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 3:17".

Matthew 3:17

Ver. 16,17. This story is also related Mr 1:10,11 Lu 3:21. Luke saith that *Jesus praying, the heaven was opened*. Mark saith, cloven asunder. It is most probable that the opening of the heavens mentioned (though possibly far more glorious) bare a proportion to that opening of the heavens which we often see in a time of great lightning, when the air seemeth to divide to make the fuller and clearer way for the light.

Unto him; that is, unto John. *And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.* The Spirit of God

is an invisible substance, and cannot be seen by human eyes, but the shape assumed by any person of the Trinity may be seen. Whether it was a real dove, or only the appearance of a dove, is little material for us to know. It was certainly one or the other; nor could any representation at this time be more fit, either to let the world know the dove like nature of Christ, Isa 42:2, or what should be the temper of all those who receive the same Spirit, though by measure, and are by it taught to be innocent as doves. Not that Christ had not received the Spirit before, but that his receiving of it might be notified to others. This dove, or appearance of a dove, lighted upon Christ, thereby showing for whose sake this apparition was. Christ was not confirmed only to be the Son of God by this appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and lighting upon him, but also by *a voice from the excellent glory*, saith Peter, 2Pe 1:17; God forming a voice in the air which spake, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. The word signifieth, a dearly beloved Son. The same voice was repeated at Christ's transfiguration, Mt 17:5. Peter from it concludes the certainty of the faith of the gospel, in the aforementioned text.

In whom I am well pleased: the word signifieth a special and singular complacency and satisfaction: I am pleased in his person, according to that, Pr 8:30; I am well pleased in his undertaking, in all that he shall do and suffer in the accomplishment of the redemption of man. We are *made accepted in the Beloved*, Eph 1:6. This text (as is generally observed) is a clear proof of the trinity of persons or subsistences in the one Divine Being: here was the Father speaking from heaven, the Son baptized and come out of the water, the Holy Ghost descending in the form or shape of a dove.

Matthew 4:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 4:1-11 Christ fasts forty days, is tempted of the devil, and ministered unto by angels.

Mt 4:12-16 He dwelleth in Capernaum,

Mt 4:17 begins to preach,

Mt 4:18-20 calleth Peter and Andrew,
Mt 4:21,22 James and John,
Mt 4:23-25 teacheth in the synagogues, and
healeth the diseased.

Ver. 1. This is mentioned by two of the other evangelists, (Mr 1:12 Lu 4:1). Luke saith that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, he returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit, &c.* Mark saith, *immediately the Spirit drove him.* Great manifestations of Divine love are commonly followed with great temptations. Others observe, that temptations usually follow baptism, the beginnings of spiritual life, and covenants made with God. He *was led up*: some think he was taken up; Mark useth the word *εκβαλλει*, the Spirit thrust him out: we must not understand an act of compulsion, doubtless he went voluntarily.

Of the Spirit; the Holy Spirit, that lighted upon him as a dove.

Into the wilderness. Mark's saying, Mr 1:13, that he was there *with wild beasts*, lets us know that it was not such a wilderness as John began to preach in, Mt 3:1; but a howling wilderness full of wild beasts. The end is expressed in the last words, *to be tempted of the devil*: thus his temptations are distinguished from Divine temptations, such as Abraham had, Ge 22:1; and by *tempted* here is meant solicited, or moved to sin, in which sense God tempteth no man, Jas 1:13. The general notion of tempting is, making a trial; God makes a trial of his people for the proof and manifestation of their gracious habit. Satan, by moving to sin, makes a trial of corruption, which was the reason that, although Christ was tempted, that he might be *able to succour those that are tempted*, Heb 2:18, and that he might taste all those evils to which we are exposed, and might overcome the devil; yet when the Prince of this world came, he could effect nothing against him, because he found nothing in him to comply with his motions.

Matthew 4:2

Ver. 2. He was in the wilderness, a place of solitude, and so fitter for Satan's purpose, and he was *an hungred*, which was another advantage Satan had. But he was not an hungred till *he had*

fasted forty days and forty nights. Here was the Divine power miraculously seen, in upholding the human nature of Christ without any thing to eat: this was a miracle. The like did Moses before the law, Elijah under the law. Christ doth the same in the beginning of the gospel; nor did he fast as the Jews were wont, of whom we sometimes read that they kept fasts several days; they only fasted in the day time, but ate their food at night; or sometimes only forbore pleasant bread, as Daniel did, Da 10:2,3, for three full weeks. But Christ fasted from all food, and that not only forty days, but forty nights also; from whence may easily be gathered, how idly, if not impiously, the papists found their fasting forty days in Lent. Here all Christ's acts (most certainly his miraculous works) are not recorded for our imitation; some of them are only for our adoration; all his miraculous acts are so. There can be nothing more sottish than for us to think that because Christ (supported by the Divine nature) fasted forty days, therefore we are obliged to do it; and because we cannot fast forty days and forty nights, without eating something, therefore we may eat fish, though no flesh (when all know that to some palates there is no more delicate food than fish); or we are obliged to fast in the day time, though not at night. And because Christ once in his lifetime fasted forty days and forty nights, therefore we must do so every year; or that the church hath any power to enjoin any such thing. If papists think Christ's fast of forty days and forty nights obliges them to imitation, let them keep them as he did, (with such a fasting I mean), and try whether they be able to do it, or whether four days or nights, instead of forty, will not convince them of their folly. Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, and thereby showed he was God man, the Divine nature supported the human; afterward he was hungry, to show that he was truly man, *touched with the feeling of our infirmities, in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*, Heb 4:15.

Matthew 4:3

Ver. 3. *And when the tempter, viz. Satan, the devil, as he is called, came unto him,* probably in some visible shape, he, forming an audible voice of the air, said, *If thou be the Son of God,* (not that he doubted it, which showed his horrible impudence), *command that these stones, (this stone, saith Luke, Lu 4:3) be made bread.* The temptation plainly was to the use of

means which God did not allow him, to relieve him in his distress of hunger, to distrust the providence of God in supporting of him. A temptation common to those who are the members of Christ, and enough to instruct us, that we ought to look upon all thoughts and motions to the use of means not allowed by God, in order to a lawful end, as temptations *vel a carne, vel hoste*, either from our own flesh, for *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed*, Jas 1:14, or from our grand adversary the devil. It is not much material for us to know from which, they being both what we ought to resist, though those from Satan are usually more violent and impetuous.

Matthew 4:4

Ver. 4. So also Lu 4:4. There is no better answering the tempter than by opposing the precepts of holy writ to his motions to sin. The word is called *the sword of the Spirit*, Eph 6:17. The papists, therefore, denying people the use of the word, disarm them as to the spiritual combat.

It is written De 8:3. Though man ordinarily liveth by common bread, such food as men usually eat, yet God's power is not restrained, he can uphold the life of man when that is wanting, as he supported the Israelites by manna (to which that text relates); nor is God obliged to create any extraordinary means, for his power, which is seen in creating such means, can produce the same effect without such means if it pleaseth him. His power must be seen in creating the means, and in upholding the proper power and faculty of the means, in order to their end; why cannot he by the same power produce the effect without any such means?

Matthew 4:5

Ver. 5. By *the holy city* is meant Jerusalem, once a holy city, Da 9:24; now, though a most impure and filthy city upon many accounts, yet, upon other accounts still a holy city, being the only city in the world which had then in it the true worship of the true God, and in which God doubtless, who in Ahab's time had seven thousand in Israel, had many holy people. How the devil

took Christ into the holy city is variously argued and judged; the words used in the Greek are such as would incline us to think he was not carried by force, but followed the tempter willingly, and set upon a place on the top of the temple, higher than the other parts of it. The end of his being set there the next verse tells us.

Matthew 4:6

Ver. 6. Before the devil had tempted our Lord to diffidence or distrust in God's providence, and the use of means not allowed by God to supply himself; here he tempts him to an unwarrantable presumption, and confidence of and concerning the Divine protection. In the former temptation the devil used no Scripture, but having been repelled in that assault by *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, Eph 6:17, he here takes up the same weapon. The thing to which the tempter solicits our Saviour, was the throwing himself down from a precipice, a temptation, in effect, to destroy himself; which is one of those fiery darts which he commonly throws at the people of God in their hours of melancholy, or under great pressures of affliction; but the usual argument which he useth to them, is deliverance from their terrors, the preventing of want, or avoiding shame. The argument he useth to our Lord is quite of another nature, the special protection of God promised to God's people, Ps 91:11,12. Herein he transforms himself *into an angel of light*, according to 2Co 11:14, and lets us know that truth may be abused to the patronage of lies; and that there is no hook more dangerous to the members of Christ, than that which is baited with Scripture misinterpreted and misapplied, which holy writ always is when it is so interpreted or so applied as to be made an argument to sin. This portion of holy writ is both:

1. Falsely cited; and,
2. As ill applied.
 - a) In the quotation the tempter leaves out those words, *in all thy ways*. This was none of our Saviour's ways, he had no call, no warrant from God to decline the stairs by which he might have gone down, and to throw himself down. God had never promised, nor ever given, any the protection of angels in sinful and forbidden ways.

b) He misapplies this text, using it not to instruct, but to deceive; dividing between man's duty and God's providence; making this word a promise to be fulfilled upon Christ's neglect of his duty; extending the promise of special providence as to dangers into which men voluntarily throw themselves; putting God upon working miracles to declare Christ to be his Son, where there was no need, and of which there was no use, mocking our Saviour's true use of Scripture, with Scripture abused, and many other ways: but he had to do with one not ignorant of his devices.

Matthew 4:7

Ver. 7. This is written De 6:16. To make an undue and unwarrantable trial of God, is to tempt God, whether the trial respecteth his power or his goodness; thus the word is used, Nu 14:22 Ps 78:18 Isa 7:12 Mt 16:1. By this answer Christ lets the devil know that he abused Scripture in his quotation of it; such as casting of himself down, when he had a plain way to go down by the stairs, would not have been an act of faith, but presumption; not a trusting God upon his word, but a tempting of God, expressly contrary to his command, De 6:16.

Matthew 4:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 4:9".

Matthew 4:9

Ver. 8,9. This is the third temptation by which the tempter solicits our Saviour to sin, and of all other the most impudent. For what can be more impudent than for the creature to expect a homage to him from him who was his Creator. What mountain this was, and how our Saviour was taken up into it, are things not revealed, and of very little concern for us to know. The text tells us it was exceeding high, yet not high enough from whence one kingdom could be seen in the extent of it. It is therefore most probable that Dr. Lightfoot judgeth most truly, that

"the devil, being the prince of the power of the air, formed an airy horizon before the eyes of Christ, carrying such pompous and glorious appearance of kingdoms, states, and royalties in the face of it, as if he had seen those very kingdoms and states indeed."

Such things the devil can do, and doth do, by condensing the air first, then shaping and figuring, and lastly so colouring it, that it may represent what he intends. All these things he promised to give our Saviour, if he would fall down and worship him. The same eminent person well observes, that

"what Luke calls worshipping before the devil, Matthew calls worshipping the devil";

and concludes solidly,

"that if to worship before the devil be to worship the devil, worshipping before an image (as the papists do) must be worshipping the image."

The devil here arrogates to himself what was God's alone to give, and such ordinarily are the devil's promises of things, as to which he hath no power to fulfil what he promiseth.

Matthew 4:10

Ver. 10. As this was of all the three the most impudent temptation, so our Lord receiveth it with the highest detestation, saying, *Get thee hence, Satan* by which words he doth not only show his detestation of this temptation, but also chides him off from any further tempting him. The sense is, Satan, I know better things, viz. that a religious adoration is not to be given unto any but unto God alone. Thou art a creature; no worship is due unto thee: to worship before thee (so Luke phrases it, Lu 4:7) is to worship thee. This is expressly contrary to the command of God, De 6:13 10:20. It is also observable, that our Saviour opposeth this to the devil's words, *εαν πεσθην προσκυνησης μοι*, if thou falling down wilt worship me; and that Christ answers, *Τον Θεοσ σου προσκυνησεις και αυτω λατρευσεις*; which shows the idleness of the papists' distinction of *doulia* and *latreia*; the first of which they say may be given to the creature,

the second only unto God; by which they justify their veneration of images. The using a posture of adoration before the creature in an act of worship, Christ here interprets a worshipping the creature, if the creature either exacts it of us, or we purposely set it before us, or choose it as an object exciting or moving us to such an act of adoration, which the papists do. Not that all prostration before the creature is an act of Divine adoration; there is a civil as well as a Divine worship; and in Divine worship the position of the creature before us may be merely for convenience, or accidental. But all prostration in an act of Divine worship is a posture of adoration, and where a creature is chosen and set before us in that act or posture, to excite or move us, it partakes of the homage. There is some little difference between the words, De 6:13 De 10:20, and those of St. Matthew; but that is said to be written, which is written as to the substance and sense, though not in those terms. Moses saith, *Thou shalt fear*; as Matthew quotes it it is, *Thou shalt worship*. The term *fear* applied unto God, signifieth any act of religion, whether external or internal, and though the last words in Deuteronomy, *thou shalt swear by his name*, be not mentioned in Matthew, yet enough are quoted for our Saviour's purpose. Falling down and worshipping belongeth only to God, (saith our Saviour), not to thee; let me therefore hear of thee no more.

Matthew 4:11

Ver. 11. *Resist the devil*, saith James, Jas 4:7, *and he shall flee from you*. Thus he did from the Head, thus he shall do from the members: but as he did not flee from Christ till commanded away, so neither till commanded off by God doth he leave the people of God; but upon our resistance God will command him off, that we may not be tempted above our strength. The evil angels leaving him, the good *angels came and ministered unto him*, whether by bringing him food, or bringing him off the mount, or otherwise executing his commands, is not expressed, and it is too much curiosity to inquire. God by this teacheth us, that our lives are to have their vicissitudes of temptations and consolations, and that our temptations shall have a happy issue, and that when ordinary means fail we may expect extraordinary influences and assistances. Luke saith, *he departed from him for a season*, to let us know, that though there was an end of his more eminent temptations, yet he was not afterward without

Satan's assaults.

Matthew 4:12

Ver. 12. John was some time after this cast into prison, for his free reproving Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, for taking Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and other evils, Mt 14:3,4 Mr 6:17 Lu 3:19,20. Jesus heard of this accident, and *departed into Galilee*. There were many things happened between Christ's temptations and this his motion into Galilee, which are omitted by all the evangelists except John, and by him recorded in his four first chapters. Neither by *Galilee* must we understand the Nether Galilee, which was within the jurisdiction of Herod, but the Upper Galilee, called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, Mt 4:15, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, which was in the jurisdiction of Philip, a man of a less bloody disposition. Others make it under Herod's jurisdiction, but where the Pharisees had less to do than in Judea. Our Saviour doth not out of cowardice avoid danger, but he knew his time was not yet come. But some judicious interpreters think that our Saviour first went into the Lower Galilee, and from thence soon after into the Upper Galilee: that which makes this more probable is the next words, *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum*; so as it should seem he first went to Nazareth, which was in the Lower Galilee.

Matthew 4:13

Ver. 13. By this (as was said before) it should seem that our Lord first went into the Nether Galilee, where Nazareth was, which after a time he left, and went to Capernaum; which Capernaum was a city near the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, whose lots in the land of Canaan were contiguous, and by the seaside, as appeareth by Jos 19:1-51.

Matthew 4:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 4:16".

Matthew 4:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 4:16".

Matthew 4:16

Ver. 14-16. The text in Isa 9:1,2, where the words are, *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* The Jews make a great many objections against the application of this text unto Christ, as indeed they do against the application of all texts cited out of the Old Testament by the evangelists. Christians, believing that the evangelists being holy men, who wrote not from a private spirit private interpretations, have not any reason to regard what their interest leadeth them to object: but even Christian interpreters are divided in their sentiments whether these words are said to be fulfilled, in this motion of Christ unto Galilee, in a literal, or typical, or a more improper and analogical sense; nor is it any great matter with which of them we agree. For my own part, I see no reason why Isa 9:2 should not be literally understood of and applied unto Christ. There is nothing more ordinary in the prophets, than, after a threatening of judgment and captivity unto the people, to comfort such as feared God amongst them with promises of the Messiah, and the spiritual salvation which was to be brought in. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali suffered much by Benhadad, 1Ki 15:20, and more by Tiglath-pileser, 2Ki 15:29, before the general captivity of the ten tribes, 2Ki 17:6. The Lord by the prophet, Isa 8:1-22, had been threatening this general captivity; possibly the prophet might say the affliction of those parts should not be so great as the second mentioned, 2Ki 15:29; because by the story it seems they were generally carried into captivity before the more general destruction of the other tribes there. Saith he, This darkness shall be abundantly hereafter compensated, by the coming of the Messiah, and preaching amongst this people; who living at a great distance from Jerusalem, never had such a light as some other parts of Judea, and first drank of the cup of God's wrath in

their captivity. It was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, because it was near to the men of Tyre, who were Gentiles, and had doubtless in it a greater mixture of Gentiles than any other part of Canaan, ever since Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in this Galilee, 1Ki 9:11.

Matthew 4:17

Ver. 17. From the time of Christ's baptism, or from the time that he heard that John was committed to prison, he, who before had preached and taught privately, and more rarely, began to preach more ordinarily and publicly, and the sum of his doctrine was the same with that of John the Baptist, confirming his doctrine, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. See the sense of those words, Mt 3:2 Mr 1:15.

Matthew 4:18

Ver. 18. Whether by *the sea* he here meant the lake of Gennesaret, or the ocean, is not worth the arguing, for the Jews called all great collections of waters the seas, according to Ge 1:10.

He saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, whether natural brethren, or called so because of their joint employment, *casting a net into the sea,* either for the catching of fish, or for the washing of their nets: see Lu 5:2.

For they were fishers: sea men (as the word seems to signify) used to fish in the sea. Simon had a ship of his own, Lu 5:3. The evangelists' differing relation of the call of Simon and Andrew hath made a great deal of work for interpreters. The greatest difference seemeth to be betwixt Matthew, in this text, and John, Joh 1:35-38. But certainly John speaketh of one call in those verses, the other evangelists of another. According to John, they were called to the knowledge of and first acquaintance with Christ while John was in the public exercise of his ministry, for they were his disciples, Joh 1:35,36,39, they are said at that time *to have abode with him that day*. Probably they again returned to their old employment, and when John was imprisoned, Christ, walking by the sea, saw them, and then called them to the

apostleship. There are other differences in their call observed betwixt Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but such as may be easily answered by those who observe, that there is nothing more ordinary, than for the evangelists, in reporting the same history, one of them to supply more largely what the other had recorded more summarily.

Matthew 4:19

Ver. 19. Here was their call to the office of apostles. It is observable that God's calls of men to places of dignity and honour, and his appearances of favour to them, have ordinarily been when they have been busied in the honest employments of their callings. Saul was seeking his father's asses, David keeping his father's sheep, when the Lord called them to the kingdom. The shepherds were feeding their flocks when they had the revelation of Christ. He calleth four apostles from their fishery; Amos from amongst the herdmen of Tekoa; Matthew from the receipt of custom; Moses when keeping Jethro's flock, Ex 3:1,2; Gideon from the threshing floor, Jud 6:11. God never encourages idleness, but despiseth not persons in meanest employments.

Follow me, that is, to return no more to your employment.

I will make you fishers of men: here is the work of ministers set out, to gain souls to God; they are not to fish merely for a livelihood, much less for honour and applause to themselves, but to win souls to God, and are to bait their hooks and order their nets to this end, which they will never serve, if either by general discourses they make the meshes so wide that all will dart through them, or if by their wit and learning they make their discourses so fine and curious that few or none of their hearers can understand them. Nor will all our art make us fishers of men: *I will make you*, saith Christ. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, God must give the increase. But yet we must order our nets rationally and probably in order to our end, and without that cannot expect God's blessings. Nor were the apostles presently to enter upon the work of the ministry, but first to *follow* him. And indeed such should all gospel ministers be. In the choice of Matthias, Peter limited the people in their election to *those that had accompanied with them all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them*, Ac 1:21. Other ministers commonly

prove fishers for something else, not for the souls of men.

Matthew 4:20

Ver. 20. When Christ calls, men shall obey; when he calls, he draweth. It is not of indispensable necessity that men who exercise the ministry should have nothing else to do, Paul's hands ministered to his necessities; but nothing but a providing for ourselves and households can excuse ministers in entangling themselves with the things of this life. Churches that are able ought better to provide for their ministers, and ministers so provided for sin if they do not wholly give up themselves to their work, 1Ti 4:15.

Matthew 4:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 4:22".

Matthew 4:22

Ver. 22. There was another James, Mt 10:3, the son of Alpheus, called James the less, brother of Joses and Salome, Mr 15:40. This was *James the son of Zebedee, and John*, who is thought to be the evangelist. Christ calleth them, not with his voice only, but by his Spirit, affecting their hearts, so as they immediately *left their ship and their father*. Elsewhere the disciples say, *Master, we have left all and followed thee*; probably their employment with their ship was their *all*. They left *their father* also, but it was upon Christ's call, in which case it is every man's duty, *and followed him*, to learn of him before they went out to preach him, and to be witnesses of his miracles, &c.

Matthew 4:23

Ver. 23. Jesus Christ having now called four disciples, did not judge it sufficient to send them about, but himself *went about all* the places of that dark country of *Galilee, teaching in their synagogues*; the word signifieth both the congregation convened and the place. Here it signifieth both. Synagogues were of old

time, Ac 15:21; how ancient we know not. Some think that they were no older than the return out of the captivity of Babylon: but I am posed then in determining where the body of the Jews ordinarily worshipped God on the sabbath days, for it is certain they did not all go up to the temple at Jerusalem. In the Old Testament we read of them only, Ps 74:8, as at that time *burnt up*. As to the order of them, we only read, that they had some rulers, Ac 13:15, who directed those who were to speak *words of exhortation*. The Scriptures were read in them, Ac 15:21; the law and the prophets, Ac 13:15. They prayed in them, Mt 6:5; they expounded Scripture in them, Lu 4:16-19. Christ preached in the synagogues; not only there, we shall find him preaching on the mount in the next chapter, and in private houses; but he did not decline the synagogues, either as to preaching or hearing, not wholly separating from a church corrupt enough through traditions, but not idolatrous. But what did he preach?

The gospel of the kingdom; the glad tidings for lost sinners, that was come into the world, by the revelation of him, who was the true Messiah, and the true and only way by which men might come to the kingdom of God, and be eternally saved. This is what all his ministers should publish; not their own conceits, or dictates of men, or things impertinent to the salvation of souls, but *the gospel of the kingdom*. *And healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease amongst the people*: the Greek is, *all diseases and sicknesses*, yet surely some died in Galilee in that time. This is another text, to prove that the term *all* in Scripture doth not always signify every individual, but some individuals of every, species. Christ confirmed his doctrine, and Divine mission, by these miraculous operations.

Matthew 4:24

Ver. 24. *Syria* is said to be bounded on the north by Cilicia, by Egypt on the south, on the west with the sea, and on the east with Euphrates, and to comprehend within it all Judea, Bethany, Galilee, Decapolis, Samaria, Idumea, Palestina, Syrophoenicia, Syria of Damascus, and Syria of Antioch. Christ's fame spread very far doubtless, because of the good he did, and the miracles he wrought, *and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases*: 'all' here again can signify no more than very many that were indisposed and ill affected as to their

bodily health, those that were sick of, or detained in their beds or houses by, divers diseases. Though Christ showed his power in curing some diseases which physicians judge incurable, yet he showed his kindness also in relieving others not so fatally sick.

And torments; such as were troubled with great pains, as if they were upon racks, or in the hands of tormentors, that set themselves to torture them.

And those which were possessed with devils: of these sorts of persons we shall read often in the gospel: this is the first time we meet with the term. It is observed that in the Old Testament we read little of any such persons; (we read only of Saul's being vexed with an evil spirit); we read much of them in the New Testament, and in ecclesiastical history for some years after Christ: they called them *energumeni*. Some think God, in those first times of the gospel, permitted the devil to this degree, that the power of our Saviour might be the more seen in casting them out, and in giving authority to his disciples to cast them out, which was a great demonstration of his Divinity. Others think that God did it for a demonstration of the error of the Sadducees, who held there were no spirits. The gospel seemeth to hint two sorts of these persons: some upon whom the devil had power no further than to rack and torture them, Mr 5:3-5 Lu 9:39; others in whom he dwelled bodily, and divined and prophesied in them, Ac 16:16.

And those which were lunatic; affected with such diseases as use to increase in some times of the moon, or at such times to seize persons: of this nature we know divers, more particularly the falling sickness and dropsy.

And those that had the palsy, a disease caused by the resolution of the nerves. Those diseases are mentioned which men account hardest to be cured, if capable of cure by men: Christ, to show his Divine power, healed them. Christ did not only cure these bodily distempers, but he also preached the gospel of the kingdom to heal their soul distempers. We read of many who came to him for bodily cure, but of none that said to him: *What shall we do to be saved?* How sensible are men and women of their bodily pains and diseases, more than of their soul's wants!

Matthew 4:25

Ver. 25. They followed for the loaves, for the benefit of the bodily cures, or out of curiosity, though some (probably) followed him out of love, and to learn of him.

Decapolis hath its name from ten cities comprehended in it. Here was a mixture both of Jews and Gentiles following Christ, who came to be a Saviour of them both, and to pull down the partition wall between both, to make them both one gospel church, Eph 2:14.

Matthew 5:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 5:1-12 Christ begins his sermon upon the Mount, declaring who are blessed.

Mt 5:13-16 He calleth his disciples the salt of the earth, the light of the world; and by the similitudes of a city on a hill, and of a candle, he urges upon them the necessity of setting a good example.

Mt 5:17-20 He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law.

Mt 5:21-26 He extendeth the precepts against murder,

Mt 5:27-32 adultery,

Mt 5:33-37 and false swearing,

Mt 5:38-42 exhorteth to suffer wrong patiently,

Mt 5:43-47 to love our enemies,

Mt 5:48 and to aim at perfection.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 5:2".

Matthew 5:2

Ver. 1,2. The last chapter concluded with telling us that a great multitude followed Christ, which he observing, that he might

with more convenience to himself, and advantage to them, speak what he had to say, *he went up into a mountain*; and sitting down, after the manner of the Jewish doctors to show their authority, which our Saviour also at other times observed, Mt 26:55 Lu 4:20 Joh 8:2, *his disciples came unto him*; both those strictly so called, and others also, viz. the multitude, mentioned in the last chapter, or some of them; and he began to speak to them with freedom, so as the multitude might hear. Christ thought it as lawful to preach in the mountain as in the synagogues; nor did his disciples doubt the lawfulness of hearing him, wherever he thought fit to speak.

Matthew 5:3

Ver. 3. Happy are they, who, though they be not rich in this world's goods, yet have a spirit suited to their state and condition, not looking for their consolation here, but, having a poor and low opinion of the world and all that is therein, looking after more excellent riches; and, in order to it, are of broken and contrite spirits for their manifold sins, and cannot entertain any proud opinion of their own righteousness, but flee unto the free grace of God, and the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not the great, and rich, and proud men of the world are happy, but these are the blessed men; for true happiness lieth not in worldly possessions, but in the favour of God, and a right to the kingdom of heaven, and that these men have, Ps 34:18 51:17 Isa 66:2.

Matthew 5:4

Ver. 4. The world is mistaken in accounting the jocund and merry companions the only happy men; their mirth is madness, and their joy will be like crackling of thorns under a pot: but those are rather the happy men, who mourn; yea, such are most certainly happy, who mourn out of duty in the sense of their own sins, or of the sins of others, or who mourn out of choice rather to suffer afflictions and persecutions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. Though such sufferings do excite in them natural passions, yet it is a blessed mourning, for those are the blessed tears which God will wipe at last from his people's eyes, and such are these.

They shall be comforted, either in this life, with the consolations of the Spirit, or with their Master's joy in the life that is to come, Isa 61:3 Joh 16:20 Jas 1:12. So as this promise, and declaration of blessedness, is not to be extended to all mourners, but only to such as God hath made so, or who in duty have made themselves so, obeying some command of God, for sympathizing with God's glory, or with his afflicted people, Ro 12:15, or testifying their repentance for their sins; for there is a mourning which is a mere natural effect of passion, and a worldly sorrow which worketh unto death, as well as a godly sorrow working repentance to salvation, 2Co 7:10.

Matthew 5:5

Ver. 5. Men count the hectors of the world happy, whom none can provoke but they must expect as good as they bring, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*: but I tell you these are not truly happy; they are tortured with their own passions; as their hand is against every one, so every man's hand is against them; besides that there is a God, who will revenge the wrongs they do. But *the meek*, who can be angry, but restrain their wrath in obedience to the will of God, and will not be angry unless they can be angry and not sin; nor will easily be provoked by others, but rather use soft words to pacify wrath, and give place to the passions of others; these are the blessed men. For though others may by their sword and their bow conquer a great deal of the earth to their will and power, yet they will never quietly and comfortably inherit or possess it; they are possessors *malae fidei*, forcible possessors, and they will enjoy what they have, as rapacious birds enjoy theirs, loudly, every one hath his gun ready charged and cocked against them; but those who are of meek and quiet spirits, though they may not take so deep root in the earth as others more boisterous, yet they shall enjoy what God giveth them with more quiet and certainty; and God will provide for them, verily they shall be fed, Ps 37:3,11.

Matthew 5:6

Ver. 6. You see many men and women hungering and thirsting after sensual satisfactions, or after sensible enjoyments; these are unhappy, miserable men, they often hunger and thirst, and are

not satisfied: but I will show you a more excellent way, a more excellent object of your hunger and thirst, that is, *righteousness*; both a righteousness wherein you may stand before God, which is in me, Jer 23:6, and is *revealed from faith to faith*, Ro 1:17, and the righteousness of a holy life. Those are blessed men, who *first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof*, God will fill these men with what they desire, Isa 55:1,2 Lu 1:53. There are some who understand this text of a hungering after the clearing of their innocency towards men, which is natural to just and innocent persons falsely accused and traduced, and they have a promise of being filled, Ps 37:6; but I see no reason to conclude this the sense of this text.

Matthew 5:7

Ver. 7. The men of the world bless themselves if they can take care of themselves, let others do what they will, and as well as they can: but I tell you, that those alone are the blessed men, who are touched with a true sense and feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and that not out of a mere goodness and tenderness of nature, but out of a true obedience to the will of God, and a sense of his love to them, and faith in his promises; and, moved from these principles, do not only pity and compassionate them, and wish them well, but extend their helping hand to them, suitably to their miseries: for these men *shall obtain mercy*, and that not only from men, if they come into straits and distress, but from the hand of God, Ps 37:26 112:5,6: he doth not say they shall merit mercy at God's hand, but they shall be mercified, they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:8

Ver. 8. The men of the world bless those who appear pure and holy to men, and put on a vizard and mask of purity, though they be but painted sepulchres, and their hearts be as cages of all unclean birds: but those alone are blessed, who, being washed from their filthiness by my blood, are of a sincere and upright heart; though they be not legally pure and free from all sin, yet are so pure as that God will accept them, the bent of their hearts being after holiness; who have not a heart and a heart, no doubleness of mind, who are persons in whom is no guile. For

though no mortal eye can see and comprehend the essence of God, yet these men shall by an eye of faith see and enjoy God in this life, though in a glass more darkly, and in the life to come face to face, and as he is, 1Co 13:12 Heb 12:14; 1Jo 3:2.

Matthew 5:9

Ver. 9. The world blesseth the boisterous, unquiet party of it, that can never be still, but are continually thinking of more worlds to conquer, and blowing up the coals of war, division, and sedition: but they are blessed indeed, who study to be quiet, seeking peace, and pursuing it; and are so far from sowing the seeds of discord, or blowing those coals, that their great study is to make peace between God and man, and between a man and his neighbour, doing this in obedience to God, and out of a principle of love to God and men; for those that do so shall approve themselves like unto God, to be his children, and so they shall be called.

To be called and to be is much the same: so what Moses said, Ge 21:12, is interpreted by Paul; Ro 9:7,8; so what is said by Matthew, Mt 21:13, is interpreted by Luke, Lu 19:46; what was said by St. John, Joh 1:12, is interpreted 1Jo 3:1; for God is the God of peace, 1Co 14:33.

Matthew 5:10

Ver. 10. The men of the world judge those men very unhappy and miserable whom their rulers make the objects of their wrath and malice, and pursue violently to the loss of their estates, liberties, or lives, never considering the cause for which they are so pursued: but they are quite mistaken; for that man who is pursued by such violence, and hunted upon this account, because to please men he durst not sin against God, but labours to keep *a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men*, Ac 24:16, is a blessed man; and if he be hunted out of the kingdoms of the earth, yet he shall be hunted but to heaven, for to such men belongeth the kingdom of God in glory, Jas 1:12 1Pe 3:14 4:13.

Matthew 5:11

Ver. 11. Reviling and speaking evil of persons falsely, because of their profession of Christ, and because they dare not sin against God, is a species of persecution, Ge 21:9 Ga 4:29, though the lowest degree of it. It hath been the constant lot of God's servants. David said, Ps 35:11, that *false witnesses did rise up, and laid to his charge things that he knew not*. Thus John and Christ were served, Mt 11:18,19 Lu 7:33,34; nor is it to be wondered that those whose consciences are so seared that they cannot feel the guilt of persecuting others for righteousness' sake, should not feel the guilt of lying and false swearing. But, saith our Saviour, you are blessed when these things happen unto you, 1Pe 4:13.

Matthew 5:12

Ver. 12. Be so far from being troubled, as to count it all joy, when you fall into these trials, Jas 1:2. Let it be music in your ears to hear that the drunkards make you their song. Rejoice in your hearts, express it in your lips and behaviour, *for great is your reward*, not of debt, but of grace; for our light and momentary afflictions are not worthy to be compared with an eternal and exceeding weight of glory; where there is no proportion, there can be no merit: especially, when it is given to us on the behalf of Christ to suffer, Php 1:29. Peter upon this argument saith, *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*, 1Pe 4:14. Our Saviour adds, *for so persecuted they the prophets before you*. The magistrates, and the rulers of the Jews, persecuted Elijah, Micaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and the rest of the prophets, whom you succeed, not in time only, but in the same office of revealing the mind of God to the people.

Matthew 5:13

Ver. 13. In our Christian course we are not to trouble ourselves with what men say of us, and do unto us, but only to attend to our duty of holiness, and an exemplary life, which is what our Saviour presseth plainly, Mt 5:16, and leads his hearers to it by four comparisons, which he institutes between them and four other things. The first we have in this verse, *Ye are the salt of the*

earth: the doctrine which you profess is so, a thing as opposite as can be to the putrefaction of the world, both in respect to corrupt doctrine and corrupt manners (therefore, by the way, it will be no wonder if they resist it by reviling and persecuting you).

You are the salt of the earth: through the grace of God bestowed upon you, Mr 9:50 Col 4:6. If it were not for the number of sound and painful ministers, and holy and gracious persons, the earth would be but a stinking dunghill of drunkards, unclean persons, thieves, murderers, unrighteous persons, that would be a stench in the nostrils of a pure and holy God. Look as it is in the world, *if the salt hath lost its savour*, its acrimony, by which it opposeth putrefaction in fish and flesh, not the fish or flesh only will be good for nothing, but the salt itself, so infatuated, (as it is in the Greek), will be *good for nothing, but to be cast upon a dunghill and trodden under foot*. So it is with ministers of the gospel, so with the professors of it; if they have lost their soundness in the faith, and holiness of life, they are of no value, nay, they are worse than other men. Money, if it be clipped in pieces, and hath lost its usefulness as coin, yet is of use for a goldsmith; meat corrupted, if it will not serve for men, yet will feed dogs; salt is good for nothing. No more are pretended ministers or Christians; their excellency lies in their savour; if that be lost, wherewith shall they be salted? Of what use are they, unless to cause the name of God and religion to be blasphemed? Such another similitude the prophet useth, Eze 15:2,3.

Matthew 5:14

Ver. 14. You that are to be my apostles are so eminently, but all you that are my disciples are so also. Christ is the Light of the world Joh 1:4,9; but though the sun be the light of the world, yet it doth not follow that the moon and the stars also are not so: he is the original Light, the great Light who hath light from and in himself. The ministers of the gospel are the lights of the world also; the angels of churches are stars, Re 1:20, and holy persons are *children of light*, 1Th 5:5.

A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. The church is often called the city of God. Christ compares his people here not to a city, but to a city upon a hill; so that all for which our Saviour

mentions a city here, is the conspicuity of a city so built. It is as much as if our Saviour should have said, You had need be holy, for your conversation cannot be hid, any more than a city can that is built upon a hill, which is obvious to every eye. All men's eyes will be upon you.

Matthew 5:15

Ver. 15. You ought also to consider the end why I have communicated of my light unto you; it is in part the same with that of men: when they light up a candle in a room, which is to show light to all those that are in the room, they do not use to light it up to hide it under a vessel, or a bushel; so I have not communicated my truths or my grace unto you merely for your own use, but for others use. It is said of John, (by our Saviour), *he was a burning and shining light*: so is every true minister of the gospel, yea, and every true Christian; not only a burning light, burning with love to God, and zeal for God, and love to and zeal for the souls of others; but also a shining light, communicating his light to others, both by instruction and a holy conversation. Others' pretended candles were never of God's lighting.

Matthew 5:16

Ver. 16. Our Saviour now plainly tells us what he intended by the comparisons before mentioned. Let the light of that doctrine which you receive from me, and the light of your holy conversation, (the latter by the following words seemeth to be here principally intended), *so shine before men*, be so evident and apparent unto men, *that they may see your good works*; all sorts of good works, whatsoever I have commanded or shall command you; and as I command you, and in obedience to such commands, otherwise they are no good works; *and glorify your Father which is in heaven*. You are not in your good actions to aim at yourselves, to be seen of men, as Mt 6:1, nor merely at doing good to others; *good works* are to be maintained *for necessary uses*, Tit 3:14, but having a primary, and principal respect to the glorifying of your Father; for, Joh 15:8, *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit*: not that we can add any thing to God's essential glory, but we may predicate and

manifest his glory; which how we can do by good works, if they proceed from mere power and liberty of our own wills, not from his special efficacious grace, is hard to understand. Our Father is said to be *in heaven*, because, though his essential presence filleth all places, yet he is pleased there, more than any where, to manifest his glory and majesty.

Matthew 5:17

Ver. 17. There are so many adversaries, Jews, papists, Socinians, Anabaptists, Antinomians, &c., that make their advantages of this text, for the establishing their several errors, that it would require a volume to vindicate it from their several exceptions; those who desire satisfaction may read Spanhemius Dub. Evang. 12.3. The plain sense of the text is this: It would have been a great cavil, with the Jews especially, (who had a great reverence for the law), if either our Saviour's enemies amongst them could have persuaded people that Christ came to destroy the law and the prophets, or his own hearers had entertained from his discourse any such apprehensions. Our Saviour designing, in his following discourse, to give a more full and strict interpretation of the law than had been given by the Pharisees and other Jewish doctors, prefaces that discourse with a protestation against his coming *to destroy the law*, and averring that he came *to fulfil* it. It is manifest, by his following discourse, that he principally spake of the moral law, though he also fulfilled the ceremonial law, he being the Antitype in whom all the types of that had their complement, and real fulfilling and accomplishment. Saith he, I am not come to destroy and put an end to the moral law. I am come to fulfil it: not to fill it up, as papists and Socinians contend, adding any new precept to it; but by yielding myself a personal obedience to it, by giving a fuller and stricter interpretation of it than you have formerly had, and by taking the curse of it (so far as concerneth my disciples) upon myself, and giving a just satisfaction to Divine justice for it. The greatest objection urged against Christ destroying part of the law, and adding new precepts to the moral law, is that about the change of the sabbath; but this is none, if we consider that the moral law required no more than one day of seven to be kept as a day of holy rest, not this or that particular day; for the particular day, the Jews learned it from the ceremonial law, as Christians learn theirs from Christ's and the apostles' practice. Nor is it any

objection against this, that the seventh day from the creation is mentioned in the law, to those who know how to distinguish between the precept and the argument; the seventh from the creation is not in the precept, but in the argument, *For in six days, &c.* Now there is nothing more ordinary than to have arguments of a particular temporary concernment used to enforce precepts of an eternal obligation, where the precepts were first given to that particular people, as to whom those arguments were of force, an instance of which is in the first commandment, as well as in this: as, on the other side, arguments of universal force are oft annexed to precepts, which had but a particular obligation upon a particular people for a time. Thus in the ceremonial law, we often find it is an argument to enforce many ceremonial precepts, *For I am the Lord thy God.*

Matthew 5:18

Ver. 18. *Amen I say unto you,* so it is in the Greek, a phrase, as some observe never used but by God and Christ himself; who is *the Amen, the faithful and true witness,* Re 3:14, though the servants of God have sometimes used it, as an adverb of wishing. It is by most concluded a form of an oath, God by it swearing by his truth and faithfulness.

Till heaven and earth pass, &c.; that is, the law is the certain and unchangeable will of God concerning reasonable creatures, and it shall never be altered in the least tittle, nor ever be abolished; you may therefore be secure that I come into the world upon no such errand.

Matthew 5:19

Ver. 19. Whosoever shall in his practice violate but one of the commandments of God, which the Pharisees judge of the least, and which possible are so compared with others, and shall teach men that they may do as he doth, making such false interpretations of the law as may warrant such a practice, he shall be accounted of the least value and esteem in the church of God, and shall never come into the kingdom of glory: but he who shall strictly and uniformly obey all the commandments, and teach others to do the like by his doctrine and example, that man shall

have a great renown and reputation in the church, which is the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and shall have a great reward in the kingdom of glory hereafter.

Matthew 5:20

Ver. 20. I am so far from giving a liberty to the violation of my Father's law, (as the scribes and Pharisees may possibly suggest), that I assure you that unless your obedience to it exceed that obedience which the scribes and Pharisees teach you, and themselves practise, you shall never come into heaven. What the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was we cannot better learn than from St. Paul, who was himself a Pharisee, and bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a great doctor amongst them, Ac 23:6 26:5 Php 3:5. That it was a righteousness of works appeareth from Php 3:1-21, and the whole Epistles to the Romans (Ro 1:1-16:27) and Galatians (Ga 1:1-6:18); and their not owning Christ as the Messiah, nor believing on him, Joh 7:48, made it impossible that it should be any other. That they looked upon their mere obedience to the ceremonial law as their righteousness cannot be proved, yea, the contrary is enough evident by their obedience to the moral law, according to the interpretation they put upon it. But their interpretation of the moral law was so short and jejune, that it is manifest that their righteousness was not only a righteousness not of faith but of works, but works that were very imperfect and short of what the true sense of the law required, as our Saviour afterward proveth. That is to say, it was no righteousness, for he that keepeth the whole law, if he be guilty in one point, is guilty of all, Jas 2:10.

Matthew 5:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 5:22".

Matthew 5:22

Ver. 21,22. The Pharisees, in their lectures upon the law, usually thus prefaced, *It was said by them of old time; this, saith Christ, ye have heard. Thou shalt not kill:* this was spoken by God in Mount Sinai, it was the sixth of the ten words then spoke.

And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: this now was the Pharisees' addition, for we read of no such addition to the law as delivered, Ex 20:13. Thus they mixed their traditions with the word of God, which possibly might be the reason of their saying rather, *It was said by them of old time*, than, "It was said by Moses", or, "It was said in the law of God"; for under that phrase, it was said by the ancients they both comprehended the law given by Moses to the ancient people of God, and also their own traditions and false glosses, which though not so ancient as the law, yet had obtained for some considerable time in the corrupt state of the Jews.

Shall be in danger of, or obnoxious unto, *the judgment;* not to the wrath and vengeance of God, of that they said nothing, but to those courts of judgment which sat amongst them, to administer justice in criminal causes. As if this law of God had been only intended to uphold peace, and to preserve human society and civil order.

Thou shalt not kill; that is, (as they interpreted), Thou shalt not, without a warrant from God, or from the law, actually take away the life of another. It appears by what followeth, that they extended not this law to unjustifiable passions in the heart, such as rash anger, malice, revengeful thoughts; nor to any opprobrious or revengeful words.

But I say unto you; I shall give you another sense of this law. The killing here forbidden is as well rash and causeless anger, and opprobrious, threatening speeches, as bloody actions.

Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, &c. Our Saviour (as most interpreters judge) speaks this with allusion to the three courts amongst the Jews. The one was the court of three men, which only judged of smaller and lighter causes, not in capital causes. Another was their court of twenty-three men, which much answered our courts at Westminster. The third was their sanhedrim, consisting of seventy men, which answered our parliament. Some think that by the judgment is meant the first or second of the courts; by *the council*, the superior courts amongst the Jews. But the judgment of our reverend Dr. Lightfoot seemeth much more probable, that by *the judgment* is meant the judgment of God; by *the council*

and *hell fire*, not only the judgment and vengeance of God, but the judgments and punishments that are inflicted in the courts of men, that are magistrates, and bear not the sword in vain: so as the sense is this: I say unto you, that if a man doth but in his heart nourish wrath and anger against another without a just cause, and lets it grow up into malice, and thoughts and desires of private revenge, though he be not by it obnoxious to courts of justice, who can only determine upon overt acts, yet he is accountable to God, and liable to his judgment: but if men suffer their passions to break out into reviling terms and language, such as *Raca*, (signifying a vain person), or, *Thou fool*, (speaking this from anger or malice), they are not only liable to the eternal vengeance of God, compared to the fire of Gehenna, but ought to be subjected to the punishment of the civil magistrate. Every civil government being by the law of God, in order to the prevention of quarrels or bloodshed, (which often followeth revilings of each other), obliged to punish such offences, as being the beginnings of murder, provocations to it, and indications of murderous hearts, hearts full of that which in the eye of God is murder.

Matthew 5:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 5:24".

Matthew 5:24

Ver. 24. The Jews were to *offer gifts and sacrifices*, Heb 5:1. Their gifts were their free will offerings, they were the most frequent oblations amongst the Jews, as may appear from Leviticus, and what the priests pressed with the greatest importunity, as may appear from Mr 7:11; therefore our Saviour instanceth in these, rather than in other parts of their worship. Bring unto God the best and most acceptable sacrifices (in your or, the teacher's judgment) that you can, if there be found malice or rash anger in your hearts, God will not accept them. Therefore, how near soever you be come to a religious action, if you there remember that your brother hath a just reason to be offended with you, for any malice or rash anger showed or expressed by you, do not think this will discharge you of your obligation to pay your homage to God; but forbear a while, *leave*

your gift before the altar, and do what in you lies to be reconciled to your brother, to have a placable spirit to him, to purge your heart of wrath and malice, and any desire of revenge, *and then come and offer your gift,* pay that homage which you owe, and it was in your heart to pay to God. It is a text usually applied with reference to communion with God in the Lord's supper, but equally extensive to any other part of worship, hearing the word, Jas 1:21, and prayer, 1Ti 2:8. God accepteth no service, no homage, from an implacable, malicious heart.

Matthew 5:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 5:26".

Matthew 5:26

Ver. 26. Forasmuch as the overt acts and expressions of unjust wrath and malice are iniquities punishable by the judge, let it be the care of those that will be my disciples, if by their passions they have provoked any, and made them their adversaries, quickly to agree with them; for you know the ordinary course of enraged adversaries amongst men, is to bring their actions, and to bring men before the civil judge; and when the judge upon inquiry hath found them guilty, he useth to deliver them to the gaoler to be carried to prison, until they have fully paid their fines for such offences. And forasmuch as not only the overt acts, but the passions which cause such acts, are culpable before God, and make men obnoxious to his righteous judgment, and God by them is made an adversary to the soul, as having violated his great command, *Thou shalt do no murder*; let all my disciples, who have been or may be overtaken with such faults, by repentance and faith in me make their peace with God in this life, lest dying in impenitency they be put under the eternal displeasure and wrath of God, from whence they shall never be delivered, Mt 6:15 18:35.

Matthew 5:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 5:28".

Matthew 5:28

Ver. 28. The scope of our Saviour in these verses is the very same as in the verses immediately preceding, viz. to correct the jejune interpretation which the Pharisees had put upon the Divine law, and to show that he, instead of coming to destroy the law, came to fulfil it, as other ways, so by giving a more strict and true interpretation of it; and whereas they interpreted it only as to overt acts, which disturb human society and break civil order, he showeth that it reacheth to the inward thoughts, and unlawful desires of the heart, and any means that have a tendency to such prohibited acts. It was said by God to those fathers of the Jews, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, Ex 20:14. This law (saith our Saviour) your doctors expound, You shall not carnally lie with a woman that is not your wife; but there is a great deal more in it than so, for he that but secretly in his heart desireth such a thing, or taketh pleasure in such thoughts, and casts his eyes upon a woman in order to such a thing, is in the sight of God an adulterer. Hence we read of *eyes full of adultery*, to avoid which Job *made a covenant with his eyes*, Job 31:1, and would not suffer his heart to walk after his eyes, Job 31:7. We must so interpret the commandments of God, as not to extend them only to forbid or command those acts which are plainly mentioned in them, but the inward pleasing of our hearts with such things as are forbidden, the desires of our hearts after them, or whatsoever is a probable means to give us that sinful pleasure of our thoughts, or further inflame such unlawful desires in our souls.

Matthew 5:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 5:30".

Matthew 5:30

Ver. 29,30. The sum of these two verses is, that the salvation of our immortal souls is to be preferred before all things, be they never so dear and precious to us; and that if men's ordinary discretion teacheth them for the preservation of their bodies to cut off a particular member, which would necessarily endanger

the whole body, it much more teacheth them to part with any thing which will prejudice the salvation of their souls. Not that any person is by this text obliged to cut off any bodily member, (as some have done), because there can be no such necessity; but only to mortify their members, Col 3:5, the deeds of the body, Ro 8:13, their inward lusts, which being mortified there will be no need of mutilating ourselves; for the members of the body are but commanded and animated to their motions from the inward lusts of the heart: but if there could happen such a case, as that a man must voluntarily part with the most useful member of his body, or sin against God to the damnation of his soul, he ought rather to choose the former than the latter. How much more then ought Christians to mortify their inward lusts and unlawful desires, which can be of no profit nor advantage to them; but will certainly make them to offend God, and so run them upon the danger of hell fire!

Matthew 5:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 5:32".

Matthew 5:32

Ver. 31,32. The law to which our Saviour refers here, or rather the indulgence and toleration, (for none was obliged to put away their wives in case of uncleanness), is that De 24:1, where we have it in these words: *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it her in her hand, and send her out of his house.* The Pharisees had extended this toleration which God gave husbands amongst the Jews to other cases, besides that of uncleanness or adultery; so as they put away their wives upon every slight occasion, interpreting those words, *that she find no favour in his eyes*, separately from the following words, *because he hath found some uncleanness in her*, and gave a liberty for men upon any dislike of their wives to put them away, provided that they first gave them a bill of divorcement; and that in these cases it was lawful for the parties, thus separated from each other, to marry to whom either of them pleased; and this is expressed in terms in their form of those

writings of divorcement, in Josephus and other writers. This indeed is a case properly relating to the judicial law; but all the judicial laws are either appendices to the moral or to the ceremonial law. This particular indulgence was an appendix to the moral law, by the seventh commandment, to which our Saviour is now speaking, and giving the true sense of it. He here opposeth the Pharisees in two points.

1. Asserting that all divorces are unlawful except in case of adultery.
2. Asserting that whosoever married her that was put away committed adultery.

It hath been a great question, not so much amongst divines as amongst lawyers, whether it be not lawful in any case to put away a wife, unless for adultery? The canonists have found out many cases in which they affirm it lawful. And the Council of Trent (from whom we may learn the sense of the popish divines) anathematize those who deny the church a power of determining other causes of divorce. But their blasphemous curse falleth upon him, who is above them, God over all blessed for ever, who in this text hath determined that point. Nor indeed did Moses give a toleration in any other cases. There may indeed be a parting between man and wife upon other accounts, either wholly or in part: in case one of them will part from the other, which the apostle determines, 1Co 7:11,15; in which case the person departing is only guilty if he or she marry again. In case of an error, through ignorance or inadvertency, upon the marriage, that it appeareth that the persons married were such as by the law of nature and of God ought not to have married, &c. But if we take divorce for the voluntary act of the husband putting away of his wife, it is unlawful in any case but that of adultery, which dissolves the marriage knot and covenant. A second question is also here determined by our Saviour, viz. that it is unlawful for her, that is justly put away, to marry to any other, or for any other to marry her wittingly.

Matthew 5:33

Ver. 33. This was said Ex 20:7, and more plainly Le 19:12; the substance was there said, though the words be not *verbatim*

recited.

Matthew 5:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 5:36".

Matthew 5:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 5:36".

Matthew 5:36

Ver. 34-36. Doth our Saviour here oppose himself to the law of God, which saith, De 6:13 10:20, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and swear by his name?* Doth he condemn Abraham, who sware his servant by the Lord God of heaven and earth? Ge 24:3. Doth he destroy such a useful means for the end of strife? Heb 6:16. None of all these. We must consider that our Saviour is here opposing himself to the corruptions of that age brought in by the Pharisees, who had taught people that swearing was nothing, if they did not forswear themselves; or at least swearing *by the heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, by their head,* or in suchlike forms, was no sin, if they forbore the name of God; that they were only obliged to swear by the name of God in public courts of justice, but they were not tied up to it at other times. To these and such like corruptions our Saviour opposeth these words, *I say unto you, Swear not at all;* not at all voluntarily, but where it is necessary for the end of strife; not at all in your common discourse, Jas 5:12: and so it is expounded in the next verse. The law doth not only forbid false swearing, but common and ordinary swearing, needless swearing, which speaks a great want of reverence in the heart of the name of God. And let not your teachers cheat you, in telling you God, or the name of God, is not concerned, in your swearing by heaven: is not heaven the throne of God? Or by earth: is not that the footstool of God? Or by Jerusalem: is not that the city of God? Or by your head: is it not God that hath given you your life and bodily members? Is it in your power to make a hair of your head white or black? So as the great thing here forbidden, is common and ordinary swearing, where God calleth us not unto it for the determination

of strife. Do not only think that false swearing, but be assured that ordinary, common, needless swearing, is forbidden by God.

Matthew 5:37

Ver. 37. St. James saith much the same, Jas 5:12. Let your ordinary discourse in the world be mere affirmations or denials of things in terms or phrases of the same import with *yea* and *nay*, though you do not always use those terms. Let forms of swearing be preserved for special times, when the providence of God calls to you for them to determine strife, and make some weighty matters which you assert credible unto others who will not take your bare assertions. Have such a reverence for the name of God, as not to use it for every trifle; and let not my ordinance for the end of strife be made of no use by your common use of the name of God; for in ordinary discourse and common talk, whatsoever is more than bare affirmations and denials, cometh of an evil heart, or from the devil, or from the corruption of other men's hearts. Some would make the communication mentioned here to be understood as if it were conversation; Let your ways of dealing with men be fitting, without fraud and guile; and so think our Saviour here strikes at the root and cause of so much idle and vain swearing, viz. the common falsehood, frauds, and cozenages of men in their dealings; but it seemeth hard so to interpret λογος in this place, our Saviour especially being speaking concerning words and forms of speech.

Matthew 5:38

Ver. 38. This was the commandment of God to the magistrate, in case a woman with child were struck, and any mischief came of it, Ex 21:24; in case of damage done to a neighbour, Le 24:20; and in the case of false witness, De 19:21. But in the mean time God had said to private persons, Le 19:18, *Thou shalt not avenge*; and it is said, Pr 24:29, *Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me*. The Pharisees had interpreted this law of God into a liberty for every private person, who had been wronged by another, to exact a satisfaction upon him, provided that he did not exceed this proportion of taking an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, doing no more wrong to another than that other

had done to him.

Matthew 5:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 5:41".

Matthew 5:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 5:41".

Matthew 5:41

Ver. 39-41. The apostle Paul giveth the best exposition upon this text, Ro 7:17-19,21, *Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. —Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* The general scope of our Saviour is that which they must observe, who would understand the sense of these words; they must not think that the particular things mentioned are their duty, but,

1. That it is the will of their Lord that they should not take any private revenge, but leave the avenging of their injuries unto God, and to the public magistrate, who is God's viceregent, before whom, notwithstanding any thing here said, they may seek a just satisfaction.
2. That in lighter cases we should rather remit the wrong done to us for peace' sake than stand upon a rigour of justice; rather overcome evil with good, than suffer ourselves to be overcome by the evil of others; rather suffer a blow on the other cheek, than with our own hands revenge the blow which is given thus on our cheek; rather lose our cloak also, than contend for our coat, taken away in judgment from us, though we be in that judgment oppressed. No injury can deserve a private revenge. Light injuries are not of that nature that we should contend for a public revenge of them.

Matthew 5:42

Ver. 42. In these words our Saviour presseth another piece of charity, viz. liberality to those who are poor; who are of two sorts: some such as are never able to repay us; to those he commandeth Christians *to give*.

To him that asketh, who hath need to ask, and in that order too which God hath directed, who hath commanded us to provide for our own household, and to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith. The other sort are such as may have only a temporary want: to these he commandeth us to lend, and not to turn away from them, when they desire to borrow of us, and we can spare it. This was an ancient precept of God, De 15:7-9, confirmed by Christ, as a piece of his will under the gospel.

Matthew 5:43

Ver. 43. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, was the old law of God, Le 19:18; the other part, *and hate thine enemy*, was the Pharisees' addition, or rather their collection, because the law only commanded them to love their neighbour. *uv* signifies sometimes a friend, sometimes more largely any other person; they took it in the strict sense, yet they could not be so blind as not to extend it to all those of their own nation, for Mt 5:17 there are two words used, one signifying *thy brother*, the other *thy countryman*, whom they are commanded in that verse not to hate in their hearts. But it appeareth by Lu 10:29, that they did not very well know their neighbour. The lawyer asked, *Who is my neighbour?* Christ instructs him by the parable of him that was *fallen among thieves*, that they ought not to look upon those of their own country only as neighbours, for a Samaritan might deserve the name better than a priest or Levite. But they generally looked upon all the uncircumcised as not their neighbours, but their enemies, whom the precept did not oblige them to love.

Matthew 5:44

Ver. 44. That this is no counsel of perfection, (as the papists

would have it), nor any new precept added to the law of God, (as the Socinians would have it), is plain from Pr 25:21, where we find it commanded under the Old Testament. Neither is it, I advise you, but, *I say unto you*, which argues a command.

Love here doth not signify the complacency of the heart in an object, which is love in the strict sense; but, Be charitable unto, do good to your enemies: nor are we equally obliged to do good to our enemies as to our friends; but it is expounded by the following words, and to be understood:

1. Of not seeking unlawful private revenge. *Bless them that curse you*: do not return reviling for reviling, while they curse do you bless.
2. Doing them common offices of kindness. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink*, Ro 12:20. This is a doing good to them that hate us, relieving them in their pressing necessities.
3. Doing them all the good we can for their souls. *Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*. So did our Saviour, Lu 23:34 and Stephen, Ac 7:60; so did David, Ps 35:13-15. In the mean time we may hate those who are God's enemies, as such, Ps 139:21,22; and for such we may seek a due revenge of God's honour upon them.

And for our enemies, this precept prohibits not the seeking of a just satisfaction for wrongs done unto us in a way of public justice, yet not without a mixture of charity.

Matthew 5:45

Ver. 45. As your heavenly Father hath a common love, which he extendeth to all mankind, in supplying their necessities, with the light and warmth of the sun, and with the rain; as well as a special love and favour, which he exerciseth only toward those that are good, and members of Christ; so ought you to have: though you are not obliged to take your enemies into your bosom, yet you ought to love them in their order. And as your heavenly Father, though he will one day have a satisfaction from sinners, for the wrong done to his majesty, unless they repent;

yet, to heap coals of fire on their heads, gives them good things of common providence, that he might not leave them without witness, yea, and affords them the outward means of grace for their souls: so, although you are bound to seek some satisfaction for God's honour and glory from flagitious sinners, and though you may in an orderly course seek a moderate satisfaction for the wrong done to yourselves, yet you ought to love them with a love consistent with these things; that so you may imitate your heavenly Father, and approve yourselves to be his children.

Matthew 5:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 5:47".

Matthew 5:47

Ver. 46,47. Reason obliges you, who expect a reward from God for what you do, to do something more than those who know of no such reward, or at least live in no expectation of any such thing; and you who condemn others as great sinners, and men not worthy of your converse, ought to do something by which you may outdo those whom you so condemn, both in offices of piety towards God and charity towards men. But if you only show kindness to your relations and to your countrymen, you do no more than those whom you look upon as heathens and the worst of men, who act only from the light and law of nature, and know of no reward God hath to give, nor live in any such expectation of it. By loving here is meant doing good offices, either for the souls or bodies of others. By saluting is meant common offices of kindness, such as inquiring of our neighbours' health, wishing them well, &c. The publicans were civil officers appointed by the Romans to gather up public taxes and revenues. The chief commissioners were knights and gentlemen of Rome, who either let out these revenues to others, or employed others under them in the collecting of them. These thus employed were some Jews, (such were Matthew and Zacchaeus), some Romans. These (as is ordinary) made their own markets, and exacted of the people, upon which accounts they were exceeding odious: and therefore ordinarily in Scripture we shall find *publicans and sinners* put together, Mt 9:11 11:19; and they are joined with harlots, Mt 21:32; and the Pharisee in

his justification gloried he was not as that publican, Lu 18:11. Those who condemn others ought to take care that they be better than others.

Matthew 5:48

Ver. 48. *Perfect* here is not taken in that sense as it is taken in other texts of Scripture, where it signifieth sincerity and uprightness, as Job 2:3, or where it signifieth a comparative perfection, as Paul saith he spake to those that were perfect; but for an absolute perfection, such as is in our *Father which is in heaven*, and so much is signified by the proposing of our heavenly Father as our example. Nor will it therefore follow, either that this is a mere counsel, not a precept, or that an absolute perfection in holiness is a thing in this life attainable. But that it is our duty to labour for it, *forgetting what is behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, as the apostle speaks, Php 3:13,14. *Pro perfecto est qui perfecto proximus*. God accounts him perfect who is nearest to perfection.

Matthew 6:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 6:1-4 Christ continuing his sermon, giveth directions about alms giving,
Mt 6:5-13 prayer,
Mt 6:14-15 forgiving our brethren,
Mt 6:16-18 fasting,
Mt 6:19-21 laying up treasure in heaven,
Mt 6:22-23 keeping a single eye,
Mt 6:24-31 and exhorteth not to be anxious about worldly things, but principally to seek God's kingdom and righteousness.

Ver. 1. *Alms* are any acts of kindness freely done by us for the relief of any that are in distress and misery, which, when they are done from a principle of love to God, his precepts commanding

them, obedience in faith to his promises made to the giving of them, and that he may be glorified, are truly good works, acts of religion, and acceptable to God, Ac 10:31, though meritorious of nothing from him; otherwise they are merely acts of humanity and morality, to the reward of which God is by no promise obliged. Therefore Christ's disciples are obliged to take heed, that in the doing of their alms, though they may do them before men, God may be glorified, Php 2:15 1Pe 2:12; yet they do them not before men on purpose that they should take notice of them, and applaud them for them, for God rewardeth no action of which he is not the end.

Matthew 6:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 6:3".

Matthew 6:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 6:4".

Matthew 6:4

Ver. 4. There are some who think that our Saviour here reflects upon some practice of the Pharisees then in use for ostentation, who, under a pretence of a means to call people together, caused a trumpet to be sounded when they distributed their alms; but those learned in their writings assure us they could never find in them any foundation for such an opinion. The speech is rather metaphorical, prohibiting all ostentation in acts of charity, and inviting others to take notice of them, as Jehu invited Jonadab to come and see his zeal, 2Ki 10:16; as the third verse is but a proverbial expression expounded Mt 6:4, *That thine alms may be in secret*. Not that it is not lawful to give a poor body money or bread, &c., in the sight of others; but only to do it for that end, that we might be seen of others. The thing forbidden under the metaphorical expression is ostentation, and seeking our own honour and applause. The thing commanded is sincerity with respect to our end. The apostle calls it a giving with simplicity, singly aiming at the glorifying of God, by an obedient performance of our duty. He tells us those who give their alms to

be honoured of *men have their reward*, that is, all which they are like to have; men applaud and cry them up, there is their reward: others shall have their reward from God, *who seeth in secret*, and so needeth not such a publication of our good deeds; and he will reward them openly before men and angels at the last day, Mt 25:31,32,34, and ordinarily in this life, Ps 37:25 41:1 Ps 112:9,10.

Matthew 6:5

Ver. 5. Our Saviour here cautions them against the same thing in prayer, as he had done before in giving alms, viz. hypocrisy and ostentation, doing this duty upon that design, merely to be taken notice of and applauded by men; it was lawful to pray *standing in the synagogues*, but not to do it merely to be taken notice of by men for devout persons, nor yet to confine themselves to praying in the synagogues. If they chose to pray *standing*, that they might be more conspicuous, and in the synagogues, because those places were more holy, (as they might dream), or, which seems rather to be here meant, because there most people would see them, for which purpose only they chose *corners of streets*, as was the old popish custom upon which account they set up crosses at three way leets?, &c., these things were sinful: but to pray standing was usual, Mr 11:25; and to pray in the synagogues and in the temple standing was usual, Lu 18:13. But those who do it merely for vain glory *have their reward*, and must expect none from God.

Matthew 6:6

Ver. 6. By this public prayer is not condemned, but secret prayer is established, and made every Christian's duty; and Christians are warned not to think that their duty of prayer is discharged by their going to places of public worship, and praying there: but that which our Saviour here cautions us against is ostentation, by which men may as much offend in their closets as elsewhere. Wherever we pray, we must take heed that our ends be right, that the glory of God be our principal end, and yielding obedience to his command; and there is no better means in order to this than the right setting of God before our eyes, as he that *seeth in secret*, and knoweth the most secret designs, scopes, and

intentions of our hearts, and who, if we thus perform our duty, will reward us of his free grace and mercy; not as persons who by our prayers have merited any thing at his hand, (for what merit can there be in our prayers?) but as having showed our obedience to his will, and in the fulfilling of those many promises which he hath made to those that seek his face for the hearing of their prayers.

Matthew 6:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 6:8".

Matthew 6:8

Ver. 7,8. It appeareth from hence, and from what followeth also, that the praying here spoken of is vocal prayer; not the mere homage which the heart payeth to God, by a recognition of him as the fountain of all good, and our secret desires that God would supply our wants, but the expression of those desires by the words of our mouths, which is that duty which the Scripture generally calleth prayer, and is most certainly a duty incumbent on every person. Nor are *repetitions* of the same requests in prayer, or *much speaking*, (that is, praying to some length of time), here absolutely forbidden: our Saviour before his passion prayed thrice for the same thing within a short compass of time, (though he did not use the same words), and, Lu 6:12, he *continued all night in prayer to God*. But that which is here forbidden, is an opinion of being heard for over long prayers, and using vain repetitions, as the priests of Baal continued from morning to night crying, *O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!* as if their god had been asleep, or gone a journey, as the prophet mocketh them, 1Ki 18:26,27. Repetitions are then vain, when they are affected, and flow from some irreverent thoughts we have of God; not when they are as it were forced from the heat and intention of our affections. The like is to be said of much speaking in prayer. Long prayers are not to be condemned, but the affectation of them is, and long prayers upon pretences and designs are: but when the mind is attent, and the affections fervent, length of prayer is no fault, especially upon solemn occasions, when we come not to ask a particular mercy at the hand of God, nor for a particular person or family. But

repetitions after the manner of heathens are condemned, as proceeding from irreverent thoughts of God, as if he did not know what things we have need of, or were, like a man, to be prevailed upon by a multitude of words.

Matthew 6:9

Ver. 9. Not always in these words, but always to this sense, and in this manner. None ever thought Christians obliged to use no other words than these in prayer, though none must deny the lawfulness of using those words which Christ hath sanctified.

After this manner; first seeking the kingdom of God, and begging those things which more immediately concern God's glory, and then those things which more immediately concern yourselves. Or, *After this manner,* praying only in particular for such things as are more generally couched in the following petitions.

Our Father which art in heaven: a compellation speaking our faith both in the power and in the goodness of God; our eyeing him as in heaven speaketh his power, Ps 115:3, our considering him as our Father speaks our faith in his goodness, Mt 7:11.

Hallowed be thy name. God's name is whatsoever he hath made himself known by: Let the Lord be glorified in every thing whereby he hath made himself known.

Matthew 6:10

Ver. 10. Let the Lord rule over all the nations of the earth, and let them be freely subject to his laws, and to his Son Jesus Christ; let the gospel of the kingdom be published, and prosper, by bringing all thoughts into a captivity to it. And let the kingdom of God come more within the hearts of all men, and hasten the revelation of the kingdom of glory. Let the will of the Lord be every where done, and that on earth, with as much freedom and cheerfulness, and with as little reluctancy, as it is done by the angels and saints in heaven. These three first petitions are of great cognation one to another; God is then glorified when his kingdom is advanced, and his kingdom is then promoted when

there is most free and cheerful obedience yielded to his will: the sum is, Let God be glorified.

Matthew 6:11

Ver. 11. And forasmuch as in thee we live, and move, and have our life, so the means for the upholding and the preserving of our lives, and the blessing upon them, must be from thee. We beseech thee to give us food convenient for us, that which thou hast ordained for our nourishment and preservation; and that thou wouldst preserve it to us, that we may have it from day to day while we live in the world, with thy blessing upon it; that we may not be tempted to take bread which is not ours, nor be over solicitous and careful for tomorrow, but by daily prayer may obtain daily supplies from thee, so far as shall be necessary or convenient for us.

Matthew 6:12

Ver. 12. Our Saviour here doth not teach us the order in which we should pray for good things for ourselves, only in three petitions comprehends whatsoever we should ask of God. For doubtless we are obliged, according to Mt 6:32, first to seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. That by our *debts* are here meant our sins is plain from Lu 11:4, as also from Mt 6:14 of this chapter, where they are called *trespasses*. The sense is, then, Discharge us from that obligation to death which our sins have laid us under; give us a pardon for our sins past and present; for who liveth, and sinneth not against thee?

As we forgive our debtors; not as perfectly, but in like manner as we, according to the imperfect state of our natures, forgive those who have done us injury, not seeking any revenge upon them, nor bearing them any malice: so as indeed those who, retaining their malice in their hearts, put up this prayer unto God, do in effect pray down Divine vengeance upon their souls: well therefore doth the apostle command, that we should lift up pure hands unto God, *without wrath or doubting*, 1Ti 2:8. So that not only faith but charity also, is necessary to our praying acceptably.

Matthew 6:13

Ver. 13. The term temptation in the general signifieth a trial, and is sometimes used to express God's trials of his people's faith and obedience, but most ordinarily to express Satan's trials of us, by motions to sin; which may be from our own lusts, Jas 1:13,14; or from the devil, who is therefore called the tempter; or from the world. These are the temptations which we are commanded to pray against: not that God leads any persons into such temptations, unless by the permission of his providence.

But deliver us from evil; from the evil one, as some read it, because of the article prefixed; but others think it not material whether we understand the devil, who is the evil one, or the evil of temptations, which harm us not if we be not overcome by them.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. These words are omitted by Luke, Lu 11:4; but many think that Luke speaks of another time, when he dictated this prayer. The words both show us that the honour and glory of God ought to be the end and scope of all our prayers, and that we can expect no audience but upon the account of God's grace and mercy; and they likewise confirm our faith, that God is able to grant what we ask of him.

Amen: this in the close of a sentence is a particle of wishing, and signifieth our desire to be heard; and as it is a term that signifies truth and certainty, it likewise signifieth our faith in God that we shall be heard.

Matthew 6:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 6:15".

Matthew 6:15

Ver. 14,15. Not that our mere forgiving our brethren the injuries done unto us is all that God requireth of us in order to the forgiveness we expect from him, the contrary is plain from

several other texts, Joh 3:18,36 Ac 2:38 16:31 &c.; but that without this forgiveness of our brethren, God will not forgive us, Mt 18:35. It is one piece of that obedience which we owe to God, and also of our gratitude, without the performance of which it is vain for us to hope for forgiveness from God.

Matthew 6:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 6:18".

Matthew 6:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 6:18".

Matthew 6:18

Ver. 16-18. Our Saviour in these words returns to his former work, to caution his disciples against hypocrisy, vain glory, and ostentation in their religious duties, the doing them to be seen of men. What he before said as to giving alms and prayer, he here again applies as to private fasting, which is by this discourse of our Saviour confirmed, though not as a stated, yet as an occasional duty of Christians, in order to, and as an indication of, their humbling of their souls for their sins, or under the mighty hand of God; but he requireth that it should be in sincerity, not in hypocrisy, for the glory of God, not for ostentation and appearance unto men. Our Saviour probably in this discourse hath a respect to some hypocritical usages of the Pharisees, using to disfigure their countenances, and look demurely or sourly upon their fasting days. Not that he prohibits here habits or gestures suited to the duty, himself sometimes commanded the Jews to put off their ornaments, nor was any thing more ordinary for good men than to cover themselves with sackcloth, and put ashes on their heads. All that our Lord prohibits is the affecting of these things, to cover the hypocrisy of their hearts. Nor must we think that it is the will of God, that we on such days should indeed anoint our heads and wash our faces; or (which is the same thing with us) adorn, paint, or perfume ourselves, or use any habits or gestures unsuitable to mourning, and not indicative of afflicted souls; but that we should rather do this than the other,

viz. put on a mask and vizard of sorrow for sin, when indeed we had no sense of it; for still we must appear to our heavenly Father to fast, which we cannot very well do, if our outward habit and demeanour be not something proportioned to the inward sorrow and affliction of our souls; for the putting on of fine dresses and ornaments must be an imperate act of the soul, and not like to be commanded by a soul in affliction, it being natural to such a soul to neglect the culture of the body, being wholly swallowed up with bitter thoughts relating to its own spiritual and eternal state. Our Saviour addeth the same argument to press sincere fasting, which he had before used concerning the duty of giving alms and secret prayer, where I have before spoken to those words.

Matthew 6:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 6:21".

Matthew 6:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 6:21".

Matthew 6:21

Ver. 19-21. A *treasure* (according to the notation of the word) signifieth something laid up for tomorrow, for future time; more largely it signifieth any riches, or what we judge a valuable portion. Make not the things of the earth your riches, or portion, with reference to future time; for all the riches of the earth are perishing, contemptible things; silver and gold is what rust will corrupt, clothes are what moths will spoil, any other things are subject to casualties, and, amongst others, to the violence of unreasonable men, who, though they have no right to them, will ordinarily take them from you. But let your riches, your treasure, be that which is heavenly, those habits of grace which will bring you to heaven, the *things which accompany salvation*, Heb 6:9, *which make you meet to be partakers of the saints in light*, Col 1:12: *be rich in good works, laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life*, 1Ti 6:18,19 Mt 19:21 25:34 Lu 18:22. Those

treasures will not be liable to such accidents as all earthly treasures are. Wherever you fix your treasure, your heart will be there also, thinking upon it, delighting in it. &c.

Matthew 6:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 6:23".

Matthew 6:23

Ver. 22,23. You had need look to your hearts, your understanding, judgment, and affections; for look what proportion there is betwixt your bodily eye and the rest of the bodily members, with regard to their guidance and conduct, the same proportion there is betwixt your heart and whole conversation, with reference to the guidance of it with relation to God. The eye is the window by which the soul looks out to guide the body; if that be not impaired by the defluxion of humours, &c., but be single, it directs all the motions of the body right; but if that be defective, or any way impaired, the whole body is at a loss how to move safely, and with advantage to it. So if your hearts be set right, if you have a right and sound judgment, a true and sanctified affection, they will influence and guide all your actions, your whole conversation will be regular and holy: but if that inward *eye be evil*, through covetousness, too much adherence to the earth, or through envy, (both which are called evil eyes in Scripture), or through the prevalence of any other lusts or passions, your darkness will be exceeding great, you will not be able to set one step right; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and according to the dictates and affections of the heart the hand and the whole man acts.

Matthew 6:24

Ver. 24. *No man can serve two masters*, that is, two masters that command contrary things each to other, for that is the present case of God and mammon. Or, No man with the like diligence, and alacrity, and faithfulness, can serve two masters. It is a proverbial speech, and in reason to be understood of contrary masters. He will either hate the one, or the first, and love the

second, or else he will cleave to the first, and contemn the other, that is, so in his actions behave himself, that he will appear a true servant but to one of them, and despise or slight the other.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. It is not improbable that some of the ancients have thought, that amongst some of the heathen they had an idol called Mammon, which they made the god of money; thence mammon by a figure signifieth riches, as Lu 16:9. So as it is of an equivalent sense to, no man can serve God and Bacchus, or God and Venus; that is, none can be a drunkard, or an unclean person, and a true servant of God. So no man can serve God, and yet make the getting of riches, right or wrong, his study; hence the apostle calls *covetousness idolatry*, Col 3:5. So that by serving here must be understood a giving up of ourselves chiefly or wholly to the service of God, and to the business of getting the world; or, serving the latter, in what it tempteth or commandeth us to, contrary to the will of God.

Matthew 6:25

Ver. 25. This text must not be interpreted in a sense contradictory to those many other texts, which forbid an idle life, an command us in the sweat of our face to eat our bread, or to provide for our families, 2Th 3:10,11 1Ti 5:8: nor did Christ himself live such a life; he went about doing good, finishing the work which his Father had given him to do. It must be therefore understood:

1. Of no such thoughts as are inconsistent with the service of God, mentioned in the last words.
2. Of no anxious and distracting thoughts.
3. Of no such thoughts as should show any distrust and diffidence in God's providing for us.

God hath given us our lives and our bodies, without our care for the existence of them; why should we, in a lawful and moderate use of means, distrust God for a subsistence for them? He hath given us the greater, will he not (think you) give us the less?

Matthew 6:26

Ver. 26. God takes care of all his creatures. For example, consider *the fowls*, and those not the tame fowls about your houses, but the fowls of the air, for whom the housewife's hand doth not provide, neither hath God fitted them for any labour by which they can procure their livelihood, nor doth he require any such thing of them, nor do they labour; yet their Creator (who is *your heavenly Father*) *feedeth them*. You have much more reason to trust in God, if you could not labour, being hindered by his providence, for you are more excellent beings than sensitive creatures, and you have a further relation to God than that of creatures to the Creator, for God is your heavenly Father; you are in the order of nature, and especially considering that God is your Father, much better than they.

Matthew 6:27

Ver. 27. How vain a thing is it to distract yourselves with anxious thoughts about your body and your life! All your thinking will not add a cubit to your stature: as your being and existence derives from God, so the increase of your stature depends upon him; likewise he maketh the child to grow to the just proportion which he hath intended him, and beyond that he cannot pass. If God's blessing be necessary to this, and so necessary that no thoughts, no means, will add any thing without the Divine blessing, what reason have you to take any such thoughts, as you cannot expect he should bless to their desired effect and issue?

Matthew 6:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 6:30".

Matthew 6:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 6:30".

Matthew 6:30

Ver. 28-30. From sensitive creatures our Lord proceedeth to vegetables, an order of creatures which have more than mere being, they have also life, though no sense, but yet two degrees beneath man, wanting not only reason, but sense. He shows us from an instance in these, that we have no more reason to be troubled and anxious about clothing, than about meat or drink. Clothing is of no other use than for warmth or ornament: for such clothing as will serve us for warmth, a little care will serve the turn; *Sundamus ad supervacanea*, our sweating thoughts are mostly for superfluities in clothing; if God see them fit for us, he will also give us them, without so many thoughts about them. Look upon *the lilies*; (whether he means what we call tulips, or other flowers called lilies, which probably those countries had in greater variety and beauty, is not worth the arguing); God designing to glorify himself in those creatures, though of meanest orders, hath given them a greater beauty than Solomon had in all his rich array; to let us know that art must not contend with nature, and that beauty and glory in apparel is no more than is to be found in creatures much inferior to our order; which made Solon (though a heathen) prefer the sight of a peacock to that of Croesus. And therefore this is a thing not worthy of any anxious thoughts, for if God seeth such things good for us, he that so clothes *the grass of the field*, which is but of a few days' continuance, will much more clothe us; and if we distrust him for such provision, we show ourselves persons of little faith.

Matthew 6:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 6:32".

Matthew 6:32

Ver. 31,32. Our Lord repeateth the precept before given, Mt 6:25, wherein he forbids not all moderate and provident thoughts for things necessary, but only such thoughts as shall argue our distrust in God, or perplex and distract our minds, or be inconsistent with our duty, and the employment of our thoughts about higher and better things. This he here presseth by two arguments.

1. Because these are the things which people spend all their thoughts upon, who are not aware that they have souls to take care for, or do not understand the providence of God, or have no such relation to God as Christians have, who call God Father.
2. You have (saith he) a heavenly Father, who, being the God of heaven, knoweth what you need, and, being your Father, will also supply your needs.

Matthew 6:33

Ver. 33. *The kingdom of God, and his righteousness,* in this verse, are terms comprehensive of whatsoever appertaineth to the honour and glory of God, either as means, or as the end. Let your principal care and study be how to get to heaven, and how to promote the kingdom of God in the world; to bring your hearts into subjection to the will of God, that the kingdom of God may be within you, and how to bring others to the obedience of faith and of the will of God. And for the things of this life, it shall fare with you as it did with Solomon, 1Ki 3:12, who asked not riches and honour, but had them. You shall have for your necessities, Ps 37:4 Mr 10:30 1Ti 4:8.

Matthew 6:34

Ver. 34. No such thoughts as before mentioned, for God will provide for you tomorrow when tomorrow cometh. Besides, every new day will bring forth some new cares; you know not what tomorrow will bring forth, nor what you will have need of tomorrow; and if you did, why should you torment yourselves before the time? It will be time enough when you feel the evils of a succeeding time. You need not torment yourselves with prophesying against yourselves, what it may be shall never be; or if it be, you had not need weaken yourselves for the encountering such evils, by a previous disturbance of your thoughts about them.

Matthew 7:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 7:1-5 Christ proceedeth in his sermon to condemn rash judgment,
Mt 7:6 forbiddeth the prostitution of holy things,
Mt 7:7-12 recommends prayer,
Mt 7:13-14 exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate,
Mt 7:15-20 to beware of false prophets, who may be known by their fruits,
Mt 7:21-23 and not to be his disciples in profession only, but in practice.
Mt 7:24-27 He compares doers of the word to houses built on a rock, those that are hearers only to houses built on the sand.
Mt 7:28-29 Christ endeth his sermon; the people are astonished at his doctrine.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 7:2".

Matthew 7:2

Ver. 1,2. Our Saviour must not be understood here prohibiting any judgment, which is elsewhere in holy writ allowed, for the Holy Spirit doth not command and prohibit the same thing; whence it is evident, that it is not to be understood of political or ecclesiastical judgments, nor was our Saviour here speaking to any such persons: it is therefore to be understood of private judgments, nor of them absolutely, for it is lawful for us to judge ourselves, yea, it is our duty, 1Co 11:31: Nor is that judgment of our neighbour's opinions or actions here forbidden which terminates in ourselves, in our satisfaction as to the truth or falsehood of the former, or the goodness or badness of the latter; we ought so to prove all things in order to our holding fast that which is good. Nor is all judgment of our neighbour's actions with reference to him forbidden: how can we reprove him for his errors, or restore him that is fallen, without a previous judgment of his actions? But that which is here forbidden, is either,

1. A rash judgment of his state, or a judging him for doing his duty: such was Simon's judging the woman, or the disciples' judgment of that woman, Mt 26:8,9. Or:
2. A judging of others for things which they judge to be indifferent, forbidden Ro 14:1-3. Or:
3. A judging them for secret things, such as inward habits of grace, when no apparent fruits to the contrary are seen. Or,
4. Condemning others for single acts, of a public censuring and condemning others for private failings. Or:
5. Finally, Any open and public censuring the actions of others, when and where it cannot conduce either to God's glory or our brother's good.

That ye be not judged: this is expounded in the next verse, telling us either the ordinary temper of men, or the just judgment of God, repaying such uncharitable actions *per legem talionis*, with suffering others to do the like to us, Lu 6:37.

Matthew 7:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 7:5".

Matthew 7:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 7:5".

Matthew 7:5

Ver. 3-5. Whether the word translated *mote* signifieth a mote or a splinter, is of no great concern to know. Our Saviour expounded this text, when he said to the Pharisees, bringing him a woman taken in adultery: *Let him that is guiltless throw the first stone.* So doth the apostle Paul, Ro 2:1. The text teacheth us these lessons:

1. That those who are most censorious of others, are usually more notorious and culpable themselves, if not for the same sins, yet for others of equal if not greater magnitude.
2. That it is notorious hypocrisy to spy smaller faults in others, and not to see greater in ourselves.
3. That it is notorious impudence to pretend to censure and judge others for sins in which we live ourselves.
4. That there is no such way to teach us charity in not hastily, rashly, or too severely judging others, as to look first into our own hearts and ways, and seeing if we have not the same or greater failings. Our charity in this kind should begin at home.

Matthew 7:6

Ver. 6. By *swine* and *dogs*, our Saviour doubtless understandeth wicked men of several sorts, either such as are more tame sinners, trampling upon holy things, and with swine wallowing in the mire of lusts and corruptions, Pr 26:11 2Pe 2:22; or, by *dogs*, more malicious, revengeful, boisterous sinners may be meant, whose consciences will serve them to bark and grin at the word of God, to mock at holy things, to persecute those that bring them the gospel, and are their open enemies, because they tell them the truth. The gospel is to be preached *to every creature*, Mr 16:15. But when the Jews *were hardened*, and *spake evil of that way before the multitude*, &c., Ac 19:9, the apostles left preaching to them. The precept doubtless is general, directing the ministers of Christ to administer the holy things, with which they are intrusted, only to such as have a right to them, and under prudent circumstances, so as the holy name of God may not be profaned, nor they run into needless danger.

Matthew 7:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 7:8".

Matthew 7:8

Ver. 7,8. Here is a precept expressed by three words, *ask, seek, knock*; and a promise annexed in three distinct terms, *it shall be given you, ye shall find, it shall be opened unto you*. The thing commanded is prayer; the thing promised is an audience of prayer, or an answer to prayer. The multiplying of the terms in which the precept is expressed is not idle and superfluous, it lets us know our averseness to the duty, and that God in it requireth of us faith, diligence, constancy, and importunity. Christ had before told us of whom we should ask, *our Father*; it is not said what we should ask, both in regard we have a liberty to ask any thing we have need of, and he had, Mt 6:8, particularly directed the matter of our prayers. The promise, that we shall have, signifies an answer, either in kind or in value; the promise of giving lets us know that our prayers are not meritorious.

For every one that asketh the things he needeth, and in faith, according to the will of God, and for a right end, receiveth, &c. See Jas 4:3.

Matthew 7:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 7:11".

Matthew 7:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 7:11".

Matthew 7:11

Ver. 9-11. Asking is but a verbal expression of an inward desire; no man desireth that which is evil, but that which he at least apprehends to be good, that is, suitable unto his wants. As earthly parents, knowing that their children, though through weakness of understanding they may ask that which is really evil for them, yet will not give them any such things, and gratify their ignorance; so neither will your heavenly Father, knowing what you truly need, and what is truly good for you, give you any thing which he knoweth is not suitable for you, but noxious to you: but if you ask any thing which is either absolutely good for you, and cannot be evil, or which your heavenly Father knoweth

to be good for you under your present circumstances, you may be assured, considering he is your Father, and hath as great a kindness for you as an earthly father for his child, and that he is your heavenly Father, and therefore hath a sufficiency to give, will give good things to you asking them of him: and this you may be assured of from that good will and inclination which you, though you come infinitely short of the perfection and good inclinations of your heavenly Father, find in yourselves towards your children; for you derive from him, as his children, all that goodness and benignity which you have. If therefore we in prayer ask any thing of God, which may be good or evil under different circumstances, and receive it not, we may conclude, that though we thought what we asked bread, yet indeed it was a stone; though we thought it a fish, yet God saw it was a scorpion; and account that God answered our general desires, which were for some good, by denying our specific request.

Matthew 7:12

Ver. 12. Most interpreters think the term *therefore* here redundant, as some such little particles often are in holy writ, for it is hard to make out this to be a proper inference from the premises. This precept containeth in it the substance of all that is to be found in the books of the law and the prophets which concerneth us in reference to others, the sum of the second table, which requireth only justice and charity. Christ doth not say, this is all the law and the prophets, but *this is the law and the prophets*. There is no man but would have others deal justly with him in giving him what is his own, whether honour, or tribute, or estate, &c., neither taking nor withholding his own from him. Nor is there any but, if he stood in need of it, would desire the charitable help of another, or a charitable remission from him of what he might in exact justice require. Do ye (saith our Saviour) the same unto them. And indeed this is but a confirmation of the light and law of nature, no more than what men would do if they would hearken to the light within them. And without this in vain do men pretend to religion, as our Saviour teacheth, Mr 7:9-13; which makes some think that our Saviour by this reflects upon the Pharisees, who laid all their religion upon ceremonies, and some ritual performances in observance of their traditions, and omitted *the weightier things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, Mt 23:23.

Matthew 7:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 7:14".

Matthew 7:14

Ver. 13,14. Our Saviour having in this sermon delivered many hard sayings to flesh and blood, here obviates a twofold temptation they might have to the neglect of them:

1. From their difficulty.
2. From the paucity of them who live according to these rules.

He here compares heaven to a house, a stately house, into which a *strait gate* leadeth to a city, the way to which is a *narrow way*. There is nothing more ordinary in holy writ, than to call a common course of men's actions a *way*. It is also compared to a *gate*. The sum of what our Saviour here saith is this: There are but two ultimate ends of all men, eternal destruction and eternal life. The course that leadeth to destruction is like a broad way that is obvious to all, and many walk in that. That course of life and actions which will bring a man to heaven is strait, unpleasing to flesh and blood, not at all gratifying men's sensitive appetites, and narrow, (the Greek is, afflicted), a way wherein men will meet with many crosses and temptations; and there are but a few will find it. You must not therefore wonder if my precepts be hard to your carnal apprehensions, nor be scandalized though you see but few going in the right road to the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:15

Ver. 15. The term *prophets* in holy writ is of larger extent than to signify only such as foretold things to come; others also who taught the people, pretending authority from God so to do, were called prophets. Thus *Bar-jesus*, Ac 13:6, is called a *false prophet*. A false prophet is of the same significance with a false teacher. Against those our Saviour cautions his hearers, as being

the most fatal and dangerous enemies to faith and holiness. Some of them indeed come *in sheep's clothing*, under very fair pretences, and a fair show of religion and strictness; but *they are ravening wolves*, as dangerous to your souls as ravenous wolves are to a flock of sheep.

Matthew 7:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:20

Ver. 16-20. A proper effect discovereth the cause. Lest his disciples should ask, How shall we distinguish true from false teachers? Our Saviour tells them, *By their fruits ye shall know them*. Our Saviour sends not his disciples to inquire into the truth of their mission, whether that more internal from God, of which they could not judge, or more external from men, who may err, and send out those whom God never sent; but you shall know them (saith our Saviour) by their faithful or unfaithful discharge of their duty: if they be true teachers, by their discharging the ministry in a faithful revelation of the mind and will of God, or by their holy life, living as ensamples to the flock; by their fruits of true doctrine and a holy life, by the discharge of their ministry in good conscience; for it is with men as it is with the trees, good trees bring forth good fruit, corrupt trees bring forth evil fruit. If

men have the root of the matter; the seed of God abiding in them, they will in every relation bring forth the fruits of truth and holiness: if they have not, they will bring forth error and wickedness. From whence we may learn, that our Lord expecteth from his people such a knowledge of the Scriptures, as that they may be able to discern truth from falsehood; and such a diligence, as to search the Scriptures, whether those things which their teachers deliver to them be according to them or not, Ac 17:11; not taking divine truths upon trust, nor believing any thing because dictated by teachers, using their teachers not as dictators, but only as helpers of their faith.

Matthew 7:21

Ver. 21. Some that say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord,* shall be saved, being the true disciples of Christ; but every one that owneth Christ by an external profession as his Lord, every one that prayeth, though he doth it often, and with some appearing zeal and importunity, shall not be saved, nor doth by it approve himself a true disciple of Christ; but he alone who doth endeavour to fulfil the whole will of God, both by faith and holiness, Ro 2:13 1Th 4:3 Jas 1:22,23. True religion lies in obedience to the whole will of God.

Matthew 7:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 7:23".

Matthew 7:23

Ver. 23. That by *that day* is to be understood the day of judgment is generally agreed by interpreters.

We have prophesied in thy name; that is, revealed thy will unto people; *and in thy name,* that is, by thy authority and power, *cast out devils, and done many wonderful works,* that is, wrought many miraculous operations. In the Old Testament we find Baalam and Saul prophesying, who were both wicked men. Judas was sent out (under the New Testament) both to preach and to work miracles. So as none from gifts, no, not the most

eminent and extraordinary gifts, can conclude the goodness of his state, or any special favour with God.

I will profess, that is, I will openly declare to them, *I never knew you*, that is, so as to approve you, or take pleasure in you.

Depart from me, ye that work iniquity: see Mt 25:41.

Matthew 7:24

Ver. 23,24. See Poole on "Mt 7:25".

Matthew 7:25

Ver. 25. Our Saviour maketh frequent use of that ancient way of instructing people by similitudes and parables, which by their easy incurring into the senses give advantage to the memory: he here chooseth a similitude to conclude his excellent sermon upon the mount. The builder intended, who our Saviour dignifies with the name of *a wise man*, is he that not only heareth Christ's sayings, but doeth them. Under the notion of hearing is comprehended understanding and believing them; by doing them, he understandeth a sincere desire and endeavour to do them, with a practice so far as human frailty will permit. The *house* intended seems to be a hope for eternal life and salvation: by the *rock* is meant Christ, 1Co 10:4 Eph 2:20 1Pe 2:4. Every wise Christian, before he buildeth up to must himself a hope of eternal life and salvation through Christ, must find that he is one who doth not only read and hear the word of God, but so hears as to understand and believe it, that has an operative faith, working upon his soul to the obedience of the will of God, or at least a sincere endeavour to it. And he who doth so, though his hope may be sometimes assaulted with fears, doubts, temptations, (which are like the assaults of a house builded on a rock, by winds; floods, and storms), yet it shall not fail, because it is truly founded on Christ, according to the revelation of his will, Pr 10:28 1Jo 3:3.

Matthew 7:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 7:27".

Matthew 7:27

Ver. 26,27. There are and will be others, that, as foolish builders, run up a house in haste, without looking to the goodness of the foundation, and happen to build it upon loose ground. So they flatter themselves with the hopes of the house in the heavens not made with hands, 2Co 5:1, without looking to the bottom and foundation of these hopes, whether they be such as Christ hath warranted or not; but either build their hopes upon God's infinite mercy, or the sufficiency of Christ's merits, or their own works, hearing the word of God, and performing some other duties of religion, never regarding to live to the obedience of the will of God. And the same event will be to these men as to such foolish builders; their building may stand a while, but when a day of visitation, or death, or sharp afflictions or temptation, comes, then their house, their hopes, all fail and perish in a moment, because they had no good foundation, Job 8:13,14 Job 11:20 27:8 Pr 11:7.

And great was the fall of it: their misery and calamity shall be the greater, by how much their hopes have been the stronger, the disappointment of their expectation adding to their misery.

Matthew 7:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 7:29".

Matthew 7:29

Ver. 28,29. The same words also are repeated, Mr 1:22 Lu 4:32. They declare the effect of this and other of our Saviour's sermons upon the hearts of those that heard him, and the reason of it. They *were astonished*, affected with an admiration at what they heard him in this and other sermons deliver: the Divine verities revealed in his discourses, the purity of his doctrine, the convincing power that attended it, his bold and free speech without respect of persons, the simplicity of his phrase, the gravity of his matter, the majesty he showed in his discourses,

affected the people, and made him appear to them one sent of God, and clothed with his authority. He did not teach as the scribes, the ordinary teachers amongst the Jews, from whom they had the discourses about traditions, and rites and ceremonies, cold and dull discourses, of little or no tendency to their eternal salvation.

Matthew 8:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 8:2-4 Christ cleanseth the leper,
Mt 8:5-13 healeth the centurion's servant,
Mt 8:14-15 Peter's mother-in-law,
Mt 8:16-17 and many other diseased,
Mt 8:18-22 showeth how he is to be followed,
Mt 8:23-27 stilleth the tempest on the sea,
Mt 8:28-34 driveth the devils out of two men possessed, and seeth them to go into the swine.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 8:2".

Matthew 8:2

Ver. 1,2. We heard of Christ's going up into the mountain, Mt 6:1; and of great multitudes that followed him from Decapolis, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan: whether the same multitude, or others, followed him upon his coming down, is not said. But *behold*, (saith the evangelist), *there came a leper*: both Mark and Luke have the same story, or one very like to it, Mr 1:40 Lu 5:12. Of the plague, or leprosy, we read much in the books of Moses. It was a white scab in the flesh, which gradually consumed the body, and was contagious. The leper, and he who touched him, or any thing he came near, was legally unclean: thrice we read of it inflicted as a severe punishment; upon Gehazi, for lying and taking bribes, and upon king Uzziah, for offering sacrifice. It was a disease of very difficult cure. This leper comes and worshipping Christ. Mark

saith that he kneeled down to him: whether he only kneeled down, or prostrated himself, is not much material, for either of them might be done according to the fashion of those countries, in token either of a civil respect, paid to him as a great and eminent prophet, or a piece of religious homage (if he had so early a revelation that he was the Son of God, which some doubt).

Saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. The term *Lord* will not conclude his recognizing Christ as the Son of God, being a term used by Sarah to Abraham, and afterwards to Elijah. The words import his desire, though they be not a form of prayer, but an acknowledgment of the power of Christ. The leper acknowledging Christ's power, submits himself to his will, and so with the same breath declareth his faith and modesty. He indeed declareth no faith in the will of God, nor can any person exercise any such faith as to any temporal mercy, any further than as God shall judge it for our good.

Matthew 8:3

Ver. 3. By the law of God, Le 5:3, he that touched another who was unclean (as the leper was, Le 13:1-14:57) was unclean; how then doth Christ (who was subject to the law) touch the leper? Some say he did not touch the unclean leper, but him that was a leper, and by his touch made clean. But it is a better answer, that by what Christ did as he was God (such were his miraculous operations) he could not contract any ritual uncleanness; and possibly under the law the priest was exempted from that uncleanness, for he came very near the leper in his office about him, expressed Le 13:1-14:57. Nor do we read of any uncleanness contracted by Aaron in his performance of his office to Miriam under her leprosy, nor by the priests, 2Ch 26:20, though it be said they thrust out Uzziah. Christ, by putting forth his hand, showed his kindness to this miserable creature; by healing him with a touch, he showed his Divine power.

Saying, I will; be thou clean: he answereth him in his own term, *I will*, and then commands the thing. How acceptable is faith to God!

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed, that is, removed; the

word *immediately* confirms the miracle, it was not only a thing done without ordinary means, but without the ordinary time requisite for such a cure.

Matthew 8:4

Ver. 4. Some think that our Saviour only commanded him silence until he had showed himself unto the priest, and he, according to the law, Le 13:1-59, should have pronounced him clean, lest their envy upon hearing of it should have caused them to have obscured the miracle, by delaying to pronounce him clean; but it is observable that this was not the only time when Christ commanded those upon whom he had wrought miracles to say nothing of it: see Mt 9:30 12:16 17:9. It is therefore more probable, that this precept was not to be understood with that limitation, but that Christ did it, either that he might not be thought to seek his own glory, or rather, because Christ judged it not yet time by his miracles to be publicly made known: but he sends him to the priest, both to teach him obedience to the law, and that the truth of the miracle might by a public record be confirmed. He also commands him to *offer the gift* appointed by the law, Le 14:1-57, thereby both acknowledging his cure to be from God, and testifying his thankfulness.

That Moses commanded; to show that he came not to oppose Moses.

For a testimony unto them; that hereafter it may be a testimony unto them, that I am more than the Son of man, Joh 5:36.

Matthew 8:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:10

Ver. 5-10. Many think that this story was in order before the other. It is related by Lu 7:1-9, with some larger circumstances: there is only this difference between the two evangelists; Matthew seems to speak as if the centurion at first came in person to him; Luke saith, that he first sent the elders of the Jews to him, then some friends. But we are accounted ourselves to do that which we set others on work to do.

There came unto him a centurion; there came some elders of the Jews first, then some particular friends of one that was a Roman captain, to him, to tell him that the captain had a servant at his house that lay grievously sick of and tormented with the palsy; that which we usually call the dead palsy, in which a fit of the apoplexy usually issueth, when it doth not presently kill. Our Lord promises to come and heal him, therein showing both his kindness, and how acceptable to him the humanity of this centurion to his servant was. The centurion by his friends, as Luke tells us, sends to him, desiring him not to trouble himself to that degree, telling him.

1. That it was a favour of which he was not worthy. The best men have always the meanest thoughts of themselves.
2. That it was needless, for if he would only *speak the word*, commanding out the distemper, that was enough to effect the cure. For he tells him, that he believed diseases were as much

at Christ's command as his servants were at his command. That they came at God's command, wrought according to their commission from God, and went off when God commanded them off; so that if he, though at a distance, would command off his servant's disease, it would be as effectual as his presence.

Whether this captain were actually proselyted to the Jewish religion or not, is uncertain: it should seem by our Saviour's next words that he was not an Israelite; but it is most certain that he had a right notion of the power of the true God, and it looks very probable that he had a revelation of Christ, as the true Messiah and Son of God.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled; admiration agreed not to Christ as God, but as man it did; and said to them that followed him, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; that is, in the generality of the Israelites, for if we speak of particular persons, both Joseph and Mary had showed a greater faith. This expression is enough to let us know, that the centurion was no native Israelite, and make it probable he was not of the Jewish church, which might be, though he was so kind to the Jewish nation as to build them a synagogue, upon which account, Lu 7:3, &c., the elders of the Jews pleaded with Christ for him. This made our Saviour go on, prophesying of a further conversion of the Gentiles.

Matthew 8:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 8:12".

Matthew 8:12

Ver. 11,12. That is, in short, many of those who are now heathens shall be saved; and many of the Jews shall be damned.

Many, not all, shall come from the east and west, from all parts, from the remotest parts in the world. Luke saith, east, west, north, and south, Lu 13:29 Isa 11:12 43:5,6.

And sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of

God; in heaven, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the heads of the Jewish nation, are, to whom the promises were made; or, in the church of God, for the church triumphant and militant are both but one church. They shall *sit down* with them, as men sit down at a banquet, an expression oft used to signify the rest and pleasure the saints shall have in heaven, Isa 25:6-8 Lu 22:29,30.

But the children of the kingdom, the Jews, who boast much that they are the children of Abraham, and think themselves the only church, and the only heirs of glory, and who are indeed the only church of God as yet, *shall be cast out into outer darkness*: either the darkness of errors, ignorance, and superstition, the gospel light shall not shine upon them, they shall be no more the church of God; or, the darkness of hell, where shall be nothing but pain and misery, and lamentations for the gospel, and the grace thereof, first offered to them, but unthankfully rejected by them, by which they judge themselves unworthy of the grace of God and of eternal life, Ac 13:46.

Matthew 8:13

Ver. 13. Luke saith, *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick*, Lu 7:10; so as it seemeth that what Christ said unto the centurion, must be interpreted, to those whom the centurion sent in his name. Go your way, your business is done, the centurion's faith hath obtained, it shall be done to him as he hath *believed*; where believing must signify, a certain persuasion of the power of Christ, with a relying on this mercy and goodness. The proximate object of faith is some word of God. How far this centurion was acquainted with the oracles of the Old Testament (though he lived amongst the Jews, and, as appears by his building a synagogue for them, Lu 7:5, had a kindness for their religion) I cannot tell. It is most probable that he had some immediate revelation of God concerning Christ, which he is here said to have believed, and to have had a full persuasion of and trusted in. All revelations of God are the object of faith, though the Scriptures, being now written, are to us that have them the tests and touchstones to try such impressions by.

As thou believest, not because thou believest. Our faith is not meritorious of the least mercies, built is an exercise of grace

which gives glory to God, and receiveth the reward not of debt but of grace. The miracle appeared in that the disease was of an incurable nature, and the cure was wrought without application of means, and in such a moment of time as means, though used, could not have wrought it.

Matthew 8:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 8:15".

Matthew 8:15

Ver. 14,15. This story is related, with some further circumstances, Mr 1:29-31 Lu 4:38,39. Mark tells us it was *the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John;* (it seems they lived there together); that they told him of her sickness, after he had been there some time; that he *took her by the hand, and lifted her up.* Luke saith it was *a great fever;* that *they besought him for her;* that *he stood over her, and rebuked the fever.* Here is no contradiction, only some amplifications of the story. It is plain from this text, that Peter was a married man, and continued so though called to be an apostle, and that he had a family. Fevers are ordinary distempers, and often cured by ordinary means, but this was a great fever. The miracle here was not in the cure of an incurable disease, but in the way of the cure, by a touch of his hand, or a lifting her up; and the suddenness of the cure, it immediately left her; and her sudden recovery of strength, that she could presently arise and minister to them: that she could do it, argued her cure miraculous; that she did do it, argues her sense of Christ's goodness, and thankfulness, and teacheth us the use we should make of all God's gracious providences to us, to make us fitter for the service of God, and to employ ourselves in it; so taking *the cup of salvation,* and praising *the name of the Lord,* Ps 116:13.

Matthew 8:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 8:17".

Matthew 8:17

Ver. 16,17. Mark hath much the same Mr 1:32-34 and Lu 4:40,41. Luke adds, *he laid his hands upon them, and healed them.* We before, Mt 4:24, showed who were meant by persons possessed by devils. See Poole on "Mt 4:24". It is only observable that it is said, *he cast out the spirits by his word*, by the same power by which he made the world and all things therein, Ge 1:1-31, by his authoritative word. He *healed all that were sick*, that is, all that were brought to him. Laying on of his hands, was but an external symbol or rite used in blessing, in miraculous operations, and in ordination of ministers. The great question is, how that which the prophet Isaiah said, Isa 53:4, was fulfilled by these miraculous operations. The words are, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;* and, Isa 53:5, *with his stripes we are healed:* and the apostle Peter, referring to that text, saith, *Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree,* 1Pe 2:24. The words neither seem truly quoted, nor doth the sense appear the same, the evangelist applying what the prophet seems to speak of our sins, to our bodily infirmities, and his bearing them, to his curing them; whereas Peter seemeth to apply it to his bearing our sins, that is, the punishment of our sins, in his stripes, and by his sufferings on the cross. What I observed before is here to be considered, that the evangelists, in their quotations out of the Old Testament, took themselves only concerned to keep to the sense, not exactly to the words (which is a liberty we ordinarily take in quotations). As to the sense, grief and sorrows are terms capable of an interpretation, as to whatsoever comes upon us as the fruit and demerit of our sins, so as the prophet designed to express Christ's suffering all the punishment due to us for sin, of which nature are all the afflictions of this life, and death itself, as well as the pains of hell. The only question is, how Matthew's saying, he healed the people's diseases, answered the prophet's expression, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. This scripture was twice fulfilled in Christ: as to their bodily griefs and sorrows, that is mentioned by Matthew, though he bare them not all in his own body, yet he had compassion on men with reference to them, and showed himself afflicted in their afflictions by his putting forth his Divine power to heal them; and he bore the guilt that was the cause of these and other griefs and sorrows upon the tree, as is said by Peter; and he therefore healed them, that he might demonstrate himself to be the true Messiah prophesied of by

Isaiah, who was to come, who was to bear our griefs and to carry our sorrows.

Matthew 8:18

Ver. 18. When Jesus did these things before mentioned, he was in Capernaum, Mt 8:5; but the multitudes pressing him, he gave order to pass over *the sea of Galilee*, otherwise called *the sea of Tiberias*, Joh 6:1.

Matthew 8:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 8:20".

Matthew 8:20

Ver. 19,20. We have the same story in Lu 9:57,58; only Luke saith it was *as they went in the way*; and saith, *a certain man thus said unto him*. Matthew more particularly describeth the man from his office, or ordinary employment. Both agree in what he said to our Saviour, *Master*, (so they usually called their teachers, to whose conduct they gave up themselves), *I will follow thee*, that is, I am resolved or I am ready to follow thee, *whithersoever thou goest*. Thus men often take up sudden resolutions to walk with God, and to be his servants, upon sinister accounts, and before they have well considered what they are like to meet withal who own themselves the disciples of Christ. Our Saviour, knowing his heart, and that this resolution was either bottomed in his curiosity to see his miracles, or in a hope of some livelihood from him, fits him with an answer, letting him know what difficulties those that followed him must look to meet with.

The foxes have holes, &c. Alas! thou dost not know what it is to follow me; my external condition is worse than that of *the birds of the air*, they have fixed nests, or the beasts of the earth, the worst of them have holes, but I have no fixed habitation on earth. He both here and in many other texts calls himself *the Son of man*, (a name never, that we read of, given to him but by himself), to declare the truth of his human nature, and that he had

a natural compassion for men; that he was *a child born, a son given to us*, Isa 9:6; the person prophesied of as the Messias. Da 7:13; the person mentioned who was to have *all things put under his feet*, Ps 8:6 1Co 15:27 Heb 2:8.

Matthew 8:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 8:22".

Matthew 8:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke repeating the same history, Lu 9:59,60, saith that Christ said to this man, *Follow me*. He replies, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father;* to live at home with my father, who is an old man, till I have performed my last filial office to him in burying him. Others think that he was already dead, and that this disciple would not have begged leave for so uncertain a time. Christ saith unto him, *Follow me;* not that our Lord disapproved the decent manner of burying the dead, but by this let him know, that no office of love and duty to men must be preferred before our duty to God, to whom we owe our first obedience. It appeareth by Lu 9:60, that this disciple was called to preach the gospel, a work not to be omitted or neglected for any offices to men. Of old, the high priests and the Nazarites were not to touch dead bodies, Nu 6:6, because of their separation to the more immediate service of God. Preachers of the gospel ought to keep themselves as free as they can from what may distract them. Saith our Saviour, *Let the dead bury their dead:* there are enough to bury the dead; persons that are spiritually dead, not alive to God, let them take care of those meaner offices; I have higher employment for thee than that is. Lawful and decent offices become sinful when they hinder greater duties.

Matthew 8:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:27

Ver. 23-27. It is apparent that the evangelists did not set down all the motions and actions of our Saviour in order, as done by him: whether therefore this was the same motion, and over the same sea, of which mention was made before, is uncertain, nor much material for us to know. Nor yet whether the storm which here arose was in the ordinary course of providence, or raised on purpose for our Saviour to show his power in quieting it. It is enough for us to know that a great storm did arise. It is expressly said that our Saviour was *asleep*; hereby he showed himself to be truly man, subject to like infirmities with us, sin only excepted, Heb 4:15. That *the disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish*, argued both their faith in his power, and their frailty in not considering who was with them in the ship, one who, though his humanity was asleep, yet was He who watcheth over Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. Our Saviour saith unto them, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* The prevalence of fears in us upon imminent dangers will not argue no faith, but will argue a weak faith; which yet he that will not break a bruised reed, nor quench a smoking flax, will not discourage. He will therefore give them a proof of his Divinity; *he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea*, let them know he was their Lord, and commanded them to cease, *and there was a calm*. It is he that rebuketh the waves of the sea when they roar, and stilleth the ragings of the people.

The men, either the sea men, or the passengers, or both,

marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? Surely this is more than a man, that can command winds and seas.

Matthew 8:28

Ver. 28. This history is related by Mr 5:1, &c. and by Lu 8:26, &c., more largely than by Matthew. The other two evangelists report it to be done in *the country of the Gadarenes*; Matthew, *in the country of the Gergesenes*; they were the same people, sometimes denominated from one great city in their territories, sometimes from another: whoso readeth the story in all three evangelists will easily conclude it the same, though related with different circumstances. Matthew saith there were two of these demoniacs. Mark and Luke mention but one. Luke saith, *the man had devils long time, that he wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* Mark saith, *there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.* Matthew saith he came out of the tombs, was exceeding fierce, so as none could pass that way. Divines agree, that the power of the evil angels was not abated by their fall, they were only depraved in their will. That the power of an angel is much more than is here mentioned is out of question. That the evil angels do not exert this power upon us is from the restraining power of God; we live in the air in which the devil hath a principality, Eph 2:2. Why God at that time suffered the devil more to exercise this power over the bodies of men, we probably showed before, upon Mt 4:24. See Poole on "Mt 4:24". The world was grown very ignorant, and wicked, and sottishly superstitious. Besides, he was now come who was to destroy the works of the devil, and was to show his Divine power in casting him out. The Jews buried their dead out of their cities; the richer of them had tombs hewed out of rocks, &c., and those very large, as may be learned from Isa 65:4 Joh 20:6. The devil chose these places, partly to affright persons through the horror of the places, and torment the possessed with the

noisomeness of them; partly to cheat men, with an opinion they were the souls of the persons deceased that were there buried.

Matthew 8:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 5:8, that Jesus first said to him, *Come out of the man;* and, Mr 5:6,7, *when he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee, that thou torment me not.* Luke's relation, Lu 8:28,29, is much the same with Mark's. The devils possessing these poor creatures, hearing Christ, to whose power they knew they were subject, to command them out of this man, or these two men, said, *What have we to do with, thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?* The devils knew Christ to be the Son of God, though the Jews would not believe it; they say unto him, *What have we to do with thee?* A usual phrase, made use of where men had no desire to be troubled with the company, converse, or importunity of others, Jos 22:24 2Sa 16:10 2Ki 9:18 2Ch 35:21 Joe 3:4 Joh 2:4, when they came to them with some ungrateful motions, &c.

Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Either they look upon their dispossession as a torment, for the devil is not at quiet but when he is doing evil; and as this is the temper of the old serpent, so we shall observe that he communicates it to his seed, Pr 4:16: or else the devil was afraid lest Christ should have commanded him to his chains before the day of judgment.

Matthew 8:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 8:31".

Matthew 8:31

Ver. 30,31. Both Mark and Luke interpose here something more. Mark saith, *And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many.* Luke saith, *And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.* A Roman legion consisted of twelve thousand five hundred

soldiers. Not that there were precisely so many evil spirits which had a power over this poor man, but many had. A certain number is named for one uncertain. Christ knew his case well enough, but probably asked him the question for the further glorifying of his Divine power in casting them out. Luke adds, Lu 8:31, *And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep*. I cannot think that the meaning of that is, into the sea, for surely the devil did not fear drowning: the word is ἀβυσσον, into the abyss, that is, into hell, into the bottomless pit, where he could do no more mischief. Mark says, Mr 5:10, the devil *besought him that he would not send them out of the country*. Still, upon the same grounds, the devil hath an insatiable thirst to do mischief, and would gladly be where he may do it. In the mean time he knoweth it is in the power of Christ to send him whither he pleaseth. Now comes in Mt 8:30,31. They saw *an herd of many swine feeding*. Mark saith, Mr 5:11, *nigh unto the mountains*. Luke saith, *on the mountain*. They beseech Christ to give them leave to enter into the swine, and the text saith, *he suffered them*. The devil cannot so much as trouble a swine without leave from God. The next verse tells us the consequent of it.

Matthew 8:32

Ver. 32. Mark gives us much the same account, Mr 5:13, only adding, *they were about two thousand*. Luke differeth not, only what Matthew calls a *sea* Luke calls a *lake*; but the Jews called all great gatherings together of waters seas. The devil is naturally so fond of doing mischief, that he will rather play at a small game than stand out. This way of executing his malice, upon the beasts, we have often had experience of in the practice of witchcraft. And it may teach husbandmen, and those that trade in much cattle, to whom they are beholden for the preservation of their cattle, and how rightly God is styled, he that preserveth both man and beast; and what need they have to keep up daily prayer in their families, and to live so as they may not make God their enemy, who hath legions of devils, as well as many legions of less hurtful creatures, to revenge his quarrels.

Matthew 8:33

Ver. 33. Mark and Luke in this differ not from Matthew, only they add, that they *told it in the city and country*. Those that most serve the devil are afraid of him when he cometh to show himself in his true colours. These men go and publish abroad the miracle, what had happened to the man that was so famous an object of the devil's malice, and what had happened to the swine.

Matthew 8:34

Ver. 34. Both Mark and Luke here add much. Mark saith, Mr 5:14-20, *And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.* Luke saith, Lu 8:37-39, *Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. By the whole city, or the whole country, we must understand a very great part of it. Came out to meet Jesus: Mark expounds it, *to see what it was that was done, and to pray him to depart out of their coasts.* They saw him, and not him only, but him that had been possessed of the devils, sitting at his feet clothed, in his right mind. A great miracle wrought! They did not only see it, but they heard their servants, the swine herds, attesting it; they had all the external means of faith imaginable. How are they affected? The text saith, *they were afraid.* An awe of this great person seized them, and possibly they were afraid lest he should have done them some further evil. What is the*

effect of this fear? Surely they will fall down at his feet beg his grace and favour, and that he would continue with them, and be the author of more good amongst them. Though they had lost two thousand swine, yet they were delivered from the fear of him that was possessed with the devil; and that poor creature was delivered from as great an affliction as we can imagine. Nothing of all this. They came, and prayed, and besought him to go out of their coasts. Certainly, our Saviour's knowledge of the nature of this people, and what was in their hearts, provoked him to give the devils such a liberty as he did to destroy their swine: we are ordinarily punished in the thing wherein we offend, we need no more than our ordinary wishes and prayers to ruin us: who shall hereafter tell us of a power in man's will to do that which is spiritually good upon a moral persuasion? What higher moral persuasion could these Gadarenes have had, than the sight of Christ, and what he had done, afforded? yet (for aught appears) they were unanimous in this desire, that Christ should be gone. They do not do what was in their power to do, desiring him to stay. But oh how dangerous a thing it is for men to reject Christ! He immediately departeth, and we do not read that he came here any more. But he out of whom the devils were cast abideth with him, sits at his feet, desires he may go along with him; How great a difference there is betwixt seeing and hearing of Christ, and tasting how good he is! The poor demoniac would have left his country, and gone with him. But Christ suffered him not; probably he saw it would be more for the glory of God for him to stay; he therefore commands him to return to his house, and show what God had done for him, and how he had compassion on him. We cannot, more show our thankfulness to God, than by declaring his wonderful works, and what in particular he hath done for us. This poor man doth accordingly, and publisheth the name of Christ in Decapolis, which name comprehends a space of the country within which were ten cities, (as the word doth signify), whereof Gadara (saith Pliny) was one; from which city these people had their denomination of Gadarenes, that is, citizens of Gadara; or, inhabitants of the country adjacent to that city.

Matthew 9:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 9:1-8 Christ cures one sick of the palsy,
Mt 9:9 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,
Mt 9:10-13 justifieth himself for eating with publicans and sinners,
Mt 9:14-17 and his disciples for not fasting.
Mt 9:18,19 is entreated by a ruler to go and heal his daughter,
Mt 9:20-22 healeth by the way a woman of an inveterate issue of blood,
Mt 9:23-26 raiseth to life the ruler's daughter,
Mt 9:27-31 giveth sight to two blind men,
Mt 9:32-35 healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil,
Mt 9:36-38 hath compassion on the multitudes, and teacheth his disciples to pray that God would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Ver. 1. Whether the same ship he came in or no it is not material: he *passed over* the lake of Gennesaret, *and came into his own city*; not Bethlehem, in which he was born, but either Nazareth, where he was brought up, or (which most judge) Capernaum, whither, leaving Nazareth, he went formerly to dwell, Mt 4:13, whither he is said to have entered, Mr 2:1; this was upon the seacoast of Zebulun and Naphtali, Mt 4:13.

Matthew 9:2

Ver. 2. The history of this miracle is reported by Mr 2:3-12; by Luke, Lu 5:18-26; by both with more circumstances than Matthew doth report it. Mark saith, *He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was not room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it*

*up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, Mr 2:1-5. Luke mentions not the place, nor our Saviour's being preaching, but saith, *And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee, Lu 5:18-20. All interpreters agree it to be the same history. Mark, in his preface to the report of the miracle, tells us where Christ was, viz. in Capernaum; what he was doing, preaching the word; the occasion of the people breaking up the roof of the house, viz. the press of the people, so as they could not come nigh to Christ. All three evangelists agree the sick man's disease to be the palsy, which being the resolution of the nerves, besides the pain that attends it, debilitates the person, and confines him to his bed, or couch, which was the reason of his being brought in his bed, and by four men. All the evangelists mention Jesus seeing their faith, their inward persuasion of his Divine power, and their confidence in his goodness, both the faith of the sick person and of those who brought him. He saw it in their hearts, for the inward principles and habits are not visible to us, yet they are seen and known to him who searcheth the heart, and knoweth what is in the heart of man. He saw it in the fruits, their endeavouring to lay him before Christ. He *said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee*. But what was this to his palsy? Our Saviour by this lets him, and those who brought him, know,**

1. That sin is the root from which our evils spring.
2. That being forgiven, bodily distempers (how fatal soever) can do a man no hurt.
3. That his primary end of coming into the world was to save his people from their sins.
4. That in the hour wherein remission of sins is granted to a soul, it becomes God's son, dear to Christ.
5. That remission of sins followeth the exercise of faith in Christ.

6. Possibly he begins with this to give the scribes and Pharisees occasion of some discourse.

Matthew 9:3

Ver. 3. Mark saith, There were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? Mr 2:6,7. Luke saith, The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? Lu 5:21. It should seem they did not speak it out. Mark saith, they reasoned in their hearts. Matthew in the next verse saith, Jesus, knowing their thoughts. It seemeth that it was then agreed on all hands, that forgiving of sins was the prerogative of God alone; and that for man to arrogate to himself such a power as belonged to God alone was no less than blasphemy, as all ascribings of Divine perfections to creatures must be. It stands the pope and priests in hand to clear themselves from this guilt. It was also agreed by the scribes and Pharisees, that Christ spake blasphemy in pronouncing to the sick of the palsy, that his sins were forgiven. The reason was, because they did not believe him to be the Son of God, but looked on him as mere man.

Matthew 9:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 9:6".

Matthew 9:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 9:6".

Matthew 9:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark repeats almost the same words, Mr 2:8-10. So doth Luke, Lu 5:22-24. Christ here giveth the scribes and Pharisees a demonstration of his Deity, by letting them know that he knew their thoughts, *Jesus knowing their thoughts said;*

a thing not compatible to angels, much less to one who is mere man; yet these blind scribes and Pharisees take no notice of it.

Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts; evil concerning me? I did this, saith he, on purpose to let you know, that I, who am indeed the Son of man, and whom you mistake in thinking to be no more than the Son of man, hath power, while he is upon the earth, and so conversing amongst you, to forgive sins, and you may make suitable applications to him for that end.

It had been as easy for me every whit to have said to this sick man, Arise and walk; and that I will demonstrate to you. Then saith he to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. The same power is required to the one as to the other; God, by your confession, can forgive sins, and God alone can raise men from the grave. The end of my miraculous operations is to convince you that I am he who hath a power to forgive men their sins. I therefore chose first to pronounce this man's sins forgiven, that I might have the advantage to confirm to you by a subsequent miracle this great truth, that I am the Son of God, though you think me no more than the Son of man, and that I have a power to forgive sins upon men's exercise of their faith and coming unto me. Now therefore believe, not because of my word only, but because of the sign I show you confirmative of it.

Matthew 9:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 9:8".

Matthew 9:8

Ver. 7,8. Mark saith. *And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion, Mr 2:12.* Luke saith, *And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today, Lu 5:25,26.* They all agree in sense, though not in words. With Christ's word there went out a power,

enabling him to do what he had commanded him. He immediately stands upon his feet, takes up his bed, or couch, *that whereon he lay*, (saith Luke), and went home in the sight of them all, so as none could doubt concerning the cure. What effect hath this upon the people?

They marvelled, saith Matthew; *they were amazed, and filled with fear*, saith Luke. Here is not a word of their believing and owning Christ as the Son of God, which was the great thing the miracle was wrought to bring them to; but blindness was happened to Israel, seeing they saw and could not perceive. The miracle wrought in them an awe and reverence of him as an extraordinary person, and put them into a kind of ecstasy and admiration; and the text saith they *glorified God*; but not aright: they praised God, not for sending his Son into the world to save sinners, but for giving *such power unto men*; they would still own Christ no more than a man, though a man to whom God had given great power.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1Co 12:3. Truly to believe, own, and receive Christ as our Lord, requireth the operation of the Spirit of grace, working such a faith and persuasion in us.

Matthew 9:9

Ver. 9. Mark hath the same story, Mr 2:14, only he calleth him *Levi*, and tells us he was the *son of Alphaeus*. Luke also mentions it, Lu 5:27,28, and calls him Levi, adding that he was a *publican*, and saith that *he left all, rose up, and followed him*. This Matthew might have also the name of Levi; all interpreters agree he was the same man. All three evangelists say, that when Christ called him, he was sitting in the custom house *at the receipt of custom*. This Matthew was one of the twelve apostles, Mt 10:3, and the penman of this Gospel. His father Alphaeus was honoured to have four of his sons apostles, James the less, and Thaddaeus, (called Lebbeus), Simon the Canaanite, and Matthew. He was a publican, an officer under the Romans to gather the public revenue; it was an odious name amongst the Jews, but Matthew, to magnify the grace of Christ in calling him, is not ashamed thus to describe himself, both here and Mt 10:3.

He saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. His word carried a secret power with it, which Matthew obeyed by leaving his employment and going after Christ.

Matthew 9:10

Ver. 10. Luke saith that *Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them,* Lu 5:29. Mark saith, *there were many, and they followed him,* Mr 2:15. Matthew, touched with the sense of the free and infinite love of Christ to him, maketh Christ a feast: this speaketh him a man of some estate: he invites many to dine with him, some of them publicans, some noted sinners. He designs good undoubtedly to such as had been his former companions, that they might also see the Lord, and be brought to follow him. Grace teacheth a man to study the conversion of others, and never dwelleth in a narrow soul, nor studieth its concealment from others.

Matthew 9:11

Ver. 11. Mark hath the same, Mr 2:16; so hath Luke, Lu 5:30, only he saith they *murmured.* The Pharisees having a perfect malice to Christ, did not only seek all means to carp at him, but to bring him under a popular odium: this seemed a fair opportunity. The publicans being an order of persons who both for their employment, and perhaps also their ill management of it, were abominated by the Jews, and reckoned amongst the more notorious sort of sinners; they therefore come to his disciples clamouring against their Master, that he kept communion with publicans and sinners.

Matthew 9:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 9:13".

Matthew 9:13

Ver. 12,13. Mark and Luke, in the places before mentioned, have

the same answer, only leaving out these words, *Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*, quoted from Ho 6:6. Our Saviour's reply to the Pharisees, to him that duly considers it, will appear very smart.

1. They were a generation that laid all religion upon rituals, sacrifice, and traditions.
2. That justified themselves, Lu 16:15, and thought they needed no repentance.

Saith our Saviour, I am the spiritual Physician. With him would they have the physician to converse, but with such as are sick? Those that are whole (as the Pharisees account themselves) think they have no need of my coming amongst them. By their peevishness at the acts of mercy which I do (and those of the highest mercy too, healing souls) they show that they do not understand what Hosea (a prophet acknowledged by themselves) long since taught them, that the Lord desired mercy before sacrifice; for that appeareth to be the sense of *not sacrifice* in that text, both by the next words, *and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*, and by the many precepts by which God declared that he did desire sacrifices.

For I am not come to call the righteous, that is, those who are swelled in an opinion of their own righteousness, *but (sensible) sinners to repentance*: first to repentance, then to the receiving remission of sins through me, and eternal life.

Matthew 9:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:17

Ver. 14-17. Mark hath this same history, almost in the same words, Mr 2:18-22, only he saith that some of the disciples of the Pharisees came with the disciples of John. Luke also hath it varying little, Lu 5:33-38; only he saith, *fast often, and make prayers, (and), the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.* And he addeth at last, Lu 5:39, *No man also having drank old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better:* which I shall consider, it plainly belonging to this history. Mark begins his narration of this history with telling us, *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast;* which is implied, though not expressed, by the two other evangelists. For the Pharisees, it is plain enough from the Pharisee's boast, Lu 18:12, that he fasted *twice in the week*, John also used his disciples to a severer discipline than Christ did (of which we shall afterward hear more.) It should seem that the Pharisees had a mind to make a division betwixt the followers of John and the followers of Christ, and set on John's disciples to go and ask an account of this. Hypocrites are always hottest for ritual things, as things most fit to raise a division about. There was no precept of God for any fast, but once in a year, though indeed God left people a liberty to fast oftener, as their circumstances more fitted and called for the duty. The Pharisees had set up themselves a method, and would fain have imposed it on Christ's disciples; especially considering John's disciples complied with the practice of frequent fasts, and seemed to suggest as if Christ set up a new and more jovial religion. (As if religion lay only or principally in rituals, as to which God had set no rule). The papists are at this day the Pharisees' true successors in these arts. Christ answereth them in two particulars:

1. He tells them that his disciples were not as yet under such a dispensation as called for fasting.
2. That his disciples were new converts, and to be brought on by degrees to the severer practices of external discipline and godliness. This is the sum of Mt 9:15-17. This he delivers in metaphorical expressions:

Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast. Your master John hath compared me to a bridegroom, Joh 3:29. These my disciples are *the children of the bride chamber*. It is as yet a festival time with them. Fasting is a duty fitted to a day of mourning and affliction. It is not yet a time of mourning for my disciples: yet do not envy them. There will shortly come a time when, as to my bodily presence, I shall be taken from them: then they shall mourn and fast. The second thing he saith he illustrates by two similitudes. First, (saith he), amongst men no discreet person will put in an old garment a new piece of cloth, for they will not agree together; the strength of the new cloth will bear no proportion to the strength of the old, which by wearing is made weak, so as if the garment comes to a stress the rent will be the greater. So as to wine, men do not use to put new wine into old bottles, that through much use are weakened, for fear of breaking the bottles and spilling the wines; but they use to put new wine into new bottles, to proportion the thing containing to the thing contained. My disciples are newly converted. Should I impose upon them the severer exercises of religion, it might discourage them, and be a temptation to them to go back; for, as Luke addeth, *No man having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is better*. Custom is a great tyrant, and men are not on the sudden brought off from their former practices, but by degrees. This is a portion of Scripture which much commendeth prudence to ministers, both teaching their people as they are able to bear, and also putting them upon duties with respect to their stature and proficiency in the ways of God; especially in such things as are but our free will offerings to God.

Matthew 9:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 9:19".

Matthew 9:19

Ver. 18,19. Mark hath this history, Mr 5:22-24, And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I

pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. Luke hath it, Lu 8:42, adding only that she was his only daughter, twelve years of age. Two evangelists say she was at the point of death, or dying: Matthew saith that he said she was dead; that might be according to his apprehension; she was so near death, that he concluded that by that time he was got to Christ she was dead. Others observe out of Greek authors, that the particle $\alpha\rho\tau\iota$, here used, doth not always signify a time past, but sometimes a time near at hand. But the best answer is, that Matthew relates the story compendiously. It appears from Lu 8:49, that the maid did die. Matthew reports that first, which the messenger brought them the news of afterwards, as we shall see in Mt 9:23. By the ruler here both Mark and Luke tell us is to be understood Jairus; not a civil magistrate, but one who was the ruler of the synagogue in that place; for in their synagogues they had an order, there was one chief who ordered the affairs of it, and they say the interpretation of the law belonged to him. And worshipped him, with a civil worship, or respect, saying, My daughter is even now dead, or dying. One would judge the latter should be the evangelist's meaning of the particle, because of what the other evangelists say, Come and lay thy hands on her, and she shall live. His faith riseth not up to the centurion's faith, who declared his faith that if Christ would but speak the word his servant should live. Jairus desires him to come and lay his hands upon her. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and his disciples. The Jews thrust Christ's followers out of their synagogues; he is more kind to the ruler of their synagogue, he presently goeth, and his disciples followed him: they were to be witnesses of his miracles. Mark adds, much people followed, and thronged him; which gave occasion to another miracle, which Christ did in his way to Jairus's house, the relation of which Matthew giveth us before he perfecteth the history of this miracle.

Matthew 9:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 9:21".

Matthew 9:21

Ver. 20,21. Mark addeth, Mr 5:26,27, that she *had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched his garment, &c.* Luke saith, *the border of his garment.* In the crowd there cometh a woman that had a bloody flux twelve years. Inveterate diseases are hard to be cured. Nor had means been neglected, she had tried many physicians, and had spent all her estate upon them. She *came behind him*, out of modesty, and perhaps shame, desiring not to be taken notice of. That which induced her to come, was the fame she had heard of Jesus, and a persuasion wrought in her heart, (doubtless by the Spirit of God), that if she could but come to touch the hem or border of his garment she should be cured. In this she judged rightly, that Christ was all virtue, and that his virtue was not restrained to his laying his hand upon her. She believed that the oil poured on his head was like that poured on the head of Aaron, which ran down to the skirts of his garment. But if she thought that she could thus steal a cure, and that Christ's cures flowed not from his grace and good will, but a kind of necessity, herein she wonderfully erred, and Christ afterward let her know it, though he pardoned her mistake.

Matthew 9:22

Ver. 22. Matthew relates this story shortly, as he doth many others, being only intent upon recording the miracle. We must here supply something out of Mark and Luke. Mark saith, Mr 5:29-34, *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.* Luke reports the same circumstances with little variation, Lu 8:45-48. Christ was not ignorant of this woman's coming and touching his garment, he doubtless influenced her to the motion, his inquiry was therefore

only that the miracle might be taken notice of: he knew that virtue was gone out of him, and had healed the woman, for he had commanded it so to go out, or she had not been healed; but he desired that the people might take notice that she was healed by his grace, not by any magical virtue in his clothes. The woman is brought openly to come and confess it, that she had touched his clothes, and that she was healed. She feared and trembled, lest she should have offended. Christ comforts her, by assuring her the cure, and telling her, that her faith in him, as an instrumental cause, had effected it. We have met with Christ often before, as well as in this text, and shall again often meet with him, ascribing much to the exercise of faith. And the faith to which he ascribes so much seemeth not to be justifying faith, or that exercise of grace whereby a soul, in the sense of its lost estate by reason of sin, accepteth of him as its Saviour, and relies upon his merits alone for salvation; for we read nothing of the persons' repentance for sin, nor reliance upon Christ for the salvation of their souls, or any profession of any such thing. Is it then so valuable an act of faith to believe that Christ is the Son of God? I answer,

1. Though faith in Christ be the only saving faith, yet a faith in God, being persuaded of his power and trusting in him, is an exercise of grace, which God (as appeareth in Scripture) much rewarded with blessings of this life; it giveth God the honour of his power, &c.
2. But, secondly: The great truth, That Christ was the eternal Son of God, was that which God more especially aimed at to give the world's assent unto and persuasion of at this time; and indeed preliminary and necessary to people's receiving of him as their Saviour, for, *Cursed is he that trusteth in man*. It was also the great truth which the Pharisees and the rest of the Jews did oppose. Hence our Saviour takes all occasions both to confirm and to encourage this faith; which was but a persuasion that he was clothed with a Divine power, and did that which no man could do; and that he had in him Divine goodness, ready to relieve man's infirmities, according to that power.
3. It is hardly possible that any should truly and seriously believe that Christ, being apparently man, and the Son of man, should also exercise a power which none but God could do; and that

they should not believe in him as the Saviour of the world, and be quickened to the use of those means which he should reveal for their salvation. For these reasons, amongst others, we may conceive that Christ predicates this faith so much in those in whom he found it.

This miracle being wrought by our Lord in his way to Jairus's house, after the first notice he had of the dangerous sickness of his daughter, the evangelist now goeth on to give us an account of his perfecting that good work.

Matthew 9:23

Ver. 23. Neither Mark nor Luke speak any thing of the minstrels, but only of the people's wailing. Amongst the Jews we read not in any part of the Old Testament of musical instruments used at funerals, but amongst the pagans it was usual, as we read in their writers. Amongst the Jews, they had some songs sang, as some gather from Jer 9:17 Jer 22:18 34:5 Am 5:16. It is very like that the Jews having long lived amongst the heathens, had learned this usage from them. Before this Mark addeth, Mr 5:35-40, that there came some from the ruler's house, which said, *Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? But Jesus, as soon as he had heard the word that was spoken, said to the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.* Matthew saith nothing of what happened in the way, neither the messengers' coming, and telling Jairus that his daughter was dead, nor our Saviour's comforting of him; but Luke mentions all, Lu 8:49,50. Matthew goes on with an account of what Christ did in the house, seeing the minstrels, and the tumult caused by the mourners there.

Matthew 9:24

Ver. 24. Mark saith, Mr 5:39,40, *When he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and mother, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.* Luke saith, Lu 8:51-53, *When he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, (that is, into the chamber where the dead body lay), save Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.* The history is plain: when Christ came into the house, there was a mixed noise of fiddlers or pipers, and mourners. Christ coming in, with Peter, James, and John, asked them what they made such ado for? The maid was not dead, but asleep. They apprehending that she was dead, mocked him. He desires to go into the chamber where the corpse lay; but would suffer none but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maid, to go in with him; the reason appeareth afterward, because he did not desire that this miracle should be presently published. The only question is, in what sense our Saviour saith, *she is not dead, but sleepeth*; whereas they knew she was dead.

1. Some think our Saviour speaketh ambiguously, for death is in Scripture often called a sleep, 1Ki 14:20 Joh 11:11 Ac 7:60 1Co 15:6 with respect to the resurrection.
2. Others think that our Saviour speaks ironically, knowing that some of them would so diminish the miracle, to calumniate him, or abate his reputation. But it is a better answer to say that he speaks with reference to their opinion; *she is not dead* in that sense you judge her dead, so as she shall not come to life before the resurrection; she is not so dead but she shall come to life again; as he said to Mary concerning Lazarus, Joh 11:23.
3. Or, to me she is not dead.
4. Or shall we say, as soon as Christ was come into the house, who is *the resurrection, and the life*, Joh 11:25, her soul again returned into her body, which though to their appearance it

was separated from her body, was not yet fixed in its eternal mansion?

In what sense soever he spake it, they judged it ridiculous, and laughed him to scorn.

Matthew 9:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 9:26".

Matthew 9:26

Ver. 25,26. Mark saith, Mr 5:41-43. *And he took the damsel by the hand and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.* Luke saith, Lu 8:54-56. *And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.* It was the power and virtue that went out of Christ which wrought the miracles: he performeth them under a variety of circumstances; sometimes he used only his word, (as in the case of Lazarus), sometimes he touched the persons, laying his hand upon them; here he takes the maid by the hand, and also saith, Daughter, or maid, arise. They were words of power and authority, she presently arose. Luke saith her spirit returned again. Luke by this lets us know, that the soul is not the crasis, or some accident to the body, but a distinct subsistence of itself. For the curious question of some, where the soul of this maiden was, as also the soul of Lazarus, of whom we read in Joh 11:1-57, and others restored to life, when dead, were in the time while they were separated from their bodies; it is a matter of no great concern to us to know where: this we know, that God designed their return to their bodies again, they were not therefore fixed in their eternal mansions. Our Saviour hath taught us, that souls departed are under the conduct of angels to their stations. Lazarus's soul was carried by

angels into Abraham's bosom. What can be opposed if we say, that it is probable the souls of these persons were under the guard of angels, about or near the dead bodies, waiting the pleasure of God with reference to them, until the Lord again commanded the restoring of them to their bodies?

He commanded to give her meat, to confirm the truth of the miracle. Concerning our Lord's command that they should not publish what he had done, we spake before in the case of the leper. Our Lord's time was not yet come, and he was not willing his enemies should take too public a notice of him. But Matthew saith, *The fame thereof went abroad into all that land,* that is, Galilee, at some distance from Jerusalem, which was the great seat of his enemies, where probably our Saviour did least desire any public notice should as yet be taken of him.

Matthew 9:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 9:30".

Matthew 9:31

Ver. 27-31. This miracle is reported only by St. Matthew, though the other evangelists tell us of some others of the same kind. They *followed him in the way, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.* These are the first we read of in this

Gospel, that made their applications to Christ under the notion of the Messiah (for so much that compellation, *Thou Son of David*, importeth). He was to open the blind eyes, Isa 35:5 42:7, and was to be the Son of David, according to the prophecies of him; nor can any reason be given, why they called him the Son of David, but this their belief that he was the true Messias.

Have mercy on us: their petition is general, though without doubt they had a particular respect to their want of sight, and so our Saviour understood them. Others, that came to Christ for cure before, looked upon Christ as a man to whom God had given great power, and glorified God upon that account, as in Mt 9:8. Their courage and boldness in the faith also appeared, in that they feared not the Pharisees decree made, as appeareth from Joh 9:22; for *the Christ and the Son of David* amongst the Jews at this time signified the same person, as appears by Mt 22:42. Christ listens not unto them till he came into the house; there he saith, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Christ forgetteth not the prayer of faith, though he doth not give a present answer according to our expectation, that he may continue us in our duty, and quicken us yet to further importunity. Our Lord puts the common test upon them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* There is no absolute particular promise for good things of a temporal concern; it is enough for us in those cases to believe that God is able to do the thing, and that he will do it if he seeth it be for our good; he only therefore questions their faith as to his power. In their former owning him as the Messiah, the Son of David, they had declared that they believed his kindness to the sons of men.

They said unto him, Yea, Lord, we believe thou art able; and we believe thee the Messiah, come to do good, and we have a trust in thee thou wilt do it; for this cause we are come, we cry unto thee.

Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. See the mighty power of the prayer of faith.

Their eyes were opened, that is, their visive faculty was restored, or given to them.

And Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. It was known they were blind, and men must know that they

now saw; but he charges them not to publish it as done by him. The word used signifieth to command with authority, and with a threatening annexed: we have met with several such commands to persons cured, and none of them observed, nor the persons blamed by Christ for not observing them. We must say the parties sinned in publishing the things, unless the command was with some limitations not mentioned by the evangelists; but we are not able, either to give a just account why or how Christ commanded them, nor how they published the things, or were excusable in doing of it.

Matthew 9:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 9:33".

Matthew 9:33

Ver. 32,33. Some think this the same mentioned Lu 11:14, as shortly as it is here. The word in the Greek signifies deaf as well as dumb, for all persons who are deaf from their birth are also dumb. But it is probable this man was only accidentally dumb, from the power of the devil, that had possessed him, and suppressed his speech. It is observed that Christ cured,

1. Some that came on their own accord to him, as the woman with her bloody flux.
2. Others that could not come, but were brought to him, as the paralytic, before mentioned in this chapter, who was willingly brought.
3. Others who neither came nor were willingly brought, but he occasionally met, Lu 7:12 Joh 5:5 9:1.
4. Others that were brought without their consent, as the demoniac before mentioned, and this in this verse.

His design was, by these operations, to show himself the Son of God, and therefore did not always stay for people's voluntarily offering him occasions, but sometimes took them when they were not voluntarily offered, to show the freeness of

his grace.

Matthew 9:34

Ver. 34. This was not the only time they said so: see Mt 12:24 Mr 3:22 Lu 11:15. See Poole on "Mt 12:24". I shall in my notes on Mt 12:24 speak more fully to this text, where we shall also meet with our Saviour's vindication of himself from this imputation. At present, I shall only observe the miserable effects of blindness and malice. The common people marvelled, and said there was never seen such things in Israel. The Jewish doctors are mad, and charge our Saviour to have made a contract with the devil, and to have derived this power from him. But how did this appear to them? Nothing appeared as to any thing which our Saviour had done that could conduct their reason to such a judgment; nothing but what led their more charitable neighbours to a quite contrary judgment. But something they must say to defame our Saviour's reputation amongst the people; having nothing else, but what the people would have judged false, they thus charge him. Nor are the children of the devil to learn his arts, who, when they cannot charge good and holy men with profaneness, charge them with hypocrisy, of which it is impossible they should be competent judges.

Matthew 9:35

Ver. 35. We met with these words Mt 4:23, only there it was *all Galilee*, by which probably this text ought to be expounded: See Poole on "Mt 4:23".

Matthew 9:36

Ver. 36. Mark hath something of this, Mr 6:34. It pitied him, who came down from heaven to earth to seek and to save lost souls, to see what a company of people followed him, willing to be instructed, because they were εκλελυμενοι, or, as some read it, εσκυλμενοι, tired and wearied with running after him to hear the gospel, and ερριμμενοι, *scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd*. Had then the Jews at this time no ministry? They had the temple at Jerusalem, scribes, and Pharisees, and priests;

synagogues in other places, where the law was read and interpreted. Christ accounts those people to have no ministers who have no good ones; but either dumb dogs, that cannot bark, or lazy ones, that will not. Such was the generality of the Jewish ministry at this time. This moved the bowels of Christ (so the word signifies). It is a great misery when the congregation of the Lord are as sheep which have no shepherd, Nu 27:17; and so they are when they have no true prophets of the Lord to instruct them, 1Ki 22:17.

Matthew 9:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 9:38".

Matthew 9:38

Ver. 37,38. The plain sense of these two verses is this: John the Baptist and Christ had now been preaching for some time, God inclined the hearts of great multitudes to follow both the one and the other; there was a great people prepared for the Lord: Mt 11:12, *From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven had suffered violence, and the violent took it by force*; men were exceeding fond of hearing the gospel.

The fields were white to the harvest, as our Saviour expresses it, Joh 4:35. But there were few that would faithfully deliver the mind of God; there were abundance of idle Pharisees, and scribes, and priests, that spent their time in teaching people their rites, and ceremonies, and traditions, but the labourers were few; such must be God's gift to the people, and they must be thrust out. No arguments will be sufficient to persuade men to the weighty work of the ministry, with an intention to fulfil it, but the power of God inclining their hearts to it. You had need therefore pray unto God that he would send, nay, that he would $\epsilon\kappa\beta\alpha\lambda\eta$, thrust out, labourers into his harvest.

1. The inclination and desire of multitudes to hear Divine truth is God's harvest.
2. Ministers' work is a labour, Ga 4:11 Php 4:3 1Ti 5:17; if rightly discharged, it must be with labour.

3. God is the Lord of the harvest; ministers ought to look upon him as so.
4. None ought to thrust themselves into the work of the ministry, till God thrust them out, Heb 5:4.
5. There always were but a few labourers in God's harvest. Hence Chrysostom thought that but a few ministers would be saved.

Our Saviour in this chapter prefaces his work of which we shall discourse in the next chapter, viz. his sending forth his twelve apostles.

Matthew 10:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 10:1-4 Christ sendeth out his twelve apostles with power to do miracles.

Mt 10:5-15 He instructs them,

Mt 10:16-39 and forewarning them of persecutions, suggests motives of comfort and constancy.

Mt 10:40-42 He promiseth a blessing to those who should receive them.

Ver. 1. Mark saith, Mr 3:14,15, *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.* Luke repeats almost the same words, Lu 9:1,2; only he saith *he gave them power and authority over devils, —and to preach the kingdom of God.* This was the first mission which the apostles had, much different from that given them after his resurrection; they were now sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, then they were sent to all nations. They were not called *disciples* as that term signified only the common hearers of Christ, but in a more emphatic sense. He chooseth out *twelve*, that as the twelve patriarchs begat the Jewish church, so these twelve men might be the fathers to all the gospel church. The

number of twelve seems a sacred number. The new Jerusalem, Re 21:12, is described as having *twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels*, and to have written (on the gates) *the names of the twelve tribes*; and, Re 21:14, *the wall of the city* is said to have had *twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles*; the dimensions of it *twelve thousand furlongs*, Re 21:16.

The power he gave to the apostles was:

1. To preach the kingdom, that is, the gospel, which as it showeth the way to the kingdom of glory, so it was the means to gather the Christian church, which is the kingdom of grace, and to subdue men's hearts to the obedience of Christ.
2. To cast out devils, and heal all manner of sicknesses. By which they gained repute amongst people, confirming people that they were sent of God, doing (though not as Christ did them) things which none but God could do, by a derivation of power from him: Christ did the same things, but by a power inherent in himself.

These twelve were ordinarily to be with Christ, and to go forth (as occasion served) clothed with his power to preach and to work miracles.

Matthew 10:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 10:4".

Matthew 10:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 10:4".

Matthew 10:4

Ver. 2-4. Mark reckoneth up the same persons, Mr 3:16-19, with some additions, which we shall consider as we come at the persons whom they concern.

Apostles signifies persons sent; the term applied to Christ's disciples signifies the persons that were first sent by him to preach the gospel. It was reasonable for the evangelists to set down their names, because the whole Christian church was to be builded upon their doctrine, Eph 2:20.

The first, Simon, who is called Peter, because the term signifies a rock, and the confession of faith which he made our Saviour declares to be a rock, on which he would build his church, Mt 16:18. He is not here called *the first* because he was first called, or first believed, the contrary is plain from Joh 1:41; but when many are named, one must be first named. He was *the son of Jonas*; Christ gave him the name of *Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone*. He was called Simon Peter to distinguish him from Simon the Canaanite, afterward mentioned. So that it seems the papists are put hard to it for arguments to prove Peter's primacy and superiority over the apostles, and headship over the church, when they are enforced to make use of this, because he is here called *the first*. Yet such another was brought at the disputation of Berne, 1528, when Alexius Grad, the nuns' confessor, would prove Peter's headship because he is called Cephas; and he had read in some dictionary, that Κεφας anciently signified a head; as if the evangelist had not interpreted it, Joh 1:41, *Peter, or a stone*. By the same argument they can from hence prove Peter the first, Ga 2:9, will prove him the second, for so he is there reckoned, *James, Cephas, and John. Andrew his brother*; Simon Peter's brother; by John directed to Christ, Joh 1:40; called by Christ together with his brother Peter, Mr 1:16,17.

James the son of Zebedee, so called to distinguish him from another of the apostles of the same name, who was the son of Alphaeus. This is he of whose death we read, Ac 12:2; he was slain by Herod.

And John his brother, viz. the son of Zebedee: this is he who was called the beloved disciple, who also wrote the Gospel of John, Joh 21:20,24.

Philip, and Bartholomew. Philip was of Bethsaida the city of Andrew and Peter, Joh 1:44, found and called by Christ, Joh 1:43. Of the call of Bartholomew we do not read; some think him the same with Nathanael, mentioned Joh 1:45,46, &c. It is

some inducement to believe it, that he is here named with Philip, who was the instrument to bring him to Christ, Joh 1:45; but there is nothing of this certain.

Thomas, the same who was called Didymus, who was so unbelieving as to Christ's resurrection, Joh 20:24,27; and *Matthew the publican*, he that wrote this history of the Gospel: we heard before of his call from the receipt of custom; he was also called Levi.

James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus. This James is called *James the less*, Mr 15:40, and so distinguished from James the son of Zebedee.

The Lord's brother, Ga 1:19; that is, as some think, his kinsman, judging him not the son of Alphaeus who was the father of Matthew, but another Alphaeus, the husband of Mary the wife of Cleophas, Joh 19:25. But this appeareth not from Scripture. Instead of *Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus*, Luke saith, Lu 6:16, *Judas the brother of James* (he that wrote the Epistle of Jude, as appeareth by Jude). Mark, Mr 3:18, mentions not Lebbaeus at all, which makes some think that the words are transposed, and should be Thaddaeus the son of Lebbaeus; for Thaddai in the Syriac is the same with Judas.

Simon the Canaanite; Luke calls him *Simon Zelotes*, Lu 6:15 Ac 1:13. We must not understand by *Canaanite* a pagan, (for Christ sent out none but Jews), but one of Cana, which by interpretation is *Zelus*, from whence it is that Luke calleth him *Zelotes*.

And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. There are many guesses how Judas had the name of Iscariot, whether from Kerioth, supposed to be his town, or on some other account: the guesses of the best are but uncertainties, nor is it material for us to know. It here distinguishes him from the other Judas. Of his betraying his Master we shall hear afterward. Christ altered the name of Simon, whom he called *Peter*, Mr 3:16. He added to the names of James and John, calling them *Boanerges*, that is, *The sons of thunder*, Mr 3:17. Thaddaeus is called Judas, and by Matthew also Lebbaeus. These were the twelve first apostles, to which were added (after Christ's ascension) Matthias, (instead of Judas Iscariot), Paul, and Barnabas; but these conversed with

Christ, and were the first sent out by him. We shall now hear the instruction he gives them.

Matthew 10:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 10:6".

Matthew 10:6

Ver. 5,6. Here Christ limiteth their ministry to the Jews. The apostle tells us, Ro 15:8, *Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to conform the promises made unto the fathers;* and the apostle tells the Jews, Ac 13:46, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.* Therefore in this his first mission, he restrains his apostles from going to the Gentiles, to whom they had afterwards a commission to go, Mt 28:19, and did go, but not before the Jews had judged themselves *unworthy of everlasting life*, Ac 13:46, by rejecting and blaspheming the gospel, and persecuting the ministers of it. They are also commanded not to go *into any city of the Samaritans*. The Samaritans were partly Jews apostatized, and partly heathens, descended from those whom the king of Syria sent thither, when the ten tribes were carried into captivity, 2Ki 17:6, and from some Jews left in the land. You shall read of their religion there, 2Ki 17:31-41. They were perfectly hated by the Jews, and as perfect haters of them, as may be gathered from Lu 9:52,53 Joh 4:9. Our Lord, partly in regard they also were no better than Gentiles, and so hated as they were of the Jews, would not suffer these his first ministers to go and preach amongst them. Not that they were forbidden (if some particular persons, whether Gentiles or Samaritans, came to them) to preach to them, but only not to make it their work to go into their country or cities; the time was not yet come for this great light to shine upon the Gentiles.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. By *Israel* he here meaneth the two tribes that clave to the house of David, for the ten tribes ever since their captivity (2Ki 17:6) had lost their share in that name. He calls them *lost sheep* in the sense that Jeremiah speaks, Jer 1:6, *My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray.* So that *lost sheep*

here signifies wandering sheep, for want of proper guides. The Jews at this time had miserable teachers, so as they wandered as lost sheep. And this comporteth with what we had in the last verses of the former chapter. There was a great harvest and but few labourers; he is therefore providing them labourers, shepherds that should gather those scattered sheep into one fold.

Matthew 10:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 10:8".

Matthew 10:8

Ver. 7,8. In these words he gives them power,

1. To preach the gospel.
2. To confirm the doctrine they preached to be of God by miraculous operations, healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, casting out devils.

He bids them *go preach*, Κηρυσσετε, Cry like heralds; something like Isaiah's commission, Isa 58:1, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. He teacheth them what should be the sum of their sermons, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*; the same thing which John Baptist preached, Mt 3:2, which Christ preached, Mr 1:15, and which he directed the seventy to preach, Lu 10:9: not that they were to use no other words, but that all the words they used were to have this tendency, to declare that the time was now come, when God had fulfilled his promise of the Messiah, who was setting up his kingdom in the world, and to whose laws they were to be obedient. This doctrine they were to confirm by miracles, which he gives them a charge they should work *freely*, without receiving any reward for them, that the miracles being used to their private profit, might not lose their end, which was the confirmation of their doctrine.

Matthew 10:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 10:10".

Matthew 10:10

Ver. 9,10. Our Saviour having in the last verse commanded them to give freely, they might reasonably be thinking that they had need to provide well for their journey. No, saith our Saviour, *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, &c.* That this was but a temporary precept, the will of God concerning them for this short journey, appeareth from Lu 22:35,36, *But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, &c.* They were to finish this journey in a short time, and much provision would have been a hinderance to their motion. Besides, our Saviour designed to give them an experience of the providence of God, and to teach them to trust in it; as also to teach people that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, and that God expects that his ministers should not live of their own, but upon the altar which they served; so as at once he taught his apostles not to be covetous, nor overmuch solicitous, and people to provide for those who ministered to them in things spiritual. I pass over what others have critically observed concerning the words, that being not my proper work. Mark saith, Mr 6:8,9, that he *commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.* From whence is plain that the *staves* forbidden in Matthew were either staves for defence, or to bear burdens upon, not merely travellers' staves. The sum is, in this their first journey, which they were soon to despatch, he would have them trust God for protection and sustenance, and load themselves with nothing more than necessary.

Matthew 10:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:15

Ver. 11-15. Our Lord had before set them their limits, and appointed them their work, and directed them as to their accoutrements for their journey; here he directeth them their methods. Luke hath much of the same instructions, Lu 10:4-6, but applied to the seventy, not to the twelve. Mark hath something of them applied to the twelve, Mr 6:10,11.

And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. The method Christ set them was, when they came into any of the cities of Israel, to inquire if there were any worthy persons in it, and thither to go, and there to abide (if they did not find they were mistaken) until they left that place; and when they came into a house to salute it, wishing all peace and happiness to it; if they found themselves welcome, to preach to it the gospel of peace. But if they found themselves unwelcome, and discerned that the people of the city, or of that house, did not care for their company, and refused to hear them, they should not make themselves or the gospel a burden to them, but show their contempt of those who contemned the gospel, and the ministry of it, by shaking the dust off their feet as a testimony against them. Then he concludes, telling them, that the Lord would so grievously at last revenge such contempt, that the condition of the men of Sodom and Gomorrhah, who were destroyed by fire and brimstone, Ge 19:24, would at the last day be more tolerable than theirs. This is the sum, by which our Saviour doth obviate

the solicitous thoughts which might from his former words arise in their minds. How shall we live, going amongst strangers, if we carry nothing with us? Saith our Saviour, When you first come into a town or city, do not inquire for the inns that entertain strangers, but who is worthy, worthy of such guests; so Heb 11:38; a *son of peace*, Lu 10:6; who are accounted the most pious and religious persons in that town or city, or best affected to the gospel. (He hereby hints, that John the Baptist and his ministry had had such success, that in most places there were some such persons.)

Worthy doth not in our ordinary discourse signify always a meritorious person, but a person excelling, either in religion or knowledge, or moral virtue. Such persons our Lord presumes would entertain those who came upon so kind an errand to their houses. He commands them to go, and when they came to a house to salute it, to say, Peace be to this house; which was the Jews' ordinary salutation; under the notion of peace they comprehended all good. But, *let your peace come upon it* (I conceive) comprehends more, viz. preach the gospel of peace unto it; or, my peace shall be upon it, I will bless that house. But if you find you are misinformed, or mistaken, your peace shall return unto you; you have done your work, and you shall have your reward. If they will *not receive you, nor hear your words*; if they declare any contempt of you, and will not hear the glad tidings of the gospel; *when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet*. This was more than a sign of contempt of them; we read of Ne 5:13, that he shook his lap, and said, *So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise*. We have but one instance of this practice of the apostles, Ac 13:51. Mark adds, *for a testimony against them*: a testimony of God's despising them who despised his grace, and of the vengeance of God that should come upon them for that contempt. For he adds, *it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city*: their condemnation will be more dreadful, as having sinned against greater light, and fairer offers of greater grace, than ever they had.

Matthew 10:16

Ver. 16. Our Lord having hitherto instructed his twelve apostles

as to the places whither they were to go, the work they had to do, and the methods he would have them observe, now comes to arm them against their difficulties, and the temptations they were like to meet with.

I send you forth (saith he) as sheep in the midst of wolves. It is most probable that our Saviour speaks this with reference to what they were like to meet with when he should be taken from them, for we do not read of any great opposition which they at present met with. *I send you, (saith he), as sheep,* which are feeble creatures in themselves, and without any natural armour to defend themselves, *in the midst of wolves,* which are rapacious creatures, and have a particular enmity to sheep: amongst enemies who will have as great an inclination from their malice to devour you, as wolves have from their nature to devour sheep.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents. It is said of the serpent, Ge 3:1, *that he was more subtle than any beast of the field.* Naturalists observe, yet, a great natural sagacity in the serpent, which they note in several particulars. It is hard to say that Christ aimed at this or that particular thing wherein the sagacity of serpents appeareth; he only proposes the serpent as a pattern of subtlety, and commendeth prudence to them so far as it consisteth with innocency, for it followeth, *harmless as doves.* Amongst the beasts of the field there is none more innocent than a sheep; amongst the birds of the air none more innocent than a dove; to both these our Lord compares his disciples.

This text teacheth us:

1. That wisdom may dwell with prudence.
2. That all true prudence must be attended with innocency.

Matthew 10:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 10:18".

Matthew 10:18

Ver. 17,18. The last word, *Gentiles,* maketh it plain, that our

blessed Lord is not here arming his disciples so much against any opposition they were like to meet with upon this their first going out, for they were not to go to the Gentiles, as those they should meet with some years after his ascension; yet not excluding what they should meet with from the Jews, for what is said about delivering up to the councils and scourging in the synagogues seemeth to have a particular reference to the Jews. This scripture was most eminently fulfilled, as to the apostles, Ac 4:1-3 &c Ac 5:27 6:12: and as to being brought before governors and kings, there are instances enough in the Acts, more in ecclesiastical stories. Neither do I think our Saviour hath in these words any reference to the distinction of their councils amongst the Jews; he only designed to let them know the time would come, when, for their owning him, and preaching his gospel, they should be brought before all sorts of magistrates, and in all kinds of courts. That phrase, *and they will scourge you in their synagogues*, hath mightily perplexed some, especially such as have dreamed religious synagogues too holy places for such offices: but there is no need that we should take the term *synagogues* here for the places of their worship, it doth as well signify, in their conventions; and there are some that think that they had, adjoining to their synagogues, a place in which they punished offenders upon the account of religion; certain it is, 2Co 11:24, that Paul was five times scourged by the Jews according to their law, De 25:3. *For a testimony against them and the Gentiles*: a testimony for me, that is expressed in those words, *for my sake*; and against them, whether Jews or Gentiles. A testimony against them in the day of judgment, εἰς μαρτυριον, hence our terms of martyr and martyrdom, the one signifies a witness, the other a testimony.

Matthew 10:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 10:20".

Matthew 10:20

Ver. 19,20. Mark hath much the same, Mr 13:11; so hath Luke, Lu 11:11,12. The apostles being men but of an ordinary education before Christ called them, he might reasonably suppose that they would not appear before councils, and kings,

and governors without some abashment, having not been accustomed to such presences; he therefore arms them in these words, wherein he doth not prohibit ordinary thoughts, which every man hath before he speaketh, but anxious thoughts beforehand, *for, (saith he), it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* The Lord seemeth to speak here as he did to Moses, Ex 4:12, complaining he was *slow of speech, and of a slow tongue: Ex 4:11, Who hath made man's mouth? It shall, (saith Christ), be given you from God.*

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you; that is, not you from yourselves only: the Holy Spirit shall influence your thoughts as to the matter, and suggest that to you, and it shall influence your tongues, giving you a freedom of speech. This was verified in Stephen, Ac 6:10, and hath been eminently verified in a multitude of martyrs. We may observe from hence, that the influence of the Spirit is not to be confined to the will and afflictions. It hath also an influence upon our words in the service of God: not that we can conclude, that whatsoever Christians so speak, either in their confessions or other duties, is from such immediate assistance; but there is such an influence, though the Spirit in this, as in other operations, like the wind, bloweth where and when it listeth.

Matthew 10:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 10:22".

Matthew 10:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke speaketh much the same, Lu 21:16,17, though as spoken upon another occasion. Our Saviour here tells them, that the persecutions would reach even to death itself, and that the malice of the world against him and his gospel should proceed so far, as to extinguish all natural affection, between brethren, and parents, and children, and that they would meet with a multitude of enemies (for that is here meant by all, not every individual man, as in a multitude of other scriptures). The root of all persecution is hatred.

For my name's sake; for preaching or professing of my gospel,

and living up to the rule of it, Ac 4:18 5:41. This is that which Peter calleth suffering *as a Christian*, 1Pe 4:16. And by this phrase he doth not only admonish them of their duty, to see that they suffered for his name's sake, but also encourage them from the honourable cause of their suffering, it was for his name's sake. He also addeth another argument: *But he that endureth to the end shall be saved*. There shall be an end of these sufferings, if they end not in your lifetime they will end with your lives, and if you continue to the end you shall be saved. It is neither true patience, nor will it be profitable, if it holdeth not out to the end, Mr 13:13 1Co 9:24 Heb 3:6.

Matthew 10:23

Ver. 23. Whether this text at all warrants ministers' flight in a time of persecution I doubt; it seemeth to be a special command given to the apostles, that they might have a time before the coming of Christ, here spoken of, to preach the gospel over all the cities of Israel. But that in some cases it is lawful to flee I do not at all doubt, though I do question whether it be to be warranted from this text. What those cases are is largely discoursed, particularly by Mr. Torshell. Generally it is said, wherever the glory of God, or the good of others, calls to us for such a flight. But what may be judged such cases is a more particular question. Augustine to Honoratus speaketh well in the case. Ministers ought not to flee rashly, nor out of cowardice, nor that they might live elsewhere lazily, nor when their flight will betray the church of God: not where the persecution is general; but where the persecution is particular, against some of them, and there will be enough left for the care of the church in their absence, and with the consent of the church, they may flee. But this is too large a case to be spoken to here; especially considering (as I said) that I do not think that any flight is to be justified from this text, the precept being particular for special reasons.

Till the Son of man be come. There is a wonderful variety of interpreters' senses of this text, founded upon the various comings of Christ mentioned in holy writ. He was already come in the flesh, so as it, speaking of a time to come, could not be meant of that: nor can it be understood of his second coming to judgment, for they have gone through the cities of Israel long

ago. Christ is therefore said in Scripture to come, when he appeareth in some great work of providence, whether of judgment or mercy. This makes some interpret it of the destruction of Jerusalem; in which sense some think the coming of Christ is mentioned, Mt 24:1-51. Some, of the resurrection of Christ, from whence they say Christ's epocha commenced. Others understand it of the effusion of the Spirit in the day of Pentecost; this they ground on Joh 14:17,18, where they think Christ's coming, promised Joh 14:18, is the coming of the Spirit, promised Joh 14:17. Undoubtedly, in the general, our Saviour means, till the time be accomplished when you must leave preaching to the Jews and go to the Gentiles, and my kingdom shall be further extended than it is at present; which dispensation of God may for aught I know be called the coming of Christ, being an eminent act of God's providence, by which Christ was more showed to the world, and his kingdom further extended.

Matthew 10:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 10:25".

Matthew 10:25

Ver. 24,25. As much as if he had said, "Think not much if you meet with persecutions: I am your Lord and Master, you are my servants and household; you have no reason to look for better measure from the world than I your Lord meet with; it is honour enough for you to be used as well as I am. You know they have persecuted me, they call me Beelzebub, saying that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Why should you expect better?" Our Saviour used the same argument, Lu 6:40.

Beelzebub was the idol of Ekron, 2Ki 1:2. The word signifies, the lord of flies; either because they invoked his help against the flies, or (as others say) the name was in derision to that idol given by the Jews to the prince of the devils, because the places herein they sacrificed to it were infested with flies, which they say God's temple at Jerusalem never was, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrifices which were there killed. Certain it is they understood by it the prince of devils.

Matthew 10:26

Ver. 26. This is a proverbial speech, used by our Saviour upon more occasions than this, Mr 4:22 Lu 8:17 12:2. As to his present use of it, the sense is, "Though my gospel be now covered and hid, yet it shall be revealed and made known." Or, "Though your innocency be hid and covered, yet God shall bring forth your judgment as the light, and your righteousness as the noonday." Or, "Though your enemies' rage and malice be hid, and their vengeance seemeth to sleep, yet it shall be revealed." The first seemeth most probable, from what followeth in the next verse, which he seemeth to speak as a means to it.

Matthew 10:27

Ver. 27. The candle of the gospel, which God hath by John the Baptist and me lighted up, is not to be hid; though therefore you have it from me in private, yet do you publish it. I do as it were whisper it in your ear by private discourses, and in a private converse, but it shall be made as public as if it were published to the greatest advantage; and do you contribute what you can unto it, do you publish my gospel as it were upon the house tops.

Matthew 10:28

Ver. 28. As I told you before, you will in the publication of my gospel meet with opposition from men. Now that it is preached as it were in darkness, and whispered in men's ears, there is no great noise made in the world; but the case will be otherwise when it cometh to be publicly revealed, and published upon the housetops. But consider, the enemies can only kill the bodies of my disciples: you have souls as well as bodies; they have no power over your souls; but he that hath sent you to preach, and called you to the owning and profession of the gospel, hath a power over your souls as well as over your bodies, and to punish both in hell. We have the same Lu 12:4,5. There is nothing so effectual to drive out of our hearts a slavish fear of man in the doing of our duty, as a right apprehension of the power of God, begetting a fear of him in our souls.

Matthew 10:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 10:31".

Matthew 10:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 10:31".

Matthew 10:31

Ver. 29-31. Besides, consider, there is a God that governs the world, and by his providence influences and watcheth over the most minute and invaluable beings in it, and preserveth and upholdeth them; it extendeth to the very hairs of your head, and to a sparrow (two of which are sold ordinarily for an assarion, the tenth part of a Roman penny): these little birds fall not when they are shot, without the notice of him who is your heavenly Father, and he will much more regard even your bodies, for you are of more value than many sparrows. Our Lord here,

1. Asserts the providence of God to extend to the most minute things, not to be restrained to things in heaven, or some greater and more noble creatures.
2. He teacheth his disciples to take courage from the consideration of it, as being assured that their greatest enemies should not be able to steal or wrest them out of God's hands. But if they should die in their testimony, it should be by God's ordering.

Matthew 10:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 10:33".

Matthew 10:33

Ver. 33. As this is a time for you publicly to own me, so there will be a time (in the day of judgment) for me to confess and

publicly own you, *before the angels of God* (which Luke addeth to this sentence, Mt 12:8): as men deal with me in this life, so I shall deal with them in that day. Our Saviour speaketh much the same thing, as repeated by Mr 8:38 Lu 9:26; only there instead of *whosoever shall deny me*, it is, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words*. Christ requireth of us not only a believing on him, but an external profession: nor that only, but a confession of him, which signifieth a profession of him and his gospel in the face of opposition and enemies: see Ro 10:10 2Ti 2:12. It is dangerous, either through shame or fear, to withhold our public owning and acknowledgment of Christ, and his truths, when we are called to it; much more to deny them; but the guilt is greater when it is through shame, for where fear is the cause the temptation is more high. This text must be understood of those who persist in such denial, for Peter denied his Master, yet was graciously upon his repentance received by him.

Matthew 10:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 10:35".

Matthew 10:35

Ver. 34,35. Luke hath much the same with Mt 10:34, in Lu 12:51. As the Jews were much mistaken in their notion of the Messiah, as if he were to be a temporal prince, to restore the kingdom to Israel, and as the kingdom, so a peaceful kingdom; so many persons think still that where true religion comes, there must be forthwith peace and union. And indeed so it should be, and so it would be if the gospel were cordially and universally received. It is impossible that a system of laws should be compiled better fitted to human society, or conducive to peace, the great end of it, than the laws of the gospel are: but eventually it is not so, nor was such a civil peace the end of Christ's coming. Accidentally, through the corruption of men's hearts, the consequent of Christ's coming into the world, and of his gospel coming into and prevailing in any part of the world, is (as Luke phrases it) *rather division*, which is here called a sword. Through men's fondness of their idolatry, superstition, and lusts, and madness on them, their impatience of being outdone in religion and righteousness of conversation, the event of Christ's

coming was division, wars, variances, like the times prophesied of by Micah, Mic 7:6; God either stirring up wars to revenge the contempt of the gospel, (as it happened to the Jews), or men taking up arms to compel all others to their idolatries and superstitions. And that natural antipathy which men have to holiness, setting them at variance with those who, embracing the gospel, live a life as becometh the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, worketh so far, that men will have no respect to their nearest relations.

Matthew 10:36

Ver. 36. Not of the household of faith, which showeth that it is not the gospel, but men's corruptions, which causeth division. Those, who truly receive the gospel agree well enough, at least break not out into open feuds; but the tie of no natural or moral relations will hold together the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This doth not always happen, but very ordinarily, and therefore there was need that Christ should forewarn his disciples of it.

Matthew 10:37

Ver. 37. Luke seemeth to speak higher, Lu 14:26, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* But the sense is the same, for by hatred there is only meant displacency, and a setting them in his esteem below Christ and his commands. Christ doth not command or encourage want of natural affection, but only by this saying he reduces it to order, and showeth that our first love and homage is due to God; and where we cannot show what love and affections our father, or mother, or son, or daughter call for, without failing in that duty which we owe unto God, or violating some Divine precept, we must acknowledge our heavenly Father, even by disobeying our earthly parents. Instead of *is not worthy of me*, Luke saith, *cannot be my disciple*, which expounds this term. He is not worthy of my favour, of the name of my disciple, or the reward I intend my disciples.

Matthew 10:38

Ver. 38. We have much the same in Mt 16:24 Mr 8:34 Lu 9:23; It is not he that maketh not, but *he that taketh not his cross*; that is, he that doth not willingly, and cheerfully, and patiently bear and undergo those trials, and afflictions, and persecutions, which God in the way of his providence shall lay upon him, and bring him into, for my sake and my gospel, is not worthy of the name or reward of my disciples. Our Saviour calls all such trials, *the cross*, either with reference to the Roman last punishment, by crucifying, or signifying what death he should die, and with reference to his own cross.

Matthew 10:39

Ver. 39. Joh 12:25, giveth us a commentary upon these words thus, *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*. He in this text is said to find his life, who thinks that he hath found, that is, saved it, who is so much in love with his life that, rather than he will lose it, he will lose God's favour, deny the Lord that brought him, deny the most fundamental truths of the gospel. The man that doth thus (saith Christ) shall lose it; possibly he shall not obtain the end he aims at here, but if he doth he shall lose eternal life. When, on the contrary, he that is valiant for the truth shall sometimes be preserved, notwithstanding his enemies' rage; but if this happens not, yet he shall have life eternal, his mortality shall be swallowed up in life.

Matthew 10:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 10:42".

Matthew 10:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 10:42".

Matthew 10:42

Ver. 40-42. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, &c.;* we have the same Lu 10:16, only there it is, *he that heareth you heareth me;* and there is added, *and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.* In Joh 13:20, it is, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.* As great princes account what favour is shown to their ambassadors, who represent their persons, shown unto themselves, and whatsoever indignities or affronts are done unto them as done to themselves, so doth Christ.

Receiving is a general term, and capable of a large interpretation. That *hearing* is one branch of it, Luke tells us. The scope of the context, and the words that follow, do manifest that a giving entertainment to them in their houses is another thing here meant. There is another more inward, receiving of their doctrine by faith and love, to which undoubtedly there will be a great reward. But whether it be here intended, I doubt. Our Saviour was sending the twelve out, he had commanded them to take with them no gold, silver, nor brass, no scrip, &c.; but when they came into any city, to inquire who there were in that city who were worthy men, favourers to the gospel, and ready to entertain strangers, and to go to their house or houses, saluting them, and to abide there till they left the place. He furnisheth them here as it were with a ticket, or bill of exchange. He gives them an assurance, that whatsoever kindness should be done to them, he would account it as done to himself. And further hath assured both them, and all the world, that if any should come to them to reveal the will of God, (for that the term *prophet* signifieth), if they give him an entertainment upon that account they should be rewarded. What is here meant by the term, *a prophet's reward*, is variously guessed, whether it be,

1. The reward which God hath appointed for such as entertain his prophets; or;
2. Such a reward as such a prophet shall himself receive; or;
3. The reward which the prophet; will give him or them, viz. prayers and instruction.

That which appears to me most probable is, that no more is meant than a liberal reward, for such shall be the reward of those

who *turn many to righteousness*, Da 12:3. Those words, *in the name of a prophet*, are both exclusive of those from the benefit of this promise who receive and entertain the ministers of the gospel upon any other account than this, that they are the Lord's prophets; and also encouraging to those who may discern they have been mistaken in their acts of charity of this nature; if they have been sincere in their designs and actions, they shall not lose their reward, though the pretended prophet so entertained prove but an impostor.

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Christ will not only reward those who show love to his prophets, but those who show kindness to his members, whom the world counts contemptible, and calleth *little ones*; nor shall those only be rewarded who give them great entertainments, and make them great presents, but (if it be proportionable to what they are able to do) though it be a kindness of the most minute consideration, but *a cup of cold water*, they shall be rewarded. God rewards the love we show to him, and the good actions that flow from it. Here are three persons mentioned, for whose entertainment and reception God hath provided in this promise; *a prophet, a righteous man, a little one*: and a threefold reward promised; the reward of a prophet, the reward of a righteous man, and his reward. How to distinguish the righteous man and the little one I cannot tell, unless we understand by the righteous man one more perfect, more eminent in holiness; and by the little one, one that is sincere, though we cannot judge him so grown in grace and the knowledge of Christ. I should understand no more by the threefold rewards, than God's more particular value for his ministers, and for such as are more perfect in holiness; while in the mean time he will not *break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*; and that every one shall be rewarded according to his works; which shall not be measured by the quantity of the gift, but by the obedience, and affection, and ability of the giver, Lu 21:2,3 Heb 6:10.

Matthew 11:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 11:2-6 John sendeth his disciples to Christ.

Mt 11:7-15 Christ's testimony concerning John.

Mt 11:16-19 The perverse judgments of the people concerning both John and Christ.

Mt 11:20-24 Christ upbraideth the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum with their long unfruitfulness and impenitency.

Mt 11:25-27 He thanks the Father for revealing his gospel to the simple only,

Mt 11:28-30 and invites the weary to partake of his rest.

Ver. 1. We never find our Saviour idle, but continually going up and down doing good, and we find him most intent upon preaching and teaching, which doubtless is the great work of the ministers of the gospel; of what quality soever they be, they call pretend to no higher than Christ's. Nor did our Saviour think it enough to send others in his stead, as his curates, he went himself. Luke notes, Lu 10:1, that he sent the seventy, two by two, into every city whither himself was to follow; so as it seems he did not judge it enough that one proclamation of the gospel should be made to them. For those that think there is a distinction to be made between preaching and teaching, κηρυσσειν and διδασκειν, they may learn from this text, that they are both the work of Christ's ministers, if they be bound to take example from their Master, and not think the servant is above his Lord. Those that under value preaching, as the least part of the ministerial work, do both forget this text, and what Paul said, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; that is, not so much to baptize as to preach. If any think that people are now so instructed that there is no such need of preaching, they should do well to question their people a little, and they may discover their own great mistakes. Besides that experience teacheth us, that those who are best instructed are most desirous of that which deserveth the name of preaching; which lets us know that there is yet something further to be known, or that we had need have our remembrance stirred up, or at least our affections quickened.

Matthew 11:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 11:3".

Matthew 11:3

Ver. 2,3. The instance of this text alone is enough to convince the observing reader of holy writ, that the evangelists do not set down all things in that order as they were done. We have heard nothing before of John's being cast into prison in this gospel, nor do we hear any thing here of the story of it, till Mt 14:6, when our evangelist occasionally relates it something largely. He here tells us of something done during his imprisonment, viz. his sending two of his disciples to Christ, to be satisfied whether he was the promised Messiah, or they must look for another. Luke reports the same thing, Lu 7:19. Could he that was sent before Christ to prepare his way, and that had baptized him, and seen the Spirit descending on him, and heard the voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, and who had showed Christ to his disciples, Joh 1:29-31, &c., doubt whether he was the Messiah? Undoubtedly no; but John saw how some of his disciples, either envying for his sake, as Joh 3:26, or else inclinable to the common error of the Jews about the Messiah, were something shaken with the clamours of the scribes and Pharisees (who were far more favourable to John than to Christ). That they might be satisfied from their own sight of the works of Christ, he a little before his death sendeth them to Christ on this errand, *Art thou he who should come* (in the Greek, *who is coming*)? Which lets us know the full expectation the Jews generally had at that time of a Messiah coming. They desire only to be satisfied whether Christ was he.

Matthew 11:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 11:6".

Matthew 11:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 11:6".

Matthew 11:6

Ver. 4-6. We must imagine these disciples of John to have stayed with Christ some time, and to have seen him work some of these miracles, and to have heard him preach, and seen the great success of his ministry, and then to have left him with this answer. Luke therefore addeth, Lu 7:21, *And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.* Then he repeateth the answer which we have here, in which our Saviour refereth unto his works as sufficiently testifying of him, Joh 5:36,37 10:25,37,38. We read not that these disciples saw any dead person raised while they were with Christ, but it appeareth from Lu 7:18, &c. that the report of such a miracle was the occasion of their coming to Christ.

The question is, how the sight of these things done by our Saviour could be a sufficient argument to confirm to them that he was the Messiah, especially considering that his apostles did the same things?

Answer: First, it was prophesied by Isaiah, Isa 35:4-6, that when God should come to save them, the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; *then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:* and Isa 61:1, that the Messiah should *preach good tidings to the meek*, that is, the poor, Lu 4:18, which Christ, Lu 4:21, applied to himself. So that the fulfilling of these promises argued that the Messiah was come, and no other was to be looked for, whether these things were done by him or by his disciples.

Secondly, the disciples as yet had done no such things, so as his doing of them plainly evidenced his Divine power; the others did them but as his disciples, by his power and authority.

Thirdly, it is more than probable, that when the disciples did them, they used some such form as Peter used, Ac 3:6, *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.* We find Peter, Ac 3:12, very wary that the people should not mistake in thinking they did it by their own power or holiness.

And the poor have the gospel preached unto them. Gr. πτωχοι

ευαγγελιζονται, which may be translated, the poor preach the gospel, in an active sense, as the word is used Lu 2:10; or, the poor are gospelized, taking the word in a passive sense, as Heb 4:2 1Pe 1:25 4:6. In the passive sense it may be understood either of a more external reception of the gospel upon preaching, or of a more internal reception of the gospel by faith. In all senses it was true of the times of the Messiah,

1. The poor preached the gospel; nor was this a mean evidence that the Messiah was come, to see a few poor fishermen at his call leaving their nets and their friends, and following one calling them to preach a new doctrine to the new world.
2. The poor had the gospel preached to them; nor was this a less evidence of Christ to be the Messiah, considering the prophecy, Isa 61:1, and the contempt of the poor amongst the Jews, Joh 7:49.

But that the poor, who commonly are the more ignorant and rude sort of people, should vouchsafe to hear the gospel, and be turned into the likeness of the gospel upon Christ's preaching to them, this was yet a higher evidence. Many by *poor* understand the poor in spirit. The binding up of broken hearts, and bringing glad tidings to souls sadden on spiritual accounts is a great effect of the Divine power. It followeth, *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*. It is not improbable that our Saviour here reflects on the disciples of John, who out of a great honour for their master took many occasions to be offended at Christ. One while because he and his disciples did not first so often as they and the Pharisees, as Mt 9:14; another while because so many followed him, Joh 3:26. But the words spoken have a further reference than to John's disciples. The Lord Jesus and his doctrine are to many a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, according to the prophecy, Isa 8:14 Isa 28:16 Lu 2:34 Ro 9:33 1Co 1:23 1Pe 2:6. The Jews stumbled at the meanness of his person and parentage, and the meanness of his followers. The Gentiles, not at these things only, but his ignominious death. At this day many stumble at the sublimeness and strictness of his doctrine, &c. Christ speaks here with reference to all, and pronounces that man a blessed man, who shall so take offence at nothing, whether respecting his person, his life, or his death, his doctrine, or his followers, as to deter or discourage him from embracing him, and believing in him as the Saviour of lost

sinner, that shall by faith receive him.

Matthew 11:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 11:9".

Matthew 11:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 11:9".

Matthew 11:9

Ver. 7-9. Luke repeating the same story, Lu 7:24-26, instead of *they that wear soft clothing, saith, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.* Our Saviour here doth tacitly imply, that the ministers of the gospel should neither be uncertain and inconstant men, nor yet delicate men, affecting splendid apparel or delicate diet, but minding their great work, viz. the revelation of the will of God. But the scope of his present speech here, was to confirm the multitude in their good opinion of John, and to keep them from being scandalized, or altering their opinion of him, because he was now in prison. All men held John as a prophet, Mt 15:5; 21:26. You went out (saith our Saviour) into the wilderness to hear John preach: you did not go out to see some idle, light man, such as a reed shaken with the wind, nor yet to see a man clothed gorgeously, (the wilderness is no place for such persons, they are to be found in the courts and palaces of princes), you went out to hear one revealing the will of God to you. Nor did you mistake. He was a prophet. Not that Prophet of which Moses spake, De 18:15. But *a prophet; yea, and more than a prophet;* one that hath taught you what none of the prophets ever could teach you, that I, the Messias, am come; they could only tell you that I should come.

Matthew 11:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 11:11".

Matthew 11:11

Ver. 10,11. St. Luke hath the same, Lu 7:27,28, only he saith, *there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.* It was written, Mal 3:1, *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* The latter part was a prophecy of Christ. The former part a prophecy of John the Baptist, and applied to him not in this text only, but Mr 1:2 Lu 1:76 7:27. Christ is set out as a great Prince, who sends his harbingers before him to prepare his way, and by John's preaching we may learn the ministers' duty, who are to prepare Christ's way to people's souls, viz. to preach repentance and faith in Christ.

Verily I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there hath not risen a greater; that is, (as Luke expounds it), a greater prophet; i.e. amongst all the prophets of the Old Testament, God raised up none greater than John.

Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Mr. Calvin and many others think that by this phrase is to be understood, the least of those who shall preach the gospel after my resurrection will be greater than he, that is, as to their doctrine. John could only declare me to be come. They shall preach me, as having died for my people's sins, and risen again for their justification, Ro 4:25. The death and the resurrection of Christ were indeed great points of the gospel, which John could only prophesy of, not preach of, and declare us things in his time accomplished.

Matthew 11:12

Ver. 12. As John Baptist was a great man, so the Lord hath owned him as such, giving such a success to his ministry, that ever since he began the course of it, men have been carried on with a great ardour and heat, in hearing and receiving the gospel, which is the gospel of the kingdom, and bringeth men into the kingdom of Christ amongst men, and at last to the kingdom of glory. The hearts of men and women have been inflamed with a desire after the knowledge and obtaining of heaven, and

heavenly things. They are great persons whom God thus owneth; and those whom the Lord thus owneth, are ordinarily such as have some measures of the spirit of this first gospel ministry, making the great things of God the matter of their discourse, and doing their work with a seriousness, zeal, and fervour fitted to it.

The violent take it by force: they are not lazy wishes or cold endeavours that will bring men to heaven.

Matthew 11:13

Ver. 13. It is no wonder that there was such a heat kindled in the souls of people upon John the Baptist's coming, for they understood that Christ, typified in the law, and only foretold by the prophets, was now come. So as the ceremonial law from his time began to die, and all the prophecies of Christ in the prophets began then to have their complement. John showed them with his finger him who before had been only darkly revealed under types and figures, and in the prophecies of the prophets; men came to see that they had not hoped or waited in vain for the salvation of Israel.

Prophesied, in this verse, signifies, made dark revelations of Christ and the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 11:14

Ver. 14. God had told the Jews, Mal 4:5,6, that he would send them *Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest (saith he) I come and smite the earth with a curse.* This prophecy related to John the Baptist, as our Saviour here teacheth us; so, Lu 1:17, it is confirmed by the angel to Zacharias, and Mr 9:11. From which last text it appeareth, that the scribes had a tradition, that Elias should come before the Messiah. Their mistake was that they looked for an Elias to come in person, whenas God meant no more (as the angel expounds it, Lu 1:17) than one *in the spirit and power of Elias*, as bold and free a preacher, who should no more fear the face of men in the discharge of his duty than Elias did. Saith our Saviour, if you

will believe, this John was that Elias prophesied of by Malachi.

Matthew 11:15

Ver. 15. It is an epiphonema or conclusion often used by our Saviour, (and by St. John in the Revelation), quickening up the hearers to a just attention to and belief of what in the doctrine preceding he had revealed to them; intimating that he knew, that what he had said would not be entertained or believed of all, but only of such whose ears and hearts God had opened, or should open to receive spiritual mysteries. But it was a matter of great concernment, he therefore calls upon those whose ears God had opened to attend to it. So Mt 13:9,43 Mr 4:9 7:16 Lu 8:8.

Matthew 11:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 11:17".

Matthew 11:17

Ver. 16,17. Luke, telling to us the same history, Lu 7:31-35, prefaces it thus, Lu 7:29,30, *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.* Which letteth us know that our Saviour by the term *this generation* here doth not mean all the people of that generation; but the Pharisees and the lawyers, whom nothing could allure or persuade to the receiving of Jesus Christ, neither the ministry and example of John, nor yet his own preaching and example. For the people and the publicans justified the words of Christ, which he had spoken in commendation of John, and were baptized of him; but the Pharisees and lawyers did not believe, nor would be baptized of him. These our Saviour likens to a company of sullen children, whom their fellows could not persuade any way to a compliance with them: if they piped they would not dance; if they sang to them some mournful songs, neither would they be affected with them; so as no tune would please them. It is thought that our Saviour doth here allude to some sport used then amongst children, which we are not so well acquainted with, wherein

children were wont to sing, sometimes more merry and pleasant, sometimes more sad and mournful songs one to another; and that he here likens the Pharisees and lawyers to a sullen set of children, that, let their companions sing what they would, would not answer them. Our Saviour's meaning is expounded plainly enough by the next words (see Mt 11:18,19).

Matthew 11:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 11:19".

Matthew 11:19

Ver. 18,19. Luke hath the same words, Lu 7:33-35. The sense of the words is this: God hath by his providence used all means to win this people to the gospel. The doctrine of John the Baptist and Christ was the same, but their temper and converse was very different: John was an austere and morose man, Christ was of a more free and familiar conversation; but these men would neither give the one nor the other a good word; they reviled both of them, and rejected them both, and the doctrine which they brought.

John came neither eating nor drinking, that is, not as other men ordinarily do; he was a man that lived most in the wilderness, and fed upon very ordinary diet, not eating with publicans and sinners, not coming at any feasts, &c.; and they said of him, *He hath a devil*; he is a melancholic, hypochondriac fellow, a kind of a madman.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, he was of a more affable, pleasant temper, of a more free and less reserved converse, eating and drinking as other men (though keeping to the law of temperance) such things as the country afforded, not refusing to be present at feasts, though publicans and sinners were there. They said of him, *Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*: he displeased them with the two great freedom of his conversation; from whence, by the way, they may be better instructed, who place some perfection, or merit, in living like monks and hermits; by that rule John the Baptist was to be preferred before Christ. But

Christ could please the Pharisees and lawyers, and their followers, no more than John did. They could not say he was melancholic or morose; but they blasphemed him to a higher degree, calling him a glutton and drunkard, and a friend of publicans and sinners. A godly man, let his temper and converse be what it will, pleaseth none who hateth the truth of the gospel, and the power of godliness. If he be reserved, then he is a morose, melancholic man; if he be of a more free and open converse, then he is a drunkard, or a glutton; something or other they must have to say against a man that will not run with them to the same excess of riot, though they lay to their charge things that they know not. The business is, they hate the power of godliness in them. This instance of these men's thus treating John the Baptist and Christ, is of mighty use to strengthen those who meet with the very same things.

But wisdom is justified of her children. There is a great variety amongst interpreters in giving the sense of these words. Some think them spoken ironically, for the Pharisees went for the children of wisdom. Some think them spoken plainly, and think it should be, wisdom is judged, or condemned, of her children; but though the word δικαιοομαι, signifying to justice or do justice to another, which, according to the merit or demerit of the person, may be by justifying or condemning, upon which account it was true here that wisdom was condemned of those who pretended to be her children, and the word is so used in other authors, yet we have no such usage of it in Scripture. Not to reckon the various senses others put upon the words, the plain sense of them seems to be this. It is a proverbial speech, something like that, *Ars non habet inimicum praeter ignorantem*, Learning hath no enemies but the ignorant.

1. I, who am the Wisdom of God, am justified by you, who truly believe on me: you know I am no glutton, no winebibber, no friend of publicans and sinners. Or;
2. Grace is justified of all that are partakers of it. Godly men that are wise will own the grace of God in all men, whether they be of John's temper or of mine, whether of more austere or more pleasant tempers. Or;
3. The wise counsel of God, making use of several instruments of several tempers to win these people unto his gospel, will be

justified, that is, acquitted, defended, praised, adored of those who belong unto God, and are acquainted with his wisdom and counsels.

Luke saith, *The people justified God*, Lu 7:29. Some, by the children of wisdom, understand the scribes and Pharisees themselves, (who thought themselves the children of wisdom), or the generality of the Jews, who were condemned in their own consciences, and could not but in heart justify Christ, though in their speeches they condemned him. But Christ never called them the children of wisdom. This interpretation therefore seemeth something strained. That which seemeth the most natural is what I before hinted. Though those that pretend to be the children of wisdom thus speak of John and of me, yet those who are truly wise will justify me, and also the counsels and wisdom of my Father in the use of all means to bring them to receive the glad tidings of salvation, brought to them both by my more austere and reserved forerunner, and by myself, who have chosen, though a holy and unblamable, yet a more free and pleasant way of converse with them.

Matthew 11:20

Ver. 20. Our Lord had hitherto spent most of his time in Galilee, and the cities belonging to that province: there both John the Baptist and himself had preached the gospel, there he had wrought many miracles, by both aiming at their repentance; but there were multitudes that did not receive him, nor would be brought to any sight of their sins, or any acknowledgment of him as the Messias. He now begins to reprove them smartly, not that they did not applaud and commend him, but because they did not repent. This was Christ's end in all his preaching, and in all his miraculous operations, to bring men to repentance, and to receive him as the Messias; and this should be the great end pursued by all his ministers.

Matthew 11:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 11:22".

Matthew 11:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke hath the same, Lu 10:13,14. *Chorazin* (and) *Bethsaida* were two cities of Galilee not far from one another, only the lake of Gennesaret was between them. Capernaum (by and by spoken of) was between them both, on the same side of the lake as Bethsaida, which was the city of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, Joh 1:44. In these towns Christ had often preached, so probably had the apostles, and Christ had done many great works in them. *Tyre and Sidon* were habitations of heathens, their country joined to Galilee. They were places of great traffic, inhabited with Canaanitish idolaters, and exceedingly wicked; threatened by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 23:1-18, and by the prophet Ezekiel, Eze 26:1-28:26, and by Amos, Am 1:9,10; a people odious to the Jews upon many accounts. To these our Lord here compares the Galileans, telling them that they were worse than that pagan people, who were so contemptible in their eyes, and that their plagues in the day of judgment would be greater.

For (saith he) if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Some think this a strong proof, that where the gospel is preached God gives a sufficiency of grace; so as if men will but use that power which they have in their own wills, they may, with the assistance only of that grace, truly repent and be saved. I shall not meddle with that dispute, but cannot see how that notion can derive any proof from this text;

1. Because the text only mentions Christ's miracles, not his preaching.
2. The text doth not say, they would long ago have repented unto life, but they would have *repented in sackcloth and ashes*, they would have been more affected than these Galileans were, who showed no sense at all of their sins. The king of Nineveh and his people repented, Jon 3:7,8; so did Ahab, 1Ki 21:27; yet none will say they repented unto life. None ever denied a power in man's will (his understanding being by the gospel enlightened to his duty) to perform acts of moral discipline.
3. Our Saviour might here speak after the manner of men, according to rational conjectures and probabilities. The scope

of our Saviour in these words is to be attended, which was only to show, that the men of Chorazin and Bethsaida, showing no signs of remorse for sin, or conviction of the Messiah upon the sight of his miracles, confirming his doctrine to be from heaven, had showed a greater stubbornness and hardness of heart than these heathens, who, though they were bad enough, yet had not had such means to reform and to convince them. Therefore he tells them their place in hell would be more dreadful than the place of the men of Tyre and Sidon. And so we are by this text taught, that as the sins of men who have the light of the gospel are much greater than the sins of the worst of men who have it not, so their condemnation in the day of judgment will be much heavier, Joh 3:19.

Matthew 11:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 10:24".

Matthew 11:24

Ver. 23,24. This speech of our Saviour is much of the same import with the other. The scope and sense of it is the same, to let the Capernaïtes know that the hardness of their heart was greater in contempt of the gospel, confirmed by so many miraculous operations, and their guilt greater, than the guilt of Sodom, long since destroyed by fire and brimstone, Ge 19:1-38, for though they were guilty of prodigious sinning, yet they had not such means to convince, reclaim, and reform them. God had not sent his Son amongst them, nor given them such testimonies of that act of grace as he had given these, by vouchsafing to confirm the doctrine of his Son by miracles; and therefore they must expect that God, in the day of judgment, should deal more severely with them than with the filthy and impure Sodomites. Our Saviour here speaketh not as an all knowing God, but as the Son of man to the sons of men, who speak upon probabilities and rational conjectures. If we should say that Christ spake this as an all knowing God, all that can be inferred is this, that an external reformation may be a lengthening out of persons' tranquillity. In the mean time God was just to both in not giving them such means, they sinning notoriously against the light of nature,

which they had, and the light of Lot's holy example, whose righteous soul they vexed with their filthy conversation and unrighteous deeds, 2Pe 2:7,8; and he was also just in destroying of them. Capernaum is here said to have been *exalted to heaven*, either with respect to their trading and outward prosperity, or with respect to the means of grace they enjoyed in hearing Christ's sermons and seeing his miracles. The casting down to hell, seems to be meant of a temporal destruction, the word ἀδης not signifying the place of the damned, but the state of the dead; but Mt 11:24 must be understood of eternal condemnation, which shall be *in the day of judgment*.

Matthew 11:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 11:26".

Matthew 11:26

Ver. 25,26. Lu 10:21, hath the same thing, only he thus prefaces, *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c.* He rejoiced in spirit, his heart was inwardly affected with this grace of God his Father. Then he *answered and said*. Answering in Scripture doth not always signify replying to the words of others, but a speaking upon some fit occasion offered, a beginning of a speech.

I thank thee, O Father. Lord of heaven and earth. In the Greek the same word is used which signifieth to confess. In all thanksgiving and praising there is a confession of the power, wisdom, or goodness of God, so as all praising is a confessing, though all confession be not praising. By calling his Father *Lord of heaven and earth*, he acknowledgeth his absolute power to have done otherwise, even as it pleased him.

Because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent. By the *wise and prudent* he here plainly means the scribes and Pharisees, the learned doctors of that age, who should have been wise and prudent, and were so both in their own and in their followers' opinion. By *these things* he means the mysteries of the gospel, as Mt 13:11, *The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*. God is said to have hid them, because he had not revealed them

to them; nor can it be understood of a mere external revelation by the preaching of the gospel, but of an internal revelation by his Spirit, so as they embraced and believed them, 1Co 2:10; in which sense Paul saith, *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, 2Co 4:3.

And hast revealed them unto babes, νηπιους. It signifieth persons that are young in years, infants, and weak in understanding. He principally means his apostles, together with those ordinary persons that believed in him, for the Pharisees said, Joh 7:48,49, *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.* O Father, (saith our Saviour), thou hast all power in thine hand, thou art the Lord of heaven and earth, thou couldest by thy Spirit have caused these learned men to have received and embraced thy gospel, and followed me, as well as these poor fishermen, and other Jews of none of the highest quality; in that thou hast not done it, thou hast declared thy justice, for their rejecting of thy counsel for their salvation, but in that thou hast revealed these things to any, especially to these persons, not under the same worldly advantages for reputation, wisdom, and wit, herein thou hast showed thy special and abounding grace, as well as the greatness of thy power. Lord, I rejoice in thy dispensations, and I give thee thanks that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected thy praise. There can be no other reason given of this, but thy good pleasure; *Even so, Father; so it pleased thee.* We may from hence observe,

1. That the further revelations of Christ some souls have more than others enjoying the same outward means, are not to be ascribed to the power or goodness of the will of man, but solely to the good pleasure of God.
2. That from the beginning of the gospel, the special and effectual revelations of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven have, from the good pleasure of God, been made generally not to the most learned and wise men in men's account, but mostly to persons of a meaner rank. *Surgunt indocti, et coelum rapiunt: Nos cum doctrina nostra in Gehennam trudemur.* 1Co 1:26-28 Jas 2:5.
3. That wheresoever God by his Spirit reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of God, it is matter of great joy and

thanksgiving; especially where God reveals these mysteries to persons most unlikely to have received them.

Matthew 11:27

Ver. 27. John saith, Joh 3:35, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* Mt 28:18, *All power is given unto me.* Joh 17:2, *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* God is the Fountain of power, Ps 62:11. He hath committed also power to Christ as Mediator, Ps 2:7-9, more particularly the power of life and eternal salvation, as Joh 17:2; he hath *the keys of hell and death*, Re 1:18, and all the means that lead to eternal life are in his power and disposal.

And no man knoweth the Son but the Father; no man knoweth his Divine essence, his eternal generation; and therefore men are not to listen to what the scribes and Pharisees say of him, but to attend to and to believe what the Father hath revealed from heaven concerning him, who best knoweth him.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son: no man knoweth the essence of the Father, or the counsels of the Father, as to the dispensations of the gospel.

Save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The prophets *inquired and searched diligently concerning this salvation, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*, 1Pe 1:10-12. Mr. Calvin saith, the Son is said to know the Father, as he is his lively image, the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory. And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Joh 6:46.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, Joh 14:9. All our saving knowledge of God is in and through Christ.

Matthew 11:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 11:30".

Matthew 11:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 11:30".

Matthew 11:30

Ver. 28-30. Our Lord having before showed;

1. That all power was given to him;
2. That none could know the Father but by and in him; closes his discourse with an invitation of persons to him. By the weary and heavy laden, in the text, some understand those that are laden with the sense of their sins, and the feeling the guilt of them. Others understand, with the burden of the law, which the apostles called *a yoke*, Ac 15:10.

Mr. Calvin thinks this too strait an interpretation. Others understand heavy laden with trials and afflictions. Christ will give rest to all those of his people that are any ways weary and heavy laden, but in an order first to souls wearied and heavy laden with the burden of their sins, and their want of a righteousness wherein to stand before God. Then to such to whom he hath given this rest, he promises also rest from their troubles and persecutions in the world, Joh 16:33. It is very like he used this term, *Come*, with respect to that of Isaiah, Isa 55:1,2. That by coming is to be understood believing is plain from Joh 6:44-46 Heb 11:6. The rest promised chiefly respecteth the soul, as appears from Mt 11:29. The promise may be understood both of that rest which believers have in this life, Ro 5:2 15:13, and also of that rest which after this life *remaineth to the people of God*, Heb 4:9. Whatever the rest be, it must be of Christ's giving and our seeking; nor is it to be obtained without labour and suffering, for it followeth, *Take my yoke upon you*. The members of Christ are not without a yoke, a law and rule by which they are obliged to walk; and though the service of God be a perfect freedom, yet to flesh and blood it is a yoke, grating upon our sensitive appetite, and restraining our natural motions and inclinations.

For I am meek and lowly. Humility and meekness are in themselves yokes, as they are contrary to our pride, and aptness to swell in a high opinion of ourselves; and to our wrath and danger, which sometimes boils to a great height, without any due fuel: and as in themselves they are a great part of Christ's yoke, so they fit and dispose us to take Christ's further yoke upon us, and may be here considered as means directed for the better performance of the precept, *Take my yoke upon you.* Our Lord also by this precept lets us know there can be no true faith without obedience to the commands of Christ. Though true faith and obedience be two things, yet they are inseparable; *Show me thy faith* (saith James) *by thy works;* and the rest of the text is not promised to either of them severally, but to both jointly.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Our Saviour had before (Mt 7:13,14) told us that the way to heaven is a strait way, how doth he now tell us his yoke is easy and his burden light?

Answer:

1. Nothing makes it hard or burdensome but our corruption, which floweth from the depravation of human nature.
2. It is much easier than the yoke and burden of the law.
3. Though it be hard to beginners, yet it is easy when we have once accustomed ourselves to it.
4. It is easy, considering that we do it not in our own strength, but by assistance from God, Jer 31:33 Eze 36:25,26 Joh 15:3, we are delivered even from the moral law, considered as a covenant, and as merely commanding us, and affording no help and assistance.
5. It is also easy; as we are by the love of God constrained to our duty, so we are freed from the rigour of the law. It is easy and light, as it is a course of life highly consonant to our reason, once delivered from a bondage to our passions. Finally, it is much more easy and light than the service of our lusts is. There is no greater slavery than a subjection to our lusts, that if a drunkard saith "Come", we must come, if an harlot saith "Go", we must go. Or than our service to the world, &c. To say nothing of the exceeding easiness of it, from the prospect

of the great reward proposed and promised to those who keep the commandments of Christ, the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2Co 4:17; as Jacob's hard service of fourteen years seemed to him but a few days.

Matthew 12:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 12:1-8 Christ alleges scripture in excuse of his disciples, whom the Pharisees charged with breaking the sabbath in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.

Mt 12:9-13 He healeth the withered hand on the sabbath day.

Mt 12:14-21 The Pharisees seek to destroy him: a prophecy of Esaias fulfilled in him.

Mt 12:22,23 He healeth one possessed of a devil, who was blind and dumb,

Mt 12:24-37 and confuting the absurd charge of his casting out devils by Beelzebub, he showeth that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is an unpardonable sin, and that every idle word must be accounted for.

Mt 12:38-45 He rebuketh those that sought of him a sign,

Mt 12:46-50 and showeth whom he regardeth as his nearest relations.

Ver. 1. Mark relating this story, Mr 2:23, varies little. Luke relating it, Lu 6:1, saith it was on *the second sabbath after the first, and his disciples did eat, rubbing them*. God in his law, De 23:25, had said, *When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn*. To take for our need so much of our neighbour's goods as we may reasonably think that, if he were present, and knew our circumstances, he would give us, is no theft. The Pharisees

therefore do not accuse them of theft, but of violation of the sabbath. Luke saith this happened upon the second sabbath after the first. Whether that was the sabbath next following the feast of unleavened bread, (which was about the time of our Easter), the first and last days of which were sabbaths in the Jewish sense, or the feast of tabernacles, or any other, is not much material for us to know. But on a sabbath day it was that our Saviour *went through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred*: this may teach us their low estate and condition in the world. He could quickly have supplied their hunger, but he chose to leave them to relieve themselves with plucking, rubbing, and eating of the corn, that he might have an opportunity to instruct them and the Pharisees in the true doctrine of the sabbath.

Matthew 12:2

Ver. 2. So saith Mark, Mr 2:24, only he puts it into the form of a question. Luke adds nothing, Lu 6:2, but saith, *certain of the Pharisees*. They granted the thing lawful to be done another day, but not on the sabbath day. How blind is superstition, that they could think that it was contrary to the will of God, that his people should fit themselves for the service of the sabbath by a moderate refreshment! Some of the Pharisees ordinarily attended Christ's motions, not to be instructed by him, but (as is afterward said) that they might have something whereof to accuse him. What a little thing do they carp at! Wherein was the sin? The plucking of a few ears of corn, and rubbing them, could hardly be called servile labour, especially not in the sense of the commandment, which restrained not necessary labour, but such labour as took them off from the duties of the sabbath; but their tradition had made this unlawful, as it was a little reaping and a kind of threshing. Hypocrites and formalists are always most zealous for little things in the law, or for their own additaments to it.

Matthew 12:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 12:4".

Matthew 12:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark and Luke add little, only Mark specifies the time, *in the days of Abiathar the high priest,* and saith, *when he had need, and was an hungred.* We have the history, 1Sa 21:1-15. David was upon his flight from Saul, upon the notice of his danger given him by Jonathan, 1Sa 20:1-42, and being hungry, he asks of the high priest five loaves of bread; the high priest tells him he had none but *hallowed bread,* which the high priest gave him, 1Sa 21:6. What the shewbread was may be read, Le 24:5-9: it is expressly said, a stranger shall not eat thereof. Now (saith our Saviour) notwithstanding this, David and his followers, being an hungred, did eat thereof, though strictly, according to the letter of the law, none but the priests might eat it.

But some may object: What was this to the purpose? It was not upon the sabbath day.

Answer:

1. It was either upon the sabbath day, or immediately after, for it was to be set on every sabbath day, and to be eaten *in the holy place,* Le 24:8,9, and the high priest told David, 1Sa 21:6, that it was taken away to set hot bread in the room of it.
2. But secondly, that which our Saviour produces this for, was to prove a more general proposition, which being proved, the lawfulness of his disciples' act would easily be inferred from it. That was this: That the letter of a ritual law is not to be insisted upon, where some eminent necessity urges the contrary, in the performance of some natural or moral duty.

The law of nature commandeth every man to feed himself when he is hungry. The moral law confirms this, as it is a means to the observation of the sixth commandment, and especially on the sabbath day, so far as may fit us for the best sanctification of it. The law concerning the shewbread was but a ritual law, and that part of it which restrained the use of it when taken off from the holy table was of lightest concern, as it commanded it should be eaten by the priests only, and by them in the holy place. Where the life, or necessary relief, of men was concerned, the obligation of the ritual law ceased, and that was lawful, both for

David and the high priest, which in ordinary cases had not been lawful. Works necessary either for the upholding of our lives, or fitting us for sabbath services, are lawful upon the sabbath day. Though the law concerning the sabbath be a moral law, yet it is *jus positivum*, not a law natural, but positive, and must be so interpreted as not to destroy the law natural, which commands men to feed themselves; nor yet to destroy itself. The scope and end of it is to be considered, which is the keeping of a day as a day of holy and religious rest. What labour is necessary to such keeping of it is also lawful. The time of the sabbath is not more holy than the shewbread; and as David in a case of necessity might make a common use of that holy bread, so the disciples in a case of like necessity might make use of a little of that holy time, in such necessary servile work as might fit them for their sabbath service. Thus it was lawful by the law of God, and if the Pharisees had not been ignorant, or had understood what they had read, they would never have disputed this, the instance of holy David might have satisfied. So that this little kind of labour could only be a breach of one of their bylaws, by which they pretended to expound the law of God, in which he showeth they had given a false interpretation.

Matthew 12:5

Ver. 5. Neither Mark nor Luke have this argument of our Saviour's. The meaning is, all acts of servile labour are not unlawful on the sabbath day. The priests, according to the law, Nu 28:9, offer sacrifices, and do many other acts, such as circumcising, and many other things, which in your sense would be a profanation of the sabbath; yet you do not blame them, neither are they to be blamed, because God permitted and directed them.

If any say, "But how doth this agree to what our Saviour is speaking to?"

Answer: The disciples of Christ were employed with and by him in going about and preaching the gospel, and what they now did was but in order to fit them for his work, when they had not had such leisure as others beforehand to provide: and this establisheth a second rule, That works of piety, and tending to fit us for acts of piety, that cannot conveniently be done before, are

lawful on the sabbath day.

Matthew 12:6

Ver. 6. The Jews had very superstitious conceits concerning the temple, and might object, But the priests' works are done in the temple. The Jews had a saying, that in the temple there was no sabbath. They looked upon the temple as sanctifying all actions done there. To obviate this, (saith our Saviour), *In this place is one* (that is, I am) *greater than the temple*. The temple was but a type of me. If the temple can sanctify so much labour, will not my authority and permission, think you, excuse this little labour of my disciples?

Matthew 12:7

Ver. 7. Neither Mark nor Luke have this argument. Our Lord yet goeth on taxing these great doctors of ignorance. The text he quotes is Ho 6:6; we met with it before quoted by our Saviour, Mt 9:13. The meaning is, that God prefers mercy before sacrifice. Where two laws in respect of some circumstance seem to clash one with another, so as we cannot obey both, our obedience is due to that which is the more excellent law. Now, saith our Saviour, the law of mercy is the more excellent law; God prefers it before sacrifice; which had you well considered, you would never have accused my disciples, who in this point are guiltless.

Matthew 12:8

Ver. 8. This argument Luke hath, Lu 6:5. Mark hath it thus, Mr 2:27,28, *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*. Some interpreters make these two arguments:

1. The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath; therefore it is in my power to dispense with this action of my disciples, though it had been contrary to the letter of the law: or rather, therefore it is in my power to interpret the law, which I myself made.

2. The sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath. A law made for the good of another bindeth not, in such cases where the observation of it would be evidently for his harm and ruin. The law of the sabbath was made for the good of man, that he might have a solemn time, in which he should be under an obligation to pay his homage unto God; this must not be so interpreted as would tend to the destruction of a man.

I find interpreters divided about that term *the Son of man*. Some think that it is not to be interpreted, as usually in the gospel, concerning Christ; but of ordinary men, and that man's lordship over the sabbath is proved by the subserviency of it to his good, to which end also it was ordained. But certainly that is both a dangerous and unscriptural interpretation: dangerous to give man a lordship over a moral law, for it is very improper to call any lord of a thing, because he hath the use of it, and it is for his advantage: I cannot see but we may as well make man lord of the whole ten commandments as of one of them. Unscriptural, for though our Saviour useth this term more than threescore times in the gospel, yet he always useth it with relation to himself, never with reference to any mere man; neither is there any necessity to understand it otherwise here. Christ affirming himself Lord of the sabbath, spake properly enough to the Pharisees' quarrel; for it must needs then follow, that he had power to dispense with the observation of it at particular times, and much more to give a true and right interpretation of the law concerning it.

Matthew 12:9

Ver. 9. Mark saith, Mr 3:1, *he entered again into the synagogue on the sabbath day*. This our Saviour was often wont to do, to own there what was done according to his Father's institution, and himself to do what good he could; nor doth he now decline it because he had had so late a contest with them: it is therefore said that *he went into their synagogue*, as being neither ashamed of what he had delivered, nor afraid to own it in the face of his adversaries.

Matthew 12:10

Ver. 10. Mark, repeating the same history, saith, Mr 3:1,2, *There was a man which had a withered hand, and they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might accuse him.* So saith Lu 6:6,7, only he addeth that it was his right hand, which made his affliction greater. They asked him not that they might rightly inform themselves, but *that they might accuse him* to their magistrates, that had power in those cases, for the violation of the sabbath was, amongst the Jews, a capital crime.

Matthew 12:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 12:12".

Matthew 12:12

Ver. 11,12. Mark saith, Mr 3:3-5, And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. Luke reports it thus, Lu 6:8,9, But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? Christ knew their thoughts; he needed not that any man should tell him what was in the heart of men; he knew their design in coming, and propounding this question. He calls this man with the withered hand to stand forth, that all men might see, and take notice of him. Then he argues the case with the Pharisees, telling them, that they themselves would grant, that if a man had a sheep fallen into a pit on the sabbath day, they might labour so far as to take it out; so, it seemeth, in Christ's time they did expound the law. They also knew that the life or good of a man was to be preferred before the life of a beast. In their reproving him, therefore, they condemned themselves in a thing which they allowed. Then he propounds a question to them, which Matthew hath not, but it is mentioned both by Mark and Luke. He asketh them whether it was lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? The argument is this, Whatsoever is good to save the life of man may be done on the sabbath day; but this is a good action; if I should not lend him

my help when it is in my power, I should, in the sense of God's law, kill him.

Matthew 12:13

Ver. 13. Mark saith, they held their peace, they made him no answer to his question, upon which he, looking round about him with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. Luke saith, Looking round about upon them all, he said, &c. Our Saviour looked about him to see if any of them would adventure to answer him, but he saw their mouths were shut. He was angry that these great doctors of the law should understand the law of God no better, and should yet be so hardy as to take upon them to instruct him. He was also grieved (saith Mark) at the hardness of their hearts. That which we call hardness, is a quality in a thing which resisteth the truth, a unimpressiveness, when a thing will receive no impression from things apt to make impressions: the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts lay in this, that whereas Christ's words and works might reasonably and ought to have made an impression upon them of faith, that they should have owned and received him as the Messiah, yet they had no such effect, nor made any such impressions upon them. He said to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, &c. Christ sometimes used the ceremony of laying on his hand; here he doth not, to let us know that that was but a sign of what was done by his power. What little things malicious men will carp at! What was here of servile labour on the sabbath day? They did far more themselves, as often as they lifted a beast out of a pit. Our Saviour compounds or prepareth no medications, he only speaks the word, and he is healed. But Matthew tells us that ...(see Mt 12:14).

Matthew 12:14

Ver. 14. Luke saith, *they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.* Mark saith, *they straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.* What cause of their madness was here offered? A poor lame man was miraculously healed. They certainly were mad to see themselves confuted, who would

not acknowledge him to be the Messiah, or to hear themselves nonplussed, or to find themselves contradicted (a thing proud men cannot bear). They take counsel with the Herodians (of whom we shall have occasion to say more when we come to Mt 22:1-46): all agree them and the Pharisees to have been steady enemies one to another, but Herod and Pilate can agree when Christ is to be crucified.

Matthew 12:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 12:16".

Matthew 12:16

Ver. 15,16. Here is nothing in these two verses but what we have before met with: the multitudes have followed Christ in all his motions, from his first beginning to preach and to work his miraculous operations.

He healed them all, must be understood of those that were sick. The charge he gives is the same which we have often met with, of which no satisfactory account can be given, further than that, knowing his time was not yet come, and he had much work to do before his death, he useth all prudent means to preserve his life, reserving himself for the further work which his Father left him to do. The publishing of his miracles would have made a great noise, and possibly have more enraged the Pharisees against him; neither did he seek his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him.

Matthew 12:17

Ver. 17. Christ did this, that is, he withdrew himself when he heard what counsels the Pharisees and Herodians had taken, he charged those whom he had cured that they should not publish it abroad, he did those good acts before spoken of, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet;* that he might show himself to be the very person whom the prophet Isaiah long since did foretell, Isa 42:1-4. The words in the prophet are thus: *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul*

delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus far that prophet; let us now consider his words, or prophecy, as repeated by the evangelist (see Mt 12:18).

Matthew 12:18

Ver. 18. The alteration is very little, and we must not expect to meet with quotations out of the Old Testament verbatim: it is enough that the sense is the same.

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen. The word indifferently signifieth a child or a servant, Christ is called the Lord's servant, because he took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even to death, Php 2:7,8: Whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: in Isaiah it is, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. Matthew seems to have left out whom I uphold, and to have taken the next words, mine elect, and to have translated them, whom I have chosen, which was all said by the prophet. God chose the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer, and the Head of the elect; hence we are said to be chosen in him, Eph 1:4. Peter saith he was foreordained, 1Pe 1:20 2:6, he is called a chief Cornerstone, elect. My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: in Isaiah it is, in whom my soul delighteth: the sense is the same.

He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, or to the nations. The words מִשְׁפָּט, in the Hebrew, κρισις in the Greek, and *judgment* in the English, are all so variously used, as gives interpreters a great latitude to abound in their senses. The most probable to me is this: *Judgment* signifies a thing adjudged: all judgment is either of approbation or condemnation.

He shall bring forth, or he shall show, the things which God approveth and judgeth right, both in matters of doctrine, worship, and the government of the church of God, and in matters which concern the government of men's lives and conversations: and to this end God promises to put his Spirit upon him, so Isa 11:2

41:1; and John tells us it was not given him by measure, Joh 3:34, which is the same with being *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, Ps 45:7, which the apostle applies to Christ, Heb 1:9.

Matthew 12:19

Ver. 19. These words declare the meekness, and gentleness, and modesty of our blessed Saviour. His meekness, that he should not do his work in any passion or roughness, nor carry on his kingdom with any strife or violence. Therefore when the Pharisees took counsel against him, he made no opposition, but peaceably withdrew, until the time came when he was to be delivered; and then he as meekly yielded up himself, rebuking Peter for but drawing a sword for him, and healing his ear which he had wounded. His not crying, nor lifting up his voice, or suffering his voice to be heard in the streets, might either signify his meekness, not crying out to stir up any sedition; or not setting a trumpet to his mouth, when he had wrought a miracle, that people might take notice of it; instead of it he charged the persons healed not to publish it.

Matthew 12:20

Ver. 20. He shall carry on his work with so little noise, that if he trod upon a bruised reed he should not break it. Or, he shall not despise the afflicted, that are as bruised reeds and smoking flax. But the best expositors interpret it of Christ's kindness to people's souls; he will not discourage those that are weak in faith, or weak in hope.

Smoking flax signifieth flax in the kindling of which the fire had not prevailed, and so is a very apt metaphor to express such as believe, but are full of doubts and fears, or such as have a truth of grace, but yet much corruption; Christ is prophesied of as one that will encourage, not discourage, such souls.

Until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory; Isaiah saith, *unto truth*. Some think that *until* here only signifies the event of the thing, not a term of time, for there shall never be a time when Christ shall break a bruised reed, or quench a smoking flax, in

the sense before mentioned. By *judgment* here may be meant, as before, what his Father hath judged right, until he hath caused the doctrine of the gospel, and the Messiah, to be believed and embraced of all the world. Or, until he shall have brought forth the judgment of those broken reeds and that smoking flax unto victory, until such souls be made perfect in faith and holiness, and shall have got a victory over all its unbelief and other corruptions. Or, until he hath brought forth condemnation unto victory, (for so the word signifieth), till he hath conquered death and hell, so as there shall be no condemnation to any soul that is in Christ Jesus, Ro 8:1. Or, until the last judgment comes, which shall determine in a perfect absolution and acquittal of all his people, and in a perfect victory over all his enemies.

Matthew 12:21

Ver. 21. This makes some think, that the bringing of judgment unto victory refers to the final destruction of the Jews by the Romans, after which the Gentiles came more universally to receive the gospel. Though Christ be meek and gentle with men a long time, while there is any hope of their reformation, yet he will not be so meek and patient always. Neither was he so with the Jews. But the falling of them proved the rising of the Gentiles. Christ is beholden to no people for bearing the name of his church; if the Jews fail in their duty, they shall be cast off, and *in his name shall the Gentiles trust*. God is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Isaiah saith, *the isles shall wait for his law*; his law, both of faith and holiness, shall be acceptable to the Gentiles. The term *law* here seemeth to expound that phrase, Mt 12:18, *he shall show judgment to the Gentiles*, that is, right things, he shall give them his law.

Matthew 12:22

Ver. 22. Some think this person was the same mentioned Lu 11:14, I presume, because the following discourse there is much the same with what followeth here; but others are of another mind; and it is certain Luke speaketh of no blindness in him. We heard before a discourse of such as were possessed by devils, so as this verse affords nothing new.

Matthew 12:23

Ver. 23. This is the first conviction we meet with, from the miracles wrought by our Saviour, that he was the Messiah, unless that of the two blind men, mentioned Mt 9:27; and their faith in it appears but weak, for they do not plainly affirm it, only ask the question, like the faith of those mentioned Joh 7:31, *When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*

Matthew 12:24

Ver. 24. We met with the same blasphemous calumny from the same persons, Mt 9:34. The Pharisees, not acknowledging the Deity of Christ, nor that he was the Messiah, were for their interest concerned not to acknowledge, and as much as in them lay to keep others from believing, that he did that from his own power which God alone could do. But yet they might have allowed him to have by a power derived from God done these miraculous things, as Elijah and Elisha of old did. But they blaspheme at the highest rate imaginable, ascribing that to the devil which was proper to God alone. Christ's miracles were exceeding many, and it was a time when the Messiah was expected. The sceptre was departed from Judah, and, as it appears from Joh 7:31, (whatever the Jews now say impudently), they heard that when the Messiah did come he should work many miracles. These things put them into a rage. This remarkable piece of history is recorded by three evangelists: by Matthew in this place; by Mark, Mr 3:22-30; and by Luke, Lu 11:15-20.

Matthew 12:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 12:26".

Matthew 12:26

Ver. 25,26. This is our Lord's first argument. Mark relates it, Mr 3:23-26, with little alteration in the phrase; so doth Luke, Lu

11:17,18. The sum of the argument is, The devil is so wise, that he will look to the upholding of his own kingdom in the world. This will require an agreement of the devils amongst themselves, for if they be divided they cannot uphold their kingdom, nor stand, any more than a house, city, or kingdom in the world so divided can stand; therefore the prince of devils will not forcibly cast out the inferior devils. There is but one imaginable objection to this: Do we not see the contrary to this in people's going to cunning men for help against those that are bewitched, to get help for them? And is there no truth in those many stories we have of persons that have found help against the devil for some that have traded with the devil? I answer, It is one thing for the devils to play one with another, another thing for them to cast out one another. One devil may yield and give place to another, to gain a greater advantage for the whole society, but one never quarrels with another. The first may be for the enlarging of Satan's kingdom. This must be to destroy it. When a poor wretched creature goeth to one who dealeth with the devil for help for one who is vexed with some effect of the devil, one devil here doth but yield and give place to another by compact, voluntarily, and for the devil's greater advantage; for it is more advantage to the devil (who seeks nothing so much as a divine homage) to gain the faith of one soul, than to exercise a power to afflict many bodies. In such cases as these, the devil, for the abatement of a little bodily pain, gains a power over the soul of him or her who cometh to implore his help, and exerciseth a faith in him. This is an establishing, promoting, and enlarging his kingdom. But Christ forced the devils out of persons; they did not yield voluntarily, for a greater advantage, but forcibly, for no advantage. He did not pray the devils to come out, nor make use of any of the devil's sacraments, upon the use of which, by some original compact, he was obliged to come out upon a soul's surrender of itself by faith to him; but they came out unwillingly, upon the authoritative words of Christ, without the use of any magical rites and ceremonies testifying the least homage done to him.

Matthew 12:27

Ver. 27. Our Saviour's argument is this, Where the case is the same the judgment ought to be the same, and the contrary judgment speaketh malice, and hatred of the person. Do I cast

out devils? So do your children. You say they do it by the power of God; why do you say that I do it by a prince of devils? What appeareth in their casting of them out more than in mine, which can argue that they do it by the power of God, and I by the power of the prince of devils? The only question is who our Saviour here meaneth by their *children*. Some think that he meaneth his own apostles, who were all of them Jews, and to whom they might be more favourable than to him, because of their relation to them. Others think that he means some exorcists amongst the Jews; such they had, Ac 19:13. But concerning these there is a double opinion. Some think that they were such as themselves, acted by compact of the devil. Others think that they invoking the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God might honour them so far, as upon that invocation to command the devil out of persons. Origen and Justin Martyr both tell us, that there were some that used that form with such success. But so they might do, and yet not obtain their effect from a Divine influence, nor so much cast as flatter out devils, upon a homage first paid to the devil. I find some difficulty to persuade myself that in those times, especially when God by this miraculous effect was demonstrating the Messiah, God should so far concur with any but him, and those that did it by his express name and authority; and I observe, that when the seven sons of Sceva attempted such a thing, Ac 19:13, they called *over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth,* (which they, being the sons of the chief of the priests, would not have done if the more grateful form of, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would have done it), yet could they not prevail, as you read there, Ac 19:14-16. Our Saviour's meaning therefore must certainly be either,

1. You do not say so of your children, my apostles, who do, and profess to do, what they do by a power derived from me; why do you say this of me, not of them? Or,
2. There are some of you who seem to cast out devils, whereas the devil only plays with them, and yields to their magical arts for his own advantage, and abates some more external effects on people's bodies, upon the surrender of their souls to him, by believing he is able to cure them, and imploring his help; yet you think these men endowed with the power of God: why are you so unequal to me?

I observe, though we read of exorcists amongst the Jews, Ac 19:13, yet they are called περιερχομενοι, vagrants. They were an idle, vagabond sort of persons, (such probably as we call gypsies), with whom, or by whom; it is not probable God would work such effects, especially at such a time, though they used the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nay, it is plain from the story of the Acts, that though they used the name Jesus, God would not work by them; Mt 12:16, the demoniac *leaped on them, overcame them, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

Matthew 12:28

Ver. 28. Luke hath the same, Lu 11:20, only for *the Spirit of God* he hath *the finger of God*. By *the kingdom of God* he here meaneth the coming of the Messiah, which is so called, Da 2:44. The time is come, when the Lord begins his kingdom of grace, setting up his King upon his *holy hill of Zion*, Ps 2:6; whence we may observe, that Christ giveth in his casting out of devils by a Divine power, as an argument to prove himself the Messiah; for saith he, By this you may know the kingdom of God is come amongst you, that there is one come among you who by the finger, power, or Spirit of God casts out devils. But where had the force of this argument been, if the Jews had had exorcists whom God had so honoured, though vagabonds, as to cast out devils, upon their calling upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while in the mean time they derided and contemned Christ?

Matthew 12:29

Ver. 29. Mark hath the same words, with little variation, Mr 3:27; Luke saith, Lu 11:21,22, *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.* The sense is the same, though the words be multiplied. Our Saviour showeth how his casting out of devils by the Spirit and power of God argued that the Messiah was come, and the time come when God would set up his kingdom amongst men. The devil, (saith he), who is the god of the world, and the prince of

the power of the air, is very strong; there is none, save God only, who is stronger than he. If I were not God, I could never cast out this strong man, who reigns in the world as in his house; as you see amongst men, the strong man is not overcome but by one stronger. He by this also lets them know, that he was so far from any covenant or compact with Beelzebub, that he came into the world a professed enemy to him, to dispossess him of that tyrannical power he exercised amongst men, by his keeping them in darkness, blinding them with error and superstition, and seducing them to sinful practices, till God, for their prodigious sins, had also given him a power over their bodies, variously to vex, afflict, and torment them. Christ took from this strong man all his armour: by scattering the darkness which was in the world by the full revelation of gospel truth: by expelling error and superstition, teaching people the truths of God, and the right way of his worship: by taking away the guilt, and destroying the power of sin and death, ignorance, error, profaneness; the sense of the guilt of sin, and the power of lusts within us, being the devil's armour, by which he kept up his power, and doth yet keep up what dominion he hath in the world.

Matthew 12:30

Ver. 30. Luke hath the same, Lu 11:23. Some understand this concerning the devil, whom he was so far from favouring, that his work was quite opposite. Some understand it concerning some neuters, that would neither show themselves for Christ nor against him. Our Saviour tells them, that this cause would bear no neutrality, they must be either for him or against him. But possibly it is best understood concerning the scribes and Pharisees, whom he lets know, that he was one who showed men the true way of life and salvation, and those that complied not with him were his enemies, and instead of gathering, scattered the sheep of God.

Matthew 12:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 12:32".

Matthew 12:32

Ver. 31,32. Mark repeateth the same, Mr 3:28,29, with no alteration as to the sense, and instead of *neither in this world, neither in the world to come,* he saith, *but is in danger of eternal damnation.* Luke hath something of it, Lu 12:10, *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgive him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.* It is a text (which) hath very much exercised great divines, and much more perplexed poor Christians in their fits of melancholy and under temptations. There is in it something asserted, that is, that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, Mt 12:32.

Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven; that is, upon the terms other sins are forgiven, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. By *the Son of man* here some would understand any ordinary man; but;

1. Christ never spake of any under the notion but himself.
2. It had been no great news for Christ to have told them, that ordinary evil speaking against men should be forgiven.

Doubtless by *the Son of man here Christ meaneth himself.* He declareth that sins of ignorance should be forgiven; though a man should blaspheme Christ, yet if he did it ignorantly, verily thinking he was no more than the son of man, it should, upon his repentance and faith in him, be forgiven: a text yielding exceeding great relief to souls labouring under the burden of their sins, and reflecting upon their aggravation.

But the difficulty lieth in the latter part of the text, which denieth forgiveness to any who blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Upon this arise several questions. First, What the sin against the Holy Ghost here specified was.

Answer: It is not hard to gather this from the context, and what Mark addeth, Mr 3:30, *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.* Christ was come amongst these persons to whom he speaketh; he had not only preached, but he had wrought many miraculous operations sufficient to convince them that he acted by the power and Spirit of God. They were not only convinced

of it, so far as to acknowledge it, but they attributed these operations to the devil, and said he had a devil, and that he did what he did by the power of the devil. This, out of doubt, was their sin against the Holy Ghost, maliciously speaking to the highest reproach of the Holy Spirit, contrary to the rational conviction of their own consciences.

Hence ariseth a second question, Whether any such sin can be now committed.

Answer: If there were no other texts that seem to conclude, there may be such as those, Heb 6:4-6 10:26,27 1Jo 5:16, where he speaketh of *a sin unto death*, for the forgiveness of which he would not have Christians pray. I should conclude that there is no such sin now to be committed, for we cannot have such means of conviction as the Pharisees had, Christ not being on the earth now working miracles; but it is plain from the texts before mentioned, that there is such a sin, that men and women may yet incur the guilt of. But now what that sin is hath exercised the judgment of the greatest divines to describe. I shall not repeat the various opinions about it, many of which are easily confuted; but shall determine from the guidance of the scriptures that mention it, so far as they will direct in the finding of it out.

1. It cannot be any sin that is committed ignorantly. Paul was a blasphemer, but forgiven, because he did it ignorantly.
2. It must be a sin knowingly committed against the operations of the Holy Ghost. So was this sin of the Pharisees.
3. Apostasy must be an ingredient in it: *If they fall away, saith the apostle, Heb 6:6. It is a sinning wilfully after the receiving the knowledge of the truth, Heb 10:26.*
4. It should seem by this text persecution is an ingredient in it: the Pharisees did not only say this, but they spake it out of malice, designing to destroy Christ.
5. Most certainly it is, that though impenitency cannot be called that sin, yet it must be an ingredient in it, for what sins we truly repent of shall be forgiven, 1Jo 1:9; and therefore the apostle saith of such sinners, It is impossible they should be renewed by repentance.

Upon the whole then, if any person hath been instructed in the things of God, and hath made a profession of religion and godliness, and afterwards falleth off from his profession, and becomes a bitter enemy to it; saying that those things are the effects of the devil in men, which his heart telleth him are the operations of the Holy Spirit, and be so hardy as to persecute and seek to destroy such persons for such profession: the interpretation be to those that hate us and to the enemies of our God: if they have not committed this unpardonable sin, they have done what is very like it; and I know no way they have, but by a timely and hearty repentance to satisfy the world, or their own consciences, that they are not under this dreadful guilt. And that which confirms me in this opinion is, that we rarely hear of such persons renewed by repentance (if any instances of that nature at all can be produced). I know some have thought that this sin might be committed by words, without other overt acts, and indeed blaspheming (properly taken) can signify nothing else but evil or reproachful speaking. But these words must proceed from a malicious heart, full of rancour and revenge; for it is not every word, nor every blasphemy, that is here meant, it is (as Augustine saith) *quoddam dictum, quaedam blasphemia*, a certain word, a certain blasphemy; not words spoken ignorantly or hastily, or according to our real judgment and opinion; but words spoken maliciously, in order to destroy God or Christ, if it were possible, after sufficient means of light and conviction, that the things which we speak evil of are not from the evil, but, probably at least, from the Holy Spirit of God, and yet we will impute them to the devil, in order to the defaming or destruction of those servants of God who do them, or in whom they are found. We can define nothing certain in the case, but this cometh nearest to the sin here mentioned, that shall never be forgiven in this world, or the world to come; that is, as Mark expounds it, the persons guilty shall be in danger of eternal damnation, by which he hath spoiled the papists' argument from this text for their purgatory.

Matthew 12:33

Ver. 33. We met with much the same Mt 7:16. The words here spoken may be understood to have reference to the devil, to the scribes and Pharisees, or to Christ himself.

1. You say I do these things by the devil: you cannot but say the things I do are good; the fruit followeth the nature of the tree: the devil is evil, a corrupt tree, how can he produce good fruit? Or thus;
2. You show yourselves to be corrupt trees by the fruit you bring forth; you indeed are not lewd and profane, but put on a mask and vizard of godliness, but your fruit showeth what you are. Or;
3. If the fruit which I produce be good, why should not you judge me good? Speak things that are consistent; if the fruit be good, the tree must be good; convince me of any evil things that I do, from whence you can rationally conclude that I am a corrupt tree.

Matthew 12:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 12:35".

Matthew 12:35

Ver. 34,35. The evangelist Luke, Lu 6:45, hath much the same with what is here.

O generation of vipers: John had so called them, and Christ again so called them, Mt 23:33. A viper is of all other the most venomous and dangerous serpent. Christ is calling them a *generation of vipers*, intimates that the Pharisees were generally a most mischievous faction for the souls of men.

How can ye, being evil, speak good things? Why do I (saith he) spend my time and breath in reprovng or admonishing you? you have cankered hearts, full of pride, malice, and envy, and therefore, cannot ordinarily speak good things.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: what men ordinarily and deliberately do speak is from the affections and thoughts of their hearts. Hence good men out of the good treasure of their hearts speak good things, that is, most ordinarily

and commonly; and evil men out of the stock of malice, revenge, envy, pride and other lusts, which are in their hearts, speak evil things.

Matthew 12:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 12:37".

Matthew 12:37

Ver. 36,37. Some understand by *idle words* here, lying and deceitful words; others, contumelious and reproachful words. But the best interpreters here extend the sense further, not only from the sense of the word *αργον*, here used, but because they judge our Saviour is here arguing from the less to the greater, convincing the Pharisees what a dreadful account they had to give for their blasphemous and reproachful words, when all must give an account even for those words which they speak to no good purpose, but vainly, without respect either to the glory of God, or the good of others, or their own necessary and lawful occasions. Hence the apostle doth not only forbid *filthiness, foolish talking, and jestings*, Eph 5:1, and *corrupt communication*, Eph 4:29, but in the same verse commandeth that Christians' speech should be *to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers*; and to the Colossians, Col 4:6, *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt*. Nor will this seem too strict to those who consider, that any thing is abused when it is not used to the right end and use. God hath not given unto man his faculty of speech to fill the world with idle tattle and impertinent discourse, but that by it;

1. We might bless God, by prayers and praises, talking of his words and wondrous works.
2. That we might communicate our minds to men, in their or our own concerns, and so be mutually helpful one to another.

For by thy words thou shall be justified, &c.: what justified here signifies, appears by the word *condemned*, to which it is opposed. God will pronounce sentence for or against men in the last day, not only according to their other actions, but

accordingly as they have used their tongues. If there were no other text in the Bible to prove that we have need of another righteousness, than any of our own, wherein to stand before God, this text alone would be enough, for *if a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*, Jas 3:2.

Matthew 12:38

Ver. 38. We read the like to this Mt 16:1, and Luke seemeth to relate the same history, Lu 11:29.

Master was the usual title which they gave to any whom they owned as a teacher. By *a sign* they mean something that might confirm unto them that he was sent of God; they expected that an extraordinary mission should be so confirmed: so Joh 6:33, *What sign showest thou then, that we might see and believe thee? What dost thou work?* Moses showed them signs, (as they there go on), he brought down for them bread from heavens. Had not Christ showed them signs enough? What were all the miracles he had wrought in their sight? They either speak this out of a further idle curiosity, (their eye being not satisfied with seeing), or else they speak it in direct opposition to the whole scope and tendency of our Saviour's former discourse, which was from his miracles to prove himself truly God, and sent of God: if the latter, which seemeth from our Saviour's sharp answer most probable, the sum of what they say is this, Master, we have seen thee do wonderful works, but no other than what impostors may do by the assistance of the devil; we would see something done by thee which magicians cannot do, such as Moses did, Ex 8:19, when the magicians confessed they were outdone, and cried, *This is the finger of God*.

Matthew 12:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 12:40".

Matthew 12:40

Ver. 39,40. *An evil and adulterous generation;* either called adulterous for that specific sin, which reigned amongst them, and

indeed their polygamy was hardly better; or else because of their degeneracy from Abraham, whom they so much gloried in as their father, Joh 8:39,44.

Seeketh after a sign; not satisfied with my miracles which I do on earth, they would have a sign from heaven. God was not difficult of confirming and encouraging people's faith by signs; he gave Gideon a sign upon his asking, he gave Hezekiah and proffered Ahaz a sign without asking; but he had already given the Pharisees signs enough, and sufficient to convince them, but they would not believe, but out of curiosity would have a sign of another kind, *a sign from heaven*, as Mark expounds it, Mt 8:11, such a sign as the devil could not counterfeit.

There shall no sign be given to it; no sign of that nature, for we shall find that after this Christ wrought many miracles. But they shall have a sign when I shall be risen again from the dead, to their confusion and condemnation; when I shall answer the prophet Jonah's type of me. He was cast into the sea, and was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, in the heart of the sea, Jon 1:17, and then the whale vomited (him) out upon the dry land, Jon 2:10. So I shall be by them violently put to death and shall be in the grave part of three days and three nights, and then I shall rise again from the dead.

But here ariseth a difficulty. Christ indeed dying the day before the Jewish sabbath, and rising the morning after, might be said to be in the grave three days, because he was there part of three days; but how can he be said to have been there three nights? For he was only in the grave the night of the Jewish sabbath, (for their sabbath began at the evening before), and the night following, which were but two nights, either in whole or in part.

Answer: What we call day and night made up the Jewish $\nu\chi\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\nu$. It appears by Ge 1:5, that *the evening and the morning* made up a day. Three days and three nights is with us but the same thing with three natural days, and so it must be understood here. Christ was in the grave three natural days, that is, part of three natural days; every one of which days contained a day and a night, viz. twenty-four hours.

Matthew 12:41

Ver. 41. The story of the men of Nineveh we have in Jon 3:1-10. Luke repeateth the same passage, Lu 11:32.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment, that is, shall at the general resurrection rise, and stand up in judgment as witnesses against the scribes and Pharisees, and the other unbelieving Jews of this age, and shall be instruments as to that condemnation which God shall that day pronounce against them. Why?

Because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Jonas was a stranger to them, he wrought no miracles amongst them to confirm that he was sent of God, he only came and cried, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed;* yet they repented, if not truly and sincerely, yet in appearance; they showed themselves to be affected with what Jonah said, his words made some impressions upon them, as that *the king arose from his throne, laid his robe from him, covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes,* called a fast, as Jon 3:5-8. But, saith our Saviour, I am greater than Jonah: I was long since prophesied of, and foretold to this people, to come; I am come; I have preached amongst them, and not only preached, but wrought many wonderful works amongst them, yet they are not so much affected as to show the least signs of repentance.

Matthew 12:42

Ver. 42. We have the history to which this relates 1Ki 10:1, &c. She is here called *the queen of the south;* in the Book of Kings, and 2Ch 9:1, *the queen of Sheba*. Whether this Sheba, or Saba, was in Arabia or Ethiopia, is not much material; certain it is, it was southward of Judea, and a place at a great distance. Yet, saith our Saviour, though she was a great queen, though she lived at so great a distance from Jerusalem, though she had only heard of the fame and wisdom of Solomon; yet she came in person to hear his wise discourses, either about things natural or supernatural. These wretched Jews are not put to it to take a journey, I am come amongst them, I who am greater than Solomon, who am the Eternal Wisdom, and come to discourse of heavenly wisdom to them; I am come to their doors, theirs to whom the notion of a Messiah is no new thing, they have heard

of me; they are no heathens, but bred up to the knowledge of God. I have done many miracles before them, yet they will not hear nor believe me. The queen of Sheba in the day of judgment shall rise up as a witness against them, when God shall condemn them for their unbelief. The more light, and means, and obligations men have upon them to faith and holiness, the greater will their judgment and condemnation be.

Matthew 12:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 12:45".

Matthew 12:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 12:45".

Matthew 12:45

Ver. 43-45. The speech appeareth parabolical, the persons concerned in it are expressed in the last words, the men of that wicked generation. The text is thought to be well expounded by Peter, 2Pe 2:20, *If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.* Our Lord here compares the Jews to a man out of whom the unclean spirit was gone. The devil is called the *unclean spirit*, both in regard of his own impure nature, and because his work is to tempt men to sin, which is spiritual filthiness. The Jews were a people holy to the Lord, a people distinguished from pagans by a visible profession; so as the devil in a great measure had left them. Now, saith he, the devil is an unquiet spirit, and findeth no rest if he cannot be doing mischief to men. For the phrase, *he walketh through dry places, seeking rest*, we must know, that in parabolical speeches we must not make a severe scrutiny upon every phrase. Dry places are for the most part places least inhabited, for want of the conveniences of water. The devil cannot be at rest where he hath no mischief to do to men.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came

out: the devil so leaveth none, but he will be attempting to come into them again; and he ordinarily succeeds where Christ hath not prepossessed the soul: all other reformation proves but a sweeping and a garnishing, while the soul is empty of Christ. It may be swept from the filth of flagitious sins, and garnished with the paint of religion, or some habits of moral virtue; but none of these will keep out the devil.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. Seven, that is, many. The meaning is, he makes that man much worse than before. So (saith he) it shall be to these Jews. God gave them his laws, and so delivered them from such a dominion as the devil doth exercise over pagans. In force of this law, the scribes and Pharisees amended many things, so as they were like a house swept and garnished. God sent his Son to dwell amongst them, but him they rejected; so the house was empty, though swept and garnished. The devil will come again, and they will be ten times worse.

Matthew 12:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:50

Ver. 46-50. Mark repeateth the same passage, Mr 3:31-35. Luke repeateth it more shortly, Lu 8:20,21. Both Mark and Luke say more than one spake to our Saviour; first one, then others.

Thy mother and thy brethren: most interpreters think *brethren* here signifieth no more than some of his kindred, whom the Hebrews usually called brethren. By the following words of our Saviour, Mt 12:48-50, we must not understand that our Saviour slighted his mother or brethren, we are elsewhere taught what honour he gave to his parents, Lu 2:51; yet he seemeth to speak something angrily, because he was interrupted in his work: so Lu 2:49 Joh 2:3-4. We may show a just respect to our parents, and respect to our relations, though we do not neglect our duty to God out of respect to them. The only thing to be further learned from this paragraph, is, how dear believers and holy persons are to Christ; he counts them as dear as mother, brethren, or sisters, and thereby teacheth us the esteem we ought to have for such. Luke saith, he that heareth my word, and doth it. Matthew saith, he that doth it. It is the will of God, that we should believe on him whom he hath sent: See Poole on "Joh 1:12", See Poole on "Joh 6:40", See Poole on "Joh 8:47"; This text derogates nothing from the honour truly due to the blessed virgin, as the mother of the Messiah; but it shows the madness of the papists, exalting her above Christ, whom Christ, considered only as his mother, seemeth here to set beneath every true believer, though, considered as a believer also, she hath a just preference.

Matthew 13:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 13:1-9 The parable of the sower.
Mt 13:10-17 Why Christ taught in parables.
Mt 13:18-23 The exposition of the parable of the sower.
Mt 13:24-30 The parable of the tares,
Mt 13:31,32 of the grain of mustard seed,
Mt 13:33-35 of the leaven.
Mt 13:36-43 The parable of the tares expounded.
Mt 13:44 The parable of the hidden treasure,

Mt 13:45,46 of one pearl of great price,
Mt 13:47-52 of a net cast into the sea,
Mt 13:53-58 Christ's countrymen are
offended in him.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 13:3".

Matthew 13:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 13:3".

Matthew 13:3

Ver. 1-3. Mark saith, Mr 4:1, *He began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.* Luke, Lu 8:4, saith no more than, *when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.* Two evangelists agree that this sermon of our Saviour's was preached out of a ship, to multitudes that stood on the shore. The occasion of his going into a ship was the throng of people, both for his own and their convenience. It is here said that he *sat*; this, we observed before, was the usual gesture of the teacher amongst the Jews. This sermon is said to have been made *the same day*, which some observe in historical narrations is to be taken strictly, and lets us know the assiduity of Christ in his work.

And he spake many things unto them in parables: the term parable often in Scripture signifies dark sayings, or proverbial speeches, Eze 17:2 20:49. But in the Gospels it generally bath another sense, and signifies similitudes or comparisons of things. This being the first time we have met with the term, and the first formed and perfect parable we have met with, because we shall meet with the term often hereafter, with many formed parables, I shall here give some notes which may be not only of use to understand the following parables we shall meet with in this chapter, but in the following part of the Gospel.

1. A parable, in the gospel sense of the term, signifieth a

similitude, taken from the ordinary actions of men, and made use of to inform us in one or more points of spiritual doctrines.

2. That it is not necessary to a parable that the matter contained in it should be true in matter of fact; for it is not brought to inform us in a matter of fact, but in some spiritual truth, to which it bears some proportion. This we see in Jotham's parable of the trees going to choose themselves a king, &c.
3. That it is not necessary that all the actions of men mentioned in a parable should be morally just and honest. The actions of the unjust steward, Lu 16:1, &c., were not so.
4. That, for the right understanding of a parable, our great care must be to consider the main scope of it, whither the story tends, and what our Saviour designed principally by the parable to instruct and teach the people by that discourse.
5. That the main scope of the parable is to be learned, either from our Saviour's general or more particular explication of it, either from the *proparabola*, or preface to it, or from the *epiparabola*, or the conclusion of it.
6. It is not to be expected that all particular actions represented in a parable should be answered by something in the explication of it.
7. Lastly, though the scope of the parable be the main thing we are to attend unto, and in which it doth instruct us, yet it may collaterally inform us in several things besides that point which is in it chiefly attended.

It is said that our Saviour *spake many things to the multitude in parables*, covering truths under similitudes fetched from such ordinary actions as men did or might do. This was a very ancient way of instruction, by fables or parables, as we may learn by Jotham's parable, Jud 9:7,8, &c. It is now much out of use with us, but amongst the Jews was very ordinary; so as our Saviour spake to them in their own dialect. It had a double advantage upon their hearers:

1. Upon their memory, we being very apt to remember stories.

2. Upon their minds, to put them upon studying the meaning of what they heard so delivered; and also upon their affections, similitudes contributing much to excite affection.

But withal it had this disadvantage, that he who so taught was not understood of a great part of his auditory.

Matthew 13:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:9

Ver. 4-9. There is some difference in the terms used by Mark and Luke in their relations of this parable, Mr 4:3-8, and Lu 8:4-8; but none that are material, nor much to be considered by us, being they are in the parable. I shall when I come to it more exactly consider what differences there are betwixt the evangelists in the terms they use in the explication which our Saviour giveth us of the parable; which he did not give before

the multitude, but *when he was alone*, saith Mark, Mr 4:10. That which our Saviour spoke to the whole multitude was this. Now whether there were indeed any such sower, yea or no, is not at all material: our Saviour's design was not to inform them in a matter of fact, but of the different success of the preaching of the word; and for this purpose he brought this similitude, leaving the generality of the hearers to study out his meaning, concluding, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; which is an *epiphonema*, or conclusion of a speech, we met with before, and spake something to.

Matthew 13:10

Ver. 10. Luke saith, Lu 8:9, *His disciples asked him, saying, what might this parable be?* Mark saith, Mr 4:10, *When he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.* It should seem that his twelve apostles understood his meaning, but others that with them were about him when the multitude were gone did not: they therefore desire of him,

1. That they might understand the reason why he spake to the multitude in dark sayings and similitudes, without plainly opening this meaning to them.
2. They own their own dulness of understanding, and confess that they themselves were ignorant, and therefore desired him that he would tell them the meaning of this parable, with which he had entertained the multitude.

Their staying with the twelve when the generality of the multitudes were departed argued that they came with a desire to learn and to be instructed, not out of a mere curiosity to see Christ, or in a mere formality. They show both their charity, in desiring others might be intelligibly instructed; and their piety, in desiring that they might be more fully themselves instructed.

Matthew 13:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 13:12".

Matthew 13:12

Ver. 11,12. Mark saith, Mr 4:11, *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.* Luke saith no more than, *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables.* Only, Mt 8:18, he saith, *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Because it is given to you, &c;* given by my Father: God, according to the good pleasure of his will, hath given to some persons to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, more than to others. Some here distinguish concerning the things which concern the kingdom of God. The laws of his kingdom, they say, are delivered plainly viz. those things which are necessary to be known in order to our salvation are delivered plainly, so as we may understand them. But there are other things that belong to his kingdom not so necessary to be known in order to salvation, these God giveth to some only to know. I cannot agree to this notion. God manifested in the flesh is the great mystery of the gospel, the mystery hid from ages, yet I am sure the knowledge of Christ as such is necessary to salvation. I therefore think the emphasis lieth upon *know*.

1. There is a more general and confused knowledge of a thing; and there is a more distinct, clear, particular knowledge.
2. There is a mere notional knowledge, and there is a more effective, experimental knowledge.

To you my Father hath given eternal life, and, as means in order to it, to know more clearly, particularly, and distinctly the things that concern the kingdom of God; to know and to believe in me, who am the Saviour of the world: my Father hath no such special and particular kindness for the generality of this people, and therefore he hath not given to them the same aids and assistance.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: by him that hath, some understand, he that hath and maketh use of what he hath, and that is plainly the sense of it Mt 25:29, where it is the *epiparabola*, or conclusion of the parable about the talents. But though the preceding parable plainly leadeth to such a sense there, yet the preceding words

seem as directly to lead to another sense here, and what is the more natural and proper signification of the word *hath*, which most naturally signifies to have a thing in our possession. He that hath, therefore, in all reason signifies, he that hath that which, Mt 13:11, is said to be given. He that hath the saving knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. To him that doth not so much come to hear me out of curiosity, and comprehends by his understanding something of my will, but hath a heart that embraces and receiveth me, so as he believeth in me. To him that hath the seed of God in him as in good ground.

Shall be given: that is expounded by the next words, *and he shall have more abundance;* he shall have more grace, a more full, and clear, and distinct knowledge of me, and the things which concern my kingdom.

But whosoever hath not, hath not the seed of God, a true root of grace, in whom the seed of my word hath not fallen as in good ground, but only as in the highway, or in thorny or stony ground, *from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.* How can that be?

Answer: It must not be understood of things in the same nature and kind; Luke expounds it, Mt 8:18, by ο δοκει εχειν, that which either to himself or to others he seemeth to have. He that hath not a truth of grace may think he hath: his hope and opinion of himself shall fail. Others may, from his gifts and parts, think he hath. God shall unmask him, taking away his common gifts, or suffering him to fall into and be overcome by foul temptations. His gifts and parts shall decay, his moral righteousness will abate by God's just dereliction of him, and withholding his restraining grace.

Matthew 13:13

Ver. 13. Neither Mark nor Luke hath this, but it directly followeth from what they have, which also followeth here; only here it is plainly asserted concerning these hearers, and given as a reason why our Lord spake to them in parables. We shall in the explication of the following words inquire in what sense it is said, This people seeing, saw not, and hearing, heard not.

Matthew 13:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 13:15".

Matthew 13:15

Ver. 14,15. These words of the prophet are not less than five times found in the New Testament (besides by Matthew in these verses) applied to the Jews. They are taken out of Isaiah, Isa 6:9,10: *And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* It is quoted Mr 4:12 Lu 8:10, where the sense of the words only is quoted more shortly; Joh 12:40 Ac 28:26,27 Ro 9:8, more largely, yet with some more difference of phrase from that of the prophet. By all of them it appeareth, either that God spake those words to the prophet, as well with reference to those Jews that were to live in the time of Christ, as to those Jews who were living when Isaiah prophesied; or at least, that the words were as true of these Jews as they were of those, so the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in them. But the words are so differently related, that the prophet, and St. John, Joh 12:39,40, seem to make God the cause of the fatness of this people's hearts, the heaviness of their ears, and the blindness of their eyes: *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* So also Paul speaketh, Ro 11:8, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* Matthew saith, *This people's heart is waxed gross.* Matthew seemeth to speak of the more proximate cause; Isaiah, Luke, John, and Paul of the higher but remoter cause. Matthew, of their sinful act preceding; John, Luke, Paul, and Isaiah, of the judicial act of God, consequent to their sinful act. God first sent them Moses and the prophets, by whom they might have seen and known his will: they would not see, nor hear, nor understand, nor convert, nor be healed. God at last did leave them to the reprobacy of their own mind: he willed indeed the prophet to go and preach,

But, saith he, this shall be all the fruit of thy ministry, it shall but make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, they shall more and more shut their eyes: their time of conversion and healing is past; it is now too late, I will not convert, I will not heal them. Now (saith our Saviour) what was applicable to the Jews in the time of Isaiah, is in like manner applicable to you, and the prophet Isaiah did foretell what I should meet with. The generality of the people are a people that have so despised the grace of God, that their day of grace is over; God is resolved he will not convert nor heal them. They have had light, they have seen me and my works, they have heard my sermons and John Baptist's; in seeing they would not see, in hearing they would not hear nor understand. So they are fallen under a judicial hardness and blindness. They shall not now have the light as they have had: my Spirit shall no longer strive with them; neither shall they have a heart to make a due use of the means they have. This is doubtless the meaning of these words. And so they give a just reason why he spake to them in parables. And thus undoubtedly God doth to this day; when a people have a long time sat under a good and profitable ministry, wherein their souls have been dealt with plainly and faithfully, and they remain still ignorant, debauched, and unbelieving, God in a righteous judgment gives them over to the blindness of mind and hardness of heart under the ministry, that though it continue never so good amongst them, yet they are not affected with the word, but sleep and harden under it. Sometimes he by his providence suffers such a minister to come amongst them as speaketh nothing but parables, things which they understand not; or smooth things, fit to smooth them up in their sinful courses, and harden them in their prejudices against Christ and holiness. A most tremendous judgment of God. When God, antecedently to this contempt, by his providence sends such a ministry as may declare his willingness they should be saved and come to the knowledge of his truth; and consequently to this contempt, and despising of his grace, so dealth with them by his providence, either suffering their first seeming affections and edge to abate, (as the Jews are said for a while to have rejoiced in the light John brought), or suffering such a ministry to come amongst them, as one would think God sent lest men should convert and be healed. In the mean time Christ in this text excellently sets out God's method in his dealing with souls:

1. He bringeth them to hear and see.

2. Then he makes them to understand and believe.
3. Then he converts them, renews and changes their hearts.
4. Then he healeth them, pardoneth their sins, and accepts their persons, not because they are converted, but at the same time when he works faith in them, and giveth them a heart to repent.

Matthew 13:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on Mt "13:17".

Matthew 13:17

Ver. 16,17. Luke repeateth this passage, Lu 10:23, but not as annexed to this parable.

Blessed are your eyes; the eyes of your bodies and of your minds. With the eyes of your bodies you have seen the promised Messiah, come in the flesh; and you have seen the works which I have done, confirming me to be the Messiah: and with the eyes of your minds you have understood and believed.

For many prophets and righteous men (Luke adds, *kings*) *have desired to see those things which ye see, &c.* From the very first giving out of the promise of Christ to Adam, upon the fall, Ge 3:15, there was in believers an expectation of the Messiah, who being so great a good, so infinite a blessing to mankind, they could not but have a desire (if God had so pleased) to have seen him. But we are told that Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced. And Simeon's and Anna's expectation of him, mentioned Lu 2:34-38, lets us know that other pious souls had such desires. Our Saviour blesseth his disciples, that they had seen with the eyes of their bodies, what others had only seen afar off by the eyes of their minds, Heb 11:13.

Matthew 13:18

Ver. 18. Mark addeth a little check he gave them, Mr 4:13, *Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?* Luke saith, *The parable is this*, that is, My meaning in and by the parable was this. You, seeing that you cannot satisfy yourselves, as the most that heard me, hearing a sound of words without understanding what they meant, and seeing *that to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God*, and seeing that you see, God hath opened your eyes and ears to spiritual mysteries.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower: my true sense and meaning in this parable, my scope in it, was to show you the different effects which the word of God preached hath upon men's hearts, and the reasons of that difference.

Matthew 13:19

Ver. 19. Mark hath this thus, Mr 4:14,15, The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. Luke hath it thus, Lu 8:11,12, The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. From Luke we learn that the seed is the word; from Mark, that the sower is the preacher, Christ in the first place, then all who derive from him as his ministers, and are exercised in preaching the gospel, which Matthew calleth the word of the kingdom, because it is the instrument by which God raised up Christ's kingdom on earth, both in the church, and in particular souls, and by which he prepareth men for the kingdom of glory. This is a mighty commendation of the word. The soil is the heart, the soul of man. Now there are some hearers to whom the word preached is like seed that a sower throws upon some footpath, or highway, the plough never turneth the earth upon it, or the harrow never goeth over it; so it lieth bare, and is trodden down by the feet of passengers, and the fowls of the air come and pick it up. So, saith our Saviour, there are some that hear the word, but never meditate upon it, never lay it to their hearts, never cover it with second thoughts; the wicked ones, the devils, who are afraid of the power of the word digested, (like the fowls of the air), by suggesting other thoughts, or by presenting other

objects to them, catch away the word that was sown in their hearts. These are they whom I compared to the highway ground receiving the seed.

But some may say, how was it sown in their hearts, if the devil could thus catch it away?

Answer: By the heart here is meant the soul, which hath several powers and faculties. Every thing we hear goeth into our heart, in some sense. As the heart may signify the imaginative power of our soul, or that power by which we take the notion of a thing, the word doth enter into sinners' hearts, so far as they spend some thoughts upon it, and gain some knowledge and notion of it, yea, they may entertain it with some sudden and temporary affection and passion: indeed it is never so in their hearts, as that they truly believe it, or that their wills are conquered into the obedience of it.

Matthew 13:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 13:21".

Matthew 13:21

Ver. 20,21. Both Mark and Luke have this with no difference, save only in words, Mr 4:16,17 Lu 8:13. What Matthew calleth stony ground, Luke calls the rock. By the sun being up, and scorching the seed, in the parable, our Saviour meant tribulation or persecution, which Luke calleth *a time of temptation*, Lu 8:13.

Stony places are places where may be a little earth, but not much; he is here likened to such ground, who heareth the word, and anon (the Greek is εϑυς, which signifieth presently) with joy receiveth it, as Herod is said to have heard John the Baptist gladly. The word of God (as some other objects) doth often on the sudden affect some persons in whom it doth not take any deep root. A sudden passion surprises them, which is but like the overflowing of a brook, which is quickly down.

Yet hath he not root in himself, &c. Our Saviour here assigns two

causes of such hearers falling away, the one internal, the other external; the former is the great cause of the latter. By *root in himself* some understand constancy, or a serious resolution and purpose of heart; but this is doubtless but the product of this root, which is the same thing which the apostle calls *the seed of God*, Job calls *the root of the matter*; a principle of grace in a heart truly touched with the love of God and of his truth.

But dureth for a while; no longer than he thinks that he can by his profession attain the end he aimed at and propounded to himself, be it riches, or honour and reputation.

But when tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, or because of the word, when he seeth that he cannot own his profession without the danger of his estate, life, liberty, places, and preferments, &c. *by and by he is offended*, made to stumble and fall, he falls off from all his former profession of the gospel.

Matthew 13:22

Ver. 22. Mark adds, Mr 4:19, *and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word.* Luke saith, Lu 8:14, *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.* Under these terms, *the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, or the lusts of other things*, our Saviour comprehends all that which St. John calls *the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*. The immoderate desires of our hearts after lawful things, or their desires after things prohibited and unlawful, these he compares to thorns: as thorns in a ground choke the seed, shadowing the blade when it comes up, and keeping off the warmth of the sun, and drawing the fatness of the ground from it; so these divert men's thoughts; and draw men's affections off from the word of God, so as it bringeth forth no fruit; or if there be some little appearance of fruit, it dwindles away, and cometh to no perfection. None of these were profane, godless persons, who make no conscience of neglecting to hear the word preached; they are all hearers. Oh how strait is the way, how narrow is the gate, that leadeth to everlasting life! How few there be that find it!

Matthew 13:23

Ver. 23. Mark saith much the same, Mr 4:20. Luke saith, Lu 8:15, *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* To make a good Christian all these things must concur:

1. A hearing of the word.
2. An understanding or believing it.
3. A keeping of it.
4. A bringing forth of fruit.
5. A bringing forth fruit with patience.

He that receiveth the seed into good ground, is he (saith Luke) *who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it.*

The good ground, (in this parable), is the good and honest heart, that is, a heart renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

He heareth the word: he (saith the apostle) who is born of God, heareth us: *faith cometh by hearing. And understandeth it.* Mark saith, *receiveth it,* that is, not in the mere notion, but by faith, and a mind willing to learn and be instructed. Luke adds, and *keepeth it,* retains the savour and impression of it upon his soul.

Which also beareth fruit, the fruit of holiness in his life, in an obedience to the will of God; for all seed bringeth forth fruit according to his kind. Luke adds, *with patience,* by which is to be understood certainty, constancy, and perseverance, and that notwithstanding all trials and oppositions he meets with from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty; not all alike. A soul may be an honest and good soul, and that (as we see here) in Christ's opinion and judgment, though it doth not bring forth fruit in the same proportion with others.

Matthew 13:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:33

Ver. 24-33. Here are three parables by the evangelist put together before he cometh to the explication which our Saviour giveth of the first; all of them concerning the gospel church, and the dispensation of the gospel. In the one he instructs us what we are to expect as to the mixture of persons in it while it is in this world. In the other two concerning the increase and propagation of it. The first himself expounds, Mt 13:37-43. This parable is only found in Matthew. The other two are found, shortly both of them in Luke, one in Mark; neither of them are expounded. I will therefore, without any explication of these verses at present, go on to the verses following them, all which will lead me to our Saviour's own interpretation of the first of these parables; after which I will also consider these two parables that follow here, but are neither expounded here nor in the other evangelists.

Matthew 13:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 13:35".

Matthew 13:35

Ver. 34,35. Christ spake all the aforementioned things to the multitude, and also to his disciples, in parables, dark sayings, covering Divine and spiritual truths with fit and proper similitudes; and at this time he delivered himself wholly in this manner to them, though at other times he spake more plainly. He gave us the reason before; and by this way of speaking also he made his own disciples more diligent to attend to what they heard, and more inquisitive after the true sense and meaning of it. And thus, saith the evangelist, that which was spoken by the prophet, Ps 78:2, was also fulfilled in Christ: not that the psalmist, whether David or Asaph, did there prophesy concerning Christ, for plainly the psalmist intended to relate the history of God's dealing with the Jews, and their behaviour toward him. Nor was it fulfilled as the type in the antitype, but as a thing of the same nature was done. The prophet delivered

himself in dark sayings, so did Christ, but instead of *I will utter dark sayings of old*, the evangelist hath, *which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*; he means the great and mysterious things of the gospel, *hid from ages and generations*, Col 1:26 1Co 2:7 Ro 16:25, where it is called *the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*. As the psalmist opened his mouth in grave discourses, tending to the good of the people to whom he spake; so Christ taught the people, by revealing the mysteries of the gospel, *hid in God from the beginning of the world*, as Paul speaks to the Ephesians, Eph 3:9.

Matthew 13:36

Ver. 36. The multitude went away (as most people do from sermons) never the wiser, understanding nothing of what they heard, nor caring to understand it. But there was a more conscientious part of our Saviour's auditory, who could not thus satisfy themselves; they follow Christ into the house, and entreat him to open to them *the parable of the tares of the field*; they say nothing of the other two parables, because probably they understood them, and it may be this parable did more affect them, in regard of the dreadful conclusion of it.

Matthew 13:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 13:39".

Matthew 13:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 13:39".

Matthew 13:39

Ver. 37-39. The design that Christ had in this parable was to show them, that though he laid a good foundation of a church in the world, calling some home to himself; and making them partakers of his effectual grace, laying the foundation of his gospel church in such as took his yoke upon them; yet in process

of time, while those that should succeed him in his ministry slept, (not being so diligent and watchful as they ought to be), the devil (who is full of envy and malice to men's souls, and is continually going about seeking whom he may devour) would sow erroneous opinions, and find a party, even in the bosom of his church, who would hearken to him, and through their lusts comply with his temptations, both to errors in doctrine and errors in practice: and it was his will, that there should be in the visible church a mixture of good and bad, such bad ones especially as men could not purge out without a danger of putting out such as were true and sincere; but there would be a time, in the end of the world, when he would come with his fan, and thoroughly purge his floor, and take to heaven all true and sincere souls, but turn all hypocrites into hell. This appears, by our Saviour's exposition, to have been our Saviour's plain meaning in this parable. Hence he tells us, that by the sower here he meant himself, *the Son of man*. By *the field* he meant *the world*. By *the good seed* he meant *the children of the kingdom*; such as had a true change wrought in their hearts, were truly regenerated and converted. By *the tares* he meant the children of the wicked one, that is, of the devil; such as did the works of the devil, Joh 8:44. That *the enemy that sowed* these tares was the devil, who by his suggestions, presenting objects, &c., makes himself the father of all wicked men. Our Saviour here saith nothing to that part of the parable, where the tares are said to be sown *while men slept*; that was plain and intelligible enough. The devil hath a power to seduce, persuade, and allure, none to force. If particular persons kept their watch, as they might, the devil could not by his temptation force them. If magistrates and ministers kept their watches according to God's prescription, there could not be so much open wickedness in the world as there is. Neither doth our Saviour give us any particular explication of that part of the parable, which is Mt 13:28,29, where the servants say to their master, *Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up*. And he said unto them, *Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them*. Our Saviour by this teacheth us, that every passage in a parable is not to be fitted by something in the explication. It was not the point that he designed in this parable to instruct them in, how far church officers might or ought to act in purging the church; but only,

1. That in the visible church they must expect it mixture, till the day of judgment.

2. That in that day he would make a perfect separation.

So as those that would from this passage in the parable conclude, that all erroneous and loose persons ought to be tolerated in the church till the day of judgment, forget the common rule in divinity, that parabolical divinity is not argumentative. We can argue from nothing in a parable but from the main scope and tendency of it. However, it is bold arguing from a passage in a parable, expounded by our Saviour himself, when he hath omitted the explication of that passage; nor can any thing be concluded, but that such must not be rooted out as have such a resemblance of wheat from the outward appearance, that they cannot be rooted out without a hazard of a mistake, and a rooting up of the wheat with them. But our Saviour reserves the point of the ministerial duty in purging the church to another more proper time; he here saith, nothing of that, but of his own design to purge it at *the harvest*, which he interprets, *the end of the world*, that is, the day of judgment. By *the reapers* he tells us that he meaneth *the angels*.

Matthew 13:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:43

Ver. 40-43. As in the common practice of men, when they have a mind to pick their corn, and have it clean, when it is reaped, to set men to clean the wheat, and to pick out the tares, and, having tied them up in bundles, to burn them, so (saith he) I will do. I

will send my angels at the day of judgment, and they shall take out of my church all impenitent sinners, all those who in this world have been scandals, and offences, and mischievous to my people, and who have made it their business to work iniquity.

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. That is, into hell, which, in regard of the severe torments which the damned shall feel there, is often in Scripture compared to fire, as Mt 25:41, and in other texts, by which is only set out to us the dreadfulness of the punishment of the damned, that is proportioned to, if not far exceeding, that of the burning living bodies in fire. Having thus expressed the punishment of wicked men, he expounds what he means by gathering the wheat into his barn, viz. the taking of righteous men to heaven.

Then, saith he, shall the righteous, those whom I have clothed with my righteousness, and who have lived in obedience to my will to that degree, that though they be not perfectly righteous, yet are sincere and upright, so as I have accepted them, *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:* an expression much like that of Da 12:2,3, significative of that glorious state of the saints in heaven, which no eye having seen, nor ear having heard, no tongue is able to express. He concludes in the same manner as he concludes the parable of the sower, exciting his hearers to a diligent consideration and belief of what he had said.

Our Saviour adding no particular explication of the two parables delivered, Mt 13:31-33, the disciples not asking him to explain them, and the evangelist having put the explication of the first parable after them, it is reasonable, that though I omitted the explication of them in their proper place, yet I should add something here for the benefit of those who possibly will not be able so readily to conceive our Saviour's meaning in them without an interpreter as the disciples did, which is thought to be the reason why they asked no explication of them. The one is the parable of the *grain of mustard seed*, Mt 13:31,32; the other, the parable of *leaven hid in three measures of meal*, Mt 13:33. The scope of both is the same. Our Saviour intended them both to let his disciples know the success that his gospel should have over all the world, that they might not be discouraged at the little success of it at present. To this purpose he compares it, first, to a *grain of mustard seed*, which, he saith, is the least of all seeds,

that is, one of the least of seeds, or the least seed that produces so great a plant; but becomes a tree so high, *that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof*. Though that small seed with us runs up to a great height, and produces a plant which hath branches considerable enough to lodge birds which sit low, yet we must not judge of what grew in those countries by what groweth in ours; there are strange and almost incredible stories told of that plant by naturalists, as to its growth in some hot and fertile countries. Christ by this foretold his disciples, what following ages quickly verified, that the heathen should entertain the gospel, and the sound of it should go to the ends of the earth, notwithstanding its present small appearance. Upon the same score he compares it to a little *leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of meal, till the whole mass of meal was leavened*. By these two expressions our Saviour also lets us know the quick and powerful nature of the word; that Christ's words are (as he said) spirit of life, and have a hidden and extraordinary virtue in them. I do not think it worth the while to inquire into the contents of these σατα or measures of meal, and why he mentions but three. They are curiosities, the knowledge of which turneth to no account. Our Saviour certainly, by the expression, designed only to hint the small number of the Jews that believed in him, but foretold a far greater harvest.

The law should go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, as Isaiah prophesied, [Isa 2:3](#); but many people (after them) should say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord.

Matthew 13:44

Ver. 44. Whatsoever belongeth to the kingdom of God, whether the word, which is called *the word of the kingdom*, or the grace and favour of God, which he by me dispenses out under the administration of the gospel, *is like*, that is, should be adjudged, esteemed, and used like as *treasure hid in a field*. Men should do by it as they would do upon the discovery of a great sum of money, buried up in the earth, in some field not yet their own. Suppose a man had made some such discovery, what would he do? He would rejoice at it, he would hide it, he would sell all he had and buy that field. So should men do to whom there is a revelation of the gospel, and the grace thereof; they should

inwardly rejoice in the revelation, and bless God for it, and, whatever it cost them, labour that they might be made partakers of that grace. Earthly possessions cannot be had without purchasing, and those who have not ready money to purchase with must raise it from the sale of something which they have; therefore our labour for the kingdom of heaven is set out under the notion of buying. But the prophet, (Isa 55:1,2) let us know that it is a buying *without money and without price*. However, there is some resemblance, for as in buying and selling there is a parting with something that is ours, in exchange for something which is another's, so in order to the obtaining of the grace of the gospel, and the kingdom of glory, to which the remission of sins leadeth, we must part with something in order to the obtaining of it. We have no ready money, nothing by us, that is a *quid pro quo*, a valuable price for Divine grace; we must therefore part with something that we have, and it is no matter what it be, which God requireth. Where this discovery is made, the soul will part with all it hath, not only its old heart, its unlawful desires and lusts, but its riches, honours, and pleasures, if it can by no other means obtain the kingdom of heaven, that it may obtain it; they are all of no value to it. Nor is it at all necessary in order to buying, that the thing parted with be of a proportionable, value. Amongst men, wedges of gold have been purchased for knives and rattles, &c; nor doth any thing we can part with, that we may obtain the kingdom of heaven, bear any better proportion; yet it is a buying, because it is what God is pleased to accept, and upon the parting with gives us this heavenly kingdom.

Matthew 13:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 13:46".

Matthew 13:46

Ver. 45,46. The state of the gospel dispensation is such, that men in it having a discovery of more excellent things than before they were aware of, *life and immortality being brought to light through the gospel*, 2Ti 1:10, *grace and truth coming by Jesus Christ*, Joh 1:17, men and women are set upon seeking for these spiritual things, as merchants do for goodly pearls; and when God makes a discovery of Christ and his grace to the soul, it

appears to them as a *pearl of great price*, of more value than all they have in the world, and they are ready to part with all to obtain Christ and his grace. Both these parables have the same scope and tendency, viz.

1. To inform us that Christ and his grace are of a great and transcendent value.
2. That under the gospel there is a clear discovery of these things to the world.
3. That where this discovery is effectually and particularly made to any soul, that soul will part with all it hath, or is worth, rather than it will miss of Christ, and his grace and glory.

Matthew 13:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:50

Ver. 47-50. The scope of this parable is much the same with that of the tares, to teach us, that while the church is in this world there will be in it a mixture of good and bad, a perfect separation of which one from another is not to be expected until the day of judgment.

Again, the kingdom of heaven. This term signifieth the whole dispensation and administration of the gospel, both the grace dispensed in it, and the means of that grace which is administered under it. I should here interpret it of the preaching

of the gospel, which is called *the word of the kingdom*, being the means by which men are gathered in both to the church visible and invisible. This our Lord here compares to *a net*, thrown *into the sea* of the world, and gathering in of every kind, bringing in many to an outward profession, all of which shall not come to the kingdom of glory, nor are indeed true members of Christ; not members of the church invisible, though they be members of the church visible. When the end of the world shall come, and Christ shall have accomplished his design in the world, then a day of judgment shall come, and there shall be a perfect separation between such as received the gospel in truth, and in the love of it, and others: the former shall be taken to heaven, and the latter thrown into hell; which he expresses by the like phrases which he had before used in the parable of the tares, which need no further explication.

Matthew 13:51

Ver. 51. A conscientious teacher will have a respect to the profit of his hearers. Christ here setteth us an example, asking his disciples if they had *understood all these things*; as well those parables of which he had given them no particular explication, as those he had explained.

They say unto him, Yea, Lord, we have understood them.

Matthew 13:52

Ver. 52. Seeing you understand these things, communicate your knowledge of them unto others, do not know for yourselves alone.

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. The scribes amongst Jews were not only clerks, that were employed in writing, but teachers of the law; such a one was Ezra, Ezr 7:6. Our Saviour here by *every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God*, understandeth every good minister of the gospel, fitted to promote the kingdom of God, to be employed in the church of God: should be like a good *householder*, that hath not his provision to seek when his guests come; but hath a full fraught storehouse, and hath nothing to do but out of his stock

and storehouse to bring out all sort of provision, according to the various palates of his guests. Ministers of the gospel should not be novices, 1Ti 3:6, raw and ignorant men; but men mighty in the Scriptures, well acquainted with the writings of the Old and New Testament, and the sense of them; men that have a stock of spiritual knowledge, able readily to speak a word to the weary, and to speak to men and women's particular cases and questions.

Matthew 13:53

Ver. 53. See Poole on "Mt 13:54".

Matthew 13:54

Ver. 53,54. Mark relates this passage, Mr 6:1-4. Our Lord went up and down preaching the gospel: he having preached unto the people in the former parables, now he departeth from the seaside, where he preached as before, *into his own country*, most interpreters judge Nazareth; he was born in Bethlehem, but we read little or nothing of any time he spent there afterward. Nazareth was the place where he was brought up, and therefore he was called *Jesus of Nazareth*. There he preached in the synagogue, or in the synagogues of Galilee. Mark addeth, on the sabbath day.

Insomuch that they were astonished: it is not said they repented, or believed, but they admired at him, and were astonished.

And said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? That is, a power to do these mighty works. Mark saith, Whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this that is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Astonishment and admiration flow from ignorance, and are no indications of any spiritual saving work upon men's hearts: we shall see that these Jews, notwithstanding their astonishment, are by and by scandalized, and offended at Christ.

Matthew 13:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 13:57".

Matthew 13:56

Ver. 56. See Poole on "Mt 13:57".

Matthew 13:57

Ver. 55-57. Mark saith the same, Mr 6:3; only he saith, *Is not this the carpenter?* ο τεκτων; which leadeth some to think that Christ, till he was thirty years of age, wrought with Joseph upon his trade. Lu 2:51, it is said, *that he came to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents.* Joseph was an artificer, that was certain; so τεκτων signifies; but whether a carpenter, or a smith, the word will not inform us. For the brethren of Christ and his sisters, here mentioned, the most by them understand his near relations. The Jews were offended at the meanness of our Saviour's parents and relations.

They were offended in him; that is, these things made them stumble at him, and not receive him as the Messias, or a prophet sent from God. How unreasonable is malice and prejudice! One would have thought that their knowledge of his friends and education should have rather led them to have concluded that he must be sent from God, and more than a man, seeing that he did not come by this wisdom by any ordinary means, nor work these great works by any human power.

Matthew 13:58

Ver. 58. Mark saith, Mr 6:4-6, *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.* Our Lord here gives another more external reason of their being scandalized at him; that is, his being so familiar with them, and conversing so long with them: familiarity ordinarily breeding contempt: to this purpose he applies to them a proverbial speech, *That a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country.* Men are ready to

undervalue, slight, and disesteem those they have been brought up and ordinarily conversed with and amongst.

He did not many mighty works there (Mark telleth us he did some, but not many) *because of their unbelief*: he saw them a people whose hearts, through the just judgment of God, were locked and shut up under unbelief, and therefore it was to no purpose to do more miracles before them, upon whom they would have no effect; nor did this consist with what he knew of the counsels of God with reference unto them. So as he left them, and went preaching about the villages or country towns in Galilee.

Matthew 14:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 14:1,2 Herod's opinion of Christ.

Mt 14:3-12 The cause and manner of John the Baptist's death.

Mt 14:13-21 Jesus departeth into a desert place, and feedeth there five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.

Mt 14:22-33 He walketh on the sea to his disciples,

Mt 14:34-36 and landing at Gennesaret, healeth the sick who touched but the hem of his garment.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 14:2".

Matthew 14:2

Ver. 1,2. This and the following history is related by Mark more largely, Mr 6:14-30; by Luke more shortly, Lu 9:7-9. We heard before, that the Romans, under whom the Jews now were, had altered the government of the Jews from a kingdom to a tetrarchy, or government of four. Luke telleth us who were the tetrarchs, Lu 3:1. Herod (as we read there) was the tetrarch of Galilee. He had before this time put John Baptist to death, upon

what occasion, and in what manner, we shall hear by and by. He heareth of the fame of Jesus. Luke saith he *heard of all that was done by him, and was perplexed*; that some said *John the Baptist was risen from the dead*; others, *that Elias had appeared*; others, *that one of the old prophets was risen again*. But *Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him*. Mark saith, Mr 6:14, *that king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad): and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead*. So as it seems though others had various opinions, yet Herod was fixed in this, that this man was John the Baptist risen again from the dead. Though Luke reports him as speaking more doubtfully, (as he might do to the people), yet Matthew and Mark speak him affirming of it more confidently (probably to his courtiers and confidants). There was an opinion amongst the heathens, that the souls of men and women, when they died, went into other bodies. Some think that Herod was infected with that, and that this is the meaning of his suspicion that John was risen from the dead; that his soul, which he had forced from his body, was gone into another body, so as it might be revenged on him. Or else he thought that John was indeed raised from the dead, (which yet by search might quickly have been known), and therefore mighty works showed themselves in him.

Matthew 14:3

Ver. 3. Mark saith, Mr 6:17, *for he had married her*. Whether this Philip was Herod's brother both by father and mother, is argued by some, as also whether he married her during the life of his brother: the Scripture satisfieth us not in these things, but it is most probable that Philip was his own brother, and that he at least lived in adultery with her during the life of her husband, contrary to the express law of God, Le 18:16.

Matthew 14:4

Ver. 4. Mark telleth us, Mr 6:20, that Herod feared, that is, revered and respected, John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. John was very popular, and all men counted him as a prophet; so that probably Herod sent for him to the court, and heard him there. John seeing Herod live in adultery and incest, was not able to suffer such a sin upon him, but tells him he did that which was not lawful for him to do, for God's law had forbidden such marriages. Mark addeth, that Herodias also had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not, because of the respect which Herod had for him. But this wore off, for Matthew tells us ... (see Mt 14:5).

Matthew 14:5

Ver. 5. At first he had some reverence for John because he was a good man, but either John, by the frequent checks he gave to his lust, or Herodias, by her continual importunities to Herod to revenge her of her great enemy, prevailed, and made Herod willing enough to put him to death; but now he was afraid of some popular tumult, or insurrection, because of the great esteem which the Jews generally had of John, thinking him a prophet, one sent of God to reveal his will unto men.

Matthew 14:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 14:7".

Matthew 14:7

Ver. 7. Mark relates this more fully, but the sense is the same, Mt 6:21-23, *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.* Those who have got over the point of lawfulness in an action, have nothing to consult but convenience:

therefore saith Mark, *when a convenient day was come*, when probably Herod should be over merry with wine, or should be busy with his company, and not so much at leisure to consider what he did. It so happened that the daughter of this Herodias danced before Herod upon his birthday. The keeping of birthdays was usual amongst the eastern kings; Pharaoh kept his birthday, Ge 40:20. Some by it understand the day of the prince's coronation, or entrance upon his government, which some think is meant in Ho 7:5, by the *day of our king, (when) the princes made him sick with bottles of wine*. The Jews reckoned them both amongst the pagan festivals, but they had derived both this and many other usages from them. Dancing was much used amongst them at their festivals, It seemeth this daughter of Herodias pleased Herod more than ordinary; he sweareth that he would give her what she would ask, to the half of his kingdom. That phrase, by Es 5:3, seemeth to have been ordinary with princes when they made liberal promises.

Matthew 14:8

Ver. 8. Mark, Mr 6:24,25, reports it more largely: *And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste to the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist*. The meaning is plain, so as the words need no interpreter: they let us see;

1. The power of the lust of malice and desire of revenge; surely Herodias might have prompted her to have asked something which might have done her more good than the blood of a holy and innocent man. The guilty soul is never at rest. John Baptist was a prisoner; she should not need have feared the influence of John's word to have caused a divorce, but she cannot be at rest while John is alive.
2. The great evil of wicked parents, and the contrary blessing of parents fearing God: the former, by commanding or persuading their children to sin, are great instruments towards their children's damnation; the other, by their admonitions, precepts and instructions, great instruments of their salvation and eternal happiness.

3. We may observe the genius of flattering courtiers, not one of them interposes to save the Baptist's life.

Matthew 14:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 14:11".

Matthew 14:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 14:11".

Matthew 14:11

Ver. 9-11. Mark relates it more largely, in Mr 6:26-28, *And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sake which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. The king was exceeding sorry; he could have wished she had asked something else: he was troubled; for we heard before, that although he feared not God, yet he feared the people. Yet for his oath's sake; not out of any religion of his oath: Juramentum non petest esse vinculum iniquitatis.* They must be sottishly ignorant, that think their calling God to witness that they will do a thing which God hath forbidden them to do, should oblige them in any measure to the doing of the thing. But for his oath's sake, in point of honour, because his word was gone out, that he might not appear guilty of any temerity or levity; and for the sake of those that were with him, that he might not seem before them to vary from his word, or it may be, as well to gratify them as to gratify the damsel and her mother; he sends an executioner, who took off John the Baptist's head, and gave it to the damsel in a charger, who carried it to her mother. What could be more unjust, and inhuman, and bloody? John was not tried, nor condemned. It was a great festival, and should not have been profaned or defiled with blood. These things were nothing, when an insatiable malice was to be gratified. Herodias will have her husband and his guests see that John Baptist's head in a charger was to her as

pleasing a dish as any was at Herod's great feast. Thus died this great man, to satisfy the malice and lust of a lewd and imperious woman; and to teach us what we must expect, if we will be faithful to the trust which God reposes in us.

Matthew 14:12

Ver. 12. The disciples of John, in testimony of their respect to their master, and of their owning of his doctrine, and grateful remembrance of him, hearing what Herod had done, came and took up John's body, and buried it in a tomb, and they soon after went and acquainted our Saviour with what had happened; which was the cause of our Saviour's withdrawing to a place where he might be less taken notice of, as we shall hear.

Matthew 14:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 14:14".

Matthew 14:14

Ver. 13,14. Mark hath the same, Mr 6:32. Our Lord knew that the time for his suffering was not yet come, and possibly consulted also the safety of his disciples. The people follow him on foot; but our Saviour going by sea, how could the people follow him on foot? It is answered, that it was but a creek of the sea which our Saviour passed over, and the people by going three or four miles about might follow him on foot. He seeing a great multitude, had compassion on them, and healed the sick persons that were amongst them.

Matthew 14:15

Ver. 15. The following miracle being an evident confirmation of the Godhead of Christ, is recorded by all the evangelists: by Matthew here; by Mark, Mr 6:35, &c; by Luke, Mt 9:10-12, &c.; by John, Mt 6:1-3, &c. These words lead us to it, and show us the occasion of it. Our Saviour was withdrawn to a more private place, which, because little inhabited, is called *a desert place*.

Luke saith it was near Bethsaida, Lu 9:10. The people, as it seemeth, had been together some time. It was now afternoon, and the time of dining was past. It was evening in the Jewish sense (who called it all evening after the sun was turned, and therefore had two evenings, as those skilled in their writings tell us, betwixt which the passover was to be killed). The disciples therefore pitying the multitudes, who, they presumed, might be hungry, come to our Saviour, and move him to dismiss them, that they might get something to eat in the villages of the adjacent country.

Matthew 14:16

Ver. 16. John relates the story thus: *When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him. Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

Matthew 14:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:21

Ver. 17-21. In the relation of this story by the other evangelists there is no difference in what is material; the others relate some circumstances more, as that they sat down on the grass, and *by fifties*, one saith, *by hundreds and by fifties*, &c.; but they all agree in the quantity of the provision, *five loaves and two fishes*; the number of the persons fed, *five thousand* (only one addeth, *besides women and children*); and in the number of the baskets full of fragments; and in our Saviour's lifting up his eyes to heaven, and blessing them. These are the main things observable in this history. In the history of the miracle, as there is no difference between the evangelists to be reconciled, so there is no difficulty to be explained. It is a plain relation of a matter of fact, by which our Lord evidently showed himself to be the Son of God, God blessed for ever, for he must in this necessarily exert a creating power: here must be a production of a substance or being out of a not being, or it had not been possible that five thousand men (besides women and children) should have been fed with five loaves and two fishes; and therefore some think that it is said that Christ blessed the loaves as he blessed the living creatures, Ge 1:22; but we have not here the following words, *Be fruitful and multiply*, which inclines me rather to think, that the blessing mentioned here, upon his lifting up of his eyes to heaven, was a begging God's blessing upon their food, himself thereby paying the homage of his human nature to his Father, and teaching us, according to that, 1Ti 4:4,5, to receive the good creatures which God's providence affords us for our nourishment with thanksgiving, sanctifying them by prayer. By this miracle, and others of the like nature, our Saviour took from the unbelieving Jews all manner of cavil and exception to his works. Though devils might by compact give place one to another, and some exorcists of their own might seem to cast them out, yet none ever pretended to multiply bread and fish, to such a proportion as this, that such a quantity of either should feed such a number, and leave such a remainder. This history like wise further instructs us, both concerning the low condition of Christ and his disciples, their faith in the word of Christ, and

our duty, and safety in depending upon his providence while we are doing of our duty, and minding the things of the kingdom of God, and obeying the will of God. St. John observeth the fruit of this miracle, Joh 6:14, *Those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

Matthew 14:22

Ver. 22. Mark saith, Mr 6:45, *before unto, or over against, Bethsaida.* Christ is said to have constrained them, to denote to us that they were not very willing to go. They were in a desert place, it was towards night, the day was far spent ere he wrought the miracle before mentioned; probably they were loath to leave Christ alone, in such a place, and at such a time. But his command was obeyed. Probably he commanded;

1. That he might better scatter the multitude, Mr 6:45.
2. That he might prevent a tumult, for St. John tells us, that the people had a design *to take him by force and make him a king, Joh 6:15.*
3. To make way for another miracle, to which their going by sea gave occasion, as we shall hear by and by.
4. To gain himself a private opportunity for prayer, for, Mr 6:46, *When he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.* So also saith our evangelist.

Matthew 14:23

Ver. 23. John saith no more than that he departed himself into a mountain alone. Matthew and Mark say it was to pray. From whence (as from others places of holy writ) the duty of secret prayer is commended to us by the great example of our Saviour: he chooseth the mountain for it, as a place of greatest privacy and solitude.

And when the evening was come: this confirmeth the former notion, that the Jews had two evenings. They called that part of

the day after the sun had began to decline the evening, which was the evening before spoken of, interpreted by the other evangelists, when the day was well spent; and the twilight, which is here called the evening, and which is the time which we most usually call by that name.

Matthew 14:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:27

Ver. 27. While our Saviour was praying on the mount the ship which carried his disciples was upon the sea, that is, that creek of the sea which they were at that time passing over. A storm ariseth, not without the counsel of God, that Christ might show that both the winds and the waves were under his command.

And in the fourth watch of the night, that is, about three hours before the rising of the sun; for though the Jews anciently divided the night into three parts, each consisting of four hours, yet being at this time under the Romans, they kept to their division of it into four parts, which they called watches, from their military guards, which they relieved every three hours.

Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea, as if it had been firm ground.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear. By this it seemeth that the doctrine of spirits was not strange to that

age, though they had a sect of Sadducees which denied it. That the devil, by God's permission, hath a power to trouble and agitate the air, and also to assume a visible shape, and in it to affright persons by sea or by land, is unquestionable. When the disciples at distance saw Christ walking on the sea, they concluded it was some such apparition. This made them cry out through fear.

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Mark addeth, Mr 6:52, *They considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened.* Having had so late an experience, both of the power and goodness of their Master, in their late strait for want of bread, they ought not so soon to have showed a distrust in his providence, as if he would have suffered them to have perished in the sea: that miracle did not make a due impression upon them.

Matthew 14:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:31

Ver. 29-31. Peter, by saying *if it be thou*, showed that his faith was not so strong as it should have been, after he had heard his Master's voice. By his saying to him, *bid me come unto thee on the water*, he showeth a something stronger faith, and a resolution to obey his command; but his fear afterward, when the wind began to rise higher, and he began to sink, argued again the infirmity of his faith. Thus Peter is a pattern of the best believers,

who though they may sometimes think that they could trust God in any state or condition, yet often mistake their own hearts, and begin to shrink in an hour of great extremity; which lets us see what need we have to pray, that God would not lead us by his providence into great temptations, much more to take heed that we do not throw ourselves into them. No man knows how he shall find his heart under a great temptation, until he hath tried it. It therefore gives us a caution, as against condemning others, so against boasting, and too much confidence as to ourselves, and lets us see how much need we have to keep our eye upon Christ and his strength in such an hour.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand: God is never far off from his people when extreme troubles are hard at hand. Christ says Peter, but not without a cheek;

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Doubting is directly contrary to faith, yet it will not conclude a soul to have no faith, only a little faith.

Matthew 14:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 14:33".

Matthew 14:33

Ver. 32-33. *They,* that is, Christ and Peter, whom we must suppose to have walked some way with Christ upon the sea. Christ by his company making his mighty power more conspicuous; so as the Manichees had no reason to conclude, from Christ's walking on the sea, that he had no true human body, for sure Peter had; and they must ascribe little to our Saviour's Divine nature, that will not allow him to have had a power to suspend the natural motion downward, which we see in all gravity, which is an affection of all human bodies. No sooner was Christ come into the ship, but the wind ceased, in testimony of its homage to him, who bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

They that were in the ship came and worshipped him, paying a religious homage unto him, as he who had preserved their lives from so great a danger; and they further owned him to be *the Son*

of God. This was that great point which God was bringing the world to the acknowledgment of, and we see it was done by degrees. His miracles at first only procured a veneration of him, and a faith that he had his power from God. Then he comes to be acknowledged *the Son of David* by the blind man. The miracle of the five loaves brought many to acknowledge him *that Prophet that should come into the world*. This is the first time we meet with so plain and open an acknowledgment of his being the Son of God: this was done not only by his disciples, but by the mariners, and the passengers in the ship, but it was far from a steady faith as to that point, which the disciples yet wanted.

Matthew 14:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 14:36".

Matthew 14:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 14:36".

Matthew 14:36

Ver. 34-36. Mark relates the same, Mr 6:53-56, with no difference considerable. Christ had been in this country before, Mt 8:1-34, and in it wrought several miracles, so as they had a former knowledge of him. As soon as they had knowledge of his being again come, they express their faith in him, and their charity towards their neighbours, in telling it abroad, and bringing sick persons to him. I know not why any should fancy any superstition in their desire to *touch the hem of his garment*, considering how Mark expresses it, $\kappa\alpha\upsilon$, which we translate, *if it were but the border of his garment*. It rather soundeth in my ears as a high expression of their faith; they believed there was such a fulness of virtue in Christ, that it flowed from him to every part of his garment. It was their faith in Christ, not their touch of his garment, that healed them. I am sure our Lord so far encouraged their faith, that he healed all those who touched his garment with that faith and expectation. The evangelist saith, they *were made perfectly whole*. Their faith here plainly implied not only an assent to his power, but a confidence in his goodness.

Matthew 15:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 15:1-9 Christ reproveth the scribes and Pharisees for setting their own traditions above the commandments of God.

Mt 15:10-20 He teacheth that not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of it, defileth a man.

Mt 15:21-28 He healeth the daughter of a woman of Canaan,

Mt 15:29-31 and great multitudes near the sea of Galilee.

Mt 15:32-39 He feedeth four thousand and upwards with seven loaves and a few small fishes.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 15:2".

Matthew 15:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark relates this piece of history more largely, Mr 7:1-5, *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain, of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?* This portion of Scripture cannot be well understood without understanding something of the Jewish government as to matters ecclesiastical; in which the high priest was the chief. God addeth seventy men more to Moses and Aaron, Nu 11:25, to bear a share in the government; these were called the sanhedrim; and

this was the supreme court of judicature amongst the Jews, as to all things which respected the laws of God, whether moral, judicial, or ceremonial, and every one was bound to abide by their determination. These sat in Jerusalem, but had their inferior courts in other places, from which they appealed to the sanhedrim, who finally determined, De 17:8-13. It was the great business of this court to take care that there should be no corruption in religion. These were they therefore that sent messengers to John, when he began to preach, to inquire what he was, and by what authority he baptized, Joh 1:19. The Pharisees (as we before heard) had charged our Saviour's disciples with violation of the sabbath by plucking and rubbing ears of corn, and himself also with the same crime for healing the sick. It is very like these accusations were got to Jerusalem, and that these were emissaries sent from the sanhedrim to watch our Saviour, or possibly they came out of their own curiosity. They could find in our Saviour no guilt as to any violation of the law of God, but they pick a quarrel with him for some rites and ceremonies of their church, which he and his disciples were not so strict in the observation of. They say, *Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?* The word *traditions* signifies only things delivered, and is as well applicable to the law of God as any thing else. Thus the whole law of God was but a tradition, a doctrine of life, delivered to the Jews by Moses from God: thus the apostle bids the Thessalonians, *Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*, 2Th 2:15. But the term of *the elders* is that which restraineth it, for as the papists in our time hold that, besides what we have in the New Testament, the apostle delivered many things to the primitive church only by word of mouth, which have since that time been imparted to succeeding churches, to the observation of which Christians are as much obliged as to the written word, so the Jews did formerly. For though, for some tract of time, they kept to the Divine law, yet in process of time they abused that text, De 4:14, to found a new invention upon it: That while Moses was in the mount of God forty days and forty nights, God in the day time revealed to him the law written in the five books of Moses, and in the night he revealed to him several other things, as to which his will was they should not be written, for fear the heathens should transcribe them, but be delivered only by word of mouth to the sanhedrim, and be to them as much a rule of judgment as any part of the law which was written. By which means they gained themselves a liberty of making the law of

God what they pleased, for their traditions were of several sorts. Some were determinations of what in the law seemed doubtful. Others were determinations of what the law left at liberty. Others they called *sepimenta legis*, rules they gave under pretence of a guard to the Divine law; for the more caution, that they might not transgress it. These things at first were not imposed as laws, but commended by way of advice and counsel, afterward they came to be looked upon as laws, and grew almost infinite. They tell us that Ezra was he who gathered those traditions together, and made the Cabbala in seventy-two books, which was kept by Gamaliel and others till the destruction of Jerusalem. A hundred and twenty years after, they tell us Rabbi Judas, the son of Simon, composed a book of them, called Misna. Three hundred years after this, they tell us R. Johanan found more, and he and others, his colleagues, collected them into a larger book, called the Jerusalem Talmud. A hundred years after this, another rabbi made a collection of the traditions amongst the Jews that remained in Babylon, which he called the Babylonish Talmud; by which two the Jews are governed in ecclesiastical matters, all the world over, at this day. Their whole Talmud is divided into six parts. The sixth is about purifications; it containeth twelve books, and every book hath twenty or thirty chapters, all treating about the purifying of houses, clothes, vessels, human bodies, and their several parts. The Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem were in such an afflicted state, that though their Talmud was not perfected of five hundred years and more after Christ, yet it is probable they added not much to what they had in use in Christ's time. The Pharisees were very severe as to these traditions. The Sadducees kept more to the written law. But the Pharisees were in far greater credit with the Jews, therefore Paul called them the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, Ac 26:5. The Jews have several ordinary sayings, that show in what esteem they had these traditions, as, *If the scribes say our right hand is our left, and our left hand our right, we are to believe them. And, There is more in the words of the scribes than the words of the law, &c.* These scribes and Pharisees accuse our Saviour's disciples for the violation of one of these traditions. Mark saith, that *the Pharisees, and all the Jews,* (that is, the major part of those that followed the Pharisees' faction), *except they wash their hands oft, eat not.* They thought it sinful to eat unless they often washed their hands. The foundation of this tradition was doubtless in the Levitical law. God by that law had declared him unclean that should touch the carcass of any unclean thing, Le

5:2,3. Upon this (as some think) they had superstructed a tradition of washing their hands, pots, cups, vessels, when they had been at the market, or almost any where, for fear they, or their pots, cups, &c., should have touched any unclean person or thing. In this they were guilty of several errors:

1. Extending the law to the touching of things and persons, of whom the law had said nothing.
2. In cases where such touches happened accidentally, and were not made on purpose.
3. In thinking that the stain of sin could be washed away by a ritual action, which God never commanded.

We must not think that they charge the disciples here with a neglect of a civil washing for cleanliness, but of a religious superstitious washing.

Mark saith, κοιναις χειρσι, that is, with common hands; we translate it, polluted: so Ac 10:14 11:8: hands not first separated to God by the religious rite of washings.

Matthew 15:3

Ver. 3. Mark hath the same, Mr 7:9, though a little out of the order in which Matthew hath it: *Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*. Our Saviour could have answered them, had he pleased, more strictly to their questions, but he must then either have incurred danger or odium; he therefore chooseth to answer them by another question, which struck at the root of the matter. Admit, saith he, my disciples culpable in not observing traditions, which indeed you call the traditions of the elders, but are your own, devised by you, or some like you, merely to uphold your power and authority, and to keep people in a needless subjection to you: I am sure you are far more guilty, in making traditions contrary to the law of God, or rejecting God's law to keep your traditions. And indeed this is the common guilt of those who are great zealots for traditions and rites, not commanded in the word of God. The Jewish Rabbi Jose saith, *He sinneth as much who eateth with unwashen hands, as he that lieth with an harlot*. The

papists make it a greater sin for a priest to marry than to keep a concubine, and commit fornication; they make it a lesser transgression than to eat meat on a Friday.

Matthew 15:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 15:6".

Matthew 15:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 15:6".

Matthew 15:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark hath much the same, Mr 7:10-13. Mark saith *Moses said*, which is the same with *God commanded*: God commanded by Moses. Mark saith, *It is Corban, that is to say, a gift*. Mark addeth, Mr 7:12, *And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother;* which more fully shows their crime, and expounds what Matthew had said more shortly. Mark adds, *and many such like things do ye*. This is an instance by which our Saviour justifieth his charge upon them, that they had made void the law of God by their traditions. The law he instances in is the fifth commandment, Ex 20:12 De 5:16; which the apostle calleth *the first commandment with promise*, Eph 6:2; which God had fortified with a judicial law, wherein he had commanded, that *he who cursed his father and mother should be put to death* Ex 21:17 Le 20:9 he had also further threatened the violaters of this law, Pr 20:20. By the way, our Saviour here also lets us know, that the fifth commandment obliges children to relieve their parents in their necessity, and this is the sense of the term *honour* in other texts of Scripture: a law of God which hath approved itself to the wisdom almost of all nations. *Liberi parentes alant aut vinciantur*, Let children relieve their parents or be put into prison, was an old Roman law. Nor did the Pharisees deny this in terms, but they had made an exception from it, which in effect made it of no use, at least such as wicked children easily might, and commonly did, elude it by: they had taught the people to say to their parents, *It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me:* and in

that case, though they did not give their poor parents any thing wherewith they might relieve their necessities, yet they should be guiltless as to the fifth commandment. There is a strange variety of interpreters as to this text. Some making the sense this, That which I should relieve you with I have dedicated unto God, and therefore I cannot relieve you. Others thus, I have dedicated my estate to God, and that will be as much good and benefit to you, as if I had given it unto you. Others think that Corban was the form of an oath, from whence they form other senses. But the most free and unconstrained sense seemeth to be this: The Pharisees were a very courteous generation, and had a share in the gifts that were brought unto God for the use of the temple or otherwise; thence they were very zealous and diligent in persuading people to make such oblations. When any pretended the need that their parents stood in of their help, they told them, that if they told their parents it was *a gift*, that they had vowed such a portion of their estate to a sacred use, that would before God excuse them for not relieving their parents; so as the precept of honouring their parents, and relieving them in their necessities, obliged them not, if they had first given to God the things by which their parents might or ought to have been relieved. Thus he tells them, that by their traditions, under pretence of a more religion, and expounding the Divine law, they had indeed destroyed it, and made it of no effect at all.

Matthew 15:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 15:9".

Matthew 15:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 15:9".

Matthew 15:9

Ver. 7-9. The Greek is, διδασκοντες διδασκαλιας, teaching doctrines, the commandments of men.

Ye hypocrites, who put on an outward vizard or appearance of holiness, but have nothing in your hearts of true and severe piety,

well did Isaiah prophesy of you: Isaiah spake to the Jews that were then in being, but what he then said of your forefathers that lived in his age, is true of you who are their children.

Saying, This people, &c. The evangelist doth not quote the words of the prophet exactly, but his sense, and teacheth us this lesson, That whatsoever outward show and profession of religion be in and upon men, if their hearts be not right with God, and what they outwardly do proceed not from an inward principle of faith, love, and obedience in and to God, they are but hypocrites.

In vain do they worship me, &c.; that is, idly, and unprofitably, and to no purpose: I will not account what they do.

Teaching doctrines, the commandments of men: he means in the worship of God, for other commandments of men are not the preacher's texts, nor doth he here mean by *commandments of men* such as backed the commandments of God, and only served to enforce them, but such as he had been speaking of, human traditions, of which God had said nothing, as washing of hands; or such traditions as enervated the commandments of God; such were the last mentioned.

Matthew 15:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 15:11".

Matthew 15:11

Ver. 10,11. Mark hath the same, Mr 7:15. Our Saviour turns off his discourse from the Pharisees and scribes, who he saw were indocible, to the multitude, in whom he discerned a more teachable temper: he useth the preface, *Hear, and understand*, as well knowing how they had been taught, and what an advantage error in possession hath. That which he tells them, and that before the scribes and Pharisees, (as will appear by the following verses), was, that that which goeth into a man doth not defile him, but that which cometh out of him. He speaketh not of a Levitical pollution, for so he that did eat of an unclean thing might by it be defiled; but even in such an eating it was not the flesh of the unclean bird or beast that defiled the man, but his

sinful lusting after it, and eating it in disobedience to the command of God.

Matthew 15:12

Ver. 12. The Pharisees' offence was, without question, at his making so light a matter at their washings; not that they understood our Saviour as speaking against the distinction of meats, which was established by the ceremonial law, not as yet abrogated. There is nothing doth more offend hypocrites than pressing spiritual worship and homage to God, and the slighting of all external rites and actions, not attended with a suitable inward homage and devotion of heart.

Matthew 15:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 15:13".

Matthew 15:14

Ver. 13,14. *Every plant* may be understood of doctrines, practices, or persons. These scribes and Pharisees are a wretched generation, that are got into the sheepfold not at the door; my Father never sent them, they are crept in at the windows, they are plants got into my garden, which my Father never planted there, and they must be rooted up.

Let them alone, they are incorrigible, and blinded by their own interest against any conviction or instruction: as, Ho 4:17, *Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone:* so these men are joined to their superstitious traditions; I will not concern myself with them. They are pretended leaders of the blind, Ro 2:19, but themselves are blind. I pity the poor people, for while the blind lead the blind they both fall into a ditch. An ignorant and unfaithful ministry is the greatest plague God can send amongst a people.

Matthew 15:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 15:16".

Matthew 15:16

Ver. 15,16. Mark saith, *his disciples asked him concerning the parable.* Peter probably began, the rest followed. Or Peter speaks in the name of the rest, for our Saviour in his answer doth not say, Art thou, but, *Are ye.* They did well in that they desired to be instructed what the meaning was of the parable, that is, the dark saying, which he used (for the Hebrews called all dark sayings parables); possibly they might also stumble at what our Saviour said, as tending to the destruction of the ceremonial law, about the difference of meats. But that they were no better instructed than not to understand a thing so plain and obvious, this was their fault, and argued their small improvement of our Saviour's company. God expects a proficiency in knowledge from us proportionate unto the means he giveth us.

Matthew 15:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:20

Ver. 17-20. Mark hath this, with very small difference in words, Mr 7:18-23; only he specifies some more sins than Matthew enumerates. The sum of what our Saviour saith is this: That all sin proceedeth from lust, some desires in the heart of man after things forbidden in the law of God. All the ticklings of our hearts with such thoughts, all the willings and desires of such things,

though they never issue in overt acts, yet defile and pollute a man; and from these inward motions of the heart proceed those overt acts (mentioned by Matthew or Mark) of *murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, pride, foolishness*: now these things, take them in their nest, which is the heart, they defile and pollute that; take them in their passage through our lips into the world, they pollute that; take them in their overt act, they pollute the man. But to eat with unwashen hands, a thing no where forbidden by God, only by the Pharisees, who had no such authority given them from God to command any such things, this doth not pollute a man. It is possible that men may sin in not obeying the commandments of men, but it must be then in things in which God hath authorized them to command, and to determine our practice in, for the pollution lies in a disobedience to the commandment of God, not of men.

Matthew 15:21

Ver. 21. Mark addeth, Mr 7:24, *and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid.* Some here make a question, whether our Saviour did go into Phoenicia, (of which Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities), or only into the coasts of Palestine, next to it: those that think he did not go into Phoenicia, are guided by his prohibition of his disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles, Mt 10:5, and the consideration that the time was not yet come for his manifestation to the Gentiles. I rather incline to think that he went into Tyre and Sidon; and that this was a kind of a *praeludium* to the calling of the Gentiles, and a prediction of what should be done more fully afterwards. It is manifest he did not go with a design to make himself public there, for Mark saith, he *would have no man know it.* But for privacy withdrew himself thither, and showed some of his miraculous operations there; and Mt 15:22 saith the woman that came to him was a Canaanite. Mark saith she was *a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation.* Nor is here any contradiction, for ever since the Grecian monarchy prevailed over so great a part of the world, the name of Greeks had obtained, so as they called all Greeks who were not Jews, Ro 1:14, 16 10:12.

A Syrophenician, saith Mark, *by nation;* that is, one that was a native of that part of Phoenicia which is joined to Tyre and

Sidon. Matthew calls her a Canaanite, or a woman of Canaan, by which though some would understand one of Cana, yet as the orthography will not agree, so Mark calling her a Greek, and a Syrophenician, inclines us rather to judge her of the stock of the old Canaanites.

Matthew 15:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 15:23".

Matthew 15:23

Ver. 22,23. Mark saith, A certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs, Mt 7:25-27. Though the woman appears to have been a pagan, yet living so near Galilee, she had doubtless heard of Christ, both what he had done in casting out devils, and also that he was looked upon as the Son of David, and usually called by that name by those who went to him for any cures; she therefore gives him that title. Others think her to have been more specially enlightened, and to have called him the Son of David, not as a usual compellation given him, but as believing him to have been the true Messias promised to the Jews: nor is that impossible, for though the gospel at this time had not shined out upon any considerable number of the heathen, yet God in all times had his number amongst them; and this woman living so near to the Jews, and so near to Galilee, where our Saviour hitherto had most conversed and preached, it is not improbable that she might have received the grace as well as the sound of the gospel, so God might have kindled in her heart a true faith in the Messias. Our Saviour's commendation of her faith in the following discourse maketh this very probable. Matthew saith that he answered her not a word. Mark saith that he said to her, Let the children first be filled, &c. To the observing reader this will appear no contradiction. For by Mark it should appear, that she first came to our Saviour into the house, into which he went that he might be private, and there fell at his feet. Here Christ

answered her not a word, took no notice of her at all. But it appeareth by Matthew that Christ soon left the home, and she followed after him upon the way. The disciples said, Send her away; for she crieth after us. Then it was that our Saviour said to her, Let the children first be filled; his disciples first interposing, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. How many of the papists think that this text patronizes their invocation of saints departed I cannot tell, for these disciples were alive, and we do not read that she spake to any of them to intercede for her. It is certain they did move Christ on her behalf.

Matthew 15:24

Ver. 24. Our Lord by these words doth not deny but that he was sent as a Redeemer to more, but not as a minister, or as an *apostle*, as he is called, Heb 3:1. The apostle, Ro 15:8, saith, *that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers*. Our Lord's ministry was confined to the Jews; so was the apostles', Mt 10:5. Till some time after our Saviour's ascension the gospel was not preached generally to the Gentiles, though some particular persons might and did, both in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles, before they did go to the Gentiles, hear, receive and embrace the gospel, as we shall hear this woman did.

Matthew 15:25

Ver. 25. She here acknowledgeth his Divine power, and implores his help; thus showing that she believed him to be the Son of God, and a rewarder of those that sought him; and continues her request after two repulses.

Matthew 15:26

Ver. 26. Mark saith, Mr 7:27, *Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet, &c.* By the *children* here he means the Jews, by the *dogs* he means the heathen. The Jews are called the children of the kingdom. Israel is called God's *son*, his *firstborn*, Ex 4:22. The apostle, Ro 9:4, saith, to them belonged the *the adoption*. By *bread* here our Saviour

means the publication of the gospel, and the miracles by which the truth of the doctrine of it was confirmed; by *dogs* he means the heathen, whom the Jews did count as dogs, no members of the household of God: it was a term of contempt, 2Sa 3:8 2Sa 16:9 2Ki 8:13. When our Saviour saith, *It is not meet* he means it is not just, nor equal.

Objection: How came it then that the gospel was ever carried to the Gentiles?

Mark expounds our Saviour's meaning, or rather gives us an account of our Saviour's words, more perfectly: *Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet, &c.* The Jews are God's children, a people whom he chose out of all the nations of the earth, to whom he gave many privileges; it is his will the gospel should be first preached to them, and then to the Gentiles. Gentiles are as dogs, of whom God hath not taken such a care; but they shall have their time. Only it is not consonant to my Father's will that the gospel, and the miracles by which it is confirmed, should be exhibited unto you Gentiles, till it hath been fully preached to the Jews, and they be first filled with the sound, and with the confirmations of it.

Matthew 15:27

Ver. 27. Mark reports it to the same sense, Mr 7:28. She goeth on after three repulses, the last of which was not without a reproach, for our Lord had implicitly called her a dog. These words are as much as if she had said, Lord, I confess the Jews are children; I am a dog, a poor heathen, no proper member of the household of God; and it is truth that it seemeth unreasonable that I, being a dog, should be served before all the children are filled. Lord, I do not beg such a full manifestation of thy power and goodness for the Gentiles. I beg but a crumb of mercy for myself and poor child; and, Lord, though we do not use to give our loaves prepared for our children to the dogs that feed under our table, crumbs of our children's bread, as Mark expresses it, yet we suffer our dogs to gather them up. Lord, I know thou hast a plenty of grace and blessing, the children may be filled, and yet I may have some crumbs. Three things are remarkable in her answer, besides her faith so eminently expressed.

1. Her humility; she owneth herself a dog.
2. Her modesty; she begs no more than a crumb.
3. Her fervency and importunity after three repulses.

By this we learn our duty in prayer, to go to God humbly, to implore him modestly, and to be instant in prayer, going on in our duty, though we have not presently such an answer as we desire. These things, conjoined with faith, make an acceptable prayer.

Matthew 15:28

Ver. 28. Mark saith, Mr 7:29, *And he said unto her. For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. O woman! For this saying, showing the greatness of thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt. Go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*

And her daughter was made whole from that very hour, as she understood when she came home to her house, for she found the devil was gone out of her daughter, and her daughter was laid upon the bed. Thus the words of both the evangelists compounded make but one entire and perfect sense. The greatness of her faith appeared in two things:

1. In that she had so little means, so small a revelation; being a pagan, she ordinarily had not heard the gospel, nor seen so many of Christ's mighty works, confirming the truth of the doctrine of it. Hence it is observed, that Christ admired the faith of none but pagans, Mt 8:10.
2. In that she would not give over, though he gave her three repulses. So as she said, like Jacob, I will not let thee go, until thou bless me. And as he, like a prince, so she, like a princess, prevailed with God, and obtained the thing which she desired.

But will some say. Where was her faith? What promise, what word of God, had she to assent to? God doth not speak to us outwardly, but inwardly, as undoubtedly he had to this woman,

giving her some inward assurance that he was the Son of God, and both able and willing to grant her the thing she asked. Now a firm and fixed assent to any Divine revelation is faith, whether the revelation be internal or external. We from hence learn the mighty power of true faith and fervent prayer.

Matthew 15:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 15:31".

Matthew 15:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on Mt "15:31".

Matthew 15:31

Ver. 29-31. Mark gives us an account of this motion of our Saviour's, Mr 7:31-37, and mentions a particular miracle which our Lord wrought, either in the way, or when he came to the place where he rested; which not being mentioned by our evangelist, I shall consider when I come to that chapter in Mark. Matthew only tells us in general that he healed many, some lame, some that were blind, some that were dumb, &c. Such a general account of the miracles wrought by our Saviour we had Mt 4:24 8:16 11:5; the evangelist not largely setting down every particular miracle wrought by our Saviour. And they glorified the Lord God of Israel. The Pharisees ascribed these operations to the devil's power, but the poor people owned them as the works of God, and gave praise unto God.

Matthew 15:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:39

Ver. 32-39. Mark gives us an account of this miracle, Mr 8:1-10. There is very little difference in their relations, only Mark saith, our Saviour went *into the parts of Dalmanutha*; Matthew saith, *into the coasts of Magdala*: most think that it was the same place, which had two names: some think one was the name of the country, the other of the city or town; others, that they were two towns near together. There are no difficulties in this history. Some question how they could fast three days; but the text doth not say so, only that at that time they had nothing to eat, having spent what they brought with them, probably in their baskets, which answers another question also, how they could get baskets in the wilderness. The miracle was of the same nature with that which we met with Mt 14:15-22; only there were five thousand men fed with five loaves and two fishes, here four thousand were fed with seven loaves and a few fishes; there they took up

twelve, here but seven baskets full. Our Lord worketh sometimes without means, sometimes by means, and those differently proportions to his end, as it pleaseth him. The miraculous operations of our Saviour are amongst his *miranda et adoranda*, not his *imitanda*. These actions of his, which we are in reading to admire and adore, but are not concerned to imitate, yet something we may observe from them, both for our instruction and imitation. For our instruction, we may from this history observe the extent of Christ's compassion to his disciples, which though it is most eminently seen in what he doth for their souls, yet reacheth also to their bodies and more external wants. It also teacheth us to trust God in the doing of our duty. Those that are in a wilderness hearing Christ, shall not faint by the way before they get home. His course of giving thanks before he brake and made use of the bread, (which we observed before in the other miracle), commendeth to us the religious custom of begging a blessing before our meat, and giving thanks to God for good things of that nature, when we have received them.

Matthew 16:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 16:1-4 The Pharisees require a sign.
Mt 16:5-12 Jesus warns his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and explains his meaning.
Mt 16:13-20 The people's opinion, and Peter's confession, of Christ.
Mt 16:21-23 Jesus foreshows his own death, and rebuketh Peter for dissuading him from it.
Mt 16:24-28 He showeth that his followers must deny themselves in prospect of a future reward.

Ver. 1. What these Pharisees and Sadducees were we have had an occasion to show before in our annotations on Mt 3:7, See Poole on "Mt 3:7". There was a great opposition between them, as we may learn from Ac 23:7,8. The Pharisees and scribes were great zealots for their traditions; the Sadducees valued them not.

The Pharisees held the resurrection, angels, and spirits; the Sadducees denied all. But they were both enemies to Christ, and combine in their designs against him. They came to him *tempting*, that is, desirous to make a trial of him; they desire *that he would show them a sign from heaven*; such a one as Moses showed them, [Joh 6:30,31](#) bringing down bread from heaven. They had seen our Saviour showing many signs, but they had taught the people that these things might be done by the power of the devil, or by the art of man; therefore they challenge our Saviour to show them another kind of sign, a sign from heaven, that they might know he was sent of God. See [Mr 8:11](#).

Matthew 16:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "[Mt 16:3](#)".

Matthew 16:3

Ver. 2,3. You can, saith our Saviour, make observations upon the works of God in nature and common providence, and from such observations you can make conclusions; if you see the sky red in the evening, you can conclude from thence that the morrow will be fair, because you think that the redness of the sky at night speaks the clouds thin and the air pure; and on the other side, the redness of it in the morning speaks the clouds thick, so as the sun cannot disperse them; or because you observe that generally it so proveth, though nothing be more mutable than the air. But you cannot *discern the signs of the times*: you are only dull at making observations upon the Scriptures, and the will of God revealed in them concerning me. You might observe that all the signs of the Messiah are fulfilled in me: I was born of a virgin, as was prophesied by Isaiah, [Isa 7:14](#); in Bethlehem Judah, as was prophesied by Micah, [Mic 5:2](#); at a time when the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from his feet, as was prophesied by Jacob, [Ge 49:10](#): that John the Baptist is come in the power and spirit of Elias, to prepare my way before me, as was prophesied by Malachi, [Mal 4:5](#); that there is one come, who openeth the eyes of the blind, and unstops the ears of the deaf, and maketh the lame to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, according to the prophecy, [Isa 35:5,6](#). All these are the signs of the time when the Messiah was to come; but these

things you cannot discern, but, like a company of hypocrites, who pretend one thing and do another, you come and ask a sign, that you might believe in me, when you have so many, and yet will not believe.

Matthew 16:4

Ver. 4. We meet with the same answer given to the Pharisees, Mt 12:39. You pretend yourselves to be the children of Abraham, but you are bastards rather than his children; he saw my day afar off and rejoiced, you will not believe though you see me amongst you, and at your doors; he believed without any sign, you will not believe though I have showed you many signs. You shall have no such sign as you would have; the sign of the prophet Jonah is enough. But in our Lord's former reference of them to the prophet Jonah, he instanced in one particular, viz. his being three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; here he seemeth more generally to refer to Jonah as a type of him in more respects, which indeed he was. Chemnitius reckons them up thus:

1. Jonah was thrown into the sea by the mariners, to whom he had entrusted himself: Christ was delivered to death by the Jews, to whom he was specially promised.
2. Jonah was willingly thrown into the sea: Christ laid down his life, and man took it not from him.
3. Jonah by being cast into the sea saved those in the ship: Christ by his death saved the children of men.
4. Jonah after he had been in the whale's belly three days was cast up on dry land: Christ after three days rose again from the dead.
5. The Ninevites, though upon the preaching of Jonah they made a show of repentance, yet returning to their former sins were soon after destroyed; so were the Jews within forty years after Christ's ascension.

So as Jonah was many ways an eminent sign and type of Christ. Our Lord having referred them to study this sign, would

entertain no more discourse with them, but leaves, and departeth from them. Mark saith, Mr 8:13, that he entering into the ship again, departed to the other side, (the ship which brought him to Dalmanutha, or Magdala), and went into the coasts of Galilee again.

Matthew 16:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 16:7".

Matthew 16:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 16:7".

Matthew 16:7

Ver. 5-7. Mark saith, Mr 8:14-16, *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.* The disciples went into the ship without taking a due care for provision for their bodies, which they were sensible of when they came on shore on the other side. Christ happened in the mean time to give them a caution against the doctrine of the Pharisees, and Sadducees, and Herodians, which he properly expressed (though metaphorically) under the notion of leaven: this they understood not, but fancied that he had spoken this to them with reference to their want of bread, as if he had only given them warning, that for the making of bread to supply their necessity, they should not go to the Pharisees, or Sadducees, or Herodians, for leaven; or that they should not go to buy any bread of the Pharisees or of the Sadducees. So dull are we to understand spiritual things, and so soon had they forgot the doctrine which our Saviour had so lately taught them, Mt 15:17,18, that those things which are foreign to a man, and come not out of his heart, do not defile a man, but those things only which proceed out of his heart.

Matthew 16:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:12

Ver. 8-12. Mark, giving us an account of this passage, Mr 8:17-19, useth some harsher expressions: *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your eyes yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? Our Saviour here charges them with three things, ignorance, unbelief, forgetfulness.*

1. Ignorance, in that they did not understand that his usual way was to discourse spiritual things to them under earthly similitudes, and so by leaven he must understand something else than leaven with which men use to leaven their bread.
2. Unbelief, that they having seen the power and goodness of the Lord and Master, to feed four thousand with seven loaves, and five thousand with five loaves, leaving a great remainder, and

that he did this for a mixed multitude, out of a mere compassion to the wants and cravings of human nature, should not judge that he was able to provide for them, although they had brought no bread; or doubt whether he would do it or no for them, who were much dearer to him.

3. Forgetfulness, which is often in Scripture made the mother of unbelief and disobedience. De 4:9,23 25:19 Ps 78:11.

There is nothing of difficulty in the terms, only from this history we may learn these things:

1. That God expects that we should not only hear and see, but understand.
2. That he looks we should not only hear for the present time, but for the time to come. Christ expected that his disciples should have learned from his doctrine about washing of hands, that he could not mean the leaven of bread, but something else, which might defile them.
3. That he is much displeased with his own people, when he discerns blindness and ignorance in them, after their more than ordinary means of knowledge.
4. That former experiences of God's power and goodness manifested for us, or to us, ought to strengthen our faith in him when we come under the like circumstances; and a disputing or doubting after such experiences argues but a little and very weak faith, and a hardness of heart, that the mercies of God have not made a just impression on our souls.

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Mark, instead of and of the Sadducees, hath, and of the leaven of Herod, which hath made some think that Herod was a Sadducee. The doctrine of the Pharisees is reducible to two heads:

1. Justification by the works of the law, and those works too according to that imperfect sense of the law they gave.
2. The obligation of the tradition of the elders; whose traditions

were also (as we have heard) some of them of that nature, that they made the law of God of no effect.

The doctrine of the Sadducees we are in part told, Ac 23:8. They said there was no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit: these were principles excellently suited to men of atheistical hearts and lives, and it is more than probable that Herod and his courtiers, and some of his lords and great captains, had sucked in some of these principles, and these were the Herodians mentioned, Mt 22:16 Mr 3:6.

These doctrines are by our Saviour compared to leaven, not only because of the sour nature of it, but also because heretics' words (as the apostle saith) eat as doth a canker, and are of a contagious nature; as leaven doth diffuse its quality into the whole mass of meat. Our Saviour had upon this account compared the gospel to leaven, Mt 13:33, because by his blessing upon it it should influence the world, as we heard, in Mt 13:1-58.

Matthew 16:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 16:14".

Matthew 16:14

Ver. 13,14. This, and the following part of this discourse, is related both by Mark and Luke. Mark hath it, Mr 8:27, And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. Luke saith, Lu 9:18,19, And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. Matthew and Mark name the place whither our Saviour was going, viz. Caesarea Philippi: it is so called partly to distinguish it from another Caesarea, and partly because it was built to the honour of Tiberius Caesar, by Philip the tetrarch. It was a city at the bottom of Lebanon, and upon the

river of Jordan. Mark saith this discourse was in the way. Luke saith, as he was alone praying; but as must there signify after, for we cannot think that our Saviour would interrupt himself in prayer by this discourse, nor could he be alone praying if his disciples were with him, both which Luke saith; so that εν τω ειναι αυταν προσευχομενον καταμονας were certainly translated better, after he had been praying alone, his disciples were with him: so that this discourse might be (as Mark saith) in the way, before they came to Caesarea Philippi, whither he was going.

He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men (or the people, as Luke hath it) say that I am? Not that our Saviour, who knew the hearts of all, did not know, but to draw out Peter's following confession.

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: we heard before that Herod said so.

Some, Elias: this respected the prophecy, Mal 4:5. The Jews had a tradition, that before the coming of the Messiah Elias should come, Joh 1:21.

Others, Jeremias, (this is only in Matthew), or one of the prophets. The Jews seeing Christ do such wonderful works, could not resolve themselves who he was. Herod and his court party said that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. They had, it seems, an opinion of some extraordinary virtues, or powers, in such as were risen from the dead. Many interpreters agree that the Jews had an opinion, that good men's souls, when they died, went into other bodies; this made them guess that our Saviour was one of the old prophets.

Matthew 16:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 16:16".

Matthew 16:16

Ver. 15,16. Mark saith, Mr 8:29, *Thou art the Christ.* Luke saith, Lu 9:20, *Peter answering said, The Christ of God,* that is, the

Messiah. You that are my disciples and apostles, what is your opinion of me? Our Lord expects not only faith in our hearts, but the confession of our lips, Ro 10:10.

And Simon Peter answered, not because he had any priority amongst the apostles, but he was of a more quick and fervid temper than the rest, and so speaketh first; they silently agreed to what he said. What he saith is but little, but of that nature that it is the very foundation of the gospel.

Thou art Christ, the Anointed, the person of old promised to the world under the name of the Messiah, Da 9:25,26.

The Son, not by adoption, but by nature for they believed John the Baptist, Elias, and the old prophets the sons of God by grace. It is plain Peter means more than that.

Of the living God. Our Lord had asked, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* And in the same sense he speaks to the disciples, *Whom do ye say that I the Son of man am?* Lord, saith Peter, we believe that thou the Son of man *art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* God is often in Scripture called the *living God*, in opposition to idols, which had eyes and saw not, ears and heard not, nor had any life in them, Ge 16:13 Heb 3:12 9:14 &c. So as here we have a full and plain confession of that doctrine, which is the foundation of the gospel.

Matthew 16:17

Ver. 17. Our Lord appeareth here to be mightily pleased with this confession of Peter and the rest of his disciples, (for we shall observe in the Gospel, that Peter was usually the first in speaking, Joh 6:68), he pronounces him *blessed*, and giveth the reason of it afterward.

Simon bar-jona, that is, Simon son of Jona, or, as some would have it, son of John (they think Jona is a contraction of Johanna). Our Lord gives him the same name, Joh 21:15.

For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. By *flesh and blood* our Saviour meaneth man, and the reason and wisdom of man. Thus it is often used in

Scripture, Isa 40:5 Ga 1:16 Eph 6:12. Some note it always signifieth so when it is in Scripture opposed to God. Thou hast not learned this by tradition, or any dictates from man, nor yet by any human ratiocination, but from *my Father which is in heaven*. This confirmeth what we have Eph 2:8, that *faith is the gift of God*. No man cometh to the Son, but he whom the Father draweth, Joh 6:44. Men may assent to things from the reports of men, or from the evidence of reason, but neither of these is faith. Faith must be an assent to a proposition upon the authority of God revealing it. Nor doth any man truly and savingly believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, but he in whom God hath wrought such a persuasion; yet is not the ministry of the word needless in the case, because, as the apostle saith, *faith comes by hearing*, and ministers are God's instruments by whom men believe. No faith makes a soul blessed but that which is of the operation of God.

Matthew 16:18

Ver. 18. *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter:* Christ gave him this name, Joh 1:42, when his brother Andrew first brought him to Christ. I did not give thee the name of Cephas, or Peter, for nothing, (for what Cephas signifieth in the Syriac Peter signifieth in the Greek), I called thee Cephas and thou art Peter, a rock. Thou shalt be a rock. This our Lord made good afterward, when he told him, that Satan had desired to winnow him like wheat, but he had prayed that his faith might not fail, Lu 22:32. Thou hast made a confession of faith which is a rock, even such a rock as was mentioned Mt 7:25. And thou thyself art a rock, a steady, firm believer. *And upon this rock I will build my church*. Here is a question amongst interpreters, what, or whom, our Saviour here meaneth by *this rock*.

1. Some think that he meaneth himself, as he saith, Joh 2:19, *Destroy this temple* (meaning his own body). God is often called a Rock, De 32:18 Ps 18:2 Ps 31:3, and it is certain Christ is the foundation of the church, Isa 28:16 1Co 3:11 1Pe 2:6. But this sense seemeth a little hard, that our Saviour, speaking to Peter, and telling him he was a stone, or a rock, should with the same breath pass to himself, and not say, Upon myself, but upon this rock *I will build my church*.

2. The generality of protestant writers, not without the suffrage of divers of the ancients, say Peter's confession, which he had made, is the rock here spoken of. And indeed the doctrine contained in his confession is the foundation of the gospel; the whole Christian church is built upon it.
3. Others think, in regard that our Saviour directeth his speech not to all the apostles, but to Peter, and doth not say, Blessed are you, but, *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona*, that here is something promised to Peter in special; but they do not think this is any priority, much less any jurisdiction, more than the rest had, but that Christ would make a more eminent and special use of him, in the building of his church, than of the rest; and they observe, that God did make a more eminent use of Peter in raising his gospel church, both amongst the Jews, Ac 2:1-47, and the Gentiles, Ac 10:1-48. But yet this soundeth a little harshly, to interpret *upon this rock*, by this rock. I do therefore rather incline to interpret it in the second sense:

Upon this rock, upon this solid and unmovable foundation of truth, which thou hast publicly made, *I will build my church*. It is true, Christ is the foundation of the church, and other foundation can no man lay. But though Christ be the foundation in one sense, the apostles are so called in another sense, Eph 2:20 Re 21:14 not the apostles' persons, but the doctrine which they preached. They, by their doctrine which they preached, (the sum or great point of which was what Peter here professed), laid the foundation of the Christian church, as they were the first preachers of it to the Gentiles. In which sense soever it be taken, it makes nothing for the papists' superiority or jurisdiction of St. Peter, or his successors. It follows, *I will build my church*. By church is here plainly meant the whole body of believers, who all agree in this one faith. It is observable, that Christ calls it his church, not Peter's, and saith, *I will build*, not, thou shalt build. The working of faith in souls is God's work. Men are but ministers, by whom others believe. They have but a ministry towards, not a lordship over the church of God.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; that is, the power of the devil and all his instruments shall never prevail against it utterly to extinguish it, neither to extinguish true faith in the heart of any particular believer, nor to root the gospel out of the world.

The gates is here put for the persons that sit in the gates. It was their custom to have the rulers to sit in the gates, Ru 4:1,11 2Sa 19:8. Neither doth *hell* signify here the place of the damned; αδης no where (except in one place, and as to that it is questionable, Lu 16:23) signifies so, but either death, or the graves, or the state of the dead: yet the devil is also understood here, as he *that hath the power of death*, Heb 2:14. The plain sense is, that our Lord would build the Christian church upon this proposition of truth, that he was the Christ, the Son of God; that Peter should be an eminent instrument in converting men to this faith; and where this faith obtained in the world, he would so far protect it, that though the devil and his instruments should by all means imaginable attempt the extinguishing of it by the total extirpation of it, the professors of it, and might as to particular places prevail; yet they should never so prevail, but to the end of the world he would have a church, a number of people called out by his apostles, and those who should succeed in their ministry, who should uphold this great truth. So as this is a plain promise for the continuance of the gospel church to the end of the world.

Matthew 16:19

Ver. 19. *And I will give unto thee;* not unto thee exclusively, that is, to thee and no others; for as we no where read of any such power used by Peter, so our Saviour's first question, Whom think you that I am? Letteth us know that his speech, though directed to Peter only, (who in the name of the rest first answered), concerned the rest of the apostles as well as Peter. Besides, as we know that the other apostles had as well as he the key of knowledge and doctrine, and by their preaching opened the kingdom of heaven to men; so the key of discipline also was committed to the rest as well as unto him: *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*, Joh 20:22,23. The keys of the kingdom of heaven; the whole administration of the gospel, both with reference to the publication of the doctrine of it, and the dispensing out the ordinances of it. We read of the key of knowledge, which the scribes and Pharisees took away, Lu 11:52, and the key of government: *The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder*, Isa 22:21, I will commit thy government into his hand; which is applied to Christ, Re 3:7.

The sense is, Peter, I will betrust thee, and the rest of my apostles, with the whole administration of my gospel; you shall lay the foundation of the Christian church, and administer all the affairs of it, opening the truths of my gospel to the world, and governing those who shall receive the faith of the gospel.

And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Some very learned interpreters think that our Saviour here speaketh according to the language then in use amongst the Jews; who by binding understood the determining and declaring a thing unlawful; and by loosing, declaring by doctrine, or determining by judgment, a thing unlawful, that is, such as no men's consciences were bound to do or to avoid. So as by this text an authority was given to these first planters of the gospel, to determine (by virtue of their infallible Spirit, breathed upon them, Joh 20:21) concerning things to be done and to be avoided. Thus Ac 15:28,29, they loosed the Gentiles from the observation of the ceremonial law. Some think that by this phrase our Saviour gave to his apostles, and not to them only, but to the succeeding church, to the end of the world, a power of excommunication and absolution, to admit in and to cast out of the church, and promises to ratify what they do of this nature in heaven; and that this text is expounded by Joh 20:23, *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained;* and that the power of the church, and of ministers in the church, as to this, is more than declarative. That the church hath a power in a due order and for just causes, to cast persons out of its communion, is plain enough from other texts; but that the church hath a power to remit sins committed against God more than declaratively, that is, declaring that upon men's repentance and faith God hath remitted, I cannot see founded in this text. Certain it is, that Christ doth not here bind himself to confirm the erroneous actions of men, either in excommunications or absolutions; nor to authorize all such actions of this nature that they do. I do therefore rather incline to think that our Saviour by this promise declared his will, that his apostles should settle the affairs of the gospel church, determining what should be lawful and unlawful, and setting rules, according to which all succeeding ministers and officers in his church should act, which our Lord would confirm in heaven. And that the ordinary power of churches in censures is rather to be derived from other texts of Scripture than this, though I will

not deny but that in the general it may be here included; but I cannot think that the sense of binding and loosing here is excommunicating and absolving, but a doctrinal or judicial determination of things lawful and unlawful granted to the apostles; the not obeying or living up to whose determinations and decisions may be indeed a just cause of casting persons out of the communion of the church, as the contrary obedience and conformity to them a good ground of receiving them in again. But whether in this text be not granted to the apostles a further power than agrees to any ministers since their age I much doubt, and am very prone to believe that there is.

Matthew 16:20

Ver. 20. We met with some charges of this nature before, given to those whom he had miraculously cured, that they should tell no man of it, Mt 8:4 9:30; but this seemeth to differ from them. There he only forbade the publication of his miracles; here he forbids them preaching that Jesus was the Christ, a doctrine necessary to be believed in order to people's salvation. We are not able to give an account of all our Saviour's particular actions.

1. We are sure this was a precept but of a temporary force and obligation, for we know that afterward they did sufficiently publish this abroad, only for a time he would not have it published by his disciples. We cannot certainly determine whether he forbade them;
 - a) Because they were not as yet fit to publish so great a truth.
Or;
 - b) Because the time was not yet come for the publication of it.
Or;
 - c) He would not have it published till he rose again from the dead, having triumphed over death, lest people, hearing of it before, should have had their faith shaken by his death; which seemeth very probable, because in the next words he begins to speak of his death.
 - d) That he might hereby (as much as might be) avoid the odium and envy of the Pharisees. Or;

- e) That himself might publish first this great truth of the gospel, and confirm it by his miracles.

Matthew 16:21

Ver. 21. Our Lord taught his hearers by degrees, as they were able to hear and to bear his instruction. He therefore first instructs them in the truth of his Divine nature, and bringeth them to a firm and steady assent to this proposition, That he was the Christ, the Son of God. Lest they should have this faith of theirs shaken by his sufferings and death, he begins to instruct them as to those things, that when they saw it come to pass, they might not be offended, but wait for his resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 16:22

Ver. 22. Peter took our Lord aside, as we do our friend to whom we would speak something which we would not have all to hear, *and began to rebuke him; επιτιμων*, to reprove him, as men often do their familiar friends, when they judge they have spoken something beneath them, or that might turn to their prejudice; saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.* The words in the Greek want the verb, so leave us in doubt whether we should translate them, Be merciful to thyself, spare thyself, or, Let God, or God shall, be merciful unto thee. The last words expound them; *this shall not be unto thee.* God shall be merciful unto thee, and help thee, this shall not betide thee. These words were undoubtedly spoken by Peter out of a good intention, and with a singular affection to his Master; but,

1. They spake him as yet ignorant of the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, of the doctrine of the cross, and of the will of the Father concerning Christ.
2. They spake great weakness in him, to contradict him whom he had but now acknowledged to be the Christ, the Son of God. Good intentions, and good affections, will not justify evil actions. Christ takes him up smartly.

Matthew 16:23

Ver. 23. Peter, thou thinkest that by this discourse thou showest some kindness unto me, like a friend, but thou art in this an adversary to me; for so the word *Satan* doth signify, and is therefore ordinarily applied to the devil, who is the grand adversary of mankind.

Get thee behind me, I abominate such advice. I told thee I *must* suffer. It was the determinate counsel of God; it is my Father's will. He is mine enemy that dissuades me from a free and cheerful obedience to it. I will hear no more such discourse.

For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. The word is *φρονηεις*, and, it may be, were better translated, Thou thinkest not of, or thou understandest not, the things that be of God, that is, the counsels of God in this matter, as to the redemption of mankind: thou considerest me only as thy Master and thy Friend, and wouldst have no harm come to me; thou dost not mind or think of me as the Saviour of the world, or the Redeemer of mankind, which cannot be redeemed otherwise than by my death. Though by thy intemperate affection to me thou wouldst hinder the redemption of mankind, this is not in this thing to mind, think on, or savour the things of God, but to suffer thyself to be seduced by thy carnal affection. It is a mistaken kindness to our friends, to persuade them, for our personal advantage, to do what they cannot do in consistency with their obedience to the will of God.

Matthew 16:24

Ver. 24. Mark hath the same, Mr 8:34, and Luke, Lu 9:23; only Mark saith, *when he had called the people unto him with his disciples*; Luke saith, *he said to them all*. He spake it to his disciples, but not privately, but before all the rest of the people, who at that time were present.

If any man will come after me; that is, if any man will be my disciple: so it is expounded by Lu 14:26,27, which is a text much of the same import with this, only what Matthew here calleth a

denying of himself, Luke calleth hating. The disciples of others are called the followers of them.

Let him deny himself. To deny ourselves, is to put off our natural affections towards the good things of this life, let them be pleasures, profit, honours, relations, life, or any thing which would keep us from our obedience to the will of God. Thus Christ did: the apostle saith *he pleased not himself. I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me, Joh 5:30 4:34, and take up his cross;* willingly and cheerfully bear those trials and afflictions which the providence of God brings him under for owning and standing to his profession, all which come under the name of the cross, with respect to Christ's cross, on which he suffered.

And follow me: in his taking up the cross he shall but do as I shall do, following my example. Or else this may be looked upon as a third term of Christ's discipleship, viz. yielding a universal obedience to the commandments of Christ, or living up as near as we can to the example of Christ, 1Pe 1:15. This doctrine our Saviour preacheth to them upon occasion of Peter's moving him to spare himself, by which he did but indulge his own carnal affection, without respect to the will of God as to what Christ was to suffer for the redemption of mankind.

Matthew 16:25

Ver. 25. We met with these words in Mt 10:39. See Poole on "Mt 10:39".

Matthew 16:26

Ver. 26. Our interpreters, by translating the same word soul in this verse which they had translated *life* Mt 16:25, let us know that they understood it here of that essential part of man which we call the soul, in which sense it could not be understood in that verse, for it is impossible in that sense to lose our soul for Christ's sake. Some think that it hath the same sense here as in that verse, and that our Saviour argues here from the less to the greater, thus: Men will lose any thing rather than their lives; skin for skin, and all that a man hath, for his life; and this is but

reasonable, for if a man lose his life to get the world, what will the world gotten do him good? What can be a proportionable exchange or compensation to him for that? Now if you value your temporary life at that rate, how much more ought you to value your eternal being and existence! It cometh much to the same, only the sense is plainer if we take it as our translators have taken it, for otherwise part of the argument is not expressed, but left to be understood, or supplied from the next verse. So as the sense is this: Besides bodies which may be killed by persecutors, you carry about with you immortal souls of infinitely more value; and besides a temporal life, of which you are in possession, there is an eternal state, which awaits you. You are creatures ordained to an eternal existence, either in misery or in happiness. Admit you could, by pleasing yourselves, denying me, shifting the cross, declining a life according to my precepts and example, prolong your temporal life, yet what will you get by it, considering that by it you must suffer loss as to your eternal happy existence, for I shall then deny you before my Father and his angels? Can any thing you can get or save in this world be a proportionable exchange for eternal happiness?

Matthew 16:27

Ver. 27. This verse makes it plain, that our Saviour by ψυχη in the former verse understood the soul of man, or eternal life, that blessed state which is prepared for the saints of God; for he here minds them that there shall be a last judgment, and gives them a little description of it.

1. As to the Judge, the Son of man, him whom you now see in the shape of a man, and whom men vilify and contemn under that notion. He is to be *the Judge of quick and dead*, Ac 10:42 2Ti 4:1.
2. As to the splendour of it. He shall *come in the glory of his Father*. It is also his glory, Joh 17:5; he calls it the glory of his Father, because by his eternal generation he received it together with the Divine nature from his Father, and it was common to him with his Father; or because his commission for judgment was from his Father:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment

unto the Son, Joh 5:22.

With his angels; his holy angels, 1Th 1:7.

And then he shall reward every man according to his works: not for his works. Our Saviour is not here speaking of the cause of the reward, but the rule and measure of it: According to his deeds, Ro 2:6.

*According to his labour, 1Co 3:8. According to that he hath done, 2Co 5:10. Not according to his faith, but works, for *faith without works is dead*; but these works must spring out of a root of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. He shall reward him, by a reward of grace, not of debt, Ro 4:4. Works shall be rewarded, but not as with a penny for a pennyworth, but of grace.*

Matthew 16:28

Ver. 28. Mark saith, Mr 9:1, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*; Lu 9:27, saith no more than *till they see the kingdom of God. There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death*, that is, that shall not die. Heb 2:9. It is the same with not seeing death, Joh 8:51,52 Heb 11:5. The great question is, what is here meant by the *Son of man coming in his kingdom*. It cannot be meant of his second coming to judgment, spoken of immediately before, for all who stood there have long since tasted of death, yet is not that day come. Some understand it of that sight of Christ's glory which Peter, and James, and John had at Christ's transfiguration, of which we shall read in the next chapter; and I should be very inclinable to this sense, (for there was a glimpse of the glory of the Father mentioned Mt 16:27) were it not for those words added by Mark, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*. This inclineth others to think, that it is to be understood of Christ's showing forth his power in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the most generally received opinion, and which seemeth to be best, is, that the coming of the Son of man here meant is, his resurrection from the dead. His ascension into heaven, and sending the Holy Spirit, after which the kingdom of grace came with a mighty power, subduing all nations to the Lord Jesus Christ. *He was declared, (or determined), to be the Son of God with power, according to*

*the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Ro 1:4. And when, after his resurrection from the dead, they asked him, Ac 1:6, whether he would at that time *restore the kingdom to Israel*, he puts them off, and tells them for an answer, Ac 1:8, *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*. And then, Ac 1:9, he in their sight ascended up into heaven. Then did the kingdom of the Son of man come with power, Ac 2:33-36, they knowing assuredly that the Son of man, whom the Jews had crucified, was *made both Lord and Christ*, as Ac 2:36, and, as Ac 2:34,35, set at God's right hand, (according to the prophecy of David, Ps 90:1), until his enemies should be made his footstool.*

Matthew 17:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 17:1-9 The transfiguration of Christ.
Mt 17:10-13 He instructs his disciples concerning the coming of Elias,
Mt 17:14-21 healeth the lunatic,
Mt 17:22,23 foretells his own passion,
Mt 17:24-27 and payeth tribute.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 17:2".

Matthew 17:2

Ver. 1,2. Both Mark and Luke have recorded this history. Mark saith, Mr 9:3, his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. Luke saith, Lu 9:28,29; And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. All three agree the place, upon a mountain. Matthew saith it was six, Luke saith eight days after the preceding discourses. Luke mentions our Lord's praying, which neither of

the others mentions, and saith his transfiguration began while that he was praying. They all agree the company that was with our Saviour, Peter, James, and John; which were the three our Saviour took with him when he went to pray before his passion, Mt 26:37. Peter was to be a great instrument in carrying on the works of the gospel. James was he whom Herod killed, Ac 12:2. John was he who outlived all the apostles. He intended to have these three witnesses of his agony, Mt 26:37; he prepareth them for that, and for the future testimony they were to give him, by making them eye witnesses of this his glorious transfiguration. This, as to his person, lay in the change of his countenance, looking gloriously as the sun, and his raiment looking extraordinarily white.

Matthew 17:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 17:4".

Matthew 17:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark adds, Mr 9:6, For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. Luke addeth, Lu 9:31-33, *who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, &c.: not knowing what he said.* So as the history seemeth to be thus: After six or eight days Christ took Peter, James, and John, and went up into a mountain, and prayed. While he prayeth his disciples fall asleep. Waking, they saw him with his face shining gloriously, like the sun, and his garments white as snow, and two men talking with him about his death and passion, whom they (by revelation) knew to be Moses and Elias. They were sore afraid, and Peter, not well knowing or considering what he said, saith to Christ, *Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* It is most likely that Moses and Elias appeared in their own bodies. As to Elias, there was no difficulty, for his body was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. For Moses, it is said the Lord *buried him in a valley in the land*

*of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day, De 34:6. The devil and the archangel had a dispute about his body, Jude 1:9. It is very probable God raised up the body of Moses for this transfiguration testimony, that by the law and the prophets, represented in Moses, the giver of the law, and Elias, one of the most famous of the prophets, the disciples might be confirmed in their faith concerning Christ as the true Messias, and also fortified against the scandal and temptation of that ignominious death which he was soon after to undergo; and that these three apostles, being the highest number of witnesses, by the law of Moses, to confirm a thing, might be judged competent witnesses of what they saw and heard. Do not think Peter's saying, *let us make here three tabernacles, &c.*, proceeded from any pleasure or satisfaction that he had from this glimpse he had of the Divine and excellent glory; for how could this consist with that fear with which Mark saith they were possessed? but that, as Mark saith, *he wist not what to say*, or, as Luke, *not knowing what he said*. Which I take to be, as a reasonable, so the best excuse can be made for the errors and weakness discovered in his speech, as if Moses and Elias, or Christ, could have dwelt there, &c.*

Matthew 17:5

Ver. 5. Mark and Luke relate the same without any considerable variation, only Luke saith, *they feared as they entered into the cloud*. It seemeth that the cloud did encompass them, so as they seemed all as if they had been within the cloud. This still increased their fear. It is observable, that God did very often make his appearances to people in a cloud, making the clouds his chariots, Ex 16:10 40:34 Nu 11:25 Ps 104:3 to teach us humility, not to pry too much into his secrets, who covereth himself with thick darkness, and likewise to consult our weakness, who are not able to behold him as he is. This is said to be a bright cloud, so differing from the cloud in which he appeared under the law, but without doubt it had something of a shadow in it, and was chosen of God for some abatement of the brightness of his glory. This cloud encompasses Christ, Moses, and Elias, and also Peter, James, and John.

And behold a voice out of the cloud: they saw no visible shape, no more did the Jews, De 4:15, only, as St. Peter (who saw it)

expresses it, 2Pe 1:17, *there came such a voice from the excellent glory*. He speaks of this very time, as may appear from 1Pe 1:18. The voice is the same which was heard upon the baptism of Christ, Mt 3:17; only there is added to it, *hear ye him*: you need no Elias to instruct you, hear him. Thus Moses saw what he had before prophesied of, De 18:15,18, fulfilled: he in this ministry as a servant in the house of God had prophesied, that the Lord would raise up a prophet from amongst their brethren like unto him, and put his words into his mouth and he should speak unto them all that God should command him, De 18:18; and, De 18:15, *unto him ye shall hearken*. God had now fulfilled that word, and he declares that this prophet was his Son, his beloved Son, and commands them to hear him. Which words establish Christ as the only Doctor and Teacher of his church, the only one whom he had entrusted to deliver his truths and will to his people, the only one to whom Christians are to hearken: nor doth this destroy the ministers of the word, who are no more than the interpreters of what he hath said, and are no more to be regarded than as by them we hear Christ speaking more plainly and frequently unto us. This appearance of God from time to time in a cloud, and that not in any visible shape, but in an excellent glory, causing a voice to be heard, lets us see the audaciousness of those who by any pictures or images pretend to make any representation of any person in the Trinity. And this command from God to us to hear Christ, lets us also see the audacity of those who take upon them to impose upon Christians what Christ never spake.

Matthew 17:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 17:8".

Matthew 17:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 17:8".

Matthew 17:8

Ver. 6-8. Mark saith no more than, *And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only*

with themselves. Such is the majesty and glory of God, that a cloud will not so veil it as that a man is able to behold any appearance of it without some consternation; something more than that fear of reverence, without which none ought to draw nigh unto him. Paul *fell to the earth* when a *light from heaven* shone upon him, Ac 9:3,4. The disciples here fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. This lets us see the goodness of God in hearkening to the people's request, Ex 20:19 De 5:28 18:16,17, and speaking to us by men like unto ourselves: by Moses under the Old Testament; by Christ (that Prophet mentioned De 18:15) under the New Testament, and such as he commissioned to declare his will, Heb 1:1,2.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. To deliver them from the fear of a spectrum, or apparition, he toucheth them, and saith in effect, It is I; be not afraid. They look up, and see the excellent glory and the cloud was withdrawn, as also Moses and Elias, and they and their Lord were left alone; and he goeth down from the mountain with them. Whether this mountain was Tabor, or some other mountain much nearer Caesarea Philippi, is of no consequence for us to be satisfied in.

Matthew 17:9

Ver. 9. Mark saith the same, Mr 9:9. Luke saith, Lu 9:36, *They kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.* The other two evangelists record the precept; Luke and Mark, their obedience to it. The most probable reason of this charge given by interpreters is, lest his after sufferings should have shaken again their faith, as to the Divine nature of Christ, before he was by his resurrection from the dead *declared to be the Son of God with power*, as the apostle speaks, Ro 1:4.

Matthew 17:10

Ver. 10. Before these words, Mark saith, Mr 9:10, *And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.* Then he addeth, *And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first*

come. The disciples (as appeareth) were as yet very imperfectly instructed in the doctrine of man's redemption by Christ, though Christ had before told them, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so he should be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth. How dull the best of men are to apprehend spiritual mysteries, which are above the reach of our reason! The Jews had a tradition, and retain it to this day, That before the coming of the Messias Elias should come; they build it upon Mal 4:4,5. That they had such an expectation appeareth by their sending to John the Baptist, Joh 1:21, to know if he were he, meaning Elijah the Tishbite (for him they expected); and this was their great error, and still blindeth them. The disciples had now seen Elijah, and possibly might wonder at our Saviour's forbidding them to speak of the vision, as thinking that nothing could more conduce to the receiving of him as the Messias: or possibly they might wonder at Elijah's so soon leaving the earth, the Messias being come, whom they expected he should come before. So as though they were fully satisfied that Christ was the true Messias, yet they knew not how to reconcile their faith to the promise, or to their tradition built upon the promise. This causeth the question.

Matthew 17:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 17:13".

Matthew 17:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 17:13".

Matthew 17:13

Ver. 11-13. Mark saith, Mr 9:12, *He answered and told them, Elias verily comes first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.* Our Saviour agreeth to the promise, but showeth their mistake as to the true sense of it. They understood the promise of Elijah the Tishbite: the promise referred only to one

of his spirit, and such a one was come, that was John the Baptist, as the angel told Zacharias, Lu 1:17, *He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*. Very much of the power and spirit of Elijah was evident in John. Elijah was full of zeal for God, 1Ki 19:10: so was John the Baptist. Did Elijah freely reprove, not only Baal's priests, but even Ahab and Jezebel? John as freely reprov'd Herod and Herodias, and the Pharisees and Sadducees. Was Elijah an austere man? Such was John the Baptist. Did Elijah flee unto the wilderness to save his life? John Baptist, for some time, lived and preached there. Elijah living in a corrupt time, was a great means or instrument to restore decayed religion: so was John the Baptist, in the time wherein he lived. This notwithstanding, not the Jews only, but some Christians, and that not only papists, but some protestants, think, that besides the Elias which is long since come, there is another Elias, who shall come before the end of the world. They found their opinion upon this text in a great measure,

1. Because our Saviour here saith, *ερχεται πρωτον*, he doth come first; and Mark saith, *ελθων πρωτον, αποκαθιστα*, *coming first, restoreth all things*. Now John the Baptist was both come and gone; nor had he restored all things. Besides, they say, that John denied himself to be Elias, Joh 1:21; and it is plain, that not the scribes and Pharisees, but the disciples, only understood the prophecy of Elijah the Tishbite; and Malachi saith, that Elijah should come before *the terrible day of the Lord*, which day, they say, is the day of judgment, in the constant language of Scripture. But to all this is answered,
 - a) That the Baptist, Joh 1:21, only denied himself to be that Elias about which they inquired, according to their tradition.
 - b) That it is true, that the disciples were led away with the Jewish tradition, and looked for Elijah the Tishbite, but Christ both here and elsewhere correcteth their error.
 - c) That not only the day of general judgment is called the terrible day of the Lord, but the gospel time, Mt 3:10, when the axe was laid to the root of the tree, &c.; so Ac 2:20; and the day of the Jews' particular judgment, which some understand hinted in those texts.

- d) That our Lord first repeateth the words of Malachi, and so he saith, Elias shall come, or is coming; and then he expounds the words of Malachi of John the Baptist.
- e) That the words of Mal 4:6 are expounded by the angel, Lu 1:16,17, and there applied to John the Baptist.
- f) That John did fulfil the words of the prophet, by endeavouring the conversion of the Jews, and prevailing in a great measure.
- g) That the last words in Malachi, *lest I smite the earth with a curse*, plainly show that the text in Malachi cannot be understood of the day of judgment.

And though the name of Elias be given to John, yet it is no more than the giving the name of David to the Messiah, Eze 37:24. So as there is no other Elijah to be expected, but the Elijah prophesied of by Malachi was (as our Saviour doth expound it) John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded.

They knew him not, their tradition blinded them so as they could not discern the prophecy of Malachi fulfilled in him, so did unto him *whatsoever they listed*; and, saith our Saviour, so shall they do with the Son of man, that is, with me, who am the Son of man.

Matthew 17:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 17:16".

Matthew 17:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 17:16".

Matthew 17:16

Ver. 14-16. The same history is told us both by Mark and Luke, but with considerable difference; we have it, Mr 9:17,18, thus, *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have*

brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. As an introduction to this, Mark saith, Mr 9:14-16, that when our Saviour came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, *What question ye with them?* Luke gives us this account, Lu 9:37-40, *And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.* When our Lord went up to the mountain where he was transfigured, he left at the foot of it the multitudes, and nine of his apostles, he took only three with him. How long he stayed there no evangelist tells us. The multitude and his disciples stayed waiting for his coming, probably not far off; some of the scribes were got to them, and they were arguing together. The day after our Lord, and Peter, James, and John, were come down from the mount, they go to the multitude, who received him with great passion, and saluted him. He begins to inquire what they were discoursing about; but was by and by interrupted with a certain man, who comes and falls down upon his knees before him, begging mercy for his son, who (as Matthew reports his condition) was lunatic and sore vexed, often falling into the fire, and often into the water. Mark saith, he had a dumb spirit, that it tore him, he often foamed and gnashed with his teeth. Luke saith, that it was the man's only child, that he had a spirit, that he cried out, it tare him, he foamed, and was bruised by it, &c. By the description of this young man's disease, it appeareth to have been what we call the falling sickness, wherein men fall down, foam, and beat themselves. With this disease the devil joined, so as at certain times of the moon this disease took him, and the devil acting with it, he was dumb, at least for the time, and fell sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water, foamed, gnashed with his teeth, tore himself: this seems to have been his condition. The father (during Christ's absence) had attempted a cure by his disciples, but the text saith they could not (the reason

we shall hear afterward); upon this he crieth unto Christ for his help.

Matthew 17:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 17:18".

Matthew 17:18

Ver. 17,18. Mark relates this part of the history much more largely, Mr 9:19-27, *he answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.* Luke relates this shorter, but addeth nothing to what is in the other evangelists, Lu 9:41,42. *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation.* Christ here calls them so not with respect to justifying faith, but that faith which respected the Divine power as to working miracles. Every revelation of the Divine will is the object of faith; Christ had revealed to the Jews that he was sent of God, and furnished with such a power; this the Jews, and particularly the scribes, did not believe. The faith of the father of this child was but very weak in the case; no more, as we shall see afterwards, was the faith of the disciples; so as he may be understood to respect them all, though in different degrees. He calls them *perverse*, because they had so often seen and experienced his power of this nature, yet their faith was not clear

and strong. He biddeth that the young man should be brought to him, and it was done. *And when he saw him, (saith Mark), straightway the spirit tare him, &c.* Our Saviour could easily have prevented this, but probably he suffered it that the miracle might be more evident. However, it letteth us see how hardly the devil parteth with his possession in us in any degree, and how ready he is to run to the length of his line in doing us mischief. Christ asked his father how long he had been so vexed; his father tells him, from a child. By this also the miracle was more illustrious, which probably was the reason why Christ propounded the question. No evils are too inveterate for Christ to remove. The father renewth his request, and in it showeth the weakness of his faith: *If (saith he) thou canst do any thing.* His coming to Christ, and crying to him, argued that he believed he could do something; his saying *if thou canst do any thing* speaks the weakness of his faith. Christ tells him, if he could believe, all things are possible. Nothing ties God's hands but his creatures' unbelief. It is said, that Christ *could not* in Capernaum *do many mighty works because of their unbelief.* Upon this the father cries out, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* Men may truly believe, and yet have a mixture of unbelief. God rewards a weak faith, to souls labouring under the sense of their weakness, and desiring an increase of strength. Christ rebukes the spirit (called a dumb and deaf spirit, because it made the person such that was thus affected with it). Christ commands the spirit out, and so to come out as never more to enter into him. The evil spirit roars, rends him, comes out, and leaveth him as one dead: which still confirmeth us in his malice to mankind; he will do what harm he can when he cannot do us the harm he would.

Matthew 17:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 17:21".

Matthew 17:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 17:21".

Matthew 17:21

Ver. 19-21. Mark repeats only what we have here Mt 17:19,21. The reason assigned here by our Saviour why his disciples could not cast out this devil, was their unbelief; not their total want, but the weakness of their faith. Christ here again lets us see the power of faith, and the mischief of unbelief. I take the plain sense of the text to be this, That there is nothing which may tend to the glory of God, or to our good, but may be obtained of God by a firm exercise of faith in him. Whether our Saviour here speaketh of a faith of miracles, or no, I will not determine; I rather think that he speaketh here of any true faith: we must have the power and promise of God for its object. The promise of working miracles by a Divine power committed to them, was a particular promise made to the disciples, Mt 10:1-42, and so was only the object of their faith. But I take our Saviour's words to extend to a further latitude, though, as to miraculous operations, it was only applicable to them. There is nothing which God hath promised to give or bestow on any but faith will obtain from him, if attended by a fervent prayer, to which fasting is subservient, as preparing us to it. There are some things which are obtained by a stronger faith, and by more fervent and importunate prayers, than others are. A mercy sometimes seem to us to come out of the hand of God with more difficulty, and wrestling for it; but there is nothing within the latitude of a promise, but is to be done and obtained by the vigorous exercise of faith, and by fervent and importunate prayer. The apostles had yet but a weak and imperfect faith, and they had not used such fervent and importunate prayer in this case as they ought to have done; thence did this work appear so difficult unto them.

Matthew 17:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 17:23".

Matthew 17:23

Ver. 22,23. Mark saith, Mr 9:30-32. *And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.*

Luke saith, Lu 9:44,45, he said unto them, *Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.* It is said that Christ taught his disciples *as they were able to hear*, Mr 4:33. He tells them, Joh 16:12, he had many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them at that time. Christ a long time concealed the doctrine of his passion, and resurrection from the dead, from them, until he had confirmed them in the great point of his Divine power, and his being the true Messiah; now he begins to deliver this doctrine unto them, that what they should now soon see might not weaken their faith in him as the Messiah and the Son of God; partly in regard of that inveterate opinion which had possessed the generality of the Jews, that the Messiah should be a temporal prince, and should deliver the Jews from that servitude under which they were, and had for a long time been; partly in regard of the difficulty to conceive how he who was the Son of God could die. Once or twice before therefore he had begun to speak to them about his passion, Mt 16:21. Moses and Elias had some discourse with him about it, Lu 9:31. The text saith, they understood it not; it was hid from them; they perceived it not; they were afraid to ask him.

They were exceeding sorry: possibly they were sorry that they could not understand it, and reconcile it to the notion of the Messias they had drank in; for it seems hard to assert they were sorry for what Christ said about his suffering, because the Scripture saith, they understood it not, thinking our Saviour had not spoken plainly of a matter of fact which should be, but that he intended something else besides what his words seemed plainly to import.

Matthew 17:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:27

Ver. 24-27. The Jews were by God's law, Ex 30:13, obliged to pay a half shekel, which was for the service of the sanctuary, Ex 30:16: this was paid every year. The half shekel amounted in our money to fifteen pence, or thereabouts. Whether this were the tribute money here demanded and paid, some doubt, and say that the Romans having the Jews now under their power, imposed this payment upon every head, as a tribute to the emperor; which being a customary payment, they thought the Jews would less stumble at, though it was changed from a sacred to a civil use, from a homage penny to God, to be a homage penny to the conquerors. The agreement of this sum with what was required by the law, together with what our Saviour saith afterward, will incline us to think that this tax was that religious tax mentioned in Ex 30:13-16, and that the collectors were some officers deputed for that service by the priests. When Peter came into the house, our Saviour prevents his propounding the question to him, (for Peter had before told them, Yes he did), by asking him of whom the kings of the earth use to receive tribute, *of their own children, or of strangers?* Where by *children* we must not understand their political children, that is, their subjects, but their natural children, for otherwise Peter would not have said, *Of strangers*, nor would our Saviour have answered, *Then are the children free*; for there is nothing more ordinary than for princes to receive tribute of their subjects. That which our Saviour seemeth to mean is this: This tribute is gathered for my heavenly Father. I am his Son, I am not bound to pay it.

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, lest we give them occasion to say we break the law of God, go thou to the sea, (the sea of Galilee, which was near), and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find στατηρα, a piece of money, to the value of about a half crown in English. How this money came in the mouth of the fish is a very idle dispute, considering that he that speaks was the Creator of all things.

That take, and give unto them for me and thee. The papists, who think they have found here an argument for the primacy of Peter, because Christ paid this tribute for him, and not for the other disciples, do not only affirm what they do not know, but forget that Capernaum was the city in which Peter lived, (we heard before of Christ's curing his wife's mother there of a fever), and that Peter was the only man of whom this tribute was demanded. This portion of Scripture affords us this instruction: That it is the duty of Christians to yield something of their own right, when they cannot insist upon and obtain it without a scandal and prejudice to the gospel, and the concern of religion. If this were required in pursuance of the law, Ex 30:12,13, and our Saviour had refused to pay it, the scribes and Pharisees would have clamoured against him as violating the law of God. If it were required as a civil tax, they would have clamoured against him as a man that went about to stir up sedition or rebellion. Having therefore first asserted his right and immunity, he departeth from it to prevent a scandal. We must never part with God's right; but to depart from our own is not only lawful, but oftentimes very advisable and expedient. Our Saviour chooseth rather to work a miracle than to give a scandal, and by this miracle he also confirmed his immunity, that he was the Son of him who is the King of kings, and so not in strictness obliged to pay it.

Matthew 18:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 18:1-6 Christ proposes a little child to his disciples for a pattern of innocence and humility.

Mt 18:7-9 He warns them to avoid offences, though at the expense of a hand, a foot, or an eye,

Mt 18:10-14 and not to despise the little ones, whom it is the Father's will to save.

Mt 18:15-20 He teacheth how to treat an offending brother,

Mt 18:21-35 and how oft to forgive him, by the parable of a king, who punished one of

his servants for refusing that mercy to his fellow which he had experienced from his lord in a larger degree.

Ver. 1. Mark, who relates also the same history more largely, Mr 9:33, saith, that this discourse was in the house at Capernaum, and that our Saviour began with them, asking them what they had been discoursing of by the way. That they held their peace, for they had been in the way arguing one with another who should be the greatest; they might at the same time also ask Christ the question. Luke, in whom we find the same history, speaketh of it only as a question that had arisen among themselves, Lu 9:46. It had been the matter of their thoughts in the way, yea, and of their more private discourse also. Luke saith, Jesus knew the thoughts of their hearts. We had need set the Lord at all times before our eyes, for we are always in his sight. He encompasses all our paths, as the psalmist saith. In the way, when we think also we cannot be overheard, he heareth us, and will call us to account for our travelling thoughts and discourses. They were at first ashamed to tell the Lord what they had been thinking and discoursing upon, for Mark saith, Mr 9:34, *they held their peace*. But by and by they propound the question to Christ himself; so saith Matthew, What do they mean here by *the kingdom of heaven?* or what gave them occasion to such a discourse? It is most probable that they did not in this question intend the kingdom of glory; but either the church, or gospel dispensation; or (which indeed is most likely) that earthly kingdom which the Jews thought the Messiah should exercise on the earth. The general error of their nation, about a secular kingdom, which the Messiah, when he came, should exercise upon the earth, restoring the kingdom to Israel, as they phrase it, Ac 1:6, seemeth to have infected them; so as though in this they differed from the unbelieving Jews, that they owned Christ to be the promised Messiah, and the Christ the Son of God, yet they looked for a temporal kingdom which he should administer. Three times we find them in this mistake; here, and Mt 20:21, and at our Saviour's administration of the supper, Lu 22:24; and by Ac 1:6 it should seem that till Christ's ascension they were not fully instructed in the nature of Christ's kingdom, but expected that after his resurrection this kingdom of his should have began; and therefore they say, *Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* Some think that that which at this time

raised their jealousy and stirred up their ambition, was our Saviour's promising Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Mt 16:19, and paying tribute for him, Mt 17:24-27. But neither of these could be, for had not the keys been given equally the question had been determined, they needed have reasoned no more. He that had the keys was certainly to be the greatest; and for the paying of tribute, it was too minute a thing to cause such a jealousy. Besides, this discourse of theirs was by the way to Capernaum, where he now was; that was after he came to the house. But they doubtless fancied a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, in which places would be bestowed; and Christ, by his discourse about the tribute, had asserted himself a King's Son; and they conceived that after his death and resurrection (which Christ had lately been speaking of) this his kingdom would begin, which also agreeth with what we have Ac 1:6: they therefore thought it now time to speak for places. They had been arguing the point amongst themselves, and could not come to a resolution. Some of them were Christ's near kinsmen (such was James, Ga 1:19). Some of them had more extraordinary parts; he named two of them, on this account, *the sons of thunder*. To others he had showed a more particular kindness; John is called *the beloved disciple*; Peter, James, and John were taken up to the mount to see his transfiguration. These things might cause some emulation and suspicions; they therefore come to our Saviour to be resolved.

1. How slowly do we conceive, and how hardly do we come to understand, spiritual things! We are of the earth, and we are earthly.
2. How prone are we to seek great things for ourselves, neglecting our higher spiritual and eternal concerns! This text lets us see, that even the best of men are subject to earthly mindedness, ambition, emulation, and hardly brought truly to understand, believe, and seek the things which are above.

Let us now observe how our Saviour behaveth himself towards his disciples upon this question, and what answer he makes to it.

Matthew 18:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 18:4".

Matthew 18:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 18:4".

Matthew 18:4

Ver. 2-4. Mark saith, Mr 9:35-37, *And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, &c.* Luke saith only, that he took the child, and set him by him, Lu 9:47; and adds, Lu 9:48, *he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.* How easy a thing had it been for our Saviour, had he intended any such primacy in the church as the papists contend for, to have said, Peter shall be the greatest! Here was a very fair opportunity for him, if he had pleased, so to have declared his will; but here is not a word of such tendency. Mark saith our Saviour,

1. *Sat down*, as the manner of their teachers was, when they taught, to denote their authority.
2. He *called the twelve*, to let them know that what he was about to speak was a grave matter not of a particular but universal concern for them to learn, that, they might teach others.

He *said unto them*, (saith Mark), *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all; and* (which Luke adds) *he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.* You would know (saith he) who shall be greatest he that doth not desire to be first; he who is most remote from pride and ambition; he that most contemneth the world, and the priorities and superiorities of it. The proud and ambitious man, he that seeketh great things for himself, shall be of least esteem in my kingdom; he is really least in grace, and ought to be of least esteem and repute among Christians, and he will be the last in the kingdom of glory.

Then he calleth to him *a little child*: the word doth not always

signify a very young child; here it doth, for,

1. He took him in his arms (saith Mark).
2. A young child was the fittest pattern to commend humility to them.

This was an ancient and usual way of teaching, by types, as it were, or patterns: see Jer 19:10 27:2. He reads this lecture upon the child, *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, &c.* The prefixing *Verily* adds much to the authority of this saying. Converted here, $\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\text{-}\phi\eta\tau\epsilon$, doth not signify the change or conversion of a soul from a state of sin unto God, (so the apostles were already converted), but the turning of their souls from a particular lust or error, into the opposite right way of truth and holiness: except ye repent of your pride and ambition, ye cannot be saved. The next words expound it, *and become as little children*: not as little children in all things, (which was the Anabaptists' dream in Germany, upon which they would run about the streets playing with rattles, &c.), but, Mt 18:4, humbling yourselves as little children.

1. Little children know not what dominion means, and therefore affect it not, are not ambitious.
2. They are not given to boast and glory, and to prefer themselves before others.
3. They are ready to be taught and instructed.
4. They live upon their fathers' providence, and are not over solicitous.
5. They are not malicious and vindictive. *In malice* (saith the apostle) *be ye children*.

The three first are principally here intended. If ye be not thus like little children, ye will be so far from being greatest in the kingdom of God, that you will never come here at all. So as this text teacheth us all,

1. The necessity of humility in order to salvation.
2. That even converted souls have need of a daily conversion. Repentance is a work which will never be perfected till we come to die.
3. How abominable in the eyes of God ambition and pride are in any, especially in ministers of the gospel.
4. That in the church the way to be great is to be humble.
5. That true humility lieth in a mean opinion of ourselves, not minding high things, condescending to men of low estate, not being wise in our own conceits, Ro 12:16; *in honour preferring one another*, Ro 12:10.

Matthew 18:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 18:6".

Matthew 18:6

Ver. 5,6. Mark hath it thus, Mr 9:37, *Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.* Then he addeth, Mr 9:42, *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* Our Lord having declared that the little ones before mentioned shall be greatest in the kingdom of God, here cometh to show the care which he in his providence will take for them; that their friends shall be his friends, and their enemies his enemies: Whoso receiveth such a little child, that is, a humble Christian. In the next verse it is opened by, one that believeth in me. By receiving I conceive is here to be understood the showing of any favour or kindness to them: Christ declares that he would take it as done to himself. It is much the same with Mt 10:40-42. Mark addeth, *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* The reason is, because he and his Father are one, and the Father takes any kindness done to Christ as if it were done to himself, and the Son takes any kindness or unkindness done to any humble, believing

soul, as if it were done to himself: see Mt 25:34-46.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c. As offending signifieth the laying of a stumbling block before any, so it signifieth any motion or temptation to them to sin against God, whether it be by flattering or frowning arguments, though the latter seemeth rather to be understood here; so, by offending, it signifies the doing them any harm upon Christ's account, because they own him, and make a profession of his gospel, which, besides that it is a stumblingblock upon which they fall and suffer as to their bodies and outward concerns, is also a stumbling block to their souls, such dangers being strong temptations to Christians, to turn them aside from the right paths of truth and holiness.

It were better for him that a millstone, &c.; *μυλος ονικος*, a stone in such a mill as asses were wont to draw, because of the heaviness of it. Some think our Saviour in this phrase alludes to some punishment of notorious malefactors, in use not amongst the Jews, but some other nations, by tying a stone about their necks, and throwing them into the sea: but whether it be such an allusion or no, is of no great moment; the phrase signifieth a certain destruction, both in regard of the weight of the stone and the depth of the sea. He saith, It is better that a millstone, &c., because of the punishment which shall be inflicted on such persons beyond this life.

Matthew 18:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 18:9".

Matthew 18:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 18:9".

Matthew 18:9

Ver. 7-9. By *offences* are here meant stumbling blocks to souls, such persons or actions as are to others temptations to sin. The world, saith our Saviour is full of temptations. Temptations to sin

are on all hands, some enticing and persuading men to that which is evil, others setting them an example to it, others alluring them by promises, others by threatenings and punishments driving men to it as much as in them lieth: the world will one day find the evil and mischief of it.

It must needs be that offences come; God hath so ordered it in the wisdom of his providence, that he will not restrain the lusts of all men's hearts, but suffer some to walk in their own ways. Men in power will command those under them to do what is sinful, fright them by threatenings, force them (if possible) by punishments. Equals and inferiors will set examples of sin, allure, entice, and persuade. But woe be to those by whom such offences come! Men, saith our Saviour, should be so afraid to sin, as they should rather part with the dearest things they have in the world, if they be as dear as eyes, hands, feet, rather than sin, or endure them to be occasions of sin to them. See Poole on "Mt 5:29", where Mt 18:8,9 are opened. Mark hath the same things, Mr 9:43-48, only with the addition of this saying thrice, *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* which phrase doth but denote the eternity of sinners' misery, taken from Isa 66:24.

Matthew 18:10

Ver. 10. Our Saviour having before declared how dear believing souls are unto him, though their quality or parts be not like others', here he gives the world a further charge not to *despise*, that is, not to contemn or neglect them, because God the heavenly Father hath such a care of them, so as he hath given his angels a charge over them, Ps 34:7 91:11 Heb 1:14; which *angels* (saith he) *do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*, that is, are always ministering before him, and ready to execute his will and pleasure; so as the argument is not only drawn from the indecency and undutifulness that such despising must import, but also from the danger of it. Your heavenly Father so loveth these little ones, that he hath given his angels a special charge concerning them; and these angels being continually in the Lord's presence, are ready both to make report how they are used in the world, and likewise having commission from God to execute his vengeance upon those who neglect, despise, or affront those that he hath taken into such a special

protection. Here is no ground in this text for their notion, who fancy that every particular child of God hath his proper angel to attend him. Our Saviour doth not say their several and respective angels, but *their angels*; and if all the angels be *ministering spirits*, for the good of God's elect, Heb 1:14, I see no great reason to contend for a particular angel for every individual amongst them. But be that as it will, the opinion hath no patronage from this text.

Matthew 18:11

Ver. 11. We find the same in Lu 19:10, but applied upon another occasion. Our Saviour here riseth higher in his argument against giving offence to his little ones. All scandal tendeth to the ruin and destruction of him to whom it is given. *Scandalum non est nisi malae rei aedificans ad Gehennam*, saith Tertullian; and a greater than he hath taught us the same lesson, Ro 14:15 1Co 8:11 Now, saith our Saviour, I am *come to save that which was lost*; you ought therefore to take care that you be not the causes and instruments of any being lost. Or thus; You look upon poor humble souls, that believe in me, as mean, contemptible creatures, therefore you think you may despise them: were not all those whom I came to redeem in as mean and despicable a condition? Yet I did not despise their souls. Did I come to save them, and shall it be your work to destroy them?

Matthew 18:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 18:14".

Matthew 18:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 18:14".

Matthew 18:14

Ver. 12-14. We shall meet with the parable or similitude more fully, Lu 15:4. To what purpose it is brought here our Lord hath told us, Mt 18:14, to show us, that it is not the will of our

heavenly Father that the least and meanest believer should perish. And every scandal, or offence, (as I before showed), hath a tendency to destroy that soul before whom it is laid, or to which it is given. Take heed, saith our Saviour, of giving scandals and offences to others, yea, though you should have observed them in something slipping and going astray. Will you be more uncharitable to men than you are to the beasts which you keep? You do not thus with a sheep; though it be gone astray you do not despise and neglect it, much less take courses to drive it further. No, you rather leave the rest, as being safe, and go, though it be into the mountains, to recover the sheep that is lost; and if you find it, have a greater passion of joy for that one sheep so recovered than for all the other. If you see some error in any of my sheep, if they do wander, should it not be your care rather to *restore such in the spirit of meekness*, as [Ga 6:1](#), than to lay further stumbling blocks before them, and give them occasion of further stumbling and falling? My Father hath done so for lost man: my coming to seek and to save that which is lost, is an evidence to you that it is not his will that one of my little ones should be lost.

Matthew 18:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 18:17".

Matthew 18:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 18:17".

Matthew 18:17

Ver. 15-17. Our Saviour very appositely addeth this to his former discourse concerning avoiding offences, that none might think that by the former doctrine he had made void the law, [Le 19:17](#), which commanded all *in any wise to rebuke their neighbour, and not to suffer sin upon him*, pretending that it was their duty in some cases to offend any person by that law. He here telleth them that he would not be so understood, as if they might not tell offenders of their sins for fear of offending them, this had been to have withheld charity from their souls under a pretence of

charity. Only in these reproofs we must keep an order, which order he here prescribes.

1. Doing it privately, between them and him alone.
2. If that had not its effect, then taking two or three with them.
3. If that also proved ineffectual, then telling it to the church.
4. If that he would not *hear the church, then, let him be unto thee* (saith Christ) *as an heathen and a publican.*

If thy brother shall trespass against thee. By *brother* here he meaneth any Christian; for what hath the church to do to judge those that are without? 1Co 5:12.

Trespass against thee. Some interpret this of offences done so privately, that none else knoweth them but one single person; but it is objected, that then there needed no going to him, much less were there need of any witnesses, for they could prove nothing. Others therefore understand the precept of private injuries, which are in man's power to forgive, Lu 17:3. Others think such injuries are primarily intended, but yet the precept is not to be restrained to them, but to be understood of all offences, whether against God, ourselves, or our neighbours; and that our Saviour useth this term *against thee* only to distinguish the offences he is here speaking of from public scandals; for, 1Ti 5:20, it appeareth to be the will of God, that public and open sinners should be rebuked *before all, that others may fear*. The rule therefore seemeth to be given concerning private miscarriages; not such only as are done in the sight or hearing of a single person, but such as are not the matter of public fame, nor openly committed before a multitude, but being committed more secretly, are come only to the knowledge of some particular person or persons. In such cases it is the will of God, not that we should blazon and publish them, but, being certain that any Christian hath so offended, it is our duty first to go to him, and tell him of it; that is, not only tell him what thou knowest, or hast heard in matter of fact, that he hath spoken or done, but show him also the sinfulness of it.

If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; that is, if he confesseth the sin, and be brought to a sight of it, a sorrow for it,

and a resolution against it for the time to come, thou hast gained the soul of thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, if he either denieth the matter of fact, that he did such a thing, or (admitting that) standeth to justify the fact, as what he might do, *then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established:* one or two more, either such as may be of more authority with him, whose words may probably be of more weight than thine with him, or who may witness the matter of fact if it be denied, or at least witness by charitable admonition of him, and his contumacy, if he refuseth to hearken to thee, and to repent and reform. What was the law of God in civil and judicial causes, De 19:15,

God would have observed in ecclesiastical causes: One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. And so the words in Matthew should be translated, or at least understood; every word, that is, every matter, be confirmed.

And if he shall neglect to hear them; either refuse to speak with them, or to suffer them to speak with him; or, hearing them with his ears, if he persists to deny the fact, or to justify the fact, as if it were no sin, or go on still in the same course; (all these things are to be understood by the term of not hearing); if he shall not hear them, *tell it to the church.* That the term church is a noun of multitude is evident, and therefore cannot be understood of any particular person. Some would by the church here understand the political magistrate; but as this sense is embraced by very few, so it is very improbable that our Saviour should send Christians in that age to the civil magistrates, when they were all great haters and persecutors of the Christian religion, especially in cases that were not punishable by the judges; for no deliberate person will say, that the offences mentioned in this text were all of that nature as a civil judicature might take notice of them. Others say, that by the church is here meant the Jewish court called the Sanhedrim, which had a mixed cognizance, both of civil and ecclesiastical causes. There are three prejudices against this:

1. That the Jewish court was never in Scripture called \square Εκκλησια.

2. That it is not probable that our Saviour would direct Christians to go to the Jewish courts in such cases.
3. That the Sanhedrim was too great a court to be troubled with all scandals, though they did take cognizance of some things in religion, which were of a grand concern; such as blasphemy, idolatry, false prophets, &c.

Others therefore understand it of the Christian church. Against this opinion there is this great prejudice, that there was no such thing in being at that time; but I take this to be a lighter objection than those against the two other opinions:

- a) Because we need not understand our Saviour speaking with relation to the present time, but the time to come, and giving laws which should take place and abide from the gathering of the Christian church to the end of the world.
- b) Nor is it necessary that we should take the term *church* here in the strict sense, in which it is most generally used in the Scriptures of the New Testament for the general notion of the word is only a company of people called together; and in this sense, Tell the church, is no more than, Tell the multitude, make his crime more public: now what that multitude was which our Saviour meant, would easily be understood when the churches came to be formed.

But the next verse will make it more plain; Mt 18:18, *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, &c.* By *the church* then must be meant those who had power to bind and loose. Now though at this time there was no particular church formed, yet there were some who had a power to bind and loose. Christ had given such a power to his apostles. These were the present church, and at this time in being. They were afterwards to constitute particular churches, to whom, (when constituted), in force of this precept, such offences were to be told. There are yet further disputes, whether this offence and contumacy be to be told only to the rulers, or to the multitude. I say, to the whole church, but first to the rulers, then by them to the multitude, not to judge of it, but for their consent in casting a person out of the communion of the church. Thus the incestuous person was first accused to Paul, then cast out by the

consent of the whole church, 1Co 5:3-5. For it is unreasonable to think that people should deny communion to any without knowing a justifiable cause; and to no purpose for rulers in a church to cast one out of its communion with whom the members will have communion.

If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican; that is, esteem him as a vile person, for so they esteemed all heathens and publicans. How far this could reach beyond having an intimacy of civil communion with them, and a communion with them in the sacrament, I cannot understand; for as Christians were licensed to a civil commerce with heathens and publicans, so neither were heathens and publicans ever, that we read of in holy writ, denied the benefit of their prayers, and hearing the apostles preach. I am very well satisfied, that the primitive church did not deny to persons excommunicated liberty to be present at the prayers of the church, but it was long after the apostles' times, and whether grounded upon any practice of theirs I much doubt. Christians had a liberty to pray for any who had not sinned the sin unto death: that they might not be present at such prayers I cannot learn from any thing in holy writ.

Matthew 18:18

Ver. 18. We met with this sentence, Mt 16:19, where we observed that by binding and loosing was signified (according to the usage of the Jews of those times) declaring of propositions true or false, or judging things lawful or unlawful. Some think that it hath no further import here; but it is the opinion of Mr. Calvin, and other very judicious interpreters, that it is here to be extended to the censures of the church, the sentence of the church pronounced justly in the case of offences; and is added, lest persons justly denied the communion of the church should condemn such censures. Christ assures these persons that such censures ought not to be slighted, for God would confirm them in heaven; as also to their absolutions, or readmissions of such persons into their communion, upon their true repentance and acknowledgment of their errors. Not that our Lord by this intended to confirm all sentences of excommunication, or to patronize any cheat or hypocrisy in any, to gain an absolution, or restoration to the church. But only, as to the first, to assure

stubborn and impenitent sinners that he would ratify what his church did, according to the rule he had given them to act by. It is therefore a terrible text to those who are justly and duly cut off from the communion of the church, for notorious and scandalous sins, such as whoso committeth and doth not repent of, they shall never enter into the kingdom of God. And as comfortable to those who, being so cast out, do truly repent, and are under temptations to be swallowed up of too much sorrow. If therefore any be cast out of any church for professing or standing to any truth of the gospel, or because he will not do what is sinful, we must not understand them bound in heaven, though they be bound on earth, nor have any such excommunications any terror in them. How forcible are right words! But these arguings, what do they reprove? The church is not by this text made infallible, nor is the holy God by it engaged to defend their errors.

Matthew 18:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 18:20".

Matthew 18:20

Ver. 19,20. Most interpreters agree there is a connection betwixt these verses and those immediately preceding, as if it were a further confirmation of what God had said concerning his binding and loosing in heaven whatsoever they should bind or loose on earth; and say, the asking mentioned in this verse supposes that no church will adventure upon so grave an act as excommunication, without asking his direction or counsel; nor undertake such a thing as absolution, without the like serious asking of God pardon for the repenting sinner. Now, saith he, let the church be never so small that so joins in prayers on this occasion, what they ask of God shall be done. Whether it hath any such reference or no, or be an independent promise of Christ's presence with his church, I shall not determine. Those who think this text hath such a particular reference, yet do also grant it a more general promise of Christ's presence with his people. Whenever they are met by his authority, or upon his account or command, whether it be for counsel, or judgment, or prayer, or the celebration of any sacred institution of his, he is in the midst of them, to protect and favour them: what they ask

shall be done for them; that is, provided the thing asked be good, Mt 7:11, and for a right end, Jas 4:3, and in a right manner, Lu 18:1 Jas 1:5-7. Christ in this text establisheth the duty of prayer in communion with others. He doth not only require of his people secret prayer, Mt 6:6, but also praying in company with others; the gathering together of his people for prayer, whether in private families or more public congregations.

Matthew 18:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 18:22".

Matthew 18:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke hath something like this Lu 17:4, but it seemeth to have been spoken at another time, and upon some other occasion; yet the sense is much the same, and there are who think that Peter's mention of seven times arose from our Saviour's command there, that we should forgive our brother offending us seven times, when our Saviour by it intended not a certain and definite number, but a number uncertain and indefinite. But it is a greater question, what sinning and what forgiveness is there meant, I cannot think that our Saviour here speaketh concerning the church's absolving scandalous sinners justly excommunicated, but of the private forgiveness of injuries done to us; it is not the church, but I forgive him; for although the doors of the church ought to be as open to a repenting sinner as the doors of heaven are, yet I think both the phrase of the text and the following parable (which seemeth to me a comment upon this text) seem to lead us to the interpretation of these verses as to private wrongs or injuries; they are properly sins against us, and such as it is in every single person's power to forgive. But it seems hard that Christians should be obliged to forgive another his private wrongs so often as he doth them, if he will go on without end multiplying affronts and injuries to us; we must therefore know, that our Saviour by this precept doth not oblige any to take his enemy into his bosom, and make him his intimate or confidant again; but only to lay aside all malice, all thoughts and desires of revenge towards him, to put on a charitable frame of spirit towards him, so as to be ready to do him any common offices of friendship. Thus far we are obliged

to forgive those that do us injuries, so often as they stand in need of forgiveness. The apostle, Col 3:8, speaks of wrath, malice, &c., as pieces of the old man, which every true Christian hath put off, and calls upon us in malice to be children.

Matthew 18:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 18:35" The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce, which after five shillings the ounce is seven pence half penny. (Mt 20:2).

Matthew 18:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:35

Ver. 23-35. All these verses (except the last) are but a parable, which (as I before showed) is a similitude brought from the usual actions of men, and made use of to open or apply some spiritual doctrine. The main scope, or the proposition of truth, which our Saviour designs to open or press, is that which is first and principally to be considered and intended; and that, as I before showed, is to be known, either by the particular explication given by our Saviour, or by what went immediately before, or followeth immediately after. The scope of this parable is plainly expressed, Mt 18:35, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* Nor is it obscurely hinted to us in what went before, where our Saviour was instructing Peter in the great duty of forgiving men their trespasses. This being agreed, as we use to say, that similitudes run not on four feet, so we are not to expect that all the actions of men, mentioned in the parable,

should be answered by some correspondent actions of God: As similitudes always halt, so never more than when by them God's actions are expressed and represented to us. The main points which this parable instructs us in are;

1. That it is our duty, especially theirs who have received forgiveness from God, to forgive their brethren.
2. That if they do not, they may justly question whether God hath forgiven them, and expect the same severity from him which they show unto their brethren.

These being the main things for instruction in which this parable is brought, and which we ought chiefly to eye as the things taught us by this parable, nothing hindereth but that it may also instruct us in some other things, though we cannot raise a proposition of truth from every branch of the parable, and some things be put in according to the passions and usual dealings of men, which possibly are in them unrighteous actions, and may follow from their ungoverned passions, which will by no means agree to the pure and holy nature of God. I will first open such terms in the parable as may be less intelligible to vulgar readers.

The kingdom of heaven; my administration of my kingdom: I am come to purchase remission of sins, and to dispense out remission of sins to those who are indebted to the justice of my Father; but in the application of my blood to men and women for the remission of their sins, both my Father and myself will do as a king, that took account of his servants, &c. Men must look for pardon from my Father, and benefit from me as their Redeemer, upon the following terms: see [Mt 6:15](#).

Ten thousand talents; a certain for an uncertain number; a very great sum. Those who have computed it, say it amounts to a million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. He *commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had;* a thing which our law will not suffer, but in use amongst other nations, and amongst the Jews in particular, as may be learned from [2Ki 4:1](#).

And delivered him to the tormentors; that is, to the keepers of the prison; so the next words teach us, and the Greek word often signifieth no more, though it doth indeed sometimes.

An hundred pence, Mt 18:28, signifieth a small sum, hardly exceeding in our money fifty shillings. This parable excellently instructs us in these truths:

1. That as men, by the law of nature and God, and the laws of men, may be debtors to us, to our reputation, to our estate; so we are all debtors to the glory, honour, and justice of God.
2. That it is a vast debt we owe to God's honour and justice, to which no debt owing by any to us can bear any proportion.
3. That we have nothing to pay to God, in satisfaction for our debt.
4. That God hath a right to demand a full satisfaction of us.
5. That God, for Christ's sake, upon our application to him for mercy, will forgive us our debts.
6. That we are not so ready to forgive our brethren their little injuries, as God is to forgive us.
7. That our difficulty to forgive our brethren, after God's liberality in forgiving us, is a great charge, or will be a great charge against us in the court of heaven.
8. That we ought to set before us God's compassion towards us, and free love in forgiving us, potently to move us to forgive those who have done us injury, and to forgive them out of that consideration.
9. That we ought from our hearts to forgive men their trespasses; that is, so as not to hate them, bear them any grudge or malice, seek any private revenge upon them, or public satisfaction, beyond what they are able to give, but be ready to do them what common offices of kindness in their straits are in our power.
10. That the not doing of this will be an ill evidence to our souls, that God hath not indeed forgiven us, as well as a bar against such forgiveness; and an ill omen, that some punishment from God expects us in this life, to bring us to a temper more

conformable to the gospel, and if not, this life, yet in the life which is to come.

Matthew 19:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 19:1-2 Christ healeth the sick,
Mt 19:3-12 answereth the question of the Pharisees concerning divorce, and the objection of his disciples to the expediency of marriage,
Mt 19:13-15 receiveth little children with tenderness,
Mt 19:16-22 instructs a young man how to attain eternal life, and how to become perfect,
Mt 19:23-26 showeth how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,
Mt 19:27-30 and promises great rewards to his disciples, and to all who have forsaken aught to follow him.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 19:2".

Matthew 19:2

Ver. 1,2. Most interpreters agree that both Mark, Mr 10:1, and Lu 9:51, make mention of the same motion of our Saviour out of Galilee into the province of Judea which is here expressed, though Luke and John mention, something largely, some things done in the way, of which Matthew speaketh not. He *departed* from Galilee. Our Saviour had hitherto spent his time mostly in Galilee. The country of the Jews was divided into three provinces, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Galilee was the more northerly part of the country, and was divided into the Upper Galilee, which is also called Galilee of the Gentiles, Mt 4:15, and the Lower Galilee, which was contiguous to it, but lay more southerly, and adjoined to Samaria. Our Saviour dwelt at Nazareth a long time. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, were all

cities of Galilee. He is now taking his leave of this province, into which he never returned more. His next way into Judea lay through Samaria, (for Samaria lay in the middle between Galilee and Judea), and through part of it he did go, for, Lu 9:52,53, some inhabitants of a village belonging to the Samaritans refused to receive him.

And came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. This phrase hath caused some difficulty to interpreters, because Judea was bounded by Jordan, and had no coasts beyond it. Some say that the term *beyond Jordan* must be applied to *he came*, he came beyond Jordan to the coasts of Judea. Others say, that as men came out of Egypt, the coasts of Judea were beyond Jordan, Mt 4:15. But some think it should be there translated, *by Jordan*: the word $\pi\epsilon\rho\alpha\nu$ signifies any border, or side of a border.

Beyond Jordan, therefore, is on the border of Jordan, and possibly were better translated so, seeing the word will bear it, and there were no coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. It is probable that our Saviour, coming out of Galilee into Samaria, kept on the left hand near to Jordan, till he came into Judea, which also bordered on that river. Wherever he went *great multitudes followed him*, but more for healing their bodies, or for the loaves, than for the feeding or healing of their souls; so different is most people's sense of their bodily and spiritual wants.

He healed them, the text saith; but it saith not, they believed in him.

Matthew 19:3

Ver. 3. Our Saviour, though yet at some distance from Jerusalem, was come into that province where the Pharisees had the greatest power, and were in greater numbers: now they come to him, *tempting him*; where the word *tempting* rather signifies, generally, making a trial of him, than strictly, soliciting him to sin; they came (as appeareth by their question) to make a trial whether they could entrap him, and get any determination from him of a point for which they might accuse him. The question they propound to him is, *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* The word here translated *cause*, signifieth not cause, or occasion, but crime also. So it may be translated

crime; but they did not only put away their wives for crimes, but upon any occasion, in abuse of that text, De 24:1, *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her;* which the Pharisees had interpreted of any kind of deformity, or natural infirmity, not merely of moral uncleanness. Had our Saviour now answered Yes, he had contradicted what he had formerly delivered, Mt 5:32; had he denied, they had trapped him as contradicting the law of Moses, De 24:1, according to their interpretation of it. So they had whereof to accuse him.

Matthew 19:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 19:6".

Matthew 19:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 19:6".

Matthew 19:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark, Mr 10:2-9, giveth us the same history of this discourse, differing a little in the order of the words, but nothing as to the substance of his discourse. Our Saviour answereth neither Yea nor Nay to their discourse, but gives them a fair occasion to answer themselves, and tacitly charges them with ignorance and corruption of the law of God. He refers them to the first institution of marriage, and for that to the book of Genesis, Ge 1:27 2:24. It is as much as if our Lord had said, You own the book of Genesis, as well as the book of Deuteronomy. In the book of Genesis you read the first institution of marriage: it was instituted by God himself; he made *male and female*, Ge 1:27; he made the law of marriage, Ge 2:24, that *a man* (should) *leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they* (should) *be one flesh*; from whence he concludes that the man and wife are one flesh in God's account. From hence he leaves them to conclude, whether it was probable that Moses, whom they so revered, and who was so faithful in the house of God as a servant, would license them to put asunder whom God had

put together; or whether they had not put an interpretation upon the law of Moses which it could not bear in consistency with the law of God. For the sense of those words, Ge 1:27 2:24, see the notes on those places. See Poole on "Ge 1:27". See Poole on "Ge 2:24".

Matthew 19:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 19:8".

Matthew 19:8

Ver. 7,8. Mark reports this a little differently, Mr 10:3 &c., as if Christ had first *said unto them. What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept, &c.* The substance of our Saviour's answer seemeth to be this: Moses gave you no positive command in the case, he could not make a law directly opposite to the law of my Father; but Moses saw the wantonness and wickedness of your hearts, that you would turn away your wives without any just and warrantable cause; and to restrain your extravagances of cruelty to your wives, or disorderly turning them off upon any occasion, he made a law that none should put away his wife but upon a legal cognizance of the cause, and giving her a bill of divorce. Indeed possibly this bill of divorce was sometimes judicially granted upon irregular causes, and Moses might connive at it for the preventing of greater evils, because you were always a hard hearted and stiff necked people; and you by your traditions have expounded that law beyond Moses's intention, and made a bill of divorce grantable in cases which he never thought of, nor intended in that law. But the measures of lawfulness are neither to be taken from Moses's temporary toleration and connivance, nor much less from your traditions and expositions of the law of Moses, but from the original institution of marriage, and from God's original law relating to it: now God at first made but one woman for one man, and so united them that he styled them *one flesh*; so as he who puts away his wife, doth as it were divide and tear his own flesh piece from piece, which is barbarous, inhuman, and unnatural. And the law of God was not, that a man should

forsake his wife whenever he had a mind to it, but that he should rather forsake his father and mother than his wife; that he should cleave to his wife, living and dwelling with her, as a man of knowledge; not hating his own flesh; loving his wife as his own body, loving and cherishing her, Eph 5:28,29. Now how can this possibly consist with a man's putting away his wife upon every little and trivial cause of offence or dislike unto her.

Matthew 19:9

Ver. 9. We met with the like determination of our Lord's upon this question Mt 5:32, only there it was (instead of committeth adultery) causeth her to commit adultery, that is, in case she married again. Here our Lord saith the like of the husband: we have the same, Mr 10:11 Lu 16:18. The reason is this: Because nothing but adultery dissolves the knot and band of marriage, though they be thus illegally separated, yet according to the law of God, they are still man and wife. Some have upon these words made a question whether it be lawful for the husband or the wife separated for adultery to marry again while each other liveth. As to the party offending, it may be a question; but as to the innocent person offended, it is no question, for the adultery of the person offending hath dissolved the knot of marriage by the Divine law. It is true that the knot cannot be dissolved without the freedom of both persons each from another, but yet it seemeth against reason that both persons should have the like liberty to a second marriage. For,

1. The adulteress is by God's law a dead woman, and so in no capacity to a second marriage.
2. It is unreasonable that she should make an advantage of her own sin and error.
3. This might be the occasion of adultery, to give a wicked person a legal liberty to satisfy an extravagant lust.

But for the innocent person, it is as unreasonable that he or she should be punished for the sin of another. But what our Saviour saith here, and in the other parallel texts, is undoubtedly to be understood of husbands and wives put away not for adultery, but for other light and trivial causes, for which by the law of God no

divorce is allowed.

Matthew 19:10

Ver. 10. This is a very strange saying, and discovers to us both the imperfect state of Christ's disciples, and also the tyranny of a sinful practice grown up into a custom. The Jews had assumed a liberty of turning their wives out of doors upon every light and trivial offence or dislike; the disciples think, if this licentiousness may not be allowed it is not good to marry. So a holy institution of God, ordained for the propagation of mankind, for the restraint of extravagant lust, and for the solace and comfort of man's life, should be despised, rather than those unquiet lusts and corruptions mortified, the mortification of which would have made those irregular separations both needless and undesirable. Surely they should rather have said, If the case of a man be so with his wife, then both husbands and wives had need to learn to deny themselves, to comply each with another, to silence their brutish and boisterous passions, that, being the same flesh, they might also have one and the same spirit, and not be like a diseased piece of flesh, where humours so quarrel that one piece need be cut off to preserve the other. But the best of men have their infirmities; and, as the Hebrews said, *Spiritus Dei non semper tangit corda prophetarum*, The Spirit of God was not always upon the hearts of the prophets; so it is as true, *Spiritus Dei non semper et ubique tangit corda fidelium*, All that the saints say is not gospel. Their flesh hath its turn to speak, as well as the Spirit in them. A sinful liberty conceded, indulged, or connived at, by the laws, or by the rulers of a church or place where we live, for a long time, is not easily restrained, and even good men may for a time be carried away with the error of it, so as they cannot discern it, be convinced of it, or be brought clear of it to a conformity to the will of God.

Matthew 19:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 19:12".

Matthew 19:12

Ver. 11,12. Our Saviour, knowing the sinful custom and practice of the Jewish nation now for many years, and giving some allowance for that, and his disciples' infirmities; so he doth not answer them severely, as what they said might deserve, but reproves them gently. What he saith amounts to thus much: You do not consider what you say.

All men, without sinning against God, cannot abstain from marriage. An ability to live chastely without the use of marriage is a peculiar gift of God, and your saying hath no place in persons to whom God hath not given that gift, *for it is better to marry than to burn.* There are some whom God by nature hath made unfit for marriage. There are others whom men (wickedly) make unfit for it, that they may gratify their own jealousy. (Thus several courtiers were made eunuchs, and so entrusted with the care of princes' wives and concubines). And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs, not castrating themselves, (that is wickedness), but abstaining from marriage, and yet living chastely, (having mortified their lusts, and brought under their body), that they might be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and be more free for the work of the ministry, or be able more to give up themselves to a holy life and spiritual conversation. But God, who by his ordinance of marriage designed to people and continue the world, hath given to persons different tempers and constitutions; so as possibly the most of men and women cannot without making use of marriage govern their lusts. As to these, marriage is not a matter of choice and deliberation, and they may and ought to use it as an appointment of God, for the ends for which he hath instituted it. If there be any who can receive this saying, who can without marriage bridle his lust, and so live in a solute and single state as not to sin against God by any extravagance of lusts, and impure desires and affections, and desire, and shall do so, that he may be more spiritual, and serve God with less distraction, and be a more fit instrument to promote the kingdom of God in the world, let him do it.

Matthew 19:13

Ver. 13. Mark saith, Mr 10:13, and Luke saith, Lu 18:15, they were brought that he should touch them. A doubt may from this text arise in the reader's mind, for what purpose the parents or

nurses did bring these young children to Christ. It was not for baptism, for he baptized none himself, Joh 4:2. It is not likely it was for healing; for though our Saviour in such cases did sometimes touch or lay his hand upon the sick persons, yet it is not likely that in that case the disciples would have rebuked them, knowing that their Master used to heal such as were brought to him. It must therefore unquestionably be, that he might bless them. Matthew here saith, *that he should put his hands on them,* and pray. The putting of hands upon persons when they blessed them, or prayed for a blessing on persons, was a very usual rite and custom amongst the Jews.

Without all contradiction (saith the apostle, Heb 7:7) *the less is blessed of the better*. It was a custom amongst the Jews to bring persons to those whom they looked upon as excelling in holiness, to be blessed and commended to God by their prayers, Ge 27:4 48:14. The parents or nurses of these children by this act declared that they looked upon Christ as some great Prophet in favour with God, and whose prayers could prevail with God, and whose blessing was considerable as to these little ones.

The disciples rebuked them, as thinking they were too troublesome to their Master, and not understanding what children in health had to do with their Master, nor perhaps having before seen such a precedent.

Matthew 19:14

Ver. 14. See poole on "Mt 19:15".

Matthew 19:15

Ver. 14,15. Both Mark and Luke add something to this story. Mark saith, Mr 10:14-16, *When Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* Luke saith the same, Lu 18:16, only he saith, he *called them unto him,* and leaves out what Mark hath, Mr 10:16 of Christ taking

them up in his arms, putting his hands upon them, and blessing them. From this text divines will prove the baptism of children, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven; which whether we understand of the church, and the dispensation of the grace of Christ under the gospel, viz. that the gospel church is made up of infants as well as more adult persons, or that the grace of Christ under the gospel, viz. remission of sins through the blood of Christ, doth belong to some children, as well as to grown persons; or of the kingdom of glory, viz. children shall go to heaven as well as grown persons; the argument is well drawn from this text, Those who have a right to a membership in the church are to be baptized; or, Those who have a right to the kingdom of glory may be baptized. But one or both of these are affirmed in this text. We must take heed we do not found infant baptism upon the example of Christ in this text, for it is certain that he did not baptize these children; Mark only saith, *he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* The argument for infant baptism from this text is founded upon his words, uttered on this occasion, not upon his practice. Mark addeth, that our Saviour told them, that unless a man received the kingdom of God as a little child, he could not enter into it. But we opened those words before, Mt 18:3, where we met with the same in effect. See Poole on "Mt 18:3".

Matthew 19:16

Ver. 16. This history is reported by Mark, Mr 10:17-23 and by Luke, Lu 18:18-25. Mark saith, *When he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* Luke saith, *A certain ruler asked him.* Our Lord was now in his way from Galilee to Judea and to Jerusalem. There cometh a person, a ruler, whether of some of the synagogues, or in some place of civil magistracy, the Scripture saith not. He runs, he kneels to him, (paying him at least a civil homage, as to his superior), he salutes him with the ordinary title they gave to their teachers, Master, Good Master; he propounds a grave question to him, what he should do that he might get to heaven; but yet he doth not propound the question in those terms, but, *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* It appeareth by his respect showed to Christ at his coming, and by the question proposed, and by his going away sorrowful when our Saviour's

answer did not satisfy him, that he did not come upon any captious design to entrap our Saviour, but out of a desire to learn; but yet it appeareth plainly that he was a Pharisee, or a disciple of the Pharisees; and thought his life was in his own hands, that he had a power in himself to do some good thing by which he might merit eternal life, or upon the doing of which he might at least obtain everlasting life, though not as a strict reward for his work, without any consideration of a Messias. He grants an eternal state, he declares his desire of an eternal happiness, he declares his readiness to do some *good thing* that he might obtain it.

Matthew 19:17

Ver. 17. Mark omits the latter clause, and only saith, *Thou knowest the commandments*; so saith Luke, Lu 18:19,20. Our Saviour's design here was, not to show this young man by this answer the way by which it was possible that he or any other might come to heaven, but only to convince him of the errors of the Pharisical doctrine. They would not own Christ to be God, nor to be come forth from God; they taught eternal life to be obtainable by the works of the law, and by a fulfilling of the law, according to that imperfect sense which they gave of it, of which we heard much, in Mt 5:1-48. Now, saith our Saviour, seeing you will not own me to be God, nor yet to have come from God, *why callest thou me good?* There is none originally, essentially, and absolutely good, but God: there is none derivatively good, but he derives his goodness from God. How callest thou me good, whom thou wilt neither own to be God, nor to derive from God?

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. This was the doctrine of the Pharisees, That men might keep the commandments. Saith our Saviour, The way to eternal life, according to your doctrine, is plain before thee. You say, men may perfectly keep the commandments of God. He that doth so shall be saved. Therefore *keep the commandments*. Not that our Saviour thought he could do it, or that there did lie a passable road to heaven that way, but that he might convince him of his error, and the need he had of a Saviour.

Matthew 19:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 19:19".

Matthew 19:19

Ver. 18,19. Mark addeth, *defraud not*, Mr 10:19, but Luke doth not put it in, Lu 18:20. Three things we may observe:

1. There are no commandments mentioned but those of the second table.
2. Nor are they reckoned up in order.
3. The tenth commandment is expressed by, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; which elsewhere our Saviour calls the second great commandment, and makes comprehensive of all the commandments of the second table.

We must not from our Saviour's order here, in the enumeration of the commandments, either conclude that the precepts of the second table are greater than those of the first, or that it is enough to keep them in order to eternal life: nor yet, that the fifth commandment is lesser than the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, because it is put after them. But;

1. Our Saviour had reckoned up commandments enough to convince this man that he could not by keeping the commandments hope for eternal life.
2. He had reckoned those, by some of which he intended by and by to convince him that he had not kept the commandments.
3. And those of the non observation of which it was most easy to convince him.
4. The Pharisees looked upon these as the most vulgar and easy commandments.
5. Because love to our neighbour is an excellent evidence of our love to God.

As concerning the order in which they are enumerated, it was not our Saviour's business here to show which was the greatest commandment; that he hath elsewhere determined, calling, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c., the first and great commandment*: here he is not solicitous about the order.

Matthew 19:20

Ver. 20. Those words, *what lack I yet?* are not in Mark or Luke. The young man understood these commandments according to the Pharisees' interpretation of them, who, as we heard, Mt 5:1-48, interpreted them only as prohibiting the overt acts, not the inward lusts and motions of the heart, together with the means or occasions leading to such acts. Paul saith, he *had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*, Ro 7:7. Men that deceive themselves with false glosses and interpretations may think they keep the commandments of God, and be very confident of a righteousness in themselves; but it is impossible others should be so. *What lack I yet?* He expected Christ should have set him some new task, and was not aware that he only wanted a better knowledge and understanding of the law to convince him of his mistake.

Matthew 19:21

Ver. 21. Mark repeats it thus, Mr 10:21, *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me*. Luke, Lu 18:22, repeats it as Matthew, only he begins it with, *Yet lackest thou one thing*. Mark saith, that Jesus *beholding him loved him*: not with a special saving love, for he sent him away sad; upon his going he tells his disciples, that it was a very hard thing for a rich man to come to heaven; he tells him one thing was wanting to him: but he loved him with such a common love as he loveth all his creatures with, and more especially such as are better than others. All that can be concluded from hence is, that acts of moral righteousness are pleasing to God. He saith to him, *If thou wilt be perfect*, that is, in keeping the commandments of God. The papists make a great deal of stir to found upon this text their counsels of perfection; as

if Christ here were advising only the young man to do something beyond what the law strictly required, in order to a more perfect state than others. But that this cannot be the sense of the words will appear to him who will diligently consider;

1. That this had been needless, for our Saviour, in directing the young man to keep the commandments in order to his obtaining everlasting life, had sufficiently declared that the keeping of the commandments was perfection enough.
2. He says, One thing is wanting to thee, that is, in order to thy obtaining everlasting life, which had not been true if our Saviour had granted him to have kept all the commandments, for he had before let him know that the keeping them was sufficient. Our Saviour therefore, by this speech, only endeavours to convince him that he had not kept all the commandments.

But it may be objected, How could that be, for there was no commandment that obliged him to go sell all that he had, and give to the poor? I answer, there was a commandment that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, which he could not do unless he had a heart ready to obey any command God should lay upon him, which our Saviour puts upon the trial by this special precept:

3. There was a commandment of God that he should love his neighbour as himself, and that he should not covet. Now not to be ready at the commandment of God liberally to relieve the poor members of Christ, argued a covetous mind, more in love with his estate than with God; so as though this was not before specially commanded, yet it was commanded generally, and that he would have understood had he rightly understood the law of God; especially having such a promise annexed as *thou shalt have treasure in heaven*.
4. Nor must all the command be taken to be included in those *Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor;* but the following words must also be taken in, *and come, take up the cross, and follow me*. Perfection here is not made to lie in a voluntary poverty only, but in coming after and following of Christ, with a free taking up of the cross.

In short, no man can be perfect in keeping the commandments of God, that doth not love God with all his heart, soul, and strength; nor can any man pretend to this, that hath not a heart ready to obey God in all things, whether more generally or more specially commanded. Nor can any man fulfil the duties of the second table, without first fulfil the duties of the first: for if our love to our neighbour flow not from a love to God, it is no act of obedience, and consequently no fulfilling of the law; which is not fulfilled by mere doing the external duty of it, but by doing what is required in it out of an obedience unto God, which cannot be without a first loving God.

Matthew 19:22

Ver. 22. Mark saith the same, Mr 10:22; so doth Luke, Lu 18:23. He was sorry that he had ever propounded the question, or that the terms were such as his covetous heart could not comply with. He would have had heaven if he could have had it cheap; or, it may be, he would have parted with something for it; but to sell all was a hard saying! Or he was sorry to see himself so confuted, and convinced that, whatsoever he dreamed, he had not kept the commandments, and had not a heart prepared to obey God in one thing. It is not said, because he loved his great possessions, but, *for he had great possessions*; yet the first is intended. It is a hard thing for us to have a great concern in the world, and not to love it more than God.

He went away; he would hear no more of that discourse. How many would have heaven if they might have it upon their own terms! How few are willing to come up to God's terms! How false and deceitful are our hearts! They will persuade us we have done all, when indeed we have done nothing, nor are prepared to do any thing in truth and sincerity. We are not perfect, something is wanting to us, till *to will* to do whatsoever God requireth of us be present with us, though, when it comes to, we may want strength to perform.

Matthew 19:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 19:24".

Matthew 19:24

Ver. 23,24. Mark saith, Mr 10:23-25, And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Luke saith, Lu 18:24,25, And when Jesus saw that he was sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Our Lord, seeing the young man that came to him so briskly, with such a zeal for his soul, and appearing warmth of desire to be instructed in the right way to heaven, and asking for a task to be set him; first, what good thing he should do in order to that end, then calling for more; when our Saviour had reckoned up some commandments to be observed, What lack I yet? saith he; go away quite damped and sorrowful when our Saviour said not to him, Give thy body to be burned; no, nor yet, Cut off a right hand or foot, or pluck out a right eye; only part with some of thy circumstances, Sell that thou hast and give to the poor; a thing he might have done, and have been a man still perfect, both as to his essential and integral parts: he hence takes occasion to discourse with his disciples the danger of riches, and the ill influence they have upon men's souls, with relation to their eternal welfare. Luke and Mark say he spake it by way of question, How hardly? Matthew delivereth it as spoken positively, A rich man shall hardly enter, &c. The sense is the same, only the interrogation seems to aggravate the difficulty, and to fortify, the affirmation, as much as to say, A rich man shall very hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples were astonished at this, (saith Mark), which made our Saviour say it over again, with a little exposition, *How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!* Which exposition is so far from a correction or abatement of the severity of his former speech, that some judge it rather a confirmation of it, for he goes on with saying, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* But why should this astonish the disciples, who had no reason upon this account to

fear for themselves, who had forsaken all to follow Christ? Possibly, because it was so contrary to the common opinion of the world, who did not only, as in Malachi's time, *call the proud happy*, but thought God had scarce any favour for any but the rich; in opposition to which Christ, Lu 6:20,24, blesseth the poor, and pronounces woes to the rich, as having received their consolation. As to the words themselves, the design of our Saviour in them was not to condemn riches, as in themselves damnable; nor yet to deny salvation to all rich persons: our Lord knew that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, were all rich persons, and yet in heaven; so was David and Solomon, &c. He also knew that riches are the gifts of God, good things, not in themselves pernicious. His design was only to show that they are dangerous temptations, soliciting and enticing our hearts into so great a love of them, and affection to them, as is not consistent with our duty with reference to God; and giving the heart of man such advantages for the lusts of pride, covetousness, ambition, oppression, luxury, (some or other of which are predominant in all souls), that it is very hard for a rich man so far to deny himself, as to do what he must do if ever he will be saved. For those words in Mark, *them that trust in riches*, I take them rather to give the reason of the difficulty, than to be an abatement of what he had before said; for to trust in riches, is to place a happiness in them, to promise ourselves a security from them, so as to be careless of a further happiness, Ps 49:6 52:7 1Ti 6:17. That which makes it so hard for a rich man to be saved, is the difficulty of having riches and not placing our felicity in them, being secure because of them, and having our hearts cleave unto them, so as we cannot deny ourselves in them to obey any command of God; and the suffering them to be temptations to us to pride, luxury ambition, oppression, contempt and despising of others, covetousness, &c. Upon these accounts our Saviour goeth on and saith, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*. Which doubtless was a proverbial expression, in use then amongst the Jews, to signify a thing of great difficulty, by terms importing impossibility: or else the phrase may signify an impossibility without the extraordinary influence of Divine grace, as our Saviour seemeth to expound it in the next verses.

Matthew 19:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 19:26".

Matthew 19:26

Ver. 25,26. Mark saith, *They were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, &c.* All three evangelists agree in the same substance of the other words. But why are the disciples amazed? or why do they say, Who then can be saved? Are there not in all places more poor than rich persons? The disciples might reasonably conclude, that poor persons were by their poverty also exposed to many great and dangerous temptations; that even they, though they had not riches, yet might too much place felicity in them, and covet what they had not; and from hence collect a difficulty for any to get to heaven. Our Saviour saith unto them, *With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* If men indeed were left all to themselves, none would be saved; the blackamoor cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots; but God can bring men to heaven by the mighty power of his grace: he can change a rich man's heart, and take it off from too much love of riches, and make him to despise and contemn his wealth, and to put his trust in the living God; or a poor man's heart, and make him also poor in spirit and rich in grace.

Matthew 19:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 19:28".

Matthew 19:28

Ver. 27,28. Mark and Luke repeateth the words of Peter in part, but neither of them have this part of our Lord's answer, particularly respecting his apostles. We heard before, Mt 4:18-22, of Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John, forsaking all and following of Christ, when he called them; the others doubtless did the same. Peter observing that our Saviour laid not the stress of men's salvation either upon riches or poverty, but upon the frame of men's spirits, their humility, self-denial, their obedience to and readiness to follow him; rejoins these words, and saith, *We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?*

Some think that he had an expectation of something in this life, according to the notion which the other Jews had, and it is apparent the disciples had some tincture of a secular kingdom, which the Messias should exercise. But considering our Lord's former discourse could not be so interpreted, and the disciples question, *Who then can be saved?* I cannot agree that. And for the same reason I cannot agree, that the coming of the Son of man in his glory, mentioned Mt 19:28, should be understood of his coming in his mediatory kingdom, (as some would have it), but of his last coming, which is most properly called the coming of the Son of man in his glory, mentioned 1Th 4:15-17 Jude 1:14; and that the thing here promised to the apostles, is not a preference in the church, but a further degree of honour and glory in the day of judgment.

Ye which have followed me in the regeneration; that is, at this time, while I have been by my doctrine reforming the word; in the regeneration of my church, while I have been putting it into a new state. Some make those words, *in the regeneration*, to refer to the next words.

In the regeneration; that is, in the day of judgment, when Christ shall come in his glory. The apostle indeed, Ac 3:21, calleth that day, *the times of restitution of all things*. And the prophet speaks of it as the time of the new heavens and new earth, Isa 66:22. So doth the apostle, 2Pe 3:13; and John, in Re 21:1. It is not much material to which part we apply the term.

Ye which have followed me; that is, who have followed and shall go on and follow me, for this promise cannot belong to Judas, the son of perdition.

Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones. Judges and princes use to have assessors, that sit with them in judgment. He mentions *twelve thrones*, because he had now twelve disciples, his apostles; and though afterward Judas fell away, yet Matthias succeeded, Ac 1:26; so as the twelve thrones shall not be empty, but filled up with twelve that followed Christ, for such a one was Matthias, Ac 1:21.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Though the tribes were thirteen, yet they usually went under the notion of twelve, because Levi was not counted, as having no particular

possession. That is, judging the Jews for their unbelief, and not reception of me: judging others also; but judgment shall begin at the house of God. Doubtless this promise imports, that the apostles shall have a higher place in glory at the great day than ordinary believers: yet the apostle saith the saints shall judge the world, 1Co 6:2.

Matthew 19:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 10:29,30, *for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.* Luke saith, Lu 18:29,30, *for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* The words are a liberal promise, and we must consider,

1. To whom it is made.
2. Of what it is.

The former promise respected the apostles, and was special, as appears by the number of twelve thrones. This respecteth all those that should forsake any thing, houses, brethren, lands, sisters, fathers, mothers, wife, children, for Christ; which is expressed by three phrases (*for my name's sake, for the gospel's sake, for the kingdom of God's sake*) all of the same import; rather than they will forsake me, and the profession of my gospel; rather than they will sin against God. The promise is,

1. Of *an hundredfold in this time.*
2. Of *eternal life.*

We must not understand of an hundredfold in specie, but in value. Therefore Mark saith, he shall receive what he hath in this life *with persecutions*. What is therefore this hundredfold in this life?

1. Joy in the Holy Ghost, peace of conscience, the sense of God's love; so as, with the apostles, they shall rejoice that

they are thought worthy to suffer any thing for the name of Christ, Ac 5:41. They shall, with Paul and Silas, Ac 16:25, sing in the prison; with those, Heb 10:34, take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. This inward joy and peace shall be a hundredfold more than fathers and mothers, or brethren, or sisters.

2. Contentment. They shall have a contented frame of spirit with the little that is left; though they have not so much to drink as they had, yet they shall have less thirst, Php 4:11,12.
3. God will stir up the hearts of others to supply their wants, and that supply shall be sweeter to them than their abundance was.
4. God sometimes repays them in this life, as he restored Job after his trial to greater riches. But they shall have a certain reward in another world, eternal happiness.

Matthew 19:30

Ver. 30. So saith Mark, Mr 10:31. We have much the same sentence, Lu 13:30 Mt 20:16. The Jews that are counted now the first, nearest to the kingdom of heaven, shall have no place there; and the Gentiles, looked upon as most remote from it, shall be admitted into it. The Pharisees and great doctors, who think themselves first, that is, nearest the kingdom of heaven, shall be last; and those whom they count last, such as shall have nothing to do with heaven, shall be counted the first, shall have the preference, the chiefest place in heaven. It is a general sentence, and may be applied variously. But if we consider what discourse follows, we shall see reason to interpret it as an awakening sentence to the best of men. It is the apostles, those who had forsaken all to follow him, to whom he here saith, *But many that are first shall be last*, &c. As much as if he had said, You have forsaken all and followed me, but you had need look, and consider, from what principle, with what love, and to what end you have done it; you had need keep a watch upon yourselves, and see that you hold on, and that you have no confidence in yourselves. For many that are first in, profession, first in the opinion of others, first in their own opinion and confidence, at the day of judgment will be found to be last in mine and my

Father's esteem and reckoning: and many who make not so great a noise, nor have so great a name and repute in the world, and who have the lowest and meanest opinion of themselves, will be found first, and highest in my favour. The day of judgment will frustrate many expectations.

Matthew 20:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 20:1-16 The parable of the labourers who were hired at different hours to work in the vineyard.

Mt 20:17-19 Jesus foretells his own passion and resurrection,

Mt 20:20-28 answereth the petition of the mother of Zebedee's children, and checks the indignation of the other disciples thereat.

Mt 20:29-34 He giveth sight to two blind men.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:16

Ver. 1-16. We find this parable only recorded by St. Matthew; nor have any thing to guide us in understanding the scope of our Saviour in it, but Ac 20:16, *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.* Some here by *first* understand such as are of greatest repute and estimation in the world, or who have the highest opinion of themselves. By *last* they understand persons who are of meaner note and reckoning in the world, and have lowest opinion of themselves. The former shall be last as to the love and favour of God, and any reward from him; and the other shall be first. Others by the *first* understand the Jews, who were the first people God had in the world, and more dignified than any other by privileges: by *the last*, the Gentiles, who came last into the church of God. This seems to be directly intended by our Saviour, who perfectly knew the pride and invidious temper of the Jews, who valued themselves upon their prerogative, that they were the church of God, when the world lay in wickedness; and were apt to resent as an indignity that the Gentiles should be called into the church, and be made equally partakers of spiritual privileges with them. Having now fixed the scope of the parable, the interpretation is easy.

The kingdom of heaven, that is, the sovereign dispensation of God in calling nations or persons to partake of spiritual benefits in his church, and consequently of eternal blessedness, is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. The householder is God the Father, compared by Christ to a husbandman, with respect to the culture of vines, Joh 15:1; to one that hath a

vineyard, Isa 5:1,2 &c. The *vineyard* is the church. The *work* is that which concerns eternal salvation, both of our own salvation, and of others that are committed to our charge, or that are within the compass of our activity to do them spiritual good. The *labourers* are, eminently, persons in office, and, generally, all that are called by the gospel. The hiring of them imports the gracious promise of the reward published in the gospel to those who will work. The penny is the reward, comprehensive of the spiritual privileges that persons in the church are made partakers of. Men *standing idle in the marketplace*, signifies their neglect of the great and proper work for which they came into the world, to glorify God and save their souls. His going out at several times, and calling in some to the vineyard at the *third, sixth, and ninth hours*, implies the calling of the Jews in the early age of the world, and his sending the prophets in sundry times, when they were degenerated, to return to his service. The calling some at the *eleventh hour* particularly respects the bringing in the Gentiles by preaching the gospel, who before were without the knowledge of God and the way to life. The *even* is the time of accounts and recompence. The murmuring of some that they received no more than those that came later into the vineyard, primarily and immediately signifies the envy and vexation of the Jews, that the Gentiles should be equal partakers of the grace of God with themselves, who for so many ages had been his peculiar people. The householder's vindicating himself is from two considerations, wherein it appears that his liberality to some is perfectly consistent with his justice to all.

1. That he agreed with them for a penny, which they received: the Jews enjoyed those external privileges of God's covenant, which they so much valued themselves for, till they cut themselves off by their obstinate rejecting his grace.
2. That he might do what he pleased with his own. He was master of his own favours, and it was malignity to tax his bounty to others, which was nothing prejudicial to what was due by agreement to them. Our Saviour concludes the parable, *that the last shall be first*; the Gentiles shall be made partakers of the gospel, with the blessed privileges attending it: *and the first shall be last*; that is, the Jews should be deprived of those privileges.

And analogically in every age, some who are first, in

presumption of their own merit, in profession, and reputation, but not in real holiness, shall be last in God's account; and those who were sincere and diligent in the Christian calling, though not valued by the world, shall be preferred before them.

For many be called, but few chosen. This is the reason of what is said before. Many are called by the external preaching of the word into the visible communion of the church; this is the evident meaning by the reading of the parable, wherein it is said persons were called at several hours, comprehending the ministry of the prophets and the apostles, and all the succession of preachers in every age.

And few chosen; that is, by the free and unchangeable decree of God ordained to eternal life, and to partake of saving grace in order to the obtaining it. This is the main scope of the parable.

Matthew 20:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 20:19".

Matthew 20:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 20:19".

Matthew 20:19

Ver. 17-19. Both Mark and Luke give us account of this passage. Mark saith, Mr 10:32-34, *And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.* Luke hath it, Lu 18:31-34, *then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of*

man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. Our blessed Lord was yet upon his road from Galilee to Jerusalem; we have here an account of some of his travelling discourse, to teach us to make use of all time for edifying and profitable discourse. Mark saith, *that as they went Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.* Mark gives us no account of any formidable object in their eye. Those that think they were amazed to see him make such haste to his death, forget that Luke saith, that after our Saviour had further instructed them in this, they understood it not; but probably they knew he was going into the nest of his enemies, and this made them afraid. He calls to him the twelve, (it was not a discourse fit for a multitude), and gives them an account very particularly of what he had twice or thrice before taught them: He had before told them of his death and resurrection, and that he should be betrayed to death; here he describes the manner, they should deliver him to the Gentiles (to Pilate and Herod); he describes his previous sufferings, he should be scourged, mocked, spit upon, and the kind of his death, he should be crucified; that when these things came to pass, they might be assured that he was God, who had so punctually foretold things to come, not existent in their causes, but mere contingencies. He comforteth them with two things:

1. That it was according to what had been foretold by the prophets.
2. That though he died, he should rise again the third day.

They had need of this forewarning for a forearming; for considering that they now looked upon him as the Messiah, it might well pose them to think how he should die; and when they had seen all these things come to pass, it might have shaken their faith; but being so particularly foretold, the coming of them to pass rather confirmed their faith in him as the Son of God than weakened it.

But Luke saith, *they understood none of these things;* that is, surely they believed none of them, *the saying was hid from them.*

The words were plain enough, but they could not reconcile them to their reason, they could not conceive how he who was the Messiah could die; nor get over the prejudice of his being a temporal prince, and exercising a kingdom in this world. For his rising again the third day, they could not believe it.

Matthew 20:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 20:21".

Matthew 20:21

Ver. 20,21. Mark saith, Mr 10:35, And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, the other on thy left hand in thy glory. Matthew's saying in thy kingdom, Mark, in thy glory, leaves us in some doubt whether these two disciples and their mother had here some carnal notion of the kingdom of heaven, because Christ had before spoken of some that should be first in it, and others last; or were in some expectation of some glorious secular kingdom, which Christ after his resurrection should exercise in the world; for that they had some such thoughts appears from Lu 22:24 Ac 1:6. This mother of James and John was Salome, Mr 15:40, a constant follower of Christ, Mt 27:55,56. Matthew saith she spake. Mark saith her two sons spake. They would first have had a general grant from Christ of whatsoever they should ask, or a certain thing. But wise men use not to grant such requests. Our Lord asks them what they would desire. Then do they betray their ambition. Was there ever a more unseasonable request, than for them to be suitors for great places to him, when he had but now told them he was going to be spit upon, scourged, condemned, crucified? Yet there was this good in it; they by it discovered a faith in him, that notwithstanding all this he should be exalted, and have a kingdom. But how carnal are our conceptions of spiritual and heavenly things, till we be taught of God a right notion of them!

Matthew 20:22

Ver. 22. Mark hath the same, Mr 10:38,39. Our Saviour gently reproves them for their unadvised petition, and again minds them, that he was first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory, and that by much tribulation they also must enter into the kingdom of God; which was a thing fitter for their present thoughts, than sitting at his right hand and left hand, for we must *suffer with him*, if we will be *glorified together*, Ro 8:17. How ready are we to ask we know not what!

Are ye able to drink of the cup, &c.: the sense is, *Are you able to suffer what I am to suffer?* Hereby our Saviour intimates that those who are the freest and greatest sufferers for Christ shall have the greatest rewards from him. Christ here expresses his sufferings under the notion of drinking of a cup, and being baptized with a baptism. A *cup* is an ordinary metaphor in holy writ, by which a man's portion in this life is expressed, whether it be a portion of good things or evil, Ps 11:6 Isa 51:17 Jer 25:15 La 4:21 Mt 26:39,42 Joh 18:11. Drinking of a cup is usually put for suffering, Jer 49:12 Eze 23:32 Ob 1:16. The metaphor being, as some think, taken from a custom in some nations, to put malefactors to death by giving them a cup of poison to drink; or, as others think, from the lewd custom, at competitions to force men to drink off their cups. To be *baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with* hath the same import: see Lu 12:50. Afflictions are ordinarily compared in Scripture to waters: to be baptized, is to be dipped in water; metaphorically, to be plunged in afflictions. I am, saith Christ, to be baptized with blood, overwhelmed with sufferings and afflictions; are you able to be so?

They say unto him, We are able. This was as rashly spoken as the other. How little do we know our own strength! When Christ was apprehended, they *all forsook him and fled*, Mt 26:56.

Matthew 20:23

Ver. 23. Mark hath the same, Mr 10:39,40. Our Saviour here tells them, that as he was first to suffer and then enter into his glory, so they that should be glorified with him should also first suffer with him; for none shall be crowned but those who *strive*

lawfully, 2Ti 2:5; and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2Ti 3:12. But who should be highest in the kingdom of glory his Father must determine, upon whose will the disposal of his kingdom, and the preferences in it, depended. This text hath been abused by those who have denied Christ's Deity, and equality to the Father, as if it served their purpose, because Christ here denieth it in his power to dispose of the kingdom of heaven; but besides that, he elsewhere asserts the contrary, Joh 10:28 17:2. Christ doth not here speak of what was in his power, but what was his office as Mediator; so his work was to encourage them to fight the good fight, not to dispense out crowns to them. Or else he speaketh of himself as man, as he speaketh, Joh 14:28. Nor indeed doth Christ here deny that it was in his power, but only that it was in his power to give this preference to any except those for whom his Father had prepared it. Note, the Greek is, ουκ εστιν εμον δουναι αλλ' οις ητοιμασται, that is, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared; so that those words, *it shall be given to them*, which our translators put in, were better left out. All this was before ordered and determined by God, and he could only dispose of the kingdom of God according to the eternal counsel. Αλλα (which we translate *but*) hath here the force of ιε μη, (*unless*,) as in Mr 9:8 2Co 2:5. Besides that, to show the order of the Trinity in working, acts of power and providence are usually ascribed to the Father, though by other scriptures it appears that the Son in them cooperates with the Father.

Matthew 20:24

Ver. 24. Mr 10:41. Here is not yet a word of Peter's primacy, or any claim he put in for it; nor, it seemeth, had the others any apprehension of such an establishment, for then neither would James and John have put in for it, nor would all the disciples (among whom Peter was one) have been so displeased at the ambition of James and John; yet they seem to be sick of the same disease, and to have been displeased only that they had the start of the motion, and had put in their petition first.

Matthew 20:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 20:27".

Matthew 20:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 20:27".

Matthew 20:27

Ver. 25-27. So Mark hath much the same, Mr 10:42-44. Luke hath also much the same, (but it seemeth spoken at another time), Lu 22:25-27. I shall not here intermeddle with the disputes some have founded on this text: Whether there may be a civil, magistracy amongst Christians; a thing undoubtedly foreign to the sense of this text. Or, Whether Christ here establisheth a party amongst ministers; which I do not think our Lord's design here. Nor yet with that other question, Whether ministers of the gospel may take upon them the exercise of any civil power. That which our Saviour here intends is,

1. To distinguish his kingdom from the kingdoms of the world. Those kingdoms are over men's bodies and estates; his was a spiritual kingdom, over the hearts and consciences of men. Or rather, his was a kingdom of glory, where there would be no need of rulers and magistrates, as in the government of the world, nor any such exercise of authority as is here exercised in the government of earthly kingdoms and politics.
2. To condemn ambition and pride in his disciples, as making them most unfit for this kingdom, which is a thing he had before taught them. The way to be greatest in heaven is to be humblest, to be low and mean in our own eyes. This I think to be the most proper interpretation of this text; our Lord by it correcting the erroneous opinion his disciples had of the nature of his kingdom, as also their pride and ambition, and pressing upon them other studies, than how to be the greatest in any earthly kingdom. If any do think that in this text our Lord hath some respect to the kingdom he hath upon earth, he rather checks ambition, and an affectation of superiority, than any thing else, and lets us know that such as love the preeminence are most unfit for it; that the work of heads of the church is but a ministry, not a domination; and that those who are fittest for it, and deserve most honour in the church,

are those that least seek and affect it; and those most unworthy of that honour, who most hunt after it. But I prefer the first sense given of this text.

For certainly what our Saviour here saith was not only occasioned by, but had a great relation to, the petition of James and John with their mother; and the bearing rule and exercising authority mentioned there relates to the kingdom mentioned in that petition; which I think cannot be understood of the church, which was a kingdom of Christ, which they as yet little understood: but they either meant the kingdom of glory, entertaining carnal conceptions of that, that there would be some superiority and inferiority there amongst the saints, which our Saviour here correcteth their mistake in; or else they fancied a secular kingdom, to be exercised by Christ on earth, after his resurrection from the dead. Our Saviour correcteth this mistake also, intimating that his kingdom should be of another nature, and the way to be highest in it was to be humble and low, and mean in opinions of ourselves.

Matthew 20:28

Ver. 28. So saith Mark, Mr 10:45. The apostle saith, Php 2:7 *he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant*. Our Saviour had before taught them, that *the disciple is not above his master*. Such, saith our Saviour, as is the King in my kingdom, such must the rulers and great persons in it be. See what a kingdom I have; *I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*, to serve the necessities of men's and women's souls and bodies; *and to give my life a ransom for many*, λυτρον, a redemption price. The apostle useth αντιλυτρον, which signifieth a price paid instead of another, 1Ti 2:6. So as there is no further satisfaction or price to be paid for any.

Matthew 20:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:34

Ver. 29-34. Mark repeateth the same story, Mr 10:46-52, with several more circumstances.

1. He mentions only one blind man, and nameth him *Bartimaeus*, *the son of Timaeus*. He saith, the blind man was *begging*.

Mark saith, when Christ called the blind man, they said unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. He further adds, that Christ said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. Luke relates the same, Lu 18:35-43. He saith, As he was come nigh to Jericho. He mentions but one blind man. In repeating Christ's words he saith, Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. Our Lord presently gives his disciples a demonstration of what he had said, that he came to minister, to serve even the poorest and most despicable creatures. Jericho was a city not far from Jordan, Jos 3:16; it was taken, Jos 6:1-27, and upon the division of the land fell within the lot of Benjamin, Jos 18:21. Our Saviour took it in his way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Probably these blind men, or Bartimaeus at least, who alone is mentioned by Mark and Luke,

hearing Christ was coming, sat first on the side of Jericho next Galilee, and then got him on the other side, as our Saviour was leaving the town. Which makes Luke say, as he was come nigh; and the two other evangelists say, as he went out of Jericho, he sat begging. Bartimaeus being (as it should seem) the most known, and the most famous, is alone mentioned by Mark and Luke. Matthew (naming none) saith there were two; which Mark and Luke deny not, but knowing only the name of the one of them, they mention only one. They speak to our Saviour under the notion of the Son of David, by which they owned him as the true Messiah; for that was a title by which the Messiah was known amongst the Jews, according to the prophecies of him. They ask him for mercy; they continue in their cry, though the multitudes rebuked them, as possibly thinking they only came to ask some alms, and were too importunate, seeing our Lord seemed not to regard them. God sometimes trieth our faith by delays, how it will hold out, but he never frustrateth it. This minds us of our duty, to pray without ceasing. Christ stops, calleth them, asks them what they would have. They seem most sensible of their bodily wants, and answer, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. Jesus hath compassion on them, toucheth their eyes, (Christ sometimes, but not always in healing, touched the affected part), and (as Luke saith) he said, Receive thy sight. The miracle is wrought; they presently are able to see. Luke addeth, that Christ said, Thy faith hath saved thee. We have met with the same phrase before. I have made thee whole, but thy faith in me hath prevailed with me to do it. Their faith in his power was seen,

1. In their owning him as the true Messiah; so able to do it.
2. In their imploring his mercy, and going on in their cries of that nature, though they met with a rebuke.

Faith and fervent prayer do great things with God, because of his compassion. *The prayer of faith shall save the sick, Jas 5:15. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Jas 5:16.* Nor is any man so mean and contemptible in the world, (these two blind men were beggars), but if they can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if they will lie in Christ's way, if they will cry unto him, and not give over their cries, they shall obtain at our Saviour's hands greater things than these. This miracle gains God glory from the multitude, and from the blind man not only

praise, but a resolution to follow Christ. This should be the effect of all salvations wrought for us. Mercy is then duly improved, when it bringeth forth in our hearts glory and praise to God, and engages us to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Saviour had wrought his former miracles in Galilee, where the witnesses of them were remote; he hath now two witnesses in the province of Judea, who go along with him towards Jerusalem, where we shall find him in the next chapter.

Matthew 21:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 21:1-11 Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

Mt 21:12-14 He driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and healeth the diseased there.

Mt 21:15-16 His reply to the priests and scribes who took offence at the hosannas of the people.

Mt 21:17-22 He curseth the barren fig tree, which presently withereth.

Mt 21:23-27 He silences the priests and elders who questioned his authority.

Mt 21:28-32 The parable of the two sons whom their father sent to work in his vineyard.

Mt 21:33-46 The parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 21:3".

Matthew 21:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 21:3".

Matthew 21:3

Ver. 1-3. This famous story of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem is recorded by Mark, and Luke also: by Mark, Mr 11:1; by Luke, Lu 19:29. There is little difference in their relation of it thus far; afterwards we shall find more. I shall consider what they all say, that I may at once give the story perfect. Mark saith, *Bethphage and Bethany*. He saith, *ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat*. Luke hardly varies at all from Mark, at least in nothing considerable. Our Lord was come now very nigh Jerusalem; Bethany was but fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, that was about two miles, wanting an eighth part, Joh 11:18; it was the town of Lazarus, Joh 11:1. Matthew names only Bethphage, which was a place at the same distance, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, so called from the plenty of olive trees growing there; this mount was betwixt Jerusalem and Bethphage. It is like our Saviour was at both these towns, for Mark and Luke nameth both. From one of them he sendeth two of his disciples to a village near hand, telling them they should there find, at their entrance in, an ass tied, with a colt, on which yet never man sat. Mark and Luke only mention the colt, because Christ rode only upon the colt. Matthew mentions the ass, for the fulfilling of the prophecy, of which we shall hear in the next verses.

Loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, (which he knew they would, and Mark and Luke tell us they did), ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them. Not, our Lord, but *the Lord* of heaven and earth, whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills, *hath need of them*: not for any weariness; he who had travelled on foot from Galilee to Bethany, could have gone the other two miles; but that he might enter into Jerusalem as was prophesied of him, Zec 9:9.

And straightway he will send them. The words are so, as may be understood as a promise of Christ to send them back, but it is more likely they are intended as an assurance to the disciples that the owners would make no difficulty to send them. These instructions (considered with the success) were an evident argument of Christ's Divine nature, who could tell all particular circumstances, and also which way the heart of man would incline.

Matthew 21:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 21:5".

Matthew 21:5

Ver. 4,5. The words are, Zec 9:9, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* The evangelist quotes no more of them than served for his purpose. John, in the short account he giveth of this our Saviour's entrance, quotes them shorter, Joh 12:15. The former part of the words are found Isa 62:11. The Jews agree this prophecy to respect the Messiah, though they were so blinded as not to see it was fulfilled in Christ. *Tell ye the daughter of Zion,* prophesy you to the Jews, to the citizens and inhabitants of Jerusalem, *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee:* thy spiritual King, having salvation, the King promised and foretold, that shall bring salvation, *cometh,* that is, shall shortly come to thee for thy profit and advantage. And you shall know him by this; he shall come $\theta\kappa\pi$, poor, afflicted, meek, lowly, *sitting upon an ass,* an ass used to bear burdens, (so the word signifies), *and a colt the foal of an ass:* not upon both; they are exegetical of each other; the first denoted the species of the beast, the second its age. There was not any prophecy of Christ more plainly fulfilled than this. Asses were of old beasts that great persons used to ride on, Jud 10:4 12:14. But after Solomon's time the Jews got a breed of horses; so as only poor people rode upon asses, mostly reserved for burdens. Whom could the Jews possibly expect to see coming riding into Jerusalem, under the notion of a King bringing them salvation, in so little state, upon the foal of an ass, but the person prophesied of by Zechariah, Zec 9:9, whom they themselves confess to be the Messiah? And had not there been a strange veil upon their hearts, Herod's courtiers, and Pilate's, might have understood his kingdom was not of this world, nor he such a King as threatened their grandeur.

Matthew 21:6

Ver. 6. Mark saith, Mr 11:4-6, *And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.* Luke saith, Lu 19:32-34, *And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him.* The true obedience of Christ's disciples is to be learned from the practice of these two disciples: they dispute not the commands of their Lord, nor make objections, nor raise any disputes, nor are afraid of any danger to themselves; they went, and that speedily, and are exact to what their Lord had commanded them; accordingly they find as he had said. They loose the colt. The owner seeing them, asks why they loose the colt. They tell him the Lord had need of him.

Matthew 21:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 21:9".

Matthew 21:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 21:9".

Matthew 21:9

Ver. 7-9. Mark saith, Mr 11:7-10, *And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.* Luke hath it yet with more circumstances, Lu 19:35-40: *And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the*

*Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. John also gives us some account of this, Joh 12:12,13: On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. They bring the ass and the colt to Jesus, who had no saddle, no costly furniture for him; they were glad to lay on the ass's back some of their garments, and to set Christ upon the colt. And in a kind of a natural country triumph, made up without any kind of art, some threw their clothes in his way, some cut down boughs of trees, (*palm trees*, saith John), with these they bestrew the way. Christ at Bethany, in his journey, had done a famous miracle, raising up Lazarus from the dead. John saith, Joh 12:18, the fame of this made many that were in Jerusalem, who were come thither against the passover time, (for, Joh 12:1, it was but *six days before the passover*), go out to meet him; and, joined with those who came along with him from Bethany, they cried all along as they came, *Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.* Many of these expressions, seem to be taken out of Ps 118:24-26. Their laying the garments upon the ass, and throwing them in the way, was a custom they used towards princes, as appears not only by many records out of profane authors, but from 2Ki 9:13, where the like was done to Jehu, upon his being anointed king over Israel. For the acclamations, they were also such as were usual to princes. Whether *Hosanna* signifieth, *Save now*, or, *Help, we pray*; or whether it was a term by which they expressed their desire of good success or prosperity to the person to whom they applied it; or whether it was the name of some song used in their festivals, or it signifies boughs, &c., is not much material: they by this acclamation acknowledged him a King, the Son of David; they blessed him, they wished him peace, honour, and glory. This was the acclamation of the multitude, who doubtless had but a small and*

imperfect knowledge of the Divine nature of Christ, but yet looked on him as the Son of David, as the Messiah. The Pharisees (some of which it seemeth had mixed themselves with this multitude) were troubled at the acclamation, and (as Luke tells us) speak to Christ to rebuke them; but he answereth, *If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* It is a proverbial expression, the sense of which is alone to be attended. The sense is this: The time is come, set by my Father for the publication of my kingdom, and declaring what I am; and when God's time is come the thing must come to pass, by one means or another. If these children of Abraham should hold their peace, God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham, and they should do the same thing, publish me as the Son of David, the King in Zion.

Matthew 21:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 21:11".

Matthew 21:11

Ver. 10,11. Such an unusual sight might well affect a great number in Jerusalem with admiration and astonishment, the people, especially, giving honour to him as a King, and calling him the Son of David; and certainly, but that the meanness of his appearance and meanness of his followers put uninterested men out of fear, and gave Herod and Pilate some security that there was no attempt on foot against the civil government, our Saviour and his followers would have been apprehended, as raisers of a sedition and rebellion. But the multitude now gave him no other title than that of Jesus the Prophet; which yet was enough to distinguish him from other prophets, for he was Jesus a Saviour, and the Prophet foretold, De 18:15,18,19.

Matthew 21:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 21:14".

Matthew 21:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 21:14".

Matthew 21:14

Ver. 12-14. This piece of the history is related by two of the other evangelists, but with great difference. Luke before this mentions a discourse upon the way, upon our Saviour's first sight of the city, and his prophecy of the destruction of it; but no other evangelist mentioning it, I shall pass it over till I come to his history. Mark hath this part of the history thus, Mr 11:11-19, *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. (Then he relates our Saviour's cursing the barren fig tree, which I leave till I come to it in order). And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves: and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. —And when the even was come, he went out of the city, Mt 21:19. Luke saith, Lu 19:45-47, *And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and those that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple.* It is plain by all the evangelists, that our Saviour, coming to Jerusalem five days before the passover, went every night to Bethany, about two miles off, and returned in the morning to the temple, where Luke saith that he taught daily. The first day it should seem, by Mark, that he only came into the temple, looked round about upon all things, and with the twelve went out to lodge at Bethany. By his going into the temple, we must understand only the outward court, for the priests and Levites only might enter into the inner court, and the holy place; and the high priest only might enter into the holiest of all. Though Mark mentions not his driving out the buyers and sellers the first day, but recites it as if it had been done the second day of his coming, yet the best interpreters think*

that it was done the first day, as Matthew and Luke seem to hint; nor is any thing more usual, than for the evangelists to set down things out of the order of time in which they were done. Some learned authors in the Hebrew learning tell us, that in the outward court was a daily market of such things as the Jews used for sacrifices, wine salt, oil, oxen, and sheep; but it being but three or four days before the passover, the market was much greater, because of the great multitude of lambs then to be used. By the law, Ex 30:12,15, every one also was to bring a half shekel. For this purpose there were tables of moneychangers, men that were furnished with half Shekels to change with the people, that every one might have his half shekel; and those that so changed allowed some little profit to those that changed their money, which gain was called *κολλυβισται*; thence the changers were called *δολλυβισται*, *money changers*. Those that *sold doves* were there, to furnish the women that came up to their purification with their offerings, according to the law, Le 12:6. This was the reason of that great market which our Lord found in the outward court of the temple; and it is not likely that our Lord should see these abuses the first day and take no notice of them, but come the next day and correct them, which makes interpreters think Mark in this relation postponed this part of the history. Here arise two questions:

1. Whether it was unlawful for them to sell these things in that part of the temple.
2. Admit it were, By what authority did our Saviour do this?

To the first it must be said, That had it not been unlawful, our Saviour would not have reproved them for turning his Father's house, and the house of prayer, into a place of merchandise; nor would he have driven them out in such a zeal, overturning the tables, &c., which he had done also once before, Joh 2:15. The temple was built by God's direction, not only dedicated by men, but God's acceptance of it was testified. It appeareth by Joh 2:19, it was a type of Christ's body. We know there were special promises made to those that did pray toward it. God saith he had *hallowed* it, 1Ki 9:3; that is, separated it from common use to his service, amongst other things for a *house of prayer*, Isa 56:7. Now though we read of no other things sold there but what were useful for sacrifices, yet this was a civil use, and a profanation of that holy place, because there were market places in Jerusalem,

in which these things might have been done. It had been against decency, if the temple had not been hallowed in this manner, if such things had been done in the synagogues, being places set apart and commonly used for God's worship; but to use the temple in this manner, so specially hallowed, was doubtless a great profanation of that holy place. As to the second question, By what authority our Lord, being no public magistrate, did these things, I am not so posed to determine that, he being the eternal Son of God, and now in the exercise of his regal power, as I am to give an account how it came to pass that the priests, and scribes, and Pharisees never questioned him for what he did; for if any will say, that we presently shall read of their taking counsel against him, I reply, But we read of nothing relating to this laid to his charge. Nor do we read of their questioning him when he did the same things before, an account of which we have in Joh 2:13-25. For though I know some say that our Saviour did this *Jure zelotarum*: that the Jews had a law, that any might punish even to death such as profaned the worship or holy things of God; which they justify from De 13:9, and the examples of Phinehas killing Zimri and Cozbi, Nu 25:6-8, and Mattaniah's killing the Jew sacrificing to idols at Modin, and the king's commissioner, of which we read in Apc 2Mac 2:24,25: yet this doth no way give me any satisfaction: for as, on the one side, I should not have known how to have defended the act of Phinehas if God had not by and by justified him, nor do I think that the law in De 13:9 is to be expounded of private persons; so, on the other side, if the priests, and scribes, and Pharisees had not known of some law that justified our Saviour in this act, I can hardly conceive they would have so quietly put it up, especially considering that probably their profit was concerned, if they had for gain licensed those traders to a place within the compass of the temple, as is very probable. Being therefore fully satisfied that our Saviour, who was Lord of the temple, and to whom the Spirit was given without measure, did no more than he might lawfully do, I am willingly ignorant how it came to pass that he met with no opposition in it, because God hath not pleased in his word to inform us. It is certain that he did the thing, and that it was a thing fit to be done, and that he, as the Son of God, had authority to do it; what made them take it so quietly I cannot tell, nor is it necessary for us to know, nor of any great advantage.

Matthew 21:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 21:16".

Matthew 21:16

Ver. 15,16. The other evangelists say nothing of this part of this history. The *wonderful things* here mentioned, are his healing the blind and lame, of which we read Mt 21:14. The cry of the children doubtless more displeased them; it was of the same nature with that of the multitude in the way, and in the streets, when our Lord came into Jerusalem; they owned Christ as the Messiah, and gave him praise, and wished all manner of felicity to him. The Pharisees showing a displeasure at the acclamation, Christ refers them to what was written, Ps 8:2: there it is, *thou hast founded, or ordained, strength*, that is, a solid and firm praise; a prediction that from the testimony of such weak persons, the glorious power of Christ should be proclaimed, and from such mean and despicable beginnings great and glorious things should come to pass.

Matthew 21:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:22

Ver. 17-22. Luke hath nothing of this passage, but Mark relates it with some variation and additions: the variation is only as to time, as to which the evangelists were not curious. Matthew relates this miracle as done in the morning of the second day, as Christ and his disciples returned from Bethany; so doth Mr 11:12: but Matthew speaks as if the disciples discerned it presently withered; Mark mentions it as not discerned to be withered till the next morning, Mr 11:20. Mark saith, Mr 11:13, *for the time of figs was not yet*; which breeds a difficulty, why our Saviour should curse the fig tree for having no fruit, when the time for its fruit was not come (of which more by and by). Mark saith, Mr 11:21,22, that *Peter calling to remembrance his Master's cursing the fig tree, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.* Then repeats the substance of what Matthew hath in Mt 21:21,22; to which Mark addeth, Mr 11:25,26, *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses.* When our Lord had been in the temple, and driven out the buyers and sellers there, he went out of the city to be at Bethany, either to avoid the noises of the city, (now very full of people, the passover being so nigh), or to get a more private place for prayer. He returns the next morning; and being hungry, and seeing a fig tree in his way, he goes to it, finds it full of leaves, but no fruit on it. He saith unto it, Never fruit grow on thee more. Mark saith, *For the time of figs was not yet.* Why then doth our Saviour curse this tree? Some think that by *time* is here meant season (as indeed the Greek word often signifieth); these would have the meaning to be, for it was not a seasonable year for figs. But this rather augments than abates the difficulty, for why should our Saviour curse it for having no figs, when the year was such as was not seasonable? Others therefore think that *ou* should be *ou*, then the English would be, Where he was was a time of figs. For this it is said;

1. That the Greek spirits and accents were ordinarily left out in ancient copies, which if they be taken away the words are the same.
2. That this was according to truth, for it was a time of green figs, at least; it being near Jerusalem, and but three or four days before the passover, about which time they reaped their corn, as appears from Le 23:10 De 16:9; and it is plain from So 2:13, that in the beginning of their spring their fig trees put forth green figs.

But when I consider that none of the ancient translations are according to this criticism, but as our translations, I conclude that the ancients understood it *ov*, not *ou*, and it seemeth too bold to interpret the words contrary to their unanimous sense. Others therefore tell us, that fig trees, or at least some kind of them, (like orange trees), had leaves and fruit upon them always, some green, some half ripe, some full ripe; and that these kept on their leaves all the winter: so that our Saviour seeing leaves, might be led to it with an expectation of some fruit put forth the former year, for the time for the ripening of fruit of that kind that year was not come; and finding none, he cursed it; thereby in a type showing what should be done to barren souls, who have only leaves, no true fruit of righteousness. Or what if we should say, that he did not curse it with any respect to its want of fruit, but only to show his Divine power, working a miracle?

And presently the fig tree withered away: as soon as our Saviour had cursed it, it began to wither. Mark tells us this was the next morning, Mr 11:20, which made Peter say, *Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.* Matthew saith, *When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!* Upon this our Saviour telleth Peter and the rest, that if they had faith, and doubted not, they should not only do that which he had done to the fig tree, but if they said to that mountain, Be removed and cast into the sea, it should be done. This is interpreted by Mt 21:22, *All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.* We met with the like expression before, Mt 17:20. Mark hath the same, Mr 11:23. Luke hath it, Lu 17:6. It is an expression which ought not to be strained further than to signify, that there is nothing conducive to the glory of God and our own good, but believers may receive at

the hand of God, if they can believe without doubting that what they would have shall come to pass. I see no reason to discourse of a faith of miracles as different from other faith; which only thus differed, that the disciples (the apostles I mean) had a power given them, and a promise made to them, that they should be able to work miraculous operations, which is not given to other Christians serving only the particular occasions of that time, to give credit to the gospel. The general proposition is true, and shall be made good to every believer, That whatsoever good is made the matter of a promise, (such are all good things), shall be given to believing souls, praying for them. But there were of old special promises, not made to the people of God in general, but to particular persons, for particular ends; we cannot expect to do or obtain such things now. Nothing is too big for true faith to obtain, but that faith must have a promise to lean upon, and it must be showed by prayer, as Mt 21:22. Mark adds, that it must be also attended with charity, a charitable heart, ready to forgive, and actually forgiving, our brethren their trespasses. But it is no more than we met with in Matthew, Mt 6:14,15, where we opened the sense of those words.

Matthew 21:23

Ver. 23. Mark hath before this, Mr 11:18, *And the scribes and chief priests heard it, that is, his turning the buyers and sellers out, and overturning the tables of the money changers, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.* Then he saith, Mt 22:27,28, *And they come again, to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?* Luke saith, Lu 19:47,48: *And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.* It is plain that our Saviour went every night to Bethany, and returned to Jerusalem every morning, and daily preached in the temple. And Luke saith, *the people were very attentive to hear him;* in the Greek it is, hung upon him, hearing him. They were also much affected with the miracles which they had seen him working. So as the scribes and the elders *feared him,* saith Mark. This

possibly might be one reason why they made no opposition to our Saviour, driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, viz. for fear of the people; for we must remember they were a conquered, tributary people, and traded the jurisdiction of the Romans, under whom, though they had a liberty for the exercise of their own religion, yet they had not such a power as before; it was not lawful for them to put any to death, Joh 18:31. And for the preserving of their own liberty, they were obliged to take heed of causing any tumults for matters concerning their religion. So as what they did of this nature they did by craft, rather than plainly and openly attempting it, Mr 14:1. It is likely they might have some previous secret counsels what method to take, mentioned both by Mark and Luke. The method, it seems, which they agreed upon, was first to send to him, to know by what authority he did those things, and who gave him such authority. This is mentioned both by Matthew and Mark. They sent such a message to John, Joh 1:19-21. They had often questioned him about his doctrine, and had gone by the worst, he justifying his doctrine to their faces. For the truth of his miracles, it was so evident that they could not question that; They therefore now only question his authority to preach. The question was captious enough, for if he had said, By a Divine authority, they would probably have accused him of blasphemy. For a human authority, they knew he had none, according to their rules for order, for they came from the court that should have given them such authority. Our Saviour well enough understanding their design, gives them, who would not understand his Divine mission by his miraculous operations, a wary answer.

Matthew 21:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:27

Ver. 24-27. We have the same without any considerable alteration Mr 11:27-33. Luke also records the same history, Lu 20:1-8, with no considerable difference, only he thus prefaceth to it: *And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders:* which makes it plain, that their question principally related to our Saviour's preaching. It should seem, they had a law prohibiting any to preach in the temple without authority from the chief priests and elders. If any one think this was not an apposite answer to the question propounded to him,

1. They ought to consider, that our Saviour did truly judge they deserved no answer, for his works had testified of him that he acted by a Divine power; he should not need tell them so, in so many words.
2. In very deed there was a direct answer couched in this question of our Saviour. I pray, saith he, by what authority did John preach and baptize? They could not say, By a human authority, for they knew he was not licensed by their masters: it must follow that he acted by virtue of an extraordinary Divine mission.

So do I, saith our Saviour, and have given you a greater proof of it than ever John Baptist did. But our Lord well knew that the Pharisees had a greater reverence for John the Baptist than for him, and that many of the people had a great opinion of John, indeed greater than of him; our Saviour coming *eating and drinking,* as he expresses it, that is, being of a more free and sociable conversation, which did not so please the Pharisaical morose, and supercilious humour: he therefore chooseth to teach them by a question, in which, as soon as they could resolve themselves, they might know by what authority he did what he did. Besides, by the baptism of John, mentioned in our Saviour's question, is not to be understood only his administration of baptism, but his doctrine, and indeed the whole of his ministry; for as his baptism is called *the baptism of repentance,* so the Pharisees here argue, that if they should say, *From heaven,* he

would say, *Why then did ye not believe him?* Which must be understood of his doctrine. A great part of John's doctrine was, that the Messiah was come, that Christ was he; Joh 1:29, he pointed to him and said, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;* which had they believed, they would never have come to him with so silly a question. The Pharisees therefore rightly judged how they would be ensnared, if they said John's baptism and doctrine was from God, for then a Divine faith was due to his words, and they must have owned Christ to be the Messiah. But why did not they say, *Of men?* The text saith, they feared the people. Those who will not fear God, shall have something to fear sordidly and slavishly. The people all owning John as a prophet, a man that had an extraordinary mission from God, and commission to reveal the mind and will of God, would have cried shame upon them had they disparaged him, as one that spake of his own head. They say, *We cannot tell.* Herein they lied. Our Saviour replies, *Neither do I tell you, &c.* Not, I cannot tell you, but I do not tell you: I will tell you no more than what John hath long since told you, and what, if you will, you and all men may know by my miracles.

Matthew 21:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:32

Ver. 28-32. Matthew alone mentions this parable. The scope of it is taught us Mt 21:31, *The publicans and the harlots go* (that is, shall go) *into the kingdom of God before you*, that is, you Pharisees. Who these Pharisees and who the publicans were, we showed before, Mt 3:7. The publicans were very odious to the Jews: see Mr 2:16. Harlots are great sinners. By *the kingdom of God*, here, is meant that of glory. Our Lord's saying that publicans and harlots should go in before the Pharisees, doth not imply that they should follow. It only signifieth that some who had been publicans (as Matthew and Zacchaeus) and harlots were in a better condition than these Pharisees. He proves it because they had done the will of God, which the Pharisees, notwithstanding all their fair profession, had not, but resisted it, and particularly in the ministry of John the Baptist, who came to them in the way of righteousness, preaching the true doctrine of righteousness, and living a holy and righteous life; upon the hearing of whose doctrine, some of the publicans and other great sinners had believed in Christ; but the Pharisees, though they heard his doctrine, saw his conversation, and saw others repent and own Christ, yet were so far from believing, that they would not repent, that they might believe; they would not be awakened to any sense of their sinful courses, nor amend any thing of their former ways, that they might receive Christ and embrace his righteousness and salvation. For although evangelical repentance is the fruit of faith, yet that repentance which lieth in a previous sense of sin, and a resolution to leave sinful courses, goeth before it. Now to illustrate and press this home upon the consciences of these Pharisees, our Saviour brings this parable, (as Nathan did to David, 2Sa 12:1,11) that they might, being convicted, condemn themselves. Hence the parable is easily understood: The *man* mentioned is God. The *two sons* were the Pharisees, a people highly pretending obedience to the law of God, and making a great show of religion. And *the publicans and harlots*, great sinners, bad and vile people, making no pretence to religion. God saith to the one and the other, *Go, work in my vineyard*, that is, do my will, do the work I command you to do. The Pharisees, so hypocrites and formalists, by their outward pretence and profession, say, *I go, sir*; but yet go not; all their religion is a vain show, a mere outside appearance. Others by their lives declare that they will not go;

but yet upon second thoughts, having their hearts touched by the finger of God, they do God's work.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. This is plain; for what was the will of the father, but that they should do the work he set them to do? This the latter did not. The father's will was not only that the son should give him a cap and a knee, and compliment him, but that he should go to work in the vineyard. It is the least part of God's will that men should give him good words, be a little complemental and ceremonious toward him; but that they should repent and believe, and obey his gospel. This some publicans and harlots did; the generality of the Pharisees refused. It is a hard thing to convince a moral, righteous, civil man, that he lacks any thing to salvation; and hence it is that profane persons many times repent, believe, and are saved, when others perish in their impenitency and unbelief, because they think they have no need of repentance, or any further righteousness than they are possessed of.

Matthew 21:33

Ver. 33. Mark hath this parable, Mr 12:1-9. Luke hath it, Lu 20:9-16. Who is here intended under the notion of a *householder*, or a *man*? We are told by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 5:1,2, it is the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: *the house of Israel and the men of Judah* are his *vineyard*, his *pleasant plant*, Isa 5:7 he hedged this people by his providence. God often compares his church to a vineyard, De 32:32 Ps 80:8 Jer 2:21. The other expressions, of making in it a winepress, or a winefat, signify no more than that God had provided for the Jews all things necessary for use or ornament. His letting of it out to husbandmen, and going into a far country, signifies that, being himself, as to his glorious residence, in heaven, he had entrusted the church of the Jews with a high priest, and other priests and Levites.

Matthew 21:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 21:36".

Matthew 21:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 21:36".

Matthew 21:36

Ver. 34-36. Mark agrees in the substance, but mentions three single servants sent, and then many others. The first he saith *they caught, and beat, and sent away empty*. At the second he saith *they cast stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled*. The third he saith *they killed*; and for others, they did beat some, and kill some. Luke speaks to the same sense. I observed before, that we must not look to fit every particular phrase in a parable in the explication. By the *servants* here sent to the husbandmen are doubtless to be understood those extraordinary prophets, whom in the corrupt state of the Jewish church God sent to reprove the priests, and to admonish the people, as well as the people, of the duty which they owed unto God, in obedience to his law. And the various phrases here used, to express the indignities offered to the servants, do but signify the various abuses offered to many of these prophets, of which are instances in 1Ki 19:10 2Ch 36:16 Ne 9:26 Jer 44:4,5. Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned; so was Micaiah; Zechariah slain in the temple, &c.

Matthew 21:37

Ver. 37. Mark saith he had but *one son, his well beloved*, Mr 12:6. Luke saith, Lu 20:13, *Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him*. God is here brought in acting after the manner of men, using all probable means to get their rent: we must not fancy that God did not know what men would do. God, after all his prophets, sent his only Son to the Jews and to their priests, his well beloved Son; he said, Perhaps they will reverence my Son. These words must be understood, not as expressing what they would do, or what appeared to God probable that they would do, but as expressive of what they ought to do, and what God might reasonably expect from them.

Matthew 21:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 21:39".

Matthew 21:39

Ver. 38,39. Mark and Luke have the same with no considerable alteration. Our Lord here prophesieth his own death by the means of these wicked priests, and so both lets them know that he was not ignorant of what was in their hearts, and they had been already (as we heard before) taking counsel about, by which they might again have concluded that he was the Son of God, and one who knew their hearts; and he also lets them know, that they should not surprise him, and that he was not afraid of them.

But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said, This is the heir. These words let the Pharisees (to whom, together with the people, he at that time spake) know that themselves knew he was the Son of God, and were convicted in their own consciences that he was the true Lord of the church. Though this was not true of all that had a hand in crucifying Christ; for Paul saith of some of them, that if they had known him, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;* yet it was doubtless true of many of them, and those the most knowing men amongst them. But herein did their most prodigious blindness and madness appear, that when they knew this, they should think it possible to prevent his being set as King upon the Lord's holy hill of Zion. One would think this were impossible to rational creatures. But why should we think so? How many are there in the world at this day, that are convicted in their own consciences, and do believe that the ways and people whom they prosecute to their ruin, yea, to death itself, are the truths, the ways, the people of God, yet they will be kicking against the pricks! And though God makes many of them perish in their enterprises, and suffers them not to come with hoary heads to the grave in peace, yet there ariseth another instead of this hydra, a posterity approving their doings and thinking, though their fathers failed in this or that little policy, yet they shall prevail against God, and his inheritance shall be theirs. Wise Providence thus fitteth the saints for their crown, and suffers sinners to prepare themselves for the day of wrath.

Matthew 21:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 21:41".

Matthew 21:41

Ver. 40,41. Mark relates the latter verse as Christ's own words, Mr 12:9; so doth Luke, Lu 20:15,16, adding, that *when they heard it, they said, God forbid*. It is said, to solve this difficulty,

1. That *they say unto him* must not be understood of the Pharisees, but some of the hearers; the Pharisees said only, *God forbid*.
2. Others think the Pharisees and elders did at first say as is here expressed, but our Saviour then telling them they were the men and opening it further to them, they said, *God forbid*.

It is very possible the Pharisees and elders might first say it, and that our Saviour confirming and opening their words, showing them how they had given judgment against themselves, they said, *God forbid*; so both they might say these words, and Christ also. This I take to be the most satisfactory answer. By those words also our Saviour declares, that his church should shortly be taken out of the hands of these Pharisees, and elders, and priests, and put into the hands of his apostles and a gospel ministry.

Matthew 21:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 21:44".

Matthew 21:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 21:44".

Matthew 21:44

Ver. 42-44. Mark saith, Mr 12:10,11, *And have ye not read this scripture, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* Luke saith, Lu 20:17,18, *And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* It is more than probable that our Saviour had more words with them upon this argument than are left us upon sacred record; for John hath let us know, that we are not to expect that all he did or spake should be written, Joh 21:25; and as not every discourse or action, so not all words in the same discourse, nor all circumstances relating to the same action. Knowing themselves and their masters to be the husbandmen with whom the Lord had entrusted this vineyard the house of Israel, it is not reasonable to think they should be very patient to hear that God would miserably destroy them as wicked men, and commit his vineyard to the trust of others. We cannot therefore in reason imagine but that they should reply something to that, as thinking it a strange thing that he should assert, that for the rejection of him, God would reject his ancient people, and cast off the church of the Jews. To show this was nothing which ought to seem strange to them, he asks them, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone, &c.* Luke saith, *he beheld them, and said, What is this then, &c.?* As if the Pharisees had charged him with speaking without any warrant from the word of God, there was no such thing in the law or prophets. To convince them of their mistake, or at least that there was nothing in that he said which needed to appear strange to them, he saith, *Did ye never read? or, Have ye not read the scripture?* (so Mark relates it); or, *What is this then?* As Luke hath it. The text he quotes is Ps 118:22,23. It is manifest that the Jews understood that Psalm to be a prophecy of Christ, by the people's acclamations of Hosanna; for the substance of those acclamations are in Ps 118:25,26: *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hoshiah na, הושיע עה נה Save, I beseech thee.* This they understood of the Messiah. This they had heard cried unto our Saviour. Saith our Saviour, In that very Psalm you may read, *The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.* Before he had compared the church to a vineyard, to show their obligation to bring forth fruit; here to a building, to denote God's dwelling in

it. The builders here intended were the heads of the Jewish church, who not only by their own pretences, but by their calling, were builders, and ought to have been builders; though indeed they proved destroyers and pullers down, instead of builders. The church is elsewhere compared to a building, 1Co 3:9 Eph 2:21; and the teachers in it to builders, Ro 15:20 Ga 2:18. Our Lord is here compared to a *stone*, because he is the only firm foundation, *the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph 2:20-22: called by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 28:16, *a stone laid in Zion for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*; which is applied to Christ, Ac 4:11 Ro 9:33 1Pe 2:6-8. He is *become the head of the corner*, that is, the chief, the principal stone in the building. Lest they should be startled at this, he addeth, *this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes*. This may seem strange to you, that those who seemed to be builders and pillars should be rejected and thrown away; and no wonder, for it is the *Lord's doing*. In the reformations of churches from gross corruptions, God doth always some extraordinary things, which we are not at present able to reconcile to other reasons. Mt 21:43, (which some think should have been put after the next verse), our Lord tells them plainly, that God was removing his church from them to the Gentiles, which he calleth a people that should bring forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: there will be many that shall be offended at Christ, his person, his doctrine, his institutions, upon which account he is called a stumbling stone, Ro 9:33. But they *shall be broken*: if they take offence at me, so as they will not believe on me, nor receive me, it will be their ruin.

But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder: if they shall go on to persecute me and my members, so that I fall on them, they shall be ruined, irreparably and irrecoverably, with a more dreadful destruction.

Matthew 21:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 21:46".

Matthew 21:46

Ver. 45,46. Mark hath much the same, Mr 12:12; so hath Luke, Lu 20:19,20: but Luke adds, *They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.* These wretched men were convinced in their own consciences, *they perceived that he spake of them.* They had nothing to oppose to what he said. They could not deny but that the psalmist, Ps 118:22, spake of the Messiah. They could not but own that they were the builders, and that they had refused him. Yet their lusts and interests would not suffer then, to obey these convictions, to receive and to embrace Christ, and prevent that ruin which was coming upon them. They durst not apprehend Christ for fear of the people. They had nothing to lay to his charge; they therefore send out spies to watch him, to see if they could catch any thing from him in discourse, whereof to accuse him before Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea at this time.

Matthew 22:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 22:1-14 The parable of the marriage of the king's son: the unworthiness of those that were first bidden: others called in their room: the punishment of one that came without a wedding garment.

Mt 22:15-22 The captious question proposed concerning paying tribute to Caesar, and Christ's answer.

Mt 22:23-33 He confutes the Sadducees who questioned him touching the resurrection.

Mt 22:34-40 He showeth which are the chief commandments of the law.

Mt 22:41-46 He proposeth to the Pharisees a knotty question concerning Christ.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:14

Ver. 1-14. Luke hath this parable, Mt 14:16-24, which hath made divers interpreters think that Matthew hath put it out of its due order; for Luke reports it as spoken long before, and that not in the temple, but at a Pharisee's house where he was at dinner, and upon occasion of one of them saying, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* But I know no reason why we may not allow our Saviour to have used the same parable twice, in two differing companies, and upon two different occasions, especially considering there are remarkable differences in Luke's and Matthew's relation. I shall therefore leave the consideration of Luke's relation till I come to that chapter in his Gospel, where I shall meet with it in course, and consider only what Matthew saith. We must remember this is a parable, not an historical narration. The first verse tells us, *And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables:* he answered, that is, he began a discourse, so the word very often signifies. Our Saviour hath neither given us any particular explication of this parable, nor any *proparabola*, or *epiparabola*, any sentence before or after the parable, guiding us as to the explication, except only that short sentence, Mt 22:14, *For many are called, but few are chosen;* which rather guides us in the explication of the four

latter verses than of the whole parable: yet it is not hard for us to find out our Saviour's scope in this parable. It seemeth to be double:

1. To inform those to whom he spake of the destruction suddenly coming upon the Jews, for their rejection of the gospel, and of the calling of the Gentiles.
2. To let us know, that neither Amongst the Jews nor Gentiles all should be saved whom God called by the external ministration of the gospel; but those alone who, belonging to the election of grace, should be found in the day of judgment having on the wedding garment.

So then, *the kingdom of heaven* here signifies, the way or equity of God in the dispensation of the gospel, or the administration of things in order to the kingdom of glory. The *king* here mentioned must be he who is the King of kings. The *marriage for his son*, is the exhibition of the covenant of grace; which whosoever layeth hold on, Isa 56:4, is by faith united to Christ; which union is often expressed in holy writ under the notion of a marriage, Ps 45:10,11 Eph 5:23, &c.: or their union with him in glory, Re 19:9. The persons *bidden* were the Jews. The *servants* that called them to the *wedding*, were those that were faithful amongst their ordinary teachers, or the prophets, such as Isaiah and the rest, whom they refused to hearken unto. The *other servants* might signify John the Baptist, and the twelve, and others sent out by Christ, to tell them that Christ was now come, there wanted nothing but their coming to him and receiving of him. Their making *light of it, going one to his farm, another to his merchandise*, and others taking the servants, entreating them spitefully, and slaying them, signifies the Jews' general refusal of the gospel, and the particular rage and malice of some of them, shown in their abusing of the Lord's prophets and messengers, and which he knew some of them would further show against Stephen and James. The king's sending forth his armies, and slaying the murderers, signified the coming of the Roman armies, and their utter destroying Jerusalem. The sending of the servants into the highways, and inviting all those whom they found to the wedding, signified the apostles going to the Gentiles, and preaching the gospel to all nations; which much enlarged the territories of the church, gathering in many who professed to accept of Christ, but not all in truth and sincerity.

The king's coming to see his guests, signifieth Christ's coming at the day of the last judgment, with his fan in his hand, throughly to purge his floor. His finding one without his wedding garment, signifieth his finding many hypocrites at the day of judgment. The guests at weddings were either wont to put on their best clothes, (as we usually do), or a particular garment which was then in use, and was worn by those who were invited to weddings. By the *wedding garment* here is meant Christ, Ro 13:14, who is at this feast both the bridegroom, and the meat at the feast, and the wedding garment also, in divers respects. It is but an idle dispute, whether faith is meant, or love: neither the one nor the other separately, but faith that worketh by love; whatsoever God requireth of us, that we may be made meet for the kingdom of God: without faith and holiness none can see God. His being *speechless* signifies, that those who have lived under the proffers of grace and salvation, and have rejected them, neither believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor bringing forth fruits of holiness, will be without excuse at the day of judgment. And the king's commanding his servants to *bind him hand and foot, &c.*, signifieth that all such persons as live within the church, under the means of grace, yet die impenitent and unbelievers, having not by a true faith received Christ as their Saviour, and brought forth the fruits of true repentance and holiness, shall get nothing by their being within the church and externally called, but shall be thrown into hell as well as others, the pains of which are here expressed by binding hand and foot, lying in outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth; as in other places by a worm that shall never die, and a fire that shall never go out; all metaphorical expressions, signifying the vexations and intolerable punishment of the damned in hell.

For (saith our Saviour) many are called, but few are chosen. We met with this expression before, Mt 20:16, where the sense of it was not so obvious as it is here. Some by it here understand, a choice unto life eternal; nor without reason, if that be understood by the marriage supper, as it is Re 19:9; and it appears to be partly at least the sense of it here, in that the person without the wedding garment is doomed to eternal misery. If we by the marriage supper understand a union with Christ here, or the benefits flowing from that, we must by *chosen* here understand effectually called, being made partakers of that special distinguishing grace which bringeth salvation. The gospel is preached to many whom God doth not favour with his special

grace, so as they receive it, convert, and are saved. The former part of this parable doth hint us the reason why the Jews rejected the offers of grace and salvation made to them, viz. the power that the temptations from the world, of pleasure, profit, and honour, had upon them. As the latter part also showeth us the true reason why any are saved to be from the free grace of God, viz. because they are chosen, chosen to eternal life, and particularly favoured to be made partakers of his special and, distinguishing grace.

Matthew 22:15

Ver. 15. Mark saith, Mr 12:13, *They send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.* Luke saith, Lu 20:20, *They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.* His life was what they sought for. This they had no power allowed by the Romans to take away without the sentence of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. That they might have something to accuse him of before him, which he might condemn him for, they first take counsel. They saw he did nothing worthy of death; they therefore issue their counsels in a resolution to send some persons to discourse with him, under the pretence of conscientious, good men, to propound some questions to him, his answer to which might give them some opportunity to accuse him of blasphemy or sedition. The men they pitch upon were some of them Pharisees, some Herodians.

Matthew 22:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 22:17".

Matthew 22:17

Ver. 16,17. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:14. So hath Luke, Lu 20:21. There is a great variety of opinions, who these *Herodians* were; we read of them in an early consultation against Christ with the Pharisees, Mr 3:6. Some think, they were foreigners of other nations, whom Herod, being tetrarch of Galilee, had

brought in from contiguous pagan nations; but this is not probable, for then the Pharisees would have had nothing to do with them. Others think that they were some of Herod's guard, or soldiers; but neither is this probable, considering the issue of their counsels, to send some who in Christ should not know, nor be frightened with. Others (which is more probable) think they were some of those Jews who favoured Herod's side, and had forgotten the liberty of their country, joining with the conqueror, and taking his part. Others think they were Sadducees. Others say, that they were persons that were of a mongrel religion, made up of Judaism and Gentilism. Our Saviour bids them *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of Herod*, Mr 8:15; which maketh it probable, that the Herodions were not only courtiers, and for the Roman interest, but that they had embraced some particular doctrines, much differing from the Pharisees; it is likely they were leavened with some of the doctrine of the Sadducees, denying angels and spirits, and the resurrection. It is plain that they were some of Herod's faction; what their principles were as to religion is not so plain, nor of much concern to us to know. They begin their discourse to our Saviour with a great compliment, *Master*, a name the Jews did usually give to those whom they owned for teachers.

We know that thou art true, one that will tell us the truth, and speak as thou thinkest to be true, *and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men*: thou wilt speak nothing out of fear, nor for any favour or affection; but plainly tell us what is truth, and what God would have us do in the cases we offer to thee. In these words they give us the true character of a good teacher; he must be a good man, true, one that will truly teach men the way of God, and, in the faithful discharge of their duty, not be afraid of the face of men. But herein they condemned themselves, for if our Saviour was so, why did they not believe in him, and obey what he taught them?

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But how came this to be a case of conscience? What doubt could there be, whether men from their peace might not lawfully part from their own, especially such a little part of it? Some think that they spake with relation to that particular tribute which was demanded, which they think was that half shekel, Ex 30:12,15, paid by the Jews every year, which

was to go for the service of the tabernacle: they say that the Romans had ordered this payment to go to the emperor, and this bred the question, Whether they might lawfully pay that which was appointed as a testimony of their homage to God, and for the service of the temple, to a profane use. I must confess I cannot so freely agree to this, wanting any good proof that the Romans exacted that payment to the emperor, and thinking it a very probable argument to the contrary, that the tables of the money changers, who changed the people's money into half shekels fit for that payment, was now continued. And if that payment had been now altered, and turned to the use of the civil government, our Saviour's overturning those tables, and driving the money changers out, had offered them a fair opportunity to have charged him with sedition, which they did not do upon that account. I rather therefore think the question propounded concerning the lawfulness of making any payments to the emperor, looking upon him as a usurper of authority over a free people. That the Jews were very tenacious of their liberty appears from Joh 8:33; and, without doubt, the most of them paid such taxes as the Roman emperor laid upon them with no very good will. Now those hypocrites turn it into a case of conscience, God having made the Jews a free people, Whether they should not sin against God in paying these civil taxes to a pagan conqueror. There was one Theudas, and Judas, mentioned Ac 5:36,37, who made an insurrection upon it. This was a question captious enough. For if he had said it was lawful, he had probably incurred the odium of the people, which was what they desired, for they had apprehended him before this time but for fear of them. If he had said it was not lawful, they had what they sought for, a fair opportunity for accusing him, and delivering him up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor at this time amongst them.

Matthew 22:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:22

Ver. 18-22. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:15-17. So hath Luke, Lu 20:23-26. Our Saviour, saith Luke, *perceived their craftiness*, how subtlety they went about to entrap him. He calls them to show him *the tribute money*. The Jews had two sorts of money, shekels and half shekels, which was money proper to them, and Roman coin, pence and sesterces. Their tribute was paid in this coin. Accordingly they bring unto him a penny, a Roman penny, as much in value as seven pence halfpenny in our coin; which it seems was the poll money, which the Romans exacted of every head. The coining of money was always looked upon as an act of sovereign power, hence the usurpation of it is made so criminal. Most princes use to have their effigies stamped upon their coin, and some inscription about it, with their names, and some words expressive of their dominion over such places where their coin is current; so as the admission of a prince's coin as current amongst a people was a testimony of their owning and subjection to such a prince. Such an image and superscription this piece of money had; upon which our Saviour concludes, *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's*. Although Caesar be a usurper, yet God hath given you into his hands, you have owned him by accepting his coin as current amongst you. His right and God's right are two distinct things. Religion doth not exempt you from your civil duties, and obedience to princes, in things wherein they have a power to command. Princes have power to impose tributes upon their subjects, for the maintenance and upholding of the civil government. Let Caesar have his due, and let God have his right. You are a company of hypocrites, who by this question would make me believe you have a great zeal for God and his rights, and that you would not pay taxes that you might assert God's

right over you; this is your preference, but indeed your design is to try me, if you can persuade me, by any words of mine, to encourage you to any sedition, or acts of disloyalty to your civil governors. I see no reason for it; Caesar hath his right, and God hath his rights; you may give them both their rights, and so you ought to do. God's kingdom is of another nature than the kingdoms of the world. His law forbiddeth no civil rights. Thus our Saviour answers their question so as he maketh them to condemn themselves, if, owning the civil magistrate's power, they did not give him his rights, and so as neither Caesar nor yet the people had any just cause of exception against him for his words. This answer surprises them, they marvel and go their way, having played their game and got nothing.

Matthew 22:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:28

Ver. 23-28. Mark thus repeats the same history, Mr 12:18-22. So

doth Luke, Lu 20:27-33. Concerning the Sadducees we have before spoken; they were a sect amongst the Jews much differing from the Pharisees, as may be seen, Ac 23:8. Amongst other erroneous tenets, they denied the resurrection, as may be seen in that text, as well as this; and (which indeed was their fundamental error) they denied spirits, and consequently the immortality of the soul in its separate estate. Their design seemeth not so much to have been to have drawn out a discourse from our Saviour which might have touched his life, (which was the Pharisees' design), as to have exposed him, by bringing him to an absurdity. To this purpose they put a case to our Saviour upon the law, De 25:5, where God had ordained, for the preservation of the inheritances of the several tribes and families distinct, That if brethren dwelt together, and one of them died leaving no issue; the wife of the dead should not marry unto a stranger; her husband's brother should go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, &c. Now they either knew of, or else supposed, a ease of seven brethren, successively marrying the same woman; they desire to know whose wife of the seven this woman should be in the resurrection. Instead of discovering their acuteness, and putting our Saviour upon a difficulty, they did but betray their own ignorance as to the state of the resurrection.

Matthew 22:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 22:30".

Matthew 22:30

Ver. 30. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:24,25, only he propounds it as a question, *Do ye not therefore err, because ye know, not the Scriptures?* Luke saith, Lu 20:34,35, *And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* The discourse of the Sadducees was bottomed upon this mistake, that there should not only be a resurrection of bodies, but of relations too; and the state of the world to come should be like the state of this world,

in, which, for the propagation and continuance of mankind, men and women marry, and are given in marriage. Now, saith our Saviour, your error is bottomed in your ignorance, *because ye know not the Scriptures*, (which indeed is the foundation of all men's errors in matter of faith), *nor the power of God*. If you knew the power of God, you would know that God is able to raise the dead. To confirm our faith in the resurrection, the Scripture every where sendeth us to the consideration of the Divine power, Ro 8:11 Php 3:21. If you knew the Scriptures, you would know that God will raise the dead, and the state of men in the resurrection shall not be as in this life, where men and women die daily; and in case they did not marry and give in marriage, the generation of men would quickly be extinct. *But* (saith Luke) *they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead*. It is manifest by the first words, that the latter words are not to be understood of the general resurrection, (to which all shall come, worthy or unworthy), but of the resurrection unto life; that resurrection which is not the mere effect of Divine providence, necessary in order to the last judgment, but that resurrection to life which is the effect of Christ's purchase. And this is observable, that the resurrection from the dead will be of so little advantage, nay, of such miserable disadvantage, to wicked men, that the Scripture sometimes speaketh of the resurrection as if it were peculiar to saints, 1Co 15:22 Php 3:11; so in this text. Hence Luke calls them afterward, *the children of the resurrection*; not that others shall not rise, but the children of God alone shall be the favourites of the resurrection, those who shall rise as children to an eternal inheritance. Concerning the state of persons in the resurrection our Saviour thus describes it: that men and women there shall be *as the angels*, not in all things, but in the things mentioned, which are two, one of them mentioned by Matthew, both by Luke:

1. They shall not die any more.
2. They shall not marry, nor be given in marriage.

The first showeth the needlessness of the latter, for one great reason of marriage was to supply the gaps which death maketh in the world; but men shall not die any more, therefore there will be no need of conjugal relations amongst men, more than among angels. *The children of this world* (saith Luke) *marry, and are*

given in marriage. Marriage was only an institution for this world, and is to continue no longer than this world stands; for the state of men in another world will be such as needs it not, being a state of immortality, so not needing it for propagation; and a state for perfection, and so not needing it for mutual help in the affairs of man's life, nor a remedy against extravagant lust.

Matthew 22:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 22:33".

Matthew 22:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 22:33".

Matthew 22:33

Ver. 31-33. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:26,27; so hath Luke, Lu 20:37,38; only Mark and Luke mention the time when God spake these words—*in the bush*, that is, when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Ex 3:6; and Luke addeth, *for all live unto him.* Mark also saith, *Touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses?* Our Saviour, in the foregoing words, had, by the by, asserted the doctrine of angels; here he asserts both the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and also of the resurrection of the body: and though Cardinal Perron, and Maldonate the Jesuit, boldly assert that the resurrection of the body cannot be proved from hence without taking in the tradition of the church; yet, notwithstanding their confidence, those who have a greater reverence for our Saviour's words, think that not only the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body also, is irrefragably proved by this argument of our Saviour's; to make out which, these things are to be observed:

1. God doth not say I have been, but *I am*: he speaketh of the time present, when he spake to Moses, and of the time to come.
2. He doth not say, I am the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but *the God of*: now wherever God styles himself the God of

any people or person, it always signifieth, God as a Benefactor, and one that doth and will do good to such a people or person. It is a federal expression, as where he saith to Abraham, Ge 17:7, I will be a God to thee and thy seed, that is, of thee and of thy seed.

3. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, doth not signify part of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but their entire persons, which consist of bodies as well as souls.
4. God is not the God of the dead, he doth not show kindness to them if they be dead, and shall rise no more.
5. In this life, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received no such signal kindness from God, but others might receive as great kindness as any of them did. Hence now our Lord proveth, as the immortality of their souls, so the resurrection also of their bodies, that God might show himself the God of whole Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Gerard saith: The argument of this text is made clear by Heb 11:16, *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city*. This is that which made God to be truly called their God, because he hath prepared for them a city, which city they could never possess without a resurrection. It is yet further added by some, That God's promise to Abraham of the land of Canaan was in these terms, Ge 13:15, *To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever; not only to thy seed, but to thee*: so to Isaac, Ge 26:3; to Jacob, Ge 35:12 Ex 6:4,8 De 11:21.

The promises seemed not to be fulfilled in giving their posterity the earthly Canaan, which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived not to enjoy; but to extend to the rest prepared for the people of God, the city mentioned by the apostle, Heb 11:16, which God had prepared for them, to justify himself to be their God. Now this could not be prepared for their souls merely, which were but a part of them, and hardly capable of perfect happiness without a reunion with the body, there being in it such an innate desire. Nor was it reasonable that the bodies of these saints, having been sharers with their souls in their labours, should have no share in their reward from that covenant; therefore of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our Saviour firmly proveth their resurrection. Luke addeth, *for all live unto*

him. Not live unto him only as their end, but in the same sense as Paul saith of Christ, Ro 6:10, *in that he liveth, he liveth unto God*; that is, with God. So saith Luke, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though dead at present, live with God; and they, and all the children of Abraham, shall live to God, that is, with God, to all eternity. Matthew addeth, *when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine*. Poor people, they had been used to hear discourses from the Pharisees, about the traditions of the elders, rites and ceremonies, washing hands before meat, and the necessity of washing pots and cups; and the Sadducees, declaiming against the doctrines of angels and spirits, and the resurrection; they were astonished to hear one instructing them in things concerning their souls, the resurrection and life eternal, and confuting their great teachers from books of Scripture owned by themselves; for the Sadducees, though they had no great regard to the prophets, yet they owned and paid a great deference to the books of Moses.

Matthew 22:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:40

Ver. 34-40. Mark relates this history more fully, Mr 12:28-31. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all thy strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question. Luke omits this history, only subjoins to our Saviour's answer to the Sadducees, Lu 20:39,40, Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all. There are different opinions of interpreters concerning the design of this scribe, called by Matthew a lawyer, in coming to Christ with this question. Some think that he came upon the same errand with the others, to entangle him in his speech. Others, that he came merely out of a desire to be more fully instructed by him, and that tempting here signifies no more than trying him, not for a bad end, but as the queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon with hard questions, to have an experiment of his wisdom. Our Saviour's fair treating him, and the commendation he gave him, together with his fair speaking to our Saviour, and commending his answer, induce me to think that he came on no ill design. Besides that, the opinion of some, that he came hoping to hear our Saviour vilify their ritual precepts in comparison of the

moral precepts, seemeth to me not probable; for himself consents to what our Saviour saith, and addeth, that to love the Lord our God, &c., is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. His question was, Which is the first and greatest commandment? Matthew saith, the great; Mark saith, the first: they have both the same sense, and our Saviour puts them together, Mt 22:38. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Mark adds, with all thy strength. It is to be found De 6:5, only there is not with all thy mind. Luke puts it in, Mt 10:27. It is but the same thing expressed in divers terms, for with all thy soul is comprehensive of heart, mind, and strength. Mark adds a preface: Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: thou shalt love, &c. Those words only;

1. Stirred up the people's attention.
2. Showed the reason of the following precept, which is fully expressed in Matthew.

If any ask, To which of the ten commandments is this to be referred? It is easily answered, that it is the sum of the four first, which comprehend our duty toward God. Our Saviour's expressing them by loving God, shows us that the law, of God was not fulfilled in the observation of the letter of those commandments, but doing these things which God commands out of a principle of love, the highest degrees of love to God. They idly interpret this precept, who interpret it only an obligation upon us to love God as much as we are able in our lapsed state; the fall of man lost God no right of commanding, and telling us our duty. The law doth undoubtedly require of us love to God in the highest degree, to be showed by the acts of the whole man, in obedience to all his commandments, and that constantly. It is our only happiness that the law is in the hands of a Mediator, who hath thus perfectly fulfilled it for all those who believe in him, Ro 8:3, and accepteth of us the will for the deed. Thus the moral law is a schoolmaster that leadeth us unto Christ. Our Saviour justly calls this the first and great commandment,

1. Because God is to be served before our neighbour.
2. Nor can love to our neighbour flow from any other true principle than that of love to God, nor is our neighbour to be

loved but for God's sake, and in subordination unto him.

And the second is like unto it, commanding love also; so that, as the apostle saith, love is the fulfilling of the law. Thy neighbour, that is, every man, as thyself; doing as much for him as thou wouldst have him do for thee, and doing no more against him than thou wouldst willingly he should do against thee: as truly and sincerely as thyself.

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets: there is nothing commanded in all the Old Testament but may be reduced to these two heads. This is the whole duty of man there commanded. The whole book of God is our rule, and we are obliged to every precept in it. Moses summed up all in the ten commandments, to which, truly interpreted, all the precepts of Scripture are reducible. Christ here brings the ten to two. The apostle brings all to one, telling us *love is the fulfilling of the law*. There is nothing forbidden in Scripture but what offends the royal law of love, either to God or man; there is nothing commanded but what will fall under it. Mark addeth, that the scribe applauds our Saviour, as having said the truth, and confessing that the fulfilling these two precepts was more than all sacrifices and burnt offerings; in which he agreed with Samuel, who long since told Saul that *to obey was better than sacrifice*; and it needs must be so, seeing that all the true value of sacrifices lay in the obedience by them given to the will of God. Christ tells the scribe he was not far from the kingdom of God. He who once rightly understands the law of God, and hath cast off that silly fancy of thinking to please God with ritual things, hath made a great proficiency under that schoolmaster, who, if rightly understood, will show him the need of another righteousness than his own wherein to appear before God.*

Matthew 22:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:46

Ver. 41-46. Mark hath this story shortly, repeating only the substance of it, Mr 12:35-37; adding nothing to it, but concluding, *And the common people heard him gladly*. Luke repeateth it as shortly, Lu 20:41,44. For the right understanding of this discourse of our Saviour to the Pharisees, we must know, that though the Pharisees and the Jews in general did expect a Messiah or a Christ, yet they expected no more of him, or in him, than that he should be a man, the son of David, descended from his family, according to the promise, Isa 9:6; and dreamed only of a secular prince, who should deliver them from their enemies, and restore them to their ancient civil liberties. Christ seeing a pack of them together, took the liberty, which he had allowed them towards himself, to propound a question or two to them. His question was, *What think ye of Christ?* Not of himself, but of the Messiah whom they expected; whose Son he should be.

They say unto him, The Son of David, that is, one who should in a right line be descended from David. This was a constant and uncontrolled tradition amongst them. Hence Mark saith, the question was propounded, *How say the scribes?* Luke, *How say they that Christ is,* that is, is to be, *the Son of David?* This was a commonly received opinion amongst them, which our Saviour by the next words doth not contradict, but only argues that he must needs be something more; for, saith he, *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?* Ps 110:1. Mark saith, *David*

himself said by the Holy Ghost. David was a prophet, and spake by inspiration from the Holy Ghost. Ac 1:16 2:30. Luke saith, *in the book of Psalms*; whence we may observe, that Ps 110:1-7 was David's Psalm, not a Psalm composed by some other for David, as some contend. Would David have called him Lord, whom he knew to be merely his son, one that should only descend from him? He would have said, The Lord said to my son, or, will say to my son.

The Lord said, Jehovah said, unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. Would David, speaking prophetically by the Holy Ghost concerning the Messiah, had he believed he was to be his son, and no more, have said that Jehovah should say unto him, *Sit at my right hand*, a place of the highest honour, dignity, and favour, *until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, that is, for ever? For *until* doth not signify a determinate time. See Poole on "Mt 1:25".

If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? That is, how is he then no more than his son, no more than a mere man? Our Saviour by this argument doth neither go about to prove that the Christ was not to be the Son of David, nor that he was the Messias himself, but that their expected Messias or Christ must be more than a mere man, otherwise David would never have called him Lord, nor yet prophesied that Jehovah should call him to sit at his right hand. Matthew concludes with telling us, that as the Sadducees and the scribes were nonplussed before, so now the Pharisees' mouths were also stopped. Mark saith, *The common people heard him gladly*. Matthew saith, *No man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man ask him any more questions*. Nor shall we hear of their troubling him with disputes any more; they now see disputing will not do their business, their next business is to consult how to take away his life; which is always the course of proud and malicious men, given over of God to ruin, to conceal their convictions, and proceed to execute their lusts and malice, rather than they will not have their ends. But before they meet with a fit opportunity we shall have some excellent discourses from our Saviour to the disciples and the multitude.

Matthew 23:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 23:1-12 Christ exhorteth to observe the doctrine, but not to follow the evil examples, of the scribes and Pharisees; and particularly not to imitate their ambition.

Mt 23:13-33 He pronounces divers woes against them for their blindness and hypocrisy,

Mt 23:34-39 and prophesieth the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 23:3".

Matthew 23:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 23:3".

Matthew 23:3

Ver. 1-3. Our Lord having now done with the Pharisees, turneth his discourse to the more docible people, who (as we heard before) heard him attentively and gladly, Mr 12:37 Lu 19:48. Our Saviour foresaw that some unwary hearers might make two ill uses of what he had spoke against the scribes and Pharisees.

1. Some might report him an enemy to the law, the interpreters of which the Pharisees were.
2. Others might condemn the authority of the law, because he had represented these men, in whose hand the interpretation of it at present was, so truly contemptible.

Whereas, on the other side, many might run into errors of practice, from the example of the scribes and Pharisees, their magistrates and teachers. Against all these mistakes he cautions them in this chapter, showing that he did not undervalue the law of Moses, nor would have his reflections on the Pharisees prejudice any thing which they taught them of it, and according

to it; neither would he have his people take the copy of the law from their actions.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat: these men were the ordinary readers and interpreters of the law of God. *Moses* is here put for the law, as Lu 16:31, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets;* and so Mt 23:29, *They have Moses and the prophets.* *Moses's seat* signifieth the seat appointed for those that gave the sense of the law, or judgment upon it; thus, *Moses of old time hath in every city those that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day,* Ac 15:21 2Co 3:15. Their way was, while they read the Scriptures they *stood up*: (paying a particular reverence to the pure word of God), Lu 4:16; when they had done reading, they *sat down* and opened it. Their sitting in the seat of *Moses* did not signify a succession to *Moses*, for he had no successor, being the Mediator of the Old Testament; but the delivering and interpreting the doctrine and law of *Moses*. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is rather to be understood of the chair of magistracy than the doctrinal chair. The Pharisees being exercised in that, it may be understood of both, for the reading and interpreting the law chiefly belonged to the scribes.

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; that is, whatsoever is in *Moses* which they bid you observe and do. The term *all* is to be understood restrainedly, with respect to the subject matter or persons spoken of, in multitudes of scriptures. Our Saviour's cautioning his disciples so often against the leaven of these men, and their traditions, plainly showeth us that must be here the sense of it: Let not the law of God lose his authority with you because of those wicked men. He doth not command them to hear none but them, for then to what purpose did he himself preach, or send out the twelve, if none might hear them? All that can be concluded from this text is that the law of God, or word of God, is not to be despised, whoever reads or delivereth it. He goeth on, *But do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* We are naturally more led by example than by precept. Men had therefore need be cautioned against ill living teachers. *Odi philosophum qui non sapit sibi.* A man had need very well know the medicine which he taketh from a physician he seeth sick of the same disease, when he himself refuseth and abominates it. He that says and does not, may be heard, but not imitated. There may be a time when men can ordinarily hear no others, which was the present

case.

Matthew 23:4

Ver. 4. Our Saviour saith the same of the *lawyers*, Lu 11:46. The *burdens* here mentioned were not their traditions and ritual things, Christ would never have before commanded his disciples to observe and do them, but the things truly commanded by the law of God, especially the ceremonial law, called *a yoke*, Ac 15:10, *which* (say the apostles) *neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*. They are, saith our Saviour, rigid exactors and pressers of the law of God upon others, but will not themselves use the least endeavours (such as the putting to of a finger) themselves to do them.

1. He blames them that their own lives no way answered their doctrine.
2. It may be, he also blames their too rigid pressing the law in all the minute things of it.

There may be a too rigorous pressing of the law. Good teachers will be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, yet teaching no more than themselves will endeavour to practise; and being conscious of human infirmity, they will do it with great tenderness and compassion, joining law and gospel both together.

Matthew 23:5

Ver. 5. Our Saviour had, Mt 23:4 blamed the Pharisees for not living up to what they taught, pressing the law of God on others, but not doing nor endeavouring to observe it themselves. Here he blames them for doing what good things they did for ostentation, *to be seen of men*; and abounding in their ritual performances of more minute concernment, in the mean time neglecting their moral duties.

All their works they do for to be seen of men; this is their main end, to be seen of men; for this he had reflected on them, Mt 6:1-34.

They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. For the right understanding of this we must have recourse to Nu 15:37-40, *And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments.* De 22:12, *Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.* In obedience to this law, the Jews did generally wear such garments that had fringes and blue ribands annexed to them. The Jews at this day do it not, because, as they pretend, they have lost the true way of dying the blue colour, required in the law. The end why God commanded them is expressed, *that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them;* and be restrained from their own inventions and imaginations in God's service. They were also a note of distinction of the Jews from other people. Besides these, God commanding that they should *bind his laws for a sign upon their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes,* De 6:6-8, they made them parchments, in which the precepts of the law were written, which they bound to their foreheads and arms. These were called phylacteries, from φυλακτω, to keep, things wherein the law was kept. The Pharisees, for a boast how zealous keepers they were of the law of God, (than which they did nothing less), made these phylacteries and ribands broader, and their fringes much longer, than other men's: this is that making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments, which our Lord here reflects upon, done only for ostentation, and that they might be seen of men.

Matthew 23:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 23:7".

Matthew 23:7

Ver. 6,7. We have the same applied to the scribes, Mr 12:38,39 Lu 11:43. Mark addeth, *which love to go in long clothing*. Our Saviour in these words doth not blame a distinction in habits and places, for he himself hath taught us, that those who are in kings' palaces wear soft raiment; and, being often called Master and Lord, never reflected on them who called him so, as having done amiss: he only blames the Pharisees' ambition, and silly affectation of these little things, seeking their own honour and glory, or an undue domination. There is therefore an emphasis to be put upon the word *love*; they might take salutations, and the upper rooms, if offered them as their due, for keeping civil order, but not affect them.

Matthew 23:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 23:10".

Matthew 23:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 23:10".

Matthew 23:10

Ver. 8-10. It is most certain that our Saviour doth not here forbid the giving of the titles of masters and fathers to his ministers, for then Paul would not have given himself the title of father, 1Co 4:15; nor called the Galatians his little children, Ga 4:19: nor called Timothy his son, and himself his father, Php 2:22; nor called himself a doctor of the Gentiles, 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11. That which he forbids is,

1. An affectation of such titles, and hunting after them.
2. *Rem tituli*, the exercise of an absolute mastership, or a paternal, absolute power; so as to require any to believe things because they said them, or to do things because they bid them, without seeing the things asserted, or first commanded, in the word of God.

For in that sense God alone is men's Father, Christ alone their Master. Pastors and teachers in the church are all but ministers, ministers of Christ to publish his will, and to enjoin his laws; nor must any be owned as masters and fathers, to impose their laws and doctrines. This is twice repeated, because such is the corruption of human nature, that it is very prone, not only to affect these swelling titles, but also to exercise these exorbitant authorities.

Matthew 23:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 23:12".

Matthew 23:12

Ver. 11,12. We have what is in Mt 23:12 twice in Luke, Lu 14:11 Lu 18:14. These verses expound what went before, and let us know;

1. That it was not a title, but the affectation of a title, which he blamed.
2. Not a doctorship, or mastership, but such a doctorship or mastership as made a man too big for the ministry of the church; such honour as lifted up the man's heart above his work.

He is an infamous doctor in the church of Christ, who thinks himself too high or too great to be a minister in it. For God will abase, and men shall abase, him who exalteth himself. God resisteth, and men usually contemn and despise the proud, especially ministers who are so. Both God shall exalt, and men shall honour, those that humble themselves, both to men, condescending to those of low degree, and to their work, thinking not the meanest ministry to souls a work beneath them.

Matthew 23:13

Ver. 13. Our Saviour now cometh to denounce eight woes against the teachers of those times, the scribes and Pharisees. Luke saith, Lu 11:52, *Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.* It was written of old, that *the priest's lips should preserve knowledge:* God hath committed the key of knowledge to the ministers and guides of his church, not that they should take it away, but that the people might *seek the law at their mouths, because they are the messengers of the Lord of hosts,* Mal 2:7. Now saith our Saviour, you have taken it away: this Matthew calls a shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; doing what in them lay to keep men from the knowledge of the mind and will of God, neither themselves teaching them the knowledge of God, which yet was their office and duty, nor suffering others to do it who would. You will neither go in yourselves, neither will you suffer them that are entering to go in. Yourselves are too proud or lazy, to preach the gospel, which is the way to the kingdom of heaven, and when others would, you suffer them not; nor yet will you suffer the people, who have a heart to it, to hear it. For this he calls them *hypocrites* seven times in this chapter, they pretending to be teachers and openers of the door to the kingdom of heaven, when indeed they did shut it; and denounces a woe to them, comprehending that ruin which soon after came upon them and their city by the Roman armies, and that eternal damnation which slept not, and was due to them. There are no worse men in the world than hypocrites, men pretending highly to God, yet neither themselves doing their duty in embracing the gospel, nor suffering others to do it, but doing what in them lie to hinder people from the means by which they might come to the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 23:14

Ver. 14. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:40 and Lu 20:47. If any should think that long prayers are here condemned, he will be confuted by Lu 6:12, where he will find that our Saviour *continued all night in prayer to God.* It is the end of their long prayers which alone our Saviour blames, their making them a *pretence to devour widows' houses;* which whether they did as interested in the civil power, (in which it is certain the Pharisees amongst the Jews were employed), or by virtue of their

ecclesiastical power or influence, persuading silly women to give them their estates, or at least to give them a great part of them, to the service of the tabernacle, that they might pray for their souls, was an abomination to God, not only for the hypocrisy of such prayers, designed for another end than they pretended, but because God had taken upon him the special care and protection of the widows. As our Saviour had before blamed their religious acts for the ostentation in them, seeking only their own honour and applause, so he here blames them for their covetous design in them.

Matthew 23:15

Ver. 15. A third woe followeth, expressed in this verse, because they corrupted their proselytes, both as to doctrine and manners, so as they were twice more the children of the devil, and in danger of hell, than before. A proselyte was one who, coming from some pagan nation, relinquished idols, and worshipped one true and living God. Of these writers tell us there were two sorts; one that only professed to believe and worship one God, though he did not embrace the Jewish religion: such a one they suffered to live amongst them, and called him a *proselyte of the gate*. Others embraced the Jewish religion, and were admitted into their church, by circumcision, and baptism, and sacrifice (as their writers tell us): these they called *proselytes of righteousness*. Our Saviour saith the scribes and Pharisees compassed sea and land, that is, would take any pains, (it is a proverbial expression), to make one a proselyte; nor was this blameworthy in them, but that which followeth, that they made him twofold more the child of hell than before; corrupting him with their false doctrine, and setting him examples of an ill life. Their business was not to turn men from sin unto God, but merely to convert them to an opinion, if they had once got them into their church, so as they could make their markets of them; never regarding their souls more, nor to press upon them the reformation of their lives, that they might be saved. Thus priests and Jesuits at this day go to China, Japan, to proselyte men to the Roman faith; and use all imaginable arts to seduce persons born and bred under the profession of the protestant religion in protestant countries, and boast much of their converts; but he who looks upon the Scriptures, and considereth the lives of the most of their converts, will easily see they are but twice more the children of

hell, being licensed, by their indulgences, pardons, absolutions, nay, by their very casuists, to live most prodigious impious lives, to say nothing of their damnable errors in matters of faith.

Matthew 23:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:22

Ver. 16-22. Our Saviour here showeth the false doctrine which the Pharisees, for their own gain, taught the people concerning oaths. God had commanded that they should fear and serve the Lord their God, and swear by his name, De 6:13 10:20. He that sweareth by any person, or thing, doth two things:

1. He attributes to the thing, or person, by which he sweareth, a knowledge of the heart and the secret intention.
2. He calleth upon the person, or thing, by which he sweareth, to be his judge, or to take a revenge upon him, in case he doth not believe in his heart what he affirms or denieth with his words to be true or false; otherwise an oath is no security at all.

From whence appeareth, that it is unreasonable for any to swear by any other than God, who alone can have a knowledge of the truth, and security of the heart; and that he who sweareth by any creature committeth idolatry in his heart, and in his heart doth indeed blaspheme, paying a Divine homage to a creature, and attributing to the creature what only agreeth to the Creator. The Pharisees, as it seemeth, had taught the people, that it was lawful to swear by the creature, but all oaths by creatures did not bind to the performance of the thing promised by such oaths: if a man swear *by the temple*, or *by the altar*, it was nothing, no man was bound by such oaths to perform the thing for which such oaths were given as a security. But if any man swear *by the gold of the temple*, or *by a gift* which he brought to the altar, these oaths did bind him. By the *gold of the temple* is not to be understood the golden vessels used in the temple, nor the golden plates with which the several parts of the temple shined; but the gold which was brought as an offering into the temple, and put into the treasury there; of which, and of the gifts, the priests and officers about the temple had a considerable share, which made them equalize an oath by these to an oath made by the name of God itself.

1. Our Saviour here showed the unreasonable folly of the tradition, and calleth them for it *blind guides*; for in reason, the temple sanctifying the gold must itself be more especially holy, that is, separate for a holy use. The temple was holy, so was the altar, before the gold was brought into it, but the gold was not holy till it was brought into the holy place, and there offered.
2. He lets them know, that oaths by the creatures once made did oblige, as much as if they had been made by God himself. They were indeed sinfully made, for men ought not to have sworn by creatures; but being made, those who made them

were bound to perform them, if the matter of them were not sinful. For he that swears *by the altar, swears by it, and by all the things thereon;* and he who swears *by the temple, swears by it, and by him that dwelleth therein;* and he who swears *by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.* For none who sware by inanimate things could possibly be imagined to call these things, which he knew had no life, no sense, no knowledge, to be a witness to the truth of his heart, as to what he believed, or what he intended. So as though he that sweareth by the creature be a profane swearer, yet he is bound by his oath, he indeed swearing by the God of those creatures. He hath reason to repent of the profane and unlawful form of his oath, but if the matter be what he may without sin perform, he is bound by his oath to the performance of it.

Matthew 23:23

Ver. 23. We have much the same Lu 11:42, only there it is, *Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God.* It is manifest by our Saviour's words in the latter part of the verse, *these ought ye to have done,* that he doth not blame the Pharisees' exactness in tithing mint, anise, rue, cummin, and all manner of herbs; but their neglecting the weightier matters of the law, faith and love to God, judgment and mercy. The Levites having no inheritance: God ordained tithes for their maintenance; of which also the poor were to have a share, Le 27:30 Nu 18:24. The Pharisee boasted, Lu 18:12, that he paid tithe of all he possessed. Christ here acknowledgeth that the Pharisees were exact in their paying tithes; but he blames them,

1. For their partiality, neglecting the weightier things of the law.
2. For their hypocrisy; they were only exact in these little things, that they might be taken notice of as scrupulous observers of the Divine law; while they omitted those things, which were of much more weight, which he reckoneth up: *faith*, by which some understand faith in God, but the most, faithfulness, and sincere and honest dealings with men, in opposition to fraud, and cheating, and circumventions.

Judgment, by which he means justice, giving to every one what is their own.

Mercy, by which he means a charitable behaviour, in helping such as are miserable and afflicted.

Love to God, which is the true root, out of which all things should flow, and is indeed comprehensive of all our duty toward God, as well as the root of all our good works towards men.

Matthew 23:24

Ver. 24. It is a proverbial expression used amongst them, against such as would pretend a great niceness and scrupulosity about, and zeal for, little things, but in matters of much higher concern and moment were not nice and scrupulous at all: and this indeed is both a certain note and an ordinary practice of hypocrites. There is no man that is sincere in his obedience to God, but hath respect to all God's commandments, Ps 119:6. Though some duties be greater, of more moment for the honour and glory of God, than others, which a good man will lay the greatest stress upon, yet he will neglect nothing which the law of God enjoins him. But concerning hypocrites, these two things are always true:

1. They are partial in their pretended obedience.
2. They always lay the greatest stress upon the least things of the law, bodily labour and exercise, and those things which require least of the heart, and least self-denial.

Matthew 23:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 23:26".

Matthew 23:26

Ver. 26. Luke hath this, Lu 11:39,40, as occasioned by the Pharisees wondering that he washed not before dinner; instead of *extortion and excess*, he hath *ravening and wickedness*, and

addeth, *Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?* But the same thing might be spoken at two several times. He speaks there to the Pharisee, with whom he dined, Mt 23:37. Here he speaks to the disciples and the multitude. Our Saviour's design here seemeth to me not to be a condemning of their legal or traditional washings of pots and cups, which he elsewhere reflects upon, but, by way of allusion only, to blame them that in their whole conversation they rather studied an external purity, than the inward purity of the heart, whereas if they would first have looked at purity of heart, the other would have followed that. A man may be outwardly pure, and inwardly filthy and impure; but no man can have a pure heart, but he will live a pure and holy life, for the external acts are but the impure acts of the soul: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, and according to the inclinations and affections of the heart the foot moveth, the hand and all the bodily members act. For our Saviour's application of this to their traditional washings, I shall speak to it when I come to Lu 11:39.

Matthew 23:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 23:27".

Matthew 23:28

Ver. 27,28. The similitude is of the same import with the other, to show that the Pharisees had only a vizard of strictness and holiness, when in the mean time their hearts were full of lusts, hypocrisy, and iniquity. The Jews had two sorts of graves; some for ordinary persons, which appeared not (to which our Saviour likened the Pharisees, Lu 11:44); others that were covered with tombs, which were wont to be kept whited, so as they looked very fair outwardly, but had within nothing but rottenness and putrefaction. To these he compares them in this place. They were men that made a great show, but had nothing of any inward purity or cleanness, but were full of iniquity. Thus Paul called Ananias a *whited wall*; and, Ps 5:9, the psalmist saith of the throat of the wicked that it is *an open sepulchre*.

Matthew 23:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 23:30".

Matthew 23:30

Ver. 29,30. Luke hath it, Lu 11:47, *Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.* It is plain by our Saviour's discourse, that the Pharisees were at great charge oft times to rebuild or adorn the sepulchres of the Lord's prophets, who had been slain by the Jews in former ages for testifying the truth of God, and the sepulchres of other righteous men dying for their righteousness. This they did like a company of hypocrites, to persuade the world of what they also said, that had they lived in the times of those prophets and other good men, they would have had no hand in their blood.

Matthew 23:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 23:33".

Matthew 23:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 23:33".

Matthew 23:33

Ver. 31-33. You (saith our Lord) confess that you are lineally descended from those who killed the prophets: you have not only their blood communicated to you, but their spirit; your behaviours and carriages towards me and my disciples have witnessed, and will yet further testify, that you are the children of those who killed the prophets in a moral as well as a natural sense; you inherit the same spirit, and are full of the same malice and rancour. They killed them, and you bury them: seeing there is no reclaiming you, go you on, fill up the measure of your fathers' sins. There is something more to be added to make the

iniquity of this nation full. You are a company of serpents, vipers, that cannot escape the damnation of hell.

Matthew 23:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 23:36".

Matthew 23:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 23:36".

Matthew 23:36

Ver. 34-36. Luke saith, Lu 11:49-51, Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Luke saith, Therefore also said the wisdom of God. Matthew saith, Behold, I send. Christ is the wisdom of God; he here tells them he would send them prophets, wise men, scribes. Luke expounds it by prophets and apostles; men authorized by Christ to reveal unto men the will of God, and men that should be extraordinarily inspired to enable them thereunto.

Scribes, that is, persons instructed to the kingdom of God; a new sort of scribes, but much fitter for their work than the present scribes.

And some ye shall kill and crucify, &c.: our Lord in this only foretells what usage both himself and his apostles should meet with from them, which was fulfilled in what the Scripture telleth us of the scourging of Paul, the stoning of Stephen, the killing of James, &c., beside the crucifying of himself.

That upon you, that is, as he expounds it, Mt 23:36, *upon this generation, may come all the righteous blood*, that is, the blood of righteous men, *shed upon the earth, from the blood of*

righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, &c.
Here arise two questions:

1. Who this Zacharias the son of Barachias was.
2. How it could stand with God's justice to bring the guilt of the blood of former generations upon that generation.

As to the first, some have guessed the person spoken of to have been one Zacharias the son of Baruch, who was the last slain upon the taking of Jerusalem, as Josephus tells us: but our Saviour here speaks of a thing passed, not to be afterwards done. Others think it was Zacharias the father of John Baptist: but we have no proof that he died a violent death. Others think it was Zechariah, who was one of the small prophets: but there was no temple in his time. It is most probably concluded to be Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, whom the Jews stoned with stones at the commandment of Joash in the court of the house of the Lord, 2Ch 24:21. The father's name indeed doth not agree; but, first, Jehoiada (as many of the Jews had) might have two names: some think it was this same Zechariah who is called *the son of Jeberechiah*, Isa 8:2. Our Saviour nameth *Abel*, who lived before the law, and *Zacharias*, who lived under the law, both slain for righteousness' sake; that under them he might comprehend all the martyrs slain in those two periods. Others judge, that these two are named because we read of Abel's blood crying, Ge 4:10, and Zechariah's praying (when he died) that the Lord would require his blood. For the other question, it is but righteous with God to punish the sins of parents upon their children; and though such vengeance doth not ordinarily reach further than the third and fourth generation, yet where succeeding generations go on in the same sinful courses, it may reach further, and often does. Isa 65:6,7, *I will (saith God) recompense into their bosom your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together*. That was the case here. They filled up the measure of their fathers' sins. Therefore Christ tells them, that vengeance should sleep no longer, but come upon that generation, which happened in the utter destruction of Jerusalem within less than forty years after. Our Lord concludes with a pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, and a further confirmation of what he had said about their ruin.

Matthew 23:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 23:39".

Matthew 23:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 23:39".

Matthew 23:39

Ver. 39. We have the same Lu 13:34,35. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* The doubling of the word showeth the vehemency of our Saviour's affection.

Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; that hast killed, and abused, and art yet going on to do the like, not taking notice of the vengeance of God upon thee before for this very sin, 2Ch 36:16,17 Ne 9:26,27. How often would I have gathered thee, giving thee all external means proper to have reformed thee and reconciled thee to God, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings! Which if thou hadst accepted and embraced, the chickens are not safer under the wings of the hen from the danger of a kite than thou wouldst have been from enemies. But thou wouldst not; instead of hearkening to my prophets, thou killedst them, and didst stone those sent unto thee, and so didst voluntarily reject me, and all my offers and tenders of grace, mercy, and protection, through the mere obstinacy of thy perverse will.

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; both the temple, in which you place such a confidence, and your own dwelling houses, shall be destroyed, burnt, and razed down, or at least left without you as inhabitants.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: I will appear no more to you as a public preacher, after two or three days, for ever; and you, that the other day so envied the people's acclamations to me, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, shall be glad yourselves to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall say the same thing, Blessed is he, &c. For

whereas some interpret the term *till*, &c. of the day of judgment, or the time when the Jews shall be converted, I take them to be strained interpretations.

Till here certainly is to be interpreted, as Ps 110:1 Mt 1:25; and this comports with the history, for after this time our Saviour appeared in the temple publicly no more. For the disputes raised from Mt 23:37, about God's secret will, whether he seriously willed the salvation of the Jews, &c., I take the affirmative part to have no foundation in this text, for *would I* is plainly enough here interpreted by the foregoing word, *sending* them *prophets*, and other ministers, to persuade them to repentance and reconciliation with God; as the use of means proper to an end appear to us indications of the will of him that useth them.

Matthew 24:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 24:1,2 Christ foretells the destruction of the temple.

Mt 24:3-31 He showeth what signs and calamities shall go before it; and what shall happen at the time of his coming.

Mt 24:32-35 By a parable of the fig tree he marketh the certainty of the prediction.

Mt 24:36-41 No man knoweth the day and hour, which shall come suddenly.

Mt 24:42-51 We ought therefore to watch, like good servants who expect their master's coming.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 24:2".

Matthew 24:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 13:1,2, *one of his disciples*. Luke saith, Lu 21:5, *some*. Mark saith, the disciple said, *Master, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!* Luke saith, they spake how the temple *was adorned with goodly stones and gifts*.

All three evangelists agree in the substance of our Saviour's reply. Christ had now done his work in the temple, where he never came more, and was going toward the Mount of Olives, where we shall find him in the next verse. His disciples, either one of them or more, probably one in the presence of the rest, either doubting (considering the structure of the temple) whether it could be destroyed, or at least thinking it pity that so famous a structure should come to ruin, come to him, admiring the stones and buildings. Most think this was the temple builded by Zerubbabel, almost six hundred years before, though it received great additions by Herod (for we have no record that that temple was ever destroyed). Incredible stories are related about the dimensions of the stones, and the ornaments of it. Our Saviour saith unto them, *Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another;* that is, this brave, goodly temple shall be utterly ruined. Nor (if we may believe other histories) did this prophecy fail as to the letter of it. Titus, the Roman emperor, taking Jerusalem, about forty years after this, commanded his soldiers to spare the temple when they entered the city, but they in their rage burnt of it what was of a combustible nature; and Turnus Rufus, left general of his army when he went away, drew a plough over it, as God had said. Jer 26:18 Mic 3:12, *Zion shall be ploughed like a field.* And when after this Alippius, by the command of Julian the apostate, attempted the rebuilding of it, with the help of the Jews, it is reported by divers, that balls or globes of fire rose up from the foundations, destroyed many of the workmen, and made the place inaccessible for any further such attempts. So justly are the Divine threatenings to be feared, whatever improbability of the contrary appeareth to us. We are very apt to be taken with the glistening prosperity of sinners, but we ought to measure the duration of it from the revelations of the Divine will, not from our own reason or fancy; to remember the temple of Jerusalem. There are no places so strong but an almighty God is able to destroy, and sin is enough to blow up. We may also observe how little God values splendid houses of prayer when they are made dens of thieves.

Matthew 24:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 24:4".

Matthew 24:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark saith, Mr 13:3-5, *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you.* Luke saith, Lu 21:7,8, *And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived.* Mark names the disciples which came to our Saviour privately, *Peter, James, John, and Andrew.* They seem to propound three questions to him:

1. What should be the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem?
2. Of his coming?
3. Of the end of the world?

It is probable they might send these four to propound these questions to our Saviour. Three of them being such to whom Christ had showed signal and special favour before. Some doubt whether the questions propounded were three or two; if but two, the coming of Christ must either be the same with the first, or with the last. Those who understand Christ's coming as a distinct period from the other two, think that the disciples refer to that secular kingdom which they fancied that the Messiah should exercise in the world. They desire to know the signs of these times, that is, prognostic signs, which might beforehand instruct them that the time was nigh, even at hand. They name two things there which time hath told us were to be at more than sixteen hundred years' distance one from the other, for historians tell us that Jerusalem was destroyed within seventy or seventy-one years after our Saviour's birth, within less than forty years after this discourse; but it is probable that they put them together, as believing that Jerusalem should not be destroyed till the day when Christ should come to judge the world, and that the end of the world and of the Jewish state should come together. And as we all are naturally curious to know things that are to come, so these disciples were in this thing particularly curious, having some particular apprehensions of the coming and kingdom of

Christ, according to the mistaken notion which the Jews had of that kingdom which their expected Messiah should exercise in the world. Our blessed Lord at another time, Ac 1:7, told them it was not for them *to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*. He therefore giveth them no such certain signs of these things, as they could from them certainly conclude the particular time; but yet gives them some signs from whence they might conclude, when they saw them, that the time was hastening; which signs, though some have distinguished, appropriating those in the former part of the chapter to the destruction of Jerusalem, and those in the latter part to the day of judgment, yet they rather seem in our Saviour's discourse mixed together; and time, which is the best interpreter of prophecies, must expound them to us. The destruction of Jerusalem is a thing past many hundreds of years since; so as by those histories which we have partly in holy writ, partly in other authors, it will not be hard to pick out what our Saviour intended for signs of that destruction, though there are some signs which were common signs both of that destruction and of the end of the world, and it is agreed by divines that the destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the destruction of the world, and therefore most of the signs are common to both. Paul was brought to Rome in the beginning of the reign of Nero, Ac 27:1-44. Other historians tell us he and Peter were put to death about the end of his reign; within a year or two after Jerusalem was destroyed. Our Saviour prefaces his discourse of these signs with a usual caution to his disciples, *Take heed that no man deceive you*.

Matthew 24:5

Ver. 5. Mark hath the same, Mr 13:6 Luke saith, Lu 21:8, *Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not after them*. Our Saviour seemeth to have given this as a sign common both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, though possibly before the destruction of Jerusalem, while the Jews were in expectation of a Messiah as a temporal prince or deliverer, there were more of them than afterward, for every one who could get a party together to colour his sedition and rebellion, gave out himself to be the Christ. Of this number are said to have been Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, mentioned by Gamaliel, Ac 5:36,37. Amongst these some also

reckon the Egyptian mentioned Ac 21:38, and Simon Magus, who gave out himself to be *some great one*, and the people accounted him *the great power of God*. Such there have been, and probably may be more toward the end of the world. Many were deceived by the impostors: Christ warns his disciples concerning them.

Matthew 24:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 24:8".

Matthew 24:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 24:8".

Matthew 24:8

Ver. 6-8. Mark hath the same, Mr 13:7,8. Luke hath also much the same, Lu 21:9-11, only he addeth, *fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven*. Interpreters think this prophecy did chiefly respect the destruction of Jerusalem, for the time from our Saviour's death to that time was full of seditions and insurrections, both in Judea and elsewhere. The truth of our Saviour's words as to this is attested by Josephus largely, from the eleventh chapter of his second book of the Wars of the Jews to the end of the fourth book. Besides that there were great wars between Otho, and Vitellius, and Vespasian, the Roman emperor who succeeded Nero, we read of one famine, Ac 11:28, which Agabus there prophesied should be in the time of Claudius Caesar. Of earthquakes in several places mention is made in divers histories. Our Saviour tells them that these things should be, but the end should not be presently, which any one that will read Josephus's history of the Wars of the Jews, will see abundantly verified upon the taking of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

Matthew 24:9

Ver. 9. Mark hath this thus, Mr 13:9, *But take heed to*

yourselfes: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. Luke saith, Lu 21:12,13, *But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.* Our Saviour, knowing that his disciples' minds still ran upon a secular kingdom, here calls off their thoughts by giving them a sign of his coming, an account of those persecutions and trials which they should undergo before his coming, either in his power to the destruction of the Jews, or in his glory at the last day: the afflictions specified are, a being hated of all nations, delivered up to councils, beating in the synagogues, casting into prisons, and being killed; all which happened to the disciples of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Christians were counted a *sect every where spoken against*, Ac 28:22. Stephen was stoned, Ac 7:59. James was killed with the sword, Ac 12:2. Paul and Silas were imprisoned, Ac 16:23. Paul *five times received of the Jews forty stripes save one*; he was *thrice beaten with rods, once stoned*, 2Co 11:24,25. He was brought before king Agrippa and Festus. Peter and John were called before the council, Ac 4:7 Ac 5:21. So as all these things happened before the destruction of Jerusalem, and this may be interpreted as a sign of that great destruction; but not of that only, for the text saith, *ye shall be hated of all nations*, which came to pass afterward, when Christianity was persecuted by heathens for three hundred years together. Mark saith, this should be done *for a testimony against them*, that is, the persecutors. Luke saith, *it shall turn to you for a testimony*. The persecutions of Christians are,

1. A testimony against the persecutors, of their ingratitude, and cruelty, and hatred to the name of Christ.
2. They are a testimony to the persecuted, of their faith, and patience, and courage, &c.

Matthew 24:10

Ver. 10. Mark saith, Mr 13:12,13, *The brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise*

up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Luke saith, Lu 21:16,17, And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Many shall be offended; the meaning is, shall turn apostates, stumbling at these great afflictions and persecutions for the gospel.

And shall betray one another. We read of several apostates in holy writ, such as Phigellus, Hermogenes, Demas, Hymeneus, Philetus, and others; but all things not being written that were done, we have no particular record of such treachery as is here mentioned. But it is no other than we may reasonably presume was done, though we had not been assured of it, to justify our Saviour's prediction. There is no time of great persecution but proves a time of great apostasy and some treachery. It hath been a constant observation, that no hatred flames to that degree with hatred upon the account of religion. Nor is what our Saviour here predicted more than the history of all ages of the church have justified.

Matthew 24:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 24:12".

Matthew 24:12

Ver. 11,12. Here are two signs more given:

1. The abounding of false teachers.
2. The abatements of Christians' zeal, and love to God.

For the matter of Mt 24:11, See Poole on "Mt 24:23" and See Poole on "Mt 24:24", where we shall meet with it more fully.

By the aboundings of iniquity here, we may either understand the rage, and malice, and cruelty of the enemies of the gospel; or the apostasy of such as are professors. Both these are great temptations, and though they will not extinguish that holy fire

which God hath kindled in good souls, yet they have oft times a very ill influence upon them, to abate of their former warmth in the ways of God. Or if we understand it of love to brethren, the apostasy of professors much cools the Christian, not knowing who they may trust and confide in as sincere. If by the abounding of iniquity we understand the abounding of profaneness in the general, (which always also aboundeth most in times of persecution), that also hath no small influence upon Christians' warmth in their profession, to cool and abate it: see Heb 10:25 2Ti 1:15 4:16.

Matthew 24:13

Ver. 13. We have the same Mr 13:13. We also met with it before, Mt 10:22. It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.

Matthew 24:14

Ver. 14. So saith Mark, Mr 13:10. Some think that *the end* mentioned in the close of this verse refers to the destruction of Jerusalem; others, that it refers to the day of judgment. If we take *world* (as it is often taken) for the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews, synecdochically, the whole being put for a great part, it is most certain, that before Jerusalem was destroyed, the gospel, which is here called the gospel of the kingdom, either because it shows the way to the kingdom of God, or because it is that sacred instrument by which Christ subdueth men's hearts to himself, was preached to the world, that is, to the Gentiles, and that to a great part of them. Paul alone had carried it from Jerusalem to Illyricum. The Romans' faith was spoken of throughout the world, Ro 1:8. Paul saith it was *preached to every creature*, Col 1:23 Ro 10:18 15:16 Col 1:6 1Ti 3:16. But others choose by *the end* here to understand the end of the world.

Matthew 24:15

Ver. 15. Mark saith, Mr 13:14, *standing where it ought not.* Here are two questions:

1. What is here meant by *the abomination of desolation.*
2. What text in Daniel our Lord refers to.

As to the latter, there are three places in Daniel which mention it: Da 9:27, *for the overspreading of abominations*, or, as it is in the margin, with the abominable armies he shall make it desolate. Da 11:31, *They shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.* Da 12:11, *From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up.* Mr. Calvin thinks that the text in Daniel here referred to is that of Da 12:11. Others say that it is that of Da 9:27, contending that those two other texts speak of Antiochus, which is the very reason given by others to the contrary. It is of no great consequence to us to know which verse our Saviour refers to. Be it which it would, it was *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*; by which quotation our Saviour doth both give his testimony to that book, as a part of holy writ, and also lets his disciples know, that what he told them was but what was prophesied of, and so must have its accomplishment, and that the Jewish worship was to cease. As to the second question, amidst the great variety of notions about it, I take theirs to be the best who understand *the abomination of desolation* to be meant of the Roman armies, which being made up of idolatrous soldiers, and having with them many abominable images are therefore called *the abomination*; those words, *of desolation* are added, because they were to make Jerusalem desolate; and so St. Luke, who hath not these words, possibly gives us in other words the best interpretation of them, Lu 21:20: *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.* When, saith our Lord, you shall see the abominable armies *stand in the holy place*, that is, upon the holy ground, (as all Judea was), *whoso readeth* those prophecies of the prophet Daniel, *let him understand*, that as through the righteous judgment of God he once suffered the holy place to be polluted by the abominable armies of Antiochus, which he foretold, so he will again suffer the holy place to be polluted by the abominable armies of the Romans, who shall make the holy

place desolate, which was prophesied by the prophet Daniel as well as the former. Therefore, saith our Saviour, when you see the Roman armies pitch their tents before Jerusalem, be you then assured God will give Jerusalem into their hands, and then all that I have foretold shall come to pass.

Matthew 24:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 24:18".

Matthew 24:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 24:18".

Matthew 24:18

Ver. 18. Mark hath this, Mr 13:14-16. Luke saith, Lu 21:21, *Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countriest enter thereinto.* The import of all this is no more than, Let every man with as much speed as he can shift for himself, for, as Luke saith, then the desolation of Jerusalem is nigh; for, as he addeth, *these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.* Let none of you think the storm will over, for when you see this be assured the time is come when all I have spoken of this city shall be accomplished.

Matthew 24:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 24:20".

Matthew 24:20

Ver. 19,20. Mark saith nothing of the sabbath day, Mr 13:1-37. Luke hath not what Matthew hath, Mt 24:20.

Woe to them in this text is only a phrase testifying our Saviour's compassion on such, and indicative of the addition it would

make to their misery, as it would retard their flight. Upon this account also, he bids them pray their flight might not be *in the winter, neither on the sabbath day*. The winter would naturally retard their motion, through the cold and moisture of it. The sabbath would be a moral hinderance, in regard of the superstitious opinion they had of the sabbath, that they might not upon that day defend themselves, nor flee from their enemies beyond the length of a sabbath day's journey, which was but two miles: our Saviour hints to them that their flight must be farther. When our Saviour spake this the Jewish sabbath was the day of holy rest, and he knew that although by his resurrection he should sanctify a new sabbath, yet the Jews would not for a time understand that the old sabbath was abolished. Here is therefore no establishment of the old sabbath to be observed after his resurrection; the praying that their flight might not be upon the sabbath day respected only either their remora to their flight which the sabbath would give them, (in case they should keep it as a holy rest), or the addition of trouble it would make in their spirits, when they considered that was the day in which they were wont to go to the house of prayer, keeping it a day of holy rest unto God.

Matthew 24:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 24:22".

Matthew 24:22

Ver. 22. Mark hath the same in effect, Mr 13:19,20. Luke speaks more particularly, Lu 21:23,24. *For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* These verses must be understood with reference to the Jewish nation, and whoso shall read in Josephus the history of the wars of the Jews, will easily agree there is nothing in all the foregoing Jewish story which we have recorded in Scripture like unto it; the final destruction of them by Titus was rather an abatement of miseries they suffered by the factions within themselves, than any thing else. And thus some think that God shortened those days of their misery by

sending the Roman armies to quiet the seditions and factions amongst themselves, which were more cruel one to another. God promises to shorten these days for the elect's sake that were amongst this sinful people. So that as the city was taken in less than six months, so was their whole country in less than eighteen months more. And if the Lord had not, in compassion to those amongst this people who belonged to his election of grace, shortened these days of calamity, both by sending the Roman armies to quiet their intestine divisions, and then giving these armies so quick a victory, none of the Jews would have been left alive, which indeed any one will judge that shall but read those histories.

Matthew 24:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:26

Ver. 23-26. Mark hath much the same, Mt 13:21-23. There is no doubt but that our Saviour here hath a special respect to those persons who, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, taking advantage of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah as a secular prince, who should restore them to liberty, (an opinion which, as we have often heard, had infected the generality of the Jews, and not a little even the disciples of Christ), made themselves heads of parties, and pretended that they were the Messiah, the Christ, thereby to encourage people to follow them, and to stand up for their liberty; of which kind there were several mentioned both in the history of Josephus, and in the Roman history, respecting those times. Our Lord therefore cautions his

disciples against such, and thereby taketh them off their expectation of any such secular kingdom of the Messiah as they had dreamed of. He tells them that there would such persons arise, and some of them should do great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they would deceive the elect of God; but he had prayed for them; only they must also watch and take heed, that they might not be cheated and deceived by them, though they came with never so fair pretences, for his coming would be quite of another nature, and his kingdom would be a quite other kingdom.

Matthew 24:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 24:28".

Matthew 24:28

Ver. 27,28. Luke hath much the same, Lu 17:24,37. The disagreement of interpreters about *the coming of the Son of man*, here spoken of, makes a variety in their interpretation of these verses. Some think the coming of the Son of man here spoken of was his coming to destroy Jerusalem, which, he saith, will be sudden like the lightning, which though the thunder be taken notice of aforehand, as following the lightning, yet is not taken notice of. These interpreters make *the carcass*, mentioned Mt 24:28, to be the body of the Jewish nation, designed to be destroyed; and *the eagles* to be the Roman armies. Job saith of the eagle, Job 39:30, *where the slain are, there is she*, Hab 1:8, saith the same of the Chaldean armies; *They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat*. Some understand by the coming of Christ here, his coming in his spiritual kingdom. The preaching of the gospel shall be like the lightning; you need not listen after those that say, Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there, for my gospel shall be preached every where; and where the carcass is, where my death and resurrection shall be preached, all the elect, my sheep that hear my voice and follow me, shall be gathered together. Others understand it of Christ's coming to judgment, which is compared to lightning for the suddenness and universality of it. There, saith Christ, I shall be, and all my saints shall be gathered together. Luke seemeth to speak of this, Lu 17:24,37. That phrase, *Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the*

eagles be gathered together, is a proverbial speech, signifying that it will need no great labour to bring things together which are naturally joined by an innate desire either of them to the other; so that it is applicable in more cases than one. And whether that discourse in Luke were at the same time when this was I cannot say; our Saviour's discourse on this argument, Lu 21:1-38; hath not these verses, and is a part of a discourse which is said to have been begun, at least to the Pharisees, Lu 17:20. But I shall further consider what Luke saith when I shall come to that chapter in him.

Matthew 24:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 13:24,25. *In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.*

Luke saith, Lu 21:25,26 *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Interpreters are much divided in the sense of these words, whether they should be interpreted,

1. Of Christ's coming to the last judgment, and the signs of that;
or,
2. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

Those who interpret it of the destruction of Jerusalem have the context to guide them, as also the reports of historians, of strange prodigies seen in the air and earth, before the taking of it; likewise the word *immediately after*, &c. But I am more inclinable to interpret them of the last judgment, and to think that our Saviour is now passed to satisfy the disciples about their other question, concerning the end of the world; for although Christ's coming may sometimes signify that remarkable act of his providence in the destruction of his enemies, yet the next

verses speaking of his coming with great power and glory, and of his coming with his angels, and with the sound of a trumpet, and gathering his elect from the four winds, the phrases are so like the phrases by which the Scripture expresses Christ's coming to the last judgment, 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16, and Christ speaking to his disciples asking of him as well about that as the destruction of Jerusalem, I should rather interpret this verse with reference to the last judgment, than the destruction of Jerusalem before spoken of, or at least that these signs should be understood common both to the one and the other, as divers of the other signs mentioned in this chapter are. Some think that the darkening of the sun and the moon here, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, are to be taken metaphorically, as signifying the great change there should be in the ecclesiastical and civil state of the Jews; and it is true that such kind of expressions do often in Scripture so signify, Isa 13:10 24:23 Eze 32:7 Joe 2:31. But without doubt the literal sense is not to be excluded, whether we understand the text of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of his coming to his last judgment; for as historians tell of great prodigies seen before the former, so the apostle confirms us that there will be such things seen before the day of judgment, 2Pe 3:10,12.

Matthew 24:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 24:31".

Matthew 24:31

Ver. 30,31. Mark saith, Mr 13:26,27, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.*

Luke saith, Lu 21:27,28, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Interpreters are also divided about these words, as about the former, some understanding them concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and judging that by the sign of the coming of the Son of man is probably meant some prodigy or some comet seen before that destruction, which should be of that nature as it should make the Jews (here called *the tribes of the earth*) to mourn; they by the angels and trumpet, mentioned Mt 24:31, understanding the ministers of the gospel, who after the destruction of Jerusalem should go and preach the gospel over all the world, and so gather in the elect into the gospel church. But I cannot agree to this sense, and most interpreters expound these words of the last judgment. What is meant by *the sign of the Son of man* all are not so well agreed. Two of the evangelists say only *the Son of man*. Matthew mentions first the appearance of the sign of the Son of man, then the Son of man himself; probably it signifieth some great prodigy that shall be seen before that great and terrible day. Those things which incline me to think that the day of judgment, not the destruction of Jerusalem, is that which is spoken of in these verses, is;

1. That all the phrases are such as the Scripture useth to express Christ's coming to the last judgment: his coming in the clouds of heaven, Mt 26:64 Re 1:7; the tribes of the earth mourning, Re 1:7; his coming with the angels, and the sound of a trumpet, Mt 25:31 Mr 8:38 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16; his sending his angels to gather the elect, Mt 13:49.
2. The *tribes of the earth mourning*, seems to signify more than the twelve tribes of Israel.
3. That which Luke hath, *Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*; seemeth hardly applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, rather to *the redemption of the body*, mentioned Ro 8:23.

For the gospel before this time was carried to the Gentiles; nor do I know that that is any where called redemption. Those things which have led some learned interpreters to expound Mt 24:29-31 of the destruction of Jerusalem, are, I conceive, those particles, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*, Mt 24:29 and the particle *then*, Mt 24:30; together with Mt 24:34 where our Saviour saith, *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*. But the term, *immediately after the*

tribulation of those days, may signify not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but that, and all the calamities of those days that should follow that, to the end of the world: and it is very usual for prophetic scriptures to speak of things to come long after as if they were presently to come to pass, De 32:35; and the day of judgment is ordinarily spoken of as if it were at hand, 1Th 4:15 Jas 5:8 1Jo 2:18, both to denote the certainty of it, and to keep us from security, and to let us know that a thousand years in God's sight are but as one day, 2Pe 3:8. For in Mt 24:34, we shall give the sense of it, in its order.

Matthew 24:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:35

Ver. 32-35. Mark hath the very same, Mr 13:28-31. So hath Luke, Lu 21:29-33, only he saith, *the fig tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, &c.* By this similitude of the fig tree (called therefore by Luke a *parable*) our Saviour doth not only design to inform them that these things which he had told them should be as certain signs of the approaching of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of his kingdom, as the fig trees and other trees putting forth of leaves is a sign of the approaching summer, as So 2:13; but that as the frosts, and snow, and cold of the winter, doth not hinder the trees from bringing forth fruit in the summer, so these tribulations and troubles should be so far

from hindering and destroying Christ's kingdom, that they should prepare the world for it, and promote it: so that as they might know from these tribulations in Judea that the kingdom of grace was at hand, and began; so from the following tribulations upon the world they might know that his kingdom of glory was also hastening.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. There are several notions men have of that term, *this generation*, some by it understanding mankind; others, the generation of Christians; others, the whole generation of the Jews: but doubtless our Saviour mean's the set of men that were at that time in the world: those who were at that time living should not all die until all these things shall be fulfilled, all that he had spoken with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem; and indeed the most of those signs which our Saviour gave, were signs common both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the last judgment, abating only Christ's personal coming in the clouds with power and glory. So that, considering that the destruction of Jerusalem was within less than forty years after our Saviour's speaking these words, so many as lived to the expiration of that number of years must see the far greater part of these things actually fulfilled, as signs of the destruction of Jerusalem; and fulfilling, as signs of the end of the world.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. By this expression our Saviour confirmeth the truth of what he had said, assuring those to whom he spake, that although there should be a change of the heavens and the earth, 2Pe 3:10,12,13, which then commonly look upon as the most stable and abiding things, yet the truth of what he had said should not fail.

Matthew 24:36

Ver. 36. Mark addeth, Mr 13:32, *neither the Son, but the Father. Of that day and hour*, that is, the particular time when the heavens and the earth shall pass away, as he had before said, or when the end of the world shall be, which was one of the questions propounded to him by his disciples, Mt 24:3.

Knoweth no man, no mere man, nor have men any reason to be

troubled at it; for it is a piece of knowledge which the Father hath reserved in his own power, and his own pleasure, from the angels, who continually behold his face. Nay, I myself, as man, know it not. Nor is it more absurd, or derogating from the perfection of Christ, than for to say, that Christ, as man, was not omnipotent, or omniscient, &c. By the way, this gives a great check to the curiosity of men's inquiries after the particular time or year when the world shall have an end, or the day of judgment begin, or be.

Matthew 24:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 24:39".

Matthew 24:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 24:39".

Matthew 24:39

Ver. 37-39. Luke hath much the same, Lu 17:26,27, where he also saith, it shall be as *in the days of Lot*; but I shall consider what he saith, which seemeth spoken at another time, and upon another occasion, when I come to his seventeenth chapter. Two things our Saviour seemeth here to teach us:

1. That Christ's coming to the last judgment will be sudden, and not looked for; upon which account his coming is compared in Scripture to the coming of a thief, Mt 24:43,44 2Pe 3:10 Re 16:15.
2. That it will be in a time of great security and debauchery: such was the time of Noah, Ge 6:3-5.

Matthew 24:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 24:41".

Matthew 24:41

Ver. 40,41. Some refer this to the coming of Christ in his kingdom of grace; some: to his coming in the day of judgment: it is true of both those comings. God shows the freeness of his grace much in the conversion of sinners, and makes discriminations of which we can give no account, as he tells us, Lu 4:25-27. But it seemeth here rather to be understood of that separation which Christ shall make at the day of judgment, of the sheep from the goats, the elect from the reprobates; for of that coming our Saviour seemeth to be speaking, both in the preceding and in the following words.

Matthew 24:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 24:44".

Matthew 24:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 24:44".

Matthew 24:44

Ver. 42-44. Mark saith, Mr 13:33, *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.* What our Lord here meaneth by watching is easily gathered, as well by what went before, where our Saviour had been speaking of the security and luxury of the old world, as by what followeth, Mt 24:44, where he biddeth them be always ready; and therefore Lu 21:34-36, expounds this thus: *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* Our Saviour in these verses, from the uncertainty of the particular time when the day of judgment shall be, presseth upon his disciples a sober, heavenly, and holy life; intimating that by such a life only they can make themselves ready for the coming of Christ, and to

stand before the Son of man, when he shall appear in his power and glory. He presseth this from that which common prudence would teach any householder, viz. if he knew in what watch of the night a thief would come, to watch, and not suffer his house to be broken open; that is, in what time of the night, for the Jews divided the night into the first, second, third, and fourth watch, as the Romans divided it for relief of their military guards. Now, saith our Saviour, you, knowing that there will come such a time, and not certainly knowing at what time, stand concerned to be always watching and praying.

Matthew 24:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:46

Ver. 45,46. We have much the same, Lu 12:42-44, whether spake at the same time, and upon the same occasion, or no, I know not. It is said there, Lu 12:41, that Peter gave occasion to this discourse, by saying, *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?* Our Saviour replies as here, only Luke saith, *Who is that faithful and wise steward?* The question intimates that there are but a few such. This discourse plainly refers to the ministers of the gospel, whom Christ leaveth in trust with his church, *to give them their meat in due season*. He declareth the blessedness of those ministers that shall be found faithfully discharging their trust, and that the Lord in the day of judgment will exalt them to a much greater honour, according to that of Da 12:3, *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

Matthew 24:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:50

Ver. 50. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:51

Ver. 47-51. Luke hath much of this, Lu 12:45,46: *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.* If that servant prove an evil servant, presumes upon my not making such haste to judgment as he thought I would, and shall prove a persecutor of my people, or a loose and debauched person, I will come to his particular judgment before I come to the general judgment, and at such a time as he shall not be aware of me, and destroy him, and give him his portion with such as believe not my second coming, and with such as are one thing in profession and another thing in practice, in hell, where the condition of poor creatures will be miserable as the condition of those that weep and gnash their teeth. By this parable our Saviour doth quicken his apostles, to whom he intended to leave the care of his church when he should be ascended into heaven, to a faithful care of the flock committed to their trust, and also lets us know that in succeeding ages there would arise a generation of loose and debauched ministers, and such as would persecute the sincerer professors of his gospel, who could not comply with their doctrines and lives. Of which, as all ages of the church have given a proof, so the time since popery hath prevailed in the world hath given a more plentiful and abundant proof: all which extravagances are encouraged from their atheism, and the belief of Christ's coming to judgment. He also showeth how severe he will be against such persons: he will come upon them before

they be aware of it, and cut them in pieces. The word signifies to cut them in two pieces, as the Jews were wont to divide their sacrifices; or, (as some think), as some pagan nations were wont to punish perfidious persons, and some more notorious malefactors. And give him his portion with unbelievers and hypocrites in hell, Mt 13:42 25:30. The case of all persons that live secure and debauched lives because judgment is not speedily executed, will be sad; but the case of ministers that do so will be dreadful. They are a sort of sinners whom God seldom suffereth to live out half their days; and when he doth, yet they shall not escape the severest damnation of hell. They betray a greater trust, and lead multitudes to hell with them, and so are the greatest traitors against the Divine Majesty.

Matthew 25:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 25:1-13 The parable of the ten virgins, Mt 25:14-30 and of the talents, which a king distributed among his servants, to be improved by them.

Mt 25:31-46 A description of the last judgment.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:13

Ver. 1-13. For the understanding of all parables, I have formerly showed, that parables are similitudes brought from some earthly things, or actions, to illustrate some heavenly doctrine, or spiritual mysteries, and insinuate them into our practice. For the right understanding of all parables, the first and principal thing to be attended to is the scope and main end of the parable. What heavenly doctrine it is which our Saviour by that earthly similitude designs to illustrate, or what practical thing it is which he designs by that parable to press, I have showed. Our Saviour sometimes more particularly showeth this, expressing what he meant by the several things and actions mentioned in the parable. This he did, Mt 13:1-58, in the parable of the *sower*, and of the *tares of the field*. But in most parables he doth not so; but from something going before or coming after gives us light enough to know what his main design was, and leaveth to us by that to interpret the several parts of the parable. Here he hath left us a sufficient light to know his meaning:

From his discourse in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, where he had been pressing the duty and prudence of watchfulness, from the uncertainty of the time of his coming. It is manifest that he is pursuing the same design still, by the *επι παραβολη*, or the saying with which he closes this parable, Mt 25:13, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh*. This watchfulness we had interpreted by an opposition to sin, both of omission and commission: taking heed of having our hearts *overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life*, Lu 21:34,36; taking heed of smiting our fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunken; discharging our trusts faithfully, ministers giving to the household of Christ their portion in due season, Mt 24:45,49; being ready for the coming of Christ, Mt 24:44; praying, Lu 21:36. This our Lord had pressed there particularly on ministers; he is here in this parable pressing the same duty on all; and in this parable further opens the duty of watchfulness, not only as opposed to slumbering and sleeping, but as comprehending a getting of ourselves ready, as he had said, Mt 24:44; and this readiness he also further openeth in this parable, under the notion of having not only lamps, but oil in our lamps.

To these purposes he takes up this parable, which we shall not

so well understand without understanding their usual rites and customs at weddings, which were these:

1. Their marriages were ordinarily in the night.
2. They usually had young men that attended the bridegroom, and young virgins that attended the bride at her father's house. The young men attended the bridegroom. These were called *the children of the bride chamber*, or *the friends of the bridegroom* or bride, Mr 2:19 Joh 3:29.

The wedding being in the night, there was need of lamps. When the bridegroom came, the bride maids, who were attending the bride, went forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps lighted, to conduct him and his companions into the house, and to her who was to be the bride.

When they were entered the door was shut, and the marriage proceeded. Our Saviour now, to quicken his auditors to the watchfulness before spoken of, supposes such a marriage, and ten virgins, the usual number at such solemnities. He supposes these ten virgins to have been half of them wise and half foolish: the wisdom of the one he makes to lie in getting their lamps ready and furnishing themselves in time with oil to feed them, that they might not go out, either while they waited for his coming, or in their conduct of him. The folly of the others he makes to lie in their want of this care, so as when the bridegroom came their lamps were out: they would have borrowed oil of the others, but they had none to lend them, so as they were shut out of the door of the bridal house, and though they knocked could obtain no entrance.

It is not hard now to apply the several parts of the parable to the end for which this parable is brought, provided that we do not expect that similitudes should run on four feet, or that every minute circumstance in a parable should be fitted in the explication.

The kingdom of heaven (which in Scripture always signifies that of grace or glory) here signifieth that of grace. The state of the church is likened to *ten virgins*: these ten virgins are professors; their lamps and their going forth to meet the bridegroom, signify their joint profession of the gospel, and their expectation joyfully

to meet Christ, who is the bridegroom here meant. Ps 45:14 Joh 3:29.

Five of them were wise, and five foolish. This signifieth the difference of professors; some have lamps, make a profession, but have no truth of grace; others have the root of the matter in them, a true faith and love, which feeds men's profession.

The bridegroom's tarrying signifies Christ's delaying to come to judgment. Their slumbering and sleeping signifies the infirmities of the best, who sleep, though their hearts wake; and the deeper security of others in their sinful state. The coming of the bridegroom at midnight signifieth Christ's coming in a dark time of troubles and afflictions, or at a time not looked for. The virgins trimming their lamps upon the cry made, signifies the care of pious souls, more especially upon any notices of Christ's coming, to prepare themselves for the meeting and reception of him. The foolish virgins late discerning that their lamps were out, and that they wanted oil, lets us know that hypocrites and formal professors will too late know that profession without a root of faith and true regeneration will serve them in no stead. Their asking the wise virgins to lend them some of their oil, with their refusal, because then they should not have enough for themselves, lets us know the woeful shifts that hypocrites will at last be put to, and how vain their hopes are, who hope to be relieved from the grace and good works of others. Their going to buy oil, and their being shut out before they returned, and knocking in vain, and in vain crying, *Lord, open to us*, lets us know, that as the tree falls so it must lie; that after our buying time in this life, mentioned Isa 55:1,2, is expired, our state will be determined; that we are concerned to take the counsel of Solomon, Ec 9:10, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, especially for our souls, to do it with thy might; for here is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the place, whither thou goest.*

Therefore we are all concerned to watch, that is, to look that we have not only lamps, but oil to feed our lamps, and to keep our lamps burning, because we know, that the Bridegroom Christ will come, and we do not know at what time he will come, to the general judgment, or our particular judgment; for when we die, we can do no more to make ourselves ready for the great coming of Christ to judge the world, but must appear before him as we

go out of this world. No oil after the determination of our lives will be to be bought, no further preparation of ourselves is to be made, as our life leaveth us judgment will find us.

Matthew 25:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 25:15".

Matthew 25:15

Ver. 14,15. There is much the same parable Lu 19:12, but the difference is so great in the narration, and the time, and circumstances, and scope seem so different, that the best expositors think it another, and spoken at another time, though there be much of this in that: I shall therefore leave the consideration of that in Luke, until I meet with it in him, (though some interpreters do think this the same with that), and only consider this, as it is before us in this evangelist. By *the kingdom of heaven*, is doubtless here to be understood the economy of God's providence in his gospel dispensations. The *man travelling into a far country*, is Christ ascending up to heaven, who, when he ascended up on high gave gifts unto men, Eph 4:8. By *the goods*, which the man is said to have delivered to his servants, are to be understood the gifts which God giveth to men, being himself (as to his glorious presence, and his principal residence, which is in heaven, at a great distance from us) as a man in a far country; for I see no reason to restrain these gifts to such as flow from Christ as Mediator, but rather choose to interpret it generally of all the gifts of God, whether of providence or grace. Whereas it is said, Mt 25:15, that this man divided his goods to his servants unequally, *to one five talents, to another two, to another one, to every man according to his several ability*, it signifieth only God's unequal distribution of his gifts to the sons of men, according to his own good pleasure; which is true both concerning natural parts, as wit, understanding, judgment, memory, as concerning those which the heathens call good things of fortune, as riches, honours, and dignities; Christians call them the good things of Providence; under which notion also come all acquired habits, or endowments, such as learning, knowledge, moral habits, &c., which though acquired are yet gifts, because it is the same God

who gives us *power to get wealth*, as Moses speaks, De 8:18, who also gives men power to get knowledge, and upon study and meditation to comprehend the natures and causes of things, and also to govern and bridle our appetites: or the gifts of more special providence, or distinguishing grace. I take all those powers given to men, by which they are enabled to do good, or to excel others, to come under the notion of the goods here mentioned, which God distributeth unequally according to his own good pleasure, and as seemeth best to his heavenly wisdom, for the government of the world, and the ordering of the affairs of his church; of all which God will have all account one day, and reward men according to the improvement, or no improvement, which they have made of them in their several stations.

Matthew 25:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 25:18".

Matthew 25:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 25:18".

Matthew 25:18

Ver. 16-18. This part in the parable only showeth the different use that men and women make of those gifts, whether of common providence or of grace, especially common grace, which the Lord bestowed on them. Some make a great use of them for the profit of their Master, for the end for which God entrusted them with them, to wit the glory of his holy name, and the salvation of their souls. Others make no use at all of them for those ends.

Matthew 25:19

Ver. 19. God, in the day of judgment, will call all men to account for those gifts which he hath given them, how they have used the days of life, the measures of health, their knowledge, wit,

memory, understanding, their wealth, estate, honours, dignities, relations, all their natural or acquired habits, all their enjoyments, &c., for the honour of his name, and the advantage of their own souls.

Matthew 25:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:23

Ver. 20-23. This part of the parable teacheth us only these things:

1. That some persons in this world make a very good use and improvement of those gifts and good things which God hath entrusted them with, according to the measure with which God hath entrusted them.
2. That those who do so shall in the day of judgment have a liberal reward in the kingdom of glory, called here *the joy of their Lord*.

That God doth not expect an equality of service from all, but a service proportionable to those gifts which God hath given men; and those shall go to heaven who have made a due improvement of the gifts with which God hath blessed them, though it be not proportionable to the service which others, of greater parts, and who have had greater advantages and opportunities, have made: if men have but two talents, yet if they gain other two, they shall go to heaven at last, as well as those who have had five, and

improved them to the gaining of other five.

We must take heed of concluding from this part of the parable, that those who have most given them ordinarily do make the best improvement of them, for daily experience teacheth us the contrary, neither is the parable brought to instruct us in any such thing.

Matthew 25:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:27

Ver. 24-27. We must remember that we are in a parable, which (as other similitudes) cannot be expected in all things to agree with what it is brought to illustrate. This part of the parable doth chiefly instruct us in these two things:

1. That it is the genius of wicked men to lay the blame of their miscarriages upon others, oft times upon God himself. The unprofitable servant here pretends that the dread of his lord, as a severe man, was that which kept him from labouring, and making an improvement of the talent with which his master had intrusted him. Thus many think that if there be an election of grace, or any thing of special and distinguishing grace, and man hath not a perfect power in his own will, he shall have something to excuse himself by before God hereafter, for his not repenting, and believing God in such a case, condemning men for unbelief and impenitency, should reap where he did not sow, and gather where he did not straw.

2. Men in their excuses which they fancy, instead of excusing will but accuse and condemn themselves. The lord of the unprofitable servant tells him that the fault lay in his own sloth and wickedness, and his dread of his lord's security was but a mere frivolous pretence and unreasonable excuse; for if he had dreaded any such thing, he would have done what he could, he would have put out his money to the exchangers, and then he should have received his own with increase.

And shall not God as justly another day reply upon those who think to excuse their lewd and wicked lives, their impenitency and unbelief, from their not being elected, not having a power of themselves to repent and believe, nor receiving his efficacious grace. O you wicked and slothful wretches! Did you suspect or fear you were not elected? Why then did you not give all diligence to make your calling and election sure? Do you plead the want of power in your own wills to repent and believe, and that I did not give you a special, effectual grace? But had you not a power to keep from the taverns and alehouses? To keep from lying, and cursing, and swearing, and open profanation of my sabbaths? Had not you a power to read, to hear, to pray? If you had to your utmost used the talents I gave you, and I had been warning in my further necessary influences of grace, you might indeed have said something; but when you made no use of the talents you had, why should I trust you with more? Faith comes by reading, hearing, praying; you had a power to these things, these talents you had. Why did you not read, hear, pray, that you might believe? If you took me to be so severe a master, why did not you do what was in your power to do, that you might find me otherwise? If you had done what lay in your power to do, in the use of those talents which I gave you for that end, you might then have blamed me if I had not given you more; but you never tried my kindness in such a case. So that you are not ruined by any severity of mine, but by your own sloth, neglect, and wickedness. Thus much this parable teacheth us, that God in the recompences at the last day of judgment will be found just, and sinners will all be found liars, and their damnation will be of themselves.

Matthew 25:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 25:30".

Matthew 25:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 25:30".

Matthew 25:30

Ver. 28-30. God often in this life deprives men and women of those gifts which he hath given them, and they do not make use of for the glory of his name, and the good of their and others' souls, the great ends for which he hath entrusted them with them. But this seems not to be here intended, this text referring to the day of judgment: all therefore that we are to understand by this is; That no man's gifts, whether of nature or providence, of what advantage soever they have been to him in this life, will be of any profit to him in the day of judgment, unless he hath in this life used them to the ends for which God gave them. In that day he will lose all; and the glory of heaven shall not be the portion of them that have had great talents of learning, wit, riches, honours, spiritual gifts, or any thing of that nature, but of those only who have used these things to the honour and glory of God, and to the advantage of their own and others' souls. For all those that have been unprofitable, hell will be their portion at last, where their misery will be, as of those that live in extreme darkness, continual weeping and gnashing of teeth. The substance of what is in Mt 25:29 we met with Mt 13:12, *To him that hath shall be given, &c.*; but I think the proverbial speech here is applied differently from the application of it there. There, *him that hath* seemeth to signify, him that hath an actual possession; for it is said before, *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.* So that I take that text to contain a promise of the increase of grace to those that have the seed of God; whereas the appearances of it in others shall not last, but vanish away. Here, plainly, *him that hath* signifieth, him that maketh a good and true use of what he hath; and thus the parable expounds it. So as the sense is, He that hath any talents from God, and maketh use of them, and improves them for the honour and glory of God, shall be rewarded with further gifts of grace or glory. But if a man *hath not*, that is, hath, but is as if he had not, making no use of what he hath for

the glory of God, those gifts and talents which he hath shall be of no profit and advantage, but miserable disadvantage to him at last.

Matthew 25:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 25:33".

Matthew 25:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 25:33".

Matthew 25:33

Ver. 31-33. Our Saviour having spoken much before of his spiritual kingdom, which he exerciseth in his church, cometh now more plainly to tell them what kind of a kingdom he should further set up and exercise in the end of the world; far different from that which the Jews dreamed of, and his own disciples seemed to have some expectations of.

When the Son of man, he who now appeareth to you in the form of a servant, and only as the Son of man, shall come in his glory, a glorious manifestation of himself; he now appeareth clothed with flesh, but he shall appear in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; he shall come with ten thousand of his saints, Jude 1:14, with his mighty angels. 2Th 1:7. Then shall he sit (after the manner of great princes) upon the throne of his glory; he shall appear in great splendour: and before him shall be gathered all nations, that is, all persons that ever were or at that time shall be in the world; the quick and the dead, Ac 10:42 2Ti 4:1 1Pe 4:5. He shall send forth his angels, and say to them, who are his reapers, Mt 13:30, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. He by his angels shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd, who feedeth both sheep and goats together, at night separateth them one from another. So the saints of God, who are like sheep for whiteness, gentleness, innocency, and feed in this world together with stinking and lascivious goats, the wicked of the world, compared to goats for the filthy qualities by which

they resemble them; yet at the day of judgment Christ shall separate them.

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand. The right hand is the place of honour and dignity, and the place for favourites: then Christ shall exalt his saints to great honour and dignity, and show them his favour.

But the goats on the left; wicked men shall rise to shame and contempt. The right hand men of the world shall be at the left hand of Christ. It shall be then seen, that because they are people of no understanding, he that formed them will show them no favour.

Matthew 25:34

Ver. 34. *The King*, that is, he who was before called *the Son of man*, who shall then sit on the throne of his glory; he shall say to his saints, to those on his right hand, those whom he designs to honour and to favour, *Come, ye blessed of my Father;* you whom my Father hath blessed with all spiritual blessings in me, who were also blessed in his eternal thoughts: for there was *a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;* you have not purchased it by your works; no, it was prepared for you before ever you were. You were blessed in my Father's eternal thoughts, so he prepared a kingdom for you; and you have been blessed since with all spiritual blessings through me, so you are now prepared for it. Therefore come and now inherit it, as that which you are foreordained and born unto, as that which is freely given you, not purchased by you.

Matthew 25:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:40

Ver. 35-40. The recompences of the last judgment are according to the tenor of our good works, and the desert of evil works. The King here gives the reason of his gracious rewarding sentence, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.* This doth not imply any desert, much less any worthiness of equality between the work and the reward; but that evangelical works, the products of unfeigned faith and love, qualify us by the covenant of grace to receive it. The causes of the reward are either, the original cause, the most free and rich mercy of God, or the meritorious, the most perfect righteousness and sacrifice of Christ; and the good works here recited are infallible signs that the performers of them are the objects of the Divine favour in predestination, and are truly united to Christ. Besides, in the gospel, which is the law of grace, God has established a necessary connection between faith, that works by love, and the blessed reward; and accordingly evangelical works are the condition of our title, that qualifies us to obtain the kingdom of glory, freely promised for Christ's sake to obedient believers. And in this respect the dispensing the reward may be said to be an act of justice, namely, in the faithful performance of the promise; as in the forgiving sins, which is an act of pure mercy, God is said to be *faithful and just*, 1Jo 1:9. Our Lord here reckons but one species of good works, instead of many, as is usual in Scripture, and he rather chooseth to instance in works of charity than of piety.

1. He knows the hardness of men's hearts; and;

2. That the poor they should have always with them, especially such as would live godly, and so be more than others out of favour with the world.
3. He knew how acceptable these were to his Father, and had a mind the world should know it, Isa 58:7 Eze 18:7 Mic 6:8 Mt 9:13 1Jo 3:17. And hereby declares, that acts of charity to the souls makes us fit subjects for the Divine mercy in the day of judgment, 2Ti 1:18.

The answer, Mt 25:37, *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, &c.*, only teacheth us this, That at the great day the best of men shall blush and be ashamed to hear God speak of any good works they have done, and be swallowed up in the admiration of God's free and infinite grace, in rewarding any thing which they have done at so liberal a rate.

And the King shall answer and say unto them, &c. This only confirmeth what we had, Mt 10:42, that Christ looketh upon acts of kindness done to the meanest godly persons, and will reward them, as if they had been done unto himself; so that though our charity must not be limited only there, yet it must be chiefly shown to those of the household of faith: other charity may be showed in obedience to the command of God, and have its reward, but none can so properly be said to be done to Christ, as that which is done to those who are his true members.

Matthew 25:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:45

Ver. 41-45. The great King and Judge of the whole earth had before given sentence for those on his right hand, who are now possessed of their kingdom, and sit with him to judge the world. He now comes to sentence the goats at the left hand, whose judgment is to eternal misery; lying in two things:

1. In a departure from God, so as never more to have any favour from him.
2. In a sense of pain and misery, exceeding that which fire causeth to a body consuming with it.

In this life wicked men are capable of some presence of God with them, and receive several favours from God, in gifts of common providence and common grace; which might serve either as encouragements to allure them, or means to help them, in turning to God: but having abused these, the righteous God in that day will totally depart from them, and they shall receive no more tokens of kindness and favour from him; and whereas, by the advantages they had from such a presence of Divine providence, as God was pleased in this life to allow them, they lived in some degrees of pleasure and liberty, which they were not thankful for, they shall at that day be condemned to eternal torments. Nor shall the justice of God be impeached for disproportioning eternal torments to temporary sinnings; for the infiniteness of the Majesty offended, to which satisfaction is due, is to be considered, and is so amongst men, who think it reasonable to recompense a prince or nobleman for an injury done to them with ten thousand pounds, which they would not recompense to an equal with so many shillings.

Beside that, every sinner hath sinned *in suo infinito*, to the utmost line of his time, and wanted nothing but more time to have sinned more, for he had a will to have sinned infinitely. This everlasting fire is said to be prepared for the devil and his

angels; not because it was not also prepared for men, but the evil angels were condemned to it before man had sinned, so that man comes but into a share with the evil angels; and by this God also lets us know that they are the children of the devil by evil works, Joh 8:44 1Jo 3:8. Having determined their punishments, and pronounced their sentence, he comes to justify himself in it: *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c.* For here may be interpreted as a causal; for though none merits his own salvation, yet every sinner's destruction is of himself, and he meriteth his condemnation. The mentioning only of sins of omission, and those only as to acts of charity, doth not only teach us that sins of omission are enough to damn us, but that omissions of acts of charity to the distressed members of Christ are such sins, as, if not repented of, and washed off with the blood of Christ, are enough to condemn us to the pit of hell; and such things as God doth keep in mind, and will in a more special manner reckon with men for. I cannot pass by a reflection which I find almost all interpreters make upon this text: If those in the day of judgment shall be sent to hell who do not feed the poor members of Christ, and give them to drink when they are thirsty, what shall be done to those who pluck the bread out of their mouths which they have got in the sweat of their face, and spill the drink which their own labours or others' liberality hath given them to drink? If those shall have their portion with the devil and his angels who give not entertainment to them when they are banished and strangers, what shall become of them who are instruments of their banishment, and to make them strangers? If it shall go so hard with those that clothe them not when they are naked, what shall become of those who any way help to strip them naked? If those shall not escape the vengeance of God who do not visit them when they are sick, and in prison, where shall they appear who cast them into prisons, and are means of those diseases that shorten their lives, by their barbarous usages of them? Those that smite their fellow servants had need be sure that it be not for well doing. Our Lord here tells us, that the wicked in that day will say, *When saw we thee an hungred, &c.* they did not deny that they had refused to give bread to the hungry; but they deny that they ever saw Christ an hungred, and did not feed him. Persecutors have always ill names to give the servants of God, pretending still a great reverence for God and Christ. But mark our Lord's answer, and that with an oath:

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the

least of these, ye did it not to me. It is no matter what you thought of or called those to whom you showed no mercy; you see they are here at my right hand. You might have known them to be my sheep, you saw them hear my voice, and following me: you, in casting them into prison, cast me; in starving them, you starved me; and in stripping them of their goods, you stripped me. Therefore, go, *ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Matthew 25:46

Ver. 46. So then it seems they shall rise as well as the other; though they live in the lands of the Grand Seignior, or the Great Mogul, they shall not (as some filthy dreamers have thought) have such a quiet sleep in the graves, but that the sound of the last trump shall awaken them. Nor are they out of the jurisdiction of him that shall be the Judge both of the quick and the dead. Nor shall they escape a judgment without the law, because they have sinned without the law: *For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, Ro 1:20. They shall perish* (as they have sinned) *without the law, Ro 2:12. They shall go into everlasting punishment,* not a punishment for a time, as Origen thought.

But the righteous, those who shall be so adjudged, being made so in this life by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and accepted as such for their holy and sincere conversation, though in many things imperfect, shall go *into life eternal;* which doth not signify a mere eternal existence, (for so the worst of men shall live eternally, or else they could not be capable of eternal punishment), but a happy and blessed estate, which shall never have an end: and thus *eternal life* always signifieth in Scripture, being opposed to eternal death, everlasting fire, the worm that never dieth, &c. Thus endeth Christ's kingdom of grace; or rather, thus shall begin his kingdom of glory; all his enemies being put under his feet, and none remaining but this glorious King, and those who shall be his true subjects. Of which kingdom shall be no end.

Matthew 26:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 26:1,2 Christ again foretells his own death.

Mt 26:3-5 The rulers conspire against him.

Mt 26:6-13 A woman poureth precious ointment upon his head.

Mt 26:14-16 Judas bargains to betray him.

Mt 26:17-25 Christ eateth the passover, and points out the traitor.

Mt 26:26-30 He institutes his last supper,

Mt 26:31-35 foretells the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's denial of him.

Mt 26:36-46 His agony and prayer in the garden.

Mt 26:47-50 He is betrayed and apprehended.

Mt 26:51-56 One of the servants of the high priest hath his ear cut off; Jesus forbiddeth opposition.

Mt 26:57-68 He is carried to Caiaphas, falsely accused, examined, pronounced guilty, and treated with indignity.

Mt 26:69-75 Peter's denial and repentance.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 26:2".

Matthew 26:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 14:1. *After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread.* Luke saith, Lu 22:1, *Now the feast of unleavened drew nigh, which is called the passover.* For our better understanding of what the evangelists say here, and in the following part of this history, we will consider the law of the passover in its institution, which we find in Ex 12:3 &c., Le 23:4 &c., Nu 28:16 &c., In Ex 12:1-51, we find its first institution, and the occasion of it. Upon the tenth day of the month Nisan, they were to take up a lamb for every household; or if the household were too small, they might take in their neighbours.

This lamb was to be a male without blemish, and to be kept up to the fourteenth day; then to be killed in the evening; or between the two evenings, that is, as is most probably judged, some time that day after the sun began after noon to decline, before the sun did set. The flesh of this lamb was that night to be eaten, neither raw, nor sodden, but roasted with fire, with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs: nothing was to remain till the morning; and if any did remain, it was to be burned. They were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands. They were to strike the blood of the lamb on the two first posts, and on the upper doorposts, of the houses where they did eat it. Seven days they were to eat unleavened bread, beginning on the fourteenth day of the month at even, and ending the one and twentieth at even. This was to be to them for a memorial of their deliverance in Egypt upon God's destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians and sparing them, and their deliverance and coming out of Egypt; and was to be an ordinance unto them for ever. This may be read at large, Ex 12:3-20. This also was a figure of the true Passover Jesus Christ, whom the apostle calleth *our Passover*, and the evangelist calls *the Lamb of God*. The law of the passover was again repeated, Le 23:5-8 Nu 28:16-25. The first and last of the days of unleavened bread (as may be seen there) were to be days of *an holy convocation*. There were some differences between the observation of the first passover in Egypt and their after observations of it. At the passover in Egypt the blood was to be sprinkled on the doorposts; in following times the blood and the fat were to be sprinkled upon the altar: at the passover in Egypt every paschal society slew the passover in their own house; but afterwards they were all slain in the temple, and then carried to be roasted and eaten by the several societies. The passover in Egypt was to be eaten standing, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet and staves in their hands, in token of their being ready to take their journey out of Egypt; but in their following passovers they (in token of the liberty into which God had brought them) did eat it sitting: hence we shall find that Christ sat down with the twelve when he ate the passover. In other things the observation was much alike. They strictly kept to the time, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan or Abib, which answereth to part of our March and April. This great festival was to be kept *after two days*, saith our Saviour. Whether the two days are to be understood as including or excluding the day when he spake is uncertain, and not material for us to know; probably he spake this on the Tuesday, (as we

call it), Friday being to be the passover day.

And the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Though he was not yet actually betrayed that we read of, yet he knew both what counsels his adversaries had already been taking, and were further about to take, and what was in the heart of Judas; he therefore forewarns his disciples, that when the thing should come to pass they might not be surprised, and might know that he was the Son of God, who could foretell future contingencies, though he was also as the Son of man to be crucified.

Matthew 26:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 26:5".

Matthew 26:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 26:5".

Matthew 26:5

Ver. 3-5. Mr 14:1, saith, *The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.* Luke saith much the same with Mark. They had before this been seeking how to destroy him, Lu 19:47; nor was it the first time they had made a formal council about it, Joh 11:47; but now again they met. The place is named, that was the high priest's hall; the councillors were the chief priests, scribes, and elders. The matter of their deliberation was to *kill* Christ, and how they might do it *by subtlety*, for they were afraid of the people, who had a great esteem for our Saviour, because of the many miracles he had wrought.

But they said, Not on the feast day: that was now within two days, and in order to it the city was full of people, and they were afraid (as they were concerned, being a conquered people, and having but a precarious liberty for their religion) of causing any tumults: this awed them, not any great religion for the festival, for all things now were out of order with them. Their high priest was chosen annually, and at the will of their conquerors; some

little appearance they had of their ancient religious government, but it was in no due order.

Matthew 26:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:13

Ver. 6-13. This piece of history (or one very like it) is recorded by the three other evangelists. Mark hath it with very little

difference, Mr 14:3-9. Instead of *for much*, Mr 14:9, Mark hath a precise sum, *three hundred pence*, and adds, *they murmured against her*; and some other little differences he hath in words rather than in sense. In Luke, Lu 7:36-38, we read, *One of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat*. This seemeth not to be the same history, though some think it is. *And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment*. It is plain this Pharisee's name was Simon, by Lu 7:40. Luke further addeth a discourse between our Saviour and this Pharisee, Lu 7:39-50, which I shall in its order consider. John relates it, Joh 12:1,2, &c.: *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them which sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always*. Whether all the evangelists relate one and the same or divers stories is the question. Luke's relation seemeth the most different; he saith nothing of this Simon being a leper, and relates this history immediately after things done in Galilee. All the other three agree this passage to have fallen out at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem. It is very probable that Matthew, and Mark, and John recite the same story. They agree it to have happened in Bethany, at a supper in Simon's house; they agree in the kind of the ointment, and in our Saviour's discourse upon the thing. The difference in the time, John mentioning six days before the passover, and Matthew two days, will be cleared by considering, that St. John sets down the precise time when our Saviour came to Bethany, which was six days before the passover; St. Matthew sets down the time when the feast was

made, which was two days before the passover; so that our Saviour had been four days in Bethany before he was entertained in the house of Simon, and anointed by Mary for his burial. When Christ came out of Galilee toward Jerusalem, he came (as we heard before) to Bethany, Mr 11:1. There he was entertained at a supper by one Simon, who had formerly been a leper, and probably had been cured by Christ, who therefore in gratitude entertained him, and made him a supper; where (saith John) Martha served, Lazarus sat at meat, whom he had newly raised from the dead, Joh 11:1-57. There comes a woman, John saith her name was Mary, and takes a pound of the ointment of spikenard; Matthew and Mark say it was in an alabaster box. John saith she did anoint his feet, and wiped them with her hair. Matthew and Mark say nothing of her anointing his feet, but of his head only. Though therefore opinions both of ancient and modern divines be very various, some thinking that the evangelists speak but of one anointing, others, that they speak of two, others, that they speak of three; yet it seems most probable that they speak of two, one of which is mentioned by Luke a year before this, the other is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and John. Whoso deliberately reads over the history in Luke, and compares it with the record of it in the three others, will see reasons enough to conclude that Luke speaketh of another person, and another time, and another place; for certainly Simon the Pharisee and Simon the leper were not the same: besides, we read in Luke that Simon carped at our Saviour for letting such a sinful woman come near him; here is nothing like it in this story. I shall therefore here consider the history as reported by our evangelist, taking in what Mark and John have to make it complete. Matthew and Mark say it was *in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper*. John mentions not the house, but adds that Lazarus was at the same time at supper with our Lord and that Martha waited. It will not from hence follow that our Saviour was at the house of Lazarus, (as some think), for as the other evangelists express another house, so John gives no suspicion of any such thing, but by mentioning the presence of Lazarus and his two sisters there, which might be and one of them wait, though they were at the house of a friend.

There came unto him a woman, (so say Matthew and Mark; John saith it was Mary, one of the sisters of Lazarus), she having an alabaster box of ointment very precious, poured it on his head as he sat at meat. John saith the ointment was of spikenard, very

costly; and that she anointed his feet, and wiped them with her hair; and that the quantity of it was a pound, so as the odour of it did fill the room. She did certainly anoint both his head and his feet. It is certain that in those Eastern countries this was a usual fashion, to entertain their guests at banquets by anointing them with oil, to which the psalmist alludes, Ps 23:5. This woman seemeth to have exceeded the usual compliment of this nature, in the kind of oil she used, the quantity of it, and in her anointing his feet (which she possibly did instead of washing his feet, which was very usual with them); in these things she showed the greatness of her love to this guest.

When his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? Mark adds, they murmured at the woman. They said, This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. Mark and John say, for three hundred pence. John saith it was Judas Iscariot that spake the words, and gives the reason for it, because he bare the bag, into which the price of the ointment (had it been sold) must have come; and he was a thief, he spake not this out of any regard to the poor, but to himself: it is likely other of the disciples might also think that it was too great a waste upon such a compliment. Our Lord understanding of it, vindicates the woman.

1. He tells them that she had done *a good work*. Actions not forbidden by the Divine law, nor commanded in it, take up their goodness or badness from their principles and ends; what she had done was done out of a principle of love to Christ, and for his honour and glory, so it was a good work.
2. He tells them that they had the poor with them always, but they should not have him always. A work may be good done at an extraordinary time, and upon an extraordinary occasion, which is not so if brought into ordinary practice. Christ here declares that he had no design to discourage the relief of the poor, but they would have daily occasions to do them good, but he was not long to be with them.
3. He tells them that she had poured this ointment upon him against his burial. That is, if this cost had been spent upon my dead body you would not have blamed her; for those kind of perfumes, both moist and dry, were much used in their embalming dead bodies. I am about to die, I have often told

you so; you believe it not; she believeth it, and hath, out of her love to me, but bestowed such a cost upon my dying body, as you would not have blamed had it been bestowed upon my dead body: so she showed her faith in Christ's words as well as his person.

Or, if this woman did not do it with any such intention, yet (saith our Saviour) she hath done the thing; I shall suddenly die, and she hath but anointed me aforehand, and is certainly as much excusable as those that spend more about bodies already dead. Finally, he tells them, that wheresoever this gospel should be preached, what she had done should be told to her honour and praise, *for a memorial of her*. Christ, seeing that her action proceeded from a hearty and burning love to him, accepteth her act as an extraordinary act of kindness to him, and proportions her a reward. Without love, if a man give all his goods to the poor, it signifieth nothing; but if there be love in the heart, it makes the gift acceptable. Love seldom underdoes in an act of kindness, and it cannot overdo where Christ is the true object of it. Men, who know not our hearts, may be ready to blame us for actions which God will highly commend and reward.

The evangelist having thus far digressed from his discourse, (probably to give us an account of the reason of Judas's disgust to our Saviour), he now returneth to a discourse about what was done at the council he had told us of, Mt 26:3-5. The fear of an uproar amongst the people seemed to be that alone which made them shy of apprehending him on the feast day.

Matthew 26:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 26:16".

Matthew 26:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 26:16".

Matthew 26:16

Ver. 14-16. Mark saith, Mr 14:10,11, And Judas Iscariot, one of

*the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him. Luke hath this yet more fully, Lu 22:3-6, Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. While they were busy in council, (viz. the chief priests, and scribes, and elders), how they might surprise Christ without making a tumult, Judas surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples of our Lord, instigated by the devil, who possibly did take advantage of Judas's discontent that the ointment was not sold, and he had not the money to put into the bag, or that Christ checked him so openly before the disciples, goes to the council, and offereth them to betray him unto them, without making any noise in the city. This being what they desired, and were consulting how to effect, they were glad of such an offer, and agreed with him for a sum of money. No evangelist but Matthew, in this place, mentions the particular sum, which was *thirty pieces of silver*. Interpreters do very probably think that these thirty pieces were thirty staters or shekels of the sanctuary, which being but of the value of two shillings and six pence apiece, amounted but to three pounds fifteen shillings in our money, which was the sum appointed by the law, Ex 21:32, to be paid for a servant gored to death by the beast of another, the poorest and meanest price of any person's life: Judas left it to them, and they set the meanest price imaginable. There are other opinions about the value of these pieces of silver, but this is the most probable, especially considering the mean opinion these men had of Christ, and their design and interest to depreciate him as much as might be, and that the priests were the great men in this council, who most probably agreed with him for such pieces of money as were most in use amongst the Jews. It may be a just matter of admiration that they should make so cheap a bargain with him, considering that they doubtless (had he insisted upon it) would have given him more; but there was a prophecy to be fulfilled, which we find Zec 11:12,13, *So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.* I shall have occasion, when I come to Mt 27:9, to discourse that text further. The price*

was set by the council of Heaven, which had determined this degree of our Lord's humiliation, that as he took upon him the form of a servant, so his life should be valued at the rate of an ordinary servant's life. Though therefore Judas was covetous enough to have asked more, and it is like the malice of those councillors would have edged them to have given more, yet it was thus ordered by the Divine council. Christ must be sold cheap, that he might be the more dear to the souls of the redeemed ones. For thirty pieces of silver he covenanted with them, and they promised it to him; whether it was now paid, or when he had done his work, appeareth not. From that time, (saith Mark), *he sought how he might conveniently betray him*. Luke expounds this $\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$ $\sigma\chi\lambda\omicron\upsilon$, without tumult, Lu 22:6. He was now fixedly resolved upon his villany; his lust wanted but opportunity, which soon after offered itself.

Matthew 26:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 26:19".

Matthew 26:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 26:19".

Matthew 26:19

Ver. 17-19. No one of the evangelists relates this history fully, but Mark relates the former part more fully than Matthew: Mr 14:12-16 *And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendet forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say you to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.* Lu 22:7-13, differeth a little in the former

part of this relation: he saith, *Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, &c.;* so he goeth on, Lu 22:10-13, varying scarce at all from what Mark saith. The variations of the evangelists are of no moment, none contradicts the other, only one hath some circumstances omitted by the other. Our Lord was now at Bethany, whither he went every night from Jerusalem. The day was come for the killing of the passover. What that day was, the law hath fixed, Ex 12:6; the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) in the evening; or, between the two evenings, that is, as is mostly agreed, betwixt the declining of the sun after noon and the setting of the sun; for they counted one evening began when the sun was declined, which was the second evening of that day, and another evening (belonging to the ensuing day) beginning at sunset. Between these two evenings the passover was to be killed. Now this fourteenth day was called the first day of unleavened bread, though strictly it was not so, according to the Jewish account of days, from sunset to sunset; but it was so after the Roman account, who count the days as we do, from midnight to midnight. For the Jews began their feast of unleavened bread from their eating the passover; so as their fourteenth day must needs take in so many hours as were betwixt the setting of the sun and midnight of the first day of unleavened bread, which held to the end of the twenty-first day; so were seven entire days with a part of another. Matthew and Mark bring in the disciples first asking our Saviour (knowing his resolution to keep the passover) where he would have it prepared. He said (Luke saith) to Peter and John, *Go into the city to such a man, &c.* Mark and Luke here supply something omitted by Matthew, for Matthew only mentions their going to the master of the house, and telling him from Christ, *The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.* The other two evangelists mention more in their instructions; telling us that he told them, that when they came into the city, they should see a man carrying a pitcher of water, whom they should follow into what house soever he should go in, and there they should say to the master of the house, *The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.* Mark and Luke add, *Where is the guest chamber?* No doubt but at that time most

householders who had convenient houses did prepare chambers for the several passover companies. Our Lord here gave his disciples an eminent proof of his Divine nature in so particularly telling them what they should meet with in the city, and disposing the heart of this householder to so free a reception of him. For all three evangelists agree, that the disciples did as Jesus commanded, *and found as he had said unto them. And they made ready the passover.* There was a great deal of work to be done, of which none of the evangelists say any thing. Some upon the reading of this may be thinking, Where had they the lamb? When was it offered? &c. According to the law, in Ex 12:3, the lamb was to be taken up the tenth day, and kept to the fourteenth; it might either be brought by those that did eat it, or bought at Jerusalem, for They had great markets for that purpose some days before the passover. Whether all the lambs thus eaten by the paschal societies were first to be brought to the temple, and then killed, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and poured out at the foot of it, and their fat and entrails offered, I much doubt; I rather think this was only to be done with some of them, instead of all. That some were so killed by the priests, their blood so sprinkled and poured out upon and at the foot of the altar, I doubt not, though God having no temple nor altar built at that time, there be no such thing in the law, Ex 12:1-51; but at Hezekiah's passover, 2Ch 30:16,17, we find the Levites killing the passover, and the priests sprinkling the blood; but, as I said before, I do not think that the priests and Levites killed the lambs for all the passover societies. The great time that it must have taken, and the vast quantity of blood there would have been, the long time it must have taken to cleanse the entrails, makes it appear impossible to be done in four or five hours, for they had no longer time to kill it in. They did not begin to kill till after the evening sacrifice, for the day was done with, and that was between two and three of the clock, and they were to finish by sunset, for then the other evening began. This inclineth me to think that every lamb was not so killed and offered, only some instead of all. But what the disciples did as to these matters, the Scripture hath not told us. It is enough for us that we are told the passover was made ready, and we may be assured that nothing in the preparing of it was omitted, which by the law of God was required as to this sacred action. It was not the business of the evangelists to acquaint us with every particular circumstance, only to let us know that our Lord did keep the passover, and in the close of that feast institute his supper, to which relation our evangelist now comes.

Matthew 26:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:25

Ver. 25. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:17-21: And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born. Luke saith, Lu 22:14-16, &c., And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this,

and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Then Luke passeth to our Lord's institution of the supper. Luke mixes the discourse about the person that should betray him with the relation about the institution of the supper, contrary to the relation both of Matthew and Mark, and John, so as we may reasonably think that Luke misplaces it, giving us an account of that passage, Lu 22:21-23, within his relation of the history of his receiving the passover, and instituting of the supper, which immediately followed each other, but not strictly in that order in which our Saviour spake them, which appeareth plainly by the other three evangelists to have been during the eating of the passover, and before the institution of the Lord's supper. For the understanding of the history, we must understand something of the Jewish order in their eating of the passover: which was this, as we have it described by the learned Doctor Lightfoot;

"Their sitting at meat was commonly upon beds or couches, made for that purpose, with the table before them. Now at other meats they either sat, as we do, with their bodies erect, or when they would enlarge themselves to more freedom of feasting, or refreshing, they sat upon the beds, and leaned upon the table on their left elbow; and this or the other posture they used indifferently at other times, as they were disposed, but on the passover night they thought they were obliged to use this leaning composure, and you may take their reason for it in some of their own words. They used their leaning posture as free men do, in memorial of their freedom. And Levi said, Because it is the manner of servants to eat standing, therefore now they eat sitting and leaning, to show that they were got out of servitude into freedom ... Upon this principle and conceit of freedom they used this manner of discumbency frequently at other times, but indispensably this night, so far different from the posture enjoined and practised at the first passover in Egypt, when they ate it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their staves in their hands, and in haste, Ex 12:11. And as the thought of their freedom disposed them to this leaning, reposed, secure composure of their elbow upon the table, and their head leaning on their hand, so, to emblem out the matter the more highly, they laid their legs under them, sitting on them, and laying out their feet behind them."

(Thus the woman, Lu 7:38, could conveniently come at our Saviour's feet to wash, anoint, and wipe them).

"Thus removing and acquitting their legs and feet, as far as possible, from the least show of standing to attend, or readiness to go upon any one's employment, which might carry with it the least colour of servitude, or contrariety to their freedom. Now according to the manner of sitting and leaning are the texts to be understood, about the beloved disciple's leaning in the bosom of Jesus, Joh 13:23, and on the breast of Jesus, Joh 13:25 Joh 21:20. Ἐνακειμενος εν κολπῳ και επιπεσαν, or επιπεσων επι το στήθος, which some translators not having observed, or at least not expressed, they have intricated the reader in such gross conceptions about this matter, as that some have thought, and some have pictured, John reposing himself or lolling on the breast of Jesus, contrary to all order and decency: whereas the manner of sitting together was only thus, Jesus leaning upon the table with his left elbow, and so turning his face and breast away from the table, on one side; John sat in the same posture next before him, with his back towards Jesus, his breast or bosom not so near as that John's back and Jesus's breast did join together, and touch one another, but at such a distance as that there was space for Jesus to use his right hand upon the table, to reach his meat at his pleasure, and so for all the rest, as they sat in like manner. For it is but a strange fancy with which some have satisfied themselves about this matter, conceiving either that they lay upon the beds before the table, one tumbling upon or before the breast of another; or if they sat leaning on the table, that they sat so close that the back of one joined to the breast of another: they sat leaning, but with such distance between each other, that the right hand of every one of them had liberty to come and go between himself and his fellow, to reach his meat, as he had occasion."

Thus far that learned man, in his discourse of the temple service, in the time of our Saviour, in Joh 13:1-38. By which discourse we may learn;

1. That the Jews at the eating of the passover used the very same posture as at other times they did eat their meat in.

2. That this was not lying along, but sitting upon their legs, and sometimes leaning their head upon their left elbow, yet at such a distance one front another, as every one that sat might freely use their right hand to take their meat, and reach it to their mouths: nor did they always sit at meat so leaning, but at their pleasure leaned or not leaned; only at the paschal supper they always leaned, as an emblem of their more perfect liberty. By this we easily understand what is meant by Christ's sitting down with the twelve, after the manner of that country in eating their meat.

And as they did eat, he said. For the understanding of this we must a little inquire into the Jewish manner of eating that holy supper, which I will take out of the aforementioned learned author in the same book and chapter, paragraph third.

"They being thus set, the first thing towards this passover supper that they went about was, that they every one drank off a cup of wine."

So do their own directories and rituals about this thing inform us. Now the consideration of this is of mighty use to us to help us to understand the two cups mentioned by Luke, [Lu 22:17](#), and again [Lu 22:20](#). The latter was the cup which our Saviour consecrated for the institution of his supper, as is plain by the consecration of the bread mentioned immediately before it, [Lu 22:19](#). The cup mentioned [Lu 22:17](#) was their first cup of wine, which they drank before the passover supper, mentioned by Luke only. Our Saviour's giving thanks when he took it, was but his blessing of the whole paschal supper. Luke before this mentions some words of our Saviour, [Lu 22:15,16](#), *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God:* that is, I am now about to suffer, I know that I am betrayed, I have therefore earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I die, to put an end to this legal service, which hath now continued so many years, and hath all this time been but a type of me and my death, and oblation for sin, [Joh 1:29](#) [1Co 5:7](#). For this is the last passover I shall eat with you or that you shall eat before you see those things fulfilled in gospel providences which this service doth but typify. This indeed was but the preface to the paschal supper, nor doth Luke mention

more of it, only addeth, Lu 22:18, *For I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come;* of which words I shall here say nothing, for they are doubtless by Luke put out of the true order, being both by Mark and Matthew mentioned as spoken after that our Saviour had blessed and taken the sacramental cup. So as, questionless, Lu 17:21,22 should have been before the Lu 17:18, according to the order in which Matthew and Mark put them, and Lu 22:18 should be put after Lu 22:20, and so also both Matthew and Mark do place them. Luke mentions no more of the paschal supper; let us therefore return to our evangelist.

And as they did eat, that is, the paschal supper, which (according to the law, Ex 12:8) was the lamb or kid roasted, which they were to eat *with unleavened bread and bitter herbs*. The Jews had a hundred traditional rites, which they observed about the paschal supper; but there seems to have none of them been of any Divine institution. The law required no more than the eating of the lamb or kid roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. As to their drink, it prescribed nothing, they were left to liberty: for their tradition of four cups of wine to be drank, &c., I cannot find any of the evangelists mentioning our Saviour's usage of any such thing, but very probably he drank wine at his pleasure, as at other meals, keeping only to the rule of the law. Now saith Matthew and Mark, *And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me*. He had before told them the Son of man should be betrayed, Mt 17:22 Mt 20:18, where he had also told them he should be scourged, mocked, and crucified; but he now cometh to discover the traitor to them, *One of you*. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say unto him, Lord, is it I?* They were sorrowful that he should be betrayed by any, but more troubled that one of themselves should be so accursed an instrument: every one mistrusts his own heart, and saith, *Is it I?* Christ replies, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me*. The dish here could be no other than the dish at the passover supper; probably the hand of Judas was at that time with our Saviour's in the dish, for we read of no more reply from any but from Judas. Our Saviour addeth, *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born*. By these words our Saviour dooms the traitor, though withal he tells them, that for his suffering it was

determined by God, foretold by the prophets, and so eventually necessary; he was not dragged to it, *The Son of man goeth*. But God's decree as to the thing did neither take away the liberty of Judas's will in acting, nor yet excuse the fact he did. *Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!* A text worthy of their study, who will not understand how God should decree to permit sin, and make a sinful act as to the event necessary, without being the author of sin. As to our Saviour's death, God had determined it, foretold it, it was necessary to be; but yet Satan put the evil motion into the heart of Judas, and Judas acted freely in the doing what he did.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. This (as I said) maketh it very probable that the hand of Judas was in the dish with our Saviour's, dipping in the sauce, when our Saviour spake these former words. That Judas, as well as the other disciples, was with our Lord at this action, is out of doubt. That he stayed any longer may very well be questioned, not only because Joh 13:30, *He then having received the sop went immediately out;* but because one cannot in reason think that his guilty conscience should suffer him to stay beyond that word, or that our Saviour would have admitted of the society of so prodigious a traitor at his last supper, the institution of which immediately followed.

Matthew 26:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 26:30". See Poole on "Mr 6:41".

Matthew 26:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:30

Ver. 26-30. Mark relates this with no considerable difference, Mr 14:22-26; only he saith, *they all drank of it, and, shed for many for the remission of sins.* Luke saith, our Saviour upon his giving the bread, said, *This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.* Lu 22:24-30 gives us some further discourses of our Saviour with Peter, and to his disciples; but no other evangelist mentioning them in this place, and Luke no where saying that they were spoken in the guest chamber, I shall not consider them till I come to that chapter in Luke.

And as they were eating, that is, while they were yet in the guest chamber, where they had eaten the paschal lamb, (for we must not think that our Saviour interrupted them in their very act of eating the paschal lamb, with these words, and another institution), *Jesus took bread;* without doubt unleavened bread, for this night there was no other to be found in the house of any Jew, nor yet for seven days which began from the sunset of this night. But it will not from hence follow, that the Lord's supper must be eaten with unleavened bread. For though our Saviour be to be imitated in his actions relating to gospel worship; yet not in such of them which had a plain reference to the Jewish worship, and were there instituted for a special reason, as unleavened bread was, to put them in mind of the haste in which they came out of Egypt. Our Saviour at this time could use no other than unleavened bread, for no other was to be had.

And blessed it: he did not only give thanks to God for it, and beg his blessing upon it, which (as we have before observed) was our Saviour's constant practice where he did eat bread, but he set it apart, and consecrated it for a part of his last supper. It seemeth very probable that this is to be understood here in the word *blessed it.* For although the Jews, and our Saviour, ordinarily used a short prayer and thanksgiving before they did eat meat, thereby showing that they owned God as the Giver of those things, and depended upon him for a blessing upon them, yet we no where read, that they did so during the same meal, as often as

they put bread into their mouths. Luke (as we heard before) made a particular mention of our Saviour's blessing the paschal supper. The mentioning of our Saviour's blessing of this bread manifestly leadeth us to a new notion and institution; and the repeating of it again, Mt 26:27, upon his taking the cup, doth yet further confirm it: That our Saviour's blessing both the one and the other signifieth to us not only his giving thanks to God, and begging of God's blessing, as upon ordinary food, but his sanctifying the one and the other to be used as a new gospel institution, for the remembrance of his death.

And brake it, and gave it to the disciples. Whether (as some say) the master of the Jewish feasts was wont, after begging of a blessing, thus to break bread and to give it to all the guests, I cannot tell, I know no scripture we have to assure us of it; certain it is our Saviour brake it, and did give it to his disciples. That he gave it into their mouths, they not touching it with their hands, or that he gave it into every one of their particular hands, the Scripture saith not, nor is it very probable, except we will admit that he changed the posture he was in; for let any judge how probable it is that one sitting upon his legs, leaning or not leaning, (the constant posture they used in eating, whether the paschal supper or any other meals), keeping his posture, could reach it to eleven persons in the same posture, to put it into their several mouths, or give it particularly into every one of their hands; it is therefore more probable, that he put the dish or vessel in which the bread was from him to him that sat next to him, and so it was conveyed from hand to hand till all had taken it, after he had first spoke as followeth. Those who can think otherwise, must presume that our Lord changed his posture, which I am sure is not to be proved from any place of holy writ.

And said, Take, eat; this is my body; Luke adds, *which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.* Paul puts all together, 1Co 11:24, only for *given* he saith *broken*. What contests have been and yet are betwixt the papists, Lutherans, and Zuinglians (since called Calvinists) about the true sense of those words, *This is my body*, every one knows. The papists make the sense this; This bread, once consecrated by the priest, is presently turned into the very body and blood of Christ, which every communicant eateth. Hence are their adorations to it, their elevations of it, their carrying it about in solemn processions, &c. The Lutherans, though they see the gross absurdities of this

sense, yet say, That the true and real body and blood of Christ, in its true substance, is present with the bread and wine in the sacrament, and eaten by every communicant. Both these opinions agree in this absurdity, that Christ's body now must be no true human body; for we know that all true human bodies are subject to our senses, and so in one place that they cannot at the same time be in another, much less in a thousand or ten thousand places at the same time. But neither the papists nor the Lutherans will hear of any arguments from that head, but stick to the letter of our Saviour's words. The Zuinglians say the meaning is; This signifieth my body. In the same sense as it is said, *Christ is the way, a door, a vine, a shepherd;* and as it is said of the lamb, Ex 12:11, *It is the Lord's passover:* yet they are far from making this ordinance a bare empty sign, but do acknowledge it a sacred institution of Christ in the gospel, in the observation of which he doth vouchsafe his spiritual presence, so as every true believer worthily receiving, doth really and truly partake of the body and blood of Christ, that is, all the benefits of his blessed death and passion, which is undoubtedly all intended by our Saviour in these words: and when he saith, *Take, eat,* he means no more than that true believers should by the hand of their body take the bread, and with their bodily mouths eat it, and at the same time, by the hand and mouth of faith, receive and apply all the benefits of his blessed death and passion to their souls; and that they should do this in remembrance of him, that is, (as the apostle, 1Co 11:26, expounds it), showing forth *the Lord's death till he come.*

It followeth, *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Christ's taking of the cup, and giving of thanks, were actions of the same nature with those which he used with a relation to the bread, of which I spoke before. Let the papists and Lutherans say what they can, here must be two figures acknowledged in these words. The *cup* here is put for the wine in the cup; and the meaning of these words, *this is my blood of the new testament,* must be, this wine is the sign of the new covenant. Why they should not as readily acknowledge a figure in those words, *This is my body,* I cannot understand; the pronoun *this,* in the Greek, is in the neuter gender, and applicable to the term cup, or to the term blood; but it is most reasonable to interpret it, This cup, that is, the wine in this cup, is the blood of the new covenant, or

testament, that is, the blood by which the new covenant is confirmed and established. Thus the blood of the covenant signifieth in several texts, Ex 24:8 Zec 9:11 Heb 9:20 10:29.

Which is shed for many for the remission of sins; to purchase remission of sins; and this lets us know, that by *many* here cannot be understood all individuals, unless we will say that Christ purchased a remission of sins for many who shall never obtain it, which how he could do, if he died in their stead, suffering the wrath of God due to them for sin, is very hard to understand.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine. I observed before, that Luke puts these words before the institution of the supper, and some think that they properly belong to that place; but I understand no reason for it, Matthew and Mark both placing it here; nor doth it seem probable, that after these words our Saviour should presently drink of it in the institution of his supper. Some here object our Saviour's drinking after his resurrection; but besides that, it cannot be proved that he drank any wine; neither did he otherwise eat or drink at all, but to show that he was indeed risen, for he hungered and thirsted no more after his resurrection. Or else by this phrase our Saviour only meant, I will no more participate in this ordinance with you.

Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom, that is, in heaven. Some will say, Shall there then be drinking of wine in heaven?

Answer. No; neither doth the particle *until* signify any such thing. But the joys and pleasures of heaven are often metaphorically set out under the notion of sitting down to banquet, Mt 8:11, supping, Re 3:20, eating and drinking, Lu 22:30. Our Saviour calls this *new wine*, to signify that he did not by it mean such wine as men drink here: I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, but both you and I, in my Father's glory, shall be satisfied with rivers of pleasures, which shall be far sweeter, and more excellent, than that which is but the juice of the grape, and the fruit of the vine.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. That the Jews were wont to close their passover supper

with singing a hymn I do not doubt; nor that they had some particular psalms or hymns which they used at that time to sing: but whether it were any of these that our Saviour at this time praised God with I cannot tell, much less whether he designed this praising of God with particular relation to the paschal supper, or his supper, which he had now instituted, or both. The inquiries after these things are but insignificant curiosities, fit for such as have more mind to look into the skirts of holy writ, than to find out of it what may be of profit and advantage to them. Our Saviour doubtless intended by this to instruct us, that the ordinance of his supper is a eucharistical service, wherein our souls are most highly concerned to give thanks unto God; and as singing is an external action which God hath appointed to express the inward joy and thankfulness of our hearts, so it is very proper to be used at that holy institution.

They went out into the Mount of Olives. Our Lord knew that his time was now come when he must be actually delivered into the hands of his enemies. That he might not therefore cause any disturbance either to the master of the family wherein he was, or to the city, though it was now midnight, he goeth out of the city (the gates being either open, because of the multitude of people, very late, or else easily opened to him) to the Mount of Olives; a mountain in the way betwixt Jerusalem and Bethany, so called, as is thought, from the multitude of olive trees growing upon and about it. The evangelist as yet mentions nothing of Judas, who now was gone to plot his work, and will anon return to accomplish it. In the mean time let us follow our Saviour, attending to his discourses and actions.

Matthew 26:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:35

Ver. 31-35. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:27-31, only he saith, Mr 14:30, *This day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* Luke hath it not entire, but he hath something of it, Lu 22:31-34, with some addition, thus, *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* Those who read the evangelists, must remember that they did not write our Saviour's words from his mouth, but from their memories; and therefore must be allowed to vary in their expressions, and in circumstances, giving us only an account of the substance of words and actions, as their memories served them; from whence also it is that some of them have some circumstances not in the others. Our Saviour's design here in general, is to inform his disciples of something which would happen by and by.

All ye (saith he) shall be offended because of me this night. The word *offended* is of a very large signification in holy writ; here it seems to signify disturbed or troubled, though if we take it strictly for stumbling, so as to sin, it was true enough, for that happened, (as we shall see anon), which made them to forsake Christ and flee, which doubtless was their sin.

For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock; shall be scattered abroad. The words are Zec 13:7. The words there are imperative, *Smite the shepherd*. There are different opinions, whether that text is primarily to be understood of Christ, or it be only a proverbial speech, which the prophet made use of with another reference, which yet Christ doth apply

unto himself. I do more incline to think, that Christ here interprets the prophecy to relate primarily to himself, for he doth not say, As it is said, but, It is written; yet, consider it as a proverbial speech, it is true of others also. But certainly our Saviour designed to uphold the spirits of his disciples, by letting them know, that though they should see the Shepherd smitten, that is, himself, who is the *good Shepherd*, Joh 10:11; and is called by the apostle, *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, Heb 13:20, *the chief Shepherd*, 1Pe 5:4; yet they should not be disturbed, for:

1. It was no more than was prophesied concerning him, Zec 13:7.
2. Though at present they were scattered, yet it should not be long, for he should rise again, and then he would go before them into Galilee; which was fulfilled, as we read, Mr 16:7.

Upon these words, Peter, whom by all the gospel history we shall observe to have been of the highest courage, and most forward to speak, saith, *Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended*. These doubtless were his present thoughts, this his sudden resolution. Here now seem to come in our Saviour's words to Peter, mentioned by Luke only, Lu 22:31, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*.

You is in the plural number, and to be interpreted by *you all*, though our Saviour directeth his speech only to Peter, who first spake, whom he calleth by his own name, and doubles it, to signify his earnestness in giving him warning. To *sift you*.

In sifting there are two things:

1. The shaking of the corn up and down.
2. The separation of the grain from the dust, or the seeds mixed with it: Satan hath desired, or hath obtained leave of my Father, to trouble you all, shaking your faith this and that way.

But I have prayed, that although the workings of your faith be suspended, and the habit of your faith be shaken, yet it may not

utterly fail, but the seeds of God may abide in you: you shall not wholly fall away, but be renewed again by repentance; and *when thou art converted*, when thou hast fallen, and shalt have a sight of thy error, and be humbled for it, endeavour to strengthen thy brethren's faith.

We may observe from hence:

1. That temptations are siftings. God sifts us to purge away our dross. Satan sifts us, if it were possible, to take away our wheat.
2. That the devil is the great tempter. Others may hold and move the sieve, but he is the master of the work.
3. That he hath a continual desire to be sifting in God's flour.
4. That he hath a chain upon him; he must ask God's leave to trouble his people.
5. That God often giveth him leave, but through Christ's pleadings he shall not conquer: he may sift and trouble a believer, but the believer's faith shall not fail.
6. That in the hour of temptation we stand in Christ's strength, by the virtue of his intercession.
7. That lapsed Christians, when the Lord hath restored them, ought to endeavour to strengthen and establish others.

Jesus saith to Peter, *Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.* Luke saith, *thou shalt deny that thou knowest me.* Mark saith, *before the cock crow twice;* and so interprets Matthew, for he denied Christ but once before the cock did crow once. How little do we know ourselves, that cannot tell what our hearts will be three or four hours! Peter was too confident of the contrary, and replies again upon our Saviour, telling him, that if all should deny him, he would not. So also they all said, but what happened we shall hear more by and by.

Matthew 26:36

Ver. 36. Mark leaveth out yonder, Mr 14:32. Luke saith, Lu 22:39-41, He came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed. Whether this Gethsemane were the name of a garden, or of a village wherein was a garden, is not much material for us to know. In Jerusalem, they say, they had no gardens, but their gardens were without the gates. Certain it is, it was on the other side of the brook Cedron, Joh 18:1, and either in or at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Thither Christ went with his disciples, that is, eleven of them; we shall hear of the twelfth by and by. Luke saith, that he bade his disciples pray that they might not enter into temptation: these words Matthew and Mark have, after Christ's first return to them; they say he now said only, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Matthew 26:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 26:38".

Matthew 26:38

Ver. 37,38. Mark names the three disciples, Mr 14:33,34: *And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.* The three witnesses of his transfiguration, Mt 17:1, he takes also to be witnesses of his agony. He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. The words in the Greek are expressive of the greatest sorrow imaginable, which he further expresses Mt 26:38, saying, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* This was not wholly upon the sense of his approaching death, for he laid down his life, no man took it from him; nor yet to consider how his disciples would be left; but in the sense he had of the wrath of God due to man for sin, which he now felt, bearing our sins. So as this was a part, and a great part, of his suffering as appears by his following earnest prayers for the passing away of that cup, his sweating as it were drops of blood, Lu 22:44, the angels

coming and ministering unto him, Lu 22:43. Luke saith, he was *in an agony*, which signifieth a great inward conflict.

Matthew 26:39

Ver. 39. Mark saith, Mr 14:35,36, He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from, me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Luke saith, Lu 22:41,42, He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Here are three distinct forms of words, but all agreeing in one and the same sense. Matthew saith, He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed. He at his first motion carried but three with him, Peter, James, and John; now he leaves them, but not far, Luke saith, about a stone's cast.. Fervent prayer loves privacy, and Christ by this teacheth us that secret prayer is our duty. He fell on his face; Luke saith, he kneeled; he possibly at first kneeled, then fell on his face. We read in Scripture of sitting, standing, kneeling, and prostration used in prayer; the first and last rarely; standing and kneeling were the most ordinary postures. David prayed sitting in his house, 2Sa 7:18. Abraham fell on his face, Ge 17:17. So did Moses and Aaron, Nu 16:22,45. Prostration was ordinarily used in great passions; hardly otherwise in prayer. Saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Mark first tells us the sum of his prayer, then saith he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Luke saith he said, If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luke's if thou be willing expounds Matthew's if it be possible. A thing in itself may be possible which considered in its circumstances is not so: thus, as it is in Mark, all things are to God possible; but yet it is not possible for God to alter any thing which he hath decreed, or said shall come to pass; because God is not as man, one that can lie, or repent. But it will be objected, Did not Christ know that it was not possible? Did not he himself, Mt 26:54, say, thus it must be? I answer, It is one thing what he knew as he was God, and of counsel with the Father; and another thing what he

prayed for as man. Besides, our Saviour's saying, if it be possible, doth not suppose that he knew it was possible; it signifieth no more than this, Father, my human nature hath an aversion from this heavy stroke, so as, if it were possible, it craves of thee a discharge from this curse: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. The first clause is but the expression of the natural (but not sinful) infirmity of his flesh; the latter a perfect resignation of his will to God. In the first he tells his Father what his natural flesh would crave, if it might consist with the will of God. In the second he begs that, whatsoever his flesh craved, yet the will of God might be done. And herein he sets us a perfect pattern for our prayers for deliverance from temporal evils, viz. with a submission to the will of God. By this our Saviour doth not declare himself ignorant or uncertain of the Divine will: only as, though the person that died was God man, yet the human nature only died; so, though the person that prayed was God man, yet he only prayed as he was man.

Matthew 26:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 26:41".

Matthew 26:41

Ver. 40,41. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:37,38. Luke hath nothing of our Saviour's going the second or third time, but hath some other passages, which we shall consider by and by; and telleth us but once of his finding the disciples asleep, which we shall also take notice of in their order. Whether Christ came this first time only to Peter, and James, and John, whom he had left nearer to him, or to the other eight, left at a farther distance, I cannot determine, but think the first most probable. He *saith unto Peter*, and so to James and John, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* You, Peter, that even now wert so resolute for me; and you, James and John, that told me, you could drink of the cup whereof I drank, and be baptized with the baptism I should be baptized with; what, do you faint the first time?

Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. Here he calls them to a greater watching, spiritual watching, in opposition to security, that they might not fall under their temptations. By

watching, he directeth them to the use of such means as were within their power to use; by adding *pray*, he lets them know, that it was not in their power to stand without God's help and assistance, which must be obtained by prayer, and upon their praying should not be denied them.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak: the spirit, sanctified by Divine grace, is resolved with constancy to perform its duty; but the flesh, the sensitive part, is apt to faint and fall away when terrible temptations assault us: therefore you should earnestly pray for supernatural strength, and be vigilant, lest you be surprised and overcome by them. The words also may have an immediate respect to their being overtaken with sleep in this hour of Christ's summons, though they resolved affectionately to attend him and cleave to him.

Matthew 26:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 26:43".

Matthew 26:43

Ver. 42,43. Mark saith Mr 14:39,40, *And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him. Saying the same words.* How our translation came to translate this so I cannot tell, in the Greek it is τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, which must be translated, the same word, or the same speech, not words (if that were the evangelist's sense). But that it is not, for, as it is plain our Saviour used more than one word, so it is as plain it was not the same speech, or form of words, for we have met with four different forms already: our Lord prayed but thrice, so as he could not say the same speech. But λόγον here signifies matter—speaking the same matter, or to the same sense, and this we translate it, Mr 1:45 10:10, and in a multitude of other texts, in correspondence with the Hebrew רַבֵּר he comes to them a second time, and findeth them asleep. So quickly did they find the truth of what he had but now taught them, that *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*, for there is no doubt but they did what they could to keep themselves awake.

Matthew 26:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 26:46".

Matthew 26:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 26:46".

Matthew 26:46

Ver. 44-46. Mark saith nothing of this third praying, but saith, Mr 14:41,42, *And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betray me is at hand.* What the meaning of *saying the same words* is, we heard before; praying to the same sense, or saying the same thing, or matter, though using other words, as it is plain he hid. Luke tells us, Lu 22:43, *there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* This is not the first time we read of angels appearing and ministering to Christ. They did so, Mt 4:11, after his conflict with the devil in the wilderness. Now an angel appeared to him in the hour of temptation. Then he had *without, troubles*; but now he hath *within, fears*, being in a great agony.

Thus it is said, Joh 12:27,28, that he being in a conflict, and praying, *Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. A voice was heard, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* There the answer was testified by a voice from heaven; here it is by an angel. So God, Da 9:21, let Daniel know his prayer was heard. Hannah knew another way, by the peace of her spirit after prayer—*her countenance was no more sad*, 1Sa 1:18. How the angel did strengthen him we are not told. Let no man think that he who was the Son of God needed an angel to strengthen him: he was not now exerting his Divine virtue, but by his suffering showing that he was truly man, and, as to that nature, made lower than the angels.

Luke addeth, Lu 22:44, *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* These words are expressive of the great conflict of our Saviour's spirit, which was such as thrust out sweat like great drops of blood: whether they were very blood, or sweat with some mixture or tincture of blood, is very hard to determine, nor of any consequence for us to know: it is no unusual thing for bodies to breathe out sweat in ordinary conflicts of spirit; this was much more than ordinary. Luke saith, Lu 22:45,46, that *when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* All three evangelists agree, that Christ coming the third time found them sleeping. Luke gives one reason of it, *for sorrow.* Their sorrow, added to their watching, may be some excuse for their sleeping, though otherwise it was a time which called for more waking.

The evangelists do not so well agree in what Christ said to his disciples. Luke saith, *Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* Matthew and Mark say he said, *Sleep on now, and take your rest, &c.* He might say both. Nor can we determine whether he spake those words seriously, as willing that they should take their rest, for they could be no further useful to him, whose time was now come; he was betrayed, and the traitor was at hand: or, with some reflection upon them for their drowsiness, which the words going before, *What, could ye not teach with me one hour?* Seem to hint us.

Matthew 26:47

Ver. 47. Mark saith the same, Mr 14:43, adding also *the scribes.* Luke saith there was *a multitude,* and *Judas went before them,* adding, that he *drew near to Jesus to kiss him,* Lu 22:47. If any ask how Judas knew where Jesus was at that time of the night, or rather so early in the morning, John satisfieth us, Joh 18:2, *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples.* And then goeth on, Joh 18:3, *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.* Those skilled in the Jewish learning tell us, that the ordinary guard of the temple belonged to

the priests, and such officers as they employed; but upon their great festivals, the Roman governor added a band of his soldiers, who yet were under the command of the priests. It is thought these officers, soldiers, and others came with a warrant to apprehend our Saviour from the Jewish sanhedrim, or highest court, which was made up of chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and the elders of the people: they had torches and lanterns, because it was yet dark, before the day was broke; swords and staves, to be ready against any opposition. Judas the traitor comes before as their leader.

Matthew 26:48

See Poole on "Mt 26:49".

Matthew 26:49

Ver. 48-49. Mark, Mr 14:44,45, differs not, only instead of *hold him fast*, he hath, *lead him away safely*; and instead of *Hail, master*, he saith, *Master, master*. There is in these words nothing difficult or doubtful: Judas had given them a sign how to know Christ, that was his kissing of him: being come where he was, he steps to our Saviour and kissed him, by which he let them know that he was the person against whom their warrant was.

Matthew 26:50

Ver. 50. Mark saith nothing of what Christ said to him. Luke, Lu 22:48, adds, that Christ said to him, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Whether Christ used this compellation of *friend* to Judas, to mind him what he formerly had been, and still ought to have been, or as a common compellation, (as we oft use it), is not much material. A kiss is the symbol of friendship and kindness, and therefore very improperly used by a traitor and professed enemy; yet so used by Joab to Amasa, 2Sa 20:9. That makes our Saviour ask him if he were not ashamed to betray the Son of man by a kiss. Judas, by calling him *Master, master*, acknowledged he had been once his disciple. By his kiss he pretended friendship to him, yet betrayed him. Oh the depth of

desperate wickedness which is in the heart of man! Especially such as apostatize from a former profession; they are commonly the worst and most false enemies of Christ and his gospel.

Matthew 26:51

Ver. 51. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:52

Ver. 52. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:53

Ver. 53. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:54

Ver. 51-54. Matthew relates this history shortly, but Mark much more, Mr 14:47; he saith no more than this, *And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.* Luke also relates something of it, Lu 22:50,51, *And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.* John relates the same passage with some more particulars, Joh 18:10. *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.* The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, *Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* If any ask, how Christ and his disciples came to have a sword, he may be satisfied that they had two, from Lu 22:35-38, which verses being in none of the other evangelists, I have left to be spoken to in their order. The disciples seeing the officers laying hands on Christ, as was said Mt 26:50, knowing *what would follow*, as Luke saith, *one of them* (St. John tells us it was Peter) *drew a sword, and smote off the right ear of one of the high priest's servants.* John tells us his name was Malchus. Our

Saviour reproveth Peter, commanding him to put up the sword again into its sheath, and telling him,

1. That he who taketh the sword should perish with the sword. It is to be understood of private persons taking up the sword to destroy their lawful magistrates; and this lesson it teacheth all Christians. Men must have the sword given orderly into their hands, before they may use it, and that no private person can have against the supreme magistrate.
2. Secondly, (saith our Saviour), I needed not thy help to defend me. If I were to make any defence, I could *pray to my Father*, and he should *give me more than twelve legions of angels*; there is therefore no need of thy drawing a sword in my defence.
3. The Scripture (saith he) must be fulfilled; it was prophesied of me that I should be thus used, and those prophecies must be fulfilled. Having reproved Peter, and silenced his passion, Luke tells us, he begged leave so far as to touch his ear, and he healed it; thus doing good to those that hated him, and working a miracle in the sight of them, which (had not their hearts been hardened) might have convinced them both of his innocency and his Divine power; but they take no notice of his kindness. Now he applies himself to the multitude of his enemies.

Matthew 26:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 26:56".

Matthew 26:56

Ver. 55,56. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:48-50. Luke, Lu 22:52,53 hath it thus: *Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* What our evangelist reports as spoken to the rabble, Luke reports as spoken to the chief priests and captains of the

temple, (that is, of the soldiers, who at that time were the guard of the temple), some of which, it should seem, came along with the rabble, to whom our Saviour directeth his speech.

I sat daily with you teaching in the temple. I observed before, that it was their usual manner for those that taught in the temple to sit while they taught, to testify their authority; Christ, when he came up to the passover, was wont to teach in the temple.

And ye laid no hold on me: I did not hide myself, nor go about to raise a party to defend myself, but quietly taught in the temple. If I had been guilty of any crime, you might easily have taken me; why are you now come out against me as against a thief, upon whom you had need to raise the country? Why come you against me with swords and staves, as if you thought I would make some resistance to defend myself? You never saw any such thing in me as should give you a jealousy of such a thing.

But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, the many scriptures which spake concerning the sufferings of Christ. Luke addeth, *but this is your hour, and the power of darkness,* that is, this is that which God hath determined. Wicked men and persecutors of Christ and his gospel have their hour. There is a time which God in his wise counsels hath set and determined, when, for the trial of his people's faith and patience, he suffers the devil, by vile and wicked men, who are his instruments, to imprison and otherwise vex and molest his people. That such a time is their hour, and what they do is by the permission and according to the counsel of God, and but an hour, a determined and short time, are great arguments to persuade us to the exercise of faith and patience.

And the power of darkness; a time when the prince of darkness is putting forth his power: or, *the power of darkness,* that is, a time of exceeding great darkness, of affliction to me and my disciples. Wicked men's hour is always to Christ's disciples the power of darkness.

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Probably all of them fled at first, though Peter and another came back again: or, *all* here signifieth the most of them. We never know our hearts upon the prospect of great trials, until we come to grapple with them, and to be engaged in them. These disciples had all said they

would not forsake him; when it comes to the push, not one of them stands by him. But although they shrunk at first, not without the providence of God permitting them thus to fail in their duty, then governing their failures to his own glory; yet they again returned to their duty after Christ's resurrection, owned Christ, preached his gospel, and at last drank of the cup, which he drank of first, and were baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized. All must not be condemned for flight in a time of persecution. We must observe whether they apostatize from their profession, or whether they do not return again, before we pass a judgment against them.

Matthew 26:57

Ver. 57. Mark saith, Mr 14:53, *They led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.* Luke saith no more but, *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house,* Lu 22:54. John saith, Joh 18:12,13 *Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.* All things were now out of order in the Jewish church. Regularly, their high priests were to be such as derived from the eldest son of Aaron, and were to hold in their place for life; but they were now chosen annually, and their conquerors ruled the choice as they pleased. Yet some think, that in this the Jews kept something of their ancient form, and the high priest was chosen regularly of the house of Aaron and for life; but the Romans when they listed turned him out, and sold the place to another; and such a one was Caiaphas, who was at that time high priest, son-in-law to Annas. Their carrying of Christ first to Annas's house, was no more than to stay there a while till Caiaphas, and the council, which was appointed to meet that morning at the house of Caiaphas, could assemble.

Matthew 26:58

Ver. 58. Mark adds, Mr 14:51, *and warmed himself at the fire.* Luke saith, Lu 22:51,55, *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed*

afar off: And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. John gives us a more particular account how Peter came into the hall, Joh 18:15,16: And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Some think that this other disciple was John himself; but it is not probable that John and the high priest should be so well acquainted: it is more probably judged, that it was none of the twelve, but one who favoured Christ more secretly, some citizen of Jerusalem whom the high priest favoured, or at least knew by face, and had some respect for, and therefore he was admitted in, and he helped Peter in; who being come in, and a fire kindled in the hall, the rest of the company sat down and warmed themselves by the fire, Peter also sat down amongst them, being desirous to see the end.

Matthew 26:59

Ver. 59. See Poole on "Mt 26:60".

Matthew 26:60

Ver. 59,60. Mark expounds this latter verse, Mr 14:56, *For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.* It is plain that they had taken up a resolution to destroy Christ one way or another, but they will make a show of justice in the execution of their malice. The council being set, it is not to be thought that they had then leisure to send about for witnesses, but out of their malice they screwed and sifted such witnesses as were brought, to see if they could get of them upon their oaths to affirm any thing against him which by their law was capital. *Many false witnesses came, yet they found none;* that is, no two agreeing in the same story, as the law required, De 19:15, for a single testimony was none. *Vox unius est vox nullius,* A single witness is no witness, or none that could testify any thing of a capital nature. Many came and witnessed trivial things, but none witnessed any thing which touched his life; till *at last came two*

false witnesses.

Matthew 26:61

Ver. 61. Mark saith, Mr 14:57-59, *And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together.* These are called by the evangelists, *false witnesses*. Our Saviour said, Joh 2:19, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, speaking of his body,* as John tells us there, Joh 2:21. He did not say, *I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.* But Mark saith these witnesses could not agree in their tale, or their testimony, though agreeing was not sufficient to make him guilty of a capital crime. The high priest must use some other arts.

Matthew 26:62

Ver. 62. See Poole on "Mt 26:63".

Matthew 26:63

Ver. 62,63. Mark speaks to the same purpose, Mr 14:60,61. The high priest expected a long defence, and so to have had matter of accusation against him out of his own mouth. Christ disappointeth him, saying nothing at all, either out of modesty, or not thinking what they said of any moment, or worthy of any reply, or perhaps seeing that they could not agree in their tale, so as what they said was of no force against him. The high priest therefore comes at last to examine him, *ex officio*. Mark saith, Mr 14:61, *Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed.* Luke, to give us the story of Peter, from his first coming into the high priest's hall to his going out, entire, interrupts himself a little in his relation of their dealings with Christ, and then relates some indignities offered him which the other evangelists do not mention; which seem to have been offered him where the soldiers and the rabble had been before he appeared in the council: Lu 22:63-67, *And*

the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led him into their council. Then he mentions nothing of what the witnesses said, possibly because it was nothing of moment, nothing upon which they proceeded against our Saviour for his life, but goes on, saying, *Art thou the Christ? tell us.* Matthew saith, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the living God?* Mark, *the Son of the Blessed.* It is plain both from this text, and from [Joh 1:49](#), that the Jews did expect a Messiah who should be the Son of the ever living and blessed God; but whether they understood that he should be the Son of God by nature and eternal generation, or only by a more special adoption, than the whole Jewish nation was, (to whom the apostle saith belonged the adoption), I cannot say. *I adjure thee that thou tell us,* that is, as some say, I charge thee upon thy oath to tell me; but it doth not appear that they had given any such oath to him, the guilty person was not wont to be forced by an oath to accuse himself, neither is it very probable that our Saviour would have taken such an oath. The sense therefore seemeth to be rather, I command, or require, or charge thee, as solemnly as if thou hadst taken an oath, (as in the presence of God), to tell us. Or, I charge thee with a terrible imprecation on thee, if thou speakest falsely, or wilt be silent, to declare if thou be the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matthew 26:64

Ver. 64. Mark saith, [Mr 14:62](#), *And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see, &c.* Luke saith, [Lu 22:67-69](#), *And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.* What all the evangelists say put together, makes up our Saviour's perfect answer. To what purpose (saith Christ) should I answer you? This is now but a captious question, not propounded by you to that end that you might be satisfied as to the truth, but only to ensnare me, for if I should tell you I am, you would not believe it. If I should argue the matter with you, you would give me no answer. I have given you proof enough, but yet, Caiaphas, thou hast said the truth, I

am the Christ, the Son of the ever living, blessed God; and, to confirm you further, hereafter you shall see me, whom you think to be no more than the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. There is a time for a man to speak, and a time for him to hold his peace; in the matter of confession of truth. The seasons for silence, or speech, are to be judged from the honour and glory of God; when we cannot be silent without betraying the truth, we are bound to speak. Our Lord therefore, being so solemnly adjured in the name of God to tell them what was the truth, now confesseth, and denieth not, that he was the Son of God, and tells them, *hereafter* they should see it. Whether the term *hereafter* refers to the time soon following, (as ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ, in this evangelist, and ἄπο τοῦ νῦν, in Luke, seem to signify), and be to be understood of Christ's resurrection, his ascension into heaven, the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the carrying of the gospel to all nations, or to the day of judgment (which the New Testament often speaks of as a thing at hand, and that phrase, *coming in the clouds of heaven*, seems rather to signify); or (as others think) to both, referring the sitting on the right hand of power to the former, and the coming in the clouds to the latter; is hard to determine.

Matthew 26:65

Ver. 65. See Poole on "Mt 26:66".

Matthew 26:66

Ver. 65,66. Mark hath much the same, Mr 14:63,64, only he saith, *they all condemned him to be guilty of death*. Luke saith, Lu 22:70,71, *Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am? And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth*. This rending of clothes was a thing very ordinary amongst the Jews, used by them in testimony of sorrow and of indignation. They used it in causes of great sorrow and mourning, even before the Israelites were formed into a nation; we find it practised by Reuben and Jacob, Ge 37:29,34, and by Jacob's sons, Ge 44:13; by Joshua and Caleb, Nu 14:6, by Jephthah, Jud 11:35. Indeed he that was high priest was

forbidden to do it, Le 21:10, and, in order to it, to come near a dead body, Le 21:11; which command yet the Jews restrain to his priestly garments, but upon other occasions he might rend his clothes, as Caiaphas here did. It was usual in case of blasphemy, both to show their sorrow for it and detestation of it, 2Ki 19:1 Jer 36:24 Ac 14:14. So as they convicted our Saviour, not upon oaths of witnesses, but upon words which they interpreted to be blasphemy. The high priest, being but the president in this council, asks the opinion of the rest of the council. They all condemn him as guilty of a capital crime, which is here phrased *guilty of death*, that is, one who by their law ought to die.

Matthew 26:67

Ver. 67. See Poole on "Mt 26:68".

Matthew 26:68

Ver. 67,68. Mark hath much the same, Mr 14:65: *And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.* Though there be nothing more barbarous and inhuman than to add to the affliction of the afflicted, yet this is no more than we ordinarily see done by a rabble of brutish people; spitting in the face was but an ordinary token of contempt, Nu 12:14 De 25:9. And perhaps in all these indignities Isaiah was a type of Christ, Isa 1:6, if that text be not to be understood of Christ immediately. In the mean time, it lets us see that there is no degree or mark of contempt, or shame, or suffering which we ought to decline and grudge at for the name of Christ; who, through much more excellent than us, yet for our sake endured the cross, and despised the shame.

Matthew 26:69

Ver. 69. See Poole on "Mt 26:70".

Matthew 26:70

Ver. 69,70. Mark hath this, Mr 14:66,67, only he saith, *Peter was beneath in the palace, and warming himself.* Luke hath this whole story before what he saith of Christ's examination and condemnation: Lu 22:56,57, *But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.* We before left Peter in the high priest's palace, warming himself by the fire amongst the servants. It is a dangerous thing for Christians to come into places of temptation. A maid comes to him, and charges him to have been with Christ, whom she calls *Jesus of Galilee*: so they called Christ sometimes *Jesus of Nazareth*, the city in Galilee where Christ lived the greatest part of his life.

He denied before them all; so loud that all heard it.

I know not what thou sayest, or, (as Luke saith), *I know him not;* I neither know him, nor what thou sayest.

Matthew 26:71

Ver. 71. See Poole on "Mt 26:72".

Matthew 26:72

Ver. 71,72. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:70, more shortly. So Luke, Lu 22:58. It is like Peter, upon the first alarm, began to shift away, and was got into the porch, but there another meets him with the same charge. Here, to the former lie which he had told, and here repeateth, he adds an oath for the confirmation of what he had said. What are the best of men, when God leaves them to their own strength! But the temptation yet riseth higher.

Matthew 26:73

Ver. 73. See Poole on "Mt 26:74".

Matthew 26:74

Ver. 73,74. Mark saith, Mr 14:70,71, *And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.* Luke hath it, Lu 22:59,60, *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.* One spake in the name of the rest that were gathered about Peter, and he charges Peter confidently; and he might well, for John saith, Joh 18:26, that this was *one of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off.* He said, *Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* Temptations always grow upon us in the company of wicked men. Here Peter adds to his lying, swearing and cursing; all confirming of what he had said in the denial of his Master; all in an exact fulfilling of what Christ had told Peter, Mt 26:34, though he was then difficult to believe it; to teach us all not to presume too far upon our own strength, but to pray that we be not led into temptation; while we stand, to take heed lest we fall; and in order to it, to avoid the society of wicked men, and places in which we probably may be tempted. To teach us also charity to lapsed brethren, and not too hastily to condemn our brethren for falling a second and a third time into the same sin; especially, while the same fit of temptation holdeth. It is added, *And immediately the cock crew*, that is, the second time; so saith Mark, Mr 14:72, who had mentioned the cock's first crowing, Mr 14:68, upon Peter's first denial of his Master.

Matthew 26:75

Ver. 75. Mark saith, Mr 14:72, *And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.* Luke saith, Lu 22:61,62, *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.* We have in this last verse Peter's repentance and the occasion and cause of it. A good man may fall, and that foully, but he shall not fall so as to rise no more. David lay longer than Peter under the guilt of his sin, but both of them wept bitterly.

He went out of the porch; whither he went is not said; possibly he was afraid to what this detection of him might rise, or else sought a place (as Joseph did) to weep more privately and plentifully than he durst do, or thought convenient to do, in the porch of the high priest. That which gave occasion to this reflection was the crowing of the cock the second time, and his remembrance of the words of Jesus, Mt 26:34. Our memories serve us much in the business of repentance, and therefore that the soul should be without knowledge of the law of God is not good. Peter remembered what Christ had personally said to him. True penitents are still excited to repentance, by remembering the law of God, what Christ hath in his word said to them, and considering their own ways. The crowing of the cock the second time helped him to remember the words of Jesus, for he had said, *Before the cock crow twice, &c.* But the cause of his repentance is expressed by Luke, *The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter*. More must be understood by this look of Christ upon him than the mere cast of Christ's bodily eye: with that look there was a virtue which went from Christ which healed Peter, exciting his habit of grace, and assisting him in the exercise of it; which double influence of grace is necessary to every renewed soul. Christ looked upon Judas, when Judas kissed him; yea, and said to him, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Yet Judas went on in his villany without remorse. He looked upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly. He looked only upon the face of Judas, but he looked upon the heart of Peter, as well as upon his face.

Matthew 27:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 27:1,2 Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.

Mt 27:3-10 Judas hangeth himself.

Mt 27:11-14 Christ's silence before Pilate.

Mt 27:15-18 Pilate's custom at the feast, and proposal to the people,

Mt 27:19 his wife's message.

Mt 27:20-26 Being urged by the multitude, he washes his hands in his own justification, and releasing Barabbas

delivereth Jesus to be crucified.

Mt 27:27-32 Christ is mocked of the soldiers, crowned with thorns,

Mt 27:33-38 crucified between two thieves,

Mt 27:39-44 reviled,

Mt 27:45-50 and calling upon God expires.

Mt 27:51-56 The astonishing events which attended his death: the centurion's confession.

Mt 27:57-61 Joseph of Arimathea begs his body, and buries it.

Mt 27:62-66 His sepulchre is sealed, and a watch set over it.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 27:2".

Matthew 27:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 15:1, *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.* Luke saith, Lu 23:1, *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him to Pilate.* John saith, Joh 18:28, *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.* If any ask why having condemned Christ, they did not put him to death. John tells us, Joh 18:31, it was not lawful for them to put any one to death. They had already out of their malice to Christ broken several of their own canons, or rules observed in ordinary capital causes, sitting in the night time, and upon a festival day. They must have notoriously broken another, if they had themselves on that day put him to death. It should seem by their stoning Stephen, Ac 7:59, they had a power in some cases to put persons to death; but Christ was to be crucified, and as to that kind of death they had no power: See Poole on "Joh 18:31". Besides that, we must consider it was the passover day, and stoning any man to death required a concourse of people to throw stones, and they were afraid of tumults. The Roman governor had the militia in his power, and could better prevent and suppress tumults than they could do. Finally, Christ

was by his death to give testimony to his kingly office; and the Jews, as we shall hear, had this to charge him with, That he made himself a King: this was a civil cause, and to be condemned by Pilate the Roman governor amongst them. In the morning, therefore, consulting how to put Christ to death, they delivered him to Pontius Pilate, having first bound him; for though he was bound upon his first apprehension, yet it is probable that they had loosed him when he came into the hall of the high priest, and now bind him a second time, when they carried him before Pilate. John tells us, that they would not themselves go *into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover*; which words have in them a difficulty, and also give us an account of a most unaccountable superstition. For the passover, they had eaten it the night before. But we must know, that not the paschal lamb only, but all the sacrifices offered any of the seven days, were also called the passover, De 16:1,2, &c. It was now the first day of unleavened bread, but there were to be offerings this day of which they were to eat, which in a large sense are called the passover. But how unaccountable was the superstition of these hypocrites! They made no conscience, when they had eaten the paschal lamb in the evening, to spend the whole night in consulting how to shed innocent blood, and condemning of Christ; but they pretend now conscience, that they will not go into a pagan's house in the morning, for that was the defilement they feared, having nothing to do to sit in judgment with him.

Matthew 27:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 27:5".

Matthew 27:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 27:5".

Matthew 27:5

Ver. 3-5. Matthew (who alone reports this piece of history) interrupts his relation of our Saviour's trial before Pilate, with an account of Judas's end. We must not interpret *Then* strictly, so as

to think Judas did this at the time when Christ was carried before Pilate, but some short time after; for they went immediately from the high priest's hall to the judgment hall, and stayed there until Christ was condemned by Pilate, before they returned to come into the temple. But possibly it was that day, after Pilate had condemned him, or within some short time after that Judas (as it is said) *repented himself*; that is, began to be terrified in his conscience for what he had done. The consciences of the worst of men will not always digest mire and dirt, but sometimes throw it up, yea, though it hath first incurably poisoned them. Sin is sweet in the month, but bitter in the belly. All repentance is not saving. Nor doth all confession of sin obtain remission. Judas here repents, and confesseth he had sinned, and his particular sin, in betraying an innocent person; yet he findeth no mercy, he hath not a heart to beg forgiveness, nor to apply himself to Christ for remedy. But the answer of the chief priests and elders is very remarkable:

What is that to us? see thou to that. Wretched Judas! he had been the servant of these wicked men's lusts, and for a poor wages served them in the highest act of villany. He falls into a distress of conscience for what he had done. What miserable comforters do they prove! Tempters never make good comforters. Those who are the devil's instruments, to command, entice, or allure men to sin, will afford them no relief when they come to be troubled for what they have done: nor will it now satisfy the conscience of Judas, to remember that he had a warrant for apprehending Christ, and acted ministerially. The priests will not take the money, he throws it down in the temple, and goes and hangs himself. How great is the power of conscience, smiting for the guilt of sin! Judas could have no hope of a better life, so as all his happiness lay in the time of this present life; yet he is not able to allow himself that. The devil that entered into his heart to tempt him, now entereth again to persuade him to put an end to his misery in this life, by hastening himself to an eternal misery. Let all apostates, turning persecutors of innocent persons, read this, and tremble. There is a difficulty of reconciling this text to that of Luke, Ac 1:18, where it is said of him, that *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*. That which is usually said is, that he fell from the place where he hanged himself, and with the fall burst himself. I know there are some others, who think that the word *απηξαστο* need not be translated, 'he hanged himself', but he was

suffocated or strangled. Some think the devil strangled him, and threw him down a precipice. Others, that he was suffocated by some disease, which caused a rupture of his body. Others think (as we translate it) that he hanged himself, and swelling, his body brake, and his bowels gushed out. Concerning the manner of his death, we can determine nothing, but that he was strangled, and his bowels gushed out; both these the Scripture asserts, but how it was we cannot certainly tell.

Matthew 27:6

Ver. 6. God, De 23:18, had forbidden to bring the price of a whore, or a dog, into the temple; this they had interpreted of all filthy gain: upon which they thus determine, that it was not lawful for them to put the money they had given Judas, for so sordid a service as that of betraying his Master, into the chest, or place which they had, where they kept the monies given for the repairs of the temple; and in this they were right enough, perhaps, but in this they showed themselves stupidly blind hypocrites, that they saw not it was much less lawful for them, who had hired him to this sordid action, to be employed in the service of the temple, for, Isa 52:11, those that *bear the vessels of the Lord* ought to be holy. Thus, to justify our Saviour's words, they *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*.

Matthew 27:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:10

Ver. 7-10. They at last resolve what to do with the money, which was no great sum, for, as we noted before, it exceeded not three pounds fifteen shillings. They would not turn it to their own private use, for (probably) it was before taken out of the treasury; neither would they again return it into the treasury, because it had been made use of as the hire of blood. They therefore agree to buy with it a piece of ground ordinarily known by the name, of *the potter's field*, probably because some potter had digged earth, and thrown the waste of his pot kilns there, so as it was of no great value. This field the vulgar, upon this purchase of it by the priests, called many years after, *The field of blood*. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet*. The evangelists use this term *fulfilled*, as I have before noted, in very different senses.

1. Sometimes to express the accomplishment of a prophecy.
2. Sometimes to express the fulfilling of a type, or answering it by the antitype.
3. Sometimes to express an allusion to some other scripture, mentioning some matter of fact of a like nature.

For the text here quoted, we have no such text in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, which are upon sacred record. Jeremiah indeed did buy a field by order from God, Jer 32:9, to declare his faith in God's promises for the return of the Jews out of captivity, but he bought it of his uncle *Hanameel*, and for *seventeen pieces of silver*; and that he was a potter, or that the field was called by that name, we do not read. The nearest place in the prophets to this text is Zec 11:12,13, *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord*. It is a very hard text as it lies in the prophet to give a just account of. The prophet was one of them who prophesied after the captivity of Babylon, yet, Zec 11:6, he plainly prophesieth after God's destruction of the Jews and of Jerusalem. Which destruction being after that of the Chaldeans, to what it should refer, but to the last destruction of the Jews by the

Romans, I cannot understand. Zec 11:7, he saith, *I will feed the flock of the slaughter*, that is, the flock designed for the slaughter, or drawing near to the slaughter, *even you, O poor of the flock*. Christ came in person to feed the church of the Jews, but they also abhorred him, so that he abhorred them, and resolved to cast them quite off; Zec 11:8,9. So he broke first his *staff* called *Beauty*, took away all the glory and beauty of that church. Then, as it were in indignation, he saith, *If ye think good, give me my price*. What requital will you give me for my labour amongst you? *So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver*. Their selling of Christ to a traitor for so much, signified their high contempt of him. *And the Lord said, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord*. The evangelist indeed doth not quote the very words of the prophet, but the substance of them. And for my part I think, that the evangelist here by fulfilling meaneth the accomplishment of the prophecy in Zechariah. For I know not what other tolerable sense to make of the prophecy, if we do not say the prophet spake in the person of Christ, foretelling his own coming amongst them, their rejection and contempt of him, and his utter rejection of them; and prophesying, as a piece of their contempt and rejection of him, their selling him to Judas for thirty pieces of silver, (a most contemptible price), and God so ordering it by his providence, that this money should again be brought them, and this potter's field should be bought with it. So as I think that text was fulfilled here more than by allusion, or as it was typical to this act, and that this act was the very thing which there is prophesied, and here fulfilled. But how Matthew saith this was *spoken by Jeremy the prophet* is a harder knot. It is observable that Zechariah hath many things found in Jeremiah, and it is not improbable that the very same thing was prophesied by Jeremiah, though afterward repeated by Zechariah, and only in the writings of Zechariah left upon sacred record. Matthew having now given us an account of the fate of Judas, returneth to our Saviour, carried (as we heard) before Pilate.

Matthew 27:11

Ver. 11. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:2; so hath Luke, Lu 23:3. John relates it more distinctly, Joh 18:29-32: *Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?*

They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

The other evangelists seem to have given us the story of this our Saviour's first appearance before Pilate summarily. John seems to have given us it more orderly and particularly. It is the course of all judicatures to require the accusers to speak first. Pilate therefore asketh what accusation they had brought against him. Their answer was very malapert, If he had not been a malefactor, &c. What was this to the purpose? Suppose him never so great a malefactor, must it not appear he is so before a judge condemns him? These accusers (as it seemeth) were of the same mind that the papists are, that the civil magistrate is to be executioner to the church; and when the ecclesiastical power hath condemned a man for heresy or blasphemy, the civil magistrate hath nothing to do, but without his own hearing the cause to put the person to death. But they met with a more equal judge, though he were a heathen. Say ye so, saith he, *Take him, then, and judge him according to your law.* This he either speaks as deriding them, and scorning what they would have put him upon; or else not thinking he had deserved any thing worthy of death, knowing they might without him scourge him, or inflict some lighter punishments. They reply, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* It is very questionable in what sense they spake this. Those that affirm that the power of judging and determining in capital causes was before this time taken from the Jews, must affirm that Stephen was put to death in a popular tumult, for he was after this stoned to death by the Jews, [Ac 7:59](#); which is not probable, considering what we read of him, [Ac 6:13,15](#), called before the council, and witnesses used against him, and have no record of any notice the civil magistrate took of the fact as a disorder. I therefore rather think their meaning was, This is with us a feast day, on which it is not lawful for us to put any to death without thy consent. Or, it is not lawful for us to put any to death for any civil cause, for saying he is our king; for it is manifest by the question which Pilate first put to him upon his second coming into the hall, mentioned [Joh 18:33](#), in which all the other three evangelists agree, that they had charged him with saying, that he was the King of the Jews; to which all

that he replied, which is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is, *Thou sayest it*. I am not bound to accuse myself; who witnesses this against me? But John saith that our Saviour said, *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* Our Saviour, by this answer to Pilate's question, seems to vindicate his right not to be condemned without witness, which, if others had told Pilate this, they were bound to have produced. Pilate tells him, he had it not of himself, he was no Jew, but they were those of his own nation who had delivered him to him; and therefore asketh him what he had done. Then our Saviour openeth himself, not denying that he was the King of the Jews, but telling him he was no king of this world; his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and he might know what King he was by his retinue, and those who took his part; for if he had laid claim to any secular kingdom, he should have had some appearing to take his part, and to fight for him to deliver him from his enemies, but he saw he had none. Pilate laying hold of his words, replies, *Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?* Our Saviour still useth prudence, and keeps himself upon a close guard. It had been dangerous for him directly to have owned himself a king. He therefore only tells Pilate, that he said he was a king, and that he came into the world to bear testimony to the truth; and further adds, that every one who was of the truth did hear his voice. This poses Pilate, who had no notion of that truth which Christ spake of; he goes out as it were deriding him, saying, *What is truth?* Presently he goeth out to the Jews, Mt 27:38, and tells them he found in him no fault at all, and offers to release him; but this we shall meet with in our evangelist by and by: the passages hereto mentioned are only related by John; excepting only the question, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* and our Saviour's answer, *Thou sayest it*, which is reported by all.

Matthew 27:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 27:14".

Matthew 27:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 27:14".

Matthew 27:14

Ver. 12-14. Mark saith much the same, Mr 15:3-5. These things were before Pilate went out to the people, and told them that he found no fault in him at all, and offered to release Barabbas unto them. Then seemeth to me to follow in order what we have in Lu 23:5-17, in these words: *And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.* The constant charge which, we shall observe, was laid upon all the ministers of the gospel from Christ's time. Tertullus the Roman advocate thus charged Paul, &c. *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.* After the death of Herod the Great, who died soon after our Saviour was born, (as we heard before), the sceptre departed from Judah, there were no more kings. The government of Jewry was turned into a tetrarchy, divided into four provinces, each of which had a governor, who was called the tetrarch of that province. You have the division and the names of the tetrarchs, Lu 3:1, where you will find that *Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.* Our Saviour being taken within the jurisdiction of Pilate, it seemeth not to have been necessary for Pilate to have sent him to Herod, but a compliment to satisfy his curiosity. For, saith Luke, *when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.* This is now all historical, and hath in it nothing difficult. Christ had spent most

of his time in Galilee, (which was Herod's tetrarchy), though Herod had not seen him, yet he had heard much of him, and had the curiosity to desire to see him, hoping that our Saviour would have wrought some miracle before him. But he failed in his expectation. He propounds several questions to him. Our Saviour being not before a proper judge, answereth him nothing. So as there was nothing done, only the chief priests and scribes followed him with incessant clamours. Herod and his guard vilify and mock him, put him on a gorgeous robe, and send him back to Pilate. All the effect of this was, Herod was pleased with Pilate's compliment, and from that day was reconciled to Pilate, though there had been a former enmity betwixt them; only, as we shall hear hereafter, Herod decreeing nothing against Christ, Pilate made some use of it, in his endeavours to have delivered our Saviour.

Matthew 27:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:18

Ver. 15-18. Mark saith, Mr 15:6-11, *Now at that feast he released unto them, one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should*

rather release Barabbas unto them.

Luke hath this passage of the history more fully, Lu 23:13-18: *And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)*

John saith, Joh 18:38-40, that when he went out he told them he found no fault in him at all. *But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews. Then cried they all again, saying, not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*

The history is plain: Pilate discerned, upon his before mentioned examination of Christ, that our Saviour had done nothing amiss, but was only loaded with the malice and envy of the chief priests and scribes; this made him resolve to do what in him lay to deliver him. He first tells them that they had brought him before him, accused him of many things, but had proved against him nothing criminal; that he had sent him to Herod, in whose jurisdiction he had lived, but neither did Herod find any fault in him. Now there was a custom, that ever at the passover the governor released a prisoner at the request of the people. The people desired he would keep their old custom in this particular. Pilate propounds to them to release the King of the Jews. The chief priests influence the people to declare their dissatisfaction at that, and to name one Barabbas, a prisoner who was a robber, and had been guilty of an insurrection, and of murder committed in the insurrection: accordingly the people cry out, *Not this man, but Barabbas*. This makes him again to return to the judgment seat.

Matthew 27:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 27:20".

Matthew 27:20

Ver. 19,20. Matthew only mentions this passage of Pilate's wife; whether it was when Pilate sat upon the judgment seat the second time, (the story of which we have heard), or afterward, is uncertain; nor is it material. She doubtless refers to some late dream, which possibly she might have after her husband was gone from her, for he was called early. Whether this dream was caused by God for a further testimony of Christ's innocency, or were merely natural, cannot be determined. But still the cry holdeth, Not him, but Barabbas. So much influence had the wicked priests upon the people.

Matthew 27:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 27:23".

Matthew 27:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 27:23".

Matthew 27:23

Ver. 21-23. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:12-14. So also Luke saith, Lu 23:20-23, *Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.*

John, Joh 19:1-12, hath yet more circumstances relating to the latter part of this trial, which follow: *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of*

thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. I have not given the reader at one view what all the evangelists say, as thinking it scarce possible from them all to set down the order how things passed at this trial; but only, that I might take notice of what was remarkable in it, related from one or other of them. The reason of our reading so often of Pilate's going out, and then again coming on to the judgment seat, seemeth to be because, as we heard before, the Jews would not come into Pilate's house, but stood at the door; and, on the other side, I conceive that he could not proceed judicially but sitting upon the tribunal, or seat of judgment. So as, though he could proceed in judgment within the house, with the attendance of his own servants, soldiers, and officers; yet, when he had any thing to propound to the Jews, he went out. We cannot think that the evangelists report all the things the Jews objected against our Saviour, nor all the questions by Pontius Pilate propounded to him. For the evangelists tell us, summarily, that they accused him of many things, and Pilate saith, *Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?* There was, it seems, but one thing that they most insisted upon, that was, his making himself a king, as to which we heard before how our Lord cleared himself. In the whole process of this trial these things are remarkable:

1. Our Saviour's silence.
2. Pilate's equity.
3. The rage and madness of the chief priests, scribes, and people.

Our Saviour's silence confirms to us that piece of the law of nature, that no man is bound to accuse himself. Pilate's equity appears in many things: He would not condemn him without a particular hearing of his cause himself, he would not force him to accuse himself; he accepts our Saviour's vindication of himself, as to the great thing wherewith he was charged; he twice declares that he found no fault in him; he studies expedients to deliver an innocent person from their rage; he sends him to Herod, and obtains his concurrent suffrage to his innocency; he offereth to release him according to a custom they had at the passover to deliver one, whomsoever they desired; when this would not do, he caused him to be scourged, then brings him out to them again, hoping to have moved them to compassion by that lighter punishment of him.

The rage and madness of the Jews, principally of the chief priests and scribes, appeared in their urging to have had our Saviour condemned without hearing; their excessive clamours against him; their preferring one before him who was a robber, a murderer, one that had made a public insurrection; their insisting so much upon the kind of death that he should die, viz. by crucifying him, though in that they did both fulfil the counsel of God, who had determined that he should be *made a curse for us*, and it was written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*, Ga 3:13, and what himself had prophesied, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and they should mock, and scourge, and crucify him, Mt 20:19. But that which is most remarkable is, the providence of God, for the evidencing of our Saviour's innocency. Pilate's wife calls him a *just man*. Pilate twice tells them that he found no fault in him. They are able to say nothing when Pilate asks them, *What evil hath he done?* Herod objects nothing against him. He is merely condemned upon the brutish clamour and rage of the rabble, incensed and set on fire by the chief priests and Pharisees. The art of these his adversaries is also observable, because it is the same which the enemies of the gospel, deriving from this first pattern, have ever since observed

in the execution of their malice against the preachers and faithful professors of the gospel. They durst not insist upon the doctrine which our Saviour preached, which was the true cause of their malice against him, but bring him under a charge of treason and sedition, as if he had gone about to make himself a king in opposition to the Roman emperor; though there was not the least pretence for any such thing, and if there had, none who considereth that they were a conquered people, and how zealous they upon all occasions showed themselves for their civil liberties, can imagine they had any great kindness for Caesar. It is very observable, that malice against religion and godliness, and a desire of the extirpation of it, and the professors of it, is the predominant lust in the hearts of wicked men. To serve this, they not only deny their own reason, and principles of common justice, but deny themselves likewise in some other lusts. And herein they show themselves the true seed of the serpent, and the children of the devil, whose works they do; who, though he be the proudest spirit, yet, to destroy a soul, will abate his pride, truckle to a poor witch, and go upon her errands.

Matthew 27:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 27:26".

Matthew 27:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 27:26".

Matthew 27:26

Ver. 24-26. Mark saith, Mr 15:15, *So Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him to be crucified.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:24,25, *And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.*

John saith, Joh 19:13, When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the Judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. Here are three accounts given of Pilate's coming over to the Jews' desire to condemn Christ, contrary to the conviction of his own conscience, for he had twice declared that he found no fault in him. Matthew saith, he saw he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made.

Mark saith, he did it *to content the people*. John saith, it was upon the hearing of that saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar*. His fear of being accused to the emperor Tiberius, as favouring one who made himself a king, especially if his opposing the Jews in their desire of his death should have caused a tumult, was questionless the great thing that moved him to give judgment in this case contrary to his own conscience; and this is the meaning of his contenting the people, mentioned by Mark. It is plain by the whole story he had no mind to gratify or gain favour with them, but considering how jealous and suspicious a prince Tiberius was, it was Pilate's interest to quiet them, and to give them no occasion of accusing him unto the emperor.

He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude. It was the law of God in manslaughter, where he that slew the man was not known, the priests and elders of the city that (upon measure) should be found nearest to the dead body, should take a heifer, and bring it to a rough valley, and strike off its head, and wash their hands over the head of the beheaded heifer, and say, *Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it*, De 21:1-7. Some think that Pilate, living amongst the Jews, had learned this rite from them; but others think that it was a rite used in protestations of innocency amongst other people, as well as the Jews. But it was a great fondness in Pilate, to think this excused him, and freed him from the guilt of our Saviour's death. For there was such an inseparable guilt clave to the act, as

nothing could expiate but that blood which he spilt. Those who take upon them the trust of executing laws, had need to take heed what they do, for the law will not excuse them in the court of heaven, unless it be found according to the law of God. What Pilate did he did but ministerially, the law condemned, not he: but if it be understood of the law of God about blasphemy, to which the Jews undoubtedly referred, Joh 10:33,36, it was misapplied. If it were a Roman law, Pilate ought to have considered the equity and justice of it, and whether the fact was proved or not. Pilate had twice owned there was no fault in him. His washing his hands could not purge him of the murder, whereof he was guilty in his condemnation; he did but protest against what he immediately was about to do.

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children: his blood, that is, the guilt of his blood, be upon us, &c. A most sad imprecation, the effect of which hath been upon that miserable people now more than sixteen hundred years.

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, &c. The scourging was before this, and so recorded by St. John, for we cannot imagine that he was twice scourged.

He delivered him to be crucified; not to the Jews, but to his own officers, for it was a civil crime that he was accused of before Pilate, and crucifying was a Roman punishment.

Matthew 27:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:31

Ver. 27-31. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:17-20, only he saith they put upon him a purple robe. John seemeth to mention this a little out of order, Joh 19:1-3, as done before his condemnation; for though some think that Matthew and Mark rather mention these things out of their due order, yet the abuses seem more likely to be done to a person who was condemned, and so dead in law, than while he was upon his trial. Writers tell us that none might be crucified before he was scourged, and that not with rods, (which was the Jewish manner), but with whips (far more cruelly); but whether it was before or after condemnation we are not certain. He was condemned upon that article, that he should say, he was the King of the Jews. To mock him, therefore, they set a crown on his head, but of thorns; they put a sceptre into his hand, but it was of a reed; they bowed the knee before him, as was wont to princes; they put on him a robe of purple, or scarlet, both which were used by princes; in short they put upon him all the indignities and marks of scorn imaginable. When they had thus glutted themselves, they restore his own garment to him, and lead him away to the place of execution. Who can read these things with a believing heart and dry eyes, if he remembers, that our sins platted the crown of thorns set upon our Saviour's head, and made the whips with which he was scourged? Our stomachs (when we read these things) are ready to rise against the pagan soldiers; but how little did they do in comparison of what Christ suffered for our sins! Who can read these things, and not be fortified against temptations from suffering if we will own the gospel and cause of Christ? Our sufferings will come much short of what Christ hath suffered for us.

Matthew 27:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 27:34".

Matthew 27:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 27:34".

Matthew 27:34

Ver. 32-34. Mark saith, Mr 15:21-23, *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.*

Luke is larger in his account of the passages between his condemnation and crucifixion, Lu 23:26-32. *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.*

Joh 19:17, saith no more than, *And he bearing his cross went forth unto a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.* Matthew, and Mark, and Luke say, that a countryman, one Simon a Cyrenian, (compelled to it by the soldiers), carried the cross after Christ. John saith, that he himself bare it. Both were doubtless true. Some say that Christ himself did carry it through the city, and when he was out of the city this Simon carried it. Others think, that Christ being wearied, Simon took it. But reason will tell us, that the cross was too heavy a piece of timber for one to bear, and therefore Simon was compelled to bear the hinder part; therefore Luke saith, he bare it after Jesus. The dispute whether this Simon was a native Jew, though an inhabitant of Cyrene, or a proselyted Cyrenian,

or as yet a pagan, and whether this Cyrene was one of the ten cities comprehended in the name Decapolis, is not worth spending any words about. All the evangelists agree, that he was crucified at *Golgotha*; Luke calls it Calvary; they are both names of the same signification, *the place of a skull*; the one is the Hebrew term, the other Latin.

They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. Mark saith, *wine mingled with myrrh.* There is so great a cognation between wine and vinegar, that it is no wonder if one evangelist calls it vinegar, another wine, which, if it be acid, is vinegar. The word translated *gall* signifies all bitterness, whether it be caused from gall or myrrh. Some think that some good people gave him wine, and the soldiers added myrrh to it. But this is a great uncertainty. Certain it is, that it was an ordinary favour they showed to dying persons, to give them some intoxicating potion, to make them less sensible of their pain. It is probable it was something of this nature; but our Saviour was not afraid to die, and so had no need of such an antidote against the pain of it; he refused it. We shall find they afterward gave him something to drink also.

Luke tells us that great multitudes followed him to the place of execution, (which is still very ordinary), lamenting him, to whom our Saviour saith, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children;* and then prophesieth the miseries that should follow his death, to that degree, that the barren should bless themselves; and they all should *say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us.* He bids the women weep only for themselves and for their children; for how much better is it for persons of any tenderness to have no children, than to have children, and to see them dashed against the stones, as was threatened to Babylon, Ps 137:9; or to kill them for the parents' sustenance, as it happened in Ahab's time; or to see them slain before the parents' faces, as it happened to Zedekiah, when the enemy took Jerusalem! Jer 52:10. The people also, he saith, should (as it was of old prophesied of those of Samaria, Ho 10:8) cry to the mountains to cover them, and to the hills to fall on them: a proverbial expression, to signify their wishing themselves dead and under ground; or expounded by Isa 2:19, *And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.* See the like expressions, Re 6:16 9:6. *In those*

days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? It is another proverbial expression, which may be understood impersonally: *If they do*, that is, if it be thus done to. If God suffers them thus to do to me, who am his Son, what shall be done to you, who are but as dry sticks, and so fitter for the fire? If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? 1Pe 4:17,18.

Matthew 27:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 27:37".

Matthew 27:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 27:37".

Matthew 27:37

Ver. 35-37. Mark saith, Mr 15:24-28, *When they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, The King of the Jews. And with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:33,34, *And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

John telleth us some further circumstances, Joh 19:18-24 *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where*

Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. And they crucified him; that is, four soldiers, as we learn from John's narration of this matter of fact; it seemeth this business was assigned to four more especially.

This crucifying was a bitter and shameful kind of death, not in use amongst the Jews, but amongst the Romans. The manner of it is not particularly known to us: but, as it is described by writers, a piece of wood was erected which was crossed with a bar upon the top. The body of the person being fastened to the main piece of wood, his arms were extended, and nailed to the cross bar, or piece of timber, and his hands and feet were nailed. Mark saith, *it was the third hour*, which with us was about nine of the clock: so hasty they were in destroying this just person, that between midnight and nine of the clock in the morning, they apprehended him, tried and condemned him in the sanhedrim, or at least in a court of high priests and elders, and then before Pilate the Roman governor, and led him to be crucified, and nailed him to his cross. The evangelists tell us, he was crucified in the middle between two thieves, of whom we shall read more afterward. Several scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in this crucifixion of Christ. *They pierced my hands and my feet*, Ps 22:16, was fulfilled in his nailing to the cross. In his being crucified betwixt two thieves was fulfilled that, Isa 53:12, *He was numbered with the transgressors*. That of the psalmist, Ps 22:18, *They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture*, was fulfilled in the soldiers' parting of our Saviour's garments, as their fee. But how could they part them, and yet not rend them? Possibly they parted his other garments, and only did cast lots for his coat, or upper garment. Or, it may be, they valued it, and agreed each man's share, and then cast lots for the whole. I see no ground for their assertion, who say, that in such cases they only stripped the condemned person of his upper

garment. John's relation seemeth to oppose it; he saith, *and also his coat*. Matthew, Mark, and John all agree in the inscription which Pilate drew to be put upon his cross, signifying the crime for which he died; only John puts in those words, *of Nazareth*. Thus Christ died in the attestation of his kingly office. This inscription angered the Jews; they solicit Pilate to alter it, and that it might be, Who said he was the King of the Jews. But Pilate refused, saying, *What I have written I have written*. There was nothing more pleasing to Pilate than this, (as he thought), to deride the Jews, as having such a despicable person (as he judged him) their King. In the mean time the counsels of God have their effect; Christ in his death is declared to be the King of the Jews. Luke saith, that Christ said, *Father, forgive them; for they know what they do*. Whether these words were spoken when our Lord was first nailed to the cross, or afterward, is not much material. Luke relates them before the soldiers' parting his garments. Our Saviour by them declares himself a true Pastor and Shepherd of souls, teaching his disciples no more than he himself did practise. Mt 5:44, he had taught his disciples to pray for them who despitefully used and persecuted them. Himself here practises it. The malice of men ought not to quench in Christians the grace of God. Let us now consider the passage that happened from the time he was nailed to the cross until the time of his expiration, which was more than three entire hours.

Matthew 27:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:44

Ver. 39-44. Mark relates this part of the history with no material circumstance differing from Matthew, Mt 15:29-32. Luke saith, Lu 23:39-43, *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

John saith, Mt 19:25-30. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. Matthew and Mark relate more particularly what abuses our Saviour suffered while he hung dying upon the cross:

1. From passengers.

2. From the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

Nothing is more inhuman than to mock such as are in the most extreme and utmost misery, and it is what we seldom hear from the worst of men; but for the chief priests and elders, the magistrates and rulers of the Jews, to be guilty of such a barbarous behaviour, is amazing. That not the ordinary priests only, but the chief priests, that is, either such as had been in the office of high priest, or else some of the most ancient and grave men of the priests; that, not the hot headed young men amongst the Jews, but the elders of Israel, should be so rude, as not only to behave themselves indecently to a man in the most extreme misery, whom they ought to have pitied, and for whom they ought at this time to have been praying, but also forgetting all reverence to God, to say, *He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him;* jeering all faith and trusting in God, and as it were defying God's power, and saying with Nebuchadnezzar, Da 3:15, *Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?* This is justly surprising, and lets us see to what a height of wickedness the Jews were come, and confirms us in this, that if those who serve the Lord in public places, especially in holy things, be not the best of men, they are the worst. Having more knowledge of the will of God than others, if they have once mastered their consciences, they become the vilest of men, and the most prodigious patterns of atheism and all wickedness. It lets us also see to what a degree malice and covetousness will debauch souls, and teach us to fear sinning against our light and convictions. All this was foretold by the prophet David, Ps 22:8, and so must be. But the necessity of the event by no means excused the sinfulness of the act, nor made God the author of these men's sins. Matthew saith, *The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

Luke saith, *only one of them did so.* Some think that at the first they both reviled him, but the heart of one of them was changed while he hung upon the cross; but it is no unusual thing in Scripture to use the plural number for the singular; and the number may be understood not so much to refer to the persons as their qualities, they were both thieves, though but one of them reviled our Saviour. Or what hinders, but that they both might desire Christ to put forth his power to deliver them, though one of them further reviled him, by words which the evangelists have

not set down. Luke tells us, that one of these thieves rebuked his fellow, and cleared Christ's innocency. Thus God had that honour from a thief which was denied him by the chief priests and elders. He can *of stones raise up children to Abraham*. He begs of Christ to remember him when he came into his kingdom; discovering an eminent faith in Christ, he is rewarded, by Christ telling him, *Today thou shalt be with me in paradise*: a plain text to prove that souls neither sleep nor die with the body, but immediately pass into their eternal mansions. John addeth, that there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and her sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, and mentions our Saviour's recommending his mother to the care of his beloved disciple, and tells us of John's care of her; the other three evangelists mention their being there, but standing afar off; which might both be true, they being nearer the cross at first, then removing themselves further from it. John further mentions their giving our Saviour (upon his saying, *I thirst*) *vinegar to drink*. It is very probable this was but a kindness they did usually show to malefactors, dying that kind of death, when they were so long a time dying; but the evangelist tells us that in our Saviour's case there was a scripture to be fulfilled, Ps 69:21, *In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*: whether David there spake in the person of Christ, or what was at that time primarily fulfilled in David, was at that time fulfilled in Christ as his antitype, is not much material for us to know; that the text related to Christ, and was fulfilled in him, we are assured by the evangelist. This giving of Christ to drink was distinct from that we meet with before, as may appear by the many different circumstances. That he refused; this he received, and said, *It is finished*: my passion is finished, or upon the finishing.

Matthew 27:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:50

Ver. 45-50. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:33-38. Luke saith, Lu 23:44, *that it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.* John saith no more, Joh 19:30, but that—*he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* It is said, Joh 19:14, it was *about the sixth hour* when Pilate brought forth Christ to the Jews; how then could he be crucified at the third hour, and the darkness begin at the sixth? The different ways the Jews and the Romans had of counting hours, make us to be at a loss sometimes as to circumstances of time to reconcile some scriptures. But as to the present difficulty, it is said that the Jews, as they divided the night into four watches, so they also divided the day into four parts, each part having its denomination from the succeeding part, by which name all the intermediate time was called. Thus when the third hour (which with us is nine of the clock) was past, they called all the sixth hour till past twelve. Thus Pilate condemned Christ in the beginning of the sixth hour, and the darkness began at the end of it, that is, after twelve, for dividing the day into quadrants, the hours had their denomination from them. John also saith no more than *about the sixth hour*, which is true if it were some small time after.

There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. That

this darkness was caused by the eclipse of the sun at that time of the day is plain enough, but that this was no eclipse in the ordinary course of nature is evident; for;

1. Whereas all eclipses use to be in the time of the new moon, this was when the moon was at the full, the fifteenth day of the month Nisan.
2. This eclipse was not seen in one part or in another, but over all the earth that was under the same hemisphere.
3. No eclipse in a natural course can last three hours.

So that plainly this was a miraculous eclipse, not caused by the interposition of the moon, (as other eclipses), but by the mighty and extraordinary power of God, which made a heathen philosopher at a great distance cry out, Either the Divine Being now suffereth, or sympathizes with one that suffereth: he is said to have seen this eclipse in Egypt.

And about the ninth hour (that is, about three of the clock, as we reckon the hours) *Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, or Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* The words are Hebrew, though Mark reports them according to the Syriac corruption of the dialect. They are David's words, [Ps 22:1](#). David was a type of Christ. He that was the Son of David useth David's words, possibly spoken by David in the person of Christ. God's forsaking any person or place, must be understood with reference not to his essential presence, for so he filleth all places, and is present with all persons; but with reference to the manifestations of his providence for our good: thus when God withholds his good providence to us, either with respect to our outward or inward man, he is said to forsake us. A total forsaking either of our bodies, or of our souls, is not consistent with the being of our outward man, or the spiritual being or life of our inward man. All forsakings therefore in this life are gradual and partial. The forsaking which Christ therefore here complains of, was not the total withdrawing of Divine favour and assistance from him; that was impossible, and incompetent with the first words testifying his relation to God, and assistance in him; but it must be understood with respect to God's consolatory manifestations, and that is testified by his other words, related by Luke, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. Which words having said,

he gave up the ghost, say Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John addeth, that he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost: words added, to confirm what he elsewhere said, that he laid down his life, none took it from him. His crying twice at this instant with a loud voice, argued his spirits not so spent, but he might have lived a few minutes longer, but he freely laid down his life. The people saying, *He calleth for Elias*, when he said *Eli, Eli*, spake them to be Jews, who to this day dream of an Elias to come and restore all things. That they no better distinguished between Eli and Elias, must be attributed either to the corruption of their dialect, he saying *Eloi, Eloi*, (according to the Syriac corruption of the term), or their too great distance from him. Their mocking him upon it was but consonant to their former behaviour toward him, while he was upon the cross. Their giving him the sponge with vinegar and hyssop we before gave an account of.

Matthew 27:51

Ver. 51. See Poole on "Mt 27:53".

Matthew 27:52

Ver. 52. See Poole on "Mt 27:53".

Matthew 27:53

Ver. 51-53. Mark, Mr 15:38, mentions only the rending of the veil. No more doth Luke, Lu 23:45. John mentions none of these things. It pleased God to give a testimony against this prodigious piece of wickedness by prodigious signs, both in the heavens and on the earth. In the heavens the sun, as we heard before, suffered an unusual, preternatural eclipse, which lasted three hours. In the earth, there was an earthquake, to that degree, that the rocks were rent by it. Earthquakes were sometimes no more than indications of God's power and majesty, Ps 68:8 Joe 2:10; and some think, that by this earthquake Christ declared his Divine power. It is certain that the centurion concluded from it, *this was the Son of God*, Mt 27:54. But earthquakes were sometimes not only the indications of the Divine majesty and power, but also of his wrath, Ps 18:7,8 Joe 3:16 Na 1:6. And such doubtless was this;

to show that the earth abhorred what these men had done. Besides these, *the veil of the temple was rent*: three of the evangelists mention it. It is not much material whether this were the outward veil, or the inward veil, or hangings, which parted the most holy place from the other part of the temple, though probably it was the inner veil. By this rending of the veil God testified his wrath against the Jews, and that he was leaving his temple amongst them. The veil also was a type of Christ's flesh, Heb 10:20: the antitype being rent, it was reasonable that the type should also be so. By this also was showed, that the temple service was now at an end, and to continue no longer, and the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles was pulled down. For what Matthew speaks, Mt 27:52,53, of the graves opening, and the bodies of the saints arising, &c., probably it was not till Christ's resurrection; only Matthew puts it in here, reckoning up together all the prodigious things that happened, for Matthew himself saith, Mt 27:53, *they came out of the graves after his resurrection*, and it is not likely that the graves opened any considerable time before they came out of their graves. These now were the prodigies which attended the death of our Saviour.

Matthew 27:54

Ver. 54. See Poole on "Mt 27:56".

Matthew 27:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 27:55".

Matthew 27:56

Ver. 54-56. Mark saith, Mr 15:39-41, *And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him); and many other women which came up with him to Jerusalem.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:47-49, *Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

We heard before, Mt 27:36, that the soldiers sat down and watched Christ. The centurion here mentioned was the captain of this watch; he seeing the earthquake, and all the other things that were done, saith Matthew. Mark saith, *When he saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost. He glorified God,* saith Luke. Matthew and Mark tell us how he said. *Truly this man was the Son of God.* Luke saith he said, *Certainly this was a righteous man:* he glorified God by a confession of the truth, to the glory of God, saying, he was a righteous man, and such a righteous man as was also the Son of God. It seems very probable that this captain, living amongst the Jews, had learned from them their expectation of a Messiah, and speaketh this with reference to that, and acknowledgeth that Christ was he. Luke addeth, that all the people that came to see that sight returned, smiting their breasts, being convinced of the great wickedness committed by their high priests, and chief priests and elders, and fearing that vengeance which followed in less than forty years.

And many women were there: these women had followed Christ out of Galilee: two only are named here, *Mary Magdalene*, who probably had her name from Magdala a city in Galilee, *and Mary the mother of James and Joses*, (*James the less*, saith Mark, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee), *and the mother of Zebedee's children:* *these stood afar off*, these three evangelists say. John told us, Joh 19:25, that two of these were so near the cross, with the mother of our Lord, that he spake to them. Here we read nothing of the mother of our Lord, probably she was gone with John, to whom Christ had commended her, and the rest withdrew and stood farther off from the cross at this time. Matthew goeth on now, describing the coming of Joseph of Arimathea to beg the dead body of Christ; so doth Mark and Luke.

John interposes something tending to complete the history, Joh 19:31-37: *The Jews therefore, because it was the*

preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

The day upon which he was crucified was the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, upon the Friday, as we call it; this appeareth from this text, which saith *it was the preparation* to the Jewish sabbath; and *that sabbath*, the evangelist saith, *was a high day*, not because, as some think, the Jews put off their passover to that day, but because it was the second day of the feast of unleavened bread. It is true, Joh 19:14, it is called *the preparation of the passover*; but we must remember, that all the seven days of unleavened bread were so called, as I before noted. This day was indeed the preparation to the sabbath in the paschal week, for otherwise we must say that Christ did not eat the passover the same day that the Jews did, which involves us in many inextricable difficulties, and could not be if the paschal lamb was to be killed by the priests, for they would not have killed it the day before. It is therefore most probable, that Joh 19:14 must be expounded by Joh 19:31, and *the preparation of the passover*, Joh 19:14; was the preparation to the sabbath, which falling within the compass of the seven days of unleavened bread, was a great day with them, especially being the day following the eating of the paschal lamb. By the law, De 21:23, the body of none that was hanged was to abide all night upon the tree. It was between three and four of the clock in the afternoon before that Christ died; they used to set some hours apart for preparation to the sabbath, which that night began as soon as the sun was set; this therefore makes them go to Pilate, and desire that the legs of them that suffered might be broken. Pilate grants their request. The soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Christ, they found him dead, and brake not his legs, but a soldier with a spear pierced his side. The evangelist takes

notice of these minute things, (and assures us he saw them, that we might believe), that he might show us how in every point the things of old spoken of Christ were fulfilled in him. Christ was the true paschal Lamb, as to which the law was, That a bone of it should not be broken, Ex 12:46 Nu 9:12; or else the evangelist refers to Ps 34:20, where it is said of a righteous man, *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken*. Our Saviour's side was pierced, and that also is recorded, to let us know the fulfilling of that scripture, Zec 12:10, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*.

Matthew 27:57

Ver. 57. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:58

Ver. 58. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:59

Ver. 59. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:60

Ver. 60. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:61

Ver. 57-61. Mark hath it, Mr 15:42-47, *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen and took him down, and*

wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where he was laid.

Luke hath it, Lu 23:50-54, thus: *And behold there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them); he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.*

John reports it with some additions, Joh 19:38-42: *And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day: for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

All four evangelists (as we see) repeat this history, one supplying what is wanting in another towards the completeness of it. Nor must we think it is for nothing so punctually related; much depended upon the world's satisfaction in the truth and certainty of his death, burial, and resurrection, they are three great articles of our faith. We have therefore here punctually described his burial, with all the circumstances of it. As it is with us, so it seems it was with them.

The bodies of those who died as malefactors were taken to be in the power of the magistrates, to dispose of as they pleased, though they were ordinarily granted upon petition to their friends and relations. The person who begged the body of our Saviour is described to us by his name, Joseph; by his city, Arimathea

(there it seems he was born, or had his mansion house, though he resided in Jerusalem); by his quality, both his more exterior quality, and his more interior qualification. As for his outward quality, Matthew saith he was *a rich man*. Mark saith he was *an honourable counsellor*. Luke also calls him *a counsellor*, but *had not consented to the counsel and deed of them*, that is, of them who had examined and condemned Christ: whether he was a member of the Jewish sanhedrim, or of Pilate's council, (though the last be not probable), or had been a counsellor formerly, but now was not so, is hard to determine; but his quality doubtless made his access more free to Pilate. He *went in boldly* to him, saith Mark; his quality in the city, and his love to Christ, both contributed to this boldness. For his more inward qualifications, Matthew and John both tell us he was *a disciple*, one that had learned of Christ, though John tells us, it was *secretly for fear of the Jews*. *Among the chief rulers many believed on him*, Joh 12:42.

As bad as that set of rulers was which now ruled the Jewish affairs, (and a worse could not be), Christ had some disciples amongst them, as well as afterward in Nero's court: these, for fear of the Jews casting them out of the synagogues, durst not openly own Christ, but secretly loved him. Joseph and Nicodemus were two of them. And to let us know what the disciples of Christ are, and should be, this Joseph is described by Luke to be *a good and a just man*; by Mark, to be one who *waited for the kingdom of God*; a believer, one who, believing what Christ had said, both concerning his kingdom of grace and glory, lived in the expectation of it. This man begs of the governor the body of Christ. Pilate wondered that he should be so soon dead, but inquiring of the centurion, and hearing that he was dead, he commands that his body should be delivered unto Joseph.

The manner of the Jews was, neither to have gardens nor burying places within the city, but without the wall; it should appear that this Joseph had a garden place without the city, and near to the place where Christ was crucified, and in that garden he had cut out of some great stone a sepulchre for himself. Matthew calls it *his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock*. The other evangelists do not call it his own new tomb, only Luke and John observe it was a sepulchre in which none ever before was laid. So as when they found him risen from the dead,

they could not say it was some other body, for there was no other body in the tomb. But before they laid in the body, both Matthew and Mark observe, that Joseph wrapped it in fine linen, and John further addeth, that they embalmed the body; to which purpose it was that Nicodemus (that ruler who came to Jesus by night, of which we have the story, [Joh 3:1-36](#), with whom our Saviour had a discourse about regeneration) brought the *mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about an hundred pound weight*; John adds, *as the manner of the Jews is to bury*, not ordinarily, but persons of greater note, whose estates were such as they could bear such an expense. This was the beginning of honour done unto Christ, after that he had passed through his lowest degree of humiliation.

Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, that is, the wife of Cleophas, of whom we heard before, stayed to see where he was laid, and took their seats over against the sepulchre. Luke saith, [Lu 23:55,56](#), *The women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment.* It seems they sat but a little while (as Matthew saith) *right over against the sepulchre*, but went home, and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him, but would not do it on the sabbath, which was now beginning, thinking that it would be time enough upon the first day of the week. Matthew saith, that Joseph *rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.*

Matthew 27:62

Ver. 62. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:63

Ver. 63. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:64

Ver. 64. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:65

Ver. 65. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:66

Ver. 62-66. This part of the history is recorded by no other evangelist: the recording it by Matthew contributes yet further to evidence the truth of Christ's resurrection; for here was all imaginable care taken to prevent a cheat in the case.

The next day, that followed the day of the preparation, must be the sabbath day, Mr 15:42. These superstitious hypocrites, that quarrelled with our Saviour for his disciples (being hungry) plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, and for his healing him that had a withered hand, Mt 12:13, can now themselves go to Pilate, to set him on work to command that the sepulchre should be made fast to the third day. They allege that Christ, whom they impiously call *that deceiver, said, while he was alive*, that he would rise again the third day, to answer the type of the prophet Jonas, Mt 12:39,40. They were doubtless jealous that there was more truth in those words than they were willing to believe. They pretend also a fear lest his disciples should come privately by night, and steal his body away, and then say he was risen. But was this a probable thing, that a government should be afraid of a few poor, unarmed men? They were doubtless convicted in their own consciences that he would rise again from the dead, and to prevent his coming out of the sepulchre, they would have Pilate command that the sepulchre should be made sure. Pilate tells them, that they had a watch, a band of soldiers, which he had commanded at this time to attend them, either for the guard of the temple, or other things about which they would employ them; they might make the sepulchre as sure as they could.

So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. Vain men! As if the same power that was necessary to raise and quicken the dead could not also remove the stone, and break through the watch which they had set. But by this their excessive care and diligence, instead of preventing Christ's resurrection, as they intended, they have confirmed the truth and belief of it to all the world. So doth God take the wise

in their own craftiness, and turn their wisdom into foolishness, that he may set his King upon his holy hill of Zion.

Matthew 28:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 28:1-8 Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women.

Mt 28:9-10 Christ himself appeareth to them.

Mt 28:11-15 The chief priests bribe the soldiers to report that he was stolen by the disciples.

Mt 28:16,17 Christ appeareth to the eleven in Galilee,

Mt 28:18-20 and sendeth them to teach and baptize all nations.

Ver. 1. We are now come to that part of the Gospel which treats concerning the resurrection of Christ, and the converse which he had upon the earth for forty days, Ac 1:3, until the time of his ascension into heaven. Matthew and Mark are the shortest in this narration. I shall therefore, only consider what Matthew saith, and what the other evangelists speak as to the same things which he mentions, leaving out what the other evangelists have (not at all mentioned by him) to be discoursed in their proper place. We heard before that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had prepared spices and ointments to anoint the body of Christ, but the sabbath day being at hand, they would not by that unnecessary action profane the sabbath; as Luke tells us, Lu 23:56, *they rested on the sabbath, according to the commandment*: The sabbath ended with them at the setting of the sun. They did not go as soon as the sabbath was ended, but after it was ended, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*. The first day of the week began with them as soon as the sabbath was ended, so as the first day of the week was a third part spent; therefore Mark reports the time, Mr 16:1,2, *And when the sabbath was past; and says that Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning,*

the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. Luke saith, Lu 24:1, that upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

John saith, Joh 20:1, *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre.* As to the time, three evangelists say it was upon the first day of the week, early in the morning; about sunrising, saith Mark; *while it was yet dark*, saith John: these now interpret Matthew's οψε σαββατων, which doth not signify, in the evening of the sabbath, but in the evening of the sabbaths, the end of the week. The Jews, in honour to the sabbath, called all the days of the week sabbaths, the first of the sabbath, the second of the sabbath, &c.; so as οψε σαββατων is well translated by our translators, *In the end of the sabbath*, the evening or night following the sabbath, following the seventh day, which was the sabbath. Nor is οψε to be taken here strictly for that time of the night which we call the evening, but for the whole night, which must be reckoned to continue until the sunrising of the first day of the week; and so Matthew expounds himself, adding, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*, that is, the first artificial day, as the day is accounted from sunrising to sun setting; otherwise it was upon the first natural day of the week, which began from the sun setting before. Matthew mentions the coming of Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, who, Mark saith, was the mother of James and Salome, to the sepulchre. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, but it is not probable she went alone, and two other evangelists say also the other Mary. Luke saith there were *certain others with them*: there might be divers with them, though one only be named by John, two by Matthew and Mark as being the principal persons in the company. And though Matthew only mentions their going to see the sepulchre, yet Mark telleth us that they went also to anoint his body, and Luke saith they carried the spices prepared for that end; their faith, as it seemeth, was yet but weak as to our Saviour's resurrection.

Matthew 28:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 28:4".

Matthew 28:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 28:4".

Matthew 28:4

Ver. 2-4. Matthew alone telleth us this; all the other evangelists agree that when the women came they found the stone rolled away, which eased them of the solicitude they had as they came, saying amongst themselves, *Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?* Matthew saith, an angel descended and rolled away the stone, and came and sat upon it. This angel had assumed a shape, for he appeared to those that saw him, as to *his countenance, like lightning*; as to his garment, as one clothed in exceeding white linen, white as snow. What doth the watch all this while? Matthew saith, they were afraid, shook, and became like dead men. Luke and John make mention of two angels. Indeed there needed not any angel at all to remove the stone, if this had been all he had come down for; He that was quickened by the Spirit, could by the same power have rolled away the stone; but as it was fit that the angels, who had been witnesses of his passion, should also be witnesses of his resurrection, that he who was *justified in the Spirit*, should be seen of angels, 1Ti 3:16; so it was necessary, that the keepers might give a just account to Pilate, the chief priests, and scribes. And no wonder that they were afraid, and as dead men, whereas all apparitions of this nature naturally affright us, and they had such a conscience of guilt upon them, and might justly fear what their masters should say to them, when they found the body was missing; especially also seeing, or being sensible of, the earthquake, or great concussion of the air (for though we translate it *earthquake*, yet the Greek saith no more than *σεισμος μεγας*). Besides that the presence of the angels seemed reasonable to prevent a cheat, by putting some other dead body into the sepulchre, and to direct the women who were now coming towards the sepulchre, for they were not yet come: when they were come, they found the stone rolled away; and Matthew's relation, how the stone came removed, was doubtless not from them, but from the keepers, or some to whom they had related it.

Matthew 28:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:8

Ver. 5-8. Mark saith, Mr 16:5-8, *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid.*

Luke saith, Lu 24:3-11, *And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them*

not.

John saith, of Mary Magdalene only, Joh 20:2, *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

Matthew in this relation omits many things more distinctly related by the other evangelists. When the women came to the sepulchre, they first entered in; so saith Mark and Luke. It was within that they saw the angel, habited as it were in a long white, shining garment. They were affrighted, (as we naturally are upon apparitions), they bowed down their faces to the earth. The angel bids them not to fear, he knew that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; *Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen;* showeth to them the place where his body was laid; minds them of Christ's words to them in Galilee, Mt 18:23; bids them go tell his disciples (Mark adds, *and Peter*) that he was going before them into Galilee, and that there they should see him, as he had said unto them, Mt 26:32 Mr 14:28.

They departed quickly from the sepulchre (as Matthew saith) *with fear and great joy;* Mark saith, trembling and amazed. John doth not say, unbelieving, but he saith it in effect, for he saith, that they said to Simon Peter, *They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.* The cause of their fear and amazement was doubtless the apparition of the angel. The cause of their sudden joy was the news that he was risen, told them by the angel. It appeareth that their joy was but a sudden flash of passion, not rising from the certainty of their souls as to the truth of what they heard, because they said to the disciples, that they did not believe it, but upon second thoughts concluded that somebody had removed our Saviour's body: neither did the apostles themselves believe it, as appeareth by Luke; he saith they looked upon it as an idle tale.

John saith expressly, Joh 20:9, *As yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead:* they knew it notionally, but they did not give a firm and a fixed assent to it, they did not believe it. It was not, it seemeth, in the power of their wills to believe this article of Christ's resurrection; for as

they had a Divine revelation of the thing from Christ himself, so we cannot but think they had mind and good will enough to believe it. But God had not given them the power of faith as to this point.

Matthew 28:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 28:10".

Matthew 28:10

Ver. 9,10. Matthew repeateth this very shortly. Mark saith, Mr 16:9-11, Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Luke saith, Lu 24:12, *Then* (that is, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had come and told the disciples what they had seen and heard, though at first they gave no credit to it) *arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

John relates this more distinctly, in Joh 20:3-18: *Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, (whom Jesus loved, as Mt 28:2, and that was John himself, who wrote that Gospel, Joh 13:23), and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in*

white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. What there is particularly to be noted upon the several particulars in John's relation, I shall observe when I come to that chapter of John; I have only at present transcribed it, that from the comparing it with the other evangelists we might understand the order of this history.

And as they went to tell his disciples. This seemeth to be their second going, and the order to be thus: When Mary and the rest came to the disciples, and told them they had been at the sepulchre, and what they had there seen and heard, they believed it not. But yet, it being close by the city, and not knowing what to think, Peter resolves to go and see, and so doth John. They both run, but John comes there first, but goes not into the sepulchre, but only looks in, and sees the linen clothes lying. Peter comes (for it was very near the gates of the city); he goeth in, seeth the linen clothes, and the napkin. Then John also adventures to go in, and saw and believed; he is the first is said to have believed. Then they went home. But Mary stayed weeping; and now and then looking into the sepulchre, she seeth not the clothes only, but two angels sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet of the place where the body of Christ did lie. They ask her why she wept. She tells them, Because they had taken away her Lord, and she did not know where they had laid him. Now, saith John, when she had said thus, *εστραφη εις τα οπισω*, we translate it, *She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing*, Joh 20:14; which seemeth to contradict our evangelist Matthew, who saith, *As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.* Our translation now would

make one think that Mary was still at the sepulchre, and there looking back she saw Jesus; and this seemeth either to assert that Mary saw Christ twice, once at the sepulchre, once in her return to the city, or else to contradict Matthew; but the Greek words may be translated, 'She was turned backward', that is, was going back to tell his disciples, and met Christ, who saluted her, saying, *All hail*.

Though Mary Magdalene be only named, and possibly all the women who were with her at first did not come back with her the second time, yet it is plain she was not alone, for Matthew saith, *They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him*. He bids her be not afraid, but go and tell his disciples they should meet him in Galilee. For the other discourse betwixt him and Mary, we shall meet with it when we come to that chapter in St. John's Gospel where it is mentioned. Mark saith, that *when they had heard he was alive, and had been seen of her, they believed not*. We do not read that the angels appeared either to Peter or John, much less that Christ as yet showed himself to them; so they had only the testimony of Mary as to these things, and their own view of the empty sepulchre, and the clothes lying by. How hard a thing it is to believe spiritual mysteries, above the reach of our reason! So hard, that no revelation of flesh and blood is sufficient to beget such a faith.

Matthew 28:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:15

Ver. 11-15. No other evangelist hath this passage, which was necessary to be inserted by Matthew:

1. To satisfy readers how it could come to pass, that Matthew should know of the earthquake, or concussion of the air rather, and that an angel came and rolled away the stone; for all this was done, and Christ risen, before the women came: it came out by the watch, or by Pilate to whom the watch related it, or else by some of the priests and elders, who did not keep counsel so well as others.
2. To show the horrible wickedness of these priests and elders, that would thus cover the blood they had spilt with a lie and subornation. Thus one sin requires more to defend it.
3. To let us see how simple people will show themselves in their malice. What a story here was! If they were asleep, how could they know that Christ's disciples came by night and stole him away? Would no noise of rolling away the stone wake them? Malice will not allow men deliberation enough to show themselves wise. God infatuated these men, that succeeding ages might know they were suborned. Here we have also the ground of that fable with which the Jews presently filled all the world.

Matthew 28:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 28:17".

Matthew 28:17

Ver. 16,17. The other evangelists mention several other appearances of Christ, which we shall consider when we come to them. This was in Galilee, upon Christ's appointment either before or after his resurrection, we cannot certainly say when, or how. Some think (upon what grounds I know not, but because

the evangelists mention no more) that this was the famous appearance mentioned by the apostles, *when he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*, 1Co 15:6. The text speaks but of eleven that went into Galilee; it is possible more might meet him there, but we have no guidance of Scripture to conclude it. Some *worshipped him; but some doubted*: Thomas we know did so, so might others: but some think that it had been better translated, 'some had doubted'; I understand no sufficient reason for it, for it is not certain that this was after his other appearances mentioned by the other evangelists.

Matthew 28:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 28:20".

Matthew 28:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 28:20".

Matthew 28:20

Ver. 18-20. Mark saith, Mr 16:15-18, *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* Our blessed Lord in these three last verses:

1. Asserts his power and authority.
2. He delegates a power.
3. He subjoins a promise.

The power and authority which he asserts to himself is, *All power both in heaven and earth*, Ac 10:36,42 Eph 1:20-22; power of remission of sins, Lu 24:47, of congregating, teaching,

and governing his church; a power to give eternal life to whomsoever he pleased. This was inherent in him as God blessed for ever, given to him as our Mediator and Redeemer, given him when he came into the world, but more especially confirmed to him and manifested to be given him at his resurrection and ascension, Php 2:9,10. Having declared his power, he delegates it:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; the Greek is μαθητευσατε,

make disciples all nations; but that must be first by preaching and instructing them in the principles of the Christian faith, and Mark expounds it, telling us our Saviour said, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, that is, to every reasonable creature capable of hearing and receiving it*. I cannot be of their mind, who think that persons may be baptized before they are taught; we want precedents of any such baptism in Scripture, though indeed we find precedents of persons baptized who had but a small degree of the knowledge of the gospel; but it should seem that they were all first taught that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and were not baptized till they professed such belief, Ac 8:37, and John baptized them in Jordan, *confessing their sins*, Mt 3:6. But it doth not therefore follow, that children of such professors are not to be baptized, for the apostles were commanded to baptize *all nations*: children are a great part of any nation, if not the greatest part, and although amongst the Jews those that were converted to the Jewish religion were first instructed in the law of God before they were circumcised, yet the fathers being once admitted, the children were circumcised at eight days old; nor were they under any covenant different from us, though we be under a more clear manifestation of the same covenant of grace, of which circumcision was a sign and seal to them, as baptism is to us. Infants are capable of the obligations of baptism, for the obligation ariseth from the equity of the thing, not from the understanding and capacity of the person; they are also capable of the same privileges, *for of such is the kingdom of God*, as our Saviour hath taught us.

All nations: the apostles were by this precept obliged to go up and down the world preaching the gospel, but not presently. So it is plain that the apostles understood their commission, from Ac 1:8 Ac 3:26 13:46 18:6,7 Ga 2:7. They were first to preach and

to baptize amongst the Jews, and then thus to disciple all nations. Pastors and teachers who succeeded the apostles were not under this obligation, but were to be fixed in churches gathered, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of the apostles. They by this commission have authority in any place to preach and to baptize, but are not under an obligation to fix no where, but to go up and down preaching in all nations.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptizing them is no more than washing them with water. We read of the baptism of *pots and cups*, Mr 7:8, (we translate it *washing*,) which we know may be by dipping them in water, or by pouring or sprinkling of water upon them. It is true, the first baptisms of which we read in holy writ were by dippings of the persons baptized. It was in a hot country, where it might be at any time without the danger of persons' lives. Where it may be, we judge it reasonable, and most resembling our burial with Christ by baptism into death; but we cannot think it necessary, for God loveth mercy rather than sacrifice, and the thing signified by baptism, viz. the washing away of the soul's sins with the blood of Christ, is in Scripture expressed to us by pouring and sprinkling, Eze 36:25 Heb 12:24 1Pe 1:2.

In the name of the Father, &c.; in the Greek it is, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, into the name. *In the name* doth not only import the naming of the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost upon them, but, in the authority, or (which is indeed the chief) into the profession of the trinity of the persons in the one Divine Being: dedicating the persons baptized to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thereby obliging them to worship and serve God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for in baptism there is both a solemn dedication of the person to God, and a solemn stipulation: the person baptized either covenanting for himself that he will be the Lord's, or his parents covenanting for him that he shall be the Lord's; which covenant doth both oblige the parents to do what in them lieth in order to that end, and also the child, the parents covenanting for no more than the child was under a natural and religious obligation to perform, if such covenant had never been made by its parents on its behalf.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. There is a teaching must go before baptism of persons grown up; and this was the constant practice of the

apostles. It is fit men should act as rational creatures, understanding what they do. And there is a teaching which must follow baptism; for baptism without obedience, and a living up to that covenant in which we are engaged, will save no soul, but lay it under a greater condemnation. The apostles might teach nothing but what Christ had commanded them, and they were bound to teach whatsoever Christ had commanded them. Here now is the rule of the baptized person's obedience. We are bound to no obedience but of the commands of Christ, and to a perfect obedience of them, under the penalty of eternal condemnation. When Mark saith, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, it doth not imply that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, or in the same order with faith in Christ; but that the contempt of it is damnable, as being a piece of presumptuous disobedience; and such a faith is to be understood there, under the notion of believing, as worketh by love.

And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world: I am and I will be with you, and those who succeed you in the work of the ministry, being called of me thereunto. I will be with you, protecting you, and upholding that ordinance, and blessing you, and all others of my faithful ministers that labour for making me and my gospel known, with success.

Unto the end of the world; not of this age only, but of the world: my ministry begun in you shall not fail, nor shall the adding of souls to the number of them who shall be saved (as a token of my gracious presence with you) fail, till the world shall be determined, and the new heavens and the new earth shall appear. What Mark addeth concerning the signs that should follow those that believed, had a particular reference to the times immediately following Christ's ascension into heaven, and is to be understood of those miraculous operations which were to be wrought by the apostles, and others, for a further confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel by them preached. Matthew says nothing of them here. There is no promise of Christ's presence with his ministers to enable to such operations to the end of the world; but with his ministers preaching, baptizing, and teaching men to observe and to do whatsoever he hath commanded them, he hath promised to be, till time shall be no more.

Mark 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

That the author of this compendious history of the Gospel was none of the twelve apostles, is evident to any who will read over their names, Mt 10:2-4 Mr 3:14-19. That he was one of the seventy, whom Christ sent out afterwards, is said by some, but upon what evidence I cannot tell. That he was a disciple of Christ is out of question. There was one John surnamed Mark, Ac 12:12; some think he was the penman of this Gospel, but others doubt it, the ancients always calling him Mark. We read of a Mark, *sister's son to Barnabas*, Col 4:10; and we read of Mark employed in the ministry, 2Ti 4:11. Peter calls one of this name his *son*, 1Pe 5:13. Paul calls one of this name his *fellow labourer*, Phm 1:24. He who was surnamed Mark (added to John as his praenomen) went along with Barnabas to Cyprus, upon the dissension betwixt Paul and him, Ac 15:39. How many distinct persons are mentioned in Scripture of this name, and which of them was the evangelist, we have not light enough in Scripture to know by, (which yet we should not have wanted had it been material for us to know), and writers give an uncertain sound concerning this evangelist. Some would have him to be one, some another. Some have thought this Gospel was dictated by Peter to Mark. We are also told, that he wrote this history at Rome, then preached the gospel in Egypt, and was the first bishop of Alexandria, where he was buried, dying in the eighth year of Nero. These are the things which men may believe, or forbear to believe, as they see reason, coming to us only upon the credit of writers who are said, to have wrote what we have of their writings at least three hundred years after Mark's time. Most valuable interpreters agree him to have wrote in Greek, though a native Jew, and well understanding that language. Hierom tells us, that he wrote it at Rome upon Peter's dictating, at the desire of some Christians; but these are great uncertainties, and we want any evidence from Scripture that Peter ever came at Rome, though we know that Paul was carried thither prisoner. His history is much shorter than that of any of the other three evangelists, yet in some particular parts he added very much to Matthew's relations. He seemeth much to have compared notes with Matthew, and hath very few things which Matthew hath not, (though he omits many things which he hath), which hath much shortened our annotations upon this Gospel. Matthew begins his history with the genealogy and birth of our Saviour. Luke begins his with some

things that preceded the birth of John the Baptist, and of our Saviour. Mark begins with the preaching of John the Baptist. The Divine authority of this book never came in question, nor can come, unless Matthew and Luke be questioned also, for he hath very little that is not in one of them. That is what we are most especially to attend unto, for from thence it followeth, that what he wrote is the object of our faith, and the rule of our life, as to things practicable by us.

Chapter Summary

Mr 1:1-8 The Gospel begins with the preaching of John the Baptist.

Mr 1:9-11 Jesus is baptized, witnessed to from heaven,

Mr 1:12-13 and tempted of the devil,

Mr 1:14-15 preacheth in Galilee,

Mr 1:16-22 calleth Peter, Andrew, James, and John,

Mr 1:23-28 healeth one possessed of an unclean spirit,

Mr 1:29-31 Simeon's mother-in-law,

Mr 1:32-34 and divers other diseased persons,

Mr 1:35-39 prayeth alone, and goeth on to preach,

Mr 1:40-45 cleanseth a leper.

Ver. 1. The Gospel seems to have taken its name, εὐαγγέλιον, from the angel's words to the shepherds, Lu 2:10, *I bring you good tidings of great joy*; for the word in the Greek signifies a good message, or good news or tidings. It sometimes signifieth the historical narration of the coming of Christ, John Baptist's and Christ's preaching, and what he did in the world, his birth, life, death, &c.; sometimes the doctrine of salvation by Christ, in opposition to that of the law; sometimes, the dispensation of it, or that period of time when God began to publish *the mystery hid from ages* openly to the world. It seemeth here to signify the latter; for both Matthew and Luke seem to begin the history higher. Luke, from the history of John the Baptist and Christ, as to what things preceded their birth. Matthew, from the birth of Christ. But the dispensation of the gospel began with the preaching of John the Baptist. Before his time the doctrine of the gospel was made known to Adam, and Abraham and David; prophesied by Jacob, Isaiah, and several of the prophets; but John was the first in whom those promises and prophecies were fulfilled, the first public and plain preacher of the doctrine of the gospel; for *the law and the prophets prophesied until John: since that time the kingdom of God is*

*preached, and every man presseth into it, Mt 11:13 Lu 16:16. So as John's preaching was the beginning of the gospel; for though the doctrine of the gospel was before darkly made known, yet it then began to be plainly and publicly declared to the world. He was the first in whom the gospel prophecies began to have an end, as both the prophecies and the types of it had a more full completion in Christ. Two prophecies at least had their completion in John, which we find in Mal 3:1, which the evangelist mentions in the next verse, and Mr 4:5, concerning Elias first to come, which our Saviour applies to John, Mt 11:14 Mr 9:11-13, and the angel before him, Lu 1:17; besides Isaiah's prophecy, Isa 40:3, applied unto him by Mt 3:3 Mr 1:3, and by John applied to himself, Joh 1:23. This Gospel is called *the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, because the history of Christ's birth, life, and death is the matter of it. Christ was by Matthew called *the Son of David, the son of Abraham*, to let us know that he was truly man, a native Jew, and of the royal family, and derived from those two families, to whom the promises of the Messiah were made. By Mark he is called *the Son of God*, to let us know that he was more than mere man. And indeed who, but he who was the Son of God, could fully reveal his Father's will, determine the law of Moses and introduce a new way of worship, and publish a mystery of salvation, hid from all preceding ages, though not from all individual persons in them.*

Mark 1:2

Ver. 2,3. The prophets Malachi and Isaiah (saith the evangelist) prophesied of this *beginning of the gospel*. Malachi prophesied that before the great King should come unto Zion, a harbinger should come before him, to prepare his way. The angel, Lu 1:17, expounds both their prophecies, and also that Mal 4:5; *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*. John by his preaching turned the ears of the people to the sound of the gospel, and so prepared them for Christ. For further explication of these words: See Poole on "Mt 3:3". See Poole on "Mt 11:10". This name given to John the Baptist, *A voice crying*, gives us the right notion of a gospel minister. Here is but a *voice crying*, speaking what God hath first suggested to him. Thus God saith to Moses, Ex 4:15, *Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and*

with his mouth.

Mark 1:4

Ver. 4. Luke saith that John began about the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. He baptized *in the wilderness*, that is, a place little inhabited. By his baptism is not to be strictly understood baptism, but his preaching and doctrine, his whole administration; which is called *the baptism of repentance*, because repentance was the great thing he preached, a seal of which baptism was to be; the consequent of which was to be *the remission of sins*, or the argument which he used to press repentance was the remission of sins. See Poole on "Mt 3:5". See Poole on "Mt 3:6", where we before had these words.

Mark 1:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 3:4".

Mark 1:7

Ver. 7,8. We had the same, with very little difference in the phrase in Matthew. See Poole on "Mt 3:11".

Mark 1:9

Ver. 9-11. Christ, who, Lu 2:51, went with his parents to *Nazareth*, and was *subject to them*, after he had been disputing with the doctors in the temple, now goes from Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to that part of Galilee near Jordan, or rather to Bethabara, where John was baptizing, and was baptized: See Poole on "Mt 3:13". See Poole on "Mt 3:16". See Poole on "Mt 3:17". See Poole on "Joh 1:28", where this piece of history is more fully related. Luke addeth, that Christ was now about thirty years of age.

Mark 1:12

Ver. 12,13. Both Matthew and Luke relate the history of our Saviour's temptations by the devil more fully. See Poole on "Mt 4:1". See Poole on "Mt 4:2". Mark saith *immediately*, but it is not to be taken strictly for the next moment, but after a day or two, as it should seem.

Mark 1:14

Ver. 14,15. It should seem that John had but a short time wherein he exercised his public ministry: he was the son of a priest, Zacharias, Lu 1:13, and it is probable that he entered not upon his public ministry till he was thirty years of age (it was the priestly age, and the age at which Luke tells us our Saviour entered upon his public ministry). He was but about six months older than our Saviour, and was imprisoned as soon as our Saviour entered upon his ministry, indeed before we read of his entrance upon it. Upon his imprisonment, Christ begins to preach in Galilee the gospel by which he set up his kingdom, and which leadeth men to the kingdom of God.

And saying, The time is fulfilled, the time determined of God for the revelation of the Messiah, and the grace of the gospel through him, foretold by the prophets, Da 2:44: hence Christ is said to have come in *the fulness*, and in *the dispensation of the fulness of time*, Ga 4:4 Eph 1:10.

And the kingdom of God is at hand; the gracious dispensation of God in the gospel is at hand, or hath approached.

Repent ye, turn from the wickedness of your ways, *and believe the gospel,* or, in the gospel: to believe the gospel is one thing, to believe in the gospel (as it is here in the Greek) is another. The former phrase signifies no more than a firm and fixed assent to the proposition of the gospel; but to believe in the gospel, is to place our hope of salvation in the doctrine and promises

of the gospel, which are the proximate object of our faith, though the primary object of it be the person of the Mediator. There is a repentance that must go before faith, that is the applicative of the promise of pardoning mercy to the soul; though true evangelical repentance, which is a sorrow for sin, flowing from the sense of the love of God in Christ, be the fruit and effect of faith. Our Saviour's preaching agreeth with the Baptist's, Mt 3:2 Joh 3:23.

Mark 1:16

Ver. 16-20. We heard of the call of these four apostles before, in Matthew. See Poole on "Mt 4:18", and following verses to Mt 4:22, upon which may be found whatsoever is necessary for the explication of these verses, (having nothing new in them), as also the reconciling of what John saith, Joh 1:40, about the calling of Andrew and Simon, to what these two evangelists say about it.

Mark 1:21

Ver. 21,22. We heard before that the synagogues were much of the nature of our parish churches, places where people ordinarily met together on the sabbath days, to worship God by prayer, and reading the law and the prophets, and hearing the words of exhortation, from such as the rulers of the synagogues appointed thereunto. Christ ordinarily preached in them. The evangelists often mention the people's admiring, being amazed, and astonished at his doctrine; but it is one thing for people to be astonished and amazed at a new doctrine, and to admire the preacher, another thing to believe: we read of many amongst the Jews that were affected at the hearing of Christ with astonishment and admiration, but of few that believed in him.

For he taught them as one that had authority: a small derivative from this

is yet seen in the gravity, awful presence, and authority which (as a great gift of God) we see still given to some faithful ministers of Christ, such especially as God maketh a more eminent use of in the conversion of souls; but this great preacher had the Spirit above human measure.

Not as the scribes, the ordinary teachers of the Jews, who read their lectures of the law, but so coldly, and without life and power, as the hearts of the people were not at all affected with them, no more than with the dull telling a tale, with which neither tellers nor hearers were much affected.

Mark 1:23

Ver. 23,24. Luke reports the same passage, Lu 4:33,34; he saith, *There was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil.* The devil is called an unclean spirit in opposition to the Spirit of God, which is the Holy Spirit. The man that had this unclean spirit, or rather the unclean spirit in the man, cries out, *Let us alone; what have we to do with thee.* He doubtless feared what followed, viz. that he should be cast out. He counts himself destroyed when he cannot do mischief; like wicked men, who are the seed of this old serpent, who *sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall,* Pr 4:16. The devil here owneth Christ to be *the Holy One of God.*

Mark 1:25

Ver. 25,26. It is both here and in many other places observable, that when the devils made a confession of Christ, yet neither Christ nor his apostles would ever take any notice of it. Truth is never advantaged from the confession of known liars, as the devil was from the beginning. Christ needed not the devil's testimony, either to his holiness, or his being the Son of God, nor would he have people allow the least faith to the devil's words. Nor was he to be imposed upon by the devil's good words; he was to make no truce with him, but to destroy him and his works, he therefore charges him to hold his peace, and to come out.

And when the unclean spirit had torn him. The Greek word here, *σπαράξαν*, is ill translated *torn*, as appears by Lu 4:35, where it is said it did him no hurt: the word signifies no more than a violent convulsion, or shaking; and it is observed that those possessed by devils had only their members made use of by the devils, but without any wounding or laceration of them.

He cried out with a loud voice, and came out of him. Oh how loth is the devil to part with his possession! But possibly also Christ would have him cry out with a loud voice, that his miraculous operation might be the more taken notice of.

Mark 1:27

Ver. 27. The Jews had exorcists amongst them, who sometimes cast out devils by some forms of invocation they had; but Christ commanded them out; he neither did it by any kind of entreaty from any compact with the devil, nor yet by any invocation of God, but by an authoritative command. This was new to the Jews, and especially confirming a new doctrine that he had published. But still we read of no believing, no agnation of him as God, or the Son of God, or the Messias and Saviour of the world; only the generality are amazed they could not obtain of themselves to believe this new doctrine, nor yet so far command their passions, but they must be startled and amazed at it.

Mark 1:28

Ver. 28. The *fame* of his miracles, rather than of his doctrine; by this means many were brought to him to be cured, many were brought also to hear him, some of whom believed, others were hardened.

Mark 1:29

Ver. 29-31. See Poole on "Mt 8:14". See Poole on "Mt 8:15", where we met with this history. Our Saviour sometimes showed his power in

diseases not accounted incurable. The miracle appeared,

1. In the cure of her without the use of any means.
2. In the instantaneousness of the act; she did not recover gradually, but in a moment, and to such a degree as she could minister unto them, suppose at dinner or supper, &c.

Mark 1:32

Ver. 32-34. It was upon the sabbath day, (as appeareth from what went before), therefore the time is noted, *at even, when the sun did set*. Before that time, when the sabbath was determined, the Jews thought it unlawful to carry any burdens, but after sunset they judged it lawful. The usage of the particule *all* here, Mr 1:32,33, is again observable to show the vanity of those who will from general particles conclude propositions contrary to the analogy of faith, those particles being often used in a restrained sense. Luke saith, that the devils cried out, *Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, because (or that) they knew him*. Christ desired not to be published so soon under that notion, but he much less desired the devil's testimony in the case: see Mr 1:25 Ac 16:18. The good words of the devil and his seed are indeed a defamation to Christ and his seed.

Mark 1:35

Ver. 35. Secret prayer stands commended to us, as by the precept of Christ, Mt 6:6, so by his frequent example, to teach us that our duty in prayer is not discharged without it: we are to pray with all prayer and supplication. There is in public and private prayer a more united strength and interest, but in secret prayer an advantage for more free and full communication of our souls unto God. Christ for this chooseth the morning, as the time freest from distractions and company; and a solitary

place, as fittest for a secret duty.

Mark 1:36

Ver. 36-39. Peter probably pitieth the multitude, because many amongst them needed Christ's presence, for their bodily infirmities. Our Saviour knew their hearts better than Peter; and that which made them so much seek for him, was either in some a curiosity to see miracles wrought, or at best but a desire of some bodily benefit from him. Whereas his working of miracles was but a secondary work, subservient to his work in preaching, and done to confirm his doctrine, and to advantage them as to their faith in him as the Messiah. As therefore he refused to gratify the curiosity of the Pharisees in giving them a sign, so here our Saviour takes no notice of the multitude seeking for him, but saith to his disciples, *Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth.* Paul saith that God sent him *not to baptize, but to preach*, 1Co 1:17. Our Saviour saith not, *Let us go into the next towns, that I may work miracles, but that I may preach there also;* he doth not say he came forth to work miracles, but to preach: how it comes to pass that some are possessed of so slight an opinion of preaching as to think that it is needless, which our Saviour and St. Paul counted to be their principal work, where, in the mean time, they pretend to derive from Christ, I cannot tell. I am sure preaching was the greatest part of Christ's work; how it comes to be the least part of ministers' work since, or how any of them think it sufficient to discharge that work by journeymen, which he thought it not beneath him to do himself, may deserve their examination which make it so. We do not say that preaching is a greater work than prayer, or that it is not ministers' duty to pray; nor yet that it is greater than administering the sacrament: but this we say, we read of Christ's preaching often in the synagogues, on the mountain, in a ship; of his public praying we read not, though of his private and secret prayer often. We read expressly that he baptized none. We must have leave to think that our greatest work which our Lord and his apostles were most employed in, and do think others will be of our minds as soon as they shall understand, that if the end of preaching be not turning men from one opinion to another, but from the love and practice of sin to God, there is as much need of it as ever; and that the turning of men from one opinion to another, without a change of heart, as to the love of sin, is but a turning of men from one quarter of the devil's kingdom to another.

Mark 1:40

Ver. 40-45. We before had this piece of history, in Matthew, See Poole on "Mt 8:2" See Poole on "Mt 8:3" See Poole on "Mt 8:4", we shall also meet with it hereafter in Lu 5:14,15. Our Lord being *moved with compassion*, or affected in his bowels, (as the word signifies), is often used as expressive of the cause of his acts of mercy: thus in curing the leper, he at once both showed himself the Son of man, one who could have compassion on our infirmities, and indeed could not but have such a commiseration toward mankind; and the Son of God, that he could in an instant, by a touch, or by the word of his power, command off a disease of so difficult cure. For his charging of him to *say nothing to any man*, we are not able to give a perfect account of it, whether it was to avoid a suspicion of ostentation, or to avoid a throng of company pressing upon him, or to avoid the odium which he knew the doing of these mighty works would bring him under with the scribes and Pharisees, until the time came for the fuller revelation of himself. Much less can we tell how to excuse the leper for doing contrary to this charge, which we find many others to have done who had the like charge, yet we read not of our Saviour's blaming them for it. Mark addeth, that his publication of it caused *that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places*; by which is to be understood only places less inhabited; some think, places near the shore, where by going into a ship (as he often did) he could more easily quit himself of the throng of people, for (as it followeth) *they came to him from every quarter*.

Mark 2:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 2:1-2 Christ, followed by multitudes,
Mr 2:3-12 healeth one sick of the palsy,
Mr 2:13-14 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,
Mr 2:15-17 justifieth himself for eating with publicans
and sinners,
Mr 2:18-22 excuses his disciples for not fasting,
Mr 2:23-28 and vindicates them for plucking the ears of
corn on the sabbath day.

Ver. 1-12. We read the history of this miracle in Matthew nine. See Poole
on "Mt 9:1", and following verses to Mt 9:8, having there taken in those
passages in this evangelist's relation which Matthew had not, I shall only
take notice of some few things not there touched upon.

He preached the word unto them; the word of God, the gospel. There are
other words, but that is *the word*, Mt 13:20 Mr 8:32 Mr 16:20 Lu 1:2 Ac
17:11: the most excellent word, and the only word to be preached.

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God?
So as it was on all hands then received, that none but the creditor could
discharge the debt, none but God could forgive sins. But how spite
cankers things! Our Saviour did not say till afterward that he forgave him
his sins. What blasphemy was there in this saying, *Thy sins be forgiven*
thee? But what if none but God could forgive sins? Could also any but
God tell unto men their thoughts? 1Sa 16:7 1Ch 28:9 2Ch 6:30 Ps 7:9 Jer
17:10. That Christ could tell their thoughts was matter of demonstration to
them, Mr 2:6,8; why might they not also have allowed him a power to
forgive sins? But they could not for this charge him with blasphemy,
which was their malicious design.

Mark 2:13

Ver. 13. Still it is said he *taught them*, thereby letting his ministers know what is their great work; and therefore they should be persons *apt to teach*, as Paul directeth Timothy, 1Ti 3:2.

Mark 2:14

Ver. 14-17. We had this piece of history with some addition in Mt 9:9-13, where he was called *Matthew*: Mark and Luke both call him *Levi*: it was ordinary with the Jews to have two names. See Poole on "Mt 9:9".

Mark 2:18

Ver. 18-22. See Poole on "Mt 9:14", and following verses to Mt 9:17. The sum of all teacheth us:

1. That fasting is an exercise suited to afflictive dispensations of Providence, and ought to be proportioned to its season.
2. That new converts are not to be discouraged by too severe exercises of religion, but to be trained up to them by degrees.

Mark 2:23

Ver. 23-28. We had also this history in Mt 12:1-8, in our notes upon which we considered all those passages relating to it which this evangelist hath, for the explication of which I refer my reader thither. See Poole on "Mt 12:1", and following verses to Mt 12:8. It refers to a story, 1Sa 21:1, where Ahimelech is said to have been the high priest. Abiathar was his son, as appeareth by 1Sa 22:20, who escaped the slaughter of his father's family upon the information of Doeg the Edomite, and followed David. It was in the latter end of the priesthood of Ahimelech, and probably Abiathar assisted his father in the execution of the office, and so suddenly succeeded, that Mark calls it the time of his priesthood. Besides that those words, ἐπὶ Ἀβιαθαρ, do not necessarily signify *in the days of Abiathar*, as we translate it, no more than ἐπὶ μετοίχῃσιν signifies in the carrying into captivity, but about the time, or near the time; which it was, for Ahimelech was presently after it (possibly within a few days) cut off, as we read, 1Sa 22:17,18; and Abiathar was a more noted man than his father Ahimelech, enjoying the priesthood more than forty years, and being the person who was made famous by carrying the ephod to David.

Mark 3:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 3:1-5 Christ appealing to reason healeth the withered hand on the sabbath day.

Mr 3:6-12 The Pharisees conspire his death: he retires to the seaside, and healeth many.

Mr 3:13-19 He chooseth his twelve apostles.

Mr 3:20-21 His friends look upon him as beside himself.

Mr 3:22-30 He confutes the blasphemous absurdity of the Pharisees in ascribing his casting out of devils to the power of Beelzebub.

Mr 3:31-35 Those who do the will of God he regardeth as his nearest relations.

Ver. 1-5. See Poole on "Mt 12:9", and following verses to Mt 12:13. The word πωρωσει, used Mr 3:5, may be understood to signify blindness, or hardness, as it may derive from πωρος, *callus*, or πωρος, *caecus*, but the derivation of it from the former best obtains. Hardness being a quality in a thing by which it resisteth our touch, and suffers us not to make an impression upon it, that ill condition of the soul by which it becomes rebellious, and disobedient to the will of God revealed, so as it is not affected with it, nor doth it make any impression of faith or holiness upon the soul, is usually called hardness of heart. But for the argument of this history, proving acts of mercy lawful on the sabbath day, it is fully spoken to in the notes on Mt 12:9-13.

Mark 3:6

Ver. 6-12. Who these Herodians were we cannot learn plainly from holy writ; it is most probable that they were a civil faction, who took Herod's part, and were stiff for promoting his interest, and the interest of the Roman emperor, whose substitute Herod was. With these the Pharisees (in other cases their implacable enemies) mix counsels how they might destroy Christ. Christ gives place to their fury, his time being not yet come, and withdraweth himself from their sight, being followed by great multitudes, who in the fame of his miracles, or the hopes they had of receiving some good from him for themselves or for their friends, drew after him. Some of these are said to have come from Idumea, which was the country of Edom, and distinct from Judea anciently, as may be gathered from Jos 15:1, and Nu 34:3, but whether it was at this time so or no, is doubted. Our Lord commandeth the devils not to make him known, not desiring any such preachers.

Mark 3:13

Ver. 13-15. We have this piece of history, or rather something to which it relates, both in Matthew and in Luke, only Mark hath this peculiar to himself, that our Saviour did this upon *a mountain*. It is the opinion of Bucer, that this was the mountain at the foot of which he preached the sermon largely recorded, Mt 5:1-7:29, and (as some judge) more shortly by Lu 6:17-45: he thinketh the multitude here mentioned is the same with that mentioned Mt 4:25, and Lu 3:7, and that our Saviour did not go up into this mountain to preach, or ordain his disciples, but only to pray, and to discourse with some of his disciples more privately about spiritual mysteries. That it was at this time that he *continued all night in prayer to God*, Lu 6:12; and in the morning called unto him such of his disciples as he thought fit, and discoursed with them his intentions concerning them, telling them,

1. That he had chosen them to be with him, ordinarily, to be eye and ear witnesses of what he spake and did.
2. That he designed soon after to send them out to preach; which we read he did, Mr 6:7 Mt 10:1; to give them *a power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils*: so that this chapter only mentions Christ's election of them, not his actual sending them, which is discoursed Mr 6:7-13, as also Mt 10:1-42.

These things being privately transacted on the mountain, Bucer thinks he came down into the plain at the foot of the mountain, according to Lu 6:17, and there preached that sermon mentioned Mt 5:1-7:29, as we before said. The evangelist telling us that he called to him which of his disciples he would, lets us know, that he chose them, and not they him; that the choice of them was of his free grace and mercy; and his continuing all night in prayer before this choice, lets us know the gravity of the work of choosing persons fit to be sent out to preach the gospel.

Mark 3:16

Ver. 16-19. Matthew nameth the apostles upon his relating the history of their mission, or sending out; Mark nameth them upon their election, or first choice. Both these evangelists agree with Luke in their names, saving that Luke calleth him Judas whom Matthew calls Lebbaeus, and Mark, Thaddaeus, so that he had three names. Christ changeth the name of Simon, whom he called *Cephas*, or *Peter*, Joh 1:42; we have the reason, Mt 16:18; he also changed the names of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, calling them *Boanerges*, about the etymology of which name critics must dispute. The evangelists tell us it signifieth *Sons of thunder*, thereby minding them of their duty, to cry aloud, and to preach the gospel as on the housetops; or perhaps declaring what he knew was in the fervour and warmth of their spirits. We must not here inquire too narrowly into the secret counsels of God, in suffering a son of perdition to come into the number of his first ministers: Christ did it not because he did not know what was in his heart, for before that he showed himself a devil, by informing against his Master, Christ told his disciples that he had chosen twelve, and one of them was a devil; nor yet because he had no others to send, he had multitudes of disciples, and he who of stones could have raised up children to Abraham, could easily have fitted out a person for this service; nor yet did he do it to let in any sots and scandalous persons into the ministry, for we read of no scandal in Judas's life. We ought to believe that God had wise ends in the permission of this, and that Christ did out of infinite wisdom do this, though we possibly are not able to give a satisfactory account in the case. What if we should say that Christ by this:

1. Instructed those that after his ascension should have the care of the church, not to pretend to judge of secret things, but only to judge as man ought to judge, according to the outward appearance, leaving the judgment of the heart to God alone.
2. God by this arms his people against the scandal of wicked ministers, such in whom corruption may break out after their entrance into that holy function, though before no such thing appeared, that they may not think the ministerial acts performed by them to have been nullities.

3. God by this also lets us know, that the efficacy of the ordinance doth not depend upon the goodness of the spiritual state of the minister that administers.

A bell may call others to hear the word, though itself receives no benefit by it. In the mean time here is no warrant either for people to choose, or the governors of a church to ordain, lewd and visibly scandalous persons. Judas was no such person; nor yet for people to own, or the governors of churches to continue, lewd and scandalous persons in the ministry, God ordinarily not blessing the labours of such. No sooner had Judas discovered himself, but he went out and hanged himself. Christ no longer allowed him his company, nor the disciples their fellowship. There is a great deal of difference with relation to our fellowship and communion, between secret wickedness concealed in the heart and open and scandalous sinning, though both be alike dangerous to the soul of the sinner.

Mark 3:20

Ver. 20,21. There is no small dispute who are here called our Saviour's friends, οι παρ' αυτου, those who were of him, whether it signifieth his neighbours, the citizens of his city, or his nearer relations, those who belonged to the family of which he was (for he had some brethren that did not *believe in him*, Joh 7:5).

They went to lay hands on him, that is, to take him from the multitude, which pressed upon him by force, (for so the word signifies), *for they said, He is beside himself*, εξεστη: various senses are given of this word, but certainly the most ordinary interpretation of it doth best agree to this place. They saw our Saviour's warmth of spirit and zeal in the prosecution of that for which he came into the world, and did so well understand his person, or mission, and receiving the Spirit not by measure, that they took what he did to be the product and effect of a natural infirmity and imperfect head and disordered reason. The young prophet sent by Elisha was counted a *mad fellow* by Jehu's comrades, 2Ki 9:11; so was Paul by Festus, Ac

26:24, or by the Corinthians, or some crept in amongst them, 2Co 5:13. We are naturally inclined to inquire the causes of strange and unusual effects, and cannot always discern the true causes, and often make false guesses at them. I am not so prone as I find some to condemn these friends, or neighbours, or kinsmen of Christ, believing that they did verily believe as they spake, not yet fully understanding that the Spirit of the Lord in that measure was upon him, but through their infirmity fearing that he had been under some distraction, and charitably offering their help to him. The next words tell us of a far worse sense the scribes put upon his actions.

Mark 3:22

Ver. 22-30. Here is no passage in all this piece of history, but what the reader will find opened these notes: See Poole on "Mt 9:34". See Poole on "Mt 12:24", and following verses to Mt 12:32. To which I refer the reader.

Mark 3:31

Ver. 31-35. See Poole on "Mt 12:46", and following verses to Mt 12:50.

Mark 4:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 4:1-9 The parable of the sower.

Mr 4:10-13 Why Christ taught in parables.

Mr 4:14-20 The exposition of the parable.

Mr 4:21-25 The light of knowledge is given to be communicated to others.

Mr 4:26-29 The kingdom of God likened to the seed which groweth imperceptibly,

Mr 4:30-34 and to a grain of mustard seed.

Mr 4:35-41 Christ stilleth a tempest by his word.

Ver. 1,2. We may observe that our Saviour often preached by the seaside, the reason of which was, doubtless, he had there the convenience by a boat or ship to quit himself of the inconvenience of the people's pressing upon him: he was now in Galilee, which bordered upon the sea.

And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine. Some of those things which our Lord taught his people by earthly similitudes are afterwards expressed, but probably he taught them many more things than the evangelists have left us upon record.

And said unto them in his doctrine: that may be understood in a double sense; either understanding by *doctrine* his way of teaching which he affected, and made much use of, viz. by similitudes; or else thus, that he intermixed with the doctrine which he taught them several parables, some of which here follow.

Mark 4:3

Ver. 3-20. See Poole on "Mt 13:1", and following verses to Mt 13:23. The parable is recorded both by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and is of excellent use:

1. To show the excellency of the word of God, which is here (as in other places) called *the word*; it is the seed of God, the *good seed*: and the excellency of the ordinance of preaching, for that is the seed sown.

2. To show us the different effect of the word preached from moral discourses and philosophical disputes, from which can be expected no fruit; but where the sower soweth the word, there is yet a very different effect. Some bring forth the fruit of faith and holiness, and the abiding fruit of it, though in different degrees. But many, yea the most of those that hear it, either bring forth no fruit, or no abiding fruit, which is indeed no true fruit. The causes of this are, some men's perfunctory and careless hearing, never regarding to meditate on it, apply it to their own souls, or to hide it in their memories. Others not suffering it to sink into their hearts, and to take root in them, though it may at present a little affect them, and make them matter of discourse. Other men's thoughts being taken up with business, and the care of this world, and their hearts filled with the love of the things of this life, which they cannot part with when trouble and persecution for the owning and profession of the gospel ariseth.
3. It likewise teacheth us a sure note of unprofitable hearers of the word, as also of those whom the word is likely to profit, and have any good and saving effect upon. The former hear, but never regard whether they understand what they hear, yea or no. The others are not satisfied with hearing unless they understand; for those who went to him to know the parable, were not the twelve only, (who are often called his disciples emphatically), but those others that were about him, to whom it was *given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God*.
4. The most of our Saviour's hearers were doubtless members of the Jewish church, yet our Saviour, Mr 4:11, styles the most of them *those that are without*; which teacheth us that not only such as are out of the pale of the church, but those also who are out of the degree of election, those to whom it is not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, are in Christ's account *without*. For other things concerning this parable, they are fully spoken to in our notes; See Poole on "Mt 13:1", and following verses to Mt 13:23.

Mark 4:21

Ver. 21. The import of this verse may be learned from Mt 5:15,16, where the words are, and applied by an exhortation to holiness, being an argument drawn from the end for which men receive gifts and grace from God, which is not only for their own advantage, though (like the husbandman) those that have it reap first of their own fruit, but for the good and advantage of others also. Some think that Christ here speaketh of himself, who is the Light of the world, and therefore opened this parable unto them. But the context in Matthew guiding us to the true sense of the words, I see no reason for us to busy ourselves in searching out another, especially when the connexion is so fair with the foregoing words, where he had been describing the good ground by bringing forth fruit, *some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred fold*. What therefore the sowing the seed in the good ground, mentioned in the parable, is, that is the lighting up of a candle in this verse; and the light showed by the lighted candle, not put under a vessel, or a bed, but in a candlestick, is the same thing with the fruit before mentioned.

Mark 4:22

Ver. 22,23. Our Saviour, Mt 10:26, sending out his apostles, saith to them, *Fear them not therefore*, that is, not your enemies and persecutors: *for*

there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known: the sense of which words we there said might be, though your innocency be now hid, yet it shall be made known, or though the gospel be now hid, and preached in a little corner, and kept secret, it shall be made manifest, and come abroad. Both Mark and Luke have it immediately after the parable of the sower, where it doth not seem to have the same sense as here. But more general proverbial common sayings may be variously applied to things, to which the common sense and import of them will agree. Some here apply them thus, There is nothing in the prophecies concerning me which shall not be manifested; which agrees with the sense of those who interpret the former verse concerning Christ, as if he had been giving a reason why he opened the parables to those that asked him of it. But those who interpret it to the sense which it beareth plainly, Mt 5:15,16, make the sense thus; For though you may play the hypocrites, and under a profession of the gospel but hide the hypocrisy, lusts, and corruptions of your hearts, yet that mask will not hold always, there will come a day of judgment, which will manifest and discover all, and bring to light the hidden things of dishonesty. What we have Mr 4:23 is but a usual conclusion which our Saviour hath often made of any grave and important discourses.

Mark 4:24

Ver. 24,25. Whoso considereth the connection of these words, *with what measure ye mete, &c.*, with the first words in the verse, *Take heed what ye hear*, and compares the former with the parallel texts, Mt 7:2 Lu 6:38, will wonder what the force should be of the argument. For in both the parallel texts the latter words in this verse seem to be used as an argument to persuade them to justice and charity towards men, from the punishments of the violations of the law concerning them, by way of retaliation. Nor are there any sins so ordinarily as those of that kind so punished. But they can have no such force here, following those words, *Take heed what ye hear*. But, as I said before, there is nothing more usual than diverse applications of the same common saying, or proverbial expression. The saying is true, whether it be understood of men or of God, As we deal with God, so will God deal with us.

Take heed what ye hear. Luke saith, *how ye hear.* *Take heed what ye hear;* as much as, Take heed to what you hear, that you may receive the word not as seed by the way side, or in thorny or stony ground, but as in good ground. This seemeth rather to be the sense of our Saviour, than to give a caution by these words to men to examine what they hear, searching the Scriptures whether what they hear doth agree with them, though that also be the duty of all conscientious persons, as appeareth from Ac 17:11 For saith our Saviour, God will deal with you as to his providence as you deal with him. If you allow the word of God but a little hearing, you shall reap from it heard little profit and advantage; this appeareth to be the sense from the following words.

And unto you that hear shall more be given; that is, unto you that hear, so as you attend, understand, believe, hearken, and obey, God will give further knowledge of Divine mysteries.

For he that hath, to him shall be given, &c.: another general proverbial expression; See Poole on "Mt 13:12", See Poole on "Mt 25:29".

Mark 4:26

Ver. 26-29. Our evangelist alone taketh notice of this parable, nor hath it any particular explication annexed. If we expound it with relation to what went before, the scope of it seemeth to be, to let us know that God will have an account of men for their hearing of his word, and therefore men had need to take heed what they hear, as Mark saith, and how they hear, as Luke phrases it: thus Mr 4:29 expounds the former, with the help of our Saviour's exposition of the parable of the tares, on which he had told us, Mt 13:39, *The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.* There is another notion of God's harvest, Mt 9:37 Joh 4:35, where God's harvest signifies a people inclined and prepared to hear and to receive the gospel. But withal this parable of our Saviour's may be of further use to us.

So is the kingdom of God, &c.; that is, Such is the providential dispensation of God, in gathering his church by the ministry of the word, as men's casting of seed into the ground: when the husbandman hath cast

his seed into the ground, he is no more solicitous about it, nor doth he expect to discern the motion of it; but having done what is his part, he sleepeth, and riseth again, leaving the issue to God's providence.

The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, yet not without the influence of heaven, both in the shining of the sun and the falling of the dew and of the rain; neither doth its fruit appear presently in its full ripeness and perfection, but gradually is made perfect; first there appears the blade, the herb, then the ear, then the grain, which by degrees groweth to its full magnitude, and then hardeneth, and then the husbandman putteth in his sickle: so the ministers of the gospel ought faithfully to do their parts in sowing the seed of the gospel, then not to be too solicitous, but to leave the issue unto God. Where the seed falls upon good ground, the word will not be unfruitful: the minister of the gospel doth not presently discern the fruit of his labour, he at first, it may be, seeth nothing of it, but is ready to cry out, *I have laboured in vain;* but though the seed lie under the clods, and seems choked with the corruption of man's heart, yet if the soul be one to whom it is *given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,* it shall spring out, the word will be found not to be lost; but first will spring the blade, then will appear the ear: the fruit of the word preached appears by degrees, sometimes at first only by creating good inclinations in the soul, and desires to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, then in acts further tending to perfection, at last in confirmed habits of grace. It is not thus with all, in some the word brings forth nothing but the blade, a little outward profession, which dwindles away and dies; in some the profession holds longer, but they never come to confirmed habits of virtue and holiness. But there will come a harvest, when God will come with his sickle to reap the fruit of his seed sown; therefore men had need take heed what and how they hear. This I take to be the sense of this parable.

Mark 4:30

Ver. 30-32. We met with this parable in Mt 13:31,32, where the reader will find we have given the sense of it. It is a prophetic parable, foretelling the great success that the gospel, which at this time was restrained to a

little corner of the world, and there met with small acceptance, should have after Christ's resurrection from the dead; which prophecy we find was fulfilled in the apostles' time, and hath been further fulfilling in all ages of the world since that time.

Mark 4:33

Ver. 33,34. From hence we may gather that all the parables by which our Saviour instructed his hearers are not recorded by the evangelists, though many be, and some mentioned by one, some by two of them, which are not recorded by the other.

As they were able to hear it. Christ disdained not to accommodate his style and method of preaching to his hearers' capacity, neither will any faithful minister of Christ do it: he preacheth in the best style, language, and method, that preacheth best to the capacity, understanding, and profit of his hearers. Other preachers do indeed but trifle with the greatest work under heaven, and please themselves with their own noises. That he did not speak without a parable unto them, was:

1. That he might speak with the best advantage for their understandings and their memories, and have the greater influence upon their affections; for similitudes have these three advantages.
2. That he might discern who came to hear him with a desire to learn, and be instructed by him, by their coming to him to inquire of his parables.

For although some of his parables were plain, and easy to be understood, yet others of them were dark sayings, because the doctrine taught by them was more mysterious; conscientious hearers would therefore come to have the parables expounded to them; these, were those *disciples* mentioned Mr 4:34, to whom he was wont to expound the parables in or by which he taught the multitude. For other common hearers, their contenting themselves with a mere hearing a sound of words, which they did not understand, was a sufficient indication that they made no conscience of their duty, but were such to whom it was not *given to*

know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but such upon whom the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah was to be fulfilled, Mr 6:9,10.

Mark 4:35

Ver. 35-41. This piece of history is related by Matthew and Luke as well as by our evangelist, and that with no considerable variations one from another; what in it wanteth explication, See Poole on "Mt 8:23", and following verses to Mt 8:27. Christ had been preaching, and being wearied and tired with the multitude still pressing upon him, gave order to cross the sea, and to go over to the other side; then (to show us he was truly man, and took upon him the infirmities of our nature) he composes himself to sleep *on a pillow, in the hinder part of the ship*. There happeneth a great storm of wind, not without Christ's knowledge and ordering, that he might upon this occasion both try his people's faith, and also show his Divine power in stilling the raging of the sea. As man he slept, but at the same time he was the true Watchman of Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. The storm increaseth till there was a great quantity of water come into the ship, and they were ready to perish. *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, Ge 22:14*. God often forbears from helping his people till the last hour. Then they awake him, he ariseth, rebukes the wind and the waves, useth no means, but by the word of his power commandeth the wind and waves to be still; and he also rebuketh his disciples for want of faith, who yet did not discern that he was not man only, but the Almighty God, as appears by their words, they *said one to another, What manner of man is this?*

Mark 5:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 5:1-20 Christ casteth out the legion of devils, and suffereth them to enter into the herd of swine.

Mr 5:21-24 He is entreated by Jairus to go and heal his daughter.

Mr 5:25-34 By the way he healeth a woman of an inveterate issue of blood.

Mr 5:35-43 He raiseth Jairus's daughter to life.

Ver. 1-20. This famous piece of history hath the testimony of three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We meeting with it in Matthew, did not only largely open what passages Matthew hath about it, but what both Mark and Luke have. See Poole on "Mt 8:28", and following verses to Mt 8:34. We shall only annex here some short notes. Interpreters judge *the country of the Gergesenes*, and of *the Gadarenes* mentioned here, to have been the same, sometimes receiving the denomination from one city, sometimes from another in it. Why the devils are called unclean spirits, in opposition to the Holy Spirit, &c., we have formerly showed; as also why they delight to be about tombs. We have also showed his power, which (by God's permission) he exerciseth upon men: some he possesseth, and acteth the part of the soul in them (especially as to the locomotive faculty); these are properly called demoniacs, *ενεργουμενοι*. Others he afflicts more as a foreign agent, offering violence to them. Others he more secretly influences, by impressions and suggestions: thus he still ordinarily *worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph 2:2; nor are the people of God free from this impetus, though, being succoured by Christ, they are not so ordinarily overcome. Of the mighty power of the evil angels to break chains and fetters we need not doubt, considering that though fallen from their first righteousness, they yet have their natural power as spirits.

I adjure thee by God, is no more than, I solemnly entreat thee; it hath not the force of, Swear unto me by God, as some would have it. Matthew mentions two (of these demoniacs); Mark and Luke but one: there were doubtless two, but probably one of them was not so raging as the other, and therefore less taken notice of. Some think one of these men was a heathen, the other a Jew:

1. Because the term *legion*, which the demoniac gives himself, is a

heathen term, signifying a squadron of soldiers, about six thousand or more, as some reckon.

2. Christ was now in a country full of heathens.

3. The woman of whose cure we next read was a Syrophenician. It is observable, that a multitude of evil spirits is called by the name of *the devil*; because, though considered as individual spirits they are many, yet in their malice and mischievous designs against mankind they are as one.

Oh that the people of God were as well united in designs for his glory! Some interpreters start a question here, not very easy to be resolved, viz. What made the devils so desirous that Christ would not send them out of the country. Their answer is not improbable: That it was a paganish, ignorant, sottish place, where usually the devil hath the best markets and the greatest rule. For as it is said of Christ, that he could not do much in some places where he came because of their unbelief; so neither can the devil do much in some places, because of the faith of the gospel received by them. Hence it is observable, that as the devil is not able to play his game in any place amongst Christians, as he doth this day amongst heathens; so he hath much less power at this day in places where the word of God is more generally known, and more faithfully preached, than in other places where people are more ignorant of the Scriptures, and have less faithful and frequent preaching. In the latter he dealeth most by more inward suggestions and impressions. Our learned Dr. Lightfoot observes it probable, that this city or country was generally made up of pagans, or apostatized Jews, because they nourished so many swine, which to the Jews were unclean beasts. For other things relating to the explication of this history; See Poole on "Mt 8:28", and following verses to Mt 8:34.

Mark 5:21

Ver. 21-24. This whole history also is recorded both by Matthew and Luke, and we have already fully opened the several passages of it mentioned by all the evangelists, to which we refer the reader. (See Poole on "Mt 9:18", &c.), Christ was now come over again into Galilee, where though the temple was not, yet there were synagogues, where the people did ordinarily assemble to worship God. Nor were they without order in these synagogues; they had one whom they called the ruler of the synagogue, who directed and ordered the affairs of that particular synagogue. It is more probable that *Jairus* (here mentioned) was in that sense so called, than because he was one of the court of twenty-three which the Jews are said to have had in every city.

Mark 5:25

Ver. 25-34. See Poole on "Mt 9:18", and following verses to Mt 9:22, upon this whole history, containing a passage which happened in the way between the place where our Saviour first heard of the sickness of *Jairus's* daughter and his house, whither our Saviour was now going. We shall in these histories observe our Saviour propounding several questions to persons: of the matter to which they related, he could not be presumed to be ignorant, being as to his Divine nature omniscient; but he only

propounded them for the bettering of the knowledge of those to whom or amongst whom he spake, that his miracles might be more fully and distinctly understood. So also he is said to have known many things (as here, *that virtue had gone out of him*) which he only knew as he was God, and knew all things. It is also observable how Christ encourages the first rudiments of saving faith in him. All that we read of this woman is, that she said, *If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole*: this was much short of her owning and receiving him as her Lord and Saviour. It amounted to no more than a persuasion she had of his Divine power and goodness, and that with respect to the healing of a bodily distemper; neither doth it import her believing him to be the eternal Son of God, but one to whom God had communicated a power of healing. In this confidence she cometh unto him, and toucheth the border of his garment. She is presently healed. Christ saith, her faith had made her whole. Christ measures her faith by the light and means she had received, and accordingly rewards it; and if the notion be true, that where he healed the body he also healed the soul, this was the beginning of a greater faith in her.

Mark 5:35

Ver. 35-43. There is nothing in this history needeth further notes for explication, than what we gave in the notes on Matthew, to which I here refer the reader; See Poole on "Mt 9:18", See Poole on "Mt 9:19", See Poole on "Mt 9:23", and following verses to Mt 9:31.

There is nothing more unaccountable in all the passages of our Saviour's life recorded by the evangelists, than the charges that he gave to several persons healed by him, *that no man should know it*. Especially if

we consider:

1. That he did not charge all so; he bid the person possessed with the devil, Lu 5:19, go home to his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him.
2. That he could not expect to be concealed had they yielded obedience, for his miracles were done openly, and it was not likely that all would keep silence, nay, he commanded the leper to go and show himself to the priests.
3. Few of those thus charged did keep silence; nor do we ever find that Christ reflected blame on them, from which yet we cannot acquit them.

But we must not think to understand the reasons of all Christ's actions and speeches; he had doubtless wise ends in doing it, though we do not understand them.

Mark 6:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 6:1-6 Christ is slighted by his own countrymen.

Mr 6:7-13 He sendeth out the twelve with power over unclean spirits.

Mr 6:14-15 The opinions of Herod and others concerning him.

Mr 6:16-29 John the Baptist imprisoned and beheaded by Herod at the instigation of Herodias.

Mr 6:30-33 The apostles return from their mission.

Mr 6:34-44 The miracle of five thousand fed with five

loaves and two fishes.

Mr 6:45-52 Christ walketh on the sea to his disciples.

Mr 6:53-56 He lands at Gennesaret, and healeth the sick who but touched the hem of his garment.

Ver. 1-3. We meet with all this in Mt 13:53-58: See Poole on "Mt 13:53", and following verses to Mt 13:58. By *his own country*, questionless, is meant Nazareth, the place of his education, though Bethlehem were the place of his birth; hence he was usually called *Jesus of Nazareth*. Lu 4:16, nameth *Nazareth*; though I cannot be confident that this text mentions the same motion of our Saviour's. The constant practice of our Saviour on the sabbath days is observable: it is true, he had a liberty there to preach and expound the Scripture; but without doubt many things of a ritual nature were there done which our Lord was far from approving: their assemblies being not idolatrous, he judged it no sin to be present: the main things done there were of his Father's institution; for other things, we never read our Saviour touched at them. Still the effect of our Saviour's preaching to the Jews we find to be amazement and astonishment, but no faith. Men may be affected by the word that are not converted by it. That which troubled them was, they could not imagine whence our Saviour had his power to do those mighty works, and to speak things importing such a wisdom given unto him; they could not conceive how one that had never sat at the feet of their doctors, but had been bred up as a mechanic, should have such wisdom and knowledge, or such a power to work miraculous operations.

Is not this the carpenter. This makes it appear probable that our Saviour did, till he was thirty years of age, work with Joseph in his trade, whether of a carpenter or a mason (for τεχνων, signifies either). It is certain he did not begin to appear publicly and to preach till he was thirty years of age, and it is not probable that he lived all these years in idleness.

The son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon; that is, the kinsman, (as most interpret it), supposing Mary the mother of our Lord had no more children: I shall not determine it. They say these four were the children of Mary, sister to the mother of our Lord, and the wife of Cleophas. Mr 15:40 16:1, we read of James, Joses, and Salome, as the children of that Mary; but of Judas and Simon we read not.

And they were offended at him; that is, although they heard such things from him, and saw such mighty works done by him, as they could not but think required a Divine influence and power, yet because by their reason they could not comprehend how one who had almost thirty years lived as a mechanic amongst them, should come by any such acquaintance with or extraordinary influence from God, their passion quickly went over; and though they were more modest than, with their corrupt teachers, to say he did this by the devil, yet neither would they receive him and believe him, but slighted and despised him; as if God's influence had been tied to their schools of the prophets.

Mark 6:4

Ver. 4-6. Experience tells us that familiarity breeds a contempt. Our Saviour (though there was a deeper cause) assigns this the cause why those of Nazareth paid him no greater respect. Unbelief in us bindeth the hands of God.

He could there do no mighty works, c.: he could not, not from a defect of power, but the exercise of Divine power is always regulated by wisdom, and in consistency with his wisdom he could do no mighty works there: for the end of our Saviour's miracles being either to convert unbelievers to the faith of the gospel, or to confirm weak believers in it, he foresaw that the performing of miracles there would be without any saving effect, and suspended his miraculous power. Besides, he was highly provoked by their obstinate infidelity, and would not work great wonders amongst them; only he cures a few sick persons.

And he marvelled because of their unbelief: his Divine doctrine was so convincing, and the fame of his glorious works done in places near them was so universal and credible, that there was just cause of his rational wonder that they did not believe. Though our Saviour left them in their infidelity, he did not leave his blessed work, going *round about the villages, teaching*. Still preaching appeareth to have been our Saviour's great work, how light a thing soever some make of it. I cannot but observe how little reason men have to glory in or to trust to any external privileges:

how little other aids and assistances, without the special influences of Divine grace, signify to the begetting of faith in unbelieving souls, and removing their prejudices against the doctrine of the gospel! Christ's own country is as bad as any other.

Mark 6:7

Ver. 7,8. Mark had before told us of the election of the twelve, Mr 3:14, which neither Matthew nor Luke mention: here he gives us an account of their mission, which is mentioned by both them also. The instructions which he gave them are much the same with what we meet with in Mt 10:1-42, and there opened. He would have them, upon their first mission, commit themselves to and find the experience of the Divine providence; and therefore he charges them,

1. To take no money as a reward of their pains.
2. Not to go provided with any sustenance, or money to buy any; only they might take a walking stick in their hands, for, as Matthew reports it, he forbade them taking any staves to bear burdens, as well as any scrips; or it may be he meant two staves, that if one had any way miscarried, have been broken or lost, they might have another at hand.

Mark 6:9

Ver. 9. Go in your ordinary habits, making no provision for yourselves, as travellers, who think they may need something before their return.

Mark 6:10

Ver. 10,11. Mt 10:1-42, gives us a larger copy of the instructions given by Christ to the twelve than doth either Mark or Luke: See Poole on "Mt 10:12", and following verses to Mt 10:15.

Mark 6:12

Ver. 12,13. They executed both the trusts which Christ had reposed in them, preaching the gospel, and by miraculous operations confirming the doctrine which they brought to be from heaven. John Baptist, and Christ, and the twelve all preached the same doctrine,

Repent; that is, turn from your former sinful courses, which if men do not, Christ's coming will profit them nothing.

And anointed with oil many that were sick. James directed this *anointing with oil* also *in the name of the Lord*. It is disputed amongst learned men whether this anointing with oil was the using of oil as a medicine, having a natural virtue, (for it is certain in that country there were oils that were of great natural force for healing), or only as sacramental and symbolical, signifying what they did was from that unction of the Spirit of Christ which they had received, not by their own power or virtue, and representing by anointing with oil, that is an excellent lenitive, the refreshing and recovery of the diseased. But it is not probable, considering that our Lord sent the disciples to confirm the doctrine of the gospel which they preached, that he should direct them in these operations to use means of a natural force and efficacy, which had at least much abated of the miracle; besides, James bids them anoint the sick with oil *in the name of the Lord*. So as they doubtless used oil as symbolical, testifying that what they did was not by their own power and virtue. Nor did the apostles always use this rite in healing. Peter and John used it not in their healing the lame man, Ac 3:6: *In the name of Jesus Christ (say they) rise up and walk*. He declareth the use of it, Ac 3:16, only to show, that Christ's name through faith in his name was that which made the lame man whole. So that it being both a free rite, which they sometimes used and sometimes not, and a rite annexed to miraculous operations, to declare the effect was from Christ, not from their power, in a miraculous and extraordinary, not in a natural and ordinary, way of operation, the necessity of the use of it still is very impertinently urged by some, and as impertinently quoted by others, to prove the lawfulness of ritual impositions.

Mark 6:14

Ver. 14-29. We meet with this history in Mt 14:1-12, to which I refer the reader, having there taken in the most considerable things in the relation of the same thing by Matthew or Mark. Mark calleth him *Herod the king*, whom Mark and Luke called *tetrarch*. Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, but under that title he exercised a regal power within his province. The whole history teacheth us several things.

1. The notion of a faithful minister. He is one that dares to fell the greatest persons of what they do contrary to the plain law of God.
2. It also teacheth us the malice of souls debauched with lust. It was not enough for Herodias to have John in prison, where he could do her no great prejudice, she must also have his head cut off.
3. The ill influence of corrupt persons in princes' courts. Herod had in his government appeared no cruel, bloody man. Our Saviour in great quiet preached the gospel, and wrought miracles for the confirmation of it, within Herod's jurisdiction; in Galilee we find no inquiry made by Herod after him, no calling him in question: and for John the Baptist, he did not only tolerate him, but brought him to his court, revered him as a just and holy man, did many things upon his instructions, *heard him gladly*; but by the influence of Herodias (his courtiers being at least silent in the case) he is prevailed with to put him to death.
4. The arts likewise of these persons are observable; they take the advantage of his jollity on his birthday, when in the excess of mirth it was likely he would be more easy and complying to grant their requests.
5. We may also from hence learn the mischief of rash oaths and general promises, especially when they flow from souls ignorant of the law of God; for had Herod understood any thing of that, he could not have thought that his oath could have been the bond of iniquity, or obliged him to any sinful act.
6. We may also understand the mercy of God to that people who are

governed by laws, whose lives and liberties do not depend upon the will of any.

7. Lastly, we may observe how far men may go, and yet be far enough from any saving grace. They may have a reverence for godly ministers, they may hear them gladly, they may do many things. The hypocrite hath some principal lust in which he must be gratified, and cannot bear a reproof as to that.

Mark 6:30

Ver. 30. When Christ chose the twelve, it is said, Lu 3:14,15, that *he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.* So that till Christ's ascension, though they went out from him to preach and work miracles, yet they ordinarily were with him, receiving further instructions. When they had preached, and in his name wrought many miracles, they again returned to Christ, and gave him account both of their doctrine and of the cures they had wrought.

Mark 6:31

Ver. 31-33. Matthew makes the cause of this motion of our Saviour's to have been his receiving the report of Herod's dealing with John the Baptist, as we often find him yielding to the fury of his adversaries. Mark assigns another reason, (as there may be several reasons or motives of and to the same action or motion), viz. that both himself and his apostles might have a little rest. The place which he chose for his recess is called *a desert place*, not because it was wholly not inhabited, but very thinly inhabited. Luke saith it was *a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida*, Lu 9:10; probably some large forest, or common pasture, which belonged to that city, and took a denomination from it. It was a place on the other side of the water, for they went to it by ship. But this water was but a lake, though called the sea of Tiberias, for the people, fetching a little further compass about, went thither on foot, and outwent the motion of the ship.

Mark 6:34

Ver. 34. When Christ came out of the ship, on the other side of the water, he found that the people had outwent the ship; they were come about with a desire to hear the word. He considered what miserable priests and teachers they had, so that they were indeed as sheep without a shepherd, having none but such as were as bad or worse than none. Though he was weary, and came hither for some rest and repose, yet he will deny himself as to his bodily cravings, to do good to their souls: he first preacheth to them, and teacheth them many things; then he confirmeth his doctrine by a miracle, the relation of which followeth (see Mr 6:35-44).

Mark 6:35

Ver. 35-44. We meet with the relation of this miracle Mt 14:15-21, and shall again meet with it Joh 6:1-14. John relates it with some more particular circumstances, telling us it was Philip that moved our Saviour to dismiss them so seasonably, that they might provide themselves food, and making Christ to propound the questions to Philip, where they should buy bread enough for them. He also tells us that it was Andrew who told our Saviour that there was a lad there had five barley loaves and two fishes.

But all three of the evangelists agree in the main, both as to the quantity of victuals, five loaves and two fishes; and the quantity of the people fed with them, five thousand; and the number of the baskets full of fragments taken up, which was twelve. John also addeth the effect of this miracle upon the multitude, Joh 6:14; they said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.* For further explication of this piece of history, See Poole on "Mt 14:15", and following verses to Mt 14:21. See Poole on "Joh 6:5", and following verses to Joh 6:13.

Mark 6:45

Ver. 45,46. If this desert where Christ was were, as Luke saith, Lu 9:10, a desert belonging to Bethsaida, those words, εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς βηθσαιδαν, are ill translated *unto Bethsaida*, and the marginal note in our larger Bibles is better, *over against Bethsaida*. Our Saviour here first sends away his disciples by water, then he dismisses the multitude to go to their own homes. Then he goeth up into a mountain to pray. We find Christ very often in the duty of secret prayer, very often choosing a mountain, as a place of solitude, for the performance of it, and very often making use of the night for it, which is also a time of quietness and solitude: which lets us know that secret prayer is necessary, not only for the bewailing, and confessing, and begging pardon for our secret sins, (for Christ had no such), but for our more free and more near communion with God; for although God filleth all places, yet we shall observe that God, in his more than ordinary communion with his people, hath not admitted of company, of which Abraham, and Moses, and Jacob, and all the prophets are sufficient instances.

Mark 6:47

Ver. 47-52. See Poole on "Mt 14:24", and following verses to Mt 14:33. By the sea here is meant the lake of Gennesaret.

The fourth watch of the night was after four in the morning. The foregoing part of the night our Saviour had spent alone upon the mountain in prayer.

They were sore amazed in themselves, and wondered. For they considered not, &c. Had they diligently considered by what power five loaves and two fishes were multiplied to a quantity to feed five thousand men, besides women and children, they would not have been amazed, either at the sight of Christ safely walking upon the water, or at the wind ceasing when he came into the ship; but these things had not made that due impression upon their hearts which they ought to have done. The time was not yet come when Christ would have his Divine nature fully revealed to them, and till he opened their eyes, and wrought in their hearts a full persuasion of that, it was not in their power so to apprehend it, as to give a full assent to it, and to act accordingly. This is that which is here called hardness or blindness of heart.

Mark 6:53

Ver. 53-56. See Poole on "Mt 14:34", and following verses to Mt 14:36. The charity of this people to their sick neighbours is very commendable, and instructive of us as to our duty to do good to others, as to their bodily wants and necessities, so far as we are able; but how much greater is that charity, which is showed to people's souls, inviting them to Christ that they may be spiritually healed! It was not their touching the hem of his garment, nor of his body, which healed these sick persons, those who had a hand in crucifying of him did both; it was the virtue that went out from Christ, upon the testification of their faith, by coming to him, and

touching, and desiring to touch, the hem of his garment: neither is it men's coming to the congregation, and hearing the word of God, that will heal their souls, unless there goeth forth a Divine power from the Spirit of grace upon men's hungering and thirsting after Christ in his ordinances, and by faith laying hold upon the promise exhibited in the preaching of the gospel.

Mark 7:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 7:1-13 The Pharisees finding fault with his disciples for eating with unwashen hands, Christ reproveth them of hypocrisy, and of making void the commandments of God by the traditions of men.

Mr 7:14-23 He teacheth that a man is defiled, not by that which entereth in, but by that which cometh out of him.

Mr 7:24-30 He healeth the daughter of a Syrophenician woman,

Mr 7:31-37 and a man that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech.

Ver. 1-13. See Poole on "Mt 15:1", and following verses to Mt 15:9. By the notion of *traditions*, our Saviour understandeth not such things as were delivered to them by God in his law, but such things as were delivered to them by the elders, that is, their rulers in the church in the former times; for, Mr 7:9, he opposeth traditions to God's commandments, and said the latter were neglected by their zeal for the former: to give countenance to which traditions, as the papists would impose upon us to believe, that Christ communicated some things to his apostles, and they to the primitive churches, by word of mouth, which have been so transmitted from age to age; so the Jews pretended that God communicated his will in some things to Moses, which Moses did not publish to the people. And as the former pretend a power by Christ left to the church to determine rituals; so the Pharisees (their true predecessors) pretended a suchlike

power. Amongst others, besides the *divers washings* mentioned by the apostle, Heb 9:10, amongst the *carnal ordinances, imposed only until the time of reformation*, they had invented many other washings, as *sepimenta legis*, hedges to the Divine law. They washed their hands often, when they came from market, or before they did eat, not for decency and neatness, but out of religion, lest they should have been defiled by touching any heathens, or any polluted things; and not their hands only, but their pots and cups, their beds and tables, and brazen vessels; as indeed there is no stop, when once men have passed the hedge of the Divine institution, of which popery is a plentiful instance, where it is hard to discern an ordinance of God in the rubbish of their superstitious traditions. And it is very observable, that superstitious men are always more fond of, and zealous for, the traditions of men in their worship, than keeping the commandments of God. It is with the papists more heinous to violate Lent than to violate the sabbath; for a priest to marry than to commit whoredom. This zeal in them ordinarily produces a neglect, or slight esteem, of the plain commandments of God. So it did in the Pharisees, Mr 7:9; upon which our Saviour calleth them *hypocrites*, Mr 7:6, and telleth them this worshipping of God was vain, sinful, and idle, and impertinent; there was in it a derogating from the authority of God, and arrogating of an undue authority to themselves, by their commands making those things necessary which are not so; and, as commonly it happeneth, when human inventions are over urged and multiplied, some are urged destructive of the Divine law, so it was with those Pharisees; so they had done as to the fifth commandment, of which we have spoken plentifully: See Poole "Mt 15:4", and following verses to Mt 15:6. Our Saviour goeth on, showing their ignorance and blindness, in imagining that any person could be defiled by eating with unwashen hands.

Mark 7:14

Ver. 14. Our Saviour's calling *all the people unto him* before he spake what next followeth, and his prefacing that discourse with, *Hearken every one of you, and understand,* lets us know that what he was about to say was a point of great moment, well worth their learning and observation.

Mark 7:15

Ver. 15,16. The addition of these words, *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear,* confirm what I observed before, that our Saviour looked upon what he said as a truth of very great moment, and withal as such a notion which carnal hearts and superstitious persons had no ears to hear. This great truth was, That a man in the sight of God (for of such defilement he alone speaketh), could be defiled by nothing but what came from within him. How easily would a popish doctor have answered this: Doth not disobedience to the church's commands come from within us? Our Saviour therefore must be understood of such things as come from within in disobedience to the commands of God; such are those which he mentions, Mr 7:21,22; for all things that come from within do not defile the man. And it is true, that a disobedience to the commands of any power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is a thing which cometh from within and defileth a soul, if it be a disobedience in such things which God hath given them a power to command, but if not the case is otherwise.

Mark 7:17

Ver. 17. That is, concerning this saying of his, which appeared to them dark, for a parable sometimes in Scripture signifieth no more, Ps 49:4; yet one would think that our Saviour's saying was plain enough. But custom is a great tyrant. The prejudice they had received from their superstitious teachers blinded them, and locked up their souls from receiving true and spiritual instructions. We see the same thing every day. What a heinous

thing do the blind papists think it is to eat flesh in Lent, or on one of their fish days! Never considering by what law of God any men are restrained in such things. Our Saviour in the next words checks their blindness (see Mr 7:18-23).

Mark 7:18

Ver. 18-23. Christ checks his disciples for understanding things no better. Ignorance is more excusable in those who are strangers to God and Christ than in those that have relation to him. In our Saviour's enumeration of those things which come out of the heart, several things are reckoned up which are the overt actions of the tongue, eye, hands; but our Saviour saith all these flow from the heart, for the actions of the outward man are but the imperate actions of the will, and things past the imaginations and understanding, before they come at the will, to be chosen or rejected. Here are but some sins reckoned instead of many, for it is true of all our evil actions, that they are first hatched in the heart, and are first entertained in our thoughts, in our understandings, then chosen by our wills, and then the bodily members are commanded by the soul to the execution of them. Mark reckoneth more than Matthew, but in both the enumerations are imperfect, and some sins are named instead of all. Nothing but sin defileth the man. Sin hath its first rise in the heart, and floweth from thence. See Poole on "Mt 15:18", and following verses to Mt 15:20.

Mark 7:24

Ver. 24-30. Matthew records this history with several considerable additions; See Poole on "Mt 15:21", and following verses to Mt 15:28, where we have largely opened it.

Mark 7:31

Ver. 31-37. This history is recorded by Mark only.

And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. We heard, Mr 7:24, of his going into those coasts; some think that our Saviour did not go out of the Jewish country, though he went to *the coasts of Tire and Sidon*, which were pagan countries.

He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. That Decapolis was a union of ten cities so called, is plain by the name; but what those cities were, and whether they lay on the same side of Jordan that Galilee did, or on the other side of Jordan, is disputed; most think they lay on the Galilean side.

One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech: some think that he was dumb, but the word signifies one that spake with difficulty, so as it is likely his deafness was not natural; (for all naturally deaf, are also dumb; we learning to speak by hearing); besides that it is said after the cure, that *he spake plain*: it was probably an accidental deafness happening to him after that he could speak. Their beseeching Christ to put his hand upon him, proceeded from their observation of him very often to use that rite in his healing sick persons.

And he took him aside from the multitude, not seeking his own glory and ostentation, *and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue.* All these things were *ex abundanti*, not necessary actions, or naturally efficacious for his cure; but our Lord sometimes used no signs or rites, sometimes these, sometimes others, as it pleased him.

And looking up to heaven, he sighed, pitying the condition of human nature, subject to so many miseries, defects, and infirmities, and saith, *Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.* By the word of his power he made the world, and by the word of his power he upholds it, and by the same word

of his power he restoreth any lapsed or decayed part of it. He speaks, and it is done.

And straightway his ears were opened: nature obeyeth the God of nature. Concerning his charge of them not to publish it, and their disobedience to it, I have had occasion once and again to speak, and must confess I can neither satisfy myself in the reason from my own thoughts, nor from what I read in others. This miracle hath no other effect on the people than astonishment, and confession that what he did was well done; which was the common effect of Christ's preaching and miracles upon the most.

Mark 8:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 8:1-9 Christ miraculously feedeth four thousand persons.

Mr 8:10-13 He refuseth the Pharisees a sign.

Mr 8:14-21 He warns his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, and explains his meaning.

Mr 8:22-26 He giveth a blind man sight.

Mr 8:27-30 The people's opinions, and Peter's confession, of him.

Mr 8:31-33 He foreshows his own death, and rebukes Peter for dissuading him from it.

Mr 8:34-38 He shows his followers that they must deny themselves, and not be ashamed of him and his gospel.

Ver. 1-9. These verses give us an account of another miracle wrought by our Saviour, of the same nature with the one which we had in Mr 6:30-44; only there five thousand (besides women and children) were fed with five loaves and two fishes, here four thousand are fed with seven loaves and a few fishes; there twelve baskets full of fragments were taken up, here but

seven. We meet with the same history in Mt 15:32-38; See Poole on "Mt 15:32", and following verses to Mt 15:38. Both miracles testified Christ to have acted by a Divine power, and were certainly wrought to prove that the doctrine which he delivered to them was from God; both of them show the compassion that he had for the sons of men, showed to them not only with relation to their spiritual, but also to their corporal wants and infirmities. In both of them is commended to us, from his great example, the religious custom of begging a blessing upon our food when we sit down to it, and receiving the good creatures of God with thanksgiving. From both of them we may learn, in the doing of our duty, not to be too solicitous what we shall eat, or what we shall drink. God will some way or other provide for those who neglect themselves to follow him. From both we may also learn our duty to take a provident care to make no waste of the good things which God lends us. These are the chief things this history affords us for our instruction.

Mark 8:10

Ver. 10-13. Matthew saith, he *came into the coasts of Magdala*; it is probable they were two contiguous tracts of land. We often read of the Pharisees coming to our Saviour to ask a sign. Had they not signs? What were all the miracles he wrought but signs of his Divine power and mission? But they ask for a sign from heaven, such a sign as Moses, Joshua, and Elijah gave them, by this means making a trial of his Divine power. Our Saviour, who never wrought miracles to satisfy men's curiosity, but only to confirm their faith, refuseth to show them any such sign as they desired, and leaves these coasts.

Mark 8:14

Ver. 14-21. We met with this whole history, with some additions, in Mt 16:5-12; See Poole on "Mt 16:5", and following verses to Mt 16:12. It teacheth us both a lesson of human frailty, and what is our Christian duty: of our frailty, in not considering the works of the Lord for us, so as to make any use of them for the time to come. God doth his great works of providence to he had in remembrance, and that not only with respect to himself, that he might be glorified by us upon the remembrance of them, and this not only by our rejoicing in him, but also by our trusting in him, and not desponding under such like difficulties as God by any of them hath delivered us from. And also with respect to our duty, that we might in present exigences relieve ourselves from former experiences: and if we do not thus conceive of God's dispensations, we do not perceive, nor understand, the meaning and will of God in them; though we have eyes we see not, though we have ears we hear not, and in remembering we remember not, our remembrance is of no benefit, no advantage at all unto us. Our Saviour, indeed, did not at all speak here of bodily bread; though he did bid them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, he spake to them about the doctrine of the Pharisees, and so Matthew tells us they (after this reproof) considered, though he (after his accustomed manner) spake to them under a parabolical expression. Saith he: What though you have forgotten to bring bread, do not you know, have not I, by two miraculous operations, taught you that I am able to furnish you with bread, though you have none, or such a quantity as is very insufficient? God expects of us that we should so keep in mind his former dispensations of providence to us, under straits and difficulties, as to trust in him when his providence brings us again into the like difficulties, yet not declining the use of any reasonable and just means for providing for ourselves. Thus David knew, and understood, that God had delivered him from the lion and the bear, while going against Goliath, 1Sa 17:31-58; he made it a ground of his confidence: so also Ps 116:8: and Paul, when he concluded God would deliver because he had delivered. God, when he *brake the heads of leviathan in pieces, gave him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*, Ps 74:14: he intends former mercies to be food for his people in following straits and exigences.

Mark 8:22

Ver. 22-26. This miracle is only mentioned by Mark particularly, possibly because of two singularities in it:

1. With reference to the signs he used.
2. With reference to the gradual cure.

Our Saviour sometimes used some signs in his miraculous operations, sometimes he used none, but by the word of his power alone healed them; in the signs he used, to let the people understand there was nothing in them, he often varied; sometimes he laid his hands upon them, sometimes he took them by the hand, sometimes he used one sign, sometimes another. Here:

1. He takes the blind man by the hand.
2. He leads him out of the town, the inhabitants being not worthy to see a miracle: it was one of the cities upbraided by our Saviour for their impenitency and unbelief; Mt 11:21.
3. He spit on his eyes: so Mr 7:33.
4. Then he twice put his hands on him.

Christ was wont to heal at once; here he healeth by degrees; so as the healing of this blind man was a true pattern of his healing spiritual blindness, which usually is done gradually, but perfected at last as this bodily cure was.

Mark 8:27

Ver. 27,28. Herod, and those that followed him, judged Christ to be John the Baptist raised from the dead, or to have the soul of John the Baptist clothed with other flesh. Others conceived him to be Elias, of whom they were in expectation that he should come before the Messias. Others thought he was Jeremias, as Matthew saith, or one of the old prophets; they could not tell what to determine of one who appeared to them in the shape of a man, but did such things as none could do, but the Divine power either immediately, or mediately, putting forth itself in a human body.

Mark 8:29

Ver. 29,30. Luke reports no more of this than Mark, but Matthew reports it much larger, giving us a further reply of Christ to Peter; See Poole on "Mt 16:15", and following verses to Mt 16:20, which we have there discoursed largely upon. I shall only say here; That if so great a point as Peter's primacy had been understood by Christ's disciples of that age to have been settled by that answer of our Saviour, it is likely two of the evangelists would not have omitted an account of it. If they had forgotten it, there is no doubt but some or other of Christ's disciples would have put them in mind of it. Our Saviour's charge that they should tell no man of him, seemeth to him, that although our Saviour was willing to be taken notice of as a prophet, yet he was not willing as yet to be taken notice of as the Messiah, or Son of God, which latter Matthew reports as added to his confession; and perhaps both Mark and Luke, in their following words, give us the reason, for if we observe it, he immediately falls into a discourse of his suffering, and he might possibly think, that a weak faith of his Divine nature would be overthrown by the sight of his subsequent sufferings. So that he reserved the publication of himself to be the Son of God, until such time when (as the apostle said, Ro 1:4) he was *declared so with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from*

the dead.

Mark 8:31

Ver. 31. Our Lord is elsewhere said to have taught his disciples, according as they were able to bear, or to hear, what he spake unto them. He did not at the first teach them that he must suffer death: the doctrine of the cross of Christ was like new wine not fit to be put into old bottles; yet necessary to be taught them, lest when they saw it soon after they should have been offended, as indeed they were to some degree, notwithstanding the premonition they had of it. With the doctrine of his suffering, he joins also the doctrine of his resurrection the third day: so saith Matthew. Mark saith, *after three days*, μετα, which seemeth to be a difference between the two evangelists, and also a difficulty, when it is certain that our Saviour did not lie three entire days in the grave. But either Mark reckons the time from his first being betrayed and apprehended, so it was after three days; and Matthew speaketh only of the time which he lay in the grave, that was but part of three days; or else it was the fault of our translators to translate μετα, *after*, because indeed it often so signifies, whereas it sometimes signifies *in*, which had better fitted this text, to make it agree with Matthew. This is Grotius's and Beza's observation, (see his notes on the text), and is abundantly justified by Mt 27:64, where his adversaries desired of Pilate that the sepulchre might be made fast εως της τριτης ημερας *until the third day*, because he had said while he was alive, Μετα τρεις ημερας εγειρομαι, *After three days I will arise*, which if they had understood of after the third day fully spent, they would not have petitioned that the sepulchre should have been made fast only until the third day, but it is plain they understood it the third day he would rise. So *after three days* here is, after the third day is come, not after the third day is past, which neither agrees with Matthew nor yet with the truth. If any desire further to make out this notion, he may read the learned Beza's larger notes on this verse.

Mark 8:32

Ver. 32,33. It is from hence manifest, that notwithstanding the confession

of Peter, that he was the Christ, yet they had a very imperfect knowledge of the business of the redemption of man by the blood of Christ, and a very imperfect faith as to the hypostatical union of the Divine and human nature in the one person of the Redeemer; for had Peter known these things he would have seen a necessity of Christ's dying and resurrection from the dead, in order to the redemption and salvation of man, and would neither have dissuaded our Saviour from it, nor doubted of the truth of what was spoken by him, who was the Truth, and could not lie. Our Saviour's telling him ου φρονεις, *thou savourest not*, might have been more favourably translated, thou understandest not, or thou mindest not, and must not be understood of a total ignorance, or regardlessness, or not relishing, but of a partial knowledge, the want of a due regard to or saviour of the things of God. Thou preferrest thy carnal affection to me, and indulgest thine own desires, to the hinderance of the honour and glory of God, and the salvation of souls, which I came to purchase by these my sufferings, and so art a Satan; an adversary, to me, who came to fulfil the will of my Father, and must not therefore give the least ear to thee, who, in what thou sayest, dost but seek and take care to please thyself. This leadeth him to the following discourse.

Mark 8:34

Ver. 34. Our Saviour hearing Peter so stumble at the news, he told him, and the rest, of the cross which himself was to endure; and taking notice of his exceeding fondness to gratify himself, to the prejudice of a far greater good, he now tells them the law of his discipleship, that as he was not to please himself, nor to decline afflictions for the gospel, so neither must any who would be his followers; they must all deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow him. And because this was a hard saying to flesh and blood, and what was to be their certain lot, he presseth it upon them by several arguments to the end of this chapter. See Poole on "Mt 10:38". See Poole on "Mt 16:24".

Mark 8:35

Ver. 35. We met with this argument twice in Matthew, to the notes upon

which I refer the reader. See Poole on "Mt 10:39". Mark adds those words, *and the gospel's*, thereby teaching us that a suffering for the sake of the gospel, with therefore owning the propositions of it, or living up to the precepts, is by Christ accounted a suffering for Christ's sake. ψυχην here must signify *life*, (as it is translated), for a man cannot lose his soul for Christ's sake and the gospel's. The meaning is, He that will deny and abandon me and my gospel, out of a desire to save his temporal life, shall lose it, or at least shall lose his soul's portion in a better life. But he that is willing to lose his life, or will run the hazard of it, for my sake, for his owning and professing me, and the faith of my gospel, or living up to the rules, shall either save it *in specie*, by the special workings of my providence for him, delivering him out of his persecutors' hands, or shall be recompensed with an eternal life, of much more value.

Mark 8:36

Ver. 36,37. Luke saith, if he lose himself and be cast away. Though ψυχην was rightly translated *life* in the former verse, the sense justifying that translation of it there, yet here it is as truly translated *soul*; for there are many things which men value in proportion with their lives, their honour, estates, nay, many value their lusts above their lives; and Christ himself here teacheth us that his disciples ought to value his honour and glory, and their steady profession of faith and holiness, above their life, because he that will lose his life shall save it. See the notes on these words, See Poole on "Mt 16:26".

Mark 8:38

Ver. 38. These words occurring twice in Matthew, Mt 10:33 16:27, have been before spoken to: See Poole on "Mt 10:33". See Poole on "Mt 16:27". Luke repeats them most perfectly, as here they are recorded. Mark expounds Luke's words, where he saith that Christ *shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*. By the *glory of the holy angels* is meant no more than attended by the holy angels, according to Mt 13:41, and 1Th 4:16, and other scriptures. Matthew saith, Mt 16:27, *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and*

then he shall reward every man according to his works: and Mt 10:33, Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. There are two passions which prevail upon men to make them apostatize in a day of temptation, fear and shame. The first prevailed upon Peter, in the high priest's hall. The second we find no instance of any good man guilty of in holy writ, and it most certainly argues a rotten and a corrupt heart. When men think it beneath their honour and quality to own the despised and maligned truth and ways of God, this is not only a denial of Christ, but the most inexcusable denial of him. Nor can any such persons look for any thing less at the hands of Christ, than that he should think it much more beneath his honour and dignity in the day of judgment to own them.

Mark 9:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 9:2-10 The transfiguration of Christ.

Mr 9:11-13 He instructs his disciples concerning the coming of Elias.

Mr 9:14-29 He casteth out a dumb and deaf spirit.

Mr 9:30-32 He foretells his own death and resurrection,

Mr 9:33-37 checks the ambition of his disciples,

Mr 9:38-50 bidding them to hinder no one from working miracles in his name, and warning them to avoid offences.

Ver. 1. To *taste of death*, is the same with to die, or to begin to die, or to experience death: compare with this text Ps 34:8 Lu 14:24 Joh 8:52 Heb 2:9 6:4,5 1Pe 2:3.

Till they have seen the kingdom of God come: our evangelist addeth, *with power.* It cannot be meant of the day of judgment, unless in the type of it, which was in the destruction of Jerusalem, (of which many understand it), for some of the apostles, more doubtless of Christ's disciples, outlived the fatal ruin of that once famous city. Others understand here by *the kingdom of God* Christ's resurrection from the dead, when Christ's kingdom began to be fully made known, Ac 10:42.

Mark 9:2

Ver. 2-10. Both Matthew and Luke, as well as Mark, bear record to the truth of this history: See Poole on "Mt 17:1", and following verses to Mt 17:9. Our Saviour was pleased thus to fortify these three of his disciples against his passion, which they were soon to see; and also to confirm their faith as to his Divine nature. Why Moses and Elias, rather than any others, appeared, is but a curious question, of no great use to us if resolved, and not possible to be resolved. These three disciples, by this apparition, saw our Saviour owned by Moses, who gave the law, and by Elias, both of them in great repute with the Jews. The three disciples could know neither of them (dead many hundreds of years before they were in being) but by revelation: probably Christ told them who they were. What their discourse with Christ was in the general Matthew telleth us. There is no considerable thing in this evangelist's relation which we did not meet with in Matthew, which may supersede any further labour about it here.

Mark 9:11

Ver. 11-13. Christ had been telling his disciples that he should suffer. The Jews had a prophecy, not only that the Messiah should come, but that he should *be cut off, but not for himself*, Da 9:26. Only this hindered the certainty of their persuasion that Christ was he, because Elias was not yet come, whom they did expect, Mal 4:5; for they expected the coming of Elias in person, whereas the prophecy was to be understood of one *in the spirit and power of Elias*, as the angel expounded it, Lu 1:17. They also expected that Elias, when he came, should make a great change in their world, and bring all things again into order; but still their eye was upon a

secular change, and a restoring of them to that liberty of their country which they formerly enjoyed, whereas the prophecy, Mal 4:6, is expounded by the angel, Lu 1:16,17, *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. —to turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* The disciples, being Jews, were under the prejudices of these notions about Elias, so commonly received by the doctors of their church and the generality of their people. To this our Saviour answers, The thing was true, Elias (that is, one *in the spirit and power of Elias*) was, according to the prophecy of Malachi, to come before the Messiah; but they had overlooked him, for indeed this Elias was come, Mt 11:14, and by his preaching the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins had endeavoured to restore all things, that is, to make a great change in the hearts and lives of the Jews, but they had put him to death. He further telleth them, that John had told them of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. He did indeed tell them so, when he pointed to him passing by, and said, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away* (or taketh up or beareth) *the sins of the world*, Joh 1:29. So that this was no just prejudice to their believing that he was the true Messiah.

Mark 9:14

Ver. 14-16. When Christ came down from the mountain of transfiguration to his disciples, whom he had left at the foot of the mountain, he saw a great multitude got together about them, and discerned some scribes (companions of the Pharisees and teachers of the law) mixing themselves with his disciples, and arguing with them. They had often attempted our Saviour to no purpose but their own shame and confusion; in his absence they fall in with his disciples, who were yet raw in the faith; over them they hope to get a great conquest. The evangelist doth not plainly tell us what the subject matter of their discourse was. Though there be no question but the scribes in this discourse pursued their design to expose and vilify Christ and his disciples, and to that purpose, taking advantage of our Saviour's absence, discoursed with them about many things, yet Mr. Calvin doth (not improbably) judge that a great part of their discourse was

about our Saviour's casting out of devils, and their power in that thing derived from him, they being at the present nonplussed, and not able to exert that power in the casting out of a devil, with which one was possessed, who in our Saviour's absence was brought to them. That which maketh this probable is, not only that this act of our Saviour more troubled and galled them than any other, and put them to that miserable refuge, (out of which our Saviour had lately beaten them), to say, That he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils; but also that when our Saviour, coming in to the timely rescue of his disciples, *asked the scribes, What question ye with them?*

Mark 9:17

Ver. 17-29. This famous history is also recorded by two other evangelists, Matthew and Luke; we have opened it in our notes on Mt 17:14-21; (See Poole on "Mt 17:14", and following verses to Mt 17:21) and considered what Mark and Luke have to complete it. For our instruction we may learn several things from the consideration of it:

1. The great goodness of God in preserving us from the power of evil spirits, as also the daily working of his providence for our preservation. What but this kept this man from being destroyed by the fires and the waters into which he had been often thrown by the evil spirit?
2. That the shorter the devil's time is, the more he rageth, Mr 9:20. This is true, both as to the devil himself, and his instruments: Re 12:12, *The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* Thus, in the moment of conversion Christians often meet with the strongest conflicts of temptation.
3. The fault is not in Christ, but in ourselves, if we receive not that mercy from him which he hath, and which we stand in need of, and beg from him—*If (saith Christ) thou canst believe.*
4. God rewardeth weak faith where it is attended with a sincere desire of increase. This poor man showed a very imperfect faith in saying, *If thou*

canst do any thing; but it being in some degree sincere, the Lord rewardeth it, though weak, he desiring an increase of it, and that God would from his goodness supply what was defective in his faith.

5. The great cures both of our bodies and souls in some cases, require more extraordinary and importunate addresses and applications unto God, more especially where evils are more inveterate. For other things relating to this history;

See Poole on "Mt 17:14", and following verses to Mt 17:21.

Mark 9:30

Ver. 30-32. Our Saviour, as the time of his suffering approached more nearly, did more frequently inculcate it to his disciples, that being forewarned, they might also be forearmed against the temptation of it; and we learn from Lu 24:21, that all was too little, for when they saw these things come to pass they began to flag as to their faith: they said, *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.* Our Saviour said unto them, *The Son of man is delivered;* which is expounded by Mt 17:22,23, *The Son of man shall be betrayed.* He was already delivered in the sure counsel of God, and what God hath revealed shall be done, because of the certainty of the effect, is often in Scripture spoken of as a thing already done. That phrase, Mr 9:31, *the third day*, τη τριτη ημερα, expounds that other phrase which we meet with, Mr 8:31. μετα τρεις ημερας, which we translate *after three days*, and makes the

meaning of the evangelists plain to have been as we determined it.

Mark 9:33

Ver. 33,34. This ambition of the disciples we have had occasion before to discourse of; See Poole on "Mt 18:1". It has founded upon their mistake of the true nature of the kingdom of the Messiah, which they at this time, and a long time after, (even to the time of Christ's ascension, as appeareth by Ac 1:6), understood of a temporal, secular kingdom, in the administration of which he should deliver the Jews from all slavery and bondage: this made their minds so often run of dignities and places which he should, in that administration, have a power to dispose of. This made the mother of Zebedee's children petition for places for her two sons.

Mark 9:35

Ver. 35-37. Matthew's recital of this passage expounds Mark; he saith Christ said, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of God. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.* Luke also relates this passage something more shortly, but without any contradiction to what is said by the other evangelists. The sense is plain: our Saviour's design was to check the ambition and ignorance of his disciples, never more unseasonably showed than now, when a suffering time was so hard at hand. He at first did it by word of mouth, telling them, *If any man desire to be first, he shall be last of all*, the least valuable in the eyes of God, and he would have them value such a person least. Humility is that which most exalts a soul in the eyes of Christ, and setteth it highest in his esteem. But it is observable our Lord doth not say, he that is the first, but he who desireth to be first. God is a God of order, not of confusion; there can be no order without a first as well as a last. But Christians (ministers especially, for he is here speaking to the twelve) ought to be sought out for, not to seek places of preeminence and dignity: he that is

first in seeking them, is usually last as to any true worth deserving them, and ought last to obtain them. Then he teacheth them humility by the type of a little child, which he setteth in the midst of them, telling them they must be like that little child, (saith Matthew,) not in all things, but in the want of ambition, in a carelessness as to the great things of this life. And whosoever entertained or showed kindness to such a one, Christ would take it as done to himself; and what kindness was showed him, reached not to him only, but to his Father who sent him. There are also other things in little children commended to us in holy writ, but this is manifestly what our Saviour here intends. See Poole on "Mt 18:1" and following verses to Mt 18:5.

Mark 9:38

Ver. 38-40. Here a question arises worthy of our discussion a little: Seeing these miraculous operations were performed by a Divine power, and for such an end as the confirmation of Christ's Divine power, how could any one cast out devils in the name of Christ, and yet not follow him and his disciples?

1. It is apparent that this person was no enemy to Christ or his gospel, by what our Saviour saith, both in Mr 9:39 and in Mr 9:40.
2. It is evident that the casting out of devils was no saving effect of the Holy Spirit. Christ saith, Mt 7:22, that some should say, *In thy name have we cast out devils*, to whom in the day of judgment he would say, *Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity*.
3. It is plain that this man was no such person as Sceva's sons, of whom we read Ac 19:14-16, for the devils resisted them, though they also used the name of Christ.

It was a time exceedingly famous for some of the more extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and it is not to be wondered if some in this time, for the glory of God, received some crumbs of that plentiful benevolence, though they were but imperfect disciples, yet being no enemies. Caiaphas

prophesied, Joh 11:51,52; and though I do think that the children of the Pharisees, mentioned, Mt 12:27, as persons that cast out devils, is best interpreted of those sent out by Christ, (the twelve and the seventy), yet some are of another mind. Some think this man, though he did not follow Christ and his disciples as a constant companion, yet was one who favoured and had received the gospel; or else one of John's disciples, and so one who, though he was not formally joined with the followers of Christ, yet was a friend of that great Bridegroom. So as John and the rest, forbidding him, seemed to be guilty of two no small errors:

1. Envyng for Christ's sake, as Joshua did for Moses's sake, Nu 11:28, as John's disciples did for their master's sake, Joh 3:26, willing that Christ, and those whom he sent out, should have all the honour of those miraculous operations.
2. Limiting the grace of Christ to that congregation which followed Christ, and the twelve; a thing that good men are too prone unto.

How much better was the spirit of Paul, who tells us, Php 1:15,18, that although some preached Christ of envy and strife, yet he rejoiced, and would rejoice, that Christ was preached, whether in pretence, or in truth. Christ would have all his people of such a spirit, as not to hinder, but commend, not to envy, but to rejoice in the doing of good by any, whether they did follow him or did not. Some think that at that time it pleased God, that, for the honour of his Son Jesus Christ, he did concur with those that named his name in such miraculous operations. Sure we are that Christ reproveth John, and commandeth them not to forbid this man, giving this for a reason, That his owning the name of Christ, so far as to use it in such an operation, had at least so much kindness for him as he was no enemy, he would not curse him, nor speak evil of him; which cometh up to that of the apostle, 1Co 12:3,

No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. For he that is not against us is on our part: if a man be not an open enemy to Christ, he ought to be presumed to be his friend, at least so far as not to be discouraged in doing a good work.

Mark 9:41

Ver. 41. We meet with the same in substance, Mt 10:42: there the phrase is, *in the name of a disciple*; here it is expounded, *because ye belong to Christ. In my name*; upon my account, believing you have a relation to me.

Mark 9:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 18:6".

Mark 9:43

Ver. 43-48. See Poole on "Mt 5:29". See Poole on "Mt 5:30", where the same things occur. Matthew only mentions the hand and the eye. All have the same significance, viz. that it is better to deny ourselves in some particular satisfaction, than to hazard eternal salvation for the gratifying the appetite in it.

Mark 9:49

Ver. 49. The phrase of this text is so difficult, and the sense of it so necessary to be understood, that it hath deservedly exercised the parts of many interpreters, and given them a latitude to abound in interpretations. Those who would rightly understand it,

1. Must have a retrospection to the six verses immediately preceding, where our Lord had persuaded to the mortification of our most beloved and profitable or pleasant lust, under the notion of cutting off the right

hand or foot offending, and plucking out the right eye, under the penalty of going into a fire that shall never be quenched: as also to the law, Le 2:13, which runs thus: *And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.*

2. They must next consider the nature of salt and fire. It is of the nature of salt, by drying up the over much moisture in meats, to preserve them from putrefaction; and to cause smart to living flesh. And of fire, to separate things not of the same kind in compounded bodies, and also to cause pain and smart.
3. They must know, that *every one* in the former part of the verse is the same with *every sacrifice* in the latter part; for every man and woman living will, or shall, be a sacrifice to God. Godly men are not only priests, 1Pe 2:5,9 Re 1:6 5:10, but sacrifices, Ro 12:1.

Wicked men, though indeed they be no priests, (voluntarily giving up themselves unto God), yet they shall be sacrifices, like the *sacrifice in Bozrah*, Isa 34:6, or *in the north country by the river Euphrates*, Jer 46:10: see also Eze 39:17 Zep 1:7. The saints are both priests and sacrifices. These things premised, the difficulty of the text is not great. Our Lord had been in the former verses persuading the mortification of men's dearest lusts, under the notions of cutting off the right hand or foot, and plucking out the right eye; and pressing this exhortation, from the eligibility of it, rather than (keeping them) to be thrust into hell, where the worm never dies, and where the fire never goeth out. Now saith he in this verse, *For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.* God hath a fire, and a salt, which every man must endure. He hath a purging fire, to take away men's dross and tin. Some he baptizeth *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, Mt 3:11 Lu 3:16. And he hath a consuming, tormenting fire, a *fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*, Heb 10:27. It is true, the Lord's sacred fire of his Holy Spirit will, like fire and salt, cause smart while it purgeth out our lusts, like the cutting off of a right hand or foot; but judge you whether it be not better to endure that smart than to endure hell fire, for every one must endure one of these. Yea, and every one must be *salted with fire*. The saints shall be seasoned with influences of grace, Eph 4:29 Col 4:6; and

they shall by the Holy Spirit of God be preserved by faith through the power of God to salvation, till their purity of heart and holiness of life shall issue in an incorruptibility of being and blessed state, 1Co 15:52-54. They shall be *salted* in or *with fire*, that is, preserved in or by the holy fire of God's Holy Spirit; (nor is salting with fire so hard a metaphor as being baptized with fire seems to be, nothing being so contrary to fire as water is); others, viz. wicked and ungodly men, who will not endure this fire, nor be salted with this salt, shall yet be salted with another fire, and with another salt, which is the fire that never goes out mentioned Mr 9:44,46,48, which will cause them a much greater pain and smart, and in which, being separated from all their comforts and satisfactions, they shall be salted, that is (as to their beings) preserved, that they may be the objects of the eternal wrath and justice of God; for every one must go through one or the other fire, every soul must be seasoned with the one or other salt. Now judge you then whether it be not more advisable for you to be seasoned with this salt, though you indeed shall endure some smart in your acts of mortification and self-denial, than to endure hell fire, where you will be salted too, as well as burned; that is, not tormented only, but preserved in torments, so as you shall never consume, but be ever dying; for with one or other of these fires every person, every man or woman breathing, must be salted and seasoned, as of old every sacrifice was to be with salt.

Mark 9:50

Ver. 50. We met with the former part of this verse: See Poole on "Mt 5:13". In that text he compared his disciples, whether preachers or others, to salt, because by their doctrine, and holy life and example, they as it were kept the world sweet. I do not see why we should not so understand him speaking here, understanding by *salt*, persons salted, seasoned with the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and who the fear and love of God. These are good. But if any appearing such, apostatize, or be lazy and inactive, what are they good for? Or what shall season them?

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another. Here salt is taken in a little different sense. In the former sense themselves were the salt, here they are commanded to keep salt in themselves. They could not have been salt to season others, if themselves had not first been salted with

gracious habits of knowledge, faith, love, fear of God: now saith our Saviour, Keep this salt in yourselves, let not this holy fire die from the altar, take heed of losing your savour.

And have peace one with another. It is one thing in the nature of salt to unite and knit the parts of the body salted together, so as the upholding of a union and peace one with another will declare that you have salt in yourselves. By this (saith the apostle) we know we are translated from death to life, if we love the brethren. In order to which men must avoid envy, and emulation, and contests for superiority, &c.; a contest of which nature gave the first occasion of these discourses.

Mark 10:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 10:1 Christ teacheth in Judea,
Mr 10:2-12 answereth the Pharisees' question concerning divorce,
Mr 10:13-16 blesseth the children that were brought unto him,
Mr 10:17-22 instructs a rich man how to attain eternal life,
Mr 10:23-27 showeth how hard it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God,
Mr 10:28-31 promises rewards to all who have forsaken aught for his gospel's sake,
Mr 10:32-34 foretells of his own death and resurrection,
Mr 10:35-45 puts by the ambitious suit of the sons of Zebedee, and checks the indignation of the other disciples thereat,
Mr 10:46-52 giveth sight to blind Bartimaeus.

Ver. 1. We have nothing in this whole chapter but what we found before in Mt 19:1-20:34. When Christ had the discourses mentioned in the former chapter, he was in Galilee; now he departeth from Galilee, passes through Samaria, and comes into the province of Judea, which being the chiefest, and that in which Jerusalem was, he was there more than before troubled

with the scribes and Pharisees; who were now watching him in all his words and actions, that they might have somewhat whereof to accuse him.

Mark 10:2

Ver. 2. Matthew adds, *for every cause*, that is, for any cause, unless for adultery, for so the Pharisees had interpreted the law permitting divorce, De 24:1, taking advantage of those words, *that she find no favour in his eyes*, and interpreting the term *uncleanness* following, of any deformity, or other cause of dislike.

Mark 10:3

Ver. 3-9. The order of the discourse as recorded by Mark something differeth from that in Matthew, but the evangelists were not so accurate in that, but took care only to set down the substance of the discourse, as appears from the relation of several other parts of the history. In the notes on Mt 19:3-6 the reader will find whatsoever stands in need of explication opened. See Poole on "Mt 19:3", and following verses to Mt 19:6.

Mark 10:10

Ver. 10-12. Mt 5:32 19:9, interprets this passage of Mark, by adding those words, *except it be for fornication*. None but Mark alone hath what is in Mr 10:12, which concerneth the woman; which hath made some doubt whether the woman, in case of the husband's adultery, may sue a divorce from him, but the most judicious interpreters say there is an equal right on both sides. I am sure the reason is equal on both sides. The adultery of the husband dissolves the tie and covenant of marriage, as well as the adultery of the wife. It is yet a more groundless and unreasonable opinion of some

from the words of this and the parallel texts, that persons divorced may not marry again; as if God's end in the law of divorce in case of adultery were merely to separate the wife from the husband's bed. Whether the person that hath given the cause for the divorce may marry again, may be more disputed, not only because such persons are dead persons in the law of God, but because such a liberty granted would open a flood gate to iniquity of that kind, while persons weary of their correlates should by this means gratify their lusts, and also obtain their desires. But I shall not determine it. Certain it is our Saviour here speaketh only of divorces for trivial causes, which the law of God doth not warrant; and in such cases the person marrying again must necessarily commit adultery, because the band of the former union holds. As to the question, whether divorces be lawful in no cases but that of adultery; See Poole on "Mt 5:31", See Poole on "Mt 5:32". See Poole on "Mt 19:3", and following verses to Mt 19:11.

Mark 10:13

Ver. 13-16. This is reported both by Matthew and Luke, only they both omit what we here have, Mr 10:15. By *the kingdom of God*, is doubtless to be understood the word of God, or rather the grace of Christ in the gospel: he that doth not receive it with humility and modesty, without disputing, without malice, like a little child, shall never come into heaven.

Mark 10:17

Ver. 17. Luke saith he was a *ruler*. His question signified, that he believed such a thing as a happy eternal existence of good souls, and that he desired it, and that he was willing to do something in order to the obtaining a share and portion in it.

Mark 10:18

Ver. 18. That is, originally good, and supremely good, or perfectly good. Herein our Saviour doth not deny himself to be God, but checked him who did not believe him such, yet called him God.

Mark 10:19

Ver. 19,20. That is, in that latitude to which the doctors of the Jewish church at that time expounded them.

Mark 10:21

Ver. 21,22. See Poole on "Mt 19:21", See Poole on "Mt 19:22". Christ had a humane compassion towards so civil a person, but showeth him, that love was the fulfilling of the law, and that love is seen in a resolution to yield a universal obedience to the will of God. Our Saviour imposes a special precept upon him, conjoined with two general precepts concerning all the disciples of Christ, to which his not yielding obedience showed that he was mistaken in his notion, that he had from his youth kept the commandments, though it might be true according to that law interpretation of them given by the Pharisees.

Mark 10:23

Ver. 23-27. See Poole on "Mt 10:23", and following verses to Mt 10:26, where the same history occurred, and all the additions to it here are opened.

Mark 10:28

Ver. 28-31. See Poole on "Mt 19:27", and following verses to Mt 19:30. Our Saviour having blessed the poor, especially such as had stripped themselves of all for his sake and the gospel's, Peter raised up hopes to himself, who had no riches to trust in or have his heart cleave unto, and had stripped himself of all that little he had to follow Christ. Christ assures him that neither he, nor any other that had done so, should by it lose any thing; for though in this life they should have persecutions, yet they should be amply rewarded in value, if not in kind, in this world, and with infinite happiness in the next.

Mark 10:32

Ver. 32-34. See Poole on "Mt 20:17", and following verses to Mt 20:19. This is at least the third time that our Saviour instructs his disciples as to his passion, toward which he was now going, and that with such a readiness, that, to the amazement of his disciples, he led the way, and outwent them. It is observable that Christ here describeth his sufferings more particularly than before. He tells them here that he should be first *delivered to the chief priests and the scribes*, and they should *condemn him*. Then they should *deliver him to the Gentiles*, (such were the Romans and Pontius Pilate), and they should *mock him, scourge him, spit on him*, put him to death, but he should rise again the third day. Luke adds, Lu 18:34, *They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken*. How hardly do we believe what seems contrary to our interests! But we are to hear for the time to come. This premonition was afterwards of use to them, they remembered the words of Jesus when the things were come to pass. Preachers' words are not lost, though at present they be not believed or hearkened to.

Mark 10:35

Ver. 35-41. See Poole on "Mt 20:20", and following verses to Mt 20:24, where we have the same history with little or no variation, only Matthew tells us that James and John did that by their mother which Mark reports as done by them in person; but there is nothing more ordinary even in our common discourse than to speak of that as done by ourselves, which is done by another on our behalf, at our command or solicitation. Both the evangelists agree in all the other parts of their relation, and in the following discourse also very much.

Mark 10:42

Ver. 42-45. See Poole on "Mt 20:25", and following verses to Mt 20:28, where we had the same almost verbatim. Those that think it worth the while to inquire what critical men say about that phrase, οι δοκουντες αρχειν, which we translate *they which are accounted to rule*, may find it in Pool's Synopsis Criticorum. When all is said, doubtless the οι αρχοντες in Matthew, and οι δοκουντες αρχειν, and Luke's οι βασιλεις, signify the same persons. And our translators might as justifiably have translated those words, *the rulers*, as *they which are accounted to rule*, which is a translation the active participle will hardly bear.

Mark 10:46

Ver. 46-52. This history is a mere narrative of a matter of fact, in the relation of which no difficulties occur which stand in need of explication.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate it with but two considerable differences. Matthew mentions two blind men, the other two evangelists but one. It is probable the one was the more remarkable, and his father a person of some note, therefore he is mentioned also; the other probably some obscurer person. Luke reports it done, *as he was come nigh unto Jericho*; Matthew and Mark, *as he went out of Jericho*: but though Luke saith that he sat begging by the way as they came nigh to Jericho, yet he doth not say the miracle of his cure was wrought then. It is most probable that he followed Christ into Jericho, crying after him, and also when he went out of Jericho, and that it was as he went out of Jericho (as Matthew and Mark say) that our Saviour took notice of him, called him, and wrought the cure upon him. See Poole on "Mt 20:29", and following verses to Mt 20:34.

Mark 11:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 11:1-11 Christ rideth into Jerusalem in triumph,
Mr 11:12-14 curseth a barren fig tree,
Mr 11:15-19 drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple.
Mr 11:20-26 The cursed fig tree is dried up: Christ exhorteth to faith in prayer, and to forgiveness of enemies,
Mr 11:27-33 and silences the priests and others, who called in question his authority.

Ver. 1. Matthew saith nothing of Bethany, mentioned by Mark and Luke. It was the town of Lazarus, Joh 11:1. Some think that Bethany was rather a tract of the Mount of Olives than a town, and that Bethphage was a kind of suburbs to Jerusalem, at the remotest part of which Bethany began, but the town itself called Bethany was fifteen furlongs, near two miles, from

Jerusalem. It was the place from which Christ ascended to heaven, Lu 24:50, a sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem, Ac 1:12, at some distance from the town called Bethany. From this place, called still Bethany, upon the borders of Bethphage, he sent out two of his disciples.

Mark 11:2

Ver. 2. Matthew saith *an ass and a colt*. The other evangelists speak only of the colt. The heathens, by a light of nature showing them there was a reverence and honour due to the Divine Being, were wont, in the use they made of creatures for any Divine service, to use such as they had not before used for common uses: the Philistines, 1Sa 6:7, sending home the ark, set it on a new cart, and took two milch kine on which there never came yoke. But our Saviour probably made choice of such a colt for the further notice of the miracle, (colts being when first backed more unruly), or for some other wise end which we know not.

Mark 11:3

Ver. 3-6. See Poole on "Mt 21:3", &c. All along the story of our Saviour's life and actions we shall find certain indications of his Divine power and virtue: his knowing men's thoughts, and declarations of such his knowledge to them: his certain prediction of future contingencies, being able to tell persons such particulars as no man could know. How could he who was not God have told the disciples, that at their entrance into the village they should find a colt on which never man sat, that the owners would not resist strangers to take it away? Yet notwithstanding all this disciples very imperfectly believed him to be so, until he was risen from the dead. The time was not yet come when Christ would have this published, and till he gave them a power to believe it, i.e. to have a full persuasion of it, all these moral arguments were not sufficient to work in their hearts a full persuasion. The faith of the Christians of that time seemeth to have had these three gradations:

1. They believed him a great Prophet, that had received great power from God.

2. They owned him as the Messiah, as the Son of David, and now and then they would drop some expressions arguing some persuasions that he was the Son of God.
3. Last of all, they came to a firm persuasion that he was truly God, as well as man, after that he was risen from the dead, and declared with power to be such, as the apostle saith.

Yet what means imaginable could they have had more than,

1. A voice from heaven declaring it.
2. The Spirit descending in a visible shape.
3. The great miracles he had wrought by sea and land, commanding the winds and the waves, healing incurable diseases and all others in an instant without use of rational means, raising the dead, &c.
4. His telling their thoughts, foretelling future contingencies, &c.

Yet all these produced in the generality of the people no more than amazement and astonishment; and in the apostles themselves, rather a disposition to such a faith, or an opinion or suspicion of such a thing, than a firm and fixed persuasion concerning it.

Mark 11:7

Ver. 7-10. See Poole on "Mt 21:8". See Poole on "Mt 21:9". It appeareth by our Saviour sending for the colt, that this little rural triumph, and the acclamations attending it, were designed by him both to show the people:

1. That he was the King whom God had promised to set upon his holy hill of Zion; and;
2. That his kingdom was not of this world. For, as he elsewhere saith, if his

kingdom had been of this world, his servants would have fought for him.

So it may be said: You may know his kingdom that he spake of was not of this world; for if it had there would have been found a more stately beast than the colt of an ass, or at least a saddle for that; the ways would have been covered with tapestry, rather than poor men's coats and cloaks; and other heralds would have been found than a company of children and poor men, crying *Hosanna*. This was such a thing as would but have ridiculed a government to be afraid of, nor indeed (to give Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor at this time in Jerusalem, his due) do we find him the least disturbed, though the scribes and Pharisees, (which were the Jewish churchmen), seeing their kingdom going down, were something nettled; and though they had more modesty than to bring this little triumph in judgment against him, yet their great charge was, his declaring and making himself a King, in order to which this was the greatest show he ever made.

Mark 11:11

Ver. 11-19. See Poole on "Mt 21:12", and following verses to Mt 21:17, where having so largely spoken to this part of the history, considering also what Mark and Luke hath to complete the history, few words will be needful about it here. Though Mark seems to relate it so, as if the first day Christ came into the temple, looked about it, and did no more till he came back from Bethany (whither he went that night) the next day, yet the other evangelists' relation of it would make one think otherwise, besides that interpreters think it not probable that our Saviour the first night should only look about, and patiently see and suffer those abuses; most do therefore think that our Saviour the first day did cast out those that sold and bought in the temple. In the notes upon Matthew we have given an account of the market in the court of the Gentiles, which was the outward court of the temple, where, through the covetousness of the priests, some say there were constant shops. In the temple there were, the most holy place, into which the priests only entered, and the holy place, into which entered all the circumcised, whether native Jews or proselytes: these two

places they accounted holy. But there was also a court which they called the court of the Gentiles, of which they had no such esteem, but allowed the keeping of shops and markets in it, especially before the passover. Concerning our Saviour's driving out these buyers and sellers, See Poole on "Mt 21:12". See Poole on "Mt 21:13". In those notes also I have fully opened the history concerning our Saviour's cursing the barren fig tree, and given what account interpreters do give of the difficulty arising from Mr 11:13, as to which I have nothing to add here, save this only, offering it to learned persons to consider, whether the sense of these words, ου γαρ ην χαιρος συχων, be any more than, *for there were no figs. He found nothing but leaves, for there were no figs,* as if it had been ου γαρ ησαν συχα. So as χαιρος there should neither signify the common time when figs use to be ripe, nor yet signify the seasonableness of the year for figs, but particularly relate to that tree, which at that time had no figs. But enough hath been before said as to that text.

Mark 11:20

Ver. 20-23. See the notes on "Mt 21:21". It is I confess the opinion of many excellent interpreters, whom I reverence, that the main end of our Saviour's cursing and blasting this fig tree, was to let his disciples see in a type what would be the consequent of a spiritual barrenness. That spiritual barrenness is exceedingly dangerous is out of question; our Saviour teacheth us it plainly by another parable of the fig tree, Lu 13:6-9, and the apostle teacheth us it, Heb 6:7,8. But I see nothing to guide us to any such interpretation of this action of his, which was a miraculous operation, by which as he;

1. Plainly showed his Divine power; so;

2. These verses inform us, that it was his design to show his people the power of faith, that is, a full persuasion, that whatsoever we ask of God according to his will, and which may tend to his glory, shall be done for us.

Which interpretation of this action of our Saviour's solves all the difficulties relating to this story, about which interpreters have so disquieted themselves.

Mark 11:24

Ver. 24-26. See Poole on "Mt 21:22". See Poole on "Mt 6:14". See Poole on "Mt 6:15". See Poole on "Mt 7:7", in which texts we before met with what we have in these verses, teaching us the necessity of faith and charity to those who would so pray as to find acceptance with God. This also lets us know the necessity of people's full satisfaction, that what things they ask of God in prayer are according to the will of God, without which it is not possible they should pray with a full persuasion that they shall receive whatsoever they in prayer ask of God. And because it is impossible we should in this point be fully satisfied, without a Divine revelation, as to things not necessary to salvation, our faith or persuasion can rise no higher, than a full persuasion, that if things of this nature, when we ask them of God in prayer, be such as are for our good, and for God's glory, we shall receive them. The cause was otherwise as to those to whom Christ had given a power to work miracles; what they asked of that nature they must know it was the will of God to effect by them, and they could not without sin doubt of it.

Mark 11:27

Ver. 27,28. Our Lord went every night to Bethany, (two miles, or near as much), and returned in the morning to Jerusalem. Our Saviour walked and

taught in the temple. Matthew saith the priests and the scribes came to him *as he was teaching*; Mark saith, *as he was walking*: possibly he at the same time both walked and taught, for in his whole story we shall observe that he lost no time, if he were walking by the highway, or sitting in the house, wherever he was, we still find him teaching. See Poole on "Mt 21:23", where we had the same thing.

Mark 11:29

Ver. 29-33. See Poole on "Mt 21:24", and following verses to Mt 21:27, where are the same passages opened.

A *prophet* here, Mr 11:32, signifieth, one extraordinarily inspired and sent of God to reveal his will, so as his baptism must needs be from heaven. This reputation John it seems universally had, so as to have denied his baptism to have been from heaven, had been to have exposed themselves to the mockings, if not the rage, of the people, which they were loath to do. If they had said, *From heaven*, they had accused themselves for not believing him, Joh 7:48. This makes them choose rather to make themselves doubtful in the case, and giveth our Saviour a fitting occasion to deny them satisfaction as to what they asked of him.

Mark 12:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 12:1-12 In the parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen Christ foretells the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.

Mr 12:13-17 His reply to the insidious question concerning paying tribute to Caesar.

Mr 12:18-27 He confutes the Sadducees who questioned him concerning the resurrection.

Mr 12:28-34 He shows which are the two great commandments of the law.

Mr 12:35-37 He proposes a difficulty to the scribes concerning the character of Christ.

Mr 12:38-40 He cautions the people against their ambition and hypocrisy,

Mr 12:41-44 and values the poor widow's two mites above all the gifts of the rich.

Ver. 1-12. This parable is related by Matthew, and by Luke also: See Poole on "Mt 21:33", and following verses to Mt 21:46. Mt 21:12 tells us, that the rulers of the Jewish church knew that he had spoken this parable against them, and they needs must know it, considering what Matthew adds to this parable, (which Mark and Luke have not), that he also told them, Mt 21:43, *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* By the man planting a vineyard, is to be understood God, who, Ps 80:8-11, *brought a vine out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen, and planted it in the land of Canaan, and prepared room for it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.* It was a noble vine, a right seed, Jer 2:21. *God planted it in a fruitful hill; he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes,* Isa 5:1,2. The church of the Jews then was this vineyard, which God hedged by his providence, and gave them all means necessary for the production of fruit. The servants sent to receive the fruit, so abused by the husbandmen, (as Mr 12:2-5,) were the prophets. 2Ch 36:16 is a compendious exposition of these verses.

They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words and misused his prophets. The son mentioned as sent at last was Christ, and the latter part of the parable is prophetic, foretelling what they should do unto him, and also of the ruin of the Jewish nation and church, and the passing of the gospel to the Gentiles, who should more freely believe in Christ, and embrace and receive the gospel: so as they should not obtain their end; but Christ, though rejected by them, should yet be the Head of a far larger and more glorious church, according to a prophecy owned by themselves as a

piece of holy writ, Ps 118:22. See Poole on "Mt 21:33", &c.

Mark 12:13

Ver. 13-18. See Poole on "Mt 22:15", and following verses to Mt 22:22.

The Sadducees most probably derived their name from one Sadoc, scholar to Antigonus Sochaeus. It is said that the occasion of their heresy was their master's teaching them, that they must not serve God as servants for rewards. Upon which they builded their notion, that there is no resurrection, no rewards nor punishments in another life. They denied the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, and angels, and spirits, Ac 23:8; attributed all to free will, denying fate and destiny; they rejected traditions, and owned no Scriptures but the five books of Moses. They seemed to be a kind of rational divines, that would own and believe nothing but what they could fathom by their reason, or was obvious to their sense; and their doctrine was excellently suited to men's lusts, who desire not to be troubled with any thoughts of a world to come. Nothing more shows the degeneracy and debauchery of human nature than this, that to gratify their sensual appetites more freely in the things of this life, they will be content to think of annihilation, (which nature not debauched abhors), and of quitting all hopes of eternal life and happiness, that they may have a principle to warrant their living like beasts. They come to our Saviour, thinking to flout him and his hearers out of the doctrine of the resurrection, as having insuperable difficulties to clog it. But he that takes the wise in their own craftiness, shows these wise men, that all their wisdom was but folly, and their argument wholly proceeded *ex*

ignoratione elenchi, from their not understanding the thing they would philosophize about.

Mark 12:19

Ver. 19-27. The true question about the resurrection was: Whether the bodies of the dead shall rise or not? Not whether they shall arise with the same qualities, affections, powers, &c. They are sown natural, but they shall rise spiritual, bodies, without affections and qualities disposing them to actions only necessary for the supporting the natural life, such as hunger and thirst, &c.; or for the upholding the world, that while one generation passeth it might be supplied by another, such as an appetite to marriage, &c.: what needs this when all generations shall be determined in the everlasting world? So as in truth these learned men showed themselves dunces, wholly ignorant of what they came to argue upon. They should first have proved that there would be any need of wives, or any such thing as marriage, after the world should have an end. In the mean time our Saviour proveth the resurrection out of the writings of Moses, owned by themselves for holy writ. Without a resurrection Abraham would not be Abraham, nor Isaac Isaac, nor Jacob Jacob. See the notes on this part of the history: See Poole on "Mt 22:24", and following verses to Mt 22:32.

Mark 12:28

Ver. 28-34. See the notes on "Mt 22:35", and following verses to Mt 22:40, where whatsoever Mark here hath is opened.

Mark 12:35

Ver. 35-37. See Poole on "Mt 22:41", and following verses to Mt 22:46. Matthew saith that Christ spake this to the Pharisees, who were very far from acknowledging Christ God man, or indeed expecting a Messiah that should be so. Had they owned Christ, and the hypostatical union of the two natures in him, the answer had been easy.

Mark 12:38

Ver. 38-40. See Poole on "Mt 23:5", and following verses to Mt 23:7, See Poole on "Mt 23:14". The more men and women want of real worth and value, the more they seek themselves a reputation from their habits, either the gravity, or the riches and gaudery, of them; and the more they court titles of honour and dignity, and affect external respect. Whereas nobler souls despise these things, being like pictures well drawn, which need no superscription to tell men what or whose they are. Good men are satisfied from themselves, and as not careless of their reputation, so neither careful who men say that they are. But these verses are more fully discoursed on Matthew twenty-three, to which I refer the reader for satisfaction.

Mark 12:41

Ver. 41-44. This is the only piece of history in this chapter which we did not before meet with in Matthew. Luke hath this, Lu 21:1-4. For the understanding of this history, both as to the letter and profitable instruction arising from it, we must know, that in the temple (where our Saviour now was) there was a treasury, or rather treasuries. And famous Dr. Lightfoot said, there were treasure chambers, called *Lesacoth*, and thirteen treasure chests, called *Shopheroth*, all called by the general name of *Corban* or *Corbonah*. Two of these chests were for the half shekel, which every Israelite was to pay according to the law, Ex 30:12,13. There were eleven more, the inscription upon which showed what money should be put there.

1. For the price of the two turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

2. For the burnt offering of birds.

3. For the money offered to buy wood for the altar.

4. For those who gave money to buy frankincense.

5. For those who offered gold for the mercy seat.

6. For the residue of the money for the sin offering.

7. For the residue of the money for a trespass offering.

8. For the residue of an offering of birds.

9. For the surplus of a Nazarite's offering.

10. For the residue of a leper's trespass offering.

11. For whosoever would offer an offering of the herd.

The Israelites, tied to their several offerings, were not tied to provide them themselves, but they might bring sums of money, with which the priests provided them, and if there were a surplussage, it was put into one or other of these chests. These chests were placed in that part of the temple which was called the court of the women, not because none but women might come there, but because women might go no further, as the court of the Gentiles (into which Jews came) was so called because the Gentiles might go no further. Our Lord so sat, as he observed men come and put their offerings into one of these chests. He saw many Jews that were rich casting in much money of silver, or gold, or brass, though brass money was most in use. Amongst others a poor widow came; *she threw in two mites, which make a farthing*. As to the value of what she threw in, let us hear the learned Dr. Lightfoot in his *Temple Service*, chapter 19.

"The weight of the piece of silver mentioned in the law, was three hundred and twenty barley corns. The wise men added to it, and made it four hundred and eighty-four middle barley corns. This made four Denarii; each Denarius made six Meahs, which in Moses's time was called a Gerah. The Meah made two Pondions; the Pondion made two Issarines or Assariusses. The Assarius, or Issarine, was the weight of four barley corns, the weight of a mite was half a barley corn."

According to this rate, the widows's two mites made in silver the weight of a middle barley corn. This our Saviour calls *all that she had*, and *all her living*. The Greek is *all her life*, that is, all that she had to sustain her life. Arias Montanus thinks that that which is meant is, all that she had to uphold her life for one day. For it is said, that this quantity was usually reckoned the livelihood, or a sufficiency, for a poor man for a day. Christ said, she had cast in more than any of the rest; not more strictly, but *pro rata*, comparing what they were able to do with what she was able to do. The two great instructions which this history affords us are:

1. That the poorer sort of people are not excused from good works, 2Co 8:2,3.
2. That God in his acceptance of our good works looks at the heart, the will, and affections, not at the quantum of what we do: *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2Co 8:12. It is the obedience and love which God accepteth, not the quantum of the gift.

Mark 13:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 13:1,2 Christ foretells the destruction of the temple,
Mr 13:3-23 shows what signs and calamities should go before,

Mr 13:24-31 and what should happen at the time of his coming,
Mr 13:32-37 no man knoweth the day or hour; we must therefore watch and pray, that we may not be found unprepared.

Ver. 1,2. The perishing nature of the splendid and gay things of this world, are fitter objects for the meditation of such as are Christ's disciples, than the splendour and magnificence of them, especially when they are the privileges of a sinful people. Sin will undermine and blow up the most famous structures. It is a good thing for Christians not to set their hearts upon them. See Poole on "Mt 24:1". See Poole on "Mt 24:2".

Mark 13:3

Ver. 3,4. Matthew puts two things more into the question, *What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* The best of men have a great curiosity to know futurities, things that shall hereafter come to pass. All the other part of this chapter is spent by our Saviour in an answer to these three questions, according to St. Matthew, or this one question, according to Mark and Luke. Some have attempted curiously to distinguish betwixt the signs intended by our Saviour, as relating to each period. But certainly those interpreters do judge best, that think our Saviour intended to let them know, that the destruction of Jerusalem should be a type of the destruction of the world at the last day, and that the same things should go before the one, and be signs of it, that should go before the other. And whoso readeth the history of Josephus, of what happened before the destruction of Jerusalem, and after this time, will find that there were few or none of these signs, that are here mentioned, but came to pass before the dreadful destruction of that so famous place; yet we must doubtless look for many, if not all, the same things to come to pass before the general destruction of the world in the last day.

Mark 13:5

Ver. 5,6. See Poole on "Mt 24:4". See Poole on "Mt 24:5". This is the first sign, fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem in part, and which had been fulfilling ever since; and probably before the day of judgment the number of such impostors will increase.

Mark 13:7

Ver. 7,8. Matthew adds *pestilences*. Luke saith, *pestilences, and fearful sights and great signs from heaven*. See Poole on "Mt 24:6", and following verses to Mt 24:8. Here are two or three more signs put together:

1. *Wars, and rumours of wars;* great commotions in nations, which though they may be at other times, yet probably may be more extraordinary before the day of judgment.
2. *Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes.*
3. *Fearful sights,* and apparitions in the air and the heavens. Such there were (as Josephus tells us) before the destruction of Jerusalem; and though these things be seen before the last day, yet it is most probable they will be greater before the day of judgment than at any time before; and for *fearful sights, and great signs from heaven,* they ordinarily go before some great judgment of God upon places, and therefore the observation of them by the heathen (as we learn by Livy and others) seems but to be a piece of natural religion; and Christ giving these things as signs of the approaching ruin, first of Jerusalem, then of the world, will make thinking Christians behold them with a religious fear, though not to undertake to expound them particularly or prophesy upon them.

Certainly we ought to look upon them as prognosticating some great work of God, and usually of judgment upon sinners.

Mark 13:9

Ver. 9. This, so far as concerneth those to whom Christ spake, can only be a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem; but so far as it concerneth others, it is also a sign of the end of the world. It is the fifth sign he gives them; the persecution of the ministers of Christ and the saints of God, for the preaching and profession of the gospel. See Poole on "Mt 24:9".

Mark 13:10

Ver. 10. I am prone to think that our Lord gives this not only as a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem, but of the end of the world, and the latter principally; for before the destruction of Jerusalem (which was in less than forty years after Christ's death) the gospel was not preached to *all nations*, otherwise than as *all* signifies *very many*. And I do think that all places shall have the gospel preached to them before the day of judgment, after another manner than either it was possible it should be preached to them within forty years after the death of Christ, or than many places have had it preached amongst them to this day. For though the Holy Scriptures, and ecclesiastical historians, give us a somewhat large account of the gospel being preached in Europe, Asia, and in Africa, yet we have little account from any of them of its being preached in America. I am not wholly ignorant of what those writers tell us, of Thomas the apostle's preaching to the Indians, and of Trumentius and his colleague, but there are very few preachers that any stories give an account of gone to the Indians, whither I believe the gospel must go before that Christ comes to judgment.

Mark 13:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 10:19". See Poole on "Mt 10:20". By *take no thought*, he means, take no anxious thoughts to disquiet yourselves.

Mark 13:12

Ver. 12,13. This is but an amplification of the fifth sign, given us Mr 13:9, viz. a furious persecution, eminently made good in the Jewish persecution before the destruction of Jerusalem; in the pagan persecution, for three hundred years after Christ; and in the popish persecutions at this day. See

Poole on "Mt 24:9". See Poole on "Mt 24:10".

Mark 13:14

Ver. 14-20. See Poole on "Mt 24:15", and following verses to Mt 24:22, where we have before opened all these passages. This sign doth manifestly relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, and can have no relation to the end of the world. In our notes on Mt 24:13-51, we have showed what is meant by the *abomination of desolation*, and to what place in Daniel it refers. Luke expounds it, Lu 21:20, *When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies*, the Roman armies, abominable for the idols that in them were worshipped. The sign was this, When you shall see the lion, an armies besieging Jerusalem, be assured God will soon deliver it into their hands, whatever vain hopes men may suggest of their holding out or driving them away. Let every one of you with all imaginable expedition shift for yourselves. God will surely deliver up the city, when that time comes. And before the taking of the city, he tells them, there shall be such affliction (by reason of their intestine factions and divisions) as never any people experienced. As to these things, see the notes on Mt 24:15-22.

Mark 13:21

Ver. 21-23. See Poole on "Mt 24:23", and following verses to Mt 24:25. The history of Josephus, and those Roman historians who wrote the history of those times that went immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, and give us account of the taking of that city, are the best commentary on these verses. It hath been often said, that the Jews were in expectation of a Messias, and are so still. But by him they understood not a person who should be God man, and save his people from their sins, and set up a spiritual kingdom in the world, but a secular prince, who should come of

the house of David, and restore them to their civil liberties. So that the name of Christ was a fair name to patronize any rebellious faction, where the leader would arrogate it to herself, especially if he could pretend to the house of David. Near the destruction of Jerusalem, several persons used these arts to draw people after them to defend themselves, and to stand up for their liberties. Our Saviour having discerned his disciples tinctured with this common error of the nation, and knowing what would come to pass, gives his disciples warning to avoid these delusions, and not to run after such pretenders, to their ruin and destruction.

Mark 13:24

Ver. 24-27. The usage of these phrases, of the darkening the sun and the moon, and the falling of the stars, to signify the ruin of nations, and changes wrought in them; as in Isa 13:10, as to the destruction of Babylon, and Eze 32:7, to express the change the providence of God made by the destruction of Egypt, as also to signify the change made in the world by setting up the gospel, to which purpose they are used by Joel, Joe 2:31; hath given interpreters a latitude to interpret these verses,

1. With relation to the destruction of the Jews, which made a great change as to the Jewish church and state.
2. And with reference to the change made by setting up the gospel church.

But Mr 13:26,27 incline me rather to interpret them of the end of the world. For though those other expressions are used to express great changes and mutations, yet it is not said of any of them, *Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, &c.* Which phrases do so agree with those other texts, where Christ's second coming to judgment is expressed certainly, that I cannot but think our Saviour speaks here with reference to that. See Mt 13:41 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16 Re 1:7.

Mark 13:28

Ver. 28-31. See Poole on "Mt 24:32", and following verses to Mt 24:35, where we met with the same things almost word for word; so as more words need not be repeated here in the explication of these verses.

Mark 13:32

Ver. 32,33. See Poole on "Mt 24:36". See Poole on "Mt 24:42". *Ideo latet ultimus dies ut observentur omnes dies*, God hath concealed from us the knowledge of the last day that we might watch all our days. See the notes on Matthew, in what sense Christ saith he did not know the last day and hour. Watching is opposed to sleeping. There is a natural sleep, and a spiritual sleep, of which the apostle speaks, Ro 13:11 Eph 5:14. The latter is here principally intended, to which the watching here commanded is opposed, and signifies an industrious, diligent care to keep ourselves from sin, upon a prospect of the last judgment, and the consideration of the uncertainty of the particular year or day when it shall be; together with such a bodily watching, as may be subservient unto that end, and fit us for prayer. But the watching principally intended, is a striving against sin, which is the spiritual sleep; and thus it is expounded by Lu 21:36, compared with Mr 13:34,35.

Mark 13:34

Ver. 34-37. In the Greek, those words, *For the Son of man is*, are not, but those, or some such like, are necessarily to be understood to make up the sense. The watching here again twice called for is the same with that before mentioned. The sense of these verses is the same as before; the uncertainty of the time when Christ cometh to judgment should oblige all men to be diligent and industrious to keep themselves from sinning, that

they may be ready at what time soever he cometh. He mentions only the four parts of the night, having spoken of sin under the notion of sleeping, and holiness under the notion of watching.

Mark 14:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 14:1,2 The chief priests and scribes conspire against Christ.

Mr 14:3-9 A woman pours precious ointment on his head.

Mr 14:10,11 Judas covenants to betray him,

Mr 14:12-21 Christ eats the passover, and showeth that one of his disciples should betray him.

Mr 14:22-26 He institutes his last supper,

Mr 14:27-31 foretells the desertion of all his disciples, and Peter's denial of him.

Mr 14:32-42 His agony and prayer in the garden.

Mr 14:43-52 He is betrayed by Judas, and apprehended: his disciples flee.

Mr 14:53-65 He is carried before the council, falsely accused, examined, pronounced guilty and treated with indignity.

Mr 14:66-72 Peter's denial, and repentance.

Ver. 1,2. Matthew saith the same, only he bringeth it in as said to the disciples by Christ. This must be said upon that day in the week which we call Tuesday, for Friday was the passover day, when began the feast of unleavened bread. See Poole on "Mt 26:1", and following verses to Mt 26:5.

Mark 14:3

Ver. 3-9. See Poole on "Mt 26:6", and following verses to Mt 26:13, where this piece of history is fully considered, with the differing circumstances related by our evangelist and by St. John.

Mark 14:10

Ver. 10-16. See Poole on "Mt 26:17", and following verses to Mt 26:19.

Mark 14:17

Ver. 17-21. See Poole on "Mt 26:20", and following verses to Mt 26:25, where is opened whatever is necessary for the understanding of these words, in which nothing of moment is varied, save only that Matthew reports Judas as being at this time particularly discovered. John hath nothing of this, unless the supper mentioned Joh 13:1-38 were this supper, of which more shall be said in its order.

Mark 14:22

Ver. 22-26. See Poole on "Mt 26:26", and following verses to Mt 26:30,

where the very small differences between our evangelist and Matthew and Luke are also considered.

Mark 14:27

Ver. 27-31. See Poole on "Mt 26:31", and following verses to Mt 26:35,
on all the discourse.

Mark 14:32

Ver. 32-42. See Poole on "Mt 26:36", and following verses to Mt 26:46.

Mark 14:43

Ver. 43-45. See Poole on "Mt 26:47", and following verses to Mt 26:49.

Mark 14:46

Ver. 46-50. Having, to complete the history of the passion, especially as to what is said of it by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in my notes on Matthew considered all passages relating to what Matthew saith, the things here mentioned being opened in our notes on Mt 26:50-56, need not here again be enlarged upon. See Poole on "Mt 26:50", and following verses to Mt 26:56.

Mark 14:51

Ver. 51,52. This part of the history is only recorded by Mark. What hath made some affirm that this was St. John I cannot tell. John was one of the eleven that were with Christ when Judas came, and though we find him asleep a little before, yet we read not that he was gone to bed, nor can conceive there was any at or near the place. The garment in which he was, in all probability, was a night garment. It is certain it was a loose garment, he could not else, when he was apprehended, have so soon quit himself of it; and being quit of that it seemeth he was quit of all, for the text saith he *fled from them naked*; nor doth the text give him the honour to call him a disciple of Christ at large. Probably it was some young man who, being in his bed, and hearing the noise of the multitude going by his lodging with swords and staves, got up, slipped on his night garment, and followed them, to see what the matter was; and they having apprehended Christ, he followed them. And possibly his unusual habit made them take the more notice of him, staying when the disciples were all fled. Nor can the reason be well given why Mark should record such a passage, unless it were to tell us what we must expect from the rage of persecutors, viz. that our own innocency should not defend us. This young man was not concerned in Christ, only came as a spectator, without any arms. But the sword of persecution useth not to distinguish perfectly. The basilisk (they say) will fly at the picture of a man.

Mark 14:53

Ver. 53-65. This history of our Saviour's examination before the high priest we had in Mt 26:57-68: See Poole on "Mt 26:57", and following verses to Mt 26:68. It should seem the high priests and council were very eager upon this thing. This council seems to have sat up all night, for early in the morning they carried him (condemned by them) to Pilate, and before twelve they brought him out of the city to be crucified. These wretched hypocrites had but the evening before been taking the passover. It was now the feast of unleavened bread. This was now the first fruit of their thanksgiving to God, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; besides that their keeping a court of judgment in a capital case on a holy day, or in the night, were things against all rules of order. But the rage of persecutors can be neither bounded by the laws of God or men. If the servants of God still be thus treated, they are in this more like Christ, who hath told them, that *the disciple is not above his master*. But see further in the notes on Matthew twenty-six.

Mark 14:66

Ver. 66-72. All four evangelists give us an account of this history of Peter's denial of his Master. We have considered what they all say, to complete the history, in our notes on Mt 26:69-75; to which I see no reason to add any thing but the observation,

1. How contemptible means God often useth to take down our pride and self-confidences. Peter, a great apostle, is here humbled by the means of two maids.
2. How naturally one sin draws on another. Peter first tells a lie, then to lying addeth swearing and cursing.
3. How necessary it is for those that would keep from sin to keep out of sinners' company. *I am (saith David) a companion of them that fear thee, Ps 119:63.*
4. How profitable words from God are for the time to come, though at present we find not the use and advantage of them.
5. How different the sinnings of reprobates and saints are, as to the consequences and issues.

Judas sins, repents, and hangs himself; Peter goeth out and weepeth bitterly. Judas repented unto death; Peter repenteth unto life. See more with reference to this history in our notes on Mt 26:75. Thus far we have heard Christ's trial before the ecclesiastical court of the Jews. Thus far what he said Mr 10:33 is made good. He is *delivered to the chief priests, and the scribes, and they have* (as we have heard) *condemned him to death*. But he also said there, —*and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him*. We must see those words verified in the ensuing part of the history, in the next chapter.

Mark 15:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 15:1-5 Jesus is brought bound and accused before Pilate: his silence before the governor.

Mr 15:6-15 Pilate, prevailed upon by the clamours of the people, releases Barabbas, and giveth up Jesus to be crucified.

Mr 15:16-23 Christ is mocked of the soldiers, crowned with thorns, and led to the place of crucifixion.

Mr 15:24-28 He is crucified between two thieves,

Mr 15:29-32 reviled,

Mr 15:33-37 and calling upon God expires.

Mr 15:38 The veil of the temple rent.

Mr 15:39-41 The centurion's confession.

Mr 15:42-47 Joseph of Arimathea begs the body, and buries it.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 27:1". See Poole on "Mt 27:2". Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor in Judea at this time, Lu 3:1. The reasons of their carrying Christ to him, when they had condemned him to death for blasphemy, (a crime cognizable before them, as appeareth in the case of Stephen, Ac 7:54-60), see in our notes on Matthew. What time in the morning they carried him before Pilate is not said, only John saith it was early, and we read it was about the sixth hour, (that is, with us twelve of the clock), when Pilate dismissed him, being by him condemned; so probably they were with Pilate by six or seven in the morning. This morning was the morning after the evening in which they had eaten the passover, and the first day of their feast of unleavened bread: so little did they regard God's ordinance.

Mark 15:2

Ver. 2-20. This history of our Saviour's examination before and condemnation by Pilate, together with the indignities offered him after his condemnation, is recorded in some degree or other by all the four evangelists, by the comparing of which it will appear that Mark hath left out many material circumstances and parts of it. In our notes on Mt 27:11-31, we have compared and considered them all, and shall thither refer the reader; only observing,

1. How much more favour Christ found from a Gentile heathen than from the Jewish high priest, and not favour only, but justice also.
2. How close our Saviour kept upon his guard, not accusing himself.
3. The horrible debauchery of these priests, that they would prefer a murderer, and seditious person, before a most innocent person.
4. The weakness of a corrupt heart to resist an ordinary temptation. Pilate was convinced the prosecution was malicious, that there was no guilt in Christ; yet he must content the people, and is basely afraid of their misrepresenting him to the Roman emperor.
5. That the point upon which Christ was condemned, was his maintaining his spiritual kingdom in and over his church, for he expressly disclaimed any claim to any earthly kingdom before Pilate, as the other evangelists tell us.
6. How punctually the words of Christ are by the providence of God fulfilled; we have now heard how Christ was delivered to the Gentiles, by them mocked, scourged, spit upon, and now going to be killed.
7. How Christ hath made all our bitter waters sweet, sanctifying every cross to us, and taking the curse out of it. He was reviled, imprisoned, mocked, scourged, spit upon, and last of all killed; he hath tasted of all these bitter waters, and by that taste they are made wholesome and medicinal for us; and he hath learned us, that there is no ignominy, shame, and contempt, no indignity and species of suffering, for his sake, in which we may not boast and glory, as being thereby made conformable to the sufferings and death of Christ. And if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together.

Mark 15:21

Ver. 21-37. To make this history complete, all the other evangelists must be consulted, and compared with Mark, who omits many considerable passages recorded by them; we have done it in our notes on Mt 27:32-50, See Poole on "Mt 27:32", and following verses to Mt 27:50, to which I refer the reader, both for the understanding the several passages of this relation, and reconciling any small differences between the relations of the several evangelists. It is the observation of some, that when in Scripture the father is made known by the son, or sons, it signifieth some more eminency in the sons than in the father. Many think that this Simon was a pagan: though it be not certain, yet it is not improbable, that this Alexander was the same who is mentioned Ac 19:33, persecuted there by the Jews; and Rufus, he whom Paul saluteth, Ro 16:13, calling him *chosen in the Lord*. They say they were both at Rome, where they judge St. Mark was when he wrote this history, and that Mark mentions them as those who could attest the truth of this part of the history. The father bare Christ's cross, (or one end of it), there is all we read of him. The sons believe on him who died upon it. So free is Divine grace, fixing where it pleaseth. Concerning the wine mingled with myrrh, we spake in our notes on Mt 27:32-50. Some think our Saviour's friends gave it him to refresh him; but it is most probable it was given him to intoxicate him, that he might be less sensible of the pain he should endure upon the cross: whatsoever they intended, our Saviour refused it, having wine to uphold him which they knew not of. For other things relating to this story, see the notes on Mt 27:32-50.

Mark 15:38

Ver. 38-41. The prodigies happening upon the death of our Saviour, and the passages happening between the time of his expiration and his burial, are more largely reported by the other evangelists than by Mark; we have put them all together, and considered the passages relating to them, in our notes on Mt 27:51-54. See Poole on "Mt 27:51", and following verses to Mt 27:54.

Mark 15:42

Ver. 42-47. The circumstances of our Saviour's honourable burial, as related by this and the other evangelists, are gathered together and opened in our notes on Mt 27:57-66. See Poole on "Mt 27:57", and following verses to Mt 27:66.

Mark 16:1

Chapter Summary

Mr 15:1-8 Christ's resurrection is declared by angels to the two Marys and Salome.

Mr 15:9-11 Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene,

Mr 15:12,13 to two of his disciples going into the country,

Mr 15:14-18 and to the eleven; whom he commissions to preach the gospel to all the world.

Mr 15:19,20 His ascension into heaven; the gospel is preached every where, the Lord confirming the word with signs.

Chapter Introduction

We are now come to the history of our Saviour's resurrection, his several appearances to and converse with his disciples, from the time of his rising from the dead unto the time of his ascension up into heaven, which was forty days. Of all the evangelists, St. John is most full in his relation of this part of the history of our Saviour, which we shall consider in order; for his two last chapters are wholly spent in this part of the history: in the mean time, as we did in our notes on Mt 28:1-20 take notice only of what Matthew hath upon that argument; so we shall, in the opening of this chapter of Mark, take notice only of what Mark hath not concurrent with, and compleatory of, what Matthew had before said (for what he hath of that nature, we shall refer the reader to our notes on Matthew). See Poole on "Mt 28:1", and following verses to Mt 28:20. And here we will also take in what Luke hath that tends to the fuller relation of any thing which Mark hath; not meddling with what John hath, but reserving that till we come to open the fuller account of this whole history, in the twentieth and twenty-first chapters of his Gospel.

Ver. 1,2. Matthew saith, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.* John saith, they came *early, when it was yet dark.* Luke also saith, *very early.* But it is manifest from the history, that they came a second time, of which Mark may speak, passing over their first coming.

Mark 16:3

Ver. 3,4. These were their thoughts as they were coming. Concerning the guard which they had set by Pilate's permission at the importunity of the Jewish priests and rulers, it is probable (the day before being the Jewish sabbath, in the observation of which the Jews were very strict) they had not heard, so were not solicitous as to them; but they knew of the stone rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre: but they were in vain solicitous; when they came they found the stone rolled away, Christ was risen before.

Mark 16:5

Ver. 5-8. Both Luke and John mention two angels in the habit of young men. Matthew speaks of one sitting upon the stone. They might see him sitting upon the stone, and yet find him within also, the motions of angels are quick and undiscernible to our sense, or the stone might be rolled inward. That they were affrighted is no wonder, considering how apt we are to be frightened by any apparitions. Concerning what the angel said to these women, See Poole on "Mt 28:5", and following verses to Mt 28:8. They presently flee from the sepulchre amazed, saying nothing to any till they came into the city, where they tell it to the disciples.

Mark 16:9

Ver. 9-11. Concerning this appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, See Poole on "Mt 28:9", See Poole on "Joh 20:14", and following verses to Joh

20:17 who gives a more full account than any other of this appearance.

Mark 16:12

Ver. 12,13. Of this appearance St. Luke gives us a very large account, Lu 24:13-35. See Poole on "Lu 24:13", and following verses to Lu 24:35.

Mark 16:14

Ver. 14. This most probably is the appearance mentioned Lu 24:36 Joh 20:19. See Poole on "Lu 24:36". See Poole on "Joh 20:19".

Mark 16:15

Ver. 15-18. See Poole on "Mt 28:19". See Poole on "Mt 28:20", where what we have here is largely explained.

Mark 16:19

Ver. 19. Matthew saith nothing of our Saviour's ascension. Mark speaketh of it very shortly. Luke saith, *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* And again gives us this part of this history most fully, Ac 1:1-12. We shall in our notes on Lu 24:51-53 speak more fully to this. We are told, Ac 1:3, that Christ was forty days upon the earth after his resurrection, and, Ac 1:9, that a cloud did receive him. He is said to sit *on the right hand of God*, to distinguish him from angels, whose places are but places of ministration.

Mark 16:20

Ver. 20. Here is now the history of a great deal of following time, shortly epitomized in one verse. The first motion of the eleven was to Jerusalem, Lu 24:52, and this was according to the express command of Christ, Lu 24:49. There they *were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*, Lu 24:53. At Jerusalem *they went into an upper room*, Ac 1:12,13. There they *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*, Ac 1:14, and chose Matthias for the twelfth apostle. The Holy Ghost came upon them, Ac 2:4. Still they continued preaching to the Jews, till the Jews, by their unbelief and persecution, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, they turned to the Gentiles, Ac 13:46. Of God *confirming their word*, that is, his word spoken by them, *with signs following*, the whole history of the Acts of the Apostles is an abundant proof.

Luke 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

Concerning the penman of this history, the certain time when he wrote it, and the occasion of his writing of it, we have little in holy writ; and there is such an uncertainty in traditions, as it is hardly worth the labour to transcribe what men have but guessed at. For those who would have him to be Barnabas, or one of the seventy, they seem not to have considered what Luke himself saith, Lu 1:2, that he wrote, *as they delivered them to him, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word.* By which is fairly hinted to us, that he was no eye witness, nor (from the first at least) a minister of the word. That there was one Luke contemporaneous with Paul, and his fellow labourer, appeareth from 2Ti 4:11 Phm 1:24 Col 4:14; in both which latter texts he is joined with Demas, and in Col 4:14, he is called *the beloved physician*. Those three texts seem all to speak of one and the same person, who, probably, at first practised physics, afterwards, being made a disciple, exercised the ministry. It is generally thought that this was he, who was the penman both of this history and of the Acts of the Apostles. Whether by nation he was a Syrian, or a Roman, or of what other nation, is but an unprofitable speculation. That he was an evangelist we know, that is, one inspired by God to transmit to the world the history of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; as also of the acts of the apostles, until Paul was a prisoner at Rome. For his history of the Gospel, so far as it relates to Christ himself, it containeth many remarkable things, not mentioned by the other evangelists. The generation of John Baptist; the history of Zacharias; the angel's coming to the blessed virgin; Elisabeth's exclamation, and salutation of her; the publication of Christ's birth to the shepherds, with the things spoken by them; the testimony which Simeon and Anna gave to Christ; the occasion of Joseph and Mary's going to Bethlehem; the circumstances of our Saviour's birth there; his disputing with the doctors at twelve years of age; are things reported by no other evangelist, and of great use to complete the history of John the Baptist and of Christ. Besides that he hath many parables (as those of the lost sheep, the lost goat, and of the prodigal, &c.) that are to be found in no other evangelist, together with several other parables and pieces of history; to say nothing of divers circumstances in those parables and pieces of history, which other evangelists have recorded, omitted by them. He dedicates his

book to some friend, either named Theophilus, or to whom the signification of that name (which is, *a lover of God*) in his judgment did very well agree. The time when he wrote it is uncertain; some would have it to be written the fifteenth, some the twenty-second, some the twenty-seventh year of our Saviour. The matter written by him is of much more concern to us to know than these circumstances. We have in our annotations spoken to those things which he mentions, before recorded by Matthew or Mark, more shortly. To other things which we in him first meet with, more largely.

Chapter Summary

Lu 1:1-4 Luke's preface.

Lu 1:5-17 An angel appeareth to Zacharias, and promises him a son in his old age.

Lu 1:18-23 Zacharias doubting is struck dumb for a sign.

Lu 1:24-25 His wife Elisabeth conceives.

Lu 1:26-38 The angel's visit to Mary.

Lu 1:39-45 Elisabeth, saluted by Mary, prophesieth.

Lu 1:46-56 Mary's song of thanksgiving.

Lu 1:57-63 The birth and circumcision of John the Baptist.

Lu 1:64-66 Zacharias's mouth is opened.

Lu 1:67-80 His prophecy.

Ver. 1-4. Luke's evangelical history hath this peculiar to itself, that whereas the histories of the other evangelists are written to the whole world, having no particular inscription, or dedication, Luke dedicates his to a particular person, named Theophilus; for though that name signifieth *one that loveth God*, yet I cannot think it is to be taken here appellatively, it being commonly used as a proper name; parents in former ages giving children names generally either expressive of their children's duty to God, (that by their names they might be put in mind of it), or expressive of God's mercy to themselves in giving them such children. The evangelist here suggests, that many had taken in hand orderly to write an account of the things which were certainly believed amongst the Jews. Some think that Luke here reflects upon some that, even so early, had given false accounts of our Saviour's history; for there were several pretended Gospels wrote, called, The Gospel of the Nazarenes, of Thomas, Matthias,

Nicodemus, and many others, which the church soon saw cause to reject. But others think that Luke doth not at all reflect, and possibly those figments were not so early; but Luke, observing that many did write this famous history, and some, possibly, for want of due information, not so exactly as they might, yet as they were delivered to them from such as *from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word*, but possibly might not be able so exactly to inform them, or the writers not so able duly to digest them (for most think Matthew, Mark, and John wrote after); or possibly because, there being then no printing, but all in manuscripts, because he thought his friend Theophilus (to whom he knew such a history would be grateful) might not have come to the sight of those manuscripts, he undertakes (not without the direction of the Holy Spirit, as appeared afterward) to compile a history of these things, to which he was either encouraged by the example of others, or incited by the mistakes of those who had done it ill, having the advantage perfectly to understand all things from the first. Most think that this advantage arose not from his personal knowledge, but his converse with the apostles and other ministers of Christ; for he saith no more, Lu 1:2, than, *even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word*; by which it seemeth to be hinted to us, that he was no eyewitness, nor minister of the word. To understand by *the word* in that verse Christ (whom John indeed so calleth, Joh 1:1) seemeth to me too hard, considering *the word*, in the evangelists, doth ordinarily signify the gospel, and no where Christ but in Joh 1:1,2, &c.

That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed; that is, by the relation of others. Before I pass this preface, I shall make some observations upon it.

1. That even from the beginning there were some cheats, in reporting matters of fact concerning the church. Whether Luke intended to reflect on them, or not, if we may believe any thing of ecclesiastical history, there were some false Gospels; and before the time of the Gospel there were apocryphal writings relating to the history of the Old Testament. No writings but the Scriptures deserve our faith (otherwise than they agree with them) in things of which they give us an account.
2. In Luke's time the history of the Gospel was most surely believed, as being delivered from eyewitnesses.

3. Men ought to have perfect understanding of matters of fact before they write them. Whoso writes a history upon uncertainty, imposes upon all future ages.
4. A knowledge of certainties is what all good men ought to aim at in writing and reading. It is a mean soul that can feed upon an uncertainty, and they are as mean that spend their time in catering such food for reasonable souls. Men's understandings are given them for nobler uses than to gain the notion of a falsehood, and they are low born souls that can spend their precious hours in such cookery let the sauce with which they serve it up be never so artificial.

Luke 1:5

Ver. 5. The Holy Ghost, for infinitely wise reasons, giveth us here an account both of the time when John the Baptist was born, and also of his parentage. It was *in the days of Herod, the king of Judea*, that is, he who was the son of Antipater: not Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, of whom you read Lu 3:1, who put John Baptist to death, that was thirty-one or thirty-two years after this. He is usually called Herod the Great; who fought his way to the government of the Jews under the Romans, and came to his throne by the slaughter of the Jewish Sanhedrim; by which means he also extinguished all the government, which till his time held in the tribe of Judah, though not in a single person, (for that was destroyed in John, soon after the time of Judas Maccabeus), yet in a select number out of that royal tribe. So that in this Herod's time the prophecy of dying Jacob, Ge 49:10, was fulfilled. The sceptre, that is, the government, departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from his feet, which was a certain sign (in order to the fulfilling of that prophecy) that Shiloh, that is, the Messias, was coming. This for the time.

A certain priest, named Zacharias; some will have him to have been the high priest, or his deputy, but that cannot be, for the high priest was but one, and so not within the courses of the priests, but of the eldest family

from Aaron; and though it be said, Lu 1:9, that *his lot was to burn incense*, yet it must not be understood of the incense mentioned Le 16:12, to be burned upon the yearly day of expiation, (which indeed none but the high priest might do), but of the daily incense mentioned in the law, Ex 30:7,8, which any of the priests did in their courses. This Zacharias was *of the course of Abia*. The eldest son of Aaron was always the high priest; his other sons were priests. In a long course of time, their descendants so multiplied, that they were too many all at the same time to minister in the temple. David therefore divided them into courses; each course waited their month. 1Ch 24:4,5, there is an account of the distribution of the priests into twenty-four courses. In David's time the eighth course was the course of Abijah. It appeareth by Ne 12:1-47, that after the captivity they kept the denominations of these courses, but it is probable the order of them was altered. We read of Abijah in Ne 12:17, but whether his was then, or at this time when Luke wrote his Gospel, the eighth course I cannot tell. It is enough for us that Zacharias was one of the ordinary priests of the course of Abia; whose office it was to serve in the temple in his course, which was the course of such as derived from the Abijah mentioned in 1Ch 24:10.

And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. This is added not to signify Zacharias's obedience to the Divine law, which obliged the priests to marry within their own tribes; for the reason of that law being only to prevent the confusion of the inheritances, which fell by lot to the several tribes, and by the will of God were to be so kept distinct, the tribe of Levi having no such inheritance, might intermix with any other tribe, and did so; the high priest only was obliged to marry one of his own people, Le 21:14, and Jehoiada, 2Ch 22:11, married one of the tribe of Judah; but it is added to show the honourableness of Elisabeth's stock. Moses and Aaron were the two first governors of the Israelites. Elisabeth was not only of the tribe of Levi, but descended from Aaron, whom God made the noblest family of the Levites. Her name was Elisabeth. It is a Hebrew name, Ex 6:23, and (as you may see there) was the very name of Aaron's wife, the *daughter of Amminadab*, and *sister of Naashon*. As it may be variously written it signifieth, *the rest*, or *the oath*, or *the rod of my God*.

Luke 1:6

Ver. 6. That they were not righteous by a perfect legal righteousness, being not guilty of any sin, is certain, for so *there is none righteous, no, not one*; but so righteous, as that God accepted them, and looked upon them as righteous; as Abraham believed, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, though he sinned in the denial of his wife, &c.; or as it is said of David, 1Ki 15:5, *He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah.* They also walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. A man's blameless conversation before the world is a piece of his righteousness, but will not make up alone such a righteousness as will testify his acceptation with God, or righteousness before him; he must, in the first place, walk in the commandments and in the ordinances of God. There is a duty towards God, as well as towards men; and that duty lies in the keeping his commandments, his ordinances, for the fear of the Lord must not be taught us by the precepts of men: yea, and in all the ordinances of God, having a respect to all God's commandments; and making this his constant course and practice, not doing it by fits. He must also be blameless towards men. Here is a true pattern of what a married couple should be, especially where the husband waits at the altar, and is employed in the holy things of God. *A bishop must be blameless, 1Ti 3:2; a deacon grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, Lu 1:8; blameless, Lu 1:10; and, Lu 1:11, Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, &c.* Such were Zacharias and Elisabeth. Such ought all ministers of the gospel and their wives to be.

Luke 1:7

Ver. 7. Amongst all earthly blessings, there is nothing we more desire than children, in whom we have a kind of perpetuity, living in our species and in our posterity when we are dead in nature. But as God, for our trial, doth often deny us other good things which are the great objects of our desires, so he doth often deny his own people this great blessing. Sometimes he withholdeth it a long time from those to whom he at length giveth it. Barrenness in Israel was a reproach: see Lu 1:25, and 1Sa 1:6. There was a promise to Abraham of a plentiful seed; hence, amongst the Jews, she that

was barren hardly thought herself, or was judged by others, a genuine daughter of Abraham. Both Zacharias and Elisabeth *were now well stricken in years*. God chooseth this woman, naturally barren, and now aged also, to be the mother of John the Baptist, therein working a double miracle; and it is observable in holy writ, that when God denied to any women children for some long time, and then opened their wombs, they were the mothers of some eminent persons, whom God made great use of. Thus it was with Sarah, Rachel, the wife of Manoaah, Hannah, 1Sa 1:1-28, and this Elisabeth.

Luke 1:8

Ver. 8,9. The priests were multiplied to an exceeding number; we find an account of more than four thousand upon the return out of the captivity of Babylon, Ezr 2:36-39; they were doubtless afterward multiplied to a far greater number. Josephus tells us there were a thousand in a course; whether they held to twenty-four courses, as in David's time, or no, I cannot tell. There were several parts of the priestly office, which it seemeth, by this text, the priests of the course that ministered divided amongst themselves by lot. One part of their work was to burn incense morning and evening. It seems this was that part of the priestly office which Zacharias was by lot to exercise.

Luke 1:10

Ver. 10. We are told, that the order of the Jewish daily service was this: twice in the day the priests whose course it was to minister, or such of them whose lot it was, went into the holy place to burn incense, according to the law, Ex 30:7. When they went in, a bell rung, to give notice that it was the hour of prayer. There were constantly there,

1. The rest of the priests of the same course.
2. The Levites.
3. Their stationary men, who represented the whole congregation, and laid

their hands upon the beast slain.

4. So many more of the people as would voluntarily come; and it was very ordinary for many to go.

Thus we read, Ac 3:1, of Peter and John going into the temple at the hour of prayer. These made the *multitude*, of whom it is said, that while the priest was burning incense they were *without*, not without the temple, but in the court of Israel, without the holy place, in which the priests were burning incense, *praying*; so they used to do privately by themselves. There is a text in Ecclesiasticus, Ec 1:15, which (though it be not canonical Scripture) is as credible as any other civil history, and will much help to make the readers understand the order of the Jewish service, and what this text saith.

Luke 1:11

Ver. 11. Though we translate it *appeared*, yet in the Greek it is, there was seen of him. An angel indeed was there; whether the angel Gabriel or not, or in what form he appeared, it is not said. It is by some observed, that until the Urim and Thummim ceased, no angel appeared to any priest executing his office; after this, it is observed by others, that most appearances of angels to the priests were when they were employed in their service in the temple.

Luke 1:12

Ver. 12. We are naturally affrighted at sudden and unusual things, but especially at any Divine appearances, whether God himself takes a shape, or authorizes an angel to do it. So was Daniel, Da 10:7,8; and Manoah and his wife, Jud 13:20; and Paul, Ac 9:1-18. For though God doth not make these appearances to affright us, yet such is the imbecility of our natures, that we cannot but be shy at them, and start from them; and it is but reasonable that God should by this means both declare his own glory and majesty, and also humble his poor creatures, and make them more impressive, and receptive of his Divine revelations. It is reasonable God should keep and declare his majesty, though we keep and declare our

infirmity.

Luke 1:13

Ver. 13. Although the great God useth so to show himself to the best of his own people, as to imprint upon them a sacred awe of his majesty, yet he never suffereth the souls of his people to sink under those apprehensions. The first words the angel saith to Zacharias are,

Fear not, Zacharias. I am no bad messenger to thee, but a good messenger from God, to tell thee *thy prayer is heard*. This is good news to any soul. But of what prayer the angel here speaketh is a little further question, for it follows, *and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son*. It is believed that the priest, while he burned incense, did offer up prayers, but that he had now offered up prayers to God for issue is not so probable, considering that both he and Elisabeth were well stricken in years, and probably past children. Some therefore think that those words, *and thy wife Elisabeth, &c.*, are given him only as a sign that his prayers were heard; and added to signify that, as a further mercy to him than what he asked, Elisabeth should conceive. Nor do I see any reason why we should restrain the prayer mentioned to the prayer he had now made, and not expound it of those many prayers which Zacharias had before made, which though God had delayed to answer, yet the angel assures him should now be answered with relation to issue.

And thou shalt call his name John, which is the same with Johanan in the Hebrew, and signifies *gracious*. The angel directed Joseph to call Christ's name *Jesus*, because he was to *save his people from their sins*; and he directeth Zacharias to call his son's name John, because he was to open the kingdom of grace, and to preach the grace of the gospel, through Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:14

Ver. 14. None ought to have so mean thoughts of these words of the angel, as to think that they are only expressive of that affection which commonly discovereth itself in us when God giveth us sons, especially after a long

barrenness, but of a further joy and gladness his parents should have upon a spiritual account, afterwards expressed.

Many shall rejoice at his birth: they rejoiced in his light, Joh 5:36, the glad tidings of the Messiah being come into the world, which he brought. The papists think they have a ground here for their holy day they keep to his honour, and their apish, carnal rejoicing, which certainly was not so valuable a thing as for an angel to foretell. The angel speaks of the great acceptance with the people (many of them) which John's doctrine should have, so that, as our Saviour saith, from his days the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent did take it by force. But he further openeth his meaning in the following verses.

Luke 1:15

Ver. 15,16. We have a natural ambition to be great, but it is only to be great in the sight of men; thence one man coveteth riches, another honours and reputation; but the true greatness is to be *great in the sight of the Lord*, who doth certainly judge with the truest and most infallible judgment. In God's sight he is a great man of whom God maketh a great use, especially in turning many souls to himself. Consider John separately from his work, and the concurrence of God with his work, he was a very little man, and so looked upon by the Pharisees and rulers, who would not believe in him. His father was an ordinary priest. For titles and dignities, he had none; John the Baptist was his highest title. For his clothing; he was not clothed in soft raiment, (as princes' chaplains), he was clothed with a skin, with *camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins;* yet Christ saith of him,

Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. He had no palace, no stately habitation; he lived mostly in desert places little inhabited. Nature was his cook, that provided him locusts and wild honey. Where was his greatness, but in this—He was a great and faithful preacher of the gospel, and God blessed his labours to convert souls? They are little men that do little of the work for which God hath sent them into the world, and do little good in their generation.

He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink: by *strong drink* is meant any

drink which ordinarily intoxicates. This was the law of the Nazarites, Nu 6:3. It was forbidden the priests during the time of their ministrations upon pain of death, Le 10:9. No lovers of wine and strong drink can be great men in the sight of God. The minister of the gospel must not be one given to wine, 1Ti 3:3 Tit 1:7.

And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. This is true, both as to prophecy, (which is all extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost), and also of the Holy Ghost considered as a sanctifying Spirit renewing the heart.

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. Then it seems there is another conversion besides the conversion of men from paganism. John (with the assistance of the Holy Ghost) was an instrument to turn many of the Israelites, who already verbally owned the true God, but were drenched in errors, and superstitions, and looseness of life, to the Lord their God, by repentance; and this he did by preaching both law and gospel to them. This made him a great man, for, *They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*, Da 12:3.

Luke 1:17

Ver. 17. God was last spoken of, he must therefore be the *him* mentioned here, before whom John the Baptist was to go, according to the prophecy, Mal 4:5,6; from whence is an evident proof that Christ was the Lord our God, before whom John the Baptist came, *in the spirit and power of Elias*, and therefore he is called *Elias*, Mal 4:5, as expounded by Christ, Mt 11:14 Mr 9:13. The Jews' not understanding this keeps them in a vain expectation of a Messiah to this day, and of a personal coming of Elias before him. It is the observation of some learned men, that where the word *power* is added to *the Spirit*, or Holy Ghost, it signifies a more than ordinary measure and influence of the Spirit, as in Lu 1:35 Ac 10:38 1Co 2:4 1Th 1:5. But I rather think that by that phrase, *in the spirit and power*, here is meant, with the same zeal and frame of spirit that Elijah had. We have before, in our notes upon Matthew, showed in how many things John the Baptist was like Elijah, to say nothing of his habit and the severity of

his life, in respect of the most corrupt time wherein they both lived, their faithfulness in their ministry, their warmth and zeal in their work, their boldness, not fearing to reprove princes for their errors, &c.

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Malachi addeth, *and the heart of the children to their fathers;* instead of which Luke hath, *and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just;* that is, to bring both young and old to repentance: the hearts of the fathers amongst the Jews to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, their children; and the hearts of the Jews, which, with respect to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David, are children, to the doctrine which they embraced, and the ways of God wherein those just men walked, which is the doctrine of wisdom: to reconcile many amongst the Jews to that which some of them own and profess, though others of them are yet apostatized, and yet led away with the superstitions of those degenerate and corrupt times.

To make ready a people prepared for the Lord; to acquaint this part of the world with the Messias, and to prepare them for receiving him and his doctrine, which is presently to be revealed by himself, taking off people's prejudices, and discovering and commending Christ to them. Or, by bringing men to a true repentance for their sins, and a sense of them, till which they cannot believe, to prepare them for a more internal reception of the Lord Jesus Christ. For John is said to have preached the doctrine of *repentance for the remission of sins;* and to have preached, saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Also defaming the Pharisees, who were the great enemies of Christ, by detecting to the people their hypocrisy. Thus he made *ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

Luke 1:18

Ver. 18. The words are much the same with those of Abraham, Ge 15:8, *Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it,* viz. the land of Canaan? And Mary, Lu 1:34, when the same angel had told her she should have a child, Lu 1:31, saith, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Gideon also asked a sign, Jud 6:17. To our appearance and judgment there seemeth no great difference betwixt these and Zacharias in this place asking a sign, only Zacharias here opposeth his own sense and reason to the words of the angel, yet we shall hear a different issue of this question, or answer to it.

Luke 1:19

Ver. 19,20. It is by some observed, that before the captivity of Babylon we read of no name of any angel, who have no names as we have, but assume names to declare the nature of their ministration; and that Gabriel signifieth, the power, or the strength, of God, because the declaring of the gospel, which the apostle declares *the power of God to salvation*, Ro 1:16, seemeth to have been his peculiar ministration. We read of this Gabriel, Da 8:16 9:21, where we find him foretelling the Messiah, and the working of man's redemption; to which prophecies he doubtless refers Zacharias in saying,

I am Gabriel. We again shall meet with him Lu 1:26,27, six months after this, appearing to the virgin Mary, and telling her she should bring forth the Messiah. He addeth, *that stand in the presence of God.* As the good angels always behold the presence of our heavenly Father, (as our Saviour tells us), and are ready to be sent about his messages, (whence is the name of *angels*), they are called God's *ministers*, Ps 103:21 104:4.

And am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings: God sent me on purpose to declare this thing to thee. Which Zacharias might have known by the time and place when he appeared; at the time of prayer, at the altar in the holy place, where the evil angels used not to show themselves.

And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed. Divines have perplexed themselves to give a just account of this signal punishment of so good a man; whether they have said enough to satisfaction I cannot tell. Abraham, upon the same question, was gratified with a sign, Ge 15:8,9; so was Gideon, Jud 6:17. Where there is no difference in the words, or in a fact, there may be a great difference in the heart, and its inward habit and motions, from which those words proceed, and we must allow God to see that better than we can discern it by the words. Before Abraham's time, we read of no such experience of God's power in such cases, neither do we find that Abraham desired a sign as to this, that God would give him a child, but only as to the Lord's giving his posterity Canaan. Besides that, it is said, Lu 1:6, he

believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness; and the apostle extols his faith, Ro 4:19-21: Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform. So as he asked not a sign for the begetting of a faith in him, he believed the Lord without a sight, only, fearing his own heart, he asked a sign for the further increase and confirmation of his faith. Besides, Zacharias's punishment was gentle, and of that nature that it also carried with it an answer to his desire: it was only the privation of speech, until the words of the angel should be fulfilled.

Because thou believest not my words. The words of God by his messengers are to be believed, and the not believing their words, which they speak truly from him, and as so sent, is a sin God will severely punish. It is all one not to believe God, as not to believe those whom he sends, speaking what he bids them.

Which shall be fulfilled in their season. The unbelief of men shall not make the word and promise of God of no effect; but God's promises have their seasons, before which we must not expect the accomplishment of them, Hab 2:3.

Luke 1:21

Ver. 21-23. While the priest was in the holy place, the people were in that part of the temple called the court of Israel, or the court of the people, praying: when he had done, he came out, and blessed them according to the law, Nu 6:23-26, where is the form of blessing which he used; for this the people waited before they went home. Whether the angel's discourse with Zacharias was longer, or his amazement at the vision made him stay longer than the priest was wont to stay, it is uncertain; but so he did, and when he came out he was not able to pronounce the blessing, nor to speak at all, only he beckons to them, by which the people judged that he had seen some vision. Yet dumbness being none of those bodily defects for which by the law they were to be removed from the priest's office, nor

having any great work in which he used his tongue during his ministration, which was more the work of the hands, he accomplished the days he was to minister, and then departed to his own house, for in the days of their ministration they had their lodgings in buildings appertaining to the temple.

Luke 1:24

Ver. 24,25. How long *after those days* the Scripture saith not, but it is probable it was soon after, as in the case of Abraham, and in the case of Manoah's wife, Jud 13:3, who conceived presently after the revelation.

And hid herself: not that she hid herself from seeing any person, but she concealed from those whom she saw the hopes that she had of her being with child, and perhaps what her husband had let her know by writing of the revelation he had from the angel: not that she herself doubted the thing, that were unreasonable to presume, after the seeing of her husband made dumb for a sign of it, and the next words will let us know the contrary; but to avoid the discourse of people upon so unusual a thing, who might possibly think her too vain in speaking of a thing so improbable and unlikely as this was. In the mean time she did not conceal herself from God, but said,

Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, ascribing it all to the power of God, who keepeth the key of the womb in his hand, and maketh the fruit of it his reward.

In the days wherein he looked upon me: it is the same with Lu 1:48,

He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. The favour of God to his creatures is oft expressed under this notion, Ps 25:18 Ps 84:9 119:132.

To take away my reproach among men. Barrenness is no more than a reproach amongst men; it was more especially a reproach to Jewish women, not only in regard of the expectation of being the mother of the Messiah, (for none could expect that but a virgin, Isa 7:14, and she of the

tribe of Judah, to which the Messiah was promised, and one of the house of David, to whose family he was promised as a branch), but in regard of the special promise to Abraham, to whom a seed was promised, numerous as the dust, and as the stars, to which the barren woman could contribute nothing. It is a great mercy when God favoureth his people with any in evidences which take away their reproach amongst men, and a just cause for his people's thankful acknowledgment.

Luke 1:26

Ver. 26,27. In the sixth month, that is, after Elisabeth's conception; thus it is expounded afterward, Lu 1:36. *The angel Gabriel*, the same angel that had appeared in the temple to Zacharias, who seemeth to have had a special ministration with reference to that part of God's will which was predictive of the Messiah; he *was sent from God* (without whose command the angels do not move) *unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth.* There Joseph lived; from thence he went, Lu 2:4. The angel came to the virgin, who is here described by her name, Mary, and her relation, she was espoused to one Joseph, who is said to be *of the house of David.* Matthew reduces his genealogy to prove him to be so.

Luke 1:28

Ver. 28. Virgins betrothed, until the consummation of their marriage, were ordinarily kept in their friends' house: thither came this angel, and saith, *Hail, thou that art highly favoured.* The word translated *hail* signifies, Rejoice thou, or is as much as, God save thee. It is not the form of a prayer, (as the papists use it), but an ordinary salutation, as much as, God save you, or, Good morrow, is amongst us. *Thou that art highly favoured,* κεχαριτωμενη; the word comes originally from χαρις, which signifieth in Scripture two things:

1. The free love and favour of another bestowed on any: thus it is taken Lu 1:30 thou hast found favour. To the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph 1:6.

2. It signifies good habits in the soul; as 2Pe 3:18, *Grow in grace*; Col 3:16, *Singing with grace in your hearts*.

Hence the verb, a participle from which the word here used is, may signify, two things; either:

1. Thou hast received grace or favour from God, or,
2. Thou that art full of gracious habits.

The first seems to be its sense in this place: it followeth in the verse, *blessed art thou*; so also it is expounded Lu 1:30, *for thou hast found favour with God*. So as the virgin was the object of Divine grace, as we are, and therefore not to be prayed to as the fountain of grace; she herself had nothing but what she received. This whole verse seemeth to be only a salutation, there is nothing of a prayer in it; the angel doth only take notice of her as a favourite of Heaven, one dear unto his Lord, with whom God was in an especial manner, and whom God blessed above the rate of those ordinary blessings with which he blesseth other women.

Luke 1:29

Ver. 29. It seemeth that she did not only hear a voice, and saw an ordinary appearance, but the appearance of the angel was attended with some manifestation of the glory of God, which affected her, and made her wonder what the meaning of this should be, that God should send an angel to her, and with such a kind of salutation.

Luke 1:30

Ver. 30. This expounds those words, *thou that art highly favoured*, Lu 1:28, and lets her know that he came upon no ill design unto her, neither upon any human errand, nor yet with any message of evil tidings from God, for she was one for whom God had a favour.

Luke 1:31

Ver. 31-33. These three verses contain the substance of the angel's message or errand to the virgin, to tell her she should be the mother of *a Son*, by what name she should call him, and what he should be. In telling her this, who knew herself to be a virgin, one who had not known man, (as she expresses it, Lu 1:34), he plainly minds her that the prophecy, Isa 7:14, should be fulfilled in her. Thus far the angel's word signifieth a promise.

And shalt call his name Jesus: the angel saith the same to Joseph, Mt 1:21, and expounds it, adding, for he shall save his people from their sins; and thus the prophet expounds it, who saith, Isa 7:14, his name should be called *Immanuel*. There were two of this name before, Joshua and Jeshua, both of which were great types of Christ, as being great temporal saviours to the Israelites. The one brought them into Canaan; the other led them out of Babylon, Ezr 2:2. But this was yet a more excellent Joshua, who was to save his people from their sins. The angel further goes on describing him, saying,

He shall be great. Isaiah had said, Isa 9:6, his name shall be called Wonderful, mighty both in words and deeds, Lu 24:19.

And shall be called the Son of the Highest, that is, the Son of God, who is often in Scripture made known by this name, Ge 14:19; Ps 83:18 92:1 Mr 5:7. *He shall be called the Son,* that is, he shall be so, for this phrase so signifieth often, Isa 1:26 Joh 1:12; for he shall be known and *declared to be so*, Ro 1:4. Peter so called him; so did the centurion who attended his cross. God himself called him so, Ps 2:7, and that in a sense agreeing to none but him; no, not to the angels, Heb 1:5, much less to saints.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: not the temporal kingdom, but the spiritual kingdom over the same people over whom David ruled, from whom he is descended. It appeareth from many passages in the prophets that David's kingdom was a type of Christ's, 2Sa 7:13 Ps 2:6 132:11 Isa 9:6,7 Am 9:11. Hence we find the name of David given to Christ, Jer 30:9 Eze 34:23 Eze 37:24 Ho 3:5. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* Jacob was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel; so as the house of Jacob primarily signifieth the Jews, who were the natural

branches in this excellent olive. Christ's kingdom extended beyond the house of Jacob, but it began there, his law went first out of Zion, and he was in the first place sent to the lost sheep of Israel; he was the *minister of the circumcision*, Ro 15:8. Others were to be joined to the house of Jacob, Isa 14:1. Or *Jacob*, and *the house of Jacob*, may signify the whole church, all that should believe in Christ. The rod of his strength went out of Zion, Ps 110:2, though his kingdom was not confined to Jacob. All believers who *worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus*, are by the apostle determined *the circumcision*, Php 3:3, and *he is a Jew who is one inwardly*, Re 2:29.

And of his kingdom there shall be no end: this both expounds the words *for ever*, going just before, and also distinguishes the kingdom of Christ from all kingdoms of the world, which all shall have their periods; and also assures us of the continuance of the gospel church, which is Christ's kingdom, till his kingdom of glory be revealed; and this agreeth with the prophecies of the Old Testament, concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, and the typical kingdom of David, Ps 145:13 Isa 9:7 Da 7:14 Mic 4:7.

Luke 1:34

Ver. 34. There are some would excuse Mary in this reply, and tell us these words spake in her no doubt that the things spoken by the angel should not come to pass, only admiration, or a desire to be further acquainted which way God would effect such a wonder of providence. Others think her words hardly excusable from all guilt, though the more excusable because there had yet been no such precedent made in the world of the Divine power, as to cause a virgin to conceive, and bring forth a son. The next words, *seeing I know not a man*, seem to import that she understood the angel of the present or past time, that she had already conceived, or should immediately conceive, against which she objects her not having any carnal knowledge of any man. For the notion of some papists, that would from hence impose upon us to believe that Mary hath vowed virginity, as if the sense of the words were, I am resolved never to know man, it is so ridiculous, that no man of ordinary sense can allow it; for, besides that there were no such vows that we ever read of amongst the Israelites, nor

could any such be made but by the law of God might be rescinded, if made when the virgin was in her father's house; and besides that it is very improbable that a Jewish woman should make such a vow, in whom barrenness was such a reproach, and who looked upon it as a curse; I say, besides these things, who can have such unworthy thoughts of the blessed virgin, as to think that she should, having made such a vow, admit of an espousal to Joseph to mock him? But she certainly understood the angel as speaking of a thing in being, or which presently should be; and though she believed what the angel said, yet is desirous of further satisfaction how such a thing could be out of the ordinary course of nature.

Luke 1:35

Ver. 35. *The Holy Ghost* (who is also called here *the power of the Highest*) shall come upon thee; it is a phrase which signifieth a special and peculiar influence of the Holy Spirit: thus we read of the prophets, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, 2Ch 20:14, &c., which argued a special influence of the Holy Spirit on them, efficacious, so as it put them upon a present prophesying. There is a common influence of God upon the forming of all children in the womb, Job 10:8 Ps 139:15. But this phrase denotes an extraordinary special influence of the Spirit, changing the order and course of nature, and giving a power to the blood of the virgin by him sanctified, to coagulate alone to the forming of the body of a child: this is more mysteriously yet expressed, by the term *overshadow thee*, which I take to be a modest phrase, signifying only a supply of man's act, by a Divine creating power, in a most miraculous manner.

Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, as Adam was called the son of God, Lu 3:38, God (by his creating power) supplying as to him the place of father and mother, and to Christ supplying the place of the father, though not of the mother, for (saith the angel) he shall be *born of thee*. But yet that mass of flesh shall be a holy thing, because, though born of thee, and flesh of thy flesh, yet of thy flesh first sanctified, by the Holy Ghost coming upon and overshadowing of thee. He *shalt be called* so, not that he was not so by eternal generation, (of which the angel here speaks not), but the Word, the eternal Son of God, which was in the beginning, being thus made flesh, and personally united to thy flesh, the whole person shall be called *the Son of God*.

Luke 1:36

Ver. 36,37. What a particular notice doth God take of the children of men! he knoweth our relations: *thy cousin Elisabeth*. Here some make a question how Elisabeth, who was one of the daughters of Aaron, Lu 1:5, and consequently of the tribe of Levi, could be cousin to Mary, who was of the house of David, and consequently of the tribe of Judah, (as our evangelist proveth, Lu 1:3), because of the law, Nu 36:6,7. But *cousin* may be taken in a large sense, as Paul calleth all the Jews his kinsmen, Ro 9:3; or they might be cousins in a strict sense, for the daughters of the tribe of Levi might marry into any other tribes, having no inheritance to carry away, to prevent which was the law, Nu 36:1-13.

And this is the sixth month from her conception, by which time women use to be at some certainly about their quickening; you must not therefore think this impossible, for you know Elisabeth was counted barren, and was old, yet she hath conceived.

For with God nothing shall be impossible. I bring you a message from God, to whom all things are possible. This was an ordinary saying amongst them, Nothing is impossible with God. Our Saviour useth it several times, Mt 19:26 Mr 10:27. Nor needed we any Scripture to prove that nothing could be impossible to him who is the first Being, the first Cause, and the Fountain of all power, and to whom all things are subject. No considerate man will from hence conclude that things are possible to God which would derogate from the perfection of the Divine Being, and are imperfections in us; nor yet that any thing is possible to God the contrary to which he hath willed, but God can do whatsoever he can will.

Luke 1:38

Ver. 38. *Once have I spoken,* (saith Job, Job 40:5) *but I will not answer.* In like manner the virgin speaketh: I will dispute no more; I am the Lord's servant, let him do with me whatsoever he pleaseth. This phrase, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord,* doth not speak her the lady and queen of

heaven, (as the papists style her), but it speaketh her humility and readiness to give up herself to the Lord's pleasure, her assent and consent unto God. She addeth a prayer, that God would do according to what the angel had said unto her. The angel, having despatched his errand, and obtained what he came for, ascendeth into heaven.

Luke 1:39

Ver. 39,40. Many think that this city where this Zacharias lived was Hebron, before called Kirjatharba, Jos 14:15, for that was a city in the mountainous part of Judah, one of the cities of refuge, and belonging to the priests, Jos 20:7; but whether it was so or not cannot be certainly determined. She probably went not only to rejoice with Elisabeth her kinswoman, but also to strengthen her own faith as to the revelation which she had received, finding that true which the angel had told her concerning her cousin Elisabeth.

Luke 1:41

Ver. 41. The motion of the child in the womb of the mother after her time of quickening is past, and the more than ordinary motion of it upon some extraordinary cause of joy, is no unusual thing with women in those circumstances; but doubtless as this motion was more than ordinary, so it had a more than ordinary cause, being caused from the Holy Spirit of God, and so the best interpreters judge: what is afterward said of Elisabeth, that she *was filled with the Holy Ghost, is expounded in the next words, wherein she prophesieth, of the Spirit of prophecy.*

Luke 1:42

Ver. 42. Elisabeth useth the same words to Mary which the angel had used for her, Lu 1:28; that is, thou art an exceedingly happy woman, not only renowned, but one whom God hath greatly favoured and exceedingly blessed and made happy.

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Though the same word be used, yet it is not to be understood of the same degree of blessing. Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and blessed in another sense and after another manner, than any creature can be said to be blessed, for the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.

Luke 1:43

Ver. 43. Elisabeth in these words acknowledgeth both the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the Divine and human nature in the one person of the Mediator; she acknowledgeth Christ her Lord, and Mary to be his mother.

Luke 1:44

Ver. 44. By these words Elisabeth declareth that she looked upon the motion of the child in her womb, upon Mary's salutation of her, as something more than natural.

Luke 1:45

Ver. 45. Some will have this given as a reason why Elisabeth pronounced her blessed, because she believed that what God had said should have its effect; as, Lu 11:27,28, when the woman blessed the womb that bare Christ, and the paps that gave him suck, Christ saith, *Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* Mary was blessed not in this so much, that she brought forth Christ, as in this, that she believed in him. The words are certainly a great confirmation of what the angel had before told her, and it must needs be a great satisfaction to her to hear to her kinswoman, by the Spirit of prophecy, coming extraordinarily upon her, confirming what the angel had before told her.

Luke 1:46

Ver. 46,47. We are now come to the famous song of the blessed virgin, upon whom also the Spirit of the Lord comes upon this occasion. She first solemnly gives praise unto God, then by various expressions declareth the power and goodness of God, showing him worthy to be praised, and lastly applies what she had spoken more generally to the particular business of man's redemption. Our magnifying God is not by making him great, as he magnifies us, as it is Lu 1:49, but by declaring and showing forth his greatness. She saith, her soul did magnify the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced. Soul and spirit are but two words signifying the same thing, and importing that she glorified God heartily, and with her whole soul, and teaching us that all praising of God with our lips is of no significance, without the conjunction of the heart with the tongue.

In God my Saviour. So Hannah, 1Sa 2:1, *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord.* This is true spiritual rejoicing, when the primary object of our joy is not the sensible good, but the goodness of the Lord to us, in giving us that good thing.

Luke 1:48

Ver. 48. Our translators have here rightly translated ταπεινωσιν, *low estate*. Mary doubtless doth not here commend her own humility, (as some papists would have it), but magnifies God for that he had respect to her who was of so mean and low a condition; for though she was of the family of David, yet that family had for many years been broken and afflicted, and she was now espoused to a carpenter, which spake her condition low and mean though descended from the royal family of David: and thus God usually magnifies himself; he chooseth David from the sheepfold to be king over Israel; he much delighteth to exalt such as are low; he chooseth *the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things*

which are despised, hath God chosen; that no flesh should glory in his presence, 1Co 1:27-29.

Henceforth (saith Mary) all generations shall call me blessed. It is no mean favour of God, when God giveth us a name: in the world, and that not only in the present generation, but in succeeding generations.

Luke 1:49

Ver. 49. That which is observable both in this verse, and in this whole song, is how the blessed virgin attributes all to God, and ascribes nothing to herself, or any merits of her own, much like unto her father David. Ps 115:1, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake;* and herein she teacheth those generations, which she had even now said should call her blessed, how to take notice of her, viz. as one highly favoured of the Lord, one for whom God indeed had done great things, but not as one who had merited any thing at God's hand, much less as one to whom we should pay a greater devotion than to her Son, and speak to her that she should command her Son, according to the blasphemous devotion and idolatry of the papists. Mary is very careful of giving succeeding generations any occasion from her expressions for any such superstitions.

And holy is his name: holy, that is, glorious and venerable. His name, that is, he himself is glorious and holy, far above the conception and comprehension of poor creatures.

Luke 1:50

Ver. 50. Having celebrated God for his glory and majesty, she here celebrates him for his mercy, which extends to all, but especially is showed to such as fear him. She certainly respecteth the promise of God to be the God of Abraham and this seed, but declareth this to be most eminently made good to those who are truly pious, all piety being expressed ordinarily in Scripture (especially in the Old Testament) under the notion of the fear of God. We have almost the same words Ps 103:17. It is elsewhere expressed under the notion of thousands, Ex 20:6,

signifying not only the extent of the Divine goodness to all his people, but the continuance of it for ever.

Luke 1:51

Ver. 51,52. In these verses the virgin celebrates both the power and justice of God, as she before had done his holiness, and his mercy and goodness. The strength of a man is much seen in the effects of his arm; hence God, who hath no such parts as we have, is yet spoken of as if he had an arm, by which no more is signified than a mighty power, by which he bringeth things to pass; Ex 15:16 Ps 89:13 98:1 Isa 40:10: so in many other texts.

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. Jethro, Ex 18:11, knew that *the Lord was above all gods*, because *in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them*.

The proud in Scripture often signifies wicked men, as *the humble* signifies good and holy men; but *proud*, in a strict sense, signifieth men that have a high opinion of themselves: now there is nothing that a proud man dealeth more proudly in, than in following the imaginations of his own heart. There (saith Mary) God scattereth them, turning their counsels into folly, and confounding them in their own imaginations.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats: thus he did by Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, &c.: he pulls down some, and sets up others. Promotion is not from the east, nor from the west.

And exalted them of low degree: this is God's way; thus he exalted Moses, Joseph, Jacob, David. God thus showeth his mighty power and superintendency upon men's affairs. He doth what he pleaseth with men, yet what he doth is infinitely wise, just, and good.

Luke 1:53

Ver. 53. In this sentence the holy virgin celebrates the equity of God in the government of the world, proportioning men in some degrees one to

another, that the rapacious qualities of some might not gain all to them, while, others have nothing. The notion of *hungry*, speaketh persons in want, and craving a supply. The notion of *rich*, signifieth persons that are full. God blesseth the poor, pitieth the needy, while he neglects greater persons. Some apply it to those whom Christ blesseth, Mt 5:3-11, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and expound the rich of those who think they have no need of the righteousness of Christ. In this sense it is also true, but whether the virgin intended it here or not I know not.

Luke 1:54

Ver. 54,55. In these verses the blessed virgin celebrates God's mercy together with his truth, withal she hath here a respect to God's particular goodness and mercy in the sending of the Redeemer. The word which we here translate *hath holpen*, signifieth he hath sustained, or as it were lifted up with his hand, *his servant Israel*, or his child Israel. He calleth *Ephraim* his *dear son*, his *pleasant child*, Jer 31:20; but by *Israel* he meaneth believers, those of Abraham's seed that lived in the faith, hope, and expectation of the Messiah; *the children of the promise*, Ro 9:8; those who are Jews *inwardly*, Ro 2:29; *the true circumcision*, Php 3:3; *Israelites indeed*, Joh 1:47. This, she saith, God had done, not *in remembrance of* their merits, but *his own mercy*, Eze 36:32; of his own free goodness and mercy, and in the fulfilling of his promise made to Abraham, Ge 17:15; the extent of which promise is declared Ro 9:6-9; and that *seed of Abraham*, his seed as the father of the faithful, shall be for ever, and the virtue of the promise shall hold to them for ever.

Luke 1:56

Ver. 56. It is most probable that she staid with her until she was brought to bed, not leaving her just at the time of her travail, but she staid not long after, but went home: by this time she must herself know that she was with child; and here in the true order of the history cometh in what we had Mt 1:18-25: See Poole on "Mt 1:18" and following verses to Mt 1:25.

Luke 1:57

Ver. 57,58. The angel told Mary, Lu 1:36, that it was then *the sixth month with her*; after this Mary was with her about three months, which made up her full time; so she was delivered, and brought forth a son, to show the truth of God's promises, that we may all learn to give credit to his word. For the neighbours and kinswomen of Elisabeth to come, and to rejoice with her, was but according to the ordinary custom of friends to this day, like enough to hold to the end of the world. But the religion of persons in that age possibly is not in so ordinary a practice, I mean in the taking notice of the influence and goodness of God to those who receive such mercies. We are fallen into an age where congratulations made to friends upon any good things happening to them are ordinary, and meetings also to make merry (as they call it) upon such occasions; but ah, how little is that God, who openeth the womb, and a reward from whom children are, taken notice of! How little is his power and goodness in such providences taken notice of in such meetings, and made the subject of the discourses there had! Elisabeth's *neighbours and cousins* take notice *how the Lord had showed great mercy unto her*. The mercy of a child, of a safe delivery in the birth of a child, are great mercies, and ought to be the first and principal things taken notice of in such rejoicing meetings; otherwise the meeting is more like a meeting of pagans than of Christians.

Luke 1:59

Ver. 59-61. The law for circumcision, Ge 17:12 Le 12:3, was strictly for it to be performed the eighth day. We find nothing commanded in Scripture, either as to the person who was to perform the office of the circumciser, or as to the place. God met Moses in the inn, and sought to kill him, because he had not circumcised his child, and Zipporah his wife did it, Ex 4:24,25. It is said they afterwards did it in the synagogues, but there is no Divine law in the case. That the name was given to the child upon its circumcision appeareth not from Scripture. It is said, Ge 21:3, that *Abraham called his son Isaac*, and then, Lu 1:4, *he circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old*. We read of no name given by Zipporah to her child when she circumcised him. But the name was at circumcision declared. It is most certain that John was circumcised in his father's house, for we find his

mother was present, who at that time was not in a condition to stir abroad. They called his name *Zacharias*, whence we may observe the ancient usage of giving to children the names of their fathers and kindred. This in all probability is the reason of so many odd and unjustifiable names given to persons, such as are names of heathenish gods and goddesses, not fit to be named amongst Christians, &c. We derive from pagans, and though some heathens changed their names when they turned Christians, yet many (probably) did not, and by a long tradition (the names of parents being given to children) the names of pagan idols, such as Fortune, Diana, and the like, are by a most sordid practice made the names of Christians, a thing which certainly ought to be reformed, for it is a doing honour to those idols, if the giving a person's name to a child be (as we ordinarily account it) an honour done to the person whose name is so given. The Jews from their beginning seem to have had a religion as to this, giving names to their children either significative of God's mercy to them, or their children, or their own duty to God; and the names of the parents, or some of the kindred, were in honour to them given to their children; therefore when Elisabeth (who knew the counsel of God as to this child, either by some writing from Zacharias, or some revelation to herself) heard them call him Zacharias, and contradicted them in this thing, and named him John, they object that none of her kindred was called by that name.

Luke 1:62

Ver. 62,63. It was the parents' place, the father's especially, to give children their names. Zacharias was dumb as yet, they therefore made signs to him; he by writing declareth that his name was *John*, that is, he was so named already by the angel, therefore there was to be no further dispute about it. The friends marvel at the consent of both the parents in the case, declining all the names of their kindred.

Luke 1:64

Ver. 64. The angel, Lu 1:20, inflicted the punishment upon him no longer

than until what he had said should be performed; now it was performed, God looseth his tongue, and he praiseth God, by the song which we shall by and by meet with.

Luke 1:65

Ver. 65,66. By *fear* here is to be understood an awe and religious reverence of God, caused by these miraculous operations. *Fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles,* Ac 2:43.

These sayings, ρηματα ταυτα; it is a Hebraism; these doings, or matters, or things, were published throughout all the parts of Judea adjacent to the city where Zacharias dwelt, Lu 1:39.

And those serious people that heard them pondered on them, considering the work of the Lord, and did think that this child would prove no ordinary person. And the hand of the Lord was with him. By the hand of the Lord is meant, the power of the Lord, his providence, love, favour: thus the Lord is said to have been with Samuel, 1Sa 3:19. The hand of the Lord oft signifieth the power, help, and assistance of the Lord, 1Ch 28:19 Ps 80:17. The hand of the Lord upon a person sometimes signifieth the Spirit of prophecy, Eze 1:3 40:1; but this is a different phrase, denoting only God's special favour to John, watching over and protecting him, causing him to grow up and thrive, to improve in knowledge, &c.

Luke 1:67

Ver. 67. We must not think that Zacharias was before this time destitute of the Holy Ghost, we heard the contrary before, Lu 1:6, but the Holy Ghost at this time came upon him by a particular and more especial impulse; as it did upon the prophets, whom the Spirit moved but at some special times to prophesy, though it at all times dwelt and wrought in them, as a holy, sanctifying Spirit. This is made good by the next words, which tell us he *prophesied;* which word signifieth any speaking for or instead of another, and is not only applicable to such speakings as are foretellings of things

which shall afterward come to pass, but unto any speaking for or instead of God, in the revelation of his will made known unto us. In this prophecy there is both predictions of what should come to pass concerning John and concerning Christ, and also applications of what was before spoken of them by the prophets; and it is observed by some, that it is an epitome of all those ancient prophecies, and that there is in it a compendium of the whole doctrine of the gospel.

Luke 1:68

Ver. 68-70. God is not the God of Israel only, but of all the nations of the earth also; but he is peculiarly called *the God of Israel*, both here and in many other places, Ps 41:13 72:18 Ps 106:48, &c., in regard of the covenant which he had specially made with them, and the special advantages they had, mentioned by the apostle; *to them were committed the oracles of God*, Ro 3:2; and to them pertained *the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*, Ro 9:4. Zacharias pronounces God *blessed*, and desires that he may be blessed, that is, honoured, and celebrated, and spoken well of, for that he had *visited and redeemed his people*. The word may be extended to all God's deliverances of Israel, but it seemeth to be here more specially restrained by what followeth to the redemption by Christ.

And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us. An horn of salvation signifies a mighty, powerful salvation, by a metaphor taken from beasts, which much exert their power by their horns. The beast's ten horns, Da 7:7, are expounded to be ten kings, Lu 1:24; so Ps 75:10, where David saith he *will cut off all the horns of the wicked*; so La 2:3, where God is said to have *cut off all the horn of Israel. In the house of his servant David*. This agreeth to the prophecy, Jer 30:9, where Christ is called *David*; *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will rise up unto them*; who is also called *a righteous Branch raised unto David*, Jer 23:5. God is said to have raised up this horn of salvation in the house of David. The house of David was now down, lapsed and decayed. God promises to raise up to the Israelites a mighty salvation from the house of David. This was fulfilled in Christ.

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the

world began. All the prophets, or many of them at least, prophesied of Christ as the Son of David, and of a great salvation to be raised up to Israel from his house.

Luke 1:71

Ver. 71,72. This was that which God had told them by his prophets, that a mighty salvation should arise to them out of the house of David, by which they should be saved from their enemies. By which enemies the generality of the Jews understood their temporal enemies, made of flesh and blood. But Zacharias, speaking by the Spirit of prophecy, must needs have a truer notion of it, as it signifies our spiritual enemies. All this is attributed to God's mercy and faithfulness, his mercy freely looking upon his creatures in distress and misery, his faithfulness in remembrance of his holy covenant, made to Adam, Abraham, David, &c.; but it is more particularly explained.

Luke 1:73

Ver. 73. God first gave Abraham his word, Ge 18:10, then he confirmed it by his oath, Ge 22:16. The apostle, to the Hebrews, saith, Heb 6:13, *When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.*

Luke 1:74

Ver. 74,75. Thus Zacharias, by an infallible Spirit, expounds the covenants and oaths of God to Abraham and David, not as they appear to us at first view, as if they were promises of a mere temporal kingdom, and a victory for the Jews over their enemies, together with a splendid state for them, which was all the scribes and Pharisees, and the generality of the Jews, expected from the Messiah; but as confirming God's resolution to send the Jews a Saviour, who should save them from their sins, the guilt and

dominion of them, and from the power of hell, and purchase a spiritual liberty for them to serve the Lord all their days, *without fear, in holiness and righteousness*, which indeed was the true end of the Messiah's coming. Thus for now the song of this holy man respected Christ, whom he showeth to be sent from the free grace and mercy of God, yet in performance of God's truth and faithfulness, according to his oath promises; and to be therefore sent to deliver his people from their enemies, and to purchase for them a spiritual liberty, not to sin, but to serve the Lord without fear; in holiness and righteousness. The latter part of his prophecy respecteth John the Baptist, the new born son of this priest and heavenly prophet.

Luke 1:76

Ver. 76. Zacharias here foretells what came to pass about thirty years after, for it cannot be thought that John began his ministry before the sacerdotal age, especially considering Christ did not begin sooner, Lu 3:23.

Thou shalt be called the prophet; that may either signify, thou shalt be a prophet, as Mt 5:9 Joh 1:12; or thou shalt be owned or taken notice of as the prophet *of the Highest*. Both were true in John. He was a prophet, (though not *that Prophet*, Joh 1:21), *yea, and more than a prophet*, saith our Saviour, Mt 11:9.

For thou shalt go before his face to prepare his ways. This was according to the prophecy, Isa 40:3 Mal 4:5: and according to what John said of himself, Mt 3:3 Mr 1:3. See Poole on "Mt 3:3".

Luke 1:77

Ver. 77. To preach the doctrine of repentance to men, that they may obtain remission of sins. But it seems more natural, To teach people that the only way by which they can attain salvation, is not by any righteousness of their own, but by obtaining the free pardon and remission of their sins by Christ and his righteousness, Ps 32:1, which is in short to preach the gospel, which *is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*. For

therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, Ro 1:16,17.

Luke 1:78

Ver. 78. In the Greek it is, through the bowels of mercy. An ordinary expression, and very natural, to signify great and deep compassion, Ge 43:30 1Ki 3:26. Our remission of sin floweth from God's bowels of mercy; it depends not upon our satisfactions and penances, (as papists dream), but God's free and tender love; yet God must be just, and declare his righteousness while he justifieth the ungodly.

Whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, ανατολη εξ υψους. Some think that the Greek word answereth the Hebrew word, translated the *Branch*, Jer 23:5 Zec 3:8; the seventy interpreters translate it by ανατολην, Jer 33:15. Those texts manifestly relate to Christ, who is called there *the Branch*. Others think it rather answereth the Hebrew word **נֹרָא** we translate it a great *light*. Others think it should be translated *the East*. So they say Christ is called Zec 3:8; Zec 6:12; but we translate it *the Branch* in both those places. Be it *the Branch*, or *the Light*, or *Dayspring*, or *the East*, it is certain Christ is meant, who is called *the Sun of righteousness*, Mal 4:2. That God might be just in the remission of our sins, he sent Christ to visit us, and in our nature to die for us.

Luke 1:79

Ver. 79. Here Zacharias showeth us the end why God visited us with his Son, *the Branch, the Light, the Dayspring, the Sun of righteousness.* Men were in the darkness of sin and ignorance, dead in trespasses and sins, at war and enmity with God; Christ came to give them the light of gospel revelations, the light of spiritual comfort and salvation, to purchase peace, and to direct them how to walk that they might have peace with God, and at last enter into peace. This he did to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles: see Isa 9:1,2 60:1,19.

Luke 1:80

Ver. 80. The evangelist having done with Zacharias's prophetic song, now cometh to tell us what became of John. He saith, *the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.* He did not only grow in his bodily dimensions, but in the endowments of his mind.

And was in the deserts, that is, in places very thinly inhabited, (some will have this to have been the deserts of Ziph and Maon), *till the day of his showing unto Israel;* that is, in all probability, till he was about thirty years of age, when he came forth as a public preacher to those parts of Israel where he spent the small remaining part of his life, of which we shall hear more hereafter.

Luke 2:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 2:1-5 Augustus taxes all the Roman empire: Joseph goeth with Mary to be taxed at Bethlehem.

Lu 2:6,7 The birth of Christ.

Lu 2:8-14 An angel bringeth news thereof to the shepherds: the heavenly host praise God.

Lu 2:15-20 The shepherds, finding it to be as the angel had said, glorify God.

Lu 2:21 The circumcision of Christ.

Lu 2:22-24 The purifying of Mary.

Lu 2:25-35 Simeon's prophecy,

Lu 2:36-38 and Anna's, concerning Christ.

Lu 2:39,40 Jesus groweth, and increases in wisdom.

Lu 2:41-50 At twelve years of age he goeth with his parents to Jerusalem, and questions with the doctors in the temple,

Lu 2:51,52 he is obedient to his parents.

Ver. 1-3. Octavius Caesar (called Augustus, for his prosperous achievements) was the first Roman emperor properly so called, (for Julius Caesar had but the title of perpetual dictator), in the forty-second year of whose reign Christ was born, (Josephus saith, in the one and thirtieth year,

Antiq. cap. 10.), Herod the Great being at that time king of Judea, being so declared by the senate of Rome near forty years before. It was the custom of the Romans to take a particular account of the numbers and qualities of all persons inhabiting countries under their jurisdiction, in order to the laying of taxes upon them. About the time of the birth of Christ there was a decree issued from the Roman emperor for such a census or account to be taken of the Jews, who, some think, are here only understood by the term, *all the world*; others think that it was a decree which reached all that part of the world which was subject to the Roman emperor. This trust it seemeth was committed to Cyrenius, governor of Syria; whether he was at that time governor, or afterwards made governor, and at this time only a commissioner for this business, is not agreed. That this Cyrenius was the same whom the Roman historians call Quirinius is pretty well agreed. Great endeavours are used to reconcile what Luke saith here to Josephus and the Roman historians, who make Varus, not Quirinius, at this time the president of Syria. Those who desire to be satisfied as to those things may read Mr. Pool's Synopsis Criticorum upon this text, &c. Where civil historians differ from what we have in holy writ, we are obliged to believe them mistaken, not the penmen of holy writ, who were guided by an infallible Spirit. Leaving therefore those disputes, and in what sense this census is called the *first*, or is said to be first begun, when Cyrenius or Quirius was president, as being of no great concern, (for other historians grant Quirinius at this time a commissioner with Caius Caesar, and within ten years after president, in succession to Varus), let us rather herein observe the wonderful providence of God in the ordering of things for the fulfilling of his word, while we think of no such things, to which purpose doubtless this is premised by the evangelist. According to the counsel of God, declared by his prophets, Mic 5:2, Christ was to be born at Bethlehem, the metropolis of Judea; so the chief priests and scribes tell Herod, Mt 2:5. Mary his mother, and Joseph his supposed father, lived at a great distance from Bethlehem, in Nazareth, a city of Galilee. God so ordereth it, that the Roman emperor (under whose power the Jews were at this time) orders a numbering of all his subjects, either in all his dominions at the same time, or at least in Judea, and an account to be taken of their persons and qualities, in order to the laying taxes upon them, to defray the charges of the empire. The account of the Jews being to be taken according to their tribes, those who belonged to each tribe were ordered to convene in the chief city belonging to the tribe of which they were. Joseph and Mary were both of the tribe of Judah. This occasion brings them both to

Bethlehem, being the chief city of their tribe, to meet the emperor's commissioners. So Christ came to be born in Bethlehem, according to the word of the Lord, from which a tittle shall not fail; and little Bethlehem becomes not the least amongst the thousands of Judah, one coming out of it to be a *Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting.*

Luke 2:4

Ver. 4-6. This was the occasion of Joseph's coming to Bethlehem, who either for fear of Herod, or for the convenience of his trade, (though he belonged to the tribe of Judah), was removed into Galilee; but he yieldeth obedience to the civil magistrates, and cometh to be enrolled in the court books belonging to the Roman empire, to which by this action he acknowledgeth himself a subject; he also by this act publicly declared both himself and Mary his wife to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. We are told it was the custom of the Romans to enrol both women and children; however, Mary's personal attendance upon this homage might have been excused by her being great with child, had not the counsel of God so ordered it, that Christ should be born there; this doubtless carried Mary along with Joseph, he having now (according to the angel's direction, Mt 1:20,24), took her unto him as his wife. While they were there, Mary's time of childbearing was *accomplished*: we have the like phrase Ge 25:24.

Luke 2:7

Ver. 7. It is Bucer's note, that in the Greek it is not *her firstborn Son*, but τον υιον αυτης τον πρωτοτοκον, her Son, the firstborn; he was truly her Son, and her Son firstborn, but he was not called πρωτοτοχος upon that account merely, for he was *the firstborn of every creature*, Col 1:15: he was the firstborn also of Mary, but it cannot be from thence concluded she had more sons, for where there is but one son he is the firstborn.

And wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, &c. Whether the inn was in the city, or in the suburbs adjoining near to the city, is not material for us to know; nor, considering the occasion of meeting at Bethlehem at that day, and the numbers who upon that occasion must be there, is it at all strange, that a person of no higher visible quality than a carpenter should not find a room in the inn, but be thrust into a stable; nor was it unusual in those countries for men and women to have lodgings in the same rooms where beasts were kept, it is no more than is at this day in some places even in Europe. Here the virgin falls into her labour, brings forth her Son, and lodgeth him in a manger; God (by this) teaching all Christians to despise the high and gay things of this world. He who, though he was *in the form of God*, and *thought it not robbery to be equal with the Father*, thus making himself of no reputation; and being found in fashion as a man, thus humbling himself, as the apostle speaks, Php 2:6-8.

Luke 2:8

Ver. 8. Bethlehem was a place about which were pastures for sheep, as appears from 1Sa 17:15. There were shepherds abroad in the night (for so the word signifieth) watching over their flocks; whether the phrase signifieth (as some think) successive watches, such as are kept by soldiers, and by the priests, I cannot say. This maketh some think, that it is hardly probable that our Saviour was born in December in the midst of the winter, that being no time when shepherds use in the night to be keeping their flocks in the field.

Luke 2:9

Ver. 9. Christ was promised to men who by their occupation were shepherds, Ge 47:3. He himself was the chief Shepherd, and the true Shepherd, Joh 10:11. The first publication of his birth is made to shepherds; not to shepherds that were idle, but busied in their honest vocations, keeping their flocks. This publication of his birth is made by an angel, whether the angel Gabriel before mentioned, or another, is not certain. This angel surprises the shepherds, cometh upon them thinking no

such thing, but only minding their business. The angel comes in a glorious appearance, probably an extraordinary light, for it is said, it *shone round about them*: such an appearance of extraordinary light is Lu 9:31,32. That *they were sore afraid* was but natural; we are naturally affected at sudden and unusual appearances with fear and amazement.

Luke 2:10

Ver. 10-12. Though God, in his appearances to his people, was wont so to appear, as to show them cause to revere his majesty, yet he always supported them, that their spirits might not fail under those apprehensions and consternations. The angel bids them not to fear, for they had no reason to be afraid, he came not to bring them any frightening tidings, but *tidings of joy*, and that not to them alone, *but to all people*, both Jews and Gentiles, for to that latitude the text may be expounded. What was that?

Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. You have heard of the promises of the Messias, of a Christ that should come, and of the house of David. The promises of that nature are this day fulfilled, he is *born this very day; unto you*, but not to you alone; he had before told them that his tidings of joy should extend to all nations.

And this shall be a sign unto you, by this you shall know the truth of what I say, and you shall know also where to find him; in *the city of David* (that is, Bethlehem, as was said before) *ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger*. Where you find such a babe, that is he, therefore be not offended at his low and mean condition, let that be no stumbling block to you, I give it you as a sign by which you shall know him.

Luke 2:13

Ver. 13,14. The nativity of our Saviour was published first by one angel, but it must be celebrated by a multitude of angels, who appear praising God upon this occasion. These are called the Lord's host, Ps 103:20,21,

not only because he useth them as his arms, to destroy his enemies, but also because of the order which is amongst them. How they praised God is expressed Lu 2:14, they sang *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*. The words may be taken either judicatively, as signifying that was come to pass that day, by which God would have glory, men would have peace, and the good will of God to the sons of men was unspeakably declared: or precatorily, the angels desiring God might have glory, and that peace might be on earth, and the goodwill of God published to the sons of men. But the Vulgar Latin is most corrupt, that rendereth these words, *peace to men of good will*. When we consider that the heavenly host was here praising God, it will appear very reasonable to interpret these words judicatively; the angels hereby declaring their apprehensions, and the truth concerning this act of providence, no act more declaring the glory of God's power, wisdom, or goodness; nor more declaring his good will towards men, and more conducing to peace upon the earth, whether by it we understand the union of the Jews and Gentiles, or that peace of particular souls which floweth from a justification by faith in Christ; for though the text seemeth to speak of three things, *glory to God, peace on earth, and good will toward men*, yet indeed they are but two; the two latter differing only as the cause and the effect; the good will of God is the cause, peace with or amongst men is the effect, Ro 5:1 Eph 2:14,15,17.

Luke 2:15

Ver. 15-18. It was night, yet they delayed not to go and make a search, according to the revelation of the angel; and not in vain, they *found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe*. Divine revelations never deceive the soul that gives credit to them. Heaven and earth may pass away, but nothing which God hath spoken shall pass away without its accomplishment.

When they had seen it, they made known the saying, &c: they had no charge of secrecy upon them, so did well in publishing what was of such universal concern for men to know. Spiritual morsels ought not to be ate alone. The effect of their relation, in the generality of the people that heard it, was the same which we have often met with upon the people's seeing of Christ's miracles, viz. amazement and astonishment; we read nothing of

their faith. The first was a natural effect of a strange relation. The other must have been the special operation of God.

Luke 2:19

Ver. 19,20. The different effect of these things upon the generality of the people, upon Mary, and upon the shepherds, is worthy of our notice. The people only wondered, thinking the story of the shepherds a strange story. Mary suffereth them not to pass out of her thoughts, nor entertains them with a mere passion, which suddenly is extinguished; but she pondereth them in her heart, both those things she had learned from her husband, and what herself had heard from the angel, and this also, which was related to her of or by the shepherds. The shepherds return, that is, to the care of their flocks. Religion gives none a discharge from their secular duties: the disciples had a special call and command, that left their nets, and their parents, and followed Christ. The shepherds were only made occasional preachers, *pro hac vice*; they return, but *glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them*; which argued that they gave a firm and full assent to them, and that they were the first fruits of believers under the gospel dispensation. True faith produces great joy and thanksgiving to God, and needs must produce joy, because of the union it maketh betwixt a soul and its desired object.

Luke 2:21

Ver. 21. The time prescribed by the Divine law for circumcision was the eighth day. Ge 17:12 Le 12:3. He was indeed the lawgiver, and as such not tied to the observance of the law. But he was also *made of a woman, made under the law*, Ga 4:4; and the law was, Le 12:2, that *if a woman had conceived seed, and borne a man child, in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin should be circumcised*. He was to make himself appear the Son of Abraham; and so this was God's covenant, Ge 17:10, with Abraham and his seed after him; *Every man child among you shall be circumcised*. This

law Christ was bound to fulfil, and by the fulfilling of it in this point he showed himself *a debtor to do the whole law*, Ga 5:3, and by his observance of it he was to teach us our duty. He was to be *a minister of the circumcision*, Ro 15:8, and to the circumcision, which they would never have allowed him to be, had not he himself been circumcised; upon which account Paul took Timothy, *and circumcised him*, Ac 16:3. By his circumcision also we were to be *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, Col 2:11. It was therefore reasonable and necessary that Christ should be circumcised the eighth day.

His name was called Jesus; it was in circumcision before witnesses publicly declared to be so, for God by his angel had given him his name, Mt 1:21. We read of four under the Old Testament, to whom God gave names before they were born; Isaac, Ge 17:19, Josiah, 1Ki 13:2, Ishmael, Ge 16:11, Cyrus, Isa 44:28; and in the New Testament to John the Baptist, and to Jesus Christ. Which lets us know the certainty to God of future contingencies; for though the parents of Ishmael, and Isaac, John the Baptist, and Christ, imposed those names in obedience to the command of God, and there was but a small time betwixt the giving of these four their names and their birth, yet the case was otherwise as to Josiah and Cyrus.

Luke 2:22

Ver. 22-24. In these verses is a record of the virgin's obedience to two laws, the one concerning the purification of the woman after child birth; the other concerning the presenting of the male child before the Lord. We have the law concerning purification, Le 12:1-8 throughout. The sum was, That if a woman had brought forth a male child, she should be unclean seven days, and after that continue in the blood of her purifying thirty-three days. If she brought forth a female, she was to be unclean fourteen days, and afterward to continue in the blood of her purifying sixty-six days. So that the time of the woman's purification after the birth of a female was fourscore days, for a male (which was the present case) forty. After the expiration of which time, she was to bring a lamb of a year old for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering, to the priest to the tabernacle, who was to offer it for her, and to make an atonement. If she were poor, and not able to bring a lamb, (which seems

the present case), then she was to bring only two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering, the other for a sin offering. The evangelist takes no notice of any lamb, but only *a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons*; which lets us know she was poor, and so obliged by the law no further. Mary, after her forty days were expired, cometh up to the temple, to yield obedience to this law. And not so only, but also to present her child before the Lord. This depended upon two laws. We find the one Ex 13:2, where, in remembrance of God's sparing the Israelites, when he smote the first born of the Egyptians, he gave the Israelites this law: *Sanctify unto me all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.* So Ex 22:29 34:19. Instead of these, God took the Levites, as appears by Nu 8:16; yet were the first born to be presented before the Lord, and redeemed by the payment of five shekels apiece, for all those who were above the number of the Levites, as appeareth by Nu 3:44-47; and five shekels was the redemption price of any male upon a singular vow, Le 27:6. For these two ends, after six weeks, Joseph, and Mary, and, Jesus come up to Jerusalem.

Luke 2:25

Ver. 25-28. Interpreters have spent much pains in fortifying their conjectures (for they can be no more) that this Simeon was Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel, the father of Gamaliel, but to what purpose I cannot tell; it can hardly be thought that a man of that note should do such a thing as this so openly, and no more notice be taken of him. That which Calvin, and Brentius, and other Reformed divines do think is much more probable, that he was some ordinary, plain man, of an obscure quality as to his circumstances in the world. There was a general expectation of the Messiah at this time, but very few had a right notion of him, but lived in a vain expectation of I know not what secular prince, who should bring them a temporal deliverance. These few were scarce any of them of their rabbis or rabbans, but a poor despised sort of people, whom those great doctors counted accursed, Joh 7:48,49. The revelations of Christ were to none of the Pharisees, but to Joseph, a carpenter, to Mary, a despised virgin, though of the house of David, to an ordinary priest, Zacharias, to

shepherds; and why we should fancy this Simeon a principal doctor I cannot tell. The evangelist gives him his highest title, *A just man, and devout*, and one that waited *for the consolation of Israel*. One of the remnant, according to the election of grace, mentioned by the apostle; a holy and righteous man, one who waited *for the consolation of Israel*. Which is the same in sense with the character given of Joseph of Arimathea, Lu 23:51, that waited for the kingdom of God. Simeon waited for Christ, that is meant by *the consolation of Israel*. For it is very observable, that the prophets ordinarily comforted the people of God amongst the Jews, against all their sad tidings they brought them, with the prophecies of the coming and kingdom of Christ, Isa 66:13 Jer 31:13 Zec 1:17. Herein old Simeon showed the truth of his piety and devotion, that he believed and waited for the coming of Christ; he had a true notion of the Messiah promised, he believed that he should come, and he waited for his coming.

And it was revealed unto him, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ: God by the Holy Ghost gave him this special revelation, as the reward of his faith and the answer of his prayers, that he should live to see Christ born. The same Holy Spirit moved him to go into the temple, at that very time when Joseph and Mary brought in Christ, to present him to the Lord according to the law, and (though it be not expressed) certainly the same Spirit did intimate to him that that Child was *the Lord's Christ*. The old man takes him up in his arms, blesseth God, and saith, (see Lu 2:29-32).

Luke 2:29

Ver. 29-32. The song consists of an eulogium of Christ, whom Simeon here calls:

1. *The Lord's salvation;*
2. *A light to lighten the Gentiles;*
3. *The glory of Israel;*

and a petition, that now the Lord would let him *depart in peace*. But I shall take the words in order.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. He desireth to die, having now lived to see what alone he desired life for. It is a speech much like Jacob's, Ge 46:30, when he had seen Joseph, whom he thought lost, but spoken here upon a much more weighty consideration. The word translated *depart*, signifies to absolve, and forgive, Lu 6:37; to dismiss, and to deliver as from bondage and misery. It is used to express the death of good men, by the Septuagint, Ge 15:15 Nu 20:29; and the noun from it is used so by the apostle, 2Pe 1:15. Simeon owns God to be the Lord of his life, who had the power of it, and could alone dismiss him; and signifieth himself to be an old man, satisfied with days, willing to be at rest from the miseries of this life; but he begs to be dismissed, and to die in peace, that is, happily: see Ge 15:15 2Ki 22:20 Ps 4:8.

According to thy word, that is, thy promise, mentioned Lu 2:26. But the putting of these words in before those words *in peace*, seems to import that he could not die in peace before he had seen God's word fulfilled to him, in which he had made him to hope.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, that is, thy Christ, according to the revelation I had from thee. Simeon had a special revelation of a corporeal sight of Christ; he could not die happily till he had had that. None of us can die in peace, till we have seen the Lord's salvation with a spiritual eye, and made application of the promises of the gospel, in the more general revelation of his word.

Thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; that is, the author of salvation, for there is no salvation in any other, Ac 4:12. Simeon declares that this salvation was prepared for all people. Isa 11:10, he was prophesied of as *an ensign for the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek*. So Isa 52:10, *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*. So Ps 98:2. Simeon speaks the same thing more particularly, Lu 2:32, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*. All the people mentioned Lu 2:32 were either Gentiles or Jews. Simeon here prophesieth, that Christ should lighten the Gentiles. The state of the

Gentiles (by whom were understood all the people in the world except the Jews) is often in Scripture expressed under the notion of darkness, both in respect of the ignorance of the true God which was amongst them, and of their idolatry and superstition, and their lewd and wicked lives, much proportioned to their religion. Hence Paul is said to be sent to the Gentiles, *to turn them from darkness to light*, Ac 26:18. Christ is called *light*; Joh 8:12, *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*. So Joh 9:5. Conformable to the old prophecies: Isa 60:1-3, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come. Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light*. And speaking of Christ, Isa 49:6, *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth*. So Isa 42:6, *And give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*. See Ps 98:3 Ac 13:47.

And the glory of thy people Israel. All the earth is the Lord's, but Israel is called his *son*, his *first born*, Ex 4:22. Christ was the *minister of the circumcision*, Ro 15:8. To them it was that he was promised, of them it was that he was born, Ro 9:5. Amongst them it was that he preached and wrought miracles: *He came unto his own*, Joh 1:11. It was said of old, *I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory*, Isa 46:13. Christ is the glory of any people; the preaching of Christ, the owning and professing of Christ, a living up to his rules, this is a people's glory. And as some do this more and better than others, so in God's account they differ from others in what is true glory.

Luke 2:33

Ver. 33. Brentius notes on this text, *Non admirantur quia non credunt, sed quia credunt ideo admirantur*, They did not admire because they did not believe, but because they believed therefore they marvelled. They had revelations what Christ was; the angel had appeared to Joseph, to Mary, to Zacharias, and Elisabeth; the wise men had come from the east (if, as some think, they came so soon); yet they *marvelled*; they did not contemn and

mock at these things, but certainly neither did they fully understand them, but in the general believed the Divine revelation. I do doubt whether, before Christ was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead*, Ro 1:4, either Mary or Christ's own disciples did steadily and firmly believe, that Christ was the eternal Son of God; though it was clear that before that time they believed him to be sent of God, and a great Prophet, nay, the promised Messiah, the Christ of God, and generally believed that what was spoken of the Messiah and the Christ belonged to him, but whether they did rightly understand that the Messiah was to be God man I cannot tell. John Baptist seemeth clearest in the case. Peter also made a famous confession of it, but many things we read of Peter afterward which speak even Peter's faith in the case rather the embryo of faith than a fixed and perfect faith. But I impose nothing here on my reader, let him judge as he seeth reason; supposing a fixed firm faith in this case, yet they might marvel, for Christ is *to be admired of them that believe*.

Luke 2:34

Ver. 34,35. *Simeon blessed them*: some may question how it was that Simeon blessed Christ, whereas the apostle tells us, *The less is blessed of the better*, Heb 7:7. But we must distinguish between:

1. A prophetic blessing, as Jacob blessed his sons, which was nothing but a prediction how God would bless them.
2. An authoritative blessing, as the priests blessed the people in the name of the Lord, Nu 6:1-27; which is nothing but a pronouncing them blessed by authority from God, whom God hath blessed.
3. A charitable or precatory blessing; praying God to bless them.

Thus inferiors may bless superiors, as well as superiors may bless inferiors. The first or last, or both those, is to be understood here, not the second.

And said unto Mary his mother; not to Joseph, who he knew was not his natural, but legal and reputed, father.

*Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. That by the fall and rising again is here meant the salvation and damnation of many is doubted by no valuable interpreters. The apostle so applies Isa 8:14,15, where he is said to be *for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.* So doth Peter, 1Pe 2:8. Neither is it more than Christ telleth us, Joh 9:39, *For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.* Accordingly the apostle saith, 2Co 2:16, that they were *to some the savour of death unto death, to others the savour of life unto life.* The reason is, because they that believe in him shall be saved, they that believe not shall be damned, Mr 16:16 Joh 3:18,36. This is now granted on all hands, that Christ will be the occasion of many people's damnation, even all that reject and oppose him, and believe not in him; and the cause of many people's salvation, even all that shall be saved: for there is no other name given under heaven, by which any can be saved, Ac 4:12: see Mt 21:44 1Pe 2:4,5. And it is observable, that the salvation of souls by Christ is expressed by the term *rising*; so as all are, fallen, Eph 2:1, and have need of the application of a greater power to them for their salvation, than an under propping of the innate power of their wills. But the great question is about *κειται*, *is set*, whether it signifieth only an event, or some counsel and ordination of God. Let us compare it with other texts where the same word is used, Php 1:17 1Th 3:3. How such great issues of providence should happen without the foreknowledge of God, or how God should have any such foreknowledge without a previous act of his will determining the thing, let any one consider; in the mean time it is freely granted, that the intervening of men's unbelief, and malice, and opposition to Christ and his gospel, is the proximate meritorious cause of the fall of any soul by occasion of him.*

It follows, *and for a sign which shall be spoken against*; such a mark as Job speaks of, Job 16:12; or such a sign as Isaiah speaks of, Isa 8:18. Simeon here prophesieth, that Christ, and his ministers and people, should be ridiculed, and all the arrows of ungodly men should be shot against him; which proved true in that age as to Christ and his apostles, and in succeeding ages as to all that derive from him, and will so hold to the end of the world.

Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; as the irons entered into the soul of Joseph, Ps 105:18. He tells the virgin her soul should be wounded with the reproaches and indignities which should be offered to this blessed babe, as it proved afterwards, when she heard him reviled, and saw him crucified.

That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. The gospel times, especially times of persecution, will discover whom God hath chosen, and whom he hath not, by discovering the thoughts of their hearts; it will then be seen who will receive and who will reject the Messiah, who is on his side and who will be against him. The term *that* doth denote the consequent, not the effect. The preaching of the gospel is the Lord's fan, by which he purgeth his floor. Persecution is the Lord's sieve, by which he winnoweth churches, and separateth the dirt, and darnel, and tares from the wheat. Gospel times and times of persecution are both of them times which make great discovery of men's spirits.

Luke 2:36

Ver. 36-38. God took care that our Saviour's nativity should be fully attested. To the testimony of the angels, the wise men, the shepherds, Simeon, here is added another. It is that of Anna, who is described here by her tribe and by her father. She was *of the tribe of Aser*, one of the meanest tribes, and of those ten tribes that were carried into the captivity of Assyria, having before made a defection (under the conduct of Jeroboam) both from the house of David and from the true worship of God. But though the generality did so, yet many particular persons removed, to enjoy the true worship of God, and joined themselves to Judith. Jer 1:4, it was prophesied, *that the children of Israel should come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping, to seek the Lord their God.* What her father *Phanuel* was we read not. She is also further said to be *a prophetess*. Such there were amongst the Jews; we read of Deborah, and Miriam, and Huldah, to whom king Josiah sent. They were called prophets and prophetesses who revealed the will of God unto the people; but in the Old Testament it most generally signified, such as God enabled to foretell things which were to come. The spirit of prophecy

had much failed amongst the Jews for four hundred years before Christ; about Christ's coming it began to revive. This woman seems to have been upwards of a hundred years old, if we account the eighty-four years here mentioned from her widowhood; not so, if we count them from her birth. She was but seven years married, all the rest of her life she had spent in widowhood. She *departed not from the temple night or day*; that is, she was frequently there, giving up herself wholly to religious exercises, prayer, and fasting, that she might be more fit for prayer. This woman *coming in at that instant* where Simeon took up Christ in his arms, &c., *gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him* to such as she knew in Jerusalem, *who looked for the redemption* of Israel. There is no place where God hath had a name, but, however it be corrupted and debauched, hath a number that keep close to God. God in Ahab's time had seven thousand in Israel; and in this most corrupt time there was a Simeon and an Anna, and also others, who had a true notion and expectation of the Messiah; and these the Holy Ghost taketh more notice of than of all the Jewish doctors, all the scribes and Pharisees, whose names are enrolled, while what these persons said and did shall remain for a memorial of them wherever the gospel shall be preached to the end of the world.

Luke 2:39

Ver. 39. If the wise men, mentioned Mt 2:1, had been with Herod before this time, it is more than probable that Herod would have made an end of Christ at this time, therefore certainly it was after this time. Luke saith nothing of what we have Mt 2:13-15,19-23, of Joseph going into Egypt upon the admonition of the angel, nor his coming back; but both Matthew and Luke agree in their dwelling at Nazareth, which he calleth *their own city*, for there Joseph dwelt, Lu 2:4. How after this the wise men came to find him at Bethlehem, Mt 2:1-12, the Scripture hath not told us. It is very idle for any to say Joseph dwelt there, for then he would not have taken up his inn there, nor been put to such a stress as to have his wife bring forth in a stable; besides, it is apparent from Lu 2:4 and this verse, and from Mt 2:23, that he dwelt at Nazareth. God, who ordered the motion of the wise men, and their instructions to be sent to Bethlehem to look for Christ, could easily find Joseph some business to be done there at that time,

whether some business of his trade, or some visit to his friends, we cannot say.

Luke 2:40

Ver. 40. This verse shortly sums up all that we have in the Gospel of the history of the first twelve years of our Saviour's life. Though there could be no accession to the perfection of the Divine nature in Christ, yet as to his human nature he was (as we are) capable of accession of habits, and wisdom and knowledge; for though the Divine nature was personally united to the human nature, yet there was no communication of properties.

Luke 2:41

Ver. 41. The law of God enjoined all the males of the Israelites to appear at Jerusalem before him three times each year, of which the feast of unleavened bread was one; but the women seem not to have been all under the same obligation, but many of them went, of which Mary was one, but we read not of Christ's going till he was twelve years old. Some think that the women used to go once in a year, we read that Elkanah's wife went, 1Sa 1:5-7, but whether they generally did so or not the Scripture saith not. One thing is observable: the Pharisees, and scribes, and priests had in those days much corrupted the worship of God by their traditions, yet they retained the substance of God's institutions; we find both our Saviour and his disciples, and other people of God, not wholly forsaking the Jewish church because of its corruptions, yet we cannot think they joined with them in any thing of their will worship; from whence we may learn a tenderness as to a total separation from a church, and the lawfulness of attending divine ministrations, though attended with usages which we approve not of, provided there be no idolatry in the service.

Luke 2:42

Ver. 42. It is said by those who are learned in the Jewish writings, that till a child was of this age he was not obliged by the law to go. We have in Scripture nothing to ascertain us in the case; it is certain that our Saviour

went at this age, *after the custom of the feast*, that is, so as to be there about the fourteenth day of the month Nisan.

Luke 2:43

Ver. 43-45. The feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread, held seven days, during which time Joseph and Mary stayed in Jerusalem, and then returned. They usually both went to and returned from these feasts in great troops, or companies. Christ tarried behind; Mary, thinking he had been in the company, missed him not; they return to Jerusalem to seek him.

Luke 2:44

Ver. 44-46. *After three days* possibly here is to be understood from the time they first went from Jerusalem; one day they went forward in their journey, a second day they were coming back, the third day they found him; for it cannot be thought they should be in Jerusalem three days before they found him, considering that they found him in the temple, which it is likely was the first place they sought for him in. It should seem that the doctors of the law gave a general liberty to any to propound any questions to them about the law of God, to which they gave answers. But it is very probable that something more than ordinary appeared in him, that they admitted him to sit amongst them, for though themselves sat on benches, yet their auditors usually sat at their feet; hence we read of Paul's being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

Luke 2:47

Ver. 47. What was the subject matter of the doctors' and Christ's discourses is vainly questioned, only in the general we may be assured it was something about the Divine law; what the particular themes or subjects were is not material for us to inquire. Our Saviour so answered their questions, as they were all astonished.

Luke 2:48

Ver. 48. Though something must be allowed to a woman's passions and a mother's indulgence, yet one would think that, especially considering where they found him, and what doing, she should not have spoken thus unto him, had she had a clear and distinct knowledge of his Divine nature, in union with her flesh: she speaks to him with the authority of a mother, *Why hast thou thus dealt with us?*

Luke 2:49

Ver. 49,50. Some read it—*that I must be in my Father's house?* Then the sense must be, why did you seek me in any other place than the temple, that is, my Father's house, there lieth my business. But the phrase seemeth rather to signify as we translate it. He doth here signify that God was his Father: that Mary might have known, not only from the revelation of the angel, but because she had not known man; but she did not yet fully understand his Divine office as Mediator, and the great Prophet promised, that should reveal the will of God to people; much less did she yet fully and distinctly understand, that he was by nature the eternal Son of God: she believed so much as was revealed to her clearly concerning Christ.

It is said, *they understood not the saying which he spake unto them;* they had not a clear and distinct understanding of it. In the mean time, from these words of our Saviour, and this fact of his, we may learn, that inferiors are not in all things under the power of their most natural superiors; particularly not in such things wherein they cannot yield obedience to them without a disobedience unto God. There are some cases wherein, instead of obeying, we are bound to hate both father and mother by our Saviour's precept.

Luke 2:51

Ver. 51. We left him at Nazareth, after Mary's purification, Lu 2:39; we find him at Nazareth now at twelve years old. We shall now read no more

of him till Lu 3:23, when he came to *be about thirty years of age*. What he did in the mean time is a business of too much curiosity for us to inquire, and of very little significance to us if we knew. Some think he wrought with his father upon his trade. As I cannot tell how to prove it, so I know nothing against it. It is not likely he was sent to any of the schools of their prophets, as he who could argue with the doctors pertinently at twelve years of age, and to whom the Spirit was given not by measure, had no need of their instructions: so their academies were not such as we can reasonably think that Joseph and Mary should seek any education for him in them; and I know no reason why we should think, that he who abhorred not the womb of the virgin, nor a stable, nor a manger, should abhor the works of an honest vocation, and not much more abhor an idle life. But we dispute about these things in vain, being such as to which we can never be satisfied (God having hidden them from our knowledge); what is for our instruction is told us, he *was subject unto his parents*. This teacheth the greatest and highest mortals to honour their fathers and mothers; *which* (saith the apostle) *is the first commandment with promise*. Solomon honoured his mother, and behold a greater than Solomon is here, paying his homage also both to the womb that bare him, and to his (supposed) father that provided for him, and protected him.

But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Mary was no forgetful hearer, some things she did not yet clearly understand, but she kept them in her heart; and those who do so as to God's word shall in time understand them.

Luke 2:52

Ver. 52. If any ask how he, who was the eternal Wisdom of the Father, (who is the only wise God), increased in wisdom, they must know that all things in Scripture which are spoken of Christ, are not spoken with respect to his entire person, but with respect to the one or the other nature united in that person; he increased in wisdom, as he did in age, or stature, with respect to his human, not to his Divine nature. And as God daily magnified his grace and favour toward him, so he gave him favour with the neighbourhood, and people of Galilee, so as that when he came forth to be a public minister, he came forth as a bishop (the chief Bishop of souls especially) ought to do, having a good repute even of those who were

without. And thus we leave our Saviour's history, for about eighteen years of which the history of the gospel tells us nothing.

Luke 3:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 3:1-14 The preaching and baptism of John.

Lu 3:15-18 His testimony of Christ.

Lu 3:19,20 Herod imprisons John for his free reproof.

Lu 3:21,22 Christ is baptized, and receiveth testimony from heaven.

Lu 3:23-38 The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.

Ver. 1,2. The evangelist having given us an account both of the birth of John the Baptist and of our Saviour, and of all the prophecies preceding and attending them both, leaving the history of our Saviour a little, cometh to give us an account of the history of John the Baptist, his entrance upon his public ministry, and fulfilling of it. John the Baptist had six months seniority of our Saviour, and probably did appear so long before him to the world as a public minister; the time of his beginning was in *the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar*. Tiberius Caesar was he who next succeeded Augustus (for all the Roman emperors after Julius Caesar were called Caesars, as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaohs): he was as wicked a prince as most who ruled the Roman empire. Herod the Great (in whose time Christ was born) was some time since dead. Archelaus began to rule in his stead as a king, but the Romans changing the government from a monarchy to a tetrarchy, (that is, a government of four), Archelaus had only the government of Judea; Herod Antipas, another son of Herod the Great, had the government of Galilee under the title of tetrarch; Philip, another son of his, had the government of Iturea and Trachonitis, under the same title of tetrarch; and one Lysanias had the government of Abilene: all four strangers. So as at this time the Jews were all under the government of foreigners, the sceptre or government was wholly departed from Judah. Archelaus was soon after sent into France, and Pontius Pilate made procurator or governor of Judea and Samaria. Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. By the law of God, the eldest son of the family of Aaron

was to be the high priest. How there came to be at this time two high priests is not agreed amongst interpreters. Those who are curious in this inquiry may see what Mr. Pool hath collected for their satisfaction in his Synopsis. We must know, that at this time the Jews were under the power of the Romans, and all things amongst them were out of order. Some say the Jews had liberty to choose their high priest, but then their conquerors would turn him out, and sell the place to another. Others say that the high priest had his deputy, who also obtained the same title. Others think, that as they had made the high priesthood an office, to which they chose one annually, (which was by God's law an office for life), so the high priest of the former year still retained his title for another year. We are at no certainty in these things. It is certain that at this time there were two that bore the title of the high priest, upon what account we cannot tell. It appeareth from Joh 18:13, that the same men three or four years after bore this title of high priest, whether chosen again or not we do not know.

But this was the time when *the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness*; the same John of which we heard before. The word of the Lord came to him, commanding him out to preach the gospel. It is a phrase which is often used in the Old Testament, to signify the influence of the Spirit of God upon the prophets, quickening them to their work; and signifieth to us, that no man ought to take this honour unto himself until he be called of God, nor to speak in the name of the Lord until first the word of God cometh to him.

Luke 3:3

Ver. 3. How long the time of John's ministry was before he was shut up by Herod in prison the Holy Scriptures do not certainly tell us; but it must be very short, for our Saviour's time was little more than three years, and we hear of his imprisonment in the beginning of our Saviour's public ministry. All that we have of John's ministry is to be found either in this chapter, or in Mt 3:1-17, or in Mr 1:1-45, or in the Joh 1:1-51 3:1-36. From them all it appeareth, that the sum of his doctrine was, the necessity of repentance, and faith in Christ, in order to the remission of sins. His pressing faith in Christ is most clearly declared by the evangelist John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke insist more upon his preaching the *doctrine of repentance for the*

remission of sins, and baptism as an evidence of it. Which doctrine or repentance he pressed both from evangelical motives, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*, and from legal motives, or arguments of terror, *The axe is now laid unto the root of the trees*: in this setting an example to all ministers of the gospel, showing them what should be the main subjects of their discourses, for we shall find that our Saviour preached the same doctrine, and in the same method. What is here said we before opened: See Poole on "Mt 3:2". See Poole on "Mr 1:4". John did not preach that baptism was repentance, or that remission of sins was infallibly annexed to it, but that the way to obtain remission of sins was by repentance, and that baptism was an external sign and symbol of it.

Luke 3:4

Ver. 4-6. All four of the evangelists apply that prophecy, Isa 40:3-5, to John the Baptist. Luke only repeats what is Lu 3:5,6 and in Isa 40:4,5, and he doth but shortly repeat what is in the prophet, Lu 3:5; the prophet saith, *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*. But there is nothing more usual than for the writers in the New Testament, in their quotations out of the Old Testament, to repeat the sum of the sense, not the words strictly. For the understanding of that prophecy, we must know, that there the prophet Isaiah was sent to comfort those amongst the Jews who feared God, partly with the assurance of them that they should return from Babylon, their warfare should have an end, Cyrus should deliver them; partly with the assurance of them of a far greater deliverance, in and by the coming of the Messiah (of whom Cyrus was but a type): to this purpose the prophet sets out both Cyrus, and in that type Christ's coming, as if both were present and at hand. Kings and great princes coming (especially with armies) have usually some coming before them, as pioneers, to prepare their way, by levelling rough places, and removing whatsoever is in the way of their motions, and filling up holes and ditches, &c.; nor are they far off when once their harbingers and pioneers are arrived, or are seen coming. John is here set out as a harbinger to Christ, to prepare his way, or a pioneer, to fill up ditches, throw down hills, to make rough ways smooth, and every way to prepare the way for him: that *all flesh* might *see the salvation of God*. And as princes that have wildernesses to pass through have more need of their pioneers to prepare and smooth their ways; so the

state of the Jews being now confused, as a wilderness, and corrupt above measure, John the Baptist was sent before to cry in the wilderness, &c. This I take to be the true sense of the prophecy, and that it is mighty vain to strain these metaphorical phrases, and inquire what is meant by valleys, mountains, and crooked ways; they all most certainly signify the same thing, viz. whatsoever might be a hinderance to people's receiving of Christ; and to philosophize further about them, is but to show the luxury of our wit, rather than any solidity of judgment. The whole scope of these three verses is but to show, that as kings, and princes, and governors of armies, have used to have harbingers and pioneers, or other officers, to go before them, to remove things out of the way of them and their retinue, and to prepare their way; so had Christ, and John the Baptist was the man whom the Lord pitched upon for that purpose, by his preaching to bring men to it sense of their sins, and off from their wicked courses, and to show them their need of a Saviour; that so when Christ came himself forth to preach, people might not be wholly ignorant, but in some measure prepared to receive the joyful tidings of the gospel, which he brought unto them.

Luke 3:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 3:7", and following verses to Mt 3:10, where we met with all this with no alteration, save that Matthew saith that he spoke this to the Pharisees and Sadducees, seeing them come to his baptism: though he did especially intend them, yet he spake in the hearing of the multitude, amongst whom they were.

Luke 3:10

Ver. 10,11. Although the preaching of the law doth not immediately conduce to work in us faith in Christ, yet mediately it doth, as it brings men to cry out, as those Ac 2:37, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* or as the jailer, Ac 16:1-40, *Sirs, what shall we do to be saved?* John

preaching God's terrors hath this effect upon the people, they ask him, *What shall we do then?* The Baptist's answer may seem a little strange to those who do not consider, that it amounts to the same with Daniel's counsel to Nebuchadnezzar, Da 4:27, *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor;* and what John had said, Lu 3:8, *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.* Our Saviour said much the same, Lu 11:41, *Give alms of such things as ye have;* and Peter commandeth, 1Pe 4:8, *Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.* Solomon saith it *covereth all sins*, Pr 10:12. The people's question was, *What shall we do?* What are the fruits meet for repentance, that is, truly indicative of repentance? To this now John answereth, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none.* Which must not be interpreted, as obliging every one that had two coats to give away one; but as instructive of us, that ceremonies and ritual performances, in which that age abounded, would not serve their turn, but true and real good works, relieving the poor to their ability, out of their superfluities, from obedience and love to God; not merely pitying them, and saying to them, *Go ye and be ye clothed, or be warmed;* not saying *Corban*, and thinking that would excuse them from relieving their parents, or other poor people, but according to their ability relieving them. John doth not here countenance Anabaptist levelling, he only cautions them against Pharisaical hypocrisy, trusting to external privileges, such as having Abraham to their father, or some ritual and ceremonial performances, while in the mean time they neglected the weighty things of the law, of which Christ hath taught us that mercy is one.

Luke 3:12

Ver. 12,13. We have showed often before that the publicans were men that collected the public revenue. In all times that sort of men have been charged with exactions of what was more than their due. The Baptist, as a fruit or indication of the truth of their repentance, cautions them against exaction, thereby declaring, that acts of justice as well as mercy are true fruits of repentance, and that repentance is vainly pretended while men go on in the same sinful courses wherein they have formerly walked. Our Lord here doth not disapprove of the office of publicans, nor certainly was

that to be condemned: if magistrates may impose taxes and payments, which without question they may, for the support of the government for our protection, there is no question but they may appoint officers under what titles they please to collect it. But both those that impose and those that collect such payments are obliged to the rule of justice; the former, to impose no more than is necessary for the end, and in a just proportion; the others, to exact no more than what is appointed them.

Luke 3:14

Ver. 14. A good and faithful minister of Christ should be one able to bring out of his storehouse things new and old, to give every one their portion in their season, and so courageous and faithful as not to be afraid to do it, nor for any reason decline the doing of it. Such was John the Baptist. These were the Roman soldiers, kept by them to maintain their conquest of Judea. Some of these also come to hear John the Baptist preach: hearing him press repentance, and bringing forth fruits that might testify the truth of it, they ask what they should do. John saith to them, *Do violence to no man, &c.* Experience hath taught all people, that soldiers (especially employed to keep garrisons amongst a conquered people) are often very insolent, and for their own gain prone to accuse innocent persons, and the jealousy of conquerors often allows them too easy an ear; as also how apt they are by oppression to mend their short commons, or to exact upon others that they may spend luxuriously. All these are acts or species of injustice, which the Baptist lets them know must be left, if they would bring forth fruits fit for repentance. He doth not blame the employment of a soldier, but only regulates their behaviour in that employment. Wars in just causes are undoubtedly lawful under the gospel, and consequently so is the employment of a soldier; we read of several good centurions or captains of hundreds. But the soldier stands highly concerned to look:

1. That the cause be good in which he draweth his sword.
2. That he behaveth himself in it lawfully, not using any needless violence, not accusing any wrongfully, not endeavouring to mend his pay by any, rapine, or unjustly taking away what is another's, either to spend in luxury, or to uphold himself in his station.

From this instruction of John the Baptist, we may learn several things concerning the nature of repentance.

1. That where there is a true root of repentance, it will bring forth fruits worthy of it.
2. That acts of mercy and justice are true and proper fruits of a true repentance, without which there can be nothing of it in truth.
3. That true repentance is best discovered by our abhorrence of and declining such sinful courses as we have formerly been addicted to, and have daily temptations to from the circumstances of our lives, and those callings, and places, and courses of life wherein the providence of God had fixed us.
4. That these things, repentance and faith, are such proper effects of both, as discover the truth of those gracious habits in the soul, and without which there can be no true evidence of them.

Luke 3:15

Ver. 15. It being known to many what the angel had told Zacharias concerning John thirty years since, and what had miraculously happened at his circumcision, as also what Zacharias his father had prophesied concerning him; and there having been many who had observed the holiness and severity of his life all along, until he came to man's estate; and knowing that the time was fulfilled for the coming of the Messiah, the sceptre being now departed from Judah, and Daniel's weeks being accomplished; and hearing him preach with that life and power which attended his ministry, as also considering his doctrine (not new in itself, being consonant to the Divine law, and the doctrine of the prophets, but) new to them, who had used to hear of rites and ceremonies and the traditions of the elders, but little or nothing of repentance, or bringing forth fruits worthy of it; they began to reason and debate with, themselves, whether John the Baptist were not the Messiah promised, and in great suspense they were about it. But John quickly satisfied them as to that, not desirous to arrogate to himself his honour, whose, messenger only he was.

Luke 3:16

Ver. 16-18. See Poole on "Mt 3:11", See Poole on "Mt 3:12", See Poole on "Mr 1:7", See Poole on "Mr 1:8". John the Baptist in these verses doth not only assure them that he was not the Christ, but also lets them know that Christ was coming amongst them, and that he was more excellent than he, and should *baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; with fire as the symbol of the Holy Ghost; so some understand it, expounding it as a prophecy of the descent of the Holy Ghost, Ac 2:3. Others possibly better expound it of the Holy Ghost working in the souls of believers as fire, purging them, and burning up their lusts and corruptions.

And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people: by which words the evangelist lets us know, that what he and the other evangelists have reported concerning John's preaching was but the sum of it.

Luke 3:19

Ver. 19,20. These two verses sufficiently confirm to us, that we are not to expect to find the several passages in the Gospel concerning John the Baptist set down according to the order of time in which they happened, for the evangelist sets down the imprisonment of John before the baptism of Christ, mentioned in the two next verses, which we know could not be as to the order of time, our Saviour being baptized by John. John was in so great repute, that Herod himself *heard him, did many things, and heard him gladly*, Mr 6:20. But John was a faithful preacher, and could not but reprove him for his wicked courses, particularly for his incestuous taking of his brother Philip's wife; for he was alive when he took her, if it be true which historians tell us, that John was imprisoned in the sixteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and Philip died not till the twentieth; however, his brother leaving issue, (for we read Herodias had a daughter, Mt 14:1-36), it was unlawful for him to have married her, especially to turn away his own wife to take her. Matthew reports this history more fully, in Mt 14:3,4, &c.: See

Poole on "Mt 14:3", See Poole on "Mt 14:4". It is said, that Herod *added yet this above all*, that is, above all his former or other wickedness, *that he shut up John in prison*. This spake him incorrigible in his wicked courses, resisting the remedy, or means to reduce him. A hypocrite may hear the word, and do many things; but he hath always some particular lust, as to which he must be spared, being neither willing to part with it, nor able to bear any reproof for it.

Luke 3:21

Ver. 21,22. This history of our Saviour's baptism is reported both by Matthew and Mark, much most largely by Matthew; See Poole on "Mt 3:13"., &c. Luke only addeth those words, *and praying*, which teacheth us that prayers ought to be joined with baptism. What was the matter of his prayer we are not told, though the following words incline some not improbably to judge that he prayed for some testimony from heaven concerning him.

Luke 3:23

Ver. 23. Here is amongst critics a little dispute, whether our blessed Lord at his baptism (after which he soon began his public ministry) was full *thirty years of age*; ωσει and αρχομενος in the Greek give occasion to the doubt. Those who judge that he was thirty complete, conceive that the age before which the priests and Levites did no service in the tabernacle of God. Nu 4:3 commanded the number of them to be taken *from thirty years old to fifty*, and it was done accordingly, Lu 3:34,35, &c. David, in the latter end of his life, so numbered them, 1Ch 23:3, when their number (of that age) was thirty-eight thousand; yet in that chapter, 1Ch 23:24,27, we find them numbered *from twenty years old and upward*; but possibly that was for some more inferior service. In conformity to this, most think that both John the Baptist and Christ entered not upon their public ministry till they were of that age; but whether they were thirty years of age complete, or current, is a question, but so little a one, as deserves no great study to resolve: the two qualifying words, ωσει and αρχομενος, would incline

one to think Christ was but thirty years of age current, which is advantaged by what others tell us, that the Jews ordinarily called a child two or three years old as soon as it did but enter upon its second or third year. Some think our Saviour was ten months above twenty-nine years of age when he was baptized, after which he was tempted of the devil forty days before he entered the public ministry; but these are little things.

Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph. Joseph was not his natural father, though so supposed by the Jews, Joseph being indeed his legal father, being married to the virgin when our Saviour was born, Mt 1:20.

Luke 3:24

Ver. 24-38 There have been great disputes about the genealogy of our Saviour, as recorded both by Matthew and Luke. The adversaries of Christian religion have taken no small advantage from the seeming difference between them, which even many sober writers have thought it no easy matter to reconcile. The apostle hath cautioned us against giving too much heed to *endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith*, 1Ti 1:4; yet certainly it is our duty, as well for the stopping the mouths of such as would clamour against the truth of the whole Scripture, (if not of the whole Christian religion), as, so far as we can, to vindicate holy writ from their little cavils, and thereby also to confirm those who are weak in faith. To make these things as clear as we can: It is plain that both the evangelists agree in their design, by setting down the genealogy of our Saviour, to prove him lineally descended both from Abraham and David, the two persons to whom was made the promise of the Messiah, and the stability of his kingdom, and also in the names of the first fourteen generations, mentioned by Matthew, and here by Luke, Lu 3:32,33, and to Abraham, Lu 3:34. Their disagreement lieth in four things.

1. In the form of the pedigree; Matthew beginning with those who were first, Luke with those who were last in order of time. But this is no valuable exception, one evangelist counts forward, another backward.
2. Matthew counts by three periods, each consisting of fourteen generations; Luke doth not: but neither is this of any moment.

3. Matthew sits down our Saviour's genealogy before he tells us any thing of his conception or birth; Luke, after his relation of his conception, birth, and baptism.
4. Matthew derives our Saviour's genealogy but from Abraham; Luke, from Adam.

All these differences lay no foundation for any exception. Several accounts are given why Luke carrieth up the genealogy to Adam; the best seemeth to be this: that Matthew intending his history primarily for the Jews, judged it enough to prove Christ the Son of Abraham, and the Son of David; but Luke designing the information of the whole world, derives him from the common father of mankind. By which means he also showeth the antiquity of the gospel, and lets us know that Christ was he who was promised to Adam, before Abraham's time, and that the grace of the gospel is not limited to the seed of Abraham. Thus also Luke supplieth what was wanting in Matthew, and truly derives both the first and second act from God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of us all. But besides these differences (hardly worth the taking notice of under that notion) there are some seeming contradictions in the genealogies, yet not such but I think a fair account may be given of to any who will but first consider:

1. That they all lie in what Luke hath, from Lu 3:23-31, and from the latter end of Lu 3:34 to the end. So that in Lu 3:32,33, and part of Lu 3:34, we have nothing to reconcile.
2. That these words the son is in the Greek only Lu 3:23, where Christ is said to be "the son of Joseph", but ever after it is supplied by the translators. So as the Greek runs thus: *The Son of Joseph, which was of Heli, which was of Matthat, which was of Levi, which was of Melchi, &c.* Which consideration cuts off the first cavil, how Joseph could be the son of Jacob, as Matthew saith, and the son of Heli, as Luke saith; for indeed Luke saith no more than, *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, Lu 3:23*; that is, Christ was of Heli, the supposed son of Joseph, but truly of Heli, the father of Mary his mother. I know that some think Jacob was also called Heli (as it was ordinary

with the Jews to have two names); others think that Joseph is called the son, because he was the son-in-law of Heli, by the marriage of the virgin Mary his daughter. (Naomi calleth those her daughters who were but her legal daughters, Ru 1:11.) In this the most agree. But I must confess I think it is Christ, who is here said to be of Heli (though he was reputed, and generally taken, to be the son of Joseph).

3. That Luke is here deriving our Saviour, not from his supposed father Joseph, but from Mary his true mother. It is not to be conceived that Luke, after such a narration of the predictions of his conception as he had given us in the first chapter, should go to derive Christ from Joseph; and this gives us a fair account why the names are so different from David's time to the birth of Christ. Joseph (whose pedigree Matthew relates) deriving from Solomon, who was the son of David, succeeding him in the kingdom. Mary (whose pedigree Luke relates) descending from Nathan, Lu 3:31 1Ch 3:5 tells us he was another son of David. So as after David's time the persons named which before were the same in our Saviour's pedigree became diverse, some the progenitors of Joseph, whom Matthew reckons, others the progenitors of Mary, whom Luke nameth. This answereth the objection from the differing number of the persons from Joseph to Zorobabel (excluding them both). Matthew reckoneth but nine, Luke here reckoneth eighteen, in Lu 3:23-28. From Zorobabel to David Luke reckons twenty-two progenitors, Matthew but fourteen, (leaving out three kings of the half blood of Ahab, of which we gave an account in our notes: See Poole on "Mt 1:1"), so as the Scripture nameth seventeen, though Matthew leaves out three. In two different lines, it is not impossible that one person in so many years might have so many more progenitors than another, supposing Matthew designed to reckon all, which it is plain from his leaving out three kings named in Scripture that he did not.
4. That ordinarily the Jews had two names, sometimes three. All Josiah's sons had each of them two at least. Matthew had also the name of Levi, &c. This solves the difference from Lu 3:27, where Rhesa is said to be the son of Zorobabel, whenas Matthew saith, Mt 1:13, Zorobabel begat Abiud. That Abraham was the son of Terah or Thara, and Terah the son of Nachor, appeareth from Ge 11:24,26. That Saruch or Serug was the son of Reu or Ragau, appeareth from Ge 11:20 1Ch 1:25. That Reu was the son of Peleg, (here called Phalec), and Peleg the son of Eber, and

Eber the son of Sala, appears from Ge 11:18 1Ch 1:25. But in Ge 11:12 we read, that Sala was the son of Arphaxad, whereas he is here said to be the son of Cainan, and Cainan is made the son of Arphaxad. So as Luke maketh Sala grandchild to Arphaxad; Moses makes no mention of Cainan at all, but mentions Salah as begotten by Arphaxad. Those who are curious to know what is said for the resolution of this difficulty, may read it largely both in Spanheim's *Dubia Evangelica*, and Mr. Pool's *Synopsis Criticorum*. It is a difficulty which hath exercised many very learned men, and I doubt whether ever any yet satisfied himself in the resolution of it. It is not probable that Luke should correct what Moses said; the best account I can give of it is, the Septuagint in Ge 11:12 have it just as Luke here hath it; and it is certain that Luke, in his quotations out of the Old Testament, doth generally follow the Septuagint, being the translation most in use among them. Beza tells us of an ancient copy of the Gospel he had, which mentions no Cainan. The best of it is, that it is a matter of no great moment, for the question is not, whether Sala was the son of Arphaxad, (for so he was, though Arphaxad was his grandfather, in the same sense that Christ is called the Son of Abraham, and the Son of David, and Elisabeth the daughter of Aaron, Lu 1:50,) but whether he was the immediate son of Arphaxad or Cainan; whether Moses omitted Cainan, or some transcriber of Luke added Cainan out of the Septuagint (being then the current translation among them): the last is most probable. For the other part of the genealogy, Lu 3:36-38, it plainly agreeth with Ge 5:6 6:10. So that I must profess I see no great difficulty to reconcile the genealogies, admitting the one to give the genealogy of Joseph, and the other to give the genealogy of Mary. That indeed Mary was the daughter of Heli is not to be proved by Scripture, nor yet contradicted, but it is very probably judged so. And though we cannot prove that Cainan, mentioned Lu 3:36, was added out of some later copies of the Septuagint, yet it is more than probable it was so. Which two things if we admit, I see no great difficulty remaining, but a fair agreement between both the evangelists. For I presume none will stumble at the alteration of some letter, or omission of some letter in a name, or addition to it in the end; there is nothing more ordinary than that, when names are mentioned in several languages.

Luke 4:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 4:1-13 Christ fasts forty days, and is tempted of the devil.

Lu 4:14,15 He begins to preach.

Lu 4:16-32 The people of Nazareth wonder at his gracious words, but being offended go about to kill him: he escapeth by miracle.

Lu 4:33-37 He casteth out a devil,

Lu 4:38-39 healeth Simeon's mother-in-law,

Lu 4:40 and many other diseased persons.

Lu 4:41 The devils acknowledging him are silenced.

Lu 4:42-44 He preacheth through the cities of Galilee.

Ver. 1. By the Holy Ghost here is to be understood the gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the prophecy of him, Isa 11:1,2. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are often in holy writ called the Spirit, Ac 2:4 8:18 10:44: and not only those that are influenced with the saving gifts and graces of the Spirit, are said to have the Spirit, and be filled; but those who received the more extraordinary powers of it, such as the gifts of prophecy, healing, &c. Others besides Christ are in Scripture said to be filled with the Spirit, Ac 6:5; and it was so prophesied concerning John, Lu 1:15. But they had but their measure; to Christ the Spirit was given not by measure, Joh 3:34.

He returned from Jordan: there John baptized, there Christ was baptized by him.

And was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Ηγετο saith Luke. ἘΑνηχθη saith Matthew. Mark expresses it by the word εκβαλλει. The words do not signify a violent motion, (for without doubt Christ went willingly), but a potent and efficacious motion.

Luke 4:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 4:2", and following verses to Mt 4:4.

Luke 4:3

Ver. 3,4 See Poole on "Mt 4:3". See Poole on "Mt 4:4". It is very observable, that Christ here asserts the authority of the Scriptures; and though he was full of the Holy Ghost, yet maketh the Holy Scripture his rule of action.

Luke 4:5

Ver. 5-8. See Poole on "Mt 4:8". See Poole on "Mt 4:9". See Poole on "Mt 4:10". Those words, Lu 4:6, *for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it,* are only mentioned by Luke; where we may observe, that the devil was a liar from the beginning. The dominion over the things of the world was not given to the angels, but to man. Neither hath he any such power as he pretends to, being not able to do any thing against Job till he had obtained leave from God, nor to enter into the swine without licence first obtained from Christ.

Luke 4:9

Ver. 9-12. See Poole on "Mt 4:5". See Poole on "Mt 4:6". See Poole on

"Mt 4:7". What Matthew calls *the holy city*, Luke expoundeth *Jerusalem*.

Luke 4:13

Ver. 13. Matthew saith, the devil left him, *and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him*. Luke saith, *he departed from him for a season, when he had ended all the temptation*. Those words, *for a season*, seem to intimate that our Saviour had further conflicts with the devil than are here mentioned; and possibly those words, *all the temptation*, may hint us, that the devil offered more temptations than the evangelist have recorded, though some affirm that all temptations fall under those which are the heads of these temptations, and think those words, *for a season*, signify until the time of his passion, when he entered into the heart of Judas, and armed all his instruments against this Captain of our salvation.

Luke 4:14

Ver. 14,15. Both Matthew and Mark make the occasion of our Saviour's going into Galilee to be his hearing that John was cast into prison. But certainly Matthew and Mark speak of a second going into Galilee, and mean by it Galilee of the Gentiles, which was in the jurisdiction of Philip, the brother of Herod Antipas. Else one might admire, why Christ should go into Galilee upon hearing that John was cast into prison; that had been for him to have thrown himself into Herod's mouth, before that his time of suffering was come; but it should seem that after his temptations, he first went to Capernaum, where he did not stay many days, Joh 2:12, and then to Nazareth, which was his own country. But others think that all the evangelists speak of a second going into Galilee, which I cannot agree if Nazareth were within that Galilee which was called the Lower Galilee, and was within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who was the tetrarch of Galilee, and the man that had imprisoned John, and afterwards caused him to be beheaded.

And he taught in their synagogues: he had the reputation of a prophet,

which procured him that liberty of speaking in all those places, where the Jews celebrated their public worship; *being glorified*, that is, admired and honoured, *of all*.

Luke 4:16

Ver. 16. We heard before, Lu 2:39,51, that Christ was brought up at Nazareth; we read of him at Nazareth, Mt 13:54. But I must confess I doubt whether Matthew there, and Luke here, speak of the same time. Of the nature of the Jewish synagogues, and their order of worship there, and the reading of the Scriptures in them, we have spoken before in our notes on Mt 4:23. See Poole on "Mt 4:23".

Luke 4:17

Ver. 17-19. The words differ in some things from the words of the prophet out of which they are quoted, Isa 61:1, where is nothing of recovering of sight to the blind; but they exactly agree with the Septuagint version, only, Lu 4:19, they have *καλεσαι*, to call, and Luke hath *κηρυξαι*, to preach, according to which probably the copies of the Septuagint in use with them were. It was their manner in the synagogues for the minister (an officer appointed to that purpose, see Lu 4:20) to bring the book of the law or of the prophets which was to be read, and to deliver it to him that officiated for that time, who, when he had read, redelivered it to the same officer to be laid up. Their writers tell us, that the books of Moses were divided into several portions, which they were tied to read in order; but for the books of the prophets, he that officiated was more at liberty to read in what place and proportion he pleased. Our Lord readeth Isa 61:1, which, according to the Septuagint copy, was as Luke here translated; and by the way, this custom of the writers of the New Testament, (writing in Greek), to quote texts out of the Old Testament, very often according to that Septuagint translation, may, first, give us some account of the difficulty we met with Lu 3:1-38, where Sala was made the son of Cainan, and the grandchild of Arphaxad, whereas Moses mentions no Cainan, Ge 11:1-32 Luke, taking the quotation of the Septuagint, might put it in according to them, for they have it in Ge 11:12. Secondly, it may learn us not to be too curious as to

minute things in Scripture, for had it been a thing of moment, the Holy Spirit of God had certainly never suffered Luke to write after their copy, either there or here. God never had a church in any place, but he soon stirred up some to make an interpretation of the Scriptures for their use, and so far assisted them, that though they might differ from the Hebrew text, or the Greek, in some minute things, yet they differed not in any thing of moment necessary for us to know and believe in order to salvation. And the frequent quotations we have in the New Testament out of the Septuagint, incline us to think that it is the will of God, that particular persons in churches should make use of such versions, and take them for the Holy Scriptures, not lightly and ordinarily varying from them; the translating of Scriptures, being not an ordinary ministerial gift, but the work of some stirred up by God unto it, and whom he more than ordinarily so assists, as that they have not erred in any momentous thing. If this may be admitted, we need not lay the fault upon those who transcribed Luke's copy. But let us come to the text itself.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me. Anointing may signify two things:

1. The endowment of the person with gifts and abilities fit for his work. Thus, 1Jo 2:27, *the anointing* is said to *teach us all things*; and Christ is said, Ps 45:7 Heb 1:9, to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, which the Baptist seemeth to interpret, Joh 3:34, *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*.
2. Anointing also was a symbol of God's calling out and sending a person to the execution of an office, 2Ki 9:6.
3. I find also anointing used as a symbol of God's purpose and designation of a person to an employment, to the performance of which he did not presently call him; thus David was anointed, 1Sa 16:13.

By *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, I conceive is meant, exciting and quickening Christ to the present execution of that office to which God had anointed him; that is:

1. Of old designed him;

2. Fitted him, giving him the Spirit not by measure;
3. Now called him to the exercise of it: and because the Lord had so designed him, so prepared, and now so called him, the Spirit now excited and quickened him.

God stirreth up none to take upon them the office of the ministry, whom he hath not fitted with gifts for the discharge of it. But what was this employment to which Christ was anointed? εὐαγγελιζεσθαι, *to preach the gospel to the poor*. This was the great work of our Lord and Saviour, to preach. And what? The gospel, the glad tidings of salvation. To whom? ητῶχοις: it is used to signify those that are mean in the world, and, by a figure, those that are miserable and afflicted; and this I should take to be the sense here, in conformity to that other phrase which our Saviour useth to John's disciples, Mt 6:5, and to that of the apostle, 1Co 1:27. Christ was first sent to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, who were all at this time in a poor afflicted state and condition, and amongst them chiefly to the meaner sort. The rulers believed not on him, Joh 7:48; to teach ministers what Erasmus saith, *Nulla nobis anima vilis videri debet, pro qua Dominus gloriae mori non est dedignatus*, That they are too proud that despise the poor, and that we ought not to count any soul vile for which he who was the Lord of glory disdained not to die: we may add, to which the great Minister of the circumcision took himself to be anointed to preach.

I had rather thus understand it, than of such as are poor in spirit; which seem to be understood in the next words, *he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted*, whether wounded in the sense of sin, or melted in the sense of mercy: the whole hearted are such as see no need of repentance, no need of a Saviour; Christ came not to heal these; *The whole need not a physician*.

It followeth, *to preach deliverance to the captives*; to let them know, that are yet slaves to sin and to their lusts, that there is a way for their deliverance.

And recovering of sight to the blind; to let all blind sinners know, that there is an eye salve discovered, which if applied will recover their spiritual sight.

To set at liberty them that are bruised: it is of the same significance with binding up the broken in heart.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord; the true jubilee, when every soul may be set free from the bonds of its sins, 2Co 6:17; the year of God's good will; that the time was now come, when in every nation he that feared God, and wrought righteousness, should be *accepted with him*, Ac 10:35.

Luke 4:20

Ver. 20,21. Christ observeth the order used in their synagogues, when he that officiates had read such a portion out of the law as was appointed, or out of the prophets, as he pleased, he closed the book, or the roll, and gave it again to the officer, whose work it was to bring it, and then to carry it back, and lay it up; and then sat down, while he made his exhortation upon it. This Christ did, the people being in the mean time very attentive to hear what he would say. He begins to speak, and telleth them this was a prophecy concerning him,

This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears; that is, it is fulfilled in me, either primarily, or as I am the antitype to Cyrus. We must not think that this was all which Christ said, but thus he began his discourse.

Luke 4:22

Ver. 22. All that heard our Saviour in the synagogue *bare him witness*. Of what? Not that he was the Messiah, much less the Son of God; but they praised his discourse in opening the prophecy: they did not believe in him, but they admired the wisdom and piety of his discourses, they admired the effects of the grace of God in him, his *gracious words*. But see the wretchedness of carnal hearts, in their proneness to take no prejudices, to choke the beginnings of any convictions in themselves. They do not admire the power of Divine grace, that it could so far influence one of so

mean an education as they took Christ to have had; but dreaming that the kingdom of God must come with observation, and the coming of the Messiah must be in great outward splendour and glory, they stumble at his parents, because (though of the house of David) they were of so mean a visible quality.

Luke 4:23

Ver. 23,24. Christ here tells those of Nazareth what was in their hearts, viz. that they in their hearts contemned him, because of the meanness of his parentage, and challenged him to confirm his doctrine by miracles, urging that Nazareth was his own country, and physicians in the first place ought to cure themselves, and their friends, and those of their own families; they therefore challenge him to work some such miracles as he had before wrought in Capernaum, as they had heard. He gives them the reason why he did no miracles amongst them, viz. because he discerned that they contemned them, as is very usual for persons, according to that common saying: *No prophet is accepted in his own country.* The reference here to some things done before this time in Capernaum, would incline us to think that after Christ's temptations he first went to Cana of Galilee, where he wrought his first miracle, Joh 2:1, turning the water into wine, then to Capernaum, where he staid not many days, Joh 2:12, then to Nazareth; but hearing that John was cast into prison, he removed from Nazareth to Capernaum, out of the jurisdiction of Herod, under the milder government of Philip his brother.

Luke 4:25

Ver. 25-27. The two stories to which our Saviour refers are those 1Ki 17:9 2Ki 5:14. But the question is what our Saviour intended to teach them by these stories, which made them so exceeding angry, as we shall find by and by. I answer, several things, none of which pleased them.

1. The freeness of God's distinguishing grace. That God was not bound to give to all the same aid, and means of grace, that he gave some. This is a doctrine the world was never patient to hear. That God will have

mercy on whom he will have mercy. We would fain make God a debtor to us. Those of Nazareth think they had as good, if not a better, right to Christ's miracles than those of Capernaum. I tell you, saith Christ, God is a Sovereign in his acts of grace, and acts freely, and I can do no miracles but where he will have them done.

2. That it is through the fault of men, if they receive not the benefits of Divine grace. If the Israelites would have entertained Elijah, he might have been sent to them, as well as to Sarepta. If the lepers in Israel would have sought out and come to Elisha they might have been healed. If you would have received me, and believed in me, you might have seen what those of Capernaum did; it is because of your contempt and unbelief that I can show you no miracles. If any say, If God had put it into the hearts of the widows in Israel, or the lepers there, they would also have entertained Elijah, and have sought out and come to Elisha: why did not God put it into their hearts? To this the answer is ready: Who art thou that disputest with God? Why doth the clay reply upon the potter? Even so, O Father, for so it pleaseth thee. However, the failures of the lepers in Israel, and the widows there, and of those in Nazareth, was in a great measure in their duty, as to things within their power to do by virtue of that common grace which God denieth to none: he might justly deny his special influences, while they neglected to make use of his more common influences.
3. That in every nation he that feared God, and wrought righteousness, was ever accepted of him. God had no respect to this country, or that country; he sent Elijah to do good to a Sidonian, and Elisha to do good to a Syrian, while he neglected the ungrateful and disobedient Israelites. Thus he also not obscurely hints, that for their unbelief, and rejection of, and disobedience to him, God would send his gospel to the Gentiles, and reject them, which came to pass within a few years after. None of all these were grateful sounds in the ears of the men of Nazareth. You ask me (saith our Saviour) why I do not such things here at Nazareth as I did at Capernaum. I was not sent to you. No; but were not they some of the lost sheep of Israel? Ah! but Christ was no more sent to all Israel, than Elias was sent to all the widows in Israel. He was sent to preach to them all, but for any special, signal favours, he was sent but to some, and those some were such as did not proudly reject and contemn him, but receive him.

Luke 4:28

Ver. 28-30. Unhappy Nazareth, where Christ had now lived more than thirty years! They had seen him growing up, increasing *in wisdom and stature, and in favour both with God and man*, Lu 2:52; they had had the first fruits of his ministry, and, Lu 4:22, they *bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*; they knew his education, so as they could not think he had this wisdom and knowledge from any advantages of that, but must have it from Heaven; yet when they hear him preaching, and but touching them for their contempt and rejection of him, and tacitly comparing them with their forefathers in the time of Ahab, and preaching the doctrine of God's sovereign and free grace, and hinting to them that the grace of God should pass to the Gentiles, while they should be rejected, they are not able to bear him. Thus, Ac 22:21, the Jews heard Paul patiently, till he repeated God's commission to him to go *unto the Gentiles*; then they cried, *Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit he should live*. This was according to the old prophecy, De 32:21, (applied to the Jews by the apostle, Ro 10:19), that because they had *moved God to jealousy with that which is not God, he would move them to jealousy with them that are not a people, and provoke them to anger with a foolish nation*. This is further matter of observation, that wretched sinners, who cannot obtain of their lusts to be as good and holy as others, yet are ordinarily so proud, as they have no patience to hear that others are better than they, or have or shall have any more special share in God's favour. Those of Nazareth which were in the synagogue hearing these things, are filled with wrath, *thrust Christ out of the city*, as not fit to live among them, and go about to kill him, by throwing him down headlong from the brow of the hill upon which their city was built.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way. How he got out of their hands, when they had laid hold of him, the Scripture doth not tell us, nor is it our concern to be curious to inquire. We read much the like passage, Joh 8:59, when the Jews had taken up stones to stone him. We know it was an easy thing for him, who was God as well as man, to quit

himself of any mortal enemies; but how he did it, whether by blinding their eyes, or altering the nature of his body, and making it imperceptible by them, or by a greater strength than they, (which the Divine nature could easily supply his human nature with), who is able to determine?

Luke 4:31

Ver. 31,32. Capernaum was a city in the other Galilee, under the jurisdiction of Philip, whither Matthew and Mark mention our Saviour's motion upon the report of the imprisonment of John. Philip is not only by historians reported of a less bloody temper than his brother Herod, but Herod having taken away his wife, it is very probable that there was no good understanding between him and Philip. So that two things promised our Saviour more quiet in Philip's jurisdiction:

1. The tameness of his temper.
2. The hatred between him and Herod.

It appears, from Lu 4:23, he had been at Capernaum before, but stayed very little, hastening to his own country of Nazareth in the other Galilee: from thence he now again removeth, hearing of John's imprisonment, and seeing the baseness of his countrymen. When he came there, he keeps on his course preaching upon the Jewish sabbath, not abolished till his resurrection. It appeareth by Lu 4:33, that he preached in the synagogue here also.

It is said that the people *were astonished at his doctrine*. Astonishment is one thing, believing is another. Men may be some ways and to some degrees affected at the word of God, that yet are far enough from believing, as the most of these Capernautes were; else Christ had never upbraided them as he did, Mt 11:23.

For his word was with power. That this phrase is to be understood only of those powerful and miraculous operations, by which Christ confirmed the word which he preached to be from God, I cannot yield. It is better

interpreted by Mr 1:22, *He taught them as one that had authority, not as the scribes*; and to be understood of the gravity and spirituality of his doctrine, his majesty and life in the delivering of it, and the power of God going along with it for the conviction of sinners; to all which were added his miraculous operations, of which the evangelist goeth on giving us a more particular account.

Luke 4:33

Ver. 33-37. We met with the same history related as done in Capernaum, and with the same circumstances, See Poole on "Mr 1:21". See Poole on "Mr 1:22", &c.

Luke 4:38

Ver. 38,39. We met with this history both in Matthew and Mark. See Poole on "Mt 8:14", and following verses to Mt 8:15. See Poole on "Mr 1:29", and following verses to Mr 1:31.

Luke 4:40

Ver. 40,41. See Poole on "Mr 1:32", and following verses to Mr 1:34, where we met with the same things.

Luke 4:42

Ver. 42-44. See Poole on "Mr 1:35", and following to Mr 1:39, where that evangelist reports the same things that this evangelist mentions, only with

more circumstances. Mark saith, he went out a great while before day into a solitary place to pray. He saith also that Simon and others followed him, and found him, and told him that all men sought him. Luke addeth that the others desired him not to depart from thence. They desired his stay, in order to his miracles, the healing of their sick, dispossessing demoniacs, &c. Christ replied, (as Mark saith), *Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth.* Luke saith he told them, *he must preach the gospel of the kingdom to other cities also; for therefore he was sent.* Accordingly, (saith Luke), he did preach *in the synagogues of Galilee.* Mark adds also that he cast out devils. How can any think that preaching the gospel is not the great work of the minister of Christ, but prayers are to be preferred before it, or administering the sacraments greater, when it is expressly said, that Christ *baptized none, but his disciples,* Joh 4:2; and Paul saith, Christ sent him *not to baptize, but to preach the gospel;* and Christ omitted opportunities of working miracles that he might preach to other cities, and only wrought miracles to confirm the doctrine he preached; and we so often read of his going about preaching and teaching, never of his praying, but alone with his disciples, or in a mountain or solitary place; (though doubtless he, or some others, did pray at their worship in the synagogues); unless any will be so mad as to think, that the sole end of preaching was to convert men from Judaism, or paganism, to an outward owning and professing of Christ, though under that profession, by reason of their sottish ignorance and debauched lives, they remain twice more the children of the devil than many Jews and pagans are? What was Christ's great work is certainly his ministers', viz. to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

Luke 5:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 5:1-3 Christ teacheth the people out of Simon's ship.

Lu 5:4-11 The miraculous draught of fishes: Simon and the two sons of Zebedee follow him.

Lu 5:12-15 Christ cleanseth a leper,

Lu 5:16 prayeth in the wilderness,

Lu 5:17-26 answereth the reasonings of the scribes and Pharisees concerning his forgiving sins, and healeth the sick of the palsy,
Lu 5:27,28 calleth Levi from the receipt of custom,
Lu 5:29-32 justifieth his eating with publicans and sinners,
Lu 5:33-35 excuses his disciples from fasting for the present,
Lu 5:36-39 and illustrates the matter by a twofold parable.

Ver. 1,2. It is by many interpreters thought that Luke in this history, to Lu 5:11, doth but give us a larger account of what Matthew, Mt 4:18, and Mark, Mr 1:16, told us shortly. The sea of Galilee (as they call it) and the lake of Gennesaret were both the same, receiving the different denomination from the opposite coasts between which it was. $\eta\alpha\rho\alpha$ $\tau\eta\nu$ $\lambda\iota\mu\nu\eta\nu$ had been better translated *upon*, or *at*, than *by the lake*, for without doubt the two ships here mentioned were upon the water, though possibly fastened as usually to the shore.

Luke 5:3

Ver. 3-11. Here is a plain and orderly story, related with many circumstances, tending to show us the power and influence of God upon men's successes, in their honest and ordinary callings, and also that God hath a command upon the fish in the sea; together with an account of Christ's call of Simon Peter to be a preacher of the gospel. The only difficulty is to reconcile this to what Matthew tells us, Mt 4:18,19, &c. Matthew's words are these: *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed him.* Mark's relation doth much agree with Matthew's. The differences are in these things:

1. Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's calling these disciples as he was walking by the sea. Luke seems to mention it as done in the ship.

Answer: Luke doth not say that Christ spake so to Simon in the ship, though he doth indeed mention those words to Simon, before he mentions their bringing the ship to land, because possibly he would give account of all that Christ did or spake together.

2. a) They might be out of the ship, walking by the sea, before he called James and John, whose call Luke doth not mention, but Matthew and Mark alone.

b) Matthew and Mark mention no ships, nor going of Christ into any, nor any draught of fishes.

Answer: Matthew saith that he saw Simon and Andrew casting their nets into the sea. But there is nothing more ordinary than for one evangelist to relate more fully what another repeateth summarily.

3. Matthew and Mark speak of Andrew being with Simon; Luke mentions Simon alone.

Answer: Luke denies not that Andrew was there, and we are sure Simon alone could not manage the nets with such a draught of fishes.

4. Matthew and Mark speak of the calling of Simon, Andrew, James, and John; Luke only of the calling of Simon.

Answer: It doth not follow from thence that they were not called during Christ's walk by the sea after he came out of the ship: Matthew and Mark assure us they were.

5. Matthew and Mark say that James and John were mending their nets.

Answer: Luke saith nothing to the contrary, for he doth not mention their call at that instant when Simon was. That immediately after such a draught of fishes their nets should want mending, and they be so employed, is nothing at all strange. So as it was like there was a little distance of time

between the call of Peter and the others; yet Luke, omitting some circumstances mentioned by Matthew and Mark, as well as adding much to this history by them omitted, saith (at least) of more than one, *they forsook all, and followed him*. Hence appeareth that there may be a coherent history, taking in what all three evangelists say, only allowing that Christ came upon the shore, and walked by the sea side some short time, before he called James and John.

The history instructs us:

1. How good a thing it is for men to be employed in their honest callings, though never so mean. There God meets people with blessings.
2. How much it is our duty to yield obedience to God's commands, and how advantageous it will prove, how contrary soever they appear to our sense and reason.
3. Upon whom our blessing depends, let our labour be what it will.
4. That it is the work of the ministers of the gospel to catch men, to gain souls to God.
5. How powerful God's calls are: *They forsook all, and followed him*.

For the difference between what John saith, Joh 1:40,41, of the call of Andrew and Simon, from what the other three evangelists say, we have spoken something in our notes: See Poole on "Mt 4:18", and shall add more when we come to that place in John. In short, John speaketh of another time, before that either of them were called to follow Christ.

Luke 5:12

Ver. 12-15. See Poole on "Mt 8:2", and verses following to Mt 8:5. See Poole on "Mr 1:40", and verses following to Mr 1:45. Matthew reports this miracle done when Christ *came down from the mountain*, and immediately after saith, that he entered into Capernaum, Mt 8:5. Mark also, concluding the first chapter with this piece of history, he begins the second with telling us, that *he entered into Capernaum after some days*. So that some think he was near Capernaum, within the bounds of it, when he wrought this miracle, but there is no certainty of that.

Luke 5:16

Ver. 16. We meet with Christ often commending to us the duty of secret prayer, by his own example, as he had done by his precept, Mt 6:1-34, and always choosing for it the most private and retired places, to teach us to go and to do likewise, often to pray to our Father which seeth in secret: and his example more presseth us, because we have much more business with God in prayer than he had; he had no sins to confess, nor to beg pardon for, no need to ask for any sanctifying habits of grace, &c. It is possible also that he withdrew into desert places oft times to avoid all show of ostentation, or dangers of tumults, and to obtain a little rest for himself. But suppose that the reason of his motion, yet the spending of his leisure hours in communion with his Father is very imitable for us. Christ had no idle hours, he was always either preaching or healing, thereby doing good to others; or praying, thereby paying a homage to God. If it could be said of the Roman, (with respect to his studies), it should be much more said of Christians, They should never be less alone than when they are alone, nor less idle than when they are most at leisure from their public employments.

Luke 5:17

Ver. 17. We shall observe that the scribes and Pharisees much haunted our Saviour wherever he came, either to cavil at him, or out of curiosity to see

the miracles he wrought. It seems they were many of them present at this time. But here ariseth a question or two.

1. How is it said, *the power of the Lord was present with Christ to heal?* had not Christ this power of healing then at all times?

Answer: Doubtless he had, for he was always *the Lord that healeth us*. The Divine nature once united to the human was never separated from Christ, but it did not always put forth itself, being as to that directed by his will. But as the end of Christ's miracles was for the confirmation of his doctrine; so we shall observe, that mostly after preaching he wrought his miraculous operations.

2. Who are here meant by *them*? by reading the words one would think *them* related to the *Pharisees and doctors of the law*, of none of which we read that they were sick, nor do we read of any cures that Christ made upon them.

Answer: We must know that sometimes in holy writ these relative terms are put out of due order, as in Mt 11:1, where we have these words, *And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities:* not in the disciples' cities; poor men, they had no cities; but in the Jewish cities, the cities of that country: yet the verse mentions no other persons than Jesus and the twelve disciples.

So here, though the verse mentions no other persons present than the Pharisees and doctors of the law, yet there doubtless were many others, and some amongst them labouring under chronical distempers; of these the text is to be understood.

Luke 5:18

Ver. 18-26. See Poole on "Mt 9:2", and following verses to Mt 9:8. See Poole on "Mr 2:3", and following verses to Mr 2:12. Both those evangelists record the same story with very small alterations in the phrase, nothing in the sense. Instead of the last words, *We have seen strange things today*, Matthew saith, *they glorified God, who had given such*

power unto men. By which appeareth that all the effect this miracle had was,

1. Amazement. A thing was done; they understood not how it could be effected.
2. They apprehended a Divine power as to the effect.

They therefore *glorified God, who had given such power unto men.* So as it is plain they only looked upon Christ as a great Prophet, to whom God had communicated such a Divine power, as of old he had communicated to Elijah, and then to Elisha. Lest any should stumble at what is said, that they uncovered the house, and let him down through the tiling, fancying the roofs of their houses built as ours, they must know, that the most of their houses were built (like some amongst us) with flat roofs, which were covered with some slates or stones, so as they might easily be uncovered; and this appeareth by the command of God, De 22:8, concerning making battlements on the tops of their houses, to prevent casualties. The object of the faith here mentioned, was plainly the Divine power and goodness, but not as coming from Christ originally, as eternal God, but as an instrument by which God conveyed it to men under such miserable circumstances as this poor man was.

Luke 5:27

Ver. 27-32. See Poole on "Mt 9:9", and following verses to Mt 9:13. See Poole on "Mr 2:14", and following verses to Mr 2:17, both which evangelists have also recorded this call of Levi; the first calls him *Matthew*; Mark and Luke call him *Levi*. There was nothing more ordinary amongst the Jews than for persons to have two names. Mark tells us his

father's name also, saying he was the son of Alphaeus. All agree in his employment, that he was a publican, one employed in the gathering of the public revenue, that part of it which arose from the exportation and importation of commodities; for he was sitting at the receipt of custom. Christ from thence calls him; he follows him, that is, gave up his name to be his disciple; in gratitude, Matthew, or Levi, invites him to a feast, and with him several other publicans and others. The other two evangelists say nothing of Matthew's preparing this feast; but it is implied in them, for they take notice of his sitting at meat in his house, and of the offence taken at it by the scribes and the Pharisees, and of our Saviour's taking notice of it, and what he said in justification of himself: see the notes before mentioned above. Only Matthew adds, that our Lord also said unto them, *Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* But for the explication of our Saviour's entire answer, See Poole on "Mt 9:9", and following verses to Mt 9:13.

Luke 5:33

Ver. 33-39. We have also both in Matthew and Mark met with this piece of history. See Poole on "Mt 9:14", and following verses to Mt 9:17; See Poole on "Mr 2:18", and following verses to Mr 2:22. Both Matthew and Mark say, that they were the disciples of John who came, and thus said to our Saviour. In our notes upon the two former evangelists, we have fully opened this piece of history. John the Baptist was of a more severe deportment than our Saviour thought fit to show himself; and complying more with the practices of the Pharisees (though in much more sincerity) in their exercises of discipline, the Pharisees did more easily get his disciples to join with them in this address to our Saviour; though probably John's disciples did it more out of infirmity, and the Pharisees out of malice, that they might have whereby to lessen Christ's reputation amongst the people: thus weak, though good, men are often drawn in by those who are more subtle and malicious to promote their designs.

Besides, we naturally desire to be the standard to all, and that others should take their measures from us, and possibly John's disciples might have a little of that envy for their master's sake, which we find them sick of, Joh 3:26. Our Lord, who might have told them that he was to be their exemplar, and not they his, dealeth more gently with them, and gives them sufficient reason why, as yet, he did not inure his disciples to those severer acts of religion:

1. Because this was all the rejoicing time they were like to have. He was now with them; when he should be gone from them, before which it would not be long, they should have time to mourn.
2. That they were but newly entered into his discipleship, and therefore not at first to be discouraged, that they might not have a temptation upon them to leave off as soon as they began. But see the notes more fully upon the same history in Matthew and Mark.

Luke 6:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 6:1-5 Christ alleges Scripture in defence of his disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.

Lu 6:6-11 He appeals to reason, and healeth the withered hand on the sabbath.

Lu 6:12-16 He spendeth the night in prayer, and chooseth the twelve apostles.

Lu 6:17-19 He healeth divers diseased,

Lu 6:20-26 pronounces blessings and woes,

Lu 6:27-45 teacheth to return good for evil, and other lessons of moral duty,

Lu 6:46-49 and admonishes to be his disciples in practice, and not in profession only.

Ver. 1-5. See Poole on "Mt 12:1", and following verses to Mt 12:8, and See Poole on "Mr 2:23", and following verses to Mr 2:28. There are several guesses what day is here meant, by *the second sabbath after the first*. The Jews had several sabbaths; besides the seventh day sabbath, which was weekly, all their festival days were called sabbaths. On the fourteenth day of the first month, at evening, began the passover; on the fifteenth day began their feast of unleavened bread, which held seven days, every one of which was called a sabbath; but the first day and the seventh day were to be days of holy convocation, in which no work was to be done that was servile, Le 23:7. Then they had their feast of first fruits. Fifty days after that they had their feast of pentecost. Some understand by *the second sabbath after the first*, the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread. Others, their second great festival. It is very hard to resolve, and not material for us to know. For the history itself: See Poole on "Mt 12:1", and following verses to Mt 12:8.

Luke 6:6

Ver. 6-11. See Poole on "Mt 12:10", and following verses to Mt 12:13, See Poole on "Mr 3:1", and following verses to Mr 3:5. In both which places we met with the same history, and with some more circumstances. Mark tells us that the subject of their deliberation, what they might do to Jesus, was, *how they might destroy him*; this the evangelist maketh the effect of their madness, $\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha\varsigma$, and he very properly so calls it. For men to answer arguments and reason with violence, is for them to act like mad men, not like reasonable creatures; yet, to show the degeneracy of human nature, we shall observe there is nothing hath been more ordinary, when men have been conquered by reasoning, and have nothing reasonably to oppose, than to fly to violence, and with swords to cut knots which they cannot untie. Nor can there be a greater evidence of silly and brutish souls, and a baffled cause.

Luke 6:12

Ver. 12. Those who straining this text would interpret the words, εν τη προσευχη, for, the place of prayer, will be concerned to find us out that house of prayer which stood in this mountain, or to tell us where we shall find in holy writ any place but the temple so called, and why it should be said that *he went out into a mountain to pray*, if it were not to signify unto us, that he sought a privacy and retiredness, which he could not have had in the temple, nor in any other common place for prayer. Those interpreters certainly judge righter that say, that our Saviour, being about to send put his twelve apostles, thought so great a work should not be done without solemn prayers; he therefore seeketh a place of privacy, and goeth thither to spend some more time than ordinary in the duty of prayer, and the evangelist saith that he *continued all night*; so setting us an example what to do in great affairs, especially such as are the sending out of persons to so great an employment as that of the ministry, and by his own example commending to us what Paul afterwards commanded, Eph 6:18 Col 4:2, *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

Luke 6:13

Ver. 13-16. We have twice already met with these names of the twelve disciples, whom our Saviour called apostles, intending them not only to be with him, and to have a more special communion with him, but also to be sent out with power to preach, baptize, and to work miracles: See Poole on "Mt 10:2". See Poole on "Mt 10:3". See Poole on "Mt 10:4". See Poole on "Mr 3:14", and following verses to Mr 3:19. There were amongst them two whose names were Simon: the one Christ named *Peter*; the other is called *Simon Zelotes* here; *Simon the Canaanite*, by Matthew and Mark. Two whose names were *James*: the one was *the son of Zebedee*, the other was *the son of Alphaeus*. Two whose names were *Judas*: the one is called *Thaddaeus* by Mark; *Lebbaeus* and *Thaddaeus*, by Matthew; *Judas the brother of James*, by Luke; (this was the penman of the Epistle of Jude);

and *Judas Iscariot, the traitor*. The other six were all of differing names. What occurs of difficulty as to their names: See Poole on "Mt 10:2", and following verses to Mt 10:4. See Poole on "Mr 3:14", and following verses to Mr 3:19.

Luke 6:17

Ver. 17-19. Such passages as these we meet with several times in the evangelists, who not writing a particular account of the several miracles wrought, or discourses made, by our Saviour, oftentimes they give us a general account of more than they particularly mention. Some think that Luke refers here to Mr 3:7,8; but Mark seemeth rather to refer to a multitude that followed him before he went up to the mountain, which yet might be the same people coming again the next morning, and waiting for Christ's coming down from the mountain.

Luke 6:20

Ver. 20-23. There are many that think that what Luke hath in these verses, and so to the end of this chapter, is but a shorter epitome of what Matthew hath in his 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters, and that both Matthew and Luke mean the same sermon preached at the same time. The things which favour this opinion are,

1. That sermon is said to be preached upon a mountain; this, when he came down and stood upon the plain, by which some understand only a plainer and more level part of the mountain.
2. That very many passages in the remaining part of this chapter are plainly the same with those we find in one of these three chapters in Matthew.

I can hardly be of that mind:

1. Because of the phrase here used, *he came down, and stood in the plain*: it seemeth to me hard to interpret that either of the top of the mountain, (which might be a plain), for how then could he be said to come down, or of a plainer place of the mountain.
2. The multitude described there are said to have come *from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan*. These are said to have come from *Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon*. But:
3. Principally from the great difference in the relations of Matthew and Luke.
 - a) Many large discourses are not touched by Luke, viz. Christ's whole discourse in giving a true interpretation of the law, and his discourses, Mt 6:1-34, about alms, prayer, fasting.
 - b) Secondly, Luke here putteth in three verses together wherein there are woes denounced, of which Matthew saith nothing.

Now though it be usual with the evangelists to relate the same discourses and miracles with some different circumstances, yet not with such considerable differences and variations. Matthew records nine blessednesses pronounced by Christ; Luke but four, and those with considerable variation from Matthew. As for those things which incline some to think it the same sermon, they do not seem to me conclusive. For what they say as to the place, it rather proves the contrary. Matthew saith it was when he had gone up into a mountain, and sat down; Luke saith, he was come down, and stood in the plain. Nor is it more considerable, that most of the passages in this chapter are to be found in the 5th, 6th, or 7th chapter of Matthew; for as they are not here exactly repeated according as Matthew recites them, so what should hinder but that our Saviour at another time, and to another auditory, might preach the same things which concern all men? Leaving therefore all to their own judgments, I see no reason to think that this discourse was but a shorter copy of the same discourse, referring to the same time and company. This being premised, let us now come to consider the words themselves, comparing them with

the words recited by Matthew.

Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Matthew saith, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is true, neither riches nor poverty bless or curse any man, and none that are poor are blessed if they be proud and high minded, nor any rich man cursed but he that places his portion or consolation in riches; yet Christ here, by the antithesis, seems more particularly to direct his discourse to relieve his disciples discouraged by their poor and low estate in the world, by telling them that, whatever the world thought, they, being his disciples, believing in him, and following him, were in a better condition than those that were rich, and had their consolation in this life.

Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Matthew saith, Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. The sense is much the same: You that are in a sad, afflicted state (being my disciples) are blessed; for there will come a time when God shall wipe tears from your eyes.

Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Matthew saith, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is true, hungering and thirsting are no blessings, but neither are they curses to a truly righteous soul, or a soul that truly seeketh after and studieth righteousness.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Matthew saith,

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. It is true the general sense is the same, sufferers for the name of Christ are pronounced blessed; but the words are very different, and here are some species of persecution mentioned that Matthew mentions not particularly.

1. Separating the disciples.
2. Casting out their names as evil.

The separating here mentioned may indeed be understood of imprisonment, or banishment, for persons under those circumstances are separated from the company of their relations and countrymen; but it may also be understood of ecclesiastical censures; and thus it agreeth both with our Saviour's prophecy, Joh 16:2, *They shall put you out of the synagogues*, and with Joh 9:22, where we read of a decree they made, *that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue*. There are some who think that the Jews exercised no such power till the time of Ezra, when their governor was but a substitute under a pagan prince, who did not give their conquered subjects a power to put any to death, but left them to exercise any lighter punishments. I cannot subscribe to the judgment of those learned men that think so. For as it is not reasonable, that God left the church of the Jews without that power that nature clothes every society with, to purge out of itself such as are not fit members for it; so it will not enter into my thoughts, that all were to be put to death, of whom God said so often, he, or they, shall be cut off from his, or their, people, as in case of uncircumcision, and not receiving the passover in its time. So as I do not think that the latter Jews derived this practice from a human constitution, but from a Divine law. Now we are told that the Jews had three degrees of this separation: some they merely separated from their communion; others they anathematized, that is, cursed; others they so separated, that they prayed against them, that God would make them examples of his vengeance; and some think (but I judge it but a guess) that these were those sinners unto death, for whom John would not have Christians pray, 1Jo 5:16. Now it is certain that the Jews exercised not the lowest degree only, but the highest, against Christians, and also made it their business by letters, and word of mouth, to reproach them all over the world, Ac 28:22. Now Christ pronounces them, under these circumstances, blessed, if they suffered these things for his name's sake. This casting out of their names as evil, doth not only signify the blotting out their names out of the rolls of the church, but the defaming of them in the manner before mentioned, which was like to be a sore temptation to the disciples; against which he further arms them, saying, *Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*. See Poole on "Mt 5:12".

Luke 6:24

Ver. 24. Not because you are rich, but because you are not rich towards God, because you look upon your riches as your portion, as your consolation; or, you that are rich in the opinion of your own righteousness.

Luke 6:25

Ver. 25. Our Saviour must be understood, either of those who are sinfully full, or at least such as are spiritually empty; those that are full are opposed to those that hunger. If we take *hunger* for a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, as Matthew speaks, those that are full are such as are filled with wind, a high opinion of their own righteousness. If we take *hunger* for a want of the necessaries of this life, then fullness signifieth either a sinfulness with drink, or meat, or ill gotten goods, or at least for such as are spiritually empty of the knowledge or grace of God; there will come a time when they shall want, as rich Dives wanted a little water to cool his tongue. So by those *that laugh* must be understood, either those that are sinfully merry, or at least those that have no true cause of spiritual joy. By mourning and weeping, threatened to such, is either meant the vengeance of God upon them in this life, or in the world to come, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 6:26

Ver. 26. A good report of all, even those that are without, is a desirable thing, and what all good men ought to labour for, both by avoiding any just occasion of their speaking ill of them, and by doing all the acts of kindness and charity that may commend religion to them. But the world is so corrupt, that usually none are worse spoken of than the best men. And this is true of no sort of men more than of the ministers of the gospel; neither the prophets of old, nor John the Baptist, nor Christ, nor the apostles, could have good words from the wicked party of their several ages. The false prophets of old were in much greater credit with the generality of the Jews

than the prophets of the Lord. The doctrines of the law and the gospel are so contrary to the most of men's lusts, as it is impossible that the most of the world should be reconciled to them, or to those who faithfully declare them: this the Pharisees in their age, and the papists and their friends in our age, have for some time so well understood, that as it was the business of the Pharisees in their time, so it hath been the business of the popish casuists, so to expound the law of God, as men may flatter themselves that they are no debtors to it, though they keep their several lusts; and so to interpret the gospel, that the way to heaven is made so broad that it is not easy for any to miss it.

Luke 6:27

Ver. 27-29. We met also with a passage much like this in this verse, Mt 5:39,40, the general sense of which was, as I then said, a prohibition of private revenge. It is therefore there prefaced in with a more general precept, *Resist not evil*. But besides this, there seems to be in it also a prohibition of vexatious suits and molestations of others, though under a colour of law; therefore Matthew saith, *If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy cloak;* and it may be thought a more special precept relating to those times, when they had none but heathen magistrates, and in some measure to be expounded by 1Co 6:7, and to be a precept given with respect to the reputation of the gospel, that it might not be scandalized by Christians going to law before infidels. It is most certain it doth not forbid the use of the law, whether for the defending or recovering our just rights, only the irregular or scandalous use of it. See Poole on "Mt 5:39".

Luke 6:30

Ver. 30. Matthew hath much the same passage, only he saith, *Give to him that, &c., not to every man that asketh of thee;* and for the latter clause, he hath, *from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away*, which seems more agreeing to the precept. De 15:8. These precepts of our Saviour must be interpreted, not according to the strict sense of the words, as if every man were by them obliged, without regard to his own abilities, or the

circumstances of the persons begging or asking of him, to give to every one that hath the confidence to ask of him; but as obliging us to liberality and charity according to our abilities, and the true needs and circumstances of our poor brethren, and in that order which God's word hath directed us; first providing for our own families, then doing good to the household of faith, then also to others, as we are able, and see any of them true objects of our charity. Nor must the second part of the verse be interpreted, as if it were a restraint of Christians from pursuing of thieves or oppressors, but as a precept prohibiting us private revenge, or too great contending for little things, &c. See Poole on "Mt 5:42".

Luke 6:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 7:12". This is the law of nature the golden rule of all justice, and may also serve for a guide to us to expound the former verses, and some other precepts of charity in this chapter. Men in all these cases should consider what they would be glad, and think reasonable, that others should do to them, were they in their circumstances, and the others had the same ability or advantage to do good to them; and by this they should measure their acts both of justice and charity.

Luke 6:32

Ver. 32-34. See Poole on "Mt 5:46". See Poole on "Mt 5:47". The strength of our Saviour's argument lieth in this, That God expects that those who have received more grace and favour from God than others, and who make a higher profession than others, should do more in obedience to the positive commands of God, and the revelations of his will in his word, than they who live merely by the light of nature, and live up merely to the law of nature.

Luke 6:35

Ver. 35,36. I know not how to agree, what I find many interpreters

judging, that this text is a prohibition of usury. I should rather interpret it more largely, as a command for acts of mercy, with respect to the circumstances of persons, obliging us not to withhold a charitable hand, from our fear that if we lend we shall lose what we lend, and obliging us, that if we find the circumstances of any that desireth us to lend him for his necessity such a quantity of money or goods as we can spare, and we can well enough bear the loss of, if the providence of God should render the person unable to repay us, we should not be awed by such a fear from acts of charity, but give with a resolution to lose it, if God please to disable the person to whom we lend, so as he cannot repay us. For the question about usury, as to which some conceive this text a prohibition, this is not a place to handle it in the latitude. I do not think it was ever absolutely forbidden to the Jews, they might take it of strangers, and that not only of the Canaanites, whom some say they might kill, (which I doubt after their agreement to a quiet cohabitation), but of other strangers also who came not under the denomination of Canaanites. That argued the taking of usury to be not *malum per se*, in itself evil, but only *malum prohibitum*, an evil as forbidden; and not absolutely and universally forbidden, but respectively, only with reference to their brethren of the same church and nation; so rather to be reckoned amongst the municipal laws of the Jews, than the common laws of God for all mankind. Besides that amongst the Jews there was less need of it, partly in respect of their years of jubilee, and partly in regard their employments were chiefly in husbandry, and about cattle, which called not for such sums of money as merchandising doth. Nor is it to be referred to any of the ten commandments, unless the eighth, *Thou shalt not steal*; which forbidding sins against charity, and such sins against charity being there forbidden as are the taking away the goods of another against his will, and without a just cause, I cannot see how the lending of money for a moderate use, when it is helpful and relieving to our neighbour, should be any kind of stealing, when his good will appeareth in the contract; nor can there be any injustice in it, where there is a *quid pro quo*, but a proportion for what I am endamaged by the loan; unless any will say it is unjust because against the law of God, which is to beg the question, this argument being brought to prove it is not contrary to the law of God. The exacting of all undue proportion for usury, or a moderate proportion, when we plainly see our brother is fallen into poverty, and cannot pay it, may be forbidden, as a sin against charity, and that love that we ought to show to our neighbours, and the mercifulness here required, Lu 6:36. Yet, admitting the law of God, De 23:19,20, to be

interpreted of all usury, (which yet seemeth hard, for then the Jews might not sell for any thing more at twelve months' time, than if they were paid presently, for the words are *usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing lent upon usury*), it concerned the Jews only between themselves, not in their dealings with any strangers, which is plain, Lu 6:20; so also Ex 22:25, where the term *poor* is also put in, as it is Le 25:35-37; by which texts the psalmist must be expounded, Ps 15:5. It may possibly from the equity of that law oblige us to be more kind to those that are of the same nation and church with us, than unto others, especially such as are no Christians; and amongst those that are Christians, to those that are poor, than to those who have better estates. But, as I said in the beginning, I had rather interpret the precept of the text more largely, as a general precept of mercy, from the example of our heavenly Father.

Luke 6:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 7:1", See Poole on "Mt 6:14", where we have discoursed what private judgings are here forbidden, and what forgiving is here required.

Luke 6:38

Ver. 38. To let us know how God favoureth acts of charity and justice we shall observe, that there are no good deeds that God so rewardeth by retaliation, as such which are the products of these habits; nor any sins which God so punishes by way of retaliation, as sins contrary to these, especially such as are more eminently contrary. This verse speaks of acts of charity.

Give, and it shall be given unto you, and that not bare measure, but good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. Nothing can more concur to make good measure, than the shaking of the bushel, the crowding and pressing down of the corn or meal with the hand, and the pouring in till the measure runneth over. So as that which is here promised, is a plentiful reward to charitable and merciful actions, either from the hand of God more mediately, God stirring up others to be as kind to us as

we are to others; or more immediately, himself blessing us by his unexpected providential dispensations: to this purpose are abundance of scriptures, De 24:19 Ps 41:1-3 Pr 11:25 28:27 2Co 9:6. If men will not be so just as to requite the good which their brethren have done them, having it in their power, yet God will be faithful to his promises, and by his providence take care that those who have done acts of mercy, not in a mere commiseration to human condition, but in a just obedience to his will, shall not lose by what they have done; they shall be rewarded fully and plentifully, finding again (though it may be after many days) the bread which they have cast upon the waters, according to his command.

Luke 6:39

Ver. 39. By a *parable* here is to be understood a proverbial saying, which hath some darkness in it, as being brought to express or signify more than the words naturally do express. Proverbial speeches are applicable to more things, and in more cases, than one. Nor is it to be expected, that in all that the evangelists give us an account of, as to the sayings of Christ, we should be able to find out an evident connexion. They, questionless, wrote much at least from their memories, and set down many sayings without respect to the time when our Saviour spake them, or the matter of his discourse immediately preceding them. We need not therefore be careful to make out the connexion of these words of his with what was before set down. In the parallel text, Mt 15:14, our Saviour plainly applies these words with reference to the scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish leaders, their doctors and teachers at that time, who themselves being ignorant of the true sense of the Divine law, were not like very well to guide others, but with them to *fall into the ditch*, that is, into ruin and destruction: from whence a very probable connexion of them here with what went before may be observed; for, as appears from Mt 5:1-48, he had in the preceding verses given an interpretation of that law of God, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, much different from what the Pharisees had given of it, who had expounded it, Mt 5:43, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*; making a great many branches of love to men more than they made. Now, (saith he), this is the will, this is the law, of my heavenly Father. The scribes and Pharisees, your present doctors and teachers, go much below this; but listen not to them, if you mind to please God; themselves are blind, and know not the will of God, and if you follow

them what can you expect more than such an event as where one blind man leads another?

Luke 6:40

Ver. 40. This was another common saying, which our Saviour applies, Mt 10:24 Joh 15:20, to comfort his disciples concerning their sufferings, because he was first in suffering: here he applies it to signify their duty in doing. Some apply this with reference to the Pharisees, and so make a connexion between this and the former verse, where he had said, If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch; for *the disciple is not above his master*, none must look to learn of another more than the teacher knoweth himself. But it is better applied to Christ, and is as much as if our Lord had said, I am your Master, you are my disciples, and by that relation engaged to learn of me, and to follow me. I have taught you no more than I am ready to practise; I am merciful, I forgive, I give, looking for nothing again. I do not look that you should do any thing above me, any thing as to which I have not set you, or shall not set you, an example; but your perfection lieth in coming as near to me as you can, in being as your Master.

Luke 6:41

Ver. 41,42. See Poole on "Mt 7:3", and following verses to Mt 7:5.

Luke 6:43

Ver. 43-45. See Poole on "Mt 7:16", and following verses to Mt 7:20. Lu 6:43 and Lu 6:44 are expounded in Lu 6:45. Men and women here (as in other texts of Scripture) are compared to trees, with respect to their root and fruit, and the dependence the fruit hath upon the root and the nature of the tree. The heart of man is made the root, that being the principle of human actions, as the root is the principle to the fruit; for all the overt actions of a man's life are but the imperate acts of the heart and of the will. Hence it is that a will renewed and sanctified in a man, and made

conformable to the will of God, doth not only will and choose the will of God, love it, desire it, and delight in it; but commandeth the tongue to direct its discourses conformable to it, and also commandeth all the members of the body, in their motions and order, to act conformably: and on the contrary, the unrenewed and unsanctified will of man doth not only reject and refuse the will of God, but directeth the tongue to words contrary to the Divine will, and all the members of the body, in their motions and order, to act without any respect to or awe of the will of God.

Luke 6:46

Ver. 46-49. See Poole on "Mt 7:24" and following verses to Mt 7:27, where we before met with the same thing. The sum is, men's hopes of salvation built upon any other but Christ alone, or built upon Christ without a sincere study and endeavour to keep the commandments of Christ, are vain hopes; and though, till a storm of affliction or temptation comes, they may please themselves a little with them, yet when they come to die, or when any notable temptation assaults them, or any great affliction cometh upon them, then they will fail them, and they will see the folly and vanity of them. *What is the hope of the hypocrite, when God taketh away his soul?* Job 27:8.

Luke 7:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 7:1-10 Christ admires the centurion's singular faith, and healeth his absent servant.

Lu 7:11-17 He raiseth to life the widow's son at Nain, Lu 7:18-23 and sendeth back the messengers of John with an account of the miracles they had seen wrought by him.

Lu 7:24-30 His testimony of John.

Lu 7:31-35 He reproveth the perverseness of the people, who were not to be won either by the manners of John or himself.

Lu 7:36-50 He suffereth his feet to be washed and anointed by a woman who had been a sinner; and in a parable showeth that even the worst of sinners may be forgiven upon the terms of a hearty and sincere repentance.

Ver. 1-10. See Poole on "Mt 8:5", and following verses to Mt 8:13, where we have considered all the differences between Matthew's and Luke's relation of this miracle. We have in it remarkable,

1. The humanity of the centurion to his servant, to teach us Christians to do the like.
2. The profitableness of good works: the centurion's love to the Jews in building them a synagogue gains their applications to Christ for him.
3. The humility of the centurion: he did not think himself worthy to appear in Christ's presence, nor to receive Christ into his house.
4. His faith in Christ's Divine power and goodness. It doth not appear that he believed that Christ was the eternal Son of God, but he did at least believe that he was clothed with a Divine power, or had a Divine power communicated to him from God, by which he was able, at a distance, and by no more than a word, without application of human rational means, to command off the distemper of his servant.
5. The power of faith in God, and its acceptableness to him. Christ doth not only effect the cure, but predicate his faith to be greater than he had found amongst the generality of the Jewish nation, who went for the only people of God at that day, and had much more light, and means to discern that Christ was sent of God for the good of men, than this Roman captain had.

Luke 7:11

Ver. 11-15. Luke alone gives us an account of this miracle of our Saviour's. Matthew mentions only the raising from the dead of Jairus's daughter. Luke adds this. John adds that of Lazarus, Joh 11:57, by which our Lord did mightily show his Divine power, and gave us some firstfruits of the more general resurrection, as well as declared himself to be, as he elsewhere saith, the resurrection and the life. The place where this miracle was done was called *Nain*. H. Stephen Heb., Chald., Gr. et Lat. *nomina*, &c., tells us, it was a city or town about two miles from Mount Tabor, at the foot of the lesser Mount Hermon, near to Hendor. It was the custom of the Jews to bury their dead without their cities. Christ met this dead body carrying out. He was it seems her only child, and she was a widow, so under a great affliction, God by this providence having quenched the only coal she had left in Israel.

And when the Lord saw her, (the text saith), he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. None moved him on the behalf of the widow, neither do we read that she herself spake to him; only our Saviour's bowels were moved at the sight of her sorrow, and consideration of her loss. It is observable that our Saviour wrought his healing miracles:

1. Sometimes at the motion and desire of the parties to be healed.
2. Sometimes at the desires of others on their behalf.
3. Sometimes of his own free motion, neither themselves nor others soliciting him for any such act of mercy toward them;

and that in the three first miracles, (of which Matthew and Luke give us an account here and Mt 8:1-34), which he wrought after his famous sermon on the mount, he gave us an instance of all these, in his healing of the leper

personally beseeching him, of the centurion's servant at the entreaty of the elders of the Jews, and of the widow's son here, upon his sight of the woman's affliction, none soliciting him. Thereby showing us that we ought not to stay our hand from doing good when we have proper objects and opportunities before us, until we be importuned and solicited there unto. Christ saying to her, *Weep not*, forbade not the natural expression of her passion, but signified a sudden and not expected resurrection, so as she should not weep without hope. This said, he cometh and toucheth the bier, or the coffin, and saith not, Young man, in the name of God, I say unto thee, Arise; but, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*; thereby declaring to them (would they have understood it) that he was the Son of God, and while he was on earth had a power in and from himself by the word of his mouth to command the dead to arise. His word was effective, and to evidence it, it is said, that *he that was dead sat up*, so as all might take notice of the miracle, *and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother*; to let him know his duty to be subject to her, and the jurisdiction she had over him.

Luke 7:16

Ver. 16,17. The people here saw the Divine power manifestly exerted; for the keys of the clouds, the womb, and the grave, are three keys, which their teachers had taught them were kept in God's hand alone. All sense of the Divine presence naturally fills us with fear. Some, even the worst of men, are filled with a stupid fear of astonishment and amazement. Pious persons, or those that are inclined to piety, are filled with a fear of reverence; such a fear we read of, Lu 1:65. Such was this; for it issued in a predication of the name of God, and a giving to him praise and glory; for that a great Prophet was risen amongst them. Thus far God blessed this miracle, to make them look upon Christ as a Prophet, a great Prophet; and to look upon God's act in his sending him as an act of great kindness to the Jews, for that is here plainly understood by them, saying, *God hath visited his people*, as before, Lu 1:68; and this rumour was spread abroad throughout all that country.

Luke 7:18

Ver. 18-23. See Poole on "Mt 11:2", and following verses to Mt 11:6.

Luke 7:24

Ver. 24-28. See Poole on "Mt 11:7", and following verses to Mt 11:15, where we met with this testimony concerning John, given by our Saviour, with some considerable enlargements.

Luke 7:29

Ver. 29,30. Matthew hath not this addition to our Saviour's commendation of John, but it is of great use to introduce our Saviour's following discourse. The evangelist here divideth the hearers into two sorts.

The first were the common people and the publicans; the former were despised by the Jewish doctors and rabbis, as a rude, illiterate sort of people; the latter, as a notoriously wicked sort.

The second sort were the Pharisees and the lawyers; of the former, he saith, that they, *being baptized with the baptism of John, justified God*, that is, they owned, and publicly declared, and predicated the goodness and justice of God; they approved of what God had done, and blessed his name for sending amongst them such a prophet as John was, they owned

and received him, and were baptized by him. Whoso believeth the message which God sendeth, and obeyeth it, he justifieth God; he that doth not, accuses and condemneth God: see Joh 3:33 1Jo 5:10.

But the Pharisees and lawyers, that is, the scribes; not the scribes of the people, (they were but actuaries, or public notaries), but the scribes of the law, whose office it was to interpret and give the sense of the law.

These *rejected*; — the word sometimes signifies to despise, Lu 10:16 1Th 4:8 Heb 10:28; sometimes to disannul, as Ga 3:15; sometimes to reject, as Mr 6:26 7:9. It is here interpreted by those words, *being not baptized of him*. We must understand the sense of $\eta\theta\epsilon\tau\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ by considering what is here meant by $\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, *the counsel of God*, which some will understand concerning the purpose of God within himself; others, concerning his revealed will, his counsel as revealed to us. The matter seemeth to me but a strife about a word, which is sometimes taken in one sense, sometimes in another. The will of God is but one, only as every one of us keep some part of our mind to ourselves, and reveal other parts of it to our servants and children; so God, who hath determined and willed all events, concealeth some part of it from his creatures, and revealeth another part of it to them. It is the will of God that this, and that, and the other person should believe and be saved. He revealeth as to this thus much of his will, that whose believers shall be saved; but for that other part of his will, that this, and that, or the other man shall believe, this he concealeth, till he gives them a power to believe, and to receive the gospel, and then his will in this particular is revealed. Supposing then we here understand by $\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, God's secret purpose to be understood, how is it proved that it must be understood of his secret purpose for their salvation? Why should it not be understood of the secret purpose and counsel of God to give them the means of life and salvation? God from all eternity purposed to give the Jews the ministry of John the Baptist and Christ, as means for their salvation, not which should be certainly effective of it, but that should have such a tendency towards it as without their own refusing, and opposing them, it should have been effective, and was in their own nature a proper means in order to it: they reject and refuse it; by this they rejected the counsel of God, the effect of his counsel, and so judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, by neglecting, despising, and rejecting the use of that means, which was the product of an eternal purpose to send them such means.

This counsel of God is said to be *rejected* towards or *against themselves*: take it as God's act, it was towards themselves, that is, for their good; if we refer it to their act of rejection, or refusal, it was against themselves, a judging of themselves unworthy of eternal life. We cannot in this place translate it disannul, or frustrate, as Ga 3:15, understanding it as to the Divine act; for who can frustrate or disannul the will or purpose of man, as to an act of his own, within his power to purpose? Though indeed as to the event it may be disannulled, as to any good effect as to another, if it be made to depend upon the action of another.

Besides, what need any further explication of this phrase, of rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, than what followeth, *being not baptized of him*, that is, not receiving John's doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins, and bringing forth fruits worthy of amendment of life, nor submitting to baptism as a testimony of such repentance; for the baptism of John in Scripture signifieth his whole administration, the doctrine he preached, as well as the ordinance of baptism by him administered; and so must be interpreted where our Saviour asked the Pharisees whether John's baptism was from earth or from heaven, and they durst not say from heaven, lest Christ should have asked them, why then they believed him not? They were not baptized of him, is the same thing with, They would be none of his disciples.

Luke 7:31

Ver. 31-35. See Poole on "Mt 11:16" and following verses to Mt 11:19, where we have this smart reflection upon the scribes and Pharisees, and the generality of the Jews. They were neither pleased full nor fasting, but censorious of the different manner of living of John and Christ. John showed a more austere and severe humour, and lived like a recluse: you had nothing else to say; you said he had a devil. I have chosen not a less innocent, but a more free converse with men of all sorts, and eat and drink as other men; of me you say that I am a wine bibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. Such was their perverseness, that proceeded from their enmity to the doctrine of John and Christ.

Luke 7:36

Ver. 36. This was no small civility from a Pharisee, for the Pharisees were of all others, in the generality of them, the most desperate and implacable enemies of our Saviour. But God hath his number amongst all nations, and all sorts and orders of men. Our Saviour, as was said before, was of a free and open converse, and never refused any opportunity offered him to do good. We may soberly eat and drink with sinners pursuing such designs.

Luke 7:37

Ver. 37,38. What hath made any interpreters imagine this was the some story which is mentioned Mt 26:6-13 Mr 14:3-9, and Joh 12:1-3, I cannot tell. The histories agree scarcely in any thing, unless in the bringing the alabaster box of ointment, and the anointing our Saviour's feet, whereas there was nothing in those countries more ordinary. That anointing was done in Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem, this in Galilee. That in the house of one Simon the leper this in the house of one Simon a Pharisee. That a little, this a great while, before our Saviour's passion. At that Judas was offended, at this Simon the Pharisee was offended. There Christ vindicates the woman from one head of argument, here from another. Questionless this is another quite different piece of history.

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner; that is, a remarkable sinner; it is a word generally so used, and, applied to women, signifies a prostitute, or at least one of an ill report as to chastity.

Was, refers here to the time past, though lately past; she had lately been infamous and notorious, but it appeareth by what followeth that she was not so now, otherwise than in the opinion and vogue of the people; according to whose opinion, though uncharitable enough, *Quae semel fuit mala, semper praesumitur esse mala in eodem genere mali*, A person who hath once been bad is always presumed so to be, through their ignorance of

the power of Divine grace in changing the heart, or their malice against and envy towards those whose hearts they see so changed. But whatever this woman had been, it seems God had affected her heart with the word which Christ had preached, and filled it with the pure love of God and Christ, instead of its former fullness of impure love, and made her sins as bitter as they had been formerly pleasant to her.

She hearing Christ was eating meat at the house of Simon the Pharisee, makes no noise, but cometh *behind him*, bringing *an alabaster box of ointment*, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Weeping in the sense of her sins, and so plentifully as she washed the feet of Christ with her tears, spoke a broken and a contrite heart. Wiping them with her hair; her hair, with which she had offended through wantonness, plaiting it, and adorning herself by the dress of it to allure her lovers, she now useth to testify her abhorrence of her former courses.

And kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. The kiss is a symbol of love, and not of love only, but of subjection and worship; by this she both showed her love to Christ, and also her subjection to him, she kissed Christ in the psalmist's sense, Ps 2:12. It was not a kiss of love only, but of reverence and subjection, like Joseph's kiss to Jacob, Ge 50:1, Moses's kiss to Jethro, Ex 18:7; nay, of the highest reverence, for such was the kiss of the feet. And to testify her adoration of him: thus the idolaters kissed the calves, Ho 13:2, and Baal. 1Ki 19:18. Washing and anointing with oil, was a common compliment they used in those countries for cleansing and cooling the feet. She had been a great sinner, she now shows the profoundest sorrow, greatest love, humility, subjection, &c. But some may say, How could she come behind him, sitting at meat, and do this? While we sit at meat our feet are before us. This confirmeth the notion I mentioned before, in my notes on Mt 26:20, concerning the Jewish manner of sitting at meat, which was kneeling and resting their bodies upon their legs leaning backwards: admitting that, all that we here read of this woman was very easy; for his legs being thrust out backward, the soles of his feet were turned up, and she might with convenience enough come at them behind him to wash, and to wipe, and to anoint them, which it is hard to conceive how she could do, admitting him to have sat as we do, putting our feet forward under the table.

Luke 7:39

Ver. 39. How easily are persons (though seemingly well inclined and fair) offended, who have not the love of God rooted and grounded in their hearts! Did then all men who were prophets know persons at first sight?

1. It is certain they knew no more of people's hearts and lives than God was pleased to reveal to them, or they knew by converse with them, and observation of them.
2. Suppose she had been a sinner, might she not be a convert now? And did not her behaviour toward Christ (before mentioned) witness a change in her?
3. Admit she had been yet such a sinner, yet might not she touch Christ?

This was indeed a Pharisaical error, that all not of their own religion, and all persons notorious for some sins, were in the same order as lepers, and other persons that were Levitically or legally unclean, so as none might touch them, but that contact made them also unclean. It is said also of the Samaritans, that when they met a Jew, or a Christian, they would first call out to him, Do not touch me. That there was of old such a party amongst the Jews that cried, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou,* is plain from Isa 65:5.

Luke 7:40

Ver. 40-48. Our Saviour treats his host civilly, but yet letteth him know, that he both knew his heart, and the heart of this poor woman, whom he had so uncharitably reflected upon.

Simon spake within himself, Lu 7:39. Christ lets him know that he knew the thoughts of his heart.

I have (saith he) somewhat to say unto thee. So he civilly obtaineth leave

of him to speak.

Simon saith, Master, say on. Our Saviour tells him: *There was a certain creditor, &c.* It is obvious by our Saviour's application of this parable, Lu 7:44-47, that he whom Christ here intends under the notion of a creditor is God; that one of the debtors that did owe five hundred pence (that is, a great sum) was this woman: whether Simon were intended by the other, or no, is not easily determined; but admit the other was ο δεινα, any one that was a sinner, but not so notorious a sinner, God forgives freely both the one and the other. Christ asks which would love most. Simon tells him, that debtor to whom most was forgiven. Christ tells him that he had judged rightly. Whence observe:

1. That as all sins, so all sinners, are not equal in the sight of God; all are guilty, but there are degrees in guilt.
2. That be men's sins less or greater, fewer or more, those who have least will stand in need of pardoning mercy and forgiveness.
3. That God is free in the forgiveness of all sins, be they few or more; *he frankly forgave them both.*
4. That Christ first speaketh of these two debtors as being forgiven, then of their loving much, and of their being forgiven as the cause of their loving much.
5. That much love will follow a great forgiveness; a great sinner (one, I mean, who hath been so) will hardly ever be able to satisfy himself that his much is forgiven, if he doth not find his heart very warm with love to God.
6. A true love to God and Christ will be seen in all acts, which may be demonstrative or declarative of it. Christ turns to the woman, and saith to Simon, &c. Kissing, washing of feet, anointing with oil, were usual compliments of those countries, by which men showed their respects and kindness to strangers and friends.

For washing of feet, see Ge 18:4 19:2 Jud 19:21 1Sa 25:41 1Ti 5:10. For anointing with oil, see Ps 23:5 45:7. This woman had exceeded the usual

kindness and civility of the country toward Christ: they were wont to bring their friends water to wash their feet, and possibly a piece of linen to wipe them; she washes his feet with her tears, and drieth them with her hair. They used to anoint the head of their friends with oil, she anoints his feet. They used to kiss one another's cheeks or lips, she kisses his feet. They kissed their friends once, she ceased not to kiss his feet. Upon this Christ, who before had forgiven her, declareth her to be forgiven, first in the hearing of Simon, then he doubles his words unto her. He had told Simon before that the creditor had frankly forgiven them both; his adding here, *Her sins, which are many*, sufficiently evidences that it was she whom he intended by the debtor who owed much. Hence we may judge how little ground the papists have to urge this place to prove, that remission of sins is procured by our own merits and satisfactions. Love here is not mentioned as the cause, but as the effect of the remission of sins; and that which our Saviour here designed to instruct Simon in, was,

1. That whatsoever this woman had been, she was not now such a notorious sinner as he fancied; her sins were forgiven.
2. That God having thus favoured her with the grace of remission, had also kindled in her heart a love towards him.
3. That this love wrought in her heart in some proportion to that love which God had magnified upon her, therefore she loved much.
4. That men and women's love to God and Christ, will and ought to be according to that love which they have received from Christ.
5. That much love to God will bring a great sense of God's love to the soul, Joh 14:21.

The particle $\sigma\tau\iota$, which we translate *because*, doth not always in Scripture signify the cause, but may be translated *therefore*, or, *for what cause*: see Joh 14:17, *Ye know him*; for he *dwelleth in you*: the Spirit's abiding in believers is not the cause of their knowing of him, but the effect of it, so that *for*, in that place, is as much as *therefore*. So in Mr 9:28, $\sigma\tau\iota$ is as much as *for what cause*, or, *for what reason*? We translate it, *Why could not we cast him out*? So here, *her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for which cause, or reason, she loveth much*.

Luke 7:49

Ver. 49. These were either the Pharisees, who thought that Christ blasphemed in arrogating to himself such a power as belonged to God alone; or the others, who speak this rather in admiration; but it is probable the former are here meant.

Luke 7:50

Ver. 50. Thy believing in me as he who have power on earth to forgive sins, and accordingly making application to me, and this thy faith working by love, Ga 5:6, producing in thee this hearty sorrow for thy sins, a subjection unto me, and such testifications of thy love as thou art able to make, hath been an instrumental cause of that salvation, which floweth from me as the principal cause, Ro 6:23. We have such another expression in Mt 9:22 Mr 5:34; though the saving here mentioned be much more excellent than that there spoken of. Faith is profitable both for the good things of this life, and those of the life which is to come; and with reference to both, salvation is ascribed to faith, as the instrumental cause, not to obedience and love, though the faith that doth us good must work by love, and be evidenced by a holy conversation.

Go in peace, is a phrase which was the usual valediction among the Jews, as much as our Farewell, or God be with you, they under the term of *peace* comprehending all good; but when we consider who it is that speaketh, and what immediately preceded, we have reason to think this was a more than ordinary compliment or farewell, even as much as is comprehended under the term *peace*, which, as I before said, is all good, but more

especially that peace mentioned by the apostle, Ro 5:1, as an effect of faith. Go thy way a blessed and happy woman, and in the view and sense of thy own blessedness, and be not troubled at the censures and reflections of supercilious persons, who may despise or overlook thee because thou hast been a great sinner. God hath pardoned thy sins, and this I assure thee of; only take heed to keep and maintain that peace.

Luke 8:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 8:1-3 Christ preacheth through the cities, attended by his disciples, and ministered unto by devout women of their substance.

Lu 8:4-8 The parable of the sower.

Lu 8:9,10 Why Christ taught in parables.

Lu 8:11-15 The parable expounded.

Lu 8:16-18 Light is given to be improved and communicated.

Lu 8:19-21 Christ showeth whom he regardeth as his nearest relations,

Lu 8:22-25 stilleth a tempest on the sea with his word,

Lu 8:26-40 casteth out the legion of devils, and suffereth them to enter into the herd of swine; is entreated by the Gadarcades to depart, and refuseth the attendance of him whom he had healed,

Lu 8:41,42 is besought by Jairus to go and heal his daughter.

Lu 8:43-48 By the way he healeth a woman of an inveterate issue of blood.

Lu 8:49-56 He raiseth Jairus's daughter to life.

Ver. 1-3. Still I cannot but observe, that preaching the gospel, and thereby showing the glad tidings of salvation, (the principal means to bring men to the kingdom of God, whether that in this life, or the kingdom of glory in the life which is to come), was Christ's great work. His working miracles was but subservient to this, and for the confirmation of the doctrine which he preached; hence, when a people showed a contempt of his word, he refused to work any miracles before them. How any one can dream, that either praying, or government, or administering sacraments, or any thing

else, should be more the work of a minister of Christ than preaching, may justly amaze any thinking soul that ever read the gospel.

Christ went every where about *preaching, and the twelve were with him*, sometimes hearing, (as his disciples), sometimes preaching; some *women* also were with him, such as *had been healed of evil spirits* and other diseases. Mary Magdalene was one, out of whom he had cast seven devils, that is, many devils. Most think she had her name from Magdala, a city in Galilee, where she was bred, or dwelt. It is a great error to think she was the Mary mentioned Joh 11:1-57, the sister of Lazarus; she lived in Bethany, near to Jerusalem. Yet it is plain from Mr 16:1-20 that she was at Jerusalem at the time of Christ's death and resurrection; but so were many that followed him from Galilee, Mr 15:41 Lu 23:49.

And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. Christ hath his elect in all places, his Joseph in Pharaoh's court, his Daniel and three children in Nebuchadnezzar's court, his saints in Nero's household, Php 4:22, his Joanna in Herod's family. This was that Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, he who put John the Baptist to death, and himself with his soldiers mocked Christ; possibly his steward was as bad, but his wife was one that followed Christ, knowing that though her husband had power over her body, he had none over her soul.

And they *ministered to him of their substance*. They were not ashamed to be seen following of Christ, though doubtless they met with scoffs enough. Nor were they ashamed to be reproached for their former failing; nor was Christ, because of their former lives, or the life of some of them, to have them following him. It is a glory to Christ, and to the church of Christ, to have great sinners brought to him, and brought into it; the only shame is to such as, being in the church, or pretending at least to be Christians, are debauchees still. Christ did not give himself for a people that were pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle, but *that he might sanctify them and cleanse them, with the washing of water by the word*, Eph 5:25-27. Following Christ *they ministered to him*. This was according to Christ's doctrine, Mt 10:10, and his apostles after him, 1Co 9:11 2Co 8:9 Ga 6:6. Some of them might be virgins, some widows, some wives, who had an allowance for themselves from their husbands; however, it could be no robbery to give of what was their husbands' to him who was the Lord of all, which either their husbands or they possessed. Nor was Christ ashamed

to live upon the baskets of others, while he was providing spiritual food for the souls of all, 2Co 8:9.

Luke 8:4

Ver. 4-15. We have had this parable, See Poole on "Mt 13:1", See Poole on "Mr 4:1". See the notes on both these chapters.

Luke 8:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 5:15", See Poole on "Mr 4:21".

Luke 8:17

Ver. 17. This we have also met with twice before. See Poole on "Mt 5:15", See Poole on "Mr 4:22".

Luke 8:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mr 4:24", See Poole on "Mt 13:12", See Poole on "Mt 25:29".

Luke 8:19

Ver. 19-21. See Poole on "Mt 12:46", and following verses to Mt 12:50. See Poole on "Mr 3:31" and following verses to Mr 3:35.

Luke 8:22

Ver. 22-25. This whole history we have also before met with, both in Mt 8:23-27, and Mr 4:35-41. See Poole on "Mt 8:23", and following verses to Mt 8:27, also See Poole on "Mr 4:35", and following verses to Mr 4:41.

Luke 8:26

Ver. 26-40. We have had this whole story Mt 8:28-34, and Mr 5:1-21. See Poole on "Mt 8:28", and following verses to Mt 8:34, and See Poole on "Mr 5:1" and following verses to Mr 5:21.

Luke 8:41

Ver. 41-56. We had both these pieces of history twice before related, by Matthew, Mt 9:18-26, and by Mark, Mr 5:22-43, with some further circumstances. See Poole on "Mt 9:18", and following verses to Mt 9:26 also See Poole on "Mr 5:22", and following verses to Mr 5:43. Christ's saying, Lu 8:45, *Who touched me?* and again, Lu 8:46, *Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me;* doth not argue that Christ knew not of the woman's coming and touching him, or did not voluntarily send out that virtue that healed her; far be any such thoughts from any pious, intelligent souls: she was not healed by her touch of the border of his garment, but by his powerful will, commanding such a miraculous effect: he only spake this to bring forth the miracle into light, which was wrought secretly, so as the people took no notice of it. Healing virtue went out of Christ upon an act of his will, not necessarily. From Lu 8:55 is confuted the atheism of those who would make the soul to be merely the crasis, or some affection of the body; and it is proved to be a being that can subsist of itself, in a state of separation from the body.

It is said, *her spirit came again;* not, Christ gave her a new spirit. Christ did not here exert a creating power; only sent forth that power with which he was clothed to raise the dead. For other things observable from this story, see the notes before mentioned upon the parallel texts.

Luke 9:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 9:1-6 Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles and preach the gospel.

Lu 9:7-9 Herod desireth to see him.

Lu 9:10,11 The apostles return.

Lu 9:12-17 Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.

Lu 9:18-22 The different opinions concerning Christ; Peter's confession of him: Christ foretells his own death and resurrection.

Lu 9:23-27 He showeth his followers the necessity of self denial, and that they must not be ashamed of owning his gospel.

Lu 9:28-36 He is transfigured,

Lu 9:37-42 healeth a demoniac,

Lu 9:43-45 again foreshoweth his sufferings,

Lu 9:46-48 checks the ambitious disputes of his disciples,

Lu 9:49,50 will not have them forbid any one to work miracles in his name,

Lu 9:51-56 reproveth the fiery zeal of James and John against the Samaritans who would not receive him,

Lu 9:57-62 and proposes terms to three persons who offer to follow him.

Ver. 1-6. We have heard of the choosing of these twelve disciples, and their names, Lu 6:13-16 Mr 3:14-19. Our Saviour chose them to be with him, to learn of him, and to be instructed by him, and to be witnesses of what he said and did; after some time thus spent, he sends them forth to preach the gospel, and giveth them a power to confirm the doctrine which they preached, by several miraculous operations. Matthew takes no notice of their election, only of their mission. Both Mark and Luke take notice of both. Lu 9:3-6 give us an account of the instructions he gave them; we met with them all before, and a more full account of them, See Poole on "Mt 10:1" and following verses to Mt 10:42. See Poole on "Mr 6:7" and following verses to Mr 6:11.

Luke 9:7

Ver. 7-9. This Herod was Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, who had beheaded John the Baptist; he heareth of these great things done by Christ, and διηπορει, saith the evangelist; it is a word that signifieth a great disturbance, and perplexity of mind, when a man is in doubt and fear, and knoweth not what counsels to take or follow: it is used Lu 24:4 Ac 2:12 5:24 10:17. The other evangelists say Herod himself guessed it was John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded. Oh the power of a guilty conscience! He had murdered John, now he is afraid his ghost haunted him, or that his soul was entered into another body, that it might be revenged on him. Others guessed variously. Herod knoweth not what to think, but desireth to see Christ, possibly that he might make up some judgment about him, possibly out of mere curiosity. But we read not that he did see him until Pilate sent him to him after his examination of him, Lu 23:8.

Luke 9:10

Ver. 10,11. The evangelists give us but a summary account of things. We read of the mission, or sending out, of the apostles, Lu 9:1. Here we read of their return, and giving their Lord an account of their discharge of the trust he had reposed in them. Being returned, our Saviour goeth with them into a place near Bethsaida, not much inhabited, and therefore called *desert*. He never wanted followers, nor a heart to receive them, and to take all opportunities to do them good. Many followed him; he receiveth them, and preacheth to them for the good of their souls, and healeth those amongst them that were sick, to teach us to join spiritual with bodily, and bodily with spiritual, alms. Spiritual alms, such as instruction, reproof, counsel, are as much better than those that relieve only bodily wants, as

the soul is better than the body. Spiritual alms, without bodily relief, from such as are able to give them, are fittest for spiritual persons; carnal, ignorant people, that have no sense of spiritual things, must, like children, be allured into a good opinion of the things and ways of God by some bodily charity, and so taken by guile, and enticed to the knowledge of God.

Luke 9:12

Ver. 12-17. The history of this miracle is recorded by all the four evangelists. See Poole on "Mt 14:15", and following verses to Mt 14:22, and See Poole on "Mr 6:35", and following verses to Mr 6:44. We shall again meet with it, Joh 6:5-14, with some further circumstances. Luke hath nothing but what we have before met with.

Luke 9:18

Ver. 18-22. Matthew and Mark tell us this discourse passed at Caesarea Philippi (or at least one of the same import). Matthew also gives us an account of it with more circumstances. See Poole on "Mt 16:13", and following verses to Mt 16:23.

As he was alone praying; that is, free from the multitude, for the next words tell us, the *disciples were with him.* (Lu 9:22) is not to be found in the other evangelists; and if Luke hath reported these words in the right order of time, they afford us a probable reason of what is said Lu 9:21, why Christ would not yet be published as the Christ, or the Son of God. Because he was to suffer, and it might much have shaken people's faith, as to that point, if they had seen the person whom they believed such suffering, and to be so despitefully used as he was; he therefore desired to be concealed as to that, until he should be declared the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead.

Luke 9:23

Ver. 23,24. We have met with these sayings before, See Poole on "Mt 16:24", See Poole on "Mt 16:25". See Poole on "Mt 10:38", See Poole on "Mt 10:39". See Poole on "Mr 8:34" and See Poole on "Mr 8:35".

Luke 9:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 16:26", See Poole on "Mr 8:36".

Luke 9:26

Ver. 26,27. See Poole on "Mt 16:28" and See Poole on "Mr 9:1". Luke seems here to have recorded several sayings of our Saviour, spoken not all at the same time.

Luke 9:28

Ver. 28-36. See Poole on "Mt 17:1", and following verses to Mt 17:9. See Poole on "Mr 9:2", and following verses to Mr 9:10.

Luke 9:37

Ver. 37-45. See Poole on "Mt 17:14", and following verses to Mt 17:21. See Poole on "Mr 9:14", and following verses to Mr 9:29. Of the people's astonishment and amazement at the sight of Christ's miracles, we often hear much; of their embracing him as their Saviour, and owning him as the Christ, we read little. Thus far many of them were come, indeed the most, (the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sadducees only excepted), that they believed Christ was a great Prophet, a man sent of God; authorized by God to reveal his will, and empowered from God to do many things, which none but God had originally a power to do. Others were gone a step further, viz. to believe not only that he was a Prophet, but that Prophet foretold by Moses, De 18:15 Joh 1:21,45; the Christ of God, as Peter expressed it, he that should redeem Israel, Lu 24:21. That they had not a true notion of the Messiah, either as to his person, that the Divine and human nature were united in his person, or as to his work, that it was not to redeem Israel from their bodily servitude, but from their sins only, will appear to any from the whole history of the gospel. Nor indeed doth our Saviour hasten their faith in this revelation, I mean the perfecting and confirming of it, knowing that it would be a great shaking to their faith in him, in this notion, and indeed as the Messiah, to see him so shamefully abused by the vilest objects of the people, (as he was at his passion), and then hanging upon the cross, and dying, until they should also see him by his own power risen from the dead, and be confirmed concerning the truth of his resurrection. Where therefore he saw this seed of precious faith springing up, as it did in Peter and divers others, who it is plain apprehended him more than man, as he did not discourage nor blame it, but highly commended it; so neither did he please to strengthen it, so as to put them out of all doubt about it, and often charged them not to publish it abroad, and bends himself to prepare them against this great obstacle, which he saw would be in their way, to wit, his sufferings. This is the second time now that in this chapter we find him inculcating it. And there was need of it, for the evangelist telleth us that *they understood it not, it was hidden from them*. They could easily understand how an ordinary prophet might be delivered into the hands of men, but how the Messiah, the Christ, that Prophet, he of whom some of them believed that he was

more than a mere man, how he should be thus delivered, thus suffer, they could not understand; and they saw Christ as to this point so reserved and private, and forbidding the publication of it, that they feared to be too particular with him about it.

Luke 9:46

Ver. 46-48. See Poole on "Mt 18:1", and following verses to Mt 18:6. See Poole on "Mr 9:33", and following verses to Mr 9:37. This paragraph showeth what need there was of the preceding discourse, that our Saviour should prepare them with a preinforming them about his suffering, that when they saw it their faith in him as the Messiah might not fail; for they were possessed with the common notion of their country, that the Messiah should deliver them from the temporal pressures which they were under, and exercise a civil or military secular power; this made them think of places of priority and greatness, about which we often find them disputing. Our Lord, to bring them off that false notion of him and his kingdom, taketh a child, and setteth him before them, and saith, *Whosoever shall receive this child, &c.* What Luke saith must be interpreted by what we had before in Matthew and Mark. This child, that is, one that is as humble as this child, &c.: see the notes before mentioned.

Luke 9:49

Ver. 49,50. Mark saith further, that Christ added, *for there is no man, which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me:* See Poole on "Mr 9:38", See Poole on "Mr 9:39".

Luke 9:51

Ver. 51. From this to Lu 9:56 we have a piece of history recorded by no other evangelist but Luke; but is of great use to us, both to let us know, that our Saviour laid down his life, no man took it from him, and to let us see to what height differences about religion ordinarily arise, and what intemperateness is often found, as to them, in the spirits of the best of people, as also what is the will of our great Master as to the government of our spirits in such cases. The going up of our Saviour to Jerusalem at this time was his last journey thither.

When the time was come that he should be received up; Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ; that is, when the time was drawing nigh when Christ should ascend up into heaven; so the word is used, Mr 16:19 Ac 1:11 1Ti 3:16. But why doth the evangelist express it thus? Why doth he not say, when he was to suffer; but skips over his death, and only mentions his ascension?

1. That is included; Christ was first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory.
2. Christ's death is called a lifting up from the earth, Joh 12:32.
3. What if we should say that Christ's death is thus expressed, to let us know that the death of Christ was to him a thing that his eye was not so much upon, as the glory which he immediately was to enter into after;

so as he calls his very death a taking up, as that which immediately preceded it, thereby teaching us to overlook sufferings and death, as not worthy to be named or mentioned, and to look only to that taking up into our Father's glory, which is the portion of all believers; when they die, they are but taken up from the earth: and though our bodies still stay behind a while, death having a power over us, yet of them also there shall be a taking up. Upon both which takings up our eyes should be so fixed, as to overlook all the sufferings of this life, as not worthy to be named.

He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Some think this was not our Saviour's last motion thither before his passion, but then it would not have been said *προσωπον εστηριξε, he set his face,* or, he confirmed his face. He was now in Galilee, Jerusalem (that killed the prophets) was the place designed for his suffering; betwixt Galilee and Jerusalem lay Samaria, through which he was to pass.

Luke 9:52

Ver. 52,53. The land of Canaan was by Joshua divided among all the twelve tribes of Israel, as we read in the book of Joshua, Jos 14:1-15 15:1-63 16:1-10 17:1-18 Saul, David, and Solomon (after the death of Joshua, the judges, and Samuel) ruled over them all; but Rehoboam the son of Solomon, following the counsel of the young men in his counsels, ten tribes revolted from the house of David, 1Ki 12:16-19. Jeroboam brought them to idolatry, Lu 9:28,29, setting up calves at Dan and Bethel. So as that there was a perpetual difference between the Israelites and those that adhered to the house of David, both upon a civil and religious account. This held for about two hundred and sixty years. In the time of Hoshea, their last king, the king of Assyria, after a siege of three years, takes Samaria their head city. Of this we have an account, 2Ki 17:6, as also of those sins which had provoked God to give them up into his hands. 2Ki 17:24 we read that *the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel.* He removed the most of the Jews, 2Ki 17:6, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the Driver of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. After this there were several mutations in the government of those countries. We must not imagine that all the Jews were carried away, but the chief and principal men; and we read in 2Ki 17:1-41, that a priest was sent back to instruct the new colonies how to worship the God of the country; because the lions infesting them, they conceived their non acquaintance with the methods of worship used toward the God of that country was the cause of it, 2Ki 17:26,27. But yet the people of the several nations brought thither worshipped their several idols, as may be read there, 2Ki 17:29. After this, about a hundred and sixty years, these places came under the dominion of Cyrus, who gave the Jews a liberty to return, but it chiefly concerned those that belonged to the kingdom of Judah, for we read, Ezr 1:5, that they were *the fathers of Judah and Benjamin* that

rose up to return. The Samaritans were their enemies as to the building of the temple, Ezr 4:4,5. After this, they fell under the power, first of the Grecians, then of the Romans, under which they at this time were. This old feud, both upon the account of their former civil difference, and their difference in religion, still held, so as there was a great enmity (especially occasioned by their difference in religion) betwixt those who belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the Samaritans, who were indeed idolaters. The Jews (for so now were they only called who adhered to the house of David) had no dealings with them, Joh 4:9; though it be the opinion of some that there were common civilities between them, and that the rigidness lay on the Jewish part, rather than the Samaritans'. Galilee lay beyond Samaria, and it should seem was more generally inhabited by native Jews. The king of Assyria planted his colonies (it is probable) more in that which was now more strictly called Samaria, which lay in the heart of the land; which might be the reason that the inhabitants of that part now called Samaria were more absurd and gross in their worship than the inhabitants of Galilee, amongst whom Christ so long preached. From whence (as was before said) Christ going to Jerusalem to the feast was to pass. The Samaritans refused to receive him, which ordinarily, it is said, they did not to passengers, but possibly their knowing that he was going to the feast was the cause, or his attendants might be more than they liked. When we come to Joh 4:1-54 we shall hear more of the religious differences between the Jews and the Samaritans. This is enough to have at present noted.

Luke 9:54

Ver. 54. The history of Elijah to which the disciples refer, is doubtless that, 2Ki 1:10, where Elijah, not without direction from God, called fire from heaven to destroy those captains and their fifties which the king sent to take him.

Luke 9:55

Ver. 55,56. The term *spirit* sometimes signifies, the inward motions, propensities, and inclinations of the soul, influenced either from the Holy

Spirit of God, or from the evil spirit. So the term is used [2Ti 1:7](#). You do not (saith our Saviour) consider what kind of motions these are, which you indulge yourselves in. The case of Elijah and this case had three remarkable differences.

1. The people of Israel at that time had been in an apostasy but of few years comparatively to these Samaritans; they were fallen into it in the sight of the true worship of God, at that time upheld in Judah. They were not only stiff in it, but the king sends these captains to apprehend Elijah for declaring what God had commanded him to declare. These Samaritans were under the prejudices of antiquity, and prescription for many hundreds of years. Histories tell us, that the Samaritan temple, on Mount Gerizim, built in opposition to the temple at Jerusalem, was built by one Sanballat, Darius's governor in those parts, to be revenged on the Jews for turning his son-in-law Manasseh from the priesthood at Jerusalem, which if it be true, the Samaritans had been fixed now in their false worship more than five hundred years. Nor were these that we read of any of the heads and rulers, but probably ordinary country people, rooted so long in this corrupt way, and doing this in zeal to their own temple on Mount Gerizim, and so inclined to show no favour to those who in any devotion were going to the opposite temple. Christ pitieth them under these prejudices, and though he doth not approve of their worship, yet he did not think that the way to change their minds was to call for fire from heaven against them, nor would he be so severe against them. It is not the will of God that we should approve of any corrupt worship, and join with those that use it; but neither is it his will that we should by fire and sword go about to suppress it, and bring men off from it. Antiquity, or the practice of our forefathers, is no sufficient plea to justify any worship. (It was the Samaritans' plea, [Joh 4:20](#).) But yet where any such prejudice against the truth is, it calleth to us for mild and gentle behaviour towards such as are under those disadvantages for the receiving of the truth.
2. But, secondly, there was a difference in the call of Elijah. He was an extraordinary prophet, who did nothing of this nature but by an immediate impulse and direction; so as what he did was in zeal for God, guided by a knowledge of the will of God. The disciples had no such call.

3. The times differed; Elijah acted under the legal dispensation, which was more severe; they were under the more mild and gentle dispensation of the gospel. And in this question they did but indulge their passions, and sinful desire of revenge; therefore, saith our Saviour, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* Our Saviour lets them know that they were under a more mild and gentle dispensation, by propounding his own example: *The Son of man* (saith he) *came not to destroy men's lives, but to save.* The term translated lives signifieth also souls; but if we consider the apostles' question, which was not whether they should call for fire from heaven to destroy their souls, but to destroy them as to their lives here, it will well enough justify our translators rendering it in this place lives. You see, saith our Saviour, by my healing the sick, raising the dead, &c., that my business is not to make my ministry ungrateful to men, by any ways prejudicing them in their outward concerns. If it were translated souls, it is yet a great truth: Christ came not to destroy men's souls, but to bring the means of salvation and eternal happiness; if they reject these, and perish, their destruction is of themselves.

Luke 9:57

Ver. 57,58. Matthew saith, Mt 8:19, this man was a scribe. See Poole on "Mt 8:19". Let those who have stately houses, and think them worth glorying in, or that they are things fit for men to value themselves upon, despising their poor brethren that want such accommodations of this life, digest this text.

Luke 9:59

Ver. 59,60. See Poole on "Mt 8:21". See Poole on "Mt 8:22". How free is Divine grace! The scribe offers to follow Christ: Christ encourages him not. To another that made no such offer, he first speaketh, saying, *Follow me*, and will admit of no excuse.

Luke 9:61

Ver. 61,62. Matthew (who mentioned the other two) mentions not this third person. Some doubt whether we well translate these words, *αποταξασθαι τοις εις τον οικον μου*, *bid them at my house farewell*; or whether it were not better translated, to order the things or persons relating to my house. Let it be translated either way, it signifies a too much worldliness of mind in this disciple, which our Saviour checks in the next words, saying, *No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back*, *εις τα οπισω*, to the things behind, *is fit for the kingdom of God*. Some think it is an allusion to the story of Elisha's call. 1Ki 19:19,20. *Elijah passing by him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth, cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.* Be that as it will, here is a plain allusion to the work of a ploughman, and a comparing of a minister of the gospel in his duty with the ploughman in his work. The ploughman is obliged to look forward to his work, or he will never draw his furrows either straight enough, or of a just depth; so must a minister of the gospel: if he be once called out of secular employments to the service of God in the ministry, he is bound to mind and attend that; that is enough to take up the whole man, and his whole strength and time, he had need of no other things to mind or look after, the things of the world are things behind him. Not that God debars his ministers (in case of exigence) to work for their bread with their hands, as Paul did; but they ought not, without apparent necessity, to entangle themselves with the things of this life, so as to make them their business.

Luke 10:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 10:1-12 Christ sendeth out the seventy disciples to work miracles and to preach.

Lu 10:13-16 He pronounces a woe against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Lu 10:17-20 The seventy return with joy; Christ showeth

them wherein to rejoice.

Lu 10:21,22 He thanks his Father for having revealed his gospel to the simple only.

Lu 10:23,24 He showeth the blessedness of those that were called into his church.

Lu 10:25-37 He teacheth a lawyer how to attain eternal life; and by the parable of the good Samaritan showeth whom we are to consider as our neighbour.

Lu 10:38-42 He commendeth Mary's attention to his doctrine in preference to Martha's busy care to entertain him.

Ver. 1. We heard before of Christ's first electing, then sending out, twelve, Lu 6:13-16 9:1-6; and we heard of their return, and giving an account of their trust to their Lord, Lu 10:10. What their particular account was we nowhere read, but it was such as our Saviour judged the harvest too great for the hands of the labourers. He therefore now resolves to send out seventy more. The names of these we have not in the evangelist, only that Christ sent them out, and that he sent them *two and two*, which might be for their better mutual assistance of each other, and also for their mutual testimony one for another. When God sent out the first conductors, and governors of his people, he sent two, Moses and Aaron. John Baptist sent two of his disciples to Christ. Christ sent two of his disciples to prepare the passover, Lu 22:8. There seemeth to be nothing mysterious in this. Man is a sociable creature, and it is not good for him to be alone. We cannot determine that our Saviour had any regard to the numbers of *twelve* and *seventy*; though it is certain that both those numbers amongst the Jews seem to have had a more than ordinary character, twelve being the number of the tribes of Israel, according to the promise, Ge 17:20 49:28; at Elim they found *twelve wells of water*, Ex 15:27; according to the number of the tribes were the twelve pillars, Ex 24:4, and the twelve stones in the breastplate of judgment, Ex 28:21; and the number of the cakes for the shew bread was to be twelve, Le 24:5. The princes of Israel were twelve, Nu 1:44; and twelve men were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, De 1:23. So we shall observe that in a multitude of things they kept to the number of twelve: John in his description of the new Jerusalem, which he saw in his vision, says, it had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates were the names of the twelve tribes, Re 21:12. And the wall had twelve foundations, &c., Lu 10:14. And for the number of seventy: Jacob's

family, when they went down into Egypt, were seventy souls, Ge 46:27; they mourned for Jacob seventy days, Ge 50:3; at Elim they met with seventy palm trees, Nu 33:9; the posterity of Jacob was in Babylon seventy years. The Jewish sanhedrim, or great court chosen upon the advice of Jethro, is said to have consisted first of seventy, then of seventy-two persons. So as the numbers of twelve and seventy seem to have been numbers to which the Jews had some respect. Whether our Saviour, in the choice of those whom he first sent to preach the gospel, had any respect or not to the Jewish value for those numbers, or designed by it to show them, that he was about to set up a new kingdom and government, which, though differing from what they had exercised formerly, yet in some little things should have some conformity to them, we cannot determine. We shall find the same powers and authority given to these seventy as to the twelve, and the same instructions: how some come to imagine a difference of order betwixt them I cannot tell; no such thing

appeareth from the instructions given the one or the other upon their first sending out.

Luke 10:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 9:37" and See Poole on "Mt 9:38", where these words are put immediately before the sending out of the twelve. Both the twelve and the seventy, all that Christ ever sent out, were to be labourers in the Lord's harvest.

Luke 10:3

Ver. 3,4. We met with these instructions before, and opened them in our notes. See Poole on "Mt 10:9", See Poole on "Mt 10:10" and See Poole on "Mt 10:16", only there we had not those words, *and salute no man by the way*. The meaning of that is no more than, make all possible speed: see 2Ki 4:29.

Luke 10:5

Ver. 5-7. See Poole on "Mt 10:11", and See Poole on "Mr 6:10". The instructions, as to the substance of them, are the same here as there, though a little differing in the terms.

Luke 10:8

Ver. 8-12. We have met with the same instructions before in Matthew and Mark. See Poole on "Mt 10:11", and following verses to Mt 10:15. See Poole on "Mr 6:10", See Poole on "Mr 6:11". There is some difference in words. Matthew saith, —*inquire who in the city is worthy*, and, Lu 10:13, *if the house be worthy*; Luke saith, *if the son of peace be there*; they both mean the same thing: if there be any in it, that belong to God's election of grace, any whom God intends by you to call, and make partakers of the peace of the gospel. For other things relating to the opening of the words, see the notes before mentioned. Only we may from hence observe for our instruction,

1. That it is the will of Christ, that his ministers should not be too solicitous for a livelihood. As the labourer is worthy of his hire, so he that sends them into his harvest will see they shall be fed. Let them look to their calling, and to the fulfilling of their ministry; God will see they shall be fed.
2. That the society of ministers of the gospel, in cities and houses, should not be with debauchees, but with those that are worthy, so far as man can judge; such as are their Master's friends and servants should be their companions.
3. Those are most worthy in places amongst whom the Son of peace is, men and women that have the most knowledge of and love for Christ.
4. The ministers of Christ ought to carry themselves with all imaginable civility, wishing good to all, and doing good to all.

5. Christ's ministers ought not to make their bellies their gods, — *eat such things as are set before you.*
6. They have a Divine licence to take and use for their necessities such things as men give them.
7. Christ expects that his people should maintain his ministers, not depriving the labourers of their hire, nor muzzling the mouths of the oxen which tread out the corn, 1Co 9:9,10, nor preferring their servants for their worldly occasions before such as labour for their souls, and in that work are God's messengers to them, and his servants in the first place, though employed in watching for people's souls.
8. The not giving a livelihood to ministers, is a not receiving them, that is, provided the people be able.
9. People by not receiving the gospel of peace brought them by faithful ministers shall do them no hurt, their peace shall return unto them. They shall be a sweet savour unto God, even as to them that perish. Their judgment is with the Lord, and their work with their God, though they labour in vain; though Israel be not gathered, they shall be glorified. Men proportion their rewards according to successes of servants. God more justly proportions his rewards to men's sincerity and diligence in their labour.
10. If men refuse the gospel, yet they shall know the kingdom of God is come nigh unto them. If they will not be subject to his kingdom of grace, yet they shall be subdued by the kingdom of his power and justice.
11. There will come a day when men that have the offers of the gospel of peace, and refuse them, slighting and despising his ministers and their message, will find that they had better have lived in Sodom when it was burnt with fire and brimstone; their portion of wrath in the day of judgment will be larger and bitterer than the portion of the men of Sodom. Let all who live in our days hear and fear, and in time break off their sins by a true repentance, lest they go to hell at the highest disadvantage.

Luke 10:13

Ver. 13-15 See Poole on "Mt 11:21", and following verses to Mt 11:24.

Luke 10:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 10:40".

Luke 10:17

Ver. 17. As we before read of the twelve coming back to give Christ an account of their success, so we here have the same of the seventy. Whether this joy of the seventy was more carnal than it ought, they rather rejoicing in that new power which they had received from Christ, than in the demonstration of Christ's Divine power, and the confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel by these miraculous operations, is hard to determine; for though Christ's reply seemeth to have a check in it, yet it is so qualified by the term *rather*, Lu 10:20, that we cannot from thence absolutely conclude any such thing from it. Here is a difference to be observed between Christ's and his disciples' casting out of devils. Christ did it in his own name, by his own word of command, power, and authority; the disciples did it in Christ's name, and by a power and authority derived from him.

Luke 10:18

Ver. 18. Lightning comes suddenly, and with thunder. The thunder of the gospel brought down the devil as lightning: and indeed this is observable, the devil is so busy in no places where the gospel prevails, as in places

where that joyful sound is not come, whether we consider his power with reference to men's bodies or souls. This is one general advantage of gospel preaching, the devil will not endure the sound of it, so as to impose upon mankind, at that rate which he doth upon ignorant persons, that are heathens, or only differing from them in that they are baptized, and call themselves Christians. Christ saw this, as God, for the devil is not visible to human senses, as neither are any spirits; which showed the impudence of that popish impostor in Germany, who selling indulgences, (by which he pretended souls were delivered from purgatory), called to the people to look up and see them fly away. But Christ could see it as God, for he certainly knew that it would be, and that it already was, the blessed effect of the gospel.

Luke 10:19

Ver. 19. Christ doth here:

1. Confirm the power before given to these seventy for working miracles, that they might not think that it ceased upon the determination of their first mission.
2. He confirmeth his promise to them for his presence with them, and protection of them.

Interpreters think here is a manifest allusion to Ps 91:13, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet:* which must be understood figuratively, the sense being, that nothing should hurt them. This promise was more specially verified for some years in God's protection of time first ministers of the gospel, until they had done their work; and shall be fulfilled in a sense to the end of the world, according to the promise in Ps 91:13. Nothing shall hurt their souls, as to the favour of God and their eternal happiness, nor their bodies, so far forth as, or so long as, God in his wisdom shall judge fit. They have a further power also given them more common to all the ministers of the gospel sent by Christ, yea, and to all Christians. They have a power over all the power of the enemy; God will not be wanting to them in a power to resist the devil, and they have a promise that, being resisted, he shall flee from them.

Luke 10:20

Ver. 20. It is a usual thing in holy writ, to have prohibitions delivered in general terms, which must be understood in a restrained sense. That it is so here, appeareth plainly by the word *rather*, prefixed to *rejoice*, in the latter part of the sentence. For it was doubtless a just cause of joy and rejoicing to them that Christ had honoured them with such an extraordinary gift and power, but not of so much joy as to know that their names were written in the book of life; for as the good was infinitely greater, so a proportionable joy was requisite upon the assurance of it.

The expression *written in heaven*, is equivalent to the being written *in the book of life*, whereby is signified, either the certain designation of some to eternal life, or effectual calling. We read of this *book of life*, Re 3:5 20:12,15 21:27 22:19. It is called the Lamb's book, Re 13:8, and it is said it was written *from the foundation of the world*; which will justify those divines who understand it of a particular election from eternity; whereas it is objected that when amongst the twelve there was a *son of perdition*, it is unreasonable to think that all the seventy were elect vessels. It is easily answered, that our Saviour's words were true according to the usual phrase of speaking, if the generality of them only were such. Nor need our Saviour be understood as asserting all their names were so written, but only asserting the greatest cause of joy to be, if men can by their calling find that their election is sure. From our Saviour's words we may infer,

1. That there is a book of life, an election of grace.
2. That there are names written in this book; it is an election of persons.
3. That men may know that their names are written in that book, otherwise they could not rejoice; no man rejoiceth but in a good with which he hath some degree of union.
4. That this is a greater cause of joy, than for a man to know that he hath a power to cast out devils.

Men may be made use of to cast out devils in Christ's name, who yet

may go to the devil at last, Mt 7:22,23; so cannot those whose names are written in the book of life. But I cannot understand that our Saviour in these words asserts that all the names of the seventy were written in that book. The tendency of his discourse is rather to quicken them to give all diligence to make sure of this cause of joy and rejoicing.

Luke 10:21

Ver. 21,22. See Poole on "Mt 11:25", and following verses to, Mt 11:27, where we met with these words of our Saviour.

Luke 10:23

Ver. 23,24. See Poole on "Mt 13:16", and See Poole on "Mt 13:17".

Luke 10:25

Ver. 25-28. These four verses would incline one to think that Luke here records the same piece of history which we met with in Mt 22:35-40, and Mr 12:28-34; See Poole on "Mt 22:35" and following verses to Mt 22:40, See Poole on "Mr 12:28" and following verses to Mr 12:34; but neither of those evangelists have the following part of this discourse, which makes me doubtful whether Luke speaks of the same person coming to Christ which the others mention. A lawyer he was, who came to our Saviour upon a design to tempt, that is, to make a trial of him, whether he would deliver any doctrine contrary to the law of Moses. It is plain that he fancied that the eternal life which Christ preached was to be obtained by wing what the law required. Our Saviour agreeth it, that if he did what the law required, according as he himself had given an account of it, he should live. I apprehend no absurdity, to affirm that our Saviour speaks here of living eternally. It is rather absurd to fancy that our Saviour did not answer *ad idem*, to the thing about which the question was propounded. Neither is salvation impossible because the law in itself could not give life, but because of the weakness of our flesh, so as we cannot fulfil it. So that

considering our infirmity, the law serveth to us only as a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ; and as a mark which we ought to shoot at, though we cannot shoot home; a rule to direct us in our duty, though we cannot perform or fulfil it.

Luke 10:29

Ver. 29. This lawyer's desire to justify himself spake him a hypocrite. The reason of that question, *Who is my neighbour?* was the notion of the neighbour (mentioned in the law) which the scribes and Pharisees had, who counted none their neighbours but their friends and benefactors, at least none but those that were of their own nation or particular sect; and had taught their people, that they might hate their enemies. Our Saviour (this being but a captious question, considering the received interpretation amongst them of the law of God) doth not think fit to answer his question directly, but telling him a story, maketh him answer himself.

Luke 10:30

Ver. 30-37. It is certain that the principal scope of our Saviour in this history, or parable, was to convince the lawyer, that every one is our neighbour to whom God offereth us an opportunity of doing good, whether he be of our nation or region or not. Every object of our mercy is our neighbour, whom God requireth us to love as ourselves. This was quite contrary to the common doctrine of the scribes' and Pharisees' interpreting the law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,* and excellently served our Saviour's design, to show this lawyer that he understood not, much less observed, the law of God in that manner, as that he could justify himself from the violation of it. He also by the by showeth him, that the Samaritans, whom the Jews so much abhorred, better understood the law of God, than the ecclesiastical guides of those times, who yet pretended to be teachers of it to others; for some of them by the light of nature discerned themselves obliged to do good to every one that stood in need of their help, or if not by the light of nature, yet by the light of revelation in

the law of Moses; but the scribes and Pharisees, by their false interpretation of the Divine law, had taught people to omit a great part of their duty required by the Divine law, and so could not hope to be justified, or to obtain eternal life and salvation, from the observation of it.

Luke 10:38

Ver. 38,39. Interpreters think this village was Bethany, and that this Martha and Mary were the same which are mentioned Joh 11:2. Inns probably were not so frequent then, and in those places, as they are now, so as strangers were often received in private houses. Christ loseth no opportunity of preaching the gospel; while they were preparing supper, he was entertaining the family with the glad tidings of the gospel, *the feast of fat things made upon the mountain*, Isa 25:6. *The lips of the righteous feed many*, Pr 10:21. It was their fashion to have disciples sit at their doctors' feet, to hear their word; there Mary fixes herself.

Luke 10:40

Ver. 40. Two things are blameable in Martha:

1. That she made too much ado about the entertainment of our Saviour. That she entertained our Saviour she did well; but herein she erred, that she made her entertainment of him so troublesome, as it would not give her leave to take that advantage, which she might, or ought to have done, from the entertainment of a prophet.
2. That she is displeased with her sister because she would not lend her hand, but chose rather to sit at Christ's feet and hear his word, and

desireth Christ to send her away to her assistance.

Luke 10:41

Ver. 41,42. Our Saviour plainly blames Martha for her too great solicitude and trouble to provide a dinner, or supper, for him, who had meat to eat which she was not aware of, it being his meat and drink to do the will of his Father, and to preach the gospel. Interpreters much trouble themselves in determining what that *one thing* is, which our Saviour here saith is *needful*. Some think our Saviour meaneth no more than, one dish is enough; but this certainly is too low a sense. Others would have this *one thing* to be a life of meditation and contemplation, and that this was that *good part* Mary had *chosen*. If Mary had thus spent her whole life they might have said something for this. But certainly Mary's choosing to take advantage of Christ's company, rather to spend an hour or two in hearing of him, than in preparing a supper for him, will prove no such thing. I should interpret it generally, concerning the care of the soul with reference to eternity. That is certainly the one thing necessary, that was the better part, which Mary had chosen, as to which Christ would not discourage her, nor any way blunt the edge of those holy desires he had kindled in her, an effect of which study and care was her sitting at the feet of Christ to hear his word.

Luke 11:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 11:1-13 Christ teacheth to pray, assuring that God will give all good things to them that ask him.

Lu 11:14-26 He casteth out a devil, and reproveth the blasphemy of the Pharisees, who ascribed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub.

Lu 11:27,28 He showeth who are the truly blessed,
Lu 11:29-36 and the inexcusableness of not believing his gospel.

Lu 11:37-54 He reprehends the outward show of holiness in the Pharisees, and pronounces woes against them and the scribes and lawyers.

Ver. 1. This seemeth to be a different time from that mentioned by Matthew, where our Saviour directed his disciples to pray; there his direction was part of his sermon on the mount. Besides, the doxology or conclusion is there left out. It is said here, *as he was praying in a certain place*. Christ looked upon all places as holy enough for prayer. It also looks as if at this time our Saviour was not at his more secret devotions, but with the twelve, (which were his family), praying with them.

When he ceased: this is very observable against those who pretend impulses of the Spirit, to disturb ministers in the time when they are praying and preaching; it may easily be known from what spirit such impulses are. The disciples of Christ often propounded questions to him after preaching, but never interrupting him in his work, nor before he was retired into a house. They now come to be informed about prayer, but they stay till he had first ceased. We having no account in holy writ of John's disciples asking him, or his teaching of them to pray, are more at a loss to determine whether our Saviour did intend that his disciples should use these words, as the phrase here seemeth to import, or only pray in this sense, *after this manner*, as Matthew saith; indeed nothing can be concluded from either phrase by any judicious person.

For as we read in many places in Scripture, that Christ *answered and said*, when it is manifest the meaning is, he spake words to that import or sense, (the evangelists reporting the words spoken with variations of expression), so when we pray we may say, *Our Father which art in, heaven, &c.*, though we do not use the same words and syllables.

Luke 11:2

Ver. 2-4. See Poole on "Mt 6:9-13". Whoso compares this prayer as it is recorded by Matthew will find the form of words differing in more things than one; not only the doxology or conclusion is left out wholly by Luke, but for *σημερον*, there we have *χαθ' ημεραν*, here, for *οφειληματα* Luke hath *αμαρτιας*, for *ως και ημεις αφιεμεν τοις οφειλειταις ημων* we have here *και γαρ αυτοι αφιεμεν παντι οφειλοντι ημιν*; from whence plainly appears that our Saviour did not intend to oblige his

disciples to the same syllabical words, but only to words of the same import, that is, to praying for the same things: yet that Christians have a liberty to use the same words is out of question, and as much out of question that they have a liberty to vary, still keeping their eyes upon the matter of this prayer, and not forgetting that when they go unto God in that holy duty.

Luke 11:5

Ver. 5-9. The plain meaning of our Saviour in this parable, is to teach us that we ought not only to pray, but to be importunate with God in prayer; to *continue in prayer*, as the apostle phrases it, Col 4:2, and to watch *thereunto with all perseverance*, Eph 6:18. This in the Greek is called *αναιδειαν*, impudence, which though in our language it is generally taken in an ill sense, yet here signifieth no more than a holy boldness, or pursuing our petitions notwithstanding delays or denials. For those words, Lu 11:9, See Poole on "Mt 7:7", where the same words are found.

Luke 11:10

Ver. 10-13. See Poole on "Mt 7:8" and following verses to Mt 7:11. As our Saviour's design in the former words appeareth to be our information, that thought the hand of God be full of good things proportioned to all the necessities of his creatures, yet they must not expect to have them without asking, he will for them *be inquired of by the house of Israel*, Eze 36:37; and all his promises for the collation of good things must be interpreted, with a supposition of people's seeking them at his hand; as also that every lazy, cold, formal praying will not obtain them at the hand of God, but the working, fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. His design in these verses seemeth to be, to let us know, that fervent and importunate prayer will not prevail with God to give us any thing but what shall be good for

us; for he knoweth that the general desire of our souls is for nothing but what is good; if we ask for things hurtful, it is but a lapse or miscarriage of our tongues, caused from the blindness and ignorance of our minds. No man knowingly will ask any thing of another that shall do him hurt; and though our children, through their want of knowledge and judgment to discern between things that are good or evil for their bodies, may ask of us, and cry unto us, for things that are hurtful, yet we, who know that they would not ask for them if they had the use of their reason, and well knew their noxious quality, considering their circumstances, will not give them to them. So our heavenly Father, though he heareth us crying for such things as he knoweth (considering our circumstances) would be mischievous and hurtful to us, yet he will not give us any thing of that nature; and so in denying the words of our lips, he yet answereth the general scope and designs of our souls, which is to have only what is good for us. But if we ask any thing which is good and wholesome for us, and profitable unto us, in the circumstances in which we are, we may be sure that God will give them to us, as we may that an earthly parent will deny nothing to his children crying, which is in his power to give, and which he knoweth to be good for them; for the nature of all good lieth in the convenience and suitableness of the thing to the wants and necessities of the person that receiveth it. And every such thing must also be according to the will of God, according to his promise, Ps 84:11, to *withhold no good thing from them that live uprightly*. So as both God's fatherly relation, and the knowledge we have that he is a God that cannot lie nor repent, are assurances to us, that whatsoever good thing we ask we shall obtain of him, and nothing else, although we ask and cry for it. Therefore whereas Matthew saith, Mt 7:11, *How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!* Luke saith here, *How much more shall he give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!*

Luke 11:14

Ver. 14. The devil is here called *dumb*, from his effect upon the demoniac, in restraining the use of his tongue.

Luke 11:15

Ver. 15-23. See Poole on "Mt 9:34". See Poole on "Mt 12:24", and following verses to Mt 12:30. See Poole on "Mr 3:22", and following verses to Mr 3:27.

Luke 11:23

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 23:6", See Poole on "Mt 23:7". Their fault was not in their taking them, but in their affecting them, and in being ambitious of them. God is the God of order, and we are bound to give honour to whom honour belongs; but pride and ambition are detestable sins, especially in such as should be teachers of humility, and the vanity of all things below.

Luke 11:24

Ver. 24-26. See Poole on "Mt 12:43", See Poole on "Mt 12:44" and See Poole on "Mt 12:45". From these verses we may observe,

1. That the devil may in some sort and degree be cast out of persons and places, while yet in other respects they may be his house, and he may dwell in and amongst them. Their bodies, their country, may be in great measure delivered from his power, and he may yet keep possession of their souls. This ordinarily happeneth in places where the gospel is faithfully preached; though there remain abundance of men whose lives evidence that the devil hath a too great possession of their souls, yet those places, and persons inhabiting in them, are more freed from witchcraft, and the power which the devil exercises (by God's

permission) upon men's and women's bodies, and cattle, &c., than other more paganish and ignorant places. He may also in a sense be said to be cast out of persons that are reclaimed from vicious and debauched lives, yet are not brought home to God, only are more enlightened, and more under the power of restraining grace; yet their souls may be his house.

2. The devil, cast out in any degree, is unquiet till (if possible) he hath recovered as full a power over and possession of men and women as he ever had.
3. If he ever recovers it, their latter end is worse than their beginning, Heb 6:4 10:26 2Pe 2:20.

Luke 11:27

Ver. 27,28. We are very prone to bless persons from external privileges, and the favours of Divine Providence, which do not at all change or affect the hearts of those to whom they are given; but God looketh with another eye upon persons. Christ doth not here deny his mother to have been blessed; her cousin Elisabeth (Lu 1:42) had pronounced her *blessed amongst women*, and the angel had before called her *highly favoured*, and told her that she had *found favour with God*. But our Saviour here declareth that her blessing did not so much lie in that her womb bare, and her paps gave suck to him, as in that she was one who heard and kept the word of God; for he pronounces all such as did so principally blessed. Nor must we separate what God hath put together; the blessing is not pronounced to those who barely hear the word of God, the blessed and the unblessed *pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt*, they may go to church together, and hear the word together, but the blessing is to *those that hear the word of God, and keep it*. See Jas 1:22,23. The word to some that hear it may be *a savour of death unto death*. The soul that through grace is made obedient to the will of God, is a more happy soul than the virgin Mary was, considered merely as the mother of Christ, without the consideration of her faith and holiness.

Luke 11:29

Ver. 29-32. See Poole on "Mt 12:38", and following verses to Mt 12:42. Matthew saith, they were the Pharisees that came to him, desiring to see a sign from heaven: they did the same again, Mt 16:1. Christ was very ready to work miracles to encourage and confirm his hearers' faith, but not to satisfy unbelievers' curiosity. Instead therefore of showing them signs from heaven, he denounces the just judgment of God against them, for their not believing in him. See further the notes upon the aforementioned parallel texts.

Luke 11:33

Ver. 33. We met with this similitude Lu 8:16 Mt 5:15: See Poole on "Lu 8:16", See Poole on "Mt 5:15". It was a kind of proverbial speech, and so applicable to divers subjects. Some think that our Saviour bringeth in these words as a reason why he would show the Pharisees no sign, viz. because he knew it would do them no good, it had been like the lighting of a candle and putting it under a bushel, which no man doth. Others think that by it he designs to give an account why he pronounced those blessed who heard the word and did it, Lu 11:28, because practice, and giving light to others, is the end of all hearing.

Luke 11:34

Ver. 34-36. See Poole on "Mt 6:22", See Poole on "Mt 6:23". Our Saviour's speech in these verses is plainly both elliptical (something being in itself to be understood) and also metaphorical. The sense is this, What the eye is to the body, that the soul, the mind and affections, are to the whole man. Now look, as the eye is the organ by which light is received to guide a man's steps, so that if that be perfect, without any mixture of ill humours, &c., the body from it takes a full and right direction how to move and act; but if that be vitiated by ill humours, the man knows not

how to direct his bodily steps: so if a man's soul, (which answereth the bodily eye), more especially a man's understanding or judgment, be darkened, perverted, prejudiced, or his affections be debauched or depraved, he will not know how to move one step right in his duty; but if his understanding have a right notion of truths, and he judgeth aright concerning the things and ways of God, and his affections be not depraved, then the whole man will be in a capacity to receive the light and revelations of truth, as they shall be communicated to him, even as he who hath a perfect eye receiveth and is able to make use of the bright shining of a candle.

Luke 11:37

Ver. 37. This is the second time we meet with our Saviour at a Pharisee's house. He saith of himself, that he *came eating and drinking*, that is, allowing himself a free, though innocent, converse with all sorts of people, that he might gain some. The Pharisees were, as to the generality of them, the most bitter, stubborn, and implacable enemies Christ had, yet he refused not to go and sit at meat with a Pharisee.

Luke 11:38

Ver. 38. Mt 15:2, the Pharisees quarrelled with the disciples upon this account; here this Pharisee is offended at Christ himself. Mark gives us the reason of it, Mr 7:3, *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.* Concerning this tradition of theirs, and the ground of it, See Poole on "Mt 15:2", See Poole on "Mr 7:3". We would all be infallible, and therefore cannot allow others to differ from us in a rite, which hath no foundation in God's word, and wonder at those who cannot see with our eyes, nor practise according to our latitudes.

Luke 11:39

Ver. 39,40. We have much the same, though delivered in another form, with a denunciation of a woe, See Poole on "Mt 23:25". We must not imagine that our Saviour here reflects upon the cleansing of vessels in which we put our meat and drink, for undoubtedly, as to them, the Pharisees washed both the inside and the outside. And the conceit of them is amiss who think that by the *inward part*, Lu 11:39, he means the meat in their dishes, which was gotten indeed by ravening, and wickedness, extortion, &c.; for it is a hard interpretation of the inward part of the platter, to say, by it is meant the meat in the platter; but neither doth our Saviour say, the inward part of the dish, but *your inward part*, by which he plainly means the soul. Our Saviour doth therefore certainly compare the Pharisees to dishes or platters washed or scoured only on the outside, and blames their hypocrisy in this, that they were mighty solicitous about an outside purity and cleanness, but for the inward purity of the heart and soul, they took no care at all about that; they were very scrupulous about undefiled hands, but nothing at all about having their souls and inward powers and affections undefiled. This he telleth them was most egregious folly, for God, that made the body, made the soul also, and therefore would exact a purity in the inward as well as the outward man, especially considering that he loveth truth in the inward parts.

Luke 11:41

Ver. 41. πλην τα ενοντα δοτε ελεημοσυνην. The word ενοντα being a word not ordinarily used in a sense which will fit this place, hath made a great abounding in their own senses amongst interpreters; some translating it, Give such things as are within for alms; others, such things as you have; others, such things as are necessary; others, such things as ye are able, as if κατα were to be understood before τα ενοντα, according to what you have. Others, what things remain, after the serving your own necessities, and a just restitution to those whom you have wronged. Others think it is but a connexion of our Saviour's speech, and the sense is, Moreover there is but one thing to be done, Give alms, &c., as if it were το ενον I do not see but our own translation is as good as any, and κατα seems to be understood in the Greek. According to what you have, which is truly and justly your own, not theirs whom you have wronged, nor your creditors', nor your families', for their necessities; give alms of all that.

And, behold, all things are clean unto you. Not, your souls are clean; though that must first be, yet our Saviour is not here directing that, or the means and methods for it; but *all things are clean to you,* you may lawfully and without guilt use them: *Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure,* Tit 1:15. Our Saviour's words are a plain exhortation to repentance, that lieth in the change of our minds; and that inward change of our minds must be evidenced by the change of our actions, and particularly by a restitution in case of wrong done to any. The Pharisees were a covetous, rapacious generation, full of extortion, devouring widows' houses, &c. Their repentance was to be evidenced by contrary works; those were works of justice and mercy. God calleth to the Israelites for the first, Isa 1:16,17. Christ calls to the Pharisees for the latter. Such works of mercy as might evidence their hearts to be truly changed: and then, saith our Saviour, all things will be clean to you, which otherwise will not be with all your traditional superstitious washings. And needs it must be so, for no soul can repent truly without the influence and assistance of Divine grace, which God giveth not, but to those souls which are washed with the blood of Christ. So that before a soul can produce the fruits of true repentance, it must be justified by faith, and sanctified by the Spirit of holiness. Or if we understand it only of that repentance which an unjustified soul may have, yet even that may so far profit, as to have our outward things so blessed to us, that we may use them without any pollution or guilt, and have them outwardly blest to us.

Luke 11:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 23:23". There are two great notes of hypocrites:

1. To be more exact, in and zealous for the observation of rituals and the traditions of men, than in and for the observation of the moral law of God.
2. In matters of morality, to be more exact and strict in and for little things, than for things more grave and weighty.

There is no commandment of God so little as we may neglect, or despise,

or disobey it; but yet there is a difference in duties, and we ought to have more regard to the greater than to the lesser.

Luke 11:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 23:6", See Poole on "Mt 23:7". Their fault was not in their taking them, but in their affecting them, and in being ambitious of them. God is the God of order, and we are bound to give honour to whom honour belongs; but pride and ambition are detestable sins, especially in such as should be teachers of humility, and the vanity of all things below.

Luke 11:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 23:27", where our Saviour compares the Pharisees to whited sepulchres: here he compares them to sepulchres, but not as there to denote their hypocrisy, appearing white, but having nothing within but rottenness; but upon the account of the contagion of them, and their pollution of others that were not aware of them. To understand our Saviour, we must consider the Levitical law, Nu 19:16; where we shall find that not only he that touched a dead body, but he that touched a grave, was legally unclean for seven days. Christ here alludes to that, though he be speaking not of legal, but moral uncleanness. By reason of the law afore mentioned, the Jews took care to whiten their graves, that people might see them, and avoid that danger. To such whited sepulchres Christ compares the Pharisees, Mt 23:27. But some graves might not be whited, or the colour washed off, so as they did not appear, and men could not be aware of them, but ran into a pollution by them. To such graves he in this place compares them. They were men that externally appeared not to be what they were. The Jews took the Pharisees' for great saints, (the strictest sect of their religion), so strict they were in their duties to their traditions, &c.; which external severity and formal behaviour covered their extortion, and covetousness, and malice, and erroneous opinions, so as people did not suspect them of any such guilt.

Luke 11:45

Ver. 45. This lawyer was a scribe of the law, Lu 11:44. The work of these men was to interpret the law; the Pharisees strictly observed their decrees and interpretations. The lawyer therefore spake rightly in thinking our Saviour's words had some reflection upon men of his order, but he woefully erred both in thinking his own order was unblamable, and also in calling our Lord's just reproof a reproaching them. But by this he gives an occasion to him, who used rightly to divide the word of God, and to give every one their portion out of it, to let them know wherein they were faulty, as well as the Pharisees.

Luke 11:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 23:4".

Luke 11:47

Ver. 47-51. See Poole on "Mt 23:29" and following verses to Mt 23:36. The Pharisees, like a company of wretched hypocrites, under a pretence of their honouring the memories of the prophets under the Old Testament, took great care to repair and to adorn their sepulchres, while in the mean time their hearts were as full of malice against the truth, and against Christ and those who came to reveal God's will to them, as ever were their fathers against the prophets; and, saith our Saviour, I, who am the Wisdom of God, tell you, that I shall send you apostles, and prophets, and some of them you shall kill, others you shall persecute; that all the righteous blood that hath been shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, may come on you; which mind being in you, the same as in your persecuting predecessors, your building and adorning the old prophets' tombs is not (as you would have it thought) any testimony of your honour to the prophets, but rather to your fathers that killed them, a kind of trophy for the victory your fathers got over the prophets of the Lord; so as by that act you give a testimony that you own them as your fathers who killed the prophets, and glory in what they did, for if you truly honoured their memory, you would not retain the same malicious, bloody mind. It is gross hypocrisy for men to magnify the servants of God in

former ages, and in the mean time to malign and persecute the servants of the same God in a present age, owning but the same truths, and living up to the same rule. See Poole on "Mt 23:29", and following verses to Mt 23:36, where the same things are said with larger circumstances. They truly honour martyrs, that live the same lives they did, and adhere to the same truths of God, in a testimony to which they died.

Luke 11:52

Ver. 52. Matthew saith, Mt 23:13, *for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, &c.* I take the sense of these words to be, You have taken away knowledge, which is the key by which men enter into the kingdom of God. Though knowledge itself be but a common gift, and men may have great measures of it, and yet perish for ever, 1Co 13:2, yet it is the foundation of all saving grace. *How shall they believe in him of whom, they have not heard?* Ro 10:14. So, how shall they obey a rule they do not know, or repent of those sins which they do not know to be so? So as those that are the hinderers of people's coming to the knowledge of the will of God, are the vilest instruments upon earth in hindering men's and women's salvation. The papists are highly guilty of this, in keeping their laity from the Scriptures in a language intelligible to them. But how were the scribes guilty of this? The Jews were never hindered from reading or hearing of the law; it was read in their synagogues every sabbath day. But we must know that knowledge is highly advantaged by an interpretation of the mind and will of God. But how did the scribes take away this? They preached and interpreted the law of God.

Answer. They gave not the true sense of it, but so preached that people were scarce any whit the wiser, as to the knowledge of the law of God, only they made people understand their traditions and ceremonies: their doctrines were the traditions of men. Now they occupying the places of teachers, and no better discharging their work, instead of giving, took away knowledge from them, and proved blind leaders of the blind. Whoever they are that arrogate to themselves the office of teaching, and

supplying the places of teachers, and either do not make preaching, and instruction of the people under their charge, their business, or who preach in styles and methods their people understand not, or who preach other things than what they prove to be the revealed will of God, fall deeply under the condemnation of this text. See Poole on "Mt 23:13".

Luke 11:53

Ver. 53,54. Herein the vile genius of these wretched men was seen, Christ was become their enemy because he told them the truth; his reproofs in order to their reformation and amendment do but fill them with madness against him. Nor are wicked and malicious men at any time fair enemies.

They urge him vehemently, and provoke him to speak of many things; they lie at the catch, in wait for him; hoping that in his many words, and answers to their many captious questions, they should hear something from him, upon which they might form an accusation against him to Pilate, the Roman governor, for his blood was that they thirsted after. If it were thus done to the green tree, let us not wonder if it be so done also to the dry. The hearts and practices of malicious and wicked men, in succeeding generations, do (as in a glass) answer the hearts of persons of their spirits and morals in preceding generations. Malice will never regard justice or equity.

Luke 12:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 12:1-12 Christ teacheth his disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and not to be fearful in publishing his doctrine.

Lu 12:13-21 He refuseth to be judge in a civil cause, and warns the people to beware of covetousness by the parable of a rich man, who boasted himself in his multiplied stores.

Lu 12:22-32 He exhorteth, not to be over anxious about the provisions of this life; but to seek the kingdom

of God,

Lu 12:33,34 to lay up treasure in heaven by giving alms,

Lu 12:35-40 and to be always ready against our Lord's coming.

Lu 12:41-48 By the parable of a good and a wicked steward he showeth the duty of his ministers in particular.

Lu 12:49-53 He foretells the divisions on account of the gospel,

Lu 12:54-56 reproveth the people for not discerning the times,

Lu 12:57-59 and showeth the danger of neglecting the means of reconciliation offered them.

Ver. 1. We read of such a caution given to the disciples, Mt 16:6. But that is not the same caution with this; there he compared their doctrine to leaven, for the aptness of it to infect others; here he compares their lives to the same thing, and for the same reason: this appeareth to be the same sense of our Saviour here, because he saith their leaven is hypocrisy. There are none so like to do mischief to the better sort of people, as those that, under a mask and exterior disguise of severity and strictness, indulge themselves in corrupt affections and vicious inclinations.

Luke 12:2

Ver. 2. It is a proverbial expression: those, and parabolical expressions, may be applied in several cases, and to several subjects: we have met with this before variously applied, Mt 10:26 Mr 4:22; and in this Gospel, Lu 8:17. Here it is applied as an argument against hypocrisy, or the concealing of naughty and corrupt hearts under the vizard and disguise of demure looks, or fair conversation. In the day of judgment sinners shall walk naked, and men shall see their shame; God will in that day make known all the secrets of men's hearts, to be sure the secrets of all their hearts, whose iniquities are not forgiven, and whose sins are not covered.

Luke 12:3

Ver. 3. We have something very like this Mt 10:27, spoken by way of precept. It seemeth to be a sentence also variously applied: it may be left indifferent to the reader, whether he will understand it as a promise of the publication of the gospel, (to which purpose it seems to be spoken in the form of a precept, Mt 10:27), or as a further enlargement of his former discourse, Lu 12:2.

Luke 12:4

Ver. 4,5. See Poole on "Mt 10:28", where we met with the same. In Lu 12:5-13 our Saviour arms his disciples to encounter those storms of persecution which he knew they would meet with after he should be taken up into heaven. Here are two arguments in this verse:

1. The one drawn from the impotency, or limited power, of the most malicious enemies; they can *kill the body*, but can do no more.
2. From the mighty power of God, who can *cast us into hell*. Matthew saith, who can cast body and soul into hell fire:

whence is evident:

1. That there are punishments beyond this life; all men's punishments will not end with the killing of their bodies.
2. That men have souls as well as bodies, and both souls and bodies of sinners will in the resurrection be made capable of eternal punishment.
3. That the ready way to bring us under that misery, is to be more afraid of the wrath of men than of the wrath of God.

Luke 12:6

Ver. 6,7. See Poole on "Mt 10:29", and following verses to Mt 10:31. Our Saviour's third argument is brought from the providence of God, both his general providence, upholding the beings of all his creatures, so that he

forgetteth not a sparrow, though a creature of so minute a value, that *two* of them *are sold for a farthing*, as Matthew saith, or *five for two farthings*, as Luke saith; yea, he so remembereth them, that one of them falls not to the ground without his knowledge and leave, saith Matthew. But besides this, God exerciseth a more special providence towards creatures, with reference to their dignity and excellency. Now, (saith our Saviour), *you are of more value than many sparrows*; you are so as men, you are more so as my disciples, especially as my ministers and ambassadors.

The very hairs of your head are numbered; God will regard your most minute concerns.

Luke 12:8

Ver. 8,9. See Poole on "Mt 10:32", See Poole on "Mt 10:33". Here is a fourth and fifth argument, drawn from the rewards and punishments of such as shall confess or deny Christ before men. Confession here signifies, the owning and adhering to the truths and ways of God in a time of opposition: the reward promised is, Christ's owning those that do it at the day of judgment; *before the Father*, saith Matthew; *before the angels*, saith Luke. Christ hath no need of our owning him, his truth and ways; we may by it be profitable to ourselves, but not to him: we shall have need in the day of judgment of Christ's owning us. By the denial of Christ, is meant our apostasy from the truths or ways of God, the denial of his truths, ways, or interest in this world: it implies a persecuting of them, but signifieth something much less, a denial by words, or a forsaking and not adhering to them. The punishment will be Christ's denial of us in the day of judgment. What that signifieth Matthew tells us, Mt 7:23, *I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity. And, he shall say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting, fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, Mt 25:41.* This must be understood not of such as deny him, as Peter did, in an hour of great temptation, and then go out and weep bitterly, and again return unto him, but of such as persist in such denials, and return not to confess him.

Luke 12:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 12:31". See Poole on "Mr 3:28". See Poole on "Mr 3:29".

Luke 12:11

Ver. 11,12. See Poole on "Mt 10:19", See Poole on "Mt 10:20", See Poole on "Mr 13:11".

Luke 12:13

Ver. 13,14. This passage certainly is not recorded for nothing; if it teacheth us any thing, it is this, That matters of civil justice belong not to those whom Christ sends to preach his gospel: that work is enough for them. Christ here refuseth the office so much as of an arbitrator. A very learned author tells us, that the practice of bringing civil matters before ecclesiastical men, as judges, began in the captivity of Babylon, the Jews by that means avoiding the bringing their differences before pagan judges, which the apostle also persuadeth at large to the primitive Christians, in 1Co 6:1,2, &c. But that the ministers of the gospel should be employed, or might be employed, in them, doth not appear by the apostle; nay, he speaks the contrary, 1Co 6:4, *Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church*: these surely were not the elders in it. Under the Romans, the Jews had more liberty, having civil courts made up of persons of their own religion, to whom our Saviour turns over this man; being not willing to move out of his calling, as a minister of the gospel. As Christ's commissioners, it is most certain that no ministers of the gospel can intermeddle in civil judgments; whether those who are such commissioners of Christ may yet as men's commissioners act, it stands those in hand who are ambitious of such an employment, and can find leisure enough for it, and are called to it, to inquire: I shall not intermeddle in that controversy. To me, the proper work of the gospel is work enough.

Luke 12:15

Ver. 15. The *πλεονεξία*, here translated *covetousness* immoderate desire of having of this world's goods, which discovers itself either by unrighteous acts in procuring, or uncharitable omissions for the keeping, of the things of this life. It is that *φιλαργυρία*, *love of money*, which the apostle determines to be *the root of all evil*. It is also discovered by a too much thoughtfulness what we shall eat, drink, or put on, or by the too great meltings of our hearts into our bags of gold or silver. All these come under the notion of that covetousness which is here forbidden. In short, whatsoever it is that hindereth our contentment with the portion God giveth us upon our endeavours, though it amounts to no more than food and raiment, according to the apostle's precept, 1Ti 6:8 Heb 13:5. This is what Christ warns his disciples to beware of; he gives us the reason, *for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of what he possesseth*: which is true, whether we understand by *life* the subsisting and upholding of our life, or (as *life* is often taken) for the happiness and felicity of our lives. Abundance is not necessary to uphold our lives. *Ad manum est quod sat est*, saith Seneca, Nature is content with a little. *Sudamus ad supervacanea*, (saith he), We sweat only to get superfluities. Nor will abundance protect our lives; it will not keep off an enemy, but rather tempt him; nor fence out a disease, but rather contribute to it, as engaging us in immoderate cares or labours to procure and keep it, or as exposing us to temptations to riot and debauchery, by which men's lives are often shortened. Nor doth the happiness of life lie in the abundance of what we possess. Some philosophers determined rightly, that something of this world's good is necessary to our happiness of life, but abundance is not. The poor are as merry, and many times more satisfied, more healthy, and at more ease, than those that have abundance. It is a golden sentence, which deserves to be engraven in every soul.

Luke 12:16

Ver. 16-21. The evangelist lets us know, that these verses contain not a narrative of a matter of fact, but only a representation of something that is too ordinary, by a fictitious story. The scope of it is to justify what our Saviour had said in the verse immediately preceding, that a man's life lieth not in the abundance of what he possesseth; for he who hath the greatest

possessions may die as soon as he who hath not where to lay down his head, and may be taken away at a time when he is enjoying the fullest satisfactions that he can promise himself, or the creature can afford him. Therefore he acts not like a wise and rational man, that takes care to lay up for himself treasure on earth, and in the mean time neglects the riches of grace. The sense of the parable is to be learned from the *επι παραβολη*, which we have Lu 12:21, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself; so foolish and unwise is he, &c.* But from this parable we may make general observations:

1. That God maketh his sun to shine and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust. Men may have laid up much earthly treasure, who are yet very poor towards God.
2. That the increase of riches increaseth care. The rich man saith, *What shall I do?* The difference between the beggar and the rich man is but this: both are saying, "What shall I do?" The beggar saith, "What shall I do to get money?" The other saith, "What shall I do with it now I have it?"
3. Worldly men's fruits are their goods, Lu 12:3; they are so in their estimation, and they are so as they are the whole portion that such should have from God.
4. Great estates and enjoyments of this life have a very enticing quality in them.
 - a) They make us loath to die, and willing to think we shall live many years.
 - b) They entice us to a spiritual sloth and security, and to sing a requiem to our souls.
 - c) They entice us to sinful mirth and luxury; *Eat, drink, and be merry.*
5. He that hath most may have his soul taken from him in a night.
6. A man is no longer owner of the goods of this life, than he can keep an earthly possession of them.

7. When he dies, he knoweth not whose those things shall be; not whether his son or strangers shall inherit them; nor, if his son doth happen to meet with the countenance of the law, doth he know whether that son shall be a wise man or a fool.
8. Hence it appears to be the most egregious folly imaginable, for men to spend their time and strength in getting and laying up treasure upon earth, in the mean time neglecting, or not duly endeavouring, to be rich towards God; both:
 - a) In that grace by which the soul is justified and accepted; and also,
 - b) In that grace in the exercise of which alone he may glorify God.

This latter is that which the apostle calls, a being *rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, &c.*, 1Ti 6:18; where he mentions only one species of good works. For whereas wisdom lies in the choice of the best end, and then of the best means to obtain it, and the best circumstances in the use of those means, the worldly man failing in the first, not choosing the best end, must needs be a spiritual fool. And indeed, of all folly that is the greatest which is seen in the choice of a worse and more ignoble end, before that which is of more advantage, more noble, and excellent; as certainly the acquiring of an eternal happiness and felicity is before an acquiring a mere transitory and uncertain felicity and satisfaction.

Luke 12:22

Ver. 22-30. See Poole on "Mt 6:25", and following verses to Mt 6:32, where we before met with all that is here. The thoughtfulness here forbidden is not moderate, prudent thoughtfulness, or care; but,

1. A distrustful thoughtfulness;
2. Distracting or dividing cares, such as make a man live in suspense, and to be wavering as a meteor, μη μετεωρίζεσθε; or,
3. A thoughtfulness for high things, as some interpret that word; but possibly it better signifies such a thoughtfulness to be forbidden, as keeps the mind of man from rest, in a continual motion and fluctuation; or:
4. Any such thoughtfulness as is inconsistent with our seeking first the kingdom of God.

Against this thoughtfulness our Lord arms his disciples with the consideration:

1. Of their dependence on God necessarily for their lives, which are better than meat and raiment, Lu 12:23.
2. Of the providence of God, which extending to all orders of creatures, particularly to such as merely have life, (such are vegetables, the grass and flowers), and such as have only life and sense, (such are the ravens), it cannot be reasonably presumed that it will be wanting to men, who are the most noble order of sublunary creatures, having being, life, sense, and reason (which is the image of God in man).
3. From the consideration of the vanity of this care, by which we cannot contribute a cubit to our stature.
4. From the consideration that the heathens make these things their care, whom Christians ought to excel, as knowing more, and living under more excellent hopes and promises than they have. Lastly, From the consideration of their relation to God as a Father, and their Father's knowing what they have need of, of whom therefore it were unreasonable to presume, that he should suffer them to want what is necessary for his children. See more in the notes before mentioned.

Luke 12:31

Ver. 31. Matthew saith, *seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added, &c.* The particle *πλην* prefixed here to *ζητειτε*, (which we translate *rather seek*), doth expound Matthew's *πρωτον*, *seek first*, and likewise expounds our Saviour's meaning, when he said. Take no thought, what ye should eat, &c.; that is, let not those be your only or principal thoughts, *quin etiam, tantum maxime*, but also, and mostly, or chiefly, *seek ye the kingdom of God*, that kingdom mentioned in the next verse, *and all these things shall be added to you*; either an affluence of them; or a sufficiency of them, with a contented, satisfied mind. See Poole on "Mt 6:33".

Luke 12:32

Ver. 32. Our Saviour had mentioned a kingdom, Lu 12:31. How much too big a thought was this for fishermen, and others of his poor hearers, to entertain! He therefore here assures them of the thing, that they should have a kingdom, and showeth them that their title to it was his and their Father's will; though they were a little flock, and so not likely to conquer a kingdom upon earth for themselves, yet they should have a kingdom from the free donation of him, who had kingdoms to give, and would give it to them, because he was their Father. By this kingdom can be understood nothing else but that state of honour, glory, and dignity which believers shall have in the world that is to come; which they shall have not from merit, but gift; not from the first good motions and inclinations of their own will, but from the free motions of the Divine will; and therefore they had no reason to fear that God would not provide food convenient for them. He that had provided a kingdom for them, which he would one day give unto them, would certainly provide bread for them, and give it to them.

Luke 12:33

Ver. 33,34. The immutable purpose of the Divine Being to glorify the disciples of Christ, the freedom of the Divine will in the gift of heaven and glory, are neither of them exclusive of, but include and suppose, their duty to use such due means as he hath directed them, in the use of which they shall obtain what he hath purposed for them, and promised to them; some of which are here directed and prescribed.

Sell that ye have, and give alms, &c. It is a precept of the same import with that, Mt 19:21 Mr 10:21. Though possibly the precept here given to the disciples of Christ generally is not to be interpreted so strictly as seemeth to be our Saviour's meaning in those texts, as to the young man. For it seems to have been a special precept to him, laying an obligation upon him to make a present actual sale of all he had, and it is plain that he so understood it. To this Christians are not obliged generally by this precept: but to be ready at the call and command of God to part with all, for such uses as God should show them: not to set their heart on riches, Ps 62:10; to be *ready to distribute*, and *willing to communicate*, 1Ti 6:18; remembering that God loveth mercy rather than sacrifice, Ho 6:6 Mt 9:13. To give of our superfluities, Lu 3:11. To *make friends* of our *mammon of unrighteousness*, Lu 16:9. Nay, if the necessities of the people of God be such as requires it, for the subsistence of Christians, to sell what we have, rather than others of God's people should starve, calling nothing our own in such a case; which Christians did in the primitive state of the church, Ac 4:34-37. For the other part of Lu 12:33,34, See Poole on "Mt 6:20", and See Poole on "Mt 6:21".

Luke 12:35

Ver. 35,36. The first words of Lu 12:40, *Be ye therefore ready also*, expound Lu 12:35. In this sense we find the phrase used, 1Ki 18:46 2Ki 4:29 9:1 Job 38:3 40:7 Jer 1:17. In those Eastern countries both masters and servants were wont to wear long garments, which they were wont to gird up, either when they went to fight, or when they were to travel, Ex

12:11 1Ki 18:46; or when they went about any service; see Lu 17:8 Joh 13:4: this was a piece of their preparation. We read of the girding about of the loins of the mind with truth, Eph 6:14, and with habits of grace and virtue; 1Pe 1:13, *Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end.* The other phrase, *and your lights burning*, is of the same import, relating to the Lord's coming from the wedding, mentioned Lu 12:36; for in those countries their weddings were celebrated in the night. Christ's coming to judgment, whether our particular or the more general judgment, is that which is here set out to us, under the notion of a man's coming home late at night from a wedding. Nor improperly, for in this life souls are united to Christ, Eph 5:32. When Christ shall have done his work of that nature upon the earth, that all the elect shall be gathered, then shall he come to judge the world. He would have all his people be ready for that day, and waiting for their Lord, that his coming may be welcome to them.

Luke 12:37

Ver. 37-40. The duty which Christ is here pressing upon his hearers is watchfulness, which signifieth:

1. A negation of sleep;
2. An industrious keeping ourselves awake with reference to some particular end. The end here expressed is the happy receiving of Christ, coming to judgment; from whence is evident, that the watching here intended is a spiritual watching, which is a denial of ourselves as to our lusts, and the sleep of sin, which is compared to sleep, Ro 13:11 Eph 5:14, and an industrious keeping ourselves from such sleep in order to the coming of our Lord, who will come at an hour when we think not, Lu 12:40; his coming is to us uncertain, and will be to many surprising.

This watchfulness he presseth upon his hearers;

1. From the reward the Lord will give to such persons: *He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them*: very high metaphorical expressions, signifying no more, than that he will put upon them a very high honour and dignity, and

satisfy them with a fulness of happiness and glory, and they shall be at rest for ever. The state of glory is elsewhere set out under the notion of drinking new wine in the kingdom of God, and eating and drinking in his kingdom.

2. From the benefit which they will have by watching in this; that let the Lord come when he will, whether in the second or third watch, they will be ready, and they shall be blessed.
3. He presseth it also from the ordinary prudence of men, who if they have an intimation that a thief is coming, will watch, and prevent the mischief that might ensue by the breaking open of their houses. But concerning those words;

See Poole on "Mt 24:43", See Poole on "Mt 24:44", where we met with them before used upon the same occasion.

Luke 12:41

Ver. 41-48. See Poole on "Mt 24:45" and following verses to Mt 24:51, where we met with the same parable, but here expressed more largely, and with more circumstances. Matthew hath not the introduction to it which we have here, Lu 12:41.

It was occasioned from Peter's saying to Christ, *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or unto all?* Doth this duty of watchfulness concern all thy disciples, or only us, that are thine apostles, the ministers of thy gospel? The substance of what our Lord saith in answer to Peter, from Lu 12:42-48, is, Peter, I spake it to all, I have not the meanest hearer but is concerned to watch against my coming; but you that are ministers of my gospel are most eminently concerned. Others are concerned, upon the pain of eternal damnation, to have the loins of their understandings girt about with truth, the loins of their minds girt with sobriety and hope, to have their lights burning, to be every way and always ready, watching against sin, abstaining from it, and industriously keeping themselves from any

obedience to their lusts, in a prospect of my coming to judgment. But you that are to be ministers are more highly concerned than others. You are the rulers of my household, the stewards of my mysteries, 1Co 4:1; your work is to give the rest of my people *their portion of meat in due season*; if you faithfully do this, you shall be blessed, holding on in doing of it to your lives end, so as your Lord find you so doing. But if any of you shall be found, who out of any atheistical principles, not in heart believing what you preach to others, but saying, either that I will not come, or not so soon but you may sleep awhile, and wake time enough to prepare for my coming; if they who should be examples to my flock, and are the rulers over them, shall give reins to their lusts, and eat with the gluttons, and drink with the drunkards; if they who should feed my flock, shall fail to the worrying of it, instead of feeding, beating my men servants and maidens; the Lord will not spare them long, but be upon them before they are aware, και διχοτομησει, and cut them to pieces, (the word signifies to divide into two parts), as those nations were wont to serve the vilest transgressors, traitors, and rebels, and violaters of their covenants; they shall be most severely dealt withal, Lu 12:47, they *shall be beaten with many stripes*, because they knew their Master's will, and did it not. Ignorance of the Divine will not wholly excuse the sinner, he shall be beaten, but his stripes shall be few, his damnation shall be gentle compared with a minister's, that knows his Master's will, but doth it not; teacheth it to others, but doth it not himself. Our Saviour further tells them, that this just judgment of God upon lewd and scandalous ministers, is justified by the ordinary practice of men, who require much where they give much, and ask milch of those to whom they have committed great trusts. God looks upon wicked, loose, and scandalous and mischievous ministers as the greatest transgressors, and he will deal with them as such. There will be degrees in the punishment as well as in the rewards of another life. Such persons as have taken upon them to be the rulers of Christ's household, the stewards of his mysteries, if they be vile and wicked, if they be not faithful in giving the servants of Christ's household their portion in its season, must expect the deepest place in the bottomless pit: they know more than others, they have more committed to their trust than others, their examples do more harm than others, their sins are greater than others, and the fiery furnace will for them be heated over seven times.

Luke 12:49

Ver. 49. Some of the ancients here by *fire* understood the Holy Ghost, or the preaching of the gospel, with those flames of love and holy affections which that causeth in the hearts of good people; but this interpretation cannot but be looked upon as strained to those who compare this verse with Lu 12:51-53, and the parallel text in Mt 10:34-36. By *fire* here therefore is to be understood the dissension or *division* mentioned Lu 12:51, with all those persecutions, wars, &c. which are the effects of it. A prediction or threatening of persecutions or wars, or any kind of troubled state of things, is often expressed in holy writ under the notion of fire, and water, or a flood, for though fire and water are opposite in their qualities, yet they both agree in the common effect of consumption, wasting, and desolation. Christ saith he came to send it, because he foresaw this would be a certain consequent, though not a proper and natural effect, of the preaching of the gospel. Christ may be said to come to send a fire, in the same sense as he that is employed in the removal of a filthy dunghill may be said to come to send a stench; his design is to carry the muck away, and in due time he will have done it, but in the mean time it sends out a much greater stench than before it was stirred.

And what will I, if it be already kindled? Not to take notice of what critical authors say about the signification of the particles or the phrase here used, I take the true sense to be, I desire nothing more than that it were already kindled; nor was this any more inconsistent with the goodness and holiness of Christ, than for a goldsmith to wish the fire was kindled that should separate the dross from the pure metal, or than for Christ to desire that his floor were thoroughly purged. Christ doth not desire the fire for the fire's sake, but for the sake of that effect it would have, in separating in his church the good from the bad; it was a thing he saw would be through the opposition the world would give to the preaching of the gospel, before his gospel would obtain in the world; I would, saith he, that what they do they would do quickly, that they would spit their venom, that my Father might

make their wrath to praise him. Whereas some interpret it indicatively, as if the fire were already begun, εἰ ἤδη ἀνηαφη can hardly be so interpreted.

Luke 12:50

Ver. 50. This baptism, spoken of here by our Saviour, is the same mentioned Mt 20:22,23, and can be understood of nothing but his passion, the accomplishment of which he hints us was to be before the fire (before mentioned) would blaze up on the earth. Concerning this he saith he was *straitened till it was accomplished*: not that he willed the influencing of the heart of Judas to betray him, the heart of Pilate to condemn him, or the hearts of the wicked Jews to accuse, condemn, and crucify him; but he willed these events, for the manifestation of the glory of his Father, in the redemption of the world by him. As the woman big with child heartily wishes that the hour of her travail were come and over, not for the pain's sake, which she must endure, but for her own ease' sake, and the joy she should have of a child born into the world.

Luke 12:51

Ver. 51-53. See Poole on "Mt 10:34", See Poole on "Mt 10:35". Our Saviour in these words doth but pursue the same argument which began Lu 12:49, to show what would be the consequences of the doctrine of the gospel. And hereby they might have understood a design in our Saviour to convince them, that the business of the Messiah whom they expect was not to exercise a temporal but a spiritual kingdom and power, not to restore to their nation a civil peace, but to purchase their peace with God, and to bring them to that joy and peace which is consequent to believing. For as to the external state of things, it would be much more troubled than it was before; our Lord foresaw how tenacious both the Jews and pagans, and in succeeding ages Christians also, would be of their idolatries and superstitious rites and usages, with whom their believing relations not complying, there would be greater feuds and animosities arise than ever were before; the father would hate the son, the son the father, &c. Before the gospel came amongst the heathens, they were entirely the devil's kingdom, which is not divided against itself. But when by Christ those

who belonged to the election of grace should be separated, through the devil's rage and men's lusts, there would be continual feuds and divisions.

Luke 12:54

Ver. 54-56. We met with a discourse of the same nature; See Poole on "Mt 16:2", See Poole on "Mt 16:3". The sense of our Saviour is, that God by his prophets had given them more certain signs and revelations of the coming of the Messiah, and of the nature of his kingdom, and the effects and consequences of it, than were written in nature of any natural effects; and upbraids their stupid ignorance and unbelief, that they could give credit to and discern the latter and not the former, whereas the former were much more certain.

Luke 12:57

Ver. 57-59. Our Saviour made use of this expression, Mt 5:25,26, to persuade peace between brethren; here he useth it to persuade men to acquaint themselves with God, and be at peace. He had been treating of the last judgment; there was no fitter foundation upon which he could build all exhortation to repentance, and making our peace with God. In not doing of it, he telleth his hearers that they did not of themselves judge what was right, for if they did, they would judge themselves as much concerned to come to an agreement with God, as they did ordinarily to come to an agreement with men. Now if amongst men they had an adversary, they did not judge it prudence to stand out with him till the sentence of the judge were past, and they were imprisoned, not to come out till they had paid every farthing of the debt and charges wherein they were condemned; but to agree while they were in the way, before they came to a final judgment in the case, that so, having compounded the case, they might avoid the judgment. So in the case between God and their souls, if they judged right, they would judge that it was not their wisdom to stand out till the irrevocable sentence of condemnation was passed upon them, but *in the*

way, during the time of this life, they would make their peace with God, and reform their lives before that great and terrible day came. It is a sign the papists are at a woeful loss for arguments to prove purgatory, when they make use of this text, because it is said, *thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite*, as if this text spake of a prison for souls from which there is an outlet. Such another argument will prove, from Ps 110:1, that Christ shall not sit at the right hand of his Father, because God only said to him. Sit there *until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; and that Joseph knew Mary after Christ was born, because it is said, Mt 1:25, *he knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son*. But we have before showed that that term, though it be exclusive of a time past, yet doth not determine a future time.

Luke 13:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 13:1-5 Christ showeth that temporal calamities are no sure signs of sinfulness, but that others should take warning by them, and repent.

Lu 13:6-9 The parable of the fig tree that was ordered to be cut down for being fruitless.

Lu 13:10-17 Christ healeth a woman that had been long bowed together, and putteth the hypocritical ruler of the synagogue to silence.

Lu 13:18,19 He likens the progress of the gospel to a grain of mustard seed,

Lu 13:20-22 and to leaven.

Lu 13:23-30 Being asked of the number of the saved, he exhorteth to strive to enter in at the strait gate,

Lu 13:31-35 He will not be diverted from his course through fear of Herod; and laments over the approaching desolation of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1-5. The Holy Scriptures giving us no account of these two stories to which our Saviour doth here refer, and those who have wrote the history of the Jews having given us no account of them, interpreters are at a great

loss to determine any thing about them. We read of one Judas of Galilee, who drew away much people after him, and perished, Ac 5:37. It is said that he seduced people from their obedience to the Roman emperor, persuading them not to acknowledge him as their governor, nor to pay tribute to the Romans. It is guessed by interpreters, that some of this faction coming up to the passover, (for they were Jews), Pilate fell upon them, and slew them while they were sacrificing. Others think that these were some remnant of Judas's faction, but Samaritans, and slain while they were sacrificing at their temple in Mount Gerizim, and that (though Samaritans) they were called Galilaeans, because Judas, the head of their faction, was such. The reader is at liberty to choose which of these he thinks most probable, for I find no other account given by any. The latter is prejudiced by our Saviour's calling them Galilaeans, and advantaged by the desperate hatred which the Jews had to the Samaritans, which might make them more prone to censure any passages of Divine providence severe towards them. But what the certain crime or provocation was we cannot say; we are sure that *de facto* the thing was true, Pilate did mingle the blood of some Galilaeans with their sacrifices, of which a report was brought to Christ. We are at the same loss for those *eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell*. Siloe, or Siloa, was the name of a small fountain at the foot of Mount Zion, which, as we are told, did not constantly, but at certain times, send out waters, which running through hollow places of the earth, and mines and quarries of stone, made a great noise. Isaiah mentions it, Isa 8:6. There was also a pool in Jerusalem which had that name, and had a wall built by it, Ne 3:15. Christ sent the blind man to go and wash there, Joh 9:7. Turrets are (as we know) very usual upon walls. It seems one of these towers fell, and slew eighteen persons, come thither either to wash themselves, or by reason of some healing virtue in those waters, upon what occasion we cannot determine; but there they perished. This story seems to have been something older than the other. Our Saviour either had heard what some people had said, or at least knew what they would say upon those accidents, for we are mightily prone to pass uncharitable judgments upon persons perishing suddenly, especially if they die by a violent death. As he therefore took all occasions to press upon them repentance, so he doth not think fit to omit one so fair; and though he doth not, by what he saith, forbid us to observe such extraordinary providences, and to whom they happen, but willeth us to hear and fear; yet he tells them, there were many Galilaeans as bad as they, who unless they repented, that is, being sensible of, heartily turned from, the wickedness of

their ways, would perish also: thereby teaching us,

1. That punishments come upon people for their sins, and more signal punishments for more signal sinnings.
2. That although God sometimes by his providence signally punishes some for notorious sinnings, yet he spareth more such sinners than he so signally punishes.
3. That therefore none can conclude from such signal punishments, that such persons punished were greater sinners than they.
4. That the best use we can make of such reports, and spectacles of notorious sinners, more than ordinarily punished, is to examine ourselves, and to repent, lest we also perish.

Luke 13:6

Ver. 6-9. This parable very fitly coheres with the preceding discourse: there he had let his hearers know, that though God spareth some sinners, and hath a longer patience with them than others, though they be every whit as great transgressors, in expectation still that they should bring forth fruit; yet if they answer not the means which God useth, with them to bring them to repentance, they shall not be spared long, but vengeance shall overtake them also. Those who think that this parable concerned not the Jews only, but all mankind, or more especially those who are in the pale of the church, judge well, provided that they allow it to have been spoken with a primary reference to that nation, amongst whom Christ had now been preaching and working miracles three years, and expected the fruits of repentance and reformation from them in vain. I do not think it any prejudice to this, that the vine dresser begged but for one year longer, whereas after this Christ had patience with them forty years, before they were destroyed; for *one year* may not be intended strictly, (though the *three years* be), but to signify some little time more, that the apostles

might use all probable means to reclaim them, and make them more fruitful. Grotius thinks the term of *three years* is used, because every fig tree (not wholly barren) brought forth fruit one year in three; which notion (if true) of that plant is valuable, but may be of ill consequence, if any should thence conclude, that men's days of grace exceed not three years: yet thus much is observable, that when God sends a faithful minister to a place, the greatest success and blessing of his ministry is within a few of his first years in a place. The parable doubtless extendeth much further than to the people of the Jews, and learns us all these lessons:

1. That where God plants any one within the pale of his church, he looks he or she should bring forth the fruits of repentance and faith.
2. That many are so planted, yet bring forth no fruit.
3. That there is a determined time beyond which God will not bear with barren souls.
4. That barren souls are not only useless, but also spoil others; την γην καταργει, they make the soil unprofitable: a quench coal spoils the fire.
5. That faithful ministers will be very earnest with God to spare even barren souls.
6. That it is their work and duty to use all probable means to make barren souls fruitful. I will *dig about it, and dung it*.
7. That bearing fruit at last will save souls from ruin and destruction.
8. That out it every soul, though standing in God's vineyard, will at last perish eternally.

Luke 13:10

Ver. 10-13. Though the Greek *be on the sabbaths*, which might signify

any day of the week, yet it is manifest by what followeth that this miracle was wrought upon the seventh day, which was the Jewish sabbath, else the ruler of the synagogue would not have quarrelled with our Saviour about it. What is meant here, Lu 13:11, by a *spirit of infirmity*, would not easily be determined, whether only a very great infirmity, or an infirmity in the bringing and continuing of which upon her the devil had a great instrumentality, but for Lu 13:16, where she is said to be one that Satan had bound; she was a cripple, and so bowed down that she could not lift up herself, and thus she had been for eighteen years, so as the distemper was inveterate, and out of the course of ordinary cure. Christ, who, as to people's bodily infirmities, was sometimes found of those that sought him not, seeing her, calleth her to him, and saith, *Woman, thou art loosed from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made straight.* The inveterateness of the disease, and the instantaneousness of the cure, without the use of any means, made the miracle evident. The woman for it gave thanks to God, for that is meant by *glorified God*, she spake some things to the honour and glory of God, who had healed her.

Luke 13:14

Ver. 14. *Answered* here signifies no more than, he spake, as in a multitude of other places in the Gospels. The Jews were both very superstitious and very uneven as to the sanctification of the sabbaths: superstitious, because they would not do many things which by God's law they might do, such as applying means to heal the sick, defending themselves against enemies, &c. Uneven, because they would do divers things of equal bodily labour with those things which they pretend to scruple, one of which we shall hear our Saviour by and by instancing in. This ruler studied to defame him before the people. His pretence was, this was a work, and such a work as might be done in the six days. Let us hear how our Saviour defends himself.

Luke 13:15

Ver. 15,16. Our Saviour here calleth this ruler of the synagogue *hypocrite*, for his impudence in so severe a reflection on him for doing on the sabbath day a work of that nature which he himself did, and thought himself blameless in the doing of, and his friends ordinarily did, upon whom for so working he did not reflect, thereby teaching us one note of a hypocrite, viz. to reflect upon others for things which we do ourselves. This ruler of the synagogue and his party indeed did not heal on the sabbath day. But what kind of work was healing? Was it not a work of mercy? What servile labour was there in it? It is only said Christ called this poor creature, and she came, not she was brought to him. What did Christ do? He only laid his hands upon her, and pronounced her loosed from her infirmity. Now the Jews would ordinarily upon the sabbath day loose a beast from the stall to go and drink at a pit, or lead it thither; was not this a greater labour? How came this to be lawful, and not that act of mercy which Christ did show to this poor creature? Their act was capable of no other excuse, than that it was an act of mercy, and a good man will show mercy to his beast: it could be no act of piety, nor of necessity; for a beast may live one day without water, or at least might have had water set by it the night before. Nay, our Lord's work of mercy was much more noble. Theirs was to a beast; his to one of mankind, to a woman, and she a Jewish woman, a daughter of Abraham, a father upon whom they much valued themselves, and their whole nation, Mt 3:9 Joh 8:39. Their beast might not be sick; she was under an infirmity, and that no ordinary infirmity, she was in the hands of the enemy of mankind, bound by Satan; nor was her affliction of a few days' continuance, she had been so bound eighteen years.

Luke 13:17

Ver. 17. It is one thing to be ashamed, another thing to be convinced, so as to confess an error; they were ashamed that they were so put to silence before the people, but we read of no confession of their error and mistake, and begging Christ's pardon. *The people rejoiced* and gave thanks to God *for all the glorious things that were done by our Saviour.*

Luke 13:18

Ver. 18-21. See Poole on "Mt 13:31", and following verses to Mt 13:33. They are two parables by which Christ foretells the great success of the gospel, notwithstanding the present small appearance of the efficacy of it.

Luke 13:22

Ver. 22. Still wherever we find our blessed Lord, we find him teaching, and that not by an exemplary life only, but by word of mouth. There are different opinions whether our Saviour was now journeying towards Jerusalem with respect to the passover, or some other great festival of the Jews.

Luke 13:23

Ver. 23,24. Our Saviour hath told us, Mt 7:14, that *strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it.* Upon this this exhortation is founded. Ἀγωνιζεσθε, Contend, or strive, to enter in at this strait gate, a word which signifies a labouring against opposition, and the utmost endeavour of the mind and body: not that our own labouring will bring us thither, the eternal life is the gift of God, and without the influence of his grace we can do nothing effectually; but to let us know, that the Lord will give heaven to none but such as labour and strive for it, yea, and also *strive lawfully*: he tells us that many *will seek to enter, and shall not be able*; either seeking in a wrong way, or in an undue time. By this speech of our Saviour's he diverts them from that curious question, about the number of those that shall be saved. That was not so much their concern to know, as that they should be some of that number.

Luke 13:25

Ver. 25-27. Our Saviour in these verses doth represent himself by a man, who, having invited guests to his supper, stays till all those who were invited, and accepted the invitation, were Come in; then rising up, shuts the door; and after that is shut, turns a deaf ear to any that shall come knocking, let them plead for admittance what they can plead. By this parabolical expressing of himself, he both openeth in part what he meant by the foregoing words, *many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, and also lets us know, that there is a determinate time, wherein souls must (if ever) accept of the offers of grace and salvation, when they are made to them, which if they slip, they will not be able to obtain of God an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. *Seek the Lord while he may be found*, saith the prophet, Isa 55:6. *In an acceptable time have I heard thee*, saith the prophet, Isa 49:8; which the apostle applies, 2Co 6:2, to persuade men that they should not *receive the grace of God* (in the gospel) *in vain*. What this determinate time is God hath hidden from us, and it is probable that it is not the same as to all persons; we know nothing to the contrary, but while there is life there is hope, which warrants us to preach truth and repentance to all. We are also further instructed, that no outward privileges though Christ hath taught in our streets; no external acts of communion with Christ, though we can say we have ate and drunk with him; will justify our hopes of entrance into heaven, if in the mean time we be workers of iniquity. We had much the same; See Poole on "Mt 7:21", and following verses to Mt 7:23.

Luke 13:28

Ver. 28,29. We have the same Mt 8:11,12, only he saith only *from the east and west*: See Poole on "Mt 8:11", See Poole on "Mt 8:12". *Weeping and gnashing of teeth*, are usual expressions by which the pains of the damned are expressed, especially by the evangelist Matthew, Mt 8:12 Mt 13:42,50 22:13 24:51 25:30. One cause of this vexation of spirit, expressed under this notion, is the Jews' sight of the rest and happiness that their relations, nay, some to whom they upon earth were enemies, should enjoy in heaven; nay, which some which were heathens should enjoy there; whereas they, who took themselves to be the only church, and to have the same right to the kingdom of heaven that children have to the inheritances of their

fathers, should be cast out, as having no portion there.

Luke 13:30

Ver. 30. This is a sentence which our Saviour often made use of, and not always to the same purpose. See Poole on "Mt 19:30". See Poole on "Mt 20:16". See Poole on "Mr 10:31". As to the sense of them here, it is plain. Our Saviour here foretells the conversion of the Gentiles; but yet I do not take the Gentiles to be all who are intended under the notion of the *last*, but divers others also. Men who, both in their opinion of themselves, and in reality with respect to privilege, are the *first*, whether in respect of gifts, or office, or the means of grace, or profession, will many of them be the *last*, that is, furthest off from the kingdom of God; and many who are the *last*, upon these accounts will in the day of judgment be *first*, that is, appear so, as having more of the favour of God, and be so, taken to heaven, when the others shall be cast to hell, Mt 11:20-24.

Luke 13:31

Ver. 31-33. It is plain from this text, that our Saviour was at this time in Galilee, for that was the tetrarchy or province of Herod Antipas, who is the Herod here mentioned. Whether these Pharisees came of their own heads, or as sent by Herod, is not so plain, nor so well agreed by interpreters. If they came of their own heads, it is certain they came not out of kindness, for the whole history of the gospel lets us know, that the Pharisees had no kindness for Christ, but were his most implacable enemies, and continually consulting how to destroy him; but they either came to scare him out of Galilee, whose repute was so great, and who did them so much mischief there, or to drive him into the trap which they had laid for him in Judea. But it is most probable that they came as secretly sent by Herod, who though of himself he be reported to be of no bloody disposition, yet upon the Pharisees' continual solicitations might be persuaded to send them on this errand, choosing rather cunningly to scare him out of his province, than by violence to fall upon him. This opinion looks more probable, because, Lu 13:32, our Saviour sends them back with a message to Herod, *Go ye, and tell that fox.* Herod had gained himself no reputation amongst

the Jews, by his murdering John the Baptist, whom the Jews generally valued as a prophet; and probably seeing our Saviour exceeding him in popular applause, he was not willing to augment the odium which already lay upon him for that fact; yet, to gratify the Pharisees, (many of which were in his province), he was willing, if he could effect it cleverly, and without noise, to be quit of Christ, especially considering (as we before heard) he had an opinion that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead, or the soul of John the Baptist in another body; and possibly: he could not tell what might be the effect of his ghost so haunting his province. It is certain, that either he, or the Pharisees, or both, had a mind to have him gone some where else, to which purpose this message is brought to him. Our Saviour, either discerning Herod's craft in this thing, or having observed the craft he used in the whole management of his government, that he might keep favour both with the Roman emperor and with the Jews, bids them, *Go and tell that fox*. I do not much value their critical observation, who observe that it is not *αλωπεκι εχεινη*, but, *ταυτη*, that is, this fox; from whence they would observe that our Saviour might mean the Pharisees, not Herod; nor is there any need of it to excuse our Saviour from the violation of that law of God, Ex 22:28, *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people*; which law Paul reflected on, Ac 23:5, and pleads ignorance for his calling Ananias a *whited wall*. For we shall observe that the prophets all along (being immediately sent from God) took a further liberty than any others, in severely reprovng kings and princes. Elijah tells Ahab it was he that troubled Israel; the prophets call the rulers of the Jews, *rulers of Sodom, and princes of Gomorrah, &c*. But Christ may be allowed a liberty neither lawful nor decent for other persons, not though they were prophets. But what is the message which Christ sends by these Pharisees?

Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Tell him, saith he, what I am doing; I am freeing his subjects from molestations by evil spirits, and the encumbrances of many diseases. What do I do worthy of death? I have but a little time to trouble him, for in a little time I must die, which is that which he means by being perfected: it is plain that those words *today, and tomorrow, and the third day*, must not be taken strictly, for Christ lived more than three days after this. If this will not satisfy him, tell him, saith our Saviour, that

I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following. I know that, as to

this thing, I am not under his command or power, *I must walk*, &c.; my days are not in his hands, and I know that he cannot kill me, *for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*. Jerusalem is the place where I must die, not Galilee; the sanhedrim sits at Jerusalem, who alone can take cognizance of the case of false prophets, and Jerusalem is the place where the people must fill up the measure of their iniquities by spilling my blood. Upon this our Saviour breaketh out into a sad lamentation of the case of that once holy city, the praise of the whole earth.

Luke 13:34

Ver. 34-35. See Poole on "Mt 23:37". See Poole on "Mt 23:38". See Poole on "Mt 23:39". These five last verses afford us much for our instruction.

1. We may from them learn the craft of the enemies of the gospel, as well as their malice; they are lions, and will, like lions, tear and rend when they see an opportunity; but when they see it convenient, then they put on the fox's skin, doing the same thing by subtlety, which they durst not attempt to effect by cruelty.
2. Their malice is as much perspicuous; who but the children of the devil could have found in their hearts to have desired Christ to go out of their country, who did nothing there but innocently and diligently preach the gospel, deliver people from grievous diseases, and the power of Satan, who miserably possessed and tormented them?
3. When the most malicious enemies of God's people have done what they can, they shall finish their course, and work the time God hath set them.
4. When they have perfected their work, they shall be perfected. Death is but the perfecting of the saints, as it was the perfecting of Christ.
5. Men shall die, as at the time, so at the place, which God hath set.
6. God sending of his ministers faithfully to reveal his will to people, is a declaration of his willingness to gather them under the wings of his

special favour and protection.

7. The perverse wills of men are those things which hinder men and women from being gathered.
8. Temporal judgments, and that of the severest nature, will first or last follow men's contempt of the offers of grace and salvation.
9. Those that do contemn the means of grace shalt not see them long. —*Ye shall not see me.*
10. The proudest scorners and contemnors of Christ and his grace shall one day wash that one would or might come unto them *in the name of the Lord*, and do but now contemn what hereafter they would be glad they might enjoy.

Luke 14:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 14:1-6 Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath, and justifieth his doing so.

Lu 14:7-11 He recommends humility,

Lu 14:12-14 and hospitality toward the poor.

Lu 14:15-24 The parable of the marriage supper, and of the guests, who making excuses were excluded, and their rooms filled by others.

Lu 14:25-33 He advises those who are willing to be his disciples to examine beforehand their resolution in case of persecutions.

Lu 14:34-35 The unprofitableness of salt, when it hath lost its savour.

Ver. 1-6. We have before observed the freedom of our Saviour's converse; sometimes he will dine with publicans, sometimes with Pharisees, becoming all things to all men that he might gain some. Christians certainly have the same liberty; the matter is not in whose houses we are, but what we do or say, how we behave ourselves there. In his going to a

Pharisee's house, he gives us a great precedent of humanity and self-denial, for the Pharisees were his great enemies, and we shall observe no great kindness showed to him in the invitation of him. Whether this Pharisee be called *one of the chief of the Pharisees* because he was a member of the sanhedrim, or a ruler of a synagogue, or because he was one of the eldest and greatest repute, is not worth the inquiry. Thither Christ went *to eat bread*, that is, to take a meal with him. It is a phrase often used to signify dining, or supping, for they ordinarily under the notion of bread understood all manner of victuals.

It was *on the sabbath day*. In the mean time, the evangelist tells us, *they watched him*, to wit, whether they might hear any thing from him, or see any thing in him, whereof they might accuse him.

It happened *there was a man which had the dropsy*, whether casually, or brought thither on purpose by the Pharisees, the Scripture saith not; he was not there without a Divine direction, to give Christ an occasion of a miracle, and further to instruct people in the true doctrine of the sabbath.

Christ upon the sabbath begins us a discourse proper for the day, asking the Pharisees if it were *lawful to heal on the sabbath day*. They make him no reply. Christ healeth him, then preacheth a doctrine to them, which he had twice before inculcated, in the case of a man who had a withered hand, Mt 12:10, and of the woman whom Satan had bound, of which we heard, Lu 13:11, viz. That works of mercy are lawful on the sabbath day. Then he justifieth his fact by the confession of their own practice, in lifting up beasts fallen into pits on the sabbath day. His argument is this: If it be lawful on the sabbath day to relieve a beast, it is much more lawful to relieve a man: but you do the former. The evangelist reports them put to silence, but saith nothing of their conviction. It is an easier thing to stop malicious persons' mouths than to remove their prejudices. Malice will ordinarily hold the conclusion, when the reason of the soul infected with it is not able to justify the premises.

Luke 14:7

Ver. 7. A *parable* here hath somewhat a different signification from what it more ordinarily hath in the evangelists: it usually signifies a similitude; here it signifies either a wise saying, or a dark saying, by which he intended something further than in the parable he expressed, which he expounds, Lu 14:11. We may observe from hence, that the dining of friends together on the Lord's day is not unlawful, only they ought to look to their discourses, that they be suitable to the day.

Luke 14:8

Ver. 8-11. Two or three moral instructions we have in this parable.

1. That the law of Christ justifieth none in any rudeness and incivility.
2. That the disciples of Christ ought to have a regard to their reputation, to do nothing they may be ashamed of.
3. That it is according to the will of God, that honour should be given to those to whom honour belongeth; that the more honourable persons should sit in the more honourable places.

Grace gives men no exterior preference; though it makes men all glorious, yet it is within. But the more spiritual instruction (for which our Saviour put forth this parable) is in Lu 14:11. Our Saviour had but now, in the sight of these Pharisees, cured a man of a bodily dropsy; he is now attempting a cure of the spiritual dropsy of pride in their souls. He had before denounced a woe against the Pharisees for loving *the uppermost seats in the synagogues*, Lu 11:43, and told us, Mt 23:6, that they *loved the uppermost rooms at feasts*, and possibly he might at this feast see something of it. He therefore applies his discourse by pressing upon them humility, and showing them the danger of pride, which though it be a vice seated in the heart, yet by such little things discovereth itself in the outward conversation. He tells them, that God is such an enemy to pride, that he ordinarily so ordereth it in the government of the world, that usually self-exalting people are by one means or other abused, and brought

to shame and contempt, and those that are low in their own eyes are exalted; and if it doth not so fall out here, yet this will be what will at the last day befall them, in the day of God's righteous judgment. See Poole on "Mt 23:12". We shall meet with the same again, Lu 18:14.

Luke 14:12

Ver. 12-14. Many things are delivered in Scripture in the form of an absolute and universal prohibition, which must not be so understood, amongst which this is one instance. None must think that our Saviour doth here absolutely or universally forbid our invitations of our brethren, or kinsmen, or rich neighbours, or friends, to dinners or suppers with us; there was nothing more ordinarily practised amongst the Jews; Christ himself was at divers meals: but Christ by this teacheth us,

1. That this is no act of charity; it is indeed a lawful act of humanity and civility, and of a good tendency sometimes to procure amity and friendship amongst neighbours and friends, but no such act of charity as they could expect a heavenly reward for.
2. That such feasting ought not to be upheld in prejudice to our duty in relieving the poor, that is, they ought not to be maintained in such excesses and immoderate degrees, as by them we shall disable ourselves from that relief of the poor, which God requireth of us, as our duty, with respect to the estate with which he hath blessed us.
3. That we may most reasonably expect a recompence from heaven for such good works as we do, for which we are not recompensed on earth.
4. That God's recompences of us, for doing our duty in obedience to his commands, are often deferred until the resurrection of the just, but then they will not fail obedient souls.

Luke 14:15

Ver. 15. Whether this person had any gross conceptions of the kingdom of God, as a state of external happiness, and sensible satisfactions, I cannot say (though it be the opinion of some valuable interpreters): he might mean no more than, Blessed is he that shall come to heaven, and enjoy the celestial pleasures and satisfactions there; for that blessed state is called *the marriage supper of the Lamb*; and Christ spake to his disciples in this dialect, when he spake of drinking wine with them in his kingdom. But this passage both lets us know the good influence of spiritual discourse, to set the tongues of others on work, and also it lets us see what good meditations may be founded almost upon any subjects, if we have any heart thereunto. This gives our Saviour an occasion to put forth the following parable.

Luke 14:16

Ver. 16-24. We met with the same parable Mt 22:1-10, where we had the most of what is here, and really other considerable circumstances: See Poole on "Mt 22:1" and following verses to Mt 2:10. Christ's primary intention by this parable was certainly to foretell the rejection of the Jews for their contempt of his gospel, and the reception of the Gentiles. They were those who were first bidden, that is, called and invited by the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ himself, and the apostles, to the receiving of Christ, that so they might be prepared for *the marriage supper of the Lamb*, mentioned Re 19:9. The Gentiles, as a more rustic people, are set out under the notion of such as were in lanes, streets, and highways. It also informs us of some great causes of men's rejection of the grace of God offered them in the ministry of the gospel:

1. Their worldly cares and businesses.
2. Their sensible enjoyments and pleasures:

which did not hinder the Jews only, but one or other of which hinders the most of people still from receiving the grace of Christ tendered in the gospel. They are either not at leisure to attend to their souls, or they must

enjoy things sensible and sensual in a degree in which the enjoyment of them is inconsistent with that duty which God requireth of them who would be saved. *Perimus licitis*, most men perish by their sinful use (or abuse rather) of things in themselves lawful. It may be observed also, that the two first sorts made a kind of mannerly excuse, saying, *I pray thee have me excused*; but the last peremptorily said, *I cannot come*. Though secular employments be great diversions of us, and so hinderances of our minding things of highest concernment, yet sensual satisfactions and pleasures do most drown and swallow up the soul of man, and keep it from minding heaven and heavenly things. There have been a great many words spent about those words, *compel them to come in*, Lu 14:23. It appeareth to be almost the unanimous sense of the ancients, That no man ought by temporal punishments to be compelled to the profession of the true faith. Some of them have a little differed about such as, having once embraced the doctrine of the true faith, afterwards swerved from it; though the truth of it is, they can be no more compelled than the other, for the will admits of no violence. Be the truth what it will in those points, certain it is that external compulsion hath no colour of foundation in this text. They are the ministers of the gospel that are thus spoken to, who we know by Christ's commission had no civil power committed to them. Nor do we ever read that they exercised any in order to the bringing of the Gentiles to the embracing of the faith; nor do servants sent out to invite men to feasts (as these were) use to pull them in by head and shoulders, or to drive them in by whips and cudgels, only to use the best arguments they can to persuade them. Christ never prescribed any Spanish conversions of people. Man is presumed to be a rational creature, and taught even by nature to choose things which he sees are or may be of highest importance and concern. So that the very opening to men the riches of Divine grace, fitted to their lost and undone state, (which must also be showed them), is a compulsion of them, or would at least be so if men by the fall were not corrupted as to their wills, so as they will not follow the dictate of their understanding. But notwithstanding the depravation and averseness of the carnal will, yet as many as the Lord will please to show mercy to, by joining the efficacious operations of his Spirit with the exterior call in the ministry of the word, shall come in. The words are *αναγκασον εισελθειν*, make it necessary for them to come in, which no cudgels, no bodily punishments, can do, for they have their choice whether they will die or do it. It is used Mt 14:22; Christ compelled his disciples to go into a ship, *ηναγκασεν*, yet it is certain he used no swords, or staves, or whips, or pecuniary mulcts to

enforce them. A word of as high an import is used Lu 24:29, of the two disciples compelling Christ to stay with them, *παρεβιασαντο*. So Ga 2:14, *αναγκαζεις*, why dost thou force the Gentiles to Judaize? Yet it is certain Peter neither exercised nor called in the power of the magistrate to force the Gentiles. But when men began to spare their pains as to their tongues, to overpower and prevail upon men's hearts, then they began to compel them, by civil coercions, and to call in the civil magistrate, to the effecting of what they would have, while they themselves would do nothing; and thus, contrary to all sense and reason, they expounded these words, *compel them to come in*.

Luke 14:25

Ver. 25-27. We met with much the same Mt 10:37,38. The sum of the words is, That no man can be a true disciple of Christ, that giveth any friend, or any thing, a preference to Christ in the affections of his heart. Christ must be loved above all. It appeareth that the words must not be interpreted rigidly, for then they would oblige us to a thing,

1. Impossible in nature: *for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it*, Eph 5:29. Yet life is one of the things mentioned which we ought to hate.
2. It is morally impossible: for the law of God commands us *to honour our father and mother*.

For the nonobservance of, or teaching contrary to, which law, teaching the people to say, *Corban, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*, Christ so severely reflected on the Pharisees. Himself therefore doth not here teach others to hate their fathers or mothers, taking hatred in

a strict and absolute sense: *If any man hate not* signifieth here no more than, *If any man doth love his father, wife, children, brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, more than me, he cannot be my disciple.* Nor is this any sense put upon the term *hate*, different from what must be the sense of it in other scriptures: Ge 29:31, *When the Lord saw that Leah was hated*, that is, less loved, as is expressed, Lu 14:30; so it must be interpreted in Lu 14:33. It also signified less loved, De 21:15,17 Mt 6:24 Joh 12:25. We met with the substance of what is here, Lu 14:27, in Mt 10:38, and Mr 8:34. See Poole on "Mt 10:38". See Poole on "Mr 8:34".

Luke 14:28

Ver. 28-33. Our Lord had in the parable of the supper showed what those things are which keep men from embracing the call of the gospel, to wit, their hearts' too much adherence to and embracing of sensible and sensual things. For the meeting of which temptation he had told them, Lu 14:25-27, that if they loved any thing in the world more than him, they could have no portion in him, they could not be his disciples, for (as Matthew saith) they are not worthy of him; nay, more than this, they must take up and bear their cross, and come after him. Here he directs them the best expedient in order to the performance of these duties, so hard to flesh and blood; that is, to sit down beforehand, and think what it will cost them to go through with the profession of religion. This, he tells them, ordinary prudence directeth men to, when they go about to build, or fight. As to the first, they make as good an estimate as they can of the charge. As to the latter, they consider both the charge, and the strength that they are able to produce to make opposition. So, saith he, must they do who will be his disciples:

1. Sit down and consider what it will cost them to become the Lord's building, what old foundations of nature must be digged up, what new foundation must be laid, how many stones must be laid before they can come up to a wall level to the promise wherein salvation is insured.
2. Then they must consider what oppositions they are like to meet with, from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And they must be ready to forsake all for Christ, though, it may be, they shall not be actually called out to it. Only we must remember, that in parables every branch is not to be applied.

1. We must desire no conditions of peace from our spiritual adversaries.
2. In our counting up of our strength to maintain the spiritual fight we must do as princes use to do, who use to count the forces of their allies and confederates, as well as their own: so we must not count what opposition we, alone can maintain against the world, the flesh, and the devil; but what Christ (who is in covenant with us as to these fights) and we can do together.

So as consideration and pre-deliberation here are not required of as upon any account to deter us from the fight, (for fight we must, or die eternally), but to prepare us for the fight, by a firm and steady resolution, and to help us how to manage the fight, looking up to Christ for his strength and assistance in the management of it.

Luke 14:34

Ver. 34,35. See Poole on "Mt 5:13". See Poole on "Mr 9:50", where we met with the most of what we have in these verses. By *salt* in this place our Saviour seemeth to mean a Christian life and profession. It is a good, a noble, a great thing to be a Christian: but one that is so in an outward profession may lose his savour. Though a man cannot fall away from truth, and reality of grace, yet he may fall away from his profession; he may be given up to believe lies, and embrace damnable errors; he may shake off that dread of God which he seemed to have upon him; and then what is he good for? Wherewith shall he be seasoned? He is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill: as some things will spoil dunghills, so debauched professors do but make wicked men worse, by prejudicing and hardening

them against the ways and truths of God.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. It is a usual epiphonema, or sentence, by which Christ often shuts up grave and weighty discourses: the sense is; You had therefore need to look about you, and to undertake the profession of my religion upon such weighty grounds and principles as will carry you through the practice of it to the end, against all the oppositions you shall meet with; for if you apostatize from your profession, you will be the worst of men, neither fit for the church nor for the world (for you will make that the worse;) indeed fit for nothing but for the fire of hell.

Luke 15:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 15:1,2 The Pharisees murmur at Christ for receiving sinners.

Lu 15:3-7 The parable of the lost sheep,

Lu 15:8-10 and piece of silver,

Lu 15:11-32 and of the prodigal son.

Ver. 1,2. I have so often taken notice, that the term *all* in the New Testament is very often used to signify, not all the individuals of that species, or order of men, to which it is applied, but only a great and considerable number of them, that it is needless again to repeat it. None can imagine, that every individual publican and sinner in those parts, where Christ now was, came to hear Christ, but only many of them, or some of every sort. Thus publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom, and such as appeared to lie fairer for it, were cast out. The scribes, who were the interpreters of the law, and the Pharisees, who were the rigid observers of their decrees and interpretations, *murmured*, they were disturbed and troubled at it; thinking that because the law appointed no sacrifice for bold and presumptuous sinners, therefore there was no mercy in God for them, or those of whom they had such a notion, and that they were *ipso jure* excommunicated, and therefore Christ sinned in eating or drinking with them, or in any degree

receiving of them; and from hence concluding he was no prophet: as if because ordinarily persons are known by their companions with whom they converse, therefore it had been a general rule; as if one might have concluded, that their doctorships were ignorant, because they conversed with them that were so, for their instruction; or could conclude, that the physician is sick, because his converse is with the sick, for their cure and healing. A man is not to be judged to be such as he converses with necessarily, or in order to their good, which was the end of all our Saviour's converse with these sinners. Besides, were they themselves without sin? The root of their uncharitableness was their opinion of their own righteousness, from the works of the law, according to their own jejune interpretation of it. But let us hear our Saviour's reply.

Luke 15:3

Ver. 3-7. See Poole on "Mt 18:12", and See Poole on "Mt 18:13", where we met with the same parable, though not related with so many circumstances. Lu 15:7, which is the *epiparabole*, showeth us the principal thing which our Saviour by this parable designs to teach His hearers, and us also, viz. That Christ is so far from rejecting the greatest sinners, that repent, and flee unto his mercy, that, if it were possible, he should take a greater satisfaction in such an issue of Divine providence, than in all the glorified saints. No repenting sinner, let his sins be as many and as great as they can be, shall be unwelcome unto Christ, fleeing to him with a broken heart (resolved against his former courses) for pardon and mercy. But as it happeneth to them who by study and practice make great experiments, they can hardly find out what they mostly seek for, but in the way to it they will find out several other notions, which are of great use to them; so it will fall out to them who diligently study the parables of the gospel. Though some one truth be that the explication of which our Saviour doth chiefly intend; yet the parable will also afford some other profitable instructions, not unworthy of our notice and regard.

The *man* here intended is Christ, who was the Son of man, as well as the eternal Son of God. The *hundred sheep* signifies the whole number of his elect, whether in heaven or on earth, whether yet called or hereafter to be called. The sheep going astray signifieth all the elect, who are *by nature*

children of wrath as well as others, dead in trespasses and sins, Eph 2:1,3. Here is mention but of one sheep so gone astray, though there be many, to let us know the love of Christ to every individual soul, that if but one of them had been to have been redeemed, he would have come down from heaven to have redeemed it.

The *ninety-nine left in the wilderness* seem to me to be the glorified saints, they are the only *just persons, who need no repentance*. The countryman's going after the lost sheep till he finds it, then bringing it home upon his shoulders rejoicing, signifies the infinite love of Christ, both in leaving his Father's throne, and the society of the glorified saints and angels, to come to seek and to save that which was lost, to pay a redemption price for them; then sending his Holy Spirit and the ministers of his gospel to invite and effectually to persuade them to accept of his salvation, truly repenting of their sins; and also preserving them through his power by faith unto salvation: for it is upon his shoulders that any elect soul is brought home; it is his eye must find them, and his power that must bring them home.

The countryman's rejoicing, and calling his neighbours to rejoice, &c., signifieth the satisfaction and well pleasedness of Christ in the conversion of sinners, which is more plainly expressed Lu 15:7, *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance*. We have much the same again Lu 15:10, leaving out the comparative part. There also it is, *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God*. We will consider the expressions in both the verses together; as to which there may arise these questions:

Question 1. What is here meant by joy in heaven? The inhabitants of heaven are, God, the blessed angels, and the glorified saints; how can they be said to rejoice, whereas rejoicing is in us the product of a passion by which we triumph in our union to some good, which we before wanted?

Answer. When terms expressive of our passions are applied to perfect beings, we must understand them so, as they alone can agree to such beings, separated from those excesses which they have in beings more imperfect. Joy signifieth nothing but the full satisfaction of the will in a good obtained. Thus God is said to rejoice in his people, Isa 62:5.

Question 2. Who are these ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance? (For the number, it is but an uncertain number put for one certain.)

Answer.

1. Some by such as *need no repentance* understand, such as think so of themselves, though indeed they do need it. Others understand it comparatively, such as if compared with others need no repentance.
2. Others by repentance understand penance; such sober persons as stand in no need of a being called to a public confession, for the satisfaction of the church offended. I had rather understand it of the glorified saints, whose society Christ left when he came to work out our redemption. For the others, it had been no great matter for Christ to have told them, that God, and the holy saints and angels, rejoice more over one repenting sinner, than over ninety-nine impenitent sinners and self righteous persons, who continually grieve him, and whom he abhorreth. But then,

Question 3. How can it be said, that God, and the angels and saints, more rejoice over one repenting sinner, than over ninety-nine glorified saints?

Answer. It is universally agreed, that Christ speaks here of God, and of the angels, after the manner of men; of whose nature it is to express more passion upon a new object that pleaseth them, than upon others that they have been long pleased with; as a parent rejoiceth more over one child recovered from the jaws of death, than over all the rest of his children. Though nothing can be new to God, that is, which he did not see and foreknow, yet some things may be new to him *in facto esse*, as done and fulfilled: and though we must not imagine any mutation or alteration of the Divine Being upon any emergency amongst men; yet to express how infinitely pleased God is, in the repentance and conversion of great sinners, he is set out as receiving an augmentation of satisfaction in the effecting of it. Such expressions as these condescended to by God for our consolation, must not be so strained by us as to occasion any unbecoming thoughts of God.

Question. Some query how the angels know of the conversion of a sinner;

and from hence the papists would some of them infer, that they know our hearts, because that is the seat of conversion.

Answer. Both the angels and the glorified saints also may know it by God revealing it to them.

Luke 15:8

Ver. 8-10. This parable (as appeareth by the conclusion of it) is of the same import with the other, and needs no further explication. By both these parables our blessed Lord lets the Pharisees know the end he aimed at in conversing with publicans and sinners, viz. In order to their repentance and conversion, than which nothing could be more grateful and well pleasing to that God who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that they should turn from their wickedness and live. Of the same import is also the following parable, which taketh up all the remaining part of this chapter.

Luke 15:11

Ver. 11-16. The scope of this excellent parable is apparently to magnify the grace of God, who is willing to receive and to treat kindly the greatest transgressors, seriously repenting, and turning unto God; but in it we are also,

1. Instructed in the original state of man, like that of a child in his father's house, happy and wanting nothing.
2. The most miserable estate of fallen men, such especially as run to great excess of riot.

3. The true way of a sinner's returning to God.
4. The readiness of our gracious Father to receive, and his wonderful kindness in the receiving and embracing, repenting and returning sinners.
5. The envy that is sometimes found in good souls to others receiving (as they think) more favour from God than they do.
6. The gentleness and meekness of God in dealing with us, notwithstanding our infirmities and misbecoming passions.

God is again here represented under the notion of a man who had two sons: some that are his children by regeneration as well as creation; he having given them that believe a right to be called *the sons of God*, Joh 1:12. Others that are his sons by creation only. The latter are here represented under the notion of a younger son. This younger son is represented as dissatisfied with living in his father's house, desiring his portion, &c. All men and women by nature were equally the sons of God, being all in Adam, who was so. All men swerved from him; in Adam all sinned, all died. But some again by grace are returned to their Father's house. Others challenge a relation to God, as his creatures, but are not of their Father's house, but desire only a portion of the good things of this life. Some desire honours, some riches, all of them life and health, &c. God, like a liberal father, gives some of these good things to one, others to another; to some more than one kind of them: whatever they have of this nature is from him who maketh his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the just and unjust. Wicked men, when they are thus furnished by God, quickly take their *journey into a far country*, are more alienated and estranged from God by lewd and wicked practices than they were by nature; waste their substance, the health of their bodies, their time of life, their estates, their great and honourable capacities, by giving up themselves to lewd and riotous kinds of life, to the high dishonour of Almighty God. It pleaseth God by his providence sometimes to bring these men into straits; when they are so brought, they will take any base, sordid course to relieve themselves, rather than they will think of returning to their heavenly Father; of themselves they will rather choose to serve swine. But if they be such as belong to God's election of grace, the providence of God will not leave them. Though there be little food for a

soul in the husks of sensible satisfactions, yet they shall not have a bellyful of them. God will bring them off from satisfaction in any thing, and make every condition uneasy to them.

Luke 15:17

Ver. 17. Every sinner is beside himself; his reason lackeys to his lust and passion, he is governed by appetite, and that rageth in him, while his understanding is blind, and cannot discern between good and evil; and when he hath in any measure discerned any thing, his will is stubborn, and chooseth the evil. Conversion is but the return of a soul to itself. The first thoughts of which conversion arise from a soul's consideration, what a poor miserable creature it is, ready to perish for ever, while never a poor soul belonging to God, no, not the meanest servant in his family, wanteth any good thing that is necessary for him. These things increase in a soul thoughts of returning to his heavenly Father, through the operation of the Holy Spirit of God; for of ourselves we are not sufficient so much as to think one good thought.

Luke 15:18

Ver. 18-20. The way of a sinner's returning to God must be by arising, going to the Father, confessing his sins with the aggravations of them, disclaiming any goodness, any righteousness in himself, humbling himself to God's footstool.

I will arise (saith the prodigal) and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. He arose from the sleep and bed of sin, and came unto his father. We are not here told by whose strength, or in whose assistance, he arose and came. We must remember that our Saviour is here

representing a spiritual notion by an ordinary human action; now men have an innate power to natural motions, though not to spiritual actions. We are elsewhere told, that no man cometh to the Father, but by Christ, nor doth any man come unto the Son, but he whom the Father draweth. Every one as he is taught of the Father cometh unto the Son. And again, that though we be *saved by faith*, yet it is *not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*; and, *it is given to us in the behalf of Christ to believe*, Php 1:29. These are but several expressions signifying, by the tender affections and gracious reception of earthly parents of a returning prodigal son, the exceeding readiness of our heavenly Father to receive penitent sinners; he is so far from discouraging great sinners from taking up thoughts of returning unto him, that he cherisheth the embryos of such resolutions: *I said*, (saith the psalmist), *I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*, Ps 32:5. God seeth the first good motions and stirrings of our hearts towards him, and he needs must do so, for he stirreth them up in us; there is no sacred fire upon our altar, but first cometh down from heaven. While yet the soul is far off from believing, and closing with Christ actually, and hath but some thoughts of that tendency, God looks upon it, encourages it, meeteth it as it were half way; and indeed if he did not, our goodness would be but like a morning dew, which would quickly pass away; our first inclinations would perish like an untimely birth, before it hath seen the light.

Luke 15:21

Ver. 21. Now the good thoughts and resolutions of the sinner ripen into action, and the first of it is an expression of his convictions and humiliation by a humble confession of his sins, with their aggravations, as committed against God, and that in the sight of God, and this God his Father, his unworthiness so much as of the name of a son to such a Father. The petitionary part of what he resolved upon, Lu 15:19, is not here again repeated, but to be understood. Men may by the common grace of God, denied to no man, have some good thoughts, but they die away, and come to no maturity, unless the Holy Spirit of God breathes upon them, and maintains and upholdeth them in the soul; but where the Lord designs a thorough change in a soul, the Spirit of the Lord comes, and convinceth

the soul of sin and of righteousness: and where he doth so, the resolution ripens into action, and produces in the soul a true and hearty contrition, and confession of its sin, with humble petitions and a resignation of itself to the Lord's will, and a casting of itself upon God's free grace and mercy.

Luke 15:22

Ver. 22-24. We must remember that we are in a parable where a sinner is represented to us under the notion of a prodigal son; God, under the notion of an indulgent father; a repenting sinner, under the notion of a prodigal returning to his father, confessing his error, petitioning his father for mercy, acknowledging he deserveth none, but casting himself upon his father's goodness and mercy. It is observed by an eminent author, that amongst all the parables this is one of the most famous, and wherein is the most full and perfect representation of the thing intended to be represented, and an applicableness of every part of the similitude to that which it is brought to represent. This part of it represents the grace of God to truly repenting sinners. We before heard his readiness and willingness to receive them, this part lets us see the manner how he will treat them. As in case of apostasy, the seeming righteousness and profession of men shall not be remembered, Eze 3:20 33:13; so in case of a true and hearty repentance, the sins of a soul shall not be remembered, Isa 43:25.

The father taketh no notice of the prodigal's leaving his house, or wasting his estate riotously, but saith, *Bring forth the best robe*, την στολην την πρωτην; and *put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf*, τον μοσχον τον σιτευτον. I find some interpreters who by the *fatted calf* are willing enough to understand Christ; yet interpreting *the best robe*, innocency, or inherent righteousness. Nor is it an ill interpretation, if we consider, that God, at the same time when he imputeth the merits of Christ to the soul for justification, doth also put his Spirit of holiness into the soul, by which being renewed in the inward man, this man brings forth the fruits of holiness unto righteousness, Eze 36:26,27. But why we should not understand both the phrases of the application of Christ's merits, and the imputation of his righteousness to the soul, I cannot tell, considering, that the church of Laodicea is counselled to buy of him *white raiment*, that she might *be clothed*, Re 3:18; and that those clothed with *white robes*, Re 7:14, are said to *have*

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and that though the habits of grace are sometimes in holy writ compared to clothing, *Be ye clothed with humility,* (saith the apostle), yet these are not ς στολ ς ς πρωτ ς . I should therefore rather choose to interpret the killing of the fatted calf for the prodigal son, as representing that application of the blood of Christ, which is made to every sinner that truly repenteth, and maketh its application to God for mercy; and the best robe, as the righteousness of Christ, in that moment reckoned unto the soul (thus believing) for righteousness. Further yet, (to consider it only in the parable), the word θ υσ α τε, sacrifice the fatted calf, seems to signify what a great cause of thanksgiving to God, as well as joy amongst men, the conversion of a sinner is. We that are earthly parents, or ministers of the gospel, should not receive the news, or see the visible probability of a soul's being converted, and returning unto God, without offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto God for doing such things for men, and without a true and hearty rejoicing in ourselves. But to return again to the meaning of the parable.

Let us eat, and be merry: consider these words as the words of a heavenly Father, they signify unto us, that the eternal God, from the day that a repenting soul hath the blood of Christ applied to it, and is clothed with his righteousness, is at peace with the soul, hath a communion with it, and that it from that time hath a true right to spiritual mirth and rejoicing; for *light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart:* though possibly the soul at present, through temptations, cannot apprehend it, and be not actually possessed of that joy and peace which followeth believing, yet it hath a right to it, and indeed none but that soul hath any thing to do with peace.

It followeth, *For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.* A sinful soul is a dead soul, as the woman *that liveth in pleasure* is said to be *dead while she liveth,* by the apostle. The conversion of a sinner is as a resurrection from the dead. Nor is any soul capable of any true mirth, till it be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ.

Luke 15:25

Ver. 25-32. This last part of the parable is not so exactly applicable to that which it is brought to represent as the former parts are, but it serveth excellently to show us that envy which is found in our hearts by nature to the spiritual good and advantage of others. Two things are observable in it:

1. Man's peevishness and envy.
2. God's meekness towards us under our frowardness.

By the *elder son* some think the Jews are represented, whose peevishness to the Gentiles, and the offer of the grace of the gospel to them, is made appear to us from many places of holy writ. Others think that by the *elder son* are represented hypocrites, who swelling in all opinion of themselves, and their own righteousness, have no patience to hear that any others should be preferred in the favour of God before them. Why may we not say that all are understood by it, even the best of God's people, who, if they narrowly search their own hearts, will find something of pride and envy remaining in the best of them? And as the former prompts them to judge themselves as much deserving the favour of God, even in special particular dispensations, as any others; so the latter inclineth them to repine at such dispensations of Divine grace as others receive, and they want: two corruptions which we are as much concerned to keep watch upon, or against, as any other; speaking both a peevishness to the honour and glory of God, a dissatisfaction in his dispensations, and an offer at the control of his wisdom and justice, and also a great degree of uncharitableness, our eye being evil because the Lord is good. Besides that it seemeth to put in a claim of merit; and the soul that indulges itself in such thoughts seems to say that it hath deserved more than it doth receive; for without such a supposition, it is the most unreasonable thing imaginable, that any person should be displeas'd that another should have a greater share in the favour of God than he, while he himself receives more than he can lay a claim unto, and God may do with his own what he pleaseth. The meekness of God in dealing with us under our frowardness is as much remarkable. *Son,* (saith this father in the parable), *thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.* This must be understood of God $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\pi\alpha\theta\omega\varsigma$ as

spoken after the manner of men, who show greater passions upon the receiving of a good that is new to them, and possibly surprising, than they ordinarily show upon the view of a good of which they have had longer fruition; so it confirms what was before said in Lu 15:7,10. We must take heed of thinking that any thing can make a change or alteration in God, but must look upon it only as an expression of God's high satisfaction and well pleasedness in a sinner's conversion, and turning unto him; so as if it were possible any good should more than other affect the Divine Being, it would be this. So as this whole parable is of excellent use, not only to instruct sinners in their miserable state, till they be reconciled to God, but to deliver them from all temptations to fear that, heartily returning, they shall not be accepted.

Luke 16:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 16:1-13 The parable of the unjust steward.

Lu 16:14-18 Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who were covetous, and derided him.

Lu 16:19-31 The parable of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar.

Ver. 1-8. Hierom of old thought this parable was very obscure; and Julian and other apostates, together with some of the heathen philosophers, took occasion from it to reproach the doctrine of Christ, as teaching and commanding acts of unrighteousness. But there will appear no such difficulty in it, nor cause of reproach to Christ and his doctrine from it, if we consider what I have before hinted, that it is no more necessary to a parable that all the actions in it supposed be just and honest, than that all the parts of it be true in matter of fact, whether past or possible to be; for a

parable is not designed to inform us in a matter of fact, but to describe to us our duty, under a fictitious representation: nor doth every part of a parable point at some correspondent duty to be done by us; but the main scope for which it is brought is principally to be attended to by us, and other pieces of duty which may be hinted to us, are to be judged of and proved not from the parable, but from other texts of holy writ where they are inculcated. The main things in which our Saviour seemeth desirous by this parable to instruct us, are,

1. That we are but stewards of the good things God lends us, and must give an account to our Master of them.
2. That being no more than stewards intrusted with some of our Master's goods for a time, it is our highest prudence, while we have them in our trust, to make such a use of them as may be for our advantage when we give up our account.

Thus we shall hear our Lord in the following verses expounding his own meaning. To this purpose he supposed a rich man to have a steward, and to have received some accusation against him, as if he embezzled his master's goods committed to his trust. Upon which he calleth him to account, and tells him that he should be his steward no longer. He supposes this steward to be one who had no other means of livelihood and subsistence than what his place afforded him, a than not used to labour, and too proud to beg. At length he fixed his resolution, to send for his master's debtors, and to abate their obligations, making them debtors to his master for much less than indeed they were; by this means he probably hoped, that when he was turned off from his master he should be received by them. He supposes his master to have heard of it, and to have commended him, not for his honesty, but for his wit in providing for the time to come. What was knavery in this steward, is honest enough in those who are the stewards of our heavenly Lord's goods, suppose riches, honours, parts, health, life, or any outward accommodation, viz. to use our Lord's goods for the best profit and advantage to ourselves, during such time as we are intrusted with them. For though an earthly lord and his steward have particular divided interests, and he that maketh use of his lord's goods for his own best advantage cannot at the same time make use of them for the best advantage of his master, yet the case is different betwixt our heavenly Lord and us. It hath pleased God so to twist the

interest of his glory with our highest good, that no man can better use his Master's goods for the advantage of his glory, than he who best useth them for the highest good, profit, and advantage to himself; nor doth any man better use them for his own interest, than he who best useth them for God's glory. So as here the parable halteth, by reason of the disparity betwixt the things that are compared. And though the unjust steward could not be commended for the honesty, but only for the policy, of his action, yet we who are stewards of the gifts of God, in doing the like, that is, making use of our Master's goods for our own best profit and advantage, may act not only wisely, but also honestly; and indeed Christ in this parable blames men for not doing so: *The children of this world* (saith he) *are wiser in their generation than the children of light*. By *the children of this world*, he meaneth such as this steward was, men who regard not eternity or the concerns of their immortal souls, but only regard the things of this life, what they shall eat, or drink, or put on. By *the children of light*, he meaneth such as live under the light of the gospel, and receive the common illumination of the gospel; though if we yet understand it more strictly, of those who are *translated out of darkness into marvellous light*, it is too true, they are not so wise, and politic, and industrious for heaven, as worldly men are to obtain their ends in getting the world. He saith, *the men of this world are wiser in their generation*, that is, in their kind, as to those things about which they exercise their wit and policy, than the children of God.

Luke 16:9

Ver. 9. That by *mammon* here is meant riches is universally agreed, but whether it originally be a Chaldaic, or Syriac, or Punic word is not so well agreed. The Chaldee paraphrast useth it, Ho 5:11; but the Hebrew there is quite otherwise, (according to our translation), *he willingly walked after the commandment*. But if the notion of those be true, that some of those

nations had an idol called Mammon, whom they made the god of riches, answering the Grecian Plutus, it fairly interprets the Chaldee paraphrast. They followed the command for idolatry, for such was Jeroboam's commandment, mentioned in that text, and from thence it might be that the Syrians and Punics called riches mammon. We have the word in the New Testament four times, thrice in this chapter, once Mt 6:24. It is called *the mammon of unrighteousness*, by a Hebraism; it is as much as, the unrighteous mammon: by which we must not understand ill gotten goods, (for God hateth robbery for a burnt offering), we must restore such goods, not make friends of them; but riches are so called, because of the manifold temptations to sin which arise from them, upon which account they are also called *deceitful*. But others think that it is so called in opposition to *the true riches*, mentioned Lu 16:11. So that *the mammon of unrighteousness* is the mammon of falsehood, or hurtful riches, riches of hurtfulness (*αδιχια* sometimes signifies hurt or wrong, and *αδιχειν*, *laedere*, *nocere*). Of these riches, which are no true riches, and which deceive the soul, and do hurt and mischief to a soul, exposing it to temptation, Christ commands us to *make friends*; either,

1. To make God our friend, not by meriting from him any thing by our disposal of them, but by obedience to his will in our distribution of them. Or:
2. To make poor Christians our friends, so as we may have their prayers. So that, *when ye fail*, when you die, when you fail of any more comfort from them, *they may receive you into everlasting habitations*; the holy Trinity, or the blessed angels, (whose work it is, as we shall hear, to carry souls into Abraham's bosom), may receive you into heaven.

Luke 16:10

Ver. 10. This is a usual sentence, (our Saviour made use of many such), as to which kind of speeches it is not necessary they should be universally true, it is sufficient if they generally be so. Besides that, our Saviour plainly speaketh here according to the common opinion and judgment of men. Men ordinarily judge that he who is faithful in a little thing, of no high concern or moment, will be faithful in what is of a higher concern, or greater moment; and if they have found a person unfaithful in a small

thing, they will conclude that he will be so in a greater, and not trust him: though sometimes it falls out otherwise, that one who is faithful enough in some trifling things, prove unfaithful in a greater trust, where unfaithfulness will turn more to his profit; and on the contrary, he that is untruthful in a little thing, may prove more faithful in a greater; but none will trust to that: and that is our Saviour's design, to teach us that God will do by us as we in the like case do by our servants or neighbours.

Luke 16:11

Ver. 11. This verse now opposeth *the unrighteous mammon* to *the true riches*, which would strongly incline one to think, that by *the mammon of unrighteousness*, before mentioned, our Saviour meant only false and deceitful riches. By the *true riches* I cannot think is meant the gospel, which indeed is said to be committed to trust of the ministers, but not of all Christians. I had rather interpret it of special, effectual grace, which is of all other the true riches: and so it teacheth us this great truth, That God is justified in the denial of his special grace to those who do not make a due use of his common gifts and grace; and indeed here will lie men's damnation, because they do not make a just use of that common grace which they have, and might make a better use of it than they do. If they would be faithful in that, God would not deny them the true riches.

Luke 16:12

Ver. 12. Let it be questioned whether *αλλοτριον* might not have been translated foreign as well as *another man's*, for so interpreters expound that phrase: If you have not been faithful in things that are without you, which are little, compared with things that are within us. Yet riches are indeed properly not ours, we are but the stewards of them, and part of them are other men's, and only trusted into our hands, to dispense to them according to our Master's order. Grace is our own, especially justifying and sanctifying grace; because it is given us of God solely for our own use and advantage. We use to say, That those who have been, bad servants seldom prove good masters. In the trust of our riches we are but servants; God will not give out of his special saving grace to those that abuse the trust of his common gifts and grace.

Luke 16:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 6:24".

Luke 16:14

Ver. 14. Concerning the Pharisees' covetousness we have often heard before; and indeed they were so from this principle, that none but the rich were happy and blessed, and that all poor people were cursed, Joh 7:49; in opposition to whom some think that our Saviour, Lu 6:20, blessed the poor. The promises relating to the Old Testament, and made to the Jews, were generally of temporal blessings, though under them spiritual mercies were also understood. As hypocrites can never endure to have their beloved lusts touched, and persons that have drunk in an error have no patience to hear it contradicted; so the Pharisees had no patience to hear that doctrine, which crossed what they had taught, and struck at their darling lusts.

They derided him: the word used signifieth a deriding with the highest degree of scorn and contempt.

Luke 16:15

Ver. 15. By justifying here is to be understood either an appearing before men as just, and strict observers of the law, or a predicating of themselves as just: You (saith our Saviour) make a fine show, and great brags amongst men; but God's eye goeth deeper, he knoweth the heart, what pride, and covetousness, and hypocrisy lodge there. Men do not know your hearts, but God knoweth them. All is not gold by God's touchstone that glitters in man's eyes. Nay, many things which are highly esteemed amongst men, as matters of great devotion and piety and merit, and which they applaud others for, are in the sight of God no better than abominations. This highly obliges all not to make their estimate of things, from the value and estimate which men put upon them; not every thing, but many things which are highly esteemed amongst men are abomination in the sight of

God.

Luke 16:16

Ver. 16. We had the sum of these words: See Poole on "Mt 11:12" and See Poole on "Mt 11:13". The connection of these words in this place seems to be this: Do not think it strange that I preach some doctrines to you which seem new to you, though indeed they are no other than was before contained in the precepts of the Old Testament; for the law and the prophets, the preaching of them, held but till John, since whose time the gospel hath been preached, which gives you a clearer light into the will of God than you had before; and it pleaseth God to give it a great acceptation in the world, though you reject it; *every man presseth*, that is, many press, *into it*; so as God will not want a people, though you mock and deride the gospel, instead of embracing of it, as you ought to do.

Luke 16:17

Ver. 17. Neither do you scandalize me, as if I came to teach a new doctrine, contrary to the law and the prophets. I tell you the quite contrary; heaven and earth shall pass away, before one tittle of the law shall pass. Your vain interpretations of the law shall be destroyed, or amended, but the law of my Father shall remain as a certain rule of life to his people until the world shall have an end.

Luke 16:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 5:32", where this is expounded; also, See Poole on "Mt 19:9", and See Poole on "Mr 10:11".

Luke 16:19

Ver. 19-22. It is a question of no great concern for us to be resolved about, whether this be a history, or narrative of matter of fact, or a parable. Those that contend on either side have probable arguments for their opinion, and

it may be they best judge who determine it to be neither the one nor the other, but a profitable discourse, that hath in it something of both. Our chief concern is to consider what our Lord by it designed to instruct us in. And certainly those do not judge amiss who think that this discourse hath a great reference to what went before, Lu 16:9,10, where our Saviour had been exhorting his hearers to make themselves *friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*, as also to the Pharisees deriding him for his doctrine, Lu 16:14; our Lord by this discourse letting them know the danger of covetousness and uncharitableness, and also letting them know that what is *highly esteemed among men may be abomination in the sight of God*. He telleth them there was a certain rich man, who lived in great plenty and splendour; his clothing was purple and fine linen, that is, exceeding costly and splendid; his fare, or diet, was delicate and sumptuous, and that every day, from whence may easily be concluded, that if he had had a heart thereunto, he might have spared something for the poor. Nor were the objects of his charity far off.

There was a certain beggar named Lazarus, poor enough, for he was full of sores, and would have been glad of the offal of the rich man's table; but the dogs were more charitable than their master; we read of nothing which the rich man gave him, but *the dogs came and licked his sores*. What was the end of this? The beggar died, and he was by the angels carried into the bosom of Abraham, that is, into heaven; some will have the phrase signify, one of the chiefest mansions in heaven. Abraham was the father of believers, and an hospitable person while he lived upon the earth. Lazarus is expressed to have been conveyed to him. There are many things discoursed by men of wit and learning about this *Abraham's bosom*, but the best centre here, that by it is meant heaven: and from hence two great points are proved:

1. That the soul is capable of an existence separated from the body, and therefore is not, as some atheists dream, a mere affection of that, and an accident, but a distinct spiritual subsistence.
2. That the souls of the good, when they depart from their bodies, immediately pass into an eternal state of blessedness.

Luke 16:23

Ver. 23,24. Και εν τω αδη, *And in hell.* The world hath been filled with disputes about the true signification of the word αδησ, which is here translated *hell*. The most probably true notion of it is, that it signifies, the state of the dead, both of the dead body, and so it often signifieth the grave, and of the departed soul. A very learned man saith, that if he mistakes not, this is the only text in Scripture in which by it is to be understood the place of torments. The Hebrew word which is translated by this, far more often signifying the place of the blessed, whither the saints and patriarchs went when they died, than the place whither sinners went; but Lu 16:24 makes it appear, that here it signifies hell, properly so called, as it imports the place of the damned. We must understand our Saviour in this whole διατυπωσις to speak to us figuratively, that by things which we understand we might comprehend spiritual things. Heaven and hell are at too great a distance for souls in each to discourse one with another: neither have souls any eyes to lift up. We are by this taught:

1. That as the souls of good men, when they leave their bodies, go into a state of eternal bliss, where are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and enjoy a felicity which we are not able to express, but is set out to us under the notion of Abraham's bosom, to let us know that it is a place of rest, and communion with saints, and the same felicity which Abraham the friend of God doth enjoy: so the souls of wicked men, when they leave their bodies, shall go into a place of torments, the greatness of which being such as we are not able to conceive, they are expressed to us under the notion of being tormented by fire.
2. That it will be a great part of the misery of damned souls, to understand those to be in a state of happiness whom they in this life have scorned, despised, and abused, and, it may be, have been instruments to hasten them to those blessed mansions.
3. That there will come a time when the proudest sinners will be glad of the help of the meanest saints, if they could obtain it. *Father Abraham,* (saith the rich man), *send Lazarus,* that Lazarus whom when alive I suffered to lie at my gate full of sores, and would not relieve.

4. That the state of the damned will be void of the least degrees of comfort and satisfaction. The rich man desireth but a cooling of his tongue with so much water as could be brought upon the tip of Lazarus's finger.
5. That the tongue is a member, the abuse of which will in another life lie very heavy upon lost souls.

Luke 16:25

Ver. 25,26. We must still remember, that all these things are spoken in a figure. The *great gulf* here mentioned, to be fixed between heaven and hell, is too wide for persons on opposite sides of it to be heard communicating their minds each to other. All that our Saviour designs to let us know is, that the circumstances of damned souls are such, that, if it were possible, they would beg the help and assistance of the meanest saints, whom they have in this life most scorned, despised, or abused; but as they will have no such opportunities as to crave any thing at their hands, so if they had, they could not receive the least relief from them; their state is determined, they are fixed for eternity, and there can be no change of their condition for the better. Abraham is here brought in calling this man *Son*, either as lineally descended from him, or being a member of that church of which he was the father. It will add to the torments of the damned, to hear and consider the former means and advantages they have been under for salvation, if they have descended from godly parents, or have been members of the church of Christ.

That in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. The *good things* which the rich man received were no more the cause of his damnation, than the *evil things* which Lazarus met with were the cause of his salvation; but the rich man's ill use of the former, and Lazarus's good improvement of the latter, through the grace of God bestowed on him. Though it be not ordinary with God to give the same persons the upper and the nether springs, yet he sometimes doth it, of which Abraham, and Lot, and Job, and David, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph of Arimathea, are some instances. But the term *thy* signifies the error of this rich man; he looked upon the good things of this life as his

portion, those were the things which he set his heart upon, and let his heart run out to the neglecting the good things of another life. Lazarus received *evil things*, God gave him a mean, afflicted portion in this life; but he was found patient, and glorifying of God by a quiet and believing submission to his will under them; now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. So then it seemeth that departed souls do not sleep, as some have dreamed; if they did, they could neither have been capable of comfort or torment.

And besides all this, there is a great gulf fixed, &c.; the meaning of which is no more than,

1. That the state of souls upon their separation from the bodies of men and women is determined and fixed. As the tree falls, so it lieth.
2. That there is no commerce, or intercourse, between glorified and damned souls. The papists passage from purgatory to heaven is a new found way, or rather a new fancied one. If purgatory be (as they pretend) a place where souls are tormented, it may be wondered how they should pass over this gulf: it seemeth Abraham did not know the way, St. Peter knew as little; this is one of his pretended vicar's new discoveries, but it is no wisdom in any souls to trust to this passage, of which Abraham knew as little as he did of our prayers passing to them, or to God for them, for there is *χασμα μεγα εστηριγμενον*, a great gulf established.

Luke 16:27

Ver. 27,28. Him that the rich man would not hear, when he lay at his gate full of sores, exhorting him to do good and to distribute, to give alms of all that he had, and to make himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, he would now have restored to the earth again, his soul before the general resurrection reunited to His body, that he might go unto his father's house, and give them warning, that they might not come into the misery which he felt. But is there any charity in hell? Is there any there that wish well to souls upon earth? Or rather, are not damned souls, like persons infected with the plague, desirous that others might be made as miserable as themselves? A grave and acute author saith, he prayeth not

for them, but for himself, that he might not be the note miserable by the company of those who upon the earth were his near relations, and dear unto him. But we must remember that our Saviour here speaketh all in a figure, and that which our Saviour by these expressions designs to instruct us in is no more than this, That although atheistical and proud and haughty souls in this life make a mock at hell, and at the wrath of God to be revealed after this life, and despise the poor servants of God, who by their doctrine, or holy life and example, would teach them better things, yet they shall find the fire of hell so hot, the wrath of God so terrible and intolerable, that if you could imagine that souls under those miseries could have the least dram of charity and good nature left it, them, though they apprehend themselves past all hopes of recovery to a better state, yet they would beg that some of those faithful ministers, or godly people, whom they have rejected, despised, and abused, might be sent to every friend they have in the world, to warn them from doing as they have done, and running the hazard of those torments they feel for doing of such things. The papists, who idly go about from hence to prove a sense in departed souls of the state of their friends that are yet alive upon the earth, can derive very little comfort from that speculation out of this text; which if it could prove any thing of that nature could prove no more than that damned souls have such a sense, and might by the same argument also evince their charity. But figurative expressions must not be so closely applied. I have showed what I judge to be the true instruction from this passage.

Luke 16:29

Ver. 29. Christ here represents to us the genius of wicked and carnal men, that would be converted by revelations and some extraordinary signs; if they could see one risen from the dead, then they would believe the resurrection; if they could see a glorified saint, or hear or see a damned soul, then they would believe a heaven and a hell: he here brings in Abraham saying, *They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.* God will have men believe the propositions of His word, and live up to the rule of life prescribed there, and not expect to have their curiosity satisfied by needless and extraordinary revelations. But is there then no need of the gospel to bring men to heaven? Doubtless there is, but that is included in Moses and the prophets, who all prophesied of Christ, though more darkly

than he is revealed in the New Testament. *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me, Joh 5:39,46, Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me:* now they at that time had no Scriptures to search but those of Moses and the prophets; for the New Testament was not at that time written.

Luke 16:30

Ver. 30,31. How vain is man in his imaginations: We are prone all of us to think after the rate that this rich man is here brought in speaking; that although persons be deaf to the sound of the word, yet some sensible evidence of the wrath of God would make a change in their hearts and lives. There is no such thing. There is not, possibly, in all the book of God a text that more speaks the desperate hardness of a sinner's heart than this, nor a text which looks more dreadfully upon persons sitting under the means of grace, reading and hearing the word of God, and yet find not their hearts so affected with the reading and hearing of it, as thereby to be brought to repentance, and faith, and such holiness of life as it requireth. If it were possible that such men and women should see one come out of the bottomless pit, tearing his hair, and wringing his hands, and gnashing his teeth, and bewailing his misery, and begging of them to be wise by his example, telling them for what sins he is made so miserable, and with tears and highest expressions of passion beseeching them that while they have time they would leave off those courses, acquaint themselves with God, and be at peace, that thereby good might come unto them, they would not yet believe nor repent; nor would this have any further effect upon them, than a little passion, till they could get the din out of their ears. For though sensible evidence be the highest advantage in the world to moral persuasion, yet these things are under no Divine appointment to such an effect. Henceforth let us wonder no more that a drunkard sees his companion drop down dead before him, yet presently cries again, Fill the glass; that hundreds of sinners are daily hurried down to hell in their wickedness, and yet their companions take no warning. In a fight at sea or land hundreds drop, yet their companions do not fly, but are held up by their stomachs and passion, and their ears are made deaf by the noise of the drums and trumpets. So in the world hundreds of sinners drop down daily into the pit, yet the rest of their companions tumble their companions

into their graves, and never consider the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands, till they also like sheep be laid in the grave, and death comes to feed upon them, and hell to devour them also. This now to those that duly consider not things, and in particular do not consider this text, seemeth strange and amazing. But it is no more to be wondered at than that hundreds read and hear the word of God, and are not by it converted and changed. It is not to be expected that any providence of God should work upon those souls any saving change, upon whom the word doth not work. That is the ordinance of God, with which the Holy Spirit joins itself, which alone can produce this change. If God works not this change thus, he will work it by nothing else; though he sometimes maketh use of such providences towards souls to whom he intends good, to make them observe and attend to the word better, in order to so blessed an effect.

Luke 17:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 17:1,2 Christ teacheth to avoid giving occasions of offence,

Lu 17:3,4 and to forgive one another.

Lu 17:5-10 The power of faith, and defect of merit toward God in our best services.

Lu 17:11-19 Christ healeth ten lepers,

Lu 17:20,21 showeth the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God,

Lu 17:22-37 and instructs his disciples concerning the coming of the Son of man.

Ver. 1,2. See Poole on "Mt 18:6". See Poole on "Mt 18:7". See Poole on "Mr 9:42". This term *σκανδαλα* is used in the New Testament very variously; in general it signifies any thing which may be an occasion of mischief to another. Man, consisting of body and soul, may by something be made to stumble and fall, either with reference to the one, or to the other: thus, Le 19:14. *Thou shalt not put a stumblingblock before the blind*: מִבְּשֵׁיל Hebrew: so Pr 24:17. The mischief done to our souls is by sin; so as in the New Testament it often signifies any action of ours by

which our brother is made to sin: which actions may be,

1. Good and necessary, and then the scandal is taken, not given. Or:
2. Wicked and abominable; hence we call some sins scandalous sins, such as give offence to others, and are examples alluring them to sin. Or:
3. Actions which in themselves are of an indifferent nature, neither commanded nor forbidden in the word. Our taking one part in these actions, rather than another, may be a scandal, that is, an offence.

What our Saviour here saith is certainly true concerning all these kinds of offences: considering the complexion of the world, and the corruption which is in man's hearts, *it is impossible but that offences will come*. But I must confess that I incline to think, that the *offences* primarily intended by our Saviour here are those of the second sort; and that by them are meant persecutions of the people of God; to the authors of which our Saviour denounces woe. So that our Saviour by this lets the world know, the special protection under which he hath taken his people; so as though he knew there would arise those who would hurt and destroy in his holy mountain, yet he declares that they shall not go unpunished, but they had better die the most certain death imaginable, (such must be the death of him who is thrown into the sea with a millstone about his neck), than to that degree expose himself to the vengeance of God; a guilt of that nature that there is not much more hope for him to escape God's vengeance, than there would be of a man escaping with his life whom we should see thrown into the sea with a millstone appendant to him. I do very well know that it is also highly dangerous to tempt or solicit a child of God to sin, either by our words or actions; but I do not think it the design of our Lord in this place so much to express that as the other.

Luke 17:3

Ver. 3,4. Matthew hath something of the same tendency in Mt 18:21,22, mentioning it as an answer to a question which Peter propounded to our Lord; but the circumstances of both relations are so different that I cannot think them the same, but do believe these words spoken at another time.

This doctrine of the forgiveness of our offending brother is pressed upon us in several places in the gospel and New Testament, and that upon the gravest arguments imaginable, Mt 6:15 18:35 Mr 11:26 Lu 6:37 Eph 4:32; from whence we may justly conclude it a duty of very high concernment for us both to understand and to live in the practice of. It signifies the laying aside of all thoughts or desire of revenge in our own cause. The precept is not exclusive of our duty in seeing the glory of God avenged upon murderers, &c.; nor yet of our seeking a just satisfaction, in a legal way, for wrongs done to us relating to our limbs or estate, so far as the person is able to do it; much less doth it require the making such a one as hath so injured us our intimate and bosom friend. That which it requireth is the laying aside all malice, or desire of revenge, upon our neighbour in a case wherein our own name or honour is concerned; and it is fitly joined to what went before, this malice, or desire of revenge, being the root of all the mischief that men voluntarily do one to another, especially of that which they do to the innocent servants of God.

Luke 17:5

Ver. 5. Though we be not to seek a connection of all those speeches of our Lord which are recorded by the evangelists, they sometimes heaping together many of his golden sayings, without so much as regard to the order of time when he spake them, or their dependence on each other; yet he that wisely observes the preceding discourse for charity, will easily observe an excellent connection of this verse with the former. No duty required of men and women more grates upon flesh and blood than this of forgiving injuries, nothing that the most of people find harder to put in practice; so as indeed where there is not a root of faith, this fruit will not be found. It is *faith which worketh by love*. Till the soul cometh steadily and fixedly to agree to those propositions of the word where this is required, as the indispensable will of God; nay, till it comes firmly to rest upon those promises, and hope for them, which are made to this duty; finally, till it comes to have received Christ, and forgiveness from him, and considers itself bound to forgive, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven it, Eph 4:32; it will hardly come up to the practice of this duty. Hence it is that unregenerate men are usually implacable, malicious, always studying revenge. Nay, so imperfect are the habits and workings of faith in

believers, that they often find it very difficult to forgive. The apostles therefore very properly pray, Lord, increase our faith after hearing this discourse. Others make the connection thus: Lord, we have now heard thee discoursing our duty as to love, now increase our faith, discourse to us something for the increase of that. But the former seemeth to be least strained. By the way we may observe from hence, that as the beginnings, so the increase, of our faith must be from God. In things truly and spiritually good, without him we can do nothing.

Luke 17:6

Ver. 6. Matthew hath in effect the same, Mt 17:20, though he saith, *ye shall say unto this mountain; See Poole on "Mt 17:20"*. I cannot be of their mind who think that our Saviour in this, and the parallel place, speaks only of a faith that works miraculous operations; the object of which must be a Divine revelation or promise made to particular persons, that they shall be able to do things (by the power of God) out of and beyond the ordinary course of nature. I do believe that in both texts our Lord designs to show the great honour he will give to the exercise of the grace of faith, so as nothing which shall be for the honour of God, and the good of those that exercise it, and which God hath promised, shall be too hard or great an achievement for it: yet will it not thence follow, that if we had faith, that is, a full persuasion, that God would do such a thing by us, and a rest and confidence in God relating to it, we might remove mountains, or cast sycamine trees into the sea; for no such faith in us now could have a promise for the object, so as such a persuasion would be no faith, but a mere presumption. But there are other things as difficult, for which all believers have promises: *Sin shall have no dominion over you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, &c.* And there are duties to be performed by us, as hard in the view of our natural eye as removing mountains; amongst which this of forgiving injuries is not the least, especially to some natural tempers. But, saith our Saviour, do not think it impossible to do: you have said well to me, Lord, increase our faith, for if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, either so small as a grain of mustard seed, (if true), or so lively and working, that had such a principle of life in it as a grain of mustard seed, you might do any duty, resist any temptation, mortify any corruption; and you that have a power given you, and a promise made you, for working miracles, might say to this sycamine tree, Be removed, &c.

Luke 17:7

Ver. 7-10. Lu 17:7-9 are plainly a parable, a part of a discourse wherein our Lord, under an earthly similitude, instructs us in a spiritual duty. This duty is easily learned from the *epiparabole*, Lu 17:10, and it lieth in two things:

1. That we ought to do all those things which our Lord hath commanded us.
2. That we, when we have done all, are to look for our reward, not of debt, but of grace.

He illustrates this by a similitude or parable. He supposes a man to have a servant ploughing or feeding cattle for him. By *servants* we must understand such servants as they had in those countries, who were not day servants, or covenant servants, who are only obliged to work their hours, or according to their contracts with us; but such servants as were most usual amongst them, who were bought with their money, or taken in war, who were wholly at their master's command, and all their time was their master's, and they were obliged by their labour only to serve him: such servants our Lord supposes to have been abroad in the field, ploughing, or sowing, or feeding cattle, and at night to be come in from their labour. He asks them which of them would think themselves obliged presently to set them to supper, (for meat, drink, and clothes were all such servants wages), or would not rather set them to work again, to make ready their master's supper, and then to wait upon him, tying up their long garments, which they used in those countries to wear, promising them that afterwards also they should eat and drink. And suppose they do that without murmuring, he asketh them again, whether they would take themselves obliged to thank them for doing the things which their master commanded? He tells them he supposes they would not take themselves to be under any such obligation. Now what is the meaning of *all this he tells them*, Lu 17:10, *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants;* for the infinitely glorious and blessed God can receive no benefit by our services; *we have done that which was our duty to do.* By which we are instructed,

1. That we are wholly the Lord's, all our time, strength, abilities; we are obliged to love the Lord with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.
2. That our labour for the Lord must not cease till the Lord ceaseth commanding, till we have done all that the Lord by his revealed will lets us know we have to do.
3. That when we have done all we shall have merited nothing at God's hands;
 - a) Because we are servants.
 - b) Because we have but done our duty.
4. That the Lord may delay our reward till we have done all that he hath commanded us.
5. That when we have it, it is not a reward of thanks, but of grace.

This parable is excellently added to the former discourses. Our Saviour had before pressed the doctrine of charity, he had also showed what must be the root of it, viz. true and lively faith; he here showeth us what we should propose to ourselves as our end in such acts, viz. not to merit at the hand of God, not merely in hope to receive a reward from him, but the glorifying of God by a faithful obedience to his will, owning him as our Lord, and ourselves as his servants, without any vain glory or ostentation, and in all humility confessing ourselves servants, unprofitable servants, and such as have but done our duty, no, though we had done all that he commanded us; waiting for our reward with patience, and taking it at last as of his free grace with thankfulness; which is indeed requisite to the true and regular performance of every good work which we do, and our duty, if the infirmity of our flesh would allow us to do all whatsoever God hath commanded us; but much more when our performances are so lame and imperfect, that the greatest part of what we do amounts not to the least part of what we leave undone.

Luke 17:11

Ver. 11-13. Christ's nearest way from Galilee to Jerusalem was through Samaria. In a certain town ten lepers met him, for though the law forbade them any other society, yet it did not restrain them from the society of each other; probably they were got together that they might at once come to this great Physician. The leprosy was a sore disease, not so much known in our countries. We shall observe it was the disease which God made to come upon some persons, to testify His displeasure for some sin committed by them. It was threatened as the mark of God upon men for sin, De 28:27 — *with the scab, whereof thou canst not be healed.* God sent it upon Miriam, Nu 12:10, for her contempt of Moses. David curseth Joab's house with it, 2Sa 3:29. Gehazi suffereth by it, for his lying and going after Naaman for a bribe, 2Ki 5:27. King Uzziah, for usurping the priest's office, 2Ki 15:5. These ten lepers cry to Christ for mercy, mercy with respect to their afflictions.

Luke 17:14

Ver. 14. It was according to the Divine law, Le 14:2, that the leper in the day of his cleansing should be brought unto the priest, who was to judge whether he was healed, yea or no, and to offer the offering there prescribed. Christ sends them to the priests, partly that he might observe the law which his Father had given in the case, partly that he might have a testimony of this his miraculous operation. We shall observe that our Saviour cured some being at a distance from them, some by the word of his power only, though he were present in the same place, others by touching of them; he certainly chose thus to vary his circumstances, in actions of this nature, to let people know that the healing virtue was inherent in him, and that the proceeding of it from him was not tied to any ceremony used at the doing of the work, which he used or omitted according to his pleasure.

Luke 17:15

Ver. 15,16. It is most probable that this leper first showed himself to the priest, according to the commandment and the direction of our Saviour, and then returned to give our Saviour thanks. Some think that this glorifying God here mentioned, and his giving thanks to Christ, signify the same thing. I doubt it, because nothing appeareth from this story sufficient to convince us that he looked upon Christ as God; nay, it doth not appear that his faith was risen so high as to believe him the Messiah, the Son of David; they speak to him only under the notion of *Jesus, Master*, Lu 17:13. It is plain they believed him at least to be a great prophet, sent from God, and clothed with a power from God. I choose rather therefore to interpret his falling down on his face at his feet, as a humble posture of reverence, which those nations did often use to compliment their superiors by, even as a posture of adoration; and that his glorifying God was a praising of him as the principal efficient cause of his healing, and his giving thanks to Christ a civil respect paid to Christ as God's instrument in the case. The evangelist addeth, and he was a Samaritan. Christ calls him a stranger, Lu 17:18 a *stranger* to the commonwealth of Israel, as all the Samaritans were.

Luke 17:17

Ver. 17,18. These ten lepers were a representation of all mankind; not more than one of ten that receive signal mercies from the bountiful hand of Divine Providence cometh to give God any suitable homage. Thus he maketh his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust. Men howl to God upon their beds, but glorify him not when they are raised up. But this increpation of our Saviour lets us know, that this their way is their folly.

Luke 17:19

Ver. 19. It is a wonderful thing to observe what small rudiments and

embryos of faith Christ encourages and rewards. His faith appeareth to be no more than a persuasion that Christ did not do what things he did of this nature by any magical art, (as the Pharisee blasphemed), but by the power of God, and that he was a man sent of God. This faith Christ honours, commends, rewards. Faith is to be measured from the revelation which he who believeth hath, and from the opposition which he encounters: a little faith upon a little light, and maintained against a great opposition, is a great faith; though little in itself, yet great with respect to the circumstances of him or her that believeth.

Luke 17:20

Ver. 20. Whether the Pharisees spake this deriding him, who in his discourses had been often mentioning a kingdom of God to come, or in simple seriousness, for they generally expected the coming of a Messiah, and a secular kingdom, which he should exercise in the earth, particularly over the Jews, (having first destroyed the Gentiles), is very hard to determine; their mean opinion of Christ inclineth some to think the former; their generally received opinion about the kingdom of the Messiah giveth some countenance to the latter. Our Saviour's answer fitteth them, whatsoever they intended by their question: *The kingdom of God* (saith he) *cometh not μετα παρατηρησεως, with observation.* The word signifies a scrupulous and superstitious observation. Thus the verb from whence it cometh signifieth, Ga 4:10. The verb also signifies a captious observation, Mr 3:2 Lu 6:7 14:1 Lu 20:20 Ac 9:24. But that sense cannot agree to the noun used in this place. The generality of the best interpreters agree the sense here to be, with external pomp and splendour; and therefore Beza expounds the noun here by a periphrasis, *ita ut observari poterit*, in such a manner as it can be observed. As if he had said, Men have taken up a false notion of my kingdom, as if it were to be a secular kingdom to be set up in the world, with a great deal of noise, and pomp, and splendour, so as men may observe it and gaze upon its coming. But that which I call my kingdom is not of this nature. Our Lord expounds it in the next verse: *The kingdom of God is within you;* it is of a spiritual nature, not obvious to human senses, but exercised over the hearts of my people. Whether our Saviour speaketh this in reply to the Pharisees, or (as some think) beginning a discourse with his disciples, which he further pursueth, I cannot determine.

Luke 17:21

Ver. 21. The latter words of this verse seem fairly to admit of a double interpretation, as *you* here may signify the disciples of Christ, who had received Christ as their Lord, over whom he exercised a spiritual dominion and jurisdiction, or as it may respect the whole Jewish nation, amongst whom the kingdom of God was now exercised, by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of Christ put forth in the casting out devils, and other miraculous operations. I incline to the latter, as differing from those that think these words were spoken with a peculiar respect to the disciples; I rather think them a reply to the Pharisees, as corrective of their false notion and apprehension of the Messiah, as if he were yet to come, and to set up a temporal principality; for it is said, Lu 17:22, And he said unto the disciples, as if he did but then specially apply his discourse to them; εἰ ἡμῖν thus signifieth, Lu 7:16 Joh 1:14. You (saith our Saviour) are much mistaken as to the nature of my kingdom, and indeed of the kingdom of the Messiah, in the expectation of which you live. It is not a kingdom of the same nature with the kingdoms of the world, it cometh not with pomp: and splendour, for men and women to observe; they shall not say, Lo here he cometh! Or, Lo there he goeth! The kingdom of God is now in the midst among you, though you observe it not.

Luke 17:22

Ver. 22. Our Lord spendeth his further discourse in this chapter in a forewarning of his disciples of those great troubles which should follow His departure from them. At present the Bridegroom was with them, and they could not mourn; for many years after that he was departed from them *the days of the Son of man* continued, that is, gospel days, times wherein the gospel of Christ was freely preached to them. But (saith he) make use of that time, for it will not hold long; there will come a time *when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it*. These evil days began when false Christs and false prophets rose up, which was most eminently a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about forty years after. Every factious person that had reputation enough to make himself the head and leader of a faction, taking his

advantage of the common error of the Jews, that a Messiah, a Christ, was to come, who should exercise a temporal kingdom over the Jews, would pretend to be, and give out he was, the Messiah, to draw a faction after him. This is that which our Saviour saith in the next words.

Luke 17:23

Ver. 23,24. See Poole on "Mt 24:23", See Poole on "Mt 24:27". You will (saith our Saviour) have a great many false Christs and false prophets arise, and foolish credulous people will be deceived by them, and come and tell you, Lo, yonder is the Messiah, or, Lo, he is in another place; but believe them not. So it is in Mr 13:21. Follow them not, saith Luke. The Son of man shall have his day, a day when he will come in a glorious manner to judge the quick and the dead; but it will come upon the world like lightning, that suddenly shineth from one part of heaven to another, so as no man can foretell it, or observe the motion of it. Some do think that by *the day of the Son of man* here was meant the spreading of his gospel; but certainly it is a strained sense, nor was the spreading of that a thing so sudden, but more gradually and observably accomplished.

Luke 17:25

Ver. 25. Before my kingdom shall appear in that glory, *I must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.* You may be seduced to think that I am going to put on a crown as a secular prince to deliver you from your enemies. Alas! I am going to a cross. I shall have a day, but this is mine enemies' day, and the power of darkness, both with reference to me and you. Look for nothing in or from this generation but to see me mocked, scourged, spit upon, buffeted, hanged upon a cross, rejected by men; these will be the issues of Divine providence as to this generation; look for better things hereafter, but look for no better from or in this generation.

Luke 17:26

Ver. 26-30. See Poole on "Mt 24:37", and following verse to Mt 24:39. Our blessed Lord in these verses doth both declare the surprisal of the Jews with that judgment which was coming upon them, and of the world with his coming in the day of judgment, (of which the destruction of Jerusalem was a type), and also forewarns them to take heed that they might not be surprised; he tells them, that *in the days of the Son of man*, (so that he speaketh of more than one day), the day of his power in the destruction of the Jews, and in the day of judgment, the antitype to the former, it shall be as in the days of Noah and of Lot. In the days of those men, neither the men of the old world, nor the men of Sodom, would hearken either to Noah or Lot, who were preachers of righteousness to them, and gave them examples of sober and holy lives; but gave up themselves to luxury, and lived in a careless regard of any thing God was doing, until the very day that Noah went into the ark, with his family, and the flood destroyed all the rest; and till the day that Lot went out of Sodom, and fire and brimstone came down and destroyed all those who were left in Sodom. So it would be before the final ruin of the world. Till the very days came, and men felt it, the generality of men would not believe it, nor make any preparation for it. But in our Lord's propounding these two great examples to them, he also lets them know their duty and wisdom, viz. to watch, and be upon their guard, with Lot to get ready to go out of Sodom, with Noah to prepare an ark upon this admonition which he gave them. There are no such signs of approaching ruin to persons or nations, as security, and the abounding of sin and wickedness, notwithstanding the warnings which God giveth them by his messengers.

Luke 17:31

Ver. 31. These words seem to relate singly to the destruction of Jerusalem. See Poole on "Mt 24:17", See Poole on "Mt 24:18", where we had the same. They only signify the certain ruin and destruction of the place, and are our Saviour's counsel to his disciples, not to linger, or promise themselves any longer security there, notwithstanding what any false Christs or false prophets should plainly tell them, but to make as much

haste away out of it as they possibly could.

Luke 17:32

Ver. 32. We have the story Ge 19:26. She *looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt*. Lot and his family leaving Sodom, she either looked back as not believing what the angel had said, or as moved with the miserable condition of the place, or as loath to leave her estate and goods; however, in disobedience to the command of God, Lu 17:17, *Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed*. God turneth her into a pillar of salt. It is a dreadful caution against unbelief, disobedience, worldly mindedness, contempt of God's threatenings, and keeping a love for the forbidden society of lewd and wicked persons.

Luke 17:33

Ver. 33. That is, whosoever, in disobedience to my command, shall use arts to preserve his life, shall lose it; and whosoever, at my command, shall be ready to lose it, shall preserve it, or if he loseth his breath, he shall preserve his soul. See Poole on "Mt 10:39", See Poole on "Mt 16:25", See Poole on "Mr 8:35".

Luke 17:34

Ver. 34-36. See Poole on "Mt 24:40", See Poole on "Mt 24:41". These verses seem to respect the day of judgment, and that dreadful separation which shall be in that day between the sheep and the goats. It is true also of Christ's day in the preaching of the gospel; but that seemeth not to be the sense of this text. They can hardly be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem; it was so universal as hardly any were there left.

Luke 17:37

Ver. 37. Concerning the sense of this proverbial expression, and the various application of it by interpreters, See Poole on "Mt 24:28". In our evangelist (where it is $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$, not $\pi\tau\omega\mu\alpha$, as in Matthew, the word there properly signifying a dead body, the word here a living body) it seems to be applied to Christ's glorious coming to judgment: Where I shall be, who am to be the Judge both of the quick and the dead, thither shall all the world be gathered before me, but my saints especially, who have eagles eyes, senses exercised to discern betwixt good and evil, to discern me as their Redeemer, and the true Messiah; according to that, Ps 1:5,6. *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.*

Luke 18:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 18:1-8 The parable of the unjust judge and the importunate widow.

Lu 18:9-14 The parable of the Pharisee and publican.

Lu 18:15-17 Christ's tenderness to the little children that were brought unto him.

Lu 18:18-23 He teacheth a ruler how to attain eternal life.

Lu 18:24-27 He showeth how hard it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God,

Lu 18:28-30 promises rewards to those who have foregone aught for the gospel's sake,

Lu 18:31-34 foretells his own death and resurrection,

Lu 18:35-43 and giveth sight to a blind man.

Ver. 1. This duty of praying always is inculcated to us several times in the Epistles, as may appear from those texts quoted in the margin, which we must not interpret as an obligation upon us to be always upon our knees praying; for thus our obedience to it would be inconsistent with our obedience to other precepts of God, relating both to religious duties and civil actions, neither was Christ himself always praying: but it either, first,

lets us know, that there is no time in which we may not pray; as we may pray in all places, *every where lifting up holy hands without doubting*, (as the apostle saith, I 1Ti 2:8), so we must pray at any time. Or, secondly, it is as much as, pray frequently and ordinarily; as Solomon's servants are said by the queen of Sheba to stand always, that is, ordinarily and frequently, before him, 1Ki 10:8; and the Jews are said always to have resisted the Spirit of God, Ac 7:51; that is, very often, for they did it not in every individual act of their lives. Or else, in every part of time; knitting the morning and evening (the general parts of our time) together by prayer. Thus the morning and evening sacrifice is called the *continual burnt offering*, Ex 29:42 Ne 10:33. Or, as it is in Eph 6:18, εν παντι καιρω, in every season, whenever the providence of God offers us a fair season and opportunity for prayer. Or mentally praying always, intermixing good and pious ejaculations with our most earthly and sublunary occasions. Or, having our hearts at all times ready for prayer, having the fire always on the altar, (as was required under the old law), though the sacrifice be not always offering.

And not to faint, which is the same with that, Eph 6:18, *watching thereunto with all perseverance*; and Col 4:2, *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same*. Not fainting either by reason of God's delay to give us the things we ask of him, or through laziness, and remission of our duty, before our life doth determine. This is now what our Saviour designs to teach us in this parable which followeth.

Luke 18:2

Ver. 2-8. We have here the parable, and the interpretation thereof, both, Lu 18:1, in the *proparabole*, or the words immediately going before it, and also in an *epiparabole*, or some words following it, which sufficiently explain our Saviour's scope and intention in it, viz. To assure his people, that though the Lord show a great deal of patience towards wicked men, who are the enemies of his people, and doth not presently answer their cries for a deliverance of them out of their hand; yet if they go on crying to him, he will most certainly at length deliver them. To this purpose he tells them a matter of fact, which either had happened, or might happen in the world.

There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, &c.: from hence he concludes, arguing from the lesser to the greater, and indeed there is an emphasis in every part of the comparison.

1. This was an unjust judge; God is a righteous Judge.
2. He did this for a stranger; God's people are *his own elect*.

Then he assures them, that God would *avenge them speedily*. We may from this discourse of our Saviour observe several things.

1. That all the wrongs and injuries which the people of God suffer in this life should make them fervent and frequent in prayer to God for redressing them.
2. That notwithstanding their prayers, God may bear with their enemies long, for so much time as they shall think a long time.
3. If God's people do not faint, but continue night and day crying to him, God will hear them, and avenge them of their adversaries.

The power that importunity hath upon sinful men, may confirm us in this thing, and ought to engage us to pray without ceasing and fainting.

Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? When Christ shall come to judgment, he will find very few whose hearts have not fainted; there will be multitudes who are fallen away, through the power that temptations have upon the frailty of human nature. By *faith* here seems to be understood the true and proper effects of faith, growing out of it as the fruit out of the root. This premonition of our Saviour also served for an excellent caution to his disciples, that they would watch, and take care that they might be none of that part of the stars of heaven, which by the dragon's tail should be cast down to the earth.

Luke 18:9

Ver. 9. By the term certain, or some, he unquestionably understandeth the Pharisees and their disciples, who (as we have all along in the history of the Gospel observed) were a generation of men who were eminently guilty both of a boasting of themselves, and a scorning and despising all others.

Luke 18:10

Ver. 10. Who these Pharisees, and who the Publicans, were we have had frequent occasions before to tell. The temple stood upon a hill, therefore they are said to ascend, or go up. They had in the temple set hours for prayer, as may be learned from Ac 3:1, at which some of all sorts went up to pay that homage unto God. Our Saviour mentions but two, having in it no further design than by this parable to inform His disciples, how much more acceptable to God the prayers of broken, humble, contrite hearts are, though the persons possessed of them be such as have been, or at least have been reputed, great sinners, than the prayers of those who are hypocrites, and proud, and come unto God pleading their own righteousness, in order to the obtaining of his favour.

Luke 18:11

Ver. 11. From hence we may observe that thanksgiving is a part of prayer. It is said he *prayed*, yet we read not of any one petition he put up. His standing while he prayed is not to be found fault with, (that was a usual posture used by persons praying), unless the Pharisee made choice of it for ostentation, that he might be the better taken notice of; which was too much their fault, Mt 6:5. Whether the term *προς εαυτον*, with himself, in this place, signifieth that he only prayed in his heart, or with a voice that could not be heard, or only that he prayed by himself, I doubt; for though our Saviour, who knew men's thoughts, could easily repeat his prayer, supposing it only mental, or at least with a voice not audible, yet this seemeth not to suit the humour of a Pharisee, whose whole design was to be taken notice of, seen, and heard by others. He saith, *God, I thank thee,*

that I am not as other men, extortioners, adulterers, &c. But was this blameworthy? May we not bless God for his restraining grace, not suffering us to run into, the same excesses of riot with other men? Doubtless it is both lawful, and our duty, provided:

1. That we speak truth when we say it.
2. That we do not come to plead this as our righteousness before God.

But this Pharisee:

1. Speaks this in the pride of his heart, in the justification of himself.
2. In the scorn and contempt of his neighbour.
3. Though he were guilty of as great sins as these, though of another kind.

In the mean time we observe, that he did not attribute this negative goodness, of which he had boasted, or that positive goodness, which he will tell us of by and by, to the power of his own will. He gives thanks to God for them.

Luke 18:12

Ver. 12. Twice in the sabbath, saith the Greek, but that is ordinary, to denominate the days of the week from the sabbath; the meaning is, twice between sabbath and sabbath. Those learned in the Jewish Rabbins tell us, that the Jews were wont to fast twice in a week, that is, the Pharisees and the more devout sort of them; once on the second, another time on the fifth day (which are those days which we call Monday and Thursday). From whence some tell us that Wednesday and Friday come to be with us fasting days or fish days. The Christians in former times, thinking it beneath them to be less in these exercises than the Jews, would have also two fasting days each week; and those not the same with the Jews, that they might not be thought to Judaize. If that custom had any true antiquity, I doubt not but they fasted after another rate than the papists or others now do, who pretend a religion to those days. But neither was the Pharisees practice, nor the practice of Christians, in this thing to be much admired or applauded.

For fasting was always used in extraordinary cases; and the bringing extraordinary duties into ordinary practice usually ends in a mere formality. It is a good rule, neither to make ordinary duties extraordinary or rare, nor yet extraordinary duties ordinary: the doing of the first ordinarily issues in the loss of them, and quite leaving them off; the latter, in a formal lifeless performance of them.

I give tithes of all that I possess. The emphasis lieth in the word *all*. Others paid tithes of apples, and some fruits of the earth (of which alone tithes were due); but the Pharisees would pay tithes of those things, as to which it was generally held that the law did not strictly require them, such as pot herbs, eggs milk, cheese. Our Saviour bare them this testimony, that they paid tithes of *mint, anise, and cummin*, Mt 23:23; *rue, and all manner of herbs*, Lu 11:42. This Pharisee boasteth of his exactness in two things, neither of which were required particularly by the law of God. Nor did he amiss in them, if he had not omitted the weightier things of the law, as our Saviour charges them to have done in both the texts before mentioned. But how came these things to make him a plea for his justification before God? Will he plead his righteousness, because he did things which God did not command him, while in the mean time he omitted those things which God had commanded? Or, what did these things signify; if they were not done out of a root of love? The law is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*; and how could they be performed out of love, when love was one of the things which our Saviour charges them to have omitted? Of the same nature are other works, such as building of churches, and hospitals, and alms houses: the fruit is good, if the root be good; but if they be done out of ostentation, or opinion of meriting at God's hands, men's money (notwithstanding these things) will perish with them, for heaven is not to be purchased by our money.

Luke 18:13

Ver. 13. Those who fancy the publican stood afar off from the Pharisee, because the Pharisees would suffer none but those of their sect, at least none that were under such a notoriety of disrepute as the publicans generally were, to come near them, suppose him to have been a Jew (which is not impossible): if he were a Gentile, he must stand so far off as the court of the Gentiles was from the court of Israel. This publican's

humility in his address to God is described,

1. By his posture; he looked upon the earth, as one that thought himself not worthy to look toward heaven.
2. By his action; he *smote upon his breast*, as one full of sorrow and trouble.
3. By the matter and form of his prayer; he confesseth himself a *sinner*; he fleeth unto the free grace of God.

Here is not a word of boasting, that he was not such or such, nor yet that he did thus or thus. He confesseth himself *a sinner*, a miserable sinner, and fleeth to the free grace of God; thereby instructing us how to make our applications to God, disclaiming any goodness or righteousness in ourselves, and fleeing to the alone merits of Christ, and the free grace of God in and through him.

Luke 18:14

Ver. 14. Justified η εχθινοϋ, we translate, *rather than the other*; not that the other was at all justified by God; the other was justified by himself only, and those of his party. The publican was justified by God. It followeth, *for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased*, &c. It is another of our Saviour's sentences, often made use of by him, Mt 23:12, and in this Gospel, Lu 14:11. It is applied to the ordinary practice of men, but here to God in the ways of his providence; he resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. The blessed Virgin magnifies God on this account, Lu 1:51,52.

Luke 18:15

Ver. 15-17. See Poole on "Mt 19:13", and following verses to Mt 19:15, See Poole on "Mr 10:13", and following verses to Mr 10:16, where we before met with this piece of history.

Luke 18:18

Ver. 18-27. We have met with this story at large, Mt 19:16-26; and with (if not the same) very like to it. Mr 10:17-27. See Poole on "Mt 19:16", and following verses to Mt 19:26. See Poole on "Mr 10:17", and following verses to Mr 10:17. The history is of great use to us.

1. To show how far a man may go, that yet is a great way short of a truly good and spiritual state. He may know that nothing in this life will make him perfectly happy. He may desire eternal life, and salvation. He may go a great way in keeping the commandments of God, as to the letter of them. He may come to the ministers of the gospel to be further instructed. But herein he will fail, he will not come to Christ that he may have life, but fancy he should do something meritorious of it; he doth not aright understand the law, and that there is no going to heaven that way, but by the perfect observation of it, and therefore fancies himself in a much better state than he is.
2. It instructs us in this, that there is no coming to heaven by works, but by a full and perfect obedience to the whole revealed will of God.
3. That every hypocrite hath some lust or other, in which he cannot deny himself. This ruler's lust was his immoderate love of the world, and the things thereof.
4. That it is a mighty difficult thing for any persons, but especially such as have great possessions on earth, to get to heaven.
5. As difficult and almost impossible as it may appear to men, yet nothing is impossible with God. He can change the heart of the rich, and incline it to himself; as well as the, heart of the poor. The rich man hath more impediments; but be men rich or poor, without the powerful influence of God upon the heart, without his free grace, no soul will be saved.

Luke 18:28

Ver. 28-30. See Poole on "Mt 19:27" and following verses to Mt 19:30, See Poole on "Mr 10:28" and following verses to Mr 10:30. The difficulty is only to reconcile Lu 18:30 to God's providences. For the everlasting life promised in the world to come, that is matter of faith, and not so much as seemingly contradicted by any providence of God. But how many lose much for Christ, that in this life do not receive manifold more, or a hundredfold!

Answer. It is true, if we understood it *in specie*. But the promise is not so to be interpreted. It is enough, if they do receive much more *in valore*, in value upon a true and just estimation. And this every sufferer for Christ hath, either,

1. In a joy, and peace, and assurance of God's love, which is a thousand times more.
2. Or at least in a contentment of mind with that state into which the providence of God bringeth them: this also is much more, as any will judge it a happier state never to thirst, than to have much drink to satisfy the appetite.

Luke 18:31

Ver. 31-34. We shall afterward, in the history of our Saviour's passion, see all these things exactly fulfilled, and our Lord here assures his disciples, that it was but in accomplishment of all that was prophesied concerning the Messiah; nor was it any more than he had told them, Lu 9:22, and

again, Lu 9:44 Mt 20:17-19, Mr 10:32-34. Yet it is said, *that they understood none of these things*. The words were easy enough to be understood, but they could not reconcile them to the notion of the Messiah which they had drank in, they could not conceive how the Messiah, that should redeem Israel, should die, or be thus barbarously used by those whom he came to redeem, or save. We have great need to consider well what notions we entertain concerning the things of God. All this blindness and unbelief of the disciples was bottomed in the false notion of the Messiah which they had taken up. However, our Saviour thought fit to inculcate them, to prepare them against the offence they might take at them when the providence of God brought them forth. It is good for us to hear, though it be only for the time to come.

Luke 18:35

Ver. 35. This blind man was *Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus*, as Mark tells us, Mr 10:46. Matthew mentions two, the other two evangelists but one, as being more famous, either upon his own or his father's account.

Luke 18:36

Ver. 36-43. See Poole on "Mt 20:30", and following verses to Mt 20:34, See Poole on "Mr 10:46", and following verses to Mr 10:52, where this whole history is more fully opened. It is here again very remarkable, how much Christ attributes to faith: *Thy faith hath saved thee*, Lu 18:42, which can be no otherwise understood, than of faith as the condition that was required in the person to be healed, for it is most certain that Christ by his Divine power was the efficient cause of this blind man's healing; but he exerted this Divine power upon that exercise of faith which he discerned in the blind man, whose faith seemeth to be a degree higher than that of the leper's, Lu 17:13, who said no more than *Jesus, Master. Jesus, thou Son of David*, was much more than this. It speaks the blind man's persuasion, that Christ was the Messiah; for it was an uncontrolled tradition amongst the Jews, that the Messiah was to be the Son of David. Christ rewards the

least exercises of true faith, but much more the higher exercises of it. It doth not appear that this blind man was fully informed who the Messiah should be, viz. God man, but so far as he knew he professeth, he calleth Jesus the *Son of David*.

Luke 19:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 19:1-10 Christ visiteth Zacchaeus the publican.
Lu 19:11-27 The parable of a nobleman who left money with his servants to trade with in his absence.
Lu 19:28-40 Christ rideth in triumph into Jerusalem.
Lu 19:41-44 He weepeth over the city,
Lu 19:45,46 driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple,
Lu 19:47,48 teacheth daily therein: the rulers seek to destroy him.

Ver. 1. *Jericho* was a very rich city, in the tribe of Benjamin, less than twenty miles distance from Jerusalem, (whither our Saviour was going), and less than eight miles distance from Jordan: See Poole on "Nu 22:1". It was the first place which Joshua sent persons to spy out, before he had conducted the Israelites over Jordan, Jos 2:1-24; he took it, Jos 6:1-27, and cursed the man that should rebuild it, for he burned it, Jos 6:24. He prophesied, that he who should go about to rebuild it, *should lay the foundation of it in his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son*; which accordingly fell out in Ahab's time, to one Hiel, a Bethelite, 1Ki 16:34. Through this town, or city, which now had been rebuilt many years, our Saviour passeth in his way to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:2

Ver. 2. We have had frequent occasions to hint, that the publicans were the gatherers of the public revenue for the Romans. Amongst them there was an order of superior and inferior officers: Zacchaeus was the chief of them that were in that commission.

And he was rich; which is not to be wondered at, considering his employment; and is particularly mentioned doubtless to magnify the grace of God towards him, of which we shall by and by hear more; as well as to let us know, that though it be a hard thing for a rich man to be saved, yet with God it is possible, as we heard before, as, that though publicans were most of them rapacious and exceedingly given to extortion, and the love of money commonly increaseth with the increase of men's estate, yet Christ can change the heart of such a man, and work it into a contempt of riches, and into a freedom to part with them at the command of Christ, or where they hinder the embraces of him.

Luke 19:3

Ver. 3,4. All this was but curiosity; he saw a great crowd passing by, and asks what was the matter. The people tell him, that it was Jesus of Nazareth, that famous Prophet, whose fame had filled Judea as well as Galilee. He hath a great curiosity to see him, and runs before to find out a convenient station; but perceiving the crowd was great, and knowing that he was too low of stature to look over all their heads so well as to satisfy himself, he climbeth up upon a sycamore tree, by the way side in which he knew that he must pass.

Luke 19:5

Ver. 5. I see no ground for their opinion who think that before this time Zacchaeus's heart was touched with any love or affection to Christ. The evangelist seemeth to represent Zacchaeus before this as a mere stranger to Christ, *he sought to see who he was.* But Christ's looks are healing looks,

there went virtue along with them to convert Zacchaeus, though a publican, and to recover Peter, who had denied his Master; but they must be such looks as carried with them a design to do good to souls. Christ looked upon thousands to whom his looks conveyed no spiritual saving grace. He that could heal by the hem of his garment touched, could change a heart by his look. How good a thing it is to be near the place where Christ is, whatever principle brings men thither! Provided men come not as the Pharisees used to come, to execute their malice. Zacchaeus was brought to the bodily view of Christ out of mere curiosity, but being there he receiveth a saving look from him. How many have had their hearts changed by gospel sermons, who never went to hear the preachers with any such desire or design! Christ's design may be executed in the conversion of sinners, though not ours. He is found of them that seek him not, and of those that inquire not after him. Preparatory dispositions in us are not necessary to the first grace. God can at the same time prepare and change the heart. Zacchaeus is the first man we read of to whose house Christ (not asked) invited himself, and in it did more for Zacchaeus than he expected. Oh the freeness and riches of Divine grace! Which seeketh not a worthy object, but makes the object worthy, and therefore loveth it. What a word was this, *Come down; for today I must abide at thy house!*

Luke 19:6

Ver. 6. Curiosity carried Zacchaeus up, but love to Christ bringeth him down; he therefore makes haste to come down, and he receiveth Christ joyfully, glad to entertain such a guest. When Christ cometh to any soul, he never brings any sorrow to it, nor any thing but glad tidings.

Luke 19:7

Ver. 7. *All* here must not be taken for every individual person, that is not to be presumed either of all the inhabitants of Jericho, or, much less, of all that were in Christ's company: amongst others Mary Magdalene was at this time in his company, who had no reason to murmur at that. But of what sort of people were these murmurers? The voice is the voice of Pharisees, who had often quarrelled at Christ for this, and of their disciples; for there were multitudes of the Jews that had drunk in the

superstitions of that faction, and were more afraid of keeping company with sinners, than themselves being so; of having fellowship with their excommunicates in their houses, than of having fellowship with their, or greater, works of darkness. Our Saviour had before answered this cavil, he will now come to show them they were mistaken in the man; that he whom they counted a sinner, was a better man than themselves generally were.

Luke 19:8

Ver. 8. See here the first effects of Christ's saving looks upon any soul. The soul presently begins to cry out with the prophet, Isa 6:5, *Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* Zacchaeus is now made sensible of his covetousness, and hardness of heart towards the poor, of his extortion and oppression, and resolves upon an effectual reformation. Christ never looks any soul in the face, but he looks his scandalous sinnings out of countenance. Acts of charity and justice are the first fruits of true repentance. The world, and the love of it, go out of the heart as soon as ever the true love of Christ comes into it; the soul knows that it *cannot serve God and mammon*. In case of wrong done to others, there can be no repentance, nor (consequently) any remission, without restitution and satisfaction, so far as we know it, and are able.

I restore, saith Zacchaeus. True love to Christ never giveth him bare measure. God had no where required the giving of half a man's goods to the poor, nor the restoring of fourfold, except in case of theft, of which men were judicially convicted; in case of voluntary confession, the law was but for a fifth part, over and above the principal, its to which a person was wronged, Nu 5:7. In case an ox were stolen, the thief was to restore fivefold, and in case of a sheep stolen four were to be restored, if the person had alienated it; if it were found alive in his hand, he was to restore double, Ex 22:1,4. In other cases he was to restore but double, if it came to the sentence of the judge, Ex 22:9; but in case of a voluntary confession, He was only tied to a fifth part above the principal, and to bring a trespass offering to the Lord, Le 6:1-6. This was the case of Zacchaeus; being touched with the sense of his sin, he voluntarily confesseth, and promises the highest degree of restitution. But a true love in the soul to Christ thinks

nothing too much to do in the detestation of sin, or demonstration of itself in works which may be acceptable in the sight of God.

Luke 19:9

Ver. 9,10. It is the opinion of some, that by *house* is here to be understood Zacchaeus and his whole family. Nor can it be denied, but that God, when he poureth out the oil of grace upon the head of a family, maketh some of it to run down to the skirts of his garments. God's covenant was with Abraham and his seed. There is a blessing upon whole nations, and whole families, where the heads of them receive the gospel; but this is not to be extended beyond some gospel privileges, and the liberty of the means of grace. εωτηρια εγενετο (which we translate *salvation is come*) seemeth to signify much more than this. I had rather therefore interpret *this house*, the head of this house.

Forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Here again a question ariseth, in what sense these words are to be understood, whether that he were the son of Abraham, as Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation, or as he was the father of the faithful, viz. of all those who believed, or should believe, in Christ. Those who think he was a Jew, suppose that the Romans did employ some Jews in their service, to gather the public revenue, which is not improbable, being no more than is done by all conquerors: they have also to countenance them,

1. That Zacchaeus is a name of Hebrew extraction.
2. That his mention of a fourfold restitution seemeth to have reference to the law of fourfold restitution, in case of a sheep stolen, and alienated, Ex 22:1.
3. That the Jews did not charge our Saviour for eating with a person uncircumcised, but a person that was a scandalous sinner.

These make these words to be a reason given by our Saviour why he was so kind to Zacchaeus, because he also was a *son of Abraham*, one of *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. If I could interpret σωτηρια, the means of salvation, I should incline to this sense also; but taking it to

signify saving grace, which brings men to a certainty of salvation, remission of sins, and the justification of the soul of this publican, I cannot but think that by *a son of Abraham* in this text is meant a true believer, which he might be, and yet be a native Jew also. Though all Israel did not obtain, yet the election amongst them did obtain, Ro 11:7. All were not Israel who were of Israel. *Neither*, (saith the apostle, Ro 9:7) *because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children*. Nor were they other than Jews to whom Christ said, Joh 8:39, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;* and, Joh 8:44, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*. Our Saviour therefore in saying, *Forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham*, intendeth much more than that he was a native Jew, (if indeed he were so, for that is not certain), viz. that he was a believer, a son of Abraham considered as the father of the faithful; a genuine son of Abraham, rejoicing with him at the sight of his day, and believing with him, so as it was imputed to him for righteousness; and salvation is already come in a sure title, though not in actual possession, to every soul that is such a one.

For the Son of man (saith he) *is come to seek and to save that which was lost*. We had the same, Mt 18:11: See Poole on "Mt 18:11".

Luke 19:11

Ver. 11. We noted before, that Jericho was but a hundred and fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, (which were not twenty miles), and probably this discourse was upon the way when he was come nearer to it. But the principal occasion of the following parable was, his discerning of the opinion which possessed some of the company which went along with him, that the time was now at hand when the *kingdom of God should appear*; when Christ would put forth some eminent act of his power, in delivering them from the servitude they were in to the Romans, or in destroying the unbelieving Jews and Pharisees; or when his gospel should take a further place, and prevail in the world beyond what it yet had done. He therefore putteth forth a parable to them, wherein by a familiar similitude he lets them understand, that he was going away from them, but would come again, and then receive the kingdom: that in the mean time he would employ them, as his servants, with his goods, and when he came

would take an account what use and improvement they had made of them, and then he would both reward his friends and be revenged on his enemies. The parable followeth.

Luke 19:12

Ver. 12-27. The parable of the talents, which we had, Mt 25:14-30, is of great cognation to this parable, and the doctrine of it in many things is the very same; but the circumstances of that and this relation are so differing, as I cannot think that both Matthew and Luke relate to the same time. I know nothing that hinders, but that our Saviour might twice repeat a parable which in substance is the same. Not to insist upon the examination of the words used in the Greek, (which is a work fit only for critical writers), for the right understanding of this parable we have three things to do:

1. To inquire what special instruction our Saviour did in this parable intend to those who heard him at that time.
2. Who the persons are, represented in it under the notion of a nobleman and servants; and what the things are, represented under the notion of going into a far country, to receive a kingdom, distributing his goods, &c.
3. What general instructions from it may be collected, which inform us as well as those to whom our Lord at that time spake. The special instructions which our Lord in this parable seemeth by it to have given his disciples were these:
 - a) That they were mistaken in their notions or apprehensions of the sudden coming of Christ's kingdom in power and glory. He had first a great journey to go, and they had a great deal of work to do. Instead of reigning amongst them, and exalting them, he was going away from them for a long time.
 - b) That there would be such a manifestation of his kingdom in glory and power, when he should exalt and liberally reward his friends, and severely punish all such as should be his enemies. In order to these

instructions, he taketh up this parable, or speaketh to them in the use of this similitude.

- c) As to the aptness of it: The *nobleman* here mentioned was Christ, who shall hereafter be a King in the exercise of power and justice, and distribute eternal rewards and punishments; but in his state of humiliation in which he was when he thus spake to them, was but like a nobleman, a Son of man, though the chiefest of ten thousand.

His going *into afar country*, signifieth his going from earth to heaven.

To receive a kingdom; a kingdom of glory, honour, and power at the right hand of the Father. His returning signifies his coming again to judge the world at the last day. His calling his servants, and delivering to them ten pounds, signifieth his giving gifts unto men, when he should ascend up on high; gifts of several natures, but all to be occupied, used in a spiritual trade, for the advantage of our common Lord. Not that he giveth to all alike, (which it is manifest he doth not), for every passage in a parable is not answered in the thing which it is brought to represent or express. The citizens hating him, and sending a message after him, &c., signifies that the generality of the world are haters of Christ, and demonstrate their hatred by their refusal of his spiritual government and jurisdiction. His returning, and calling his servants to an account, signifies, that when Christ at the last day shall come to judge the world, he will have an account of every individual person, how they have used the gifts with which he hath intrusted them, whether they be longer time of life, more health than others, riches, honours, or more spiritual gifts, such as knowledge, utterance, wit, &c., or any trusty places or offices they have been in. The different account the servants brought in, signifies that men do not equally use the gifts with which the Lord blesseth them; some use them well, some ill; some bring honour and glory to God by the use of them, and that some in one degree, and some in another. Some bring him no honour or glory at all. The master's answer to them upon their accounts, lets us know that every man shall be rewarded according to his work. There will be degrees in glory, (though we cannot well open them), as well as of punishments. The unprofitable servant's excuse for himself, signifies the great itch of proud human nature to excuse itself, and lay all file blame of its miscarriages on God, either his severity, or his not giving them enough, &c. The king's answer, Lu 19:22,23, lets us know, that sinners will be

found to be condemned out of their own mouths: at the last day, God will be found a righteous God, and man will be found to be the liar. What the Lord further adds, Lu 19:24,26, lets us know God's liberality in rewarding his saints at last. What he saith Lu 19:27, concerning his enemies, assures us, that although God spareth men and women a long time, so long as while his Son is in the far country, while the heavens must contain him; yet in the day of judgment a most certain final ruin will be their portion. Hence we may easily gather what instructions are offered us in this parable.

1. That the state of Christ, when he shall come to judge the world, will be a far more glorious state than it was while he was here upon the earth. He was here in the appearance of a nobleman, but he shall then appear as a king.
2. That all the good things which we have in this life are our Lord's goods, put in trust with us to be used for his honour and glory.
3. That it must be expected that in the world there should be a great many rebels against Christ and his kingdom, a great many that shall say, *We will not have this man to rule over us.*
4. That some make greater improvements than others of what God intrusts them with for his honour and glory, and some make no improvement at all of them.
5. That Christ, when he cometh to judge the world, will have a strict account how men have used his goods, their time of life, or health, their capacities, honours, riches, trusts, parts, &c.
6. That those shall have the highest reward in glory who have made the highest improvements; but those who have made improvements in any proportion shall have their reward.
7. That proud and wretched sinners will think in the day of judgment to wipe their own mouths, and lay all the blame of their miscarriages on God.
8. That this is their folly, God will condemn them from their own vain

pleas.

9. That in the day of judgment unprofitable creatures will, besides the loss of those rewards which they might have received from God, have all their little satisfactions taken from them, in the enjoyments of which they dishonoured God.
10. That though proud sinners here oppose the law of God revealed to them, and will not suffer Christ to reign over them; yet his power they shall not be able to resist, they shall at the last day be slain before Christ's face, and become his footstool. He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, Ps 2:9 110:1, and who shall then deliver them out of his hand?

Luke 19:28

Ver. 28. Jerusalem (as we before noted) stood upon a hill; those that went to it therefore ascended. This going before the company was noted by Mr 10:32; here again Luke taketh notice of it; to let us know certainly with what alacrity our Saviour managed the business of man's redemption. He knew that he was at this time to be the sufferer, and to die at Jerusalem; to show that he was freely willing, he leadeth the way.

Luke 19:29

Ver. 29-34. See Poole on "Mt 21:1", and following verses to Mt 21:6. See Poole on "Mr 11:1", and following verses to Mr 11:6. We have discoursed there of Bethphage and Bethany, and whatever occurs in this history needing any explication.

Luke 19:35

Ver. 35-38. See Poole on "Mt 21:7" and following verses to Mt 21:9. See Poole on "Mr 11:7" and following verses to Mr 11:10. Both which evangelists (Mark most fully) describe this great triumph.

Luke 19:39

Ver. 39,40. How peevish were these wretched Pharisees, to envy our Saviour this little triumph, of coming into the city upon an ass's colt, with garments under him instead of a saddle, or any stately furniture and trappings, and attended by a company of poor people throwing their garments and boughs of trees in the way! Yet these they would have silenced. Our Saviour's reply, *If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*, seemeth to have been a proverbial speech used amongst them, to signify a thing which could not be. This day was accomplished God's decree in that particular passage of providence, concerning our Saviour, which could not be defeated.

Luke 19:41

Ver. 41. Those who of old blotted out this sentence, as thinking that weeping was not becoming Christ's perfection, seem to have forgotten that he was perfect man, and a sharer in all the natural infirmities of human nature (if weeping upon the prospect of human miseries deserveth no better name than an infirmity, being an indication of love and compassion). Those who think that it was idle for him to weep for that which he might easily have helped, seem to oblige God to give out of his grace, whether men do what he hath commanded them, and is in their power to do, yea or no. Christ wept over Jerusalem as a man, having compassion for these poor Jews, with respect to the miseries he saw coming upon them; as a minister of the gospel, pitying the people to whom he was primarily sent.

Luke 19:42

Ver. 42. Speeches which are the products of great passion, are usually abrupt and imperfect: *If thou hadst known*, that is, Oh that thou hadst known, or, I wish that thou hadst known. We are said in Scripture not to know more than we believe, are affected with, and live up to the knowledge of. They had heard enough of the things which concerned their peace, Christ had told them to them, but they attended not to them, they believed them not, and so cared not to direct their lives according to any such notions.

At least in this thy day; the time in which I have been preaching the gospel to thee (for so I had rather interpret it, than of this last journey of our Saviour's to Jerusalem). This was properly the Jews day, for the first preachers of the gospel spent all their time and pains amongst them.

The things which belong unto thy peace, that is, to thy happiness, for so the term often signifies, and it refers as well to the happiness of the outward as of their inward man.

But now they are hid from thine eyes: God will not suffer his Spirit always to strive with man, because he is but flesh, not fit to be always waited on by the great Majesty of heaven. First men shut their eyes against the things

that do concern their peace, then God hideth them from them. No man hath more than his day, his time of grace: how long that is none can tell: if he sleepeth out that, his case is desperate, past remedy.

Luke 19:43

Ver. 43,44. It is a plain prophecy of the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, which came to pass within less than forty years after. The cause of that dreadful judgment is assigned, *because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*. God's visitations are either of wrath or mercy; of wrath, Ex 32:34 Le 26:16 Jer 15:3; of mercy, Jer 29:10. It is plain that our Saviour useth the term here in the latter, not the former sense; and that by God's visitation of this people here, is meant his visiting them with his prophets, by John the Baptist, and by himself. Their not knowing of it (here intended) was their not making use of it, not receiving and embracing the gospel. The contempt of the gospel is the great, cause of all those miseries which come upon people in this life, or shall come upon them in that life which is to come.

Luke 19:45

Ver. 45,46. We have met with this before more fully: See Poole on "Mt 21:12". See Poole on "Mt 21:13". See Poole on "Mr 11:15", and following verses to Mr 11:17.

Luke 19:47

Ver. 47,48. This our Saviour's preaching *daily* must be understood of a very few days, for it appeareth from Joh 12:1, that he came to Bethany but six days before the passover; now upon the passover day he died; but for the intermediate time, it is plain from the other evangelists that he was wont to spend the day time at Jerusalem in the temple, and at night to return to Bethany.

The chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, only they stood in a little awe of the people, who were very attentive to hear him.

Luke 20:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 20:1-8 Christ silences those who questioned his authority.

Lu 20:9-18 The parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen.

Lu 20:19-26 The chief priests and scribes seek matter against him: his reply to their insidious question concerning: paying tribute to Caesar.

Lu 20:27-40 He confuteth the Sadducees concerning the resurrection.

Lu 20:41-44 He propounds a difficulty concerning the character of Christ.

Lu 20:45-47 He warns his disciples against the ambition and hypocrisy of the scribes.

Ver. 1,2. We have along the history of the gospel observed, that the scribes and Pharisees took all advantages imaginable against our Saviour: failing in all their acts, they now come to question his authority, which seemeth not so much to have respect to his preaching, as to his act in casting of the buyers and sellers out of the temple; for as to preaching, they seem, by the history of Scripture, to have given a great liberty, especially if any had the repute of a prophet.

Luke 20:3

Ver. 3-8. See Poole on "Mt 21:24", and following verses to Mt 21:27. See Poole on "Mr 11:29", and following verses to Mr 11:33. The substance of our Saviour's answer is this: From whence had John his authority? He preached and baptized; who gave him his authority? They had sent much

such another message to John, Joh 1:19-22. Was John's authority ordinary or extraordinary? It is plain that he had no authority from them, for then they would not have sent to him to know who he was. He must therefore have it from heaven. Now if they had allowed John's call extraordinary, why should not they allow Christ's to be such, to whom John gave so large a testimony, and who confirmed his extraordinary mission by miraculous operations, which we do not read that John ever did? Besides, the Pharisees saw that if they allowed John's mission to be extraordinary, and from heaven, they had obviously exposed themselves to a check for not believing what he said; they therefore refuse to make any answer, and Christ refuseth also to satisfy them.

Luke 20:9

Ver. 9-18. We met with this parable at large both in Mt 21:33-41, and in Mr 12:1-11. Its obvious scope is to let them know, that God in righteous judgment, for the Jews' abusing the Lord's prophets, John the Baptist, and himself, who was in a few days to be killed by them, would unchurch and destroy them, and raise up to himself a church amongst the Gentiles; and that this was no more than was prophesied of, Ps 118:22.

Luke 20:19

Ver. 19,20. There is nothing in these verses, but what we before met with, and is opened in the notes on Mt 21:45,46, or Mr 12:12,13. They let us see as in a glass the spirit and genius of wicked men filled with malice against the gospel. They are continually seeking to destroy such as have any relation to Christ, and, to effect their ends, they will judge no means unfair; and their great art is to represent them as dangerous persons to the civil government: so as if good men find the same things still, they have this to comfort them, that *the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord*.

Luke 20:21

Ver. 21-26 This piece of history we have likewise met with, both in Mt 22:16-22, and Mr 12:14-17.

Luke 20:27

Ver. 27-38. See Poole on "Mt 22:23", and following verses to Mt 22:32, See Poole on "Mr 12:18", and following verses to Mr 12:27, where all the passages in this piece of history are fully opened. By *equal unto the angels*, in Lu 20:36, we must not understand in all things, but in the thing mentioned:

1. The number of the elect shall be perfect, so there shall be no need of marrying, or giving in marriage, to multiply the number of men.
2. There shall be no more marriages amongst men than amongst angels; *all live unto God*, Lu 20:38. Though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead at the speaking of those words, yet they were not so in God's eye, who was determined to raise them up in the last day, and who with the same eye beholds things past, present, and to come. But see more in the notes

before mentioned.

Luke 20:39

Ver. 39,40 The scribes were the Jewish doctors of the Pharisees faction, and enemies to the Sadducees; they applaud our Saviour's answer: thus as the Herodians before, (in the case of the tribute), so the Sadducees here, are put to silence. He will now put the scribes and Pharisees to silence.

Luke 20:41

Ver. 41-44. The answer had been easy if the scribes and Pharisees, who (Matthew saith) were there also, had owned Christ to be the Son of God. But this they did not own, and so, as Mt 22:46 tells us, *No man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.* Thus Christ nonplussed all his adversaries.

Luke 20:45

Ver. 45-47. We have met with all this before, See Poole on "Lu 11:43". See Poole on "Mt 23:6". See Poole on "Mt 23:7". See Poole on "Mr

12:38", and following verses to Mr 12:40.

Luke 21:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 21:1-4 Christ values the poor widow's two mites above all the larger offerings of the rich,
Lu 21:5,6 foretells the destruction of the temple,
Lu 21:7-24 the signs and calamities that should precede and accompany it,
Lu 21:25-33 and what should happen at the time of the Son of man's coming.
Lu 21:31-38 He exhorteth to watchfulness and prayer.

Ver. 1-4. We met with this piece of history, Mr 12:41-44. Mark telleth us, that Christ was sitting right over against the treasury. For other things necessary to be known to understand this piece of history, See Poole on "Mr 12:41", and following verses to Mr 12:44.

Luke 21:5

Ver. 5,6. Matthew and Mark say, that some of his disciples spake these words to him, and received this answer, as he was going out of the temple. For the *goodly stones* which the disciples admired, we are told that there were some of them forty-five cubits long, five in depth, and six in breadth. The gifts here mentioned are called in the Greek, *αναθηματα*, not *αναθεματα*, nor *δωρα*. The latter word, *δωρα*, signified any gifts, money or plate, &c., which men voluntarily offered. *Αναθηματα* signified things accursed, or devoted to God, as all the goods of Ai were, Jos 7:1-26. But this word signified such gifts or presents made to God, as might be hung up and exposed to open view. Our Lord, to take off his disciples eyes from

those gay and stately things, prophesieth the utter ruin of the temple, to that degree that one stone should not be left upon another; which how it was afterwards fulfilled within less than forty years, See Poole on "Mt 24:1", See Poole on "Mt 24:2", and See Poole on "Mr 13:1", See Poole on "Mr 13:2". God by that providence not only destroying the vain confidence of the Jews, who took their temple to be an asylum, or sanctuary, for them from the providence of God, or his justice rather; but also severely punishing them for their profanation of his holy place; and also lets them know that the time was come, when God would put an end to all types of the Messiah, and also to all that worship, *which could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; but stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation,* Heb 9:9,10. See Poole on "Mt 24:1", See Poole on "Mt 24:2", and See Poole on "Mr 13:1", See Poole on "Mr 13:2".

Luke 21:7

Ver. 7. Mark saith, *Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately. Matthew brings two things more within the compass of their question, viz. What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Our Saviour answereth this question from Lu 21:8-32. The most of what he saith we have before met with in Matthew and Mark. It is the harder to distinguish between the signs Christ giveth of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the day of judgment, because the signs of both are generally the same, and most divines think that God in the destruction of Jerusalem intended to give a specimen of the general conflagration, and ruin of the world at the last day; so as signs of the same kind with those seen before Jerusalem was destroyed, shall be seen before the great and terrible day of our Lord's coming to judge the world.

Luke 21:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 24:4", See Poole on "Mt 24:5", See Poole on "Mr 13:5", and See Poole on "Mr 13:6". This happened, and was abundantly fulfilled, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably will receive a

further fulfilling in the latter end of the world. But before the destruction of Jerusalem it was, as Josephus assures us, fulfilled in many, particularly:

1. In one Theudas, whether the same mentioned by Gamaliel, Ac 5:36, or some other of that name, is uncertain.
2. An Egyptian sorcerer, mentioned Ac 21:38.
3. One Dositheus, a Samaritan.
4. Another in the time of Festus's government.
5. Simon Magus is also reckoned for one, Ac 8:9. He boasted he was *the great power of God*. Others also reckon one Menander, a disciple of Simon Magus.

It is certain there were many who arrogated to themselves the name of the Messiah, to countenance their heading of a faction. There have also been many since the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably will be many more before the end of the world, 2Ti 4:3 2Pe 2:1 1Jo 2:18.

Luke 21:9

Ver. 9-11. See Poole on "Mt 24:6", See Poole on "Mt 24:7", and See Poole on "Mr 13:8". Time is the best interpreter of prophecies: what shall be seen of these before the end of the world we are yet to observe, but the destruction of Jerusalem is past many hundreds of years since. What commotions were before that, we must learn out of civil historians, who tell us of divers. Josephus telleth us of an insurrection made by those of Judea against the Samaritans, Romans, and Syrians; and of the Romans against the Jews, to the destruction of twenty thousand Jews: as also of those of Scythopolis, who destroyed of the Jews thirteen thousand; of the Ascalonites, who destroyed of them two thousand five hundred; of those of Alexandria, who destroyed of them fifty thousand; of those of Damascus, who slew of them ten thousand. They tell us also of many more seditions, during the government of Felix, Festus, Albinus, Florus, &c.

The text speaks further of *earthquakes*; the Greek word signifieth no more

than concussions and shakings, but historians tell us of several earthquakes that happened (though not in Judea) before the destruction of Jerusalem; one at Rome, in Nero's time; another in Asia, which destroyed three cities, &c.

For *famines*, we read of one in Scripture prophesied of by Agabus, Ac 11:28. Twelve years after Christ's death, there was another in Greece; and four years after, at Rome.

For the *fearful sights, and great signs from heaven*, Josephus tells us of a comet, which for a year together in the form of a sword pointed over the city; a light that shined in the night in the temple, and made it as bright as if it had been noon day. He tells us also of a neat beast bringing forth a lamb in the midst of the temple; of the strange opening of the gates of the temple; of visions of chariots and armed men; of a voice heard in the temple, inviting those who were there to be gone; as also of a man (whom he names) who for seven years and five months together before the siege went about crying, *Woe, woe to Jerusalem!* And could with no punishments (which they thought fit to inflict) be restrained, &c. These were great signs both from heaven and earth.

Luke 21:12

Ver. 12. We have all this justified from holy writ, Ac 4:3 Ac 5:18 Ac 7:4 16:24. What of this shall be seen before the end of the world, time must show; though the prophecies of holy writ speak enough of that also.

Luke 21:13

Ver. 13. That is, your persecution shall *turn to you for a testimony*: for a testimony against your adversaries; so as they themselves shall be brought by your confession of me to own me as the true Messiah; and their cruelty, which they mask under the vizard of religion, shall be openly detected, and it shall at last appear to all the world, that the judgments of God are just, for the cruelty they have exercised upon you. And to you it shall be for a

testimony; you shall have a more ampler occasion of testifying, both before kings and great men, that I am the true Messiah. Your faith, patience, and constancy shall be made more manifest; you shall also testify that my kingdom is not of this world, and that my disciples care not to expect a terrene felicity. They shall also be a testimony to you, that you expect not your portion and felicity in this, but in another life.

Luke 21:14

Ver. 14,15. See Poole on "Mt 10:19", See Poole on "Mt 10:20", See Poole on "Mr 13:11". We must not think that our Saviour by this forbids us what is naturally impossible for us to avoid, that is, the forming of those words first in our thoughts which we speak, nor yet a prudent thinking beforehand what we should speak; but an anxious thinking what we should speak, such a thinking as should argue a distrust in God to carry its through with that testimony which he calleth us forth to give.

For, saith he, I will give you a mouth and wisdom. So he promised Moses, that he would be with his mouth, and teach him what to say, Ex 4:12,15. And he tells Ezekiel, that he would open his mouth, Eze 3:27. Here he promises the disciples *a mouth and wisdom*, that is, such wisdom as should guide their tongues when they should be called out to testify for him. This was made good to Stephen, Ac 6:9,10; *the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, those of Cilicia and Asia, were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake.* Thus it fared with Peter and John, Ac 4:8-13.

By *resist* we must understand conquer, or victoriously resist. The enemies of the gospel have been always opposing and resisting the patrons and witnesses of and for the truth, but never yet made a conquest: let any indifferent reader but read, and judge the accounts we have of the conflicts between the papists and the protestants in the beginning of the Reformation, or between the papists and the martyrs in Queen Mary's days in this nation, and judge on whose side there was most Scripture and reason. This promise hath been fulfilling from Christ's time even to this day. It is true, the enemies have been able to kill the persons of Christ's disciples; they stoned Stephen, killed James with the sword, Ac 7:12; they crucified Peter and Andrew, stoned Philip, banished John into Patmos,

flayed Bartholomew, beheaded Matthew, and various ways destroyed many in the first and most furious times, and have slain many thousands since; but the truths which they preached prevailed.

Luke 21:16

Ver. 16,17. See Poole on "Mt 24:9", See Poole on "Mt 24:10", See Poole on "Mr 8:12", See Poole on "Mr 8:13".

Luke 21:18

Ver. 18. It is a proverbial speech, signifying that they should have no hurt or damage by any thing which their enemies should do against them. When at the last you come to cast up your accounts, you shall find you have lost nothing, and your enemies shall also find that they have gained nothing.

Luke 21:19

Ver. 19. Patience is either passive, seen in a quiet, free, and courageous suffering those evils which God will please in his providence to order us for our portion; or active, seen in a quiet believing, waiting for, and expectation of what God hath promised.

Possess your souls, that is, yourselves; do not decline suffering for my name's sake, but live in the exercise of Christian courage and fortitude until the Lord will please to release you. In this sense James expounds this phrase, Jas 1:4, *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Others say, *possess your souls* is the same with *save your souls*. So it seems to be expounded by Mt 24:13, and Mr 8:13, *But he that shall endure to the end shall be saved.*

Luke 21:20

Ver. 20-22. After our Saviour's ascension, the seditions amongst the Jews were so many, and they rebelled so often against the Romans, during the governments of Felix, Festus, Albinus, and Florus, that the Romans resolved wholly to destroy them, and to that purpose Titus Vespasian was sent with an army against them, who took the city. Our Saviour foresaw, that when that time should come there would be some vain persons full of stomach for their liberties, that would be prophesying their deliverance, and encouraging them to hold out to the last. He warns his disciples to give no credit to them, for God would certainly deliver the city into their hands; therefore he advises them, as soon as they should see the city besieged, they should all shift for themselves as first as they could, for there was no true ground to hope for any deliverance. The time of God's vengeance was come, when God would most certainly fulfil against that place whatsoever he had foretold against it.

Luke 21:23

Ver. 23,24. Josephus tells us, that in the wars which ended in the taking of Jerusalem, by the famine and the sword there perished one million one hundred thousand Jews, and ninety seven thousand were carried into captivity. Jerusalem ever since that time hath been *trodden down by the Gentiles*, the Romans, Saracens, Franks, and is at this day trodden of the Turks.

Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Some from this text think, that there shall be a time when the Jews shall repossess the city of Jerusalem. Whether any such thing can be from hence gathered, I doubt. Some here by the *times of the Gentiles* understand all that time between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Others, the time when the gospel should be carried over all the world. But their opinion seemeth to me most probable, who interpret it of the time of God's patience with the Gentiles. As the Jews have filled up their measure, and now the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost, so the Gentiles shall have their time also. The Romans have had their time, the Turks now have their time;

but their glass is also running out, there will be a fulfilling of their time too, and whether then another sort of barbarians shall possess it, or the Jews or Christians shall recover it, time must interpret.

Luke 21:25

Ver. 25,26. We may easily imagine, that this was eminently fulfilled in the siege of Jerusalem, that men's hearts failed them for fear; and for prodigies, we are told of enough, both by Josephus and Tacitus, the latter tells us, that armies were seen fighting in the air with glistening armour, and the temple seemed all as on fire with lightning; he also tells us of the voice heard, and throwing open of the doors of the temple, before mentioned; but tells us few were affected, but built hopes upon a tradition they had, That now was the time *ut valesceret Oriens*; which was true enough, but not in their sense. But what is spoken here certainly relates to the day of judgment, before which prodigious things will be seen, 2Pe 3:10,12; and it follows, (see Lu 21:27,28).

Luke 21:27

Ver. 27,28. Matthew seemeth to expound this, Mt 24:31; so doth Mr 13:27. Both speak to the same sense: *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from, one end of heaven to the other.* This is certainly to be understood of the day of judgment, when the saints shall be glorified as the sons of God by adoption, and obtain the redemption of the body, Ro 8:23.

Luke 21:29

Ver. 29-33. We had this same parable both in Matthew and Mark. See Poole on "Mt 24:32", and following verses to Mt 24:35. See Poole on "Mr 13:28", and following verses to Mr 13:31.

Luke 21:34

Ver. 34-36. I take the Lu 21:34 to be a good exposition of the term *watch*, Lu 21:36. Avoid sin industriously, in a prospect of my coming to judgment: for sin is compared to sleep, Ro 13:11 Eph 5:14; and as he that watcheth doth not only wake, but setteth himself designedly to forbear sleep, in order to some end; so he who keepeth the spiritual watch must set himself designedly to avoid sin, upon a prospect of Christ's coming, and the uncertainty of it. Particularly he cautions his disciples against luxury and worldly mindedness. The first he expresses under the notions of gluttony and drunkenness, which are two eminent species of it.

The latter, under the notion of the *cares of this life*; not necessary and provident cares, but superfluous and distracting cares. These things he presseth them to avoid, lest they should be surprised by Christ's coming, as he tells them the most of the world would be.

He further exhorteth them to *pray always*; the sense of which precept we showed largely in our notes on Lu 18:1.

He further presseth both these duties in those words, *That ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass*; those that should come to pass at or before the destruction of Jerusalem, or afterward; *and to stand before the Son of man*, that is, in the last judgment; for, *The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous*, Ps 1:5.

Luke 21:37

Ver. 37,38 In these two verses our evangelist letteth us know how Christ spent those few days which he had yet to live. In the day time he was in

the temple preaching; in the evening he was on the mount of Olives praying; to teach all those, who as under shepherds derive from him, who is the true and chief Shepherd, how they should spend their time, preaching and praying. Though the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, and the chief of the Jews, maligned and despised him, yet many of the people paid him a due respect, and *came early in the morning to hear him*. In the world's reception and entertainment of Christ, that of the apostle was verified, *Not many rich, not many wise, &c.; but the poor of this world hath God chosen*.

Luke 22:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 22:1,2 The chief priests and scribes conspire against Christ.

Lu 22:3-6 Judas covenants to betray him.

Lu 22:7-18 The apostles sent to prepare the passover: Christ eateth it with them,

Lu 22:19,20 and institutes his last supper.

Lu 22:21-23 He covertly points out the traitor,

Lu 22:24-30 cheeks the ambitious strife of his disciples, and promises them a share in his kingdom.

Lu 22:31-34 He telleth Peter of Satan's desire to sift him; but that his faith should be supported; and yet he should thrice deny him.

Lu 22:35-38 He advises his disciples to provide necessaries and a sword.

Lu 22:39-46 His agony and prayer in the garden.

Lu 22:47-49 He is betrayed,

Lu 22:50-53 healeth a servant of the high priest, whose ear was cut off,

Lu 22:54-62 is lead to the high priest's house; Peter thrice denieth him.

Lu 22:63-65 Christ is scornfully used,

Lu 22:66-71 and brought before the council, where, confessing himself to be the Son of God, he is pronounced guilty of blasphemy.

Ver. 1,2. See Poole on "Mt 26:1" and following verses to Mt 26:5, See Poole on "Mr 14:1", See Poole on "Mr 14:2".

Luke 22:3

Ver. 3-14. See Poole on "Mt 26:14", and following verses to Mt 26:19. See Poole on "Mr 14:10", and following verses to Mr 14:16.

Luke 22:15

Ver. 15-23. See Poole on "Mt 26:20", and following verses to Mt 26:30, where is opened whatsoever Luke hath that is not in the other evangelists.

Luke 22:24

Ver. 24. Luke only taketh notice of this strife at the time of their being in

the guest chamber. Such a strife we read of, Mt 18:1 20:25,26 Mr 9:33 and in this Gospel, Lu 9:46; by which it is apparent, that they had been more than once arguing this point. But yet most interpreters think that it is here placed by Luke out of order and some translate *εγενετο* in this text, *there had been*, not, *there was*; and indeed we can hardly think so uncharitably of the apostles, as to imagine of them, that immediately after their receiving, first the passover, then the Lord's supper, their thoughts should be taken up with things of this nature, much less that they should discourse of any such subjects as these; especially also considering what our Saviour had told them, that he was betrayed into the hands of sinners. Something of our Saviour's answer, pressing upon them brotherly love, and mutual serviceableness each to other, was very proper to this time, which our Saviour (though spoken before) might at this time repeat, and Luke prefactorily to it might take notice of this contest in this place.

Luke 22:25

Ver. 25-27. See Poole on "Mt 20:25", and following verses to Mt 20:28. The sum is, our Saviour hereby teacheth all his disciples (his ministers especially) to avoid affectation of rule and dominion, as that which became heathens rather than Christians, and the kings of the Gentiles rather than the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This text giveth no countenance to the levelling of all orders of men. Magistracy is an ordinance of God, and ought to be upheld. Order also in the church is to be observed, for God is the God of order; but no minister of Christ ought to affect great titles, nor to exercise a dominion or lordship. Our work is to *feed the flock of God, taking the oversight of them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, 1Pe 5:2,3.* Not for that we have dominion, over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, 2Co 1:24. That the ministers of Christ may not have titles given them, speaking honour and reverence due to them, I do not know. But the reason is obvious why they should not affect them to be fond of them; for pride is a vain and vicious affection, and more culpable in them than others. Their works are but a ministration to the church, in putting the laws of Christ relating to it in execution, and it is their greatest honour to be humble. Nor doth this at all degrade a minister of Christ, for even Christ himself, while he was upon the earth, was not as one that sat at meat, but as one that served.

Luke 22:28

Ver. 28-30. These verses seem to contain (though in a few more words) the substance of what we met with Mt 19:28. There they are spoken as an answer to Peter, speaking on the behalf of himself and the rest of the apostles, who had forsaken all to follow Christ. Christ tells them there, that those *which had followed him, in the regeneration when the Son of man should sit on the throne of his glory, should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. That time which our Lord there calleth the regeneration, is the time when he had been giving a new birth to the church, reforming the world by his doctrine and holy example. That time he here calleth the time of his temptations, by which he meaneth trials, afflictions, and persecutions, as the word is often taken in holy writ, Ga 4:14 Jas 1:12 2Pe 2:9 Re 3:10.

To those of the disciples (they were eleven of the twelve) he promises *a kingdom*, a state of great honour and dignity, as his Father had appointed him; and therefore they might satisfy themselves with the titles and qualities of ministers and servants while they were here, and be content to meet with troubles and temptations, as he had done, to hunger and thirst, &c.; when that time came which he had appointed, they should then eat and drink at his table, they should sit also upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Terms expressive of that rest and satisfaction, that glory, honour, and dignity, which the saints in God shall in heaven be possessed of.

Luke 22:31

Ver. 31,32. Our Lord directeth his speech to Peter, as one who (as it will by and by appear) had a greater confidence of himself than the rest expressed, and as one who he foresaw would fall more foully than the rest; though it appears, that in his speech he had a respect to them all, for the

word *you* is in the plural number. The devil had a mind to disturb them all by his temptations (that is here called sifting). Christ hath his fan in his hand, and will sift his church, but his sifting is to purge his floor; he sifts a particular soul, to purify it from its lusts and corruptions; but Satan sifts the soul and the church merely to give them trouble, and to keep them from rest and quiet by continual motion and agitation. This we are all concerned to take notice of, that we may both be continually prepared for the time of our siftings, and bless God who doth not satisfy Satan's desires to sift his; for he hath the same mind to winnow us now, that he had to sift Peter and the rest of the apostles.

But (saith our Saviour) *I have prayed that thy faith fail not.* There is a total and a partial failing of faith. Peter's faith did fail in part; but the seed of God did yet abide in him, his faith did not wholly fail: so will it be with the faith of every true disciple of Christ. In hours of great temptation and trial, their faith may, as to some degrees, fail, but totally it shall not: they may be perverted, but they shall again be converted. As the apostles saith of the bodies of the saints, Ro 8:10,11, *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you:* may also be said of their souls. They have in them a body of death, and they may in act hour of great temptations fail, and their gracious habits may seem to die. But if the Spirit of God dwelleth in the soul, he will again quicken their souls by his Spirit which dwelleth in them.

And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren; that is, when God hath recovered thee from thy fall, and made thee to see thy error, make an improvement of thy recovery out of the snare of the devil, by admonishing others to take heed of too much confidence in themselves, and encouraging them not to despair, though they also may fall into temptation; but that the grace of God shall be sufficient for them.

Luke 22:33

Ver. 33,34. This is more largely recorded by Mt 26:33-35, and by Mr

14:27-30.

Luke 22:35

Ver. 35-38. Those who interpret Lu 22:35,36, as a precept of our Saviour's imposing a duty upon his disciples, or a counsel concerning the providing arms which they might use for the protection and defence of themselves, will not only find a difficulty to reconcile their notion of it to several other precepts, and the will of God declared by the apostles' practice, who never went about by force and arms to defend themselves in the first plantation and propagation of the gospel; but also to reconcile it to the last words of our Saviour, who said, when his disciples told him they had *two swords*, *It is enough*; which he would never have said, if he had intended any such thing; for two swords was much too little to have conquered that multitude of adversaries which the disciples of Christ were to meet with. Our Saviour doth doubtless speak in a figure, and all that he intends amounts but to this: Hitherto I have been with you, and you have had my special protection; though you went out without a purse or a scrip, yet you have wanted nothing; though you went without a sword, yet none did you any harm. But the time is now come, when the posture of your affairs will be much altered; your friends will be few, your enemies many, therefore you stand concerned to make as good preparation as you can do in those things that are consistent with the general precepts that I have given you. The tragedy will begin with me; for what is written of me must now be accomplished, Isa 53:12, *He was numbered with the transgressors*. I must be brought before magistrates as a common malefactor, and hanged on a cross between two thieves. And *the things concerning me shall shortly have an end*: you will next come upon the stage, and therefore prepare what in you lieth for the performance of your part.

Luke 22:39

Ver. 39. Both Matthew and Mark say, he went to *a place called*

Gethsemane; but that makes no difference, for whether Gethsemane signifieth a village, or a garden, or a valley, all agree it was at the foot of the mount of Olives. It was a place to which our Saviour had used to go ever since he came to Jerusalem, and lay in his way to Bethany. He went thither to pray, and his disciples followed him.

Luke 22:40

Ver. 40. When he came to the mount of Olives, he first setteth his disciples to that work, which at this day was proper for them.

Pray that ye enter not into temptation; that, if it be the will of God, you may be delivered from such an hour of trial as I am entering into; or, at least, that you may not be overcome by it. That my trials which you will presently be witnesses unto, and your own which you shall hereafter meet with, may have no power upon you to withdraw you from your work in the publication or profession of my gospel. The other two evangelists make mention of our Saviour's taking Peter, and James, and John with him, yet more privately. Luke mentions not that, but goeth on.

Luke 22:41

Ver. 41. Whether from the eight, or from Peter, James, and John also, the evangelist doth not tell us; but some are of opinion, that he took the three disciples along to join with him in prayer, from whom some account might be given of the substance of his prayer, which followeth. I rather think he was alone.

Luke 22:42

Ver. 42. We have a larger account given us of our Saviour's prayer, See Poole on "Mt 26:39", and following verses to Mt 26:46. See Poole on "Mr 14:35", and following verses to Mr 14:42.

Luke 22:43

Ver. 43,44. We have formerly opened these verses in Mt 26:44-46, where we took them in, as being a part of the history of our Saviour's praying before his passion.

Luke 22:45

Ver. 45,46. The relations which Matthew and Mark give us are both more particular than that given us by Luke, to which we refer the reader. Luke speaketh but of his praying once; Matthew saith he prayed thrice. Luke mentions nothing of his withdrawing with Peter, James, and John from the other eight; Matthew and Mark both mention it. Luke maketh mention of an angel's appearing to him, of the agony in which he was, and his sweating drops as it were of blood; which neither Matthew nor Mark take notice of: yet we must not think, that either any one of the evangelists, or all of them together, give a perfect account of all the words our Saviour used in these prayers, only they tell us the sum of them in different words; but See Poole on "Mt 26:40", and following verses to Mt 26:41. See Poole on "Mr 14:37", and following verses to Mr 14:38, where we have fully considered whatsoever is said by any of the evangelists upon this argument.

Luke 22:47

Ver. 47,48. See Poole on "Mt 26:47", and following verses to Mt 26:49. See Poole on "Mr 14:43", and following verses to Mr 14:45.

Luke 22:49

Ver. 49-51. No other evangelist but John hath this passage perfect. What he hath we have opened in our notes on Mt 26:51,52, because it tendeth to complete that part of the history there discoursed, concerning Christ's

being apprehended. John relates it with more circumstances, telling us that it was Peter who drew the sword, and that his name whose ear was cut off was Malchus, and relates some further words used by our Saviour to Peter, which we shall further consider in their places. This rash act of Peter might have cost him dear, for it made a kinsman of Malchus take such notice of him, as he was very near being accused by him, Joh 18:26. Swords are dangerous things for us to use, until God puts them into our hands. Peter ought not only to have asked his Master if he should smite with the sword, but also to have staid his hand till Christ had given him an answer.

Luke 22:52

Ver. 52,53. See Poole on "Mt 26:55". See Poole on "Mr 14:48". See Poole on "Mr 14:49". It speaketh a great degree of rage and malice against our Saviour, that so great men, as the chief of the priests and the elders, should come out at midnight, in the company of the officers and soldiers, to apprehend Christ. From these verses it appeareth that some of them were there in the height of their zeal.

Luke 22:54

Ver. 54-62. The whole history of Peter's denial of his Master, and of his repentance. See Poole on "Mt 26:69", and following verses to Mt 26:75, where we have opened what passages relating to it are in Mark or this evangelist.

Luke 22:63

Ver. 63-65. Concerning these abuses offered to our Saviour. See Poole on "Mt 26:67". See Poole on "Mt 26:68". See Poole on "Mr 14:65".

Luke 22:66

Ver. 66-71. Our blessed Lord before his death passed two trials or examinations. The one before the Jewish sanhedrim, whose proper province it was to try such as were accused as false prophets, or blasphemers. This was a kind of ecclesiastical court. The high priest was the chief judge in it, and we are told that they used to sit in his palace. The other was before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea at that time; he principally took cognizance of criminal things, such especially as concerned the peace of the country, considered as a part of the Roman empire. These verses give an account only of the former. Blasphemy was the crime they charged upon him. We cannot from any one evangelist have a full account of either of them. See Poole on "Mt 26:57" and following verses to Mt 26:68, when have fully considered what all the evangelists say.

Luke 23:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 23:1-7 Jesus is accused before Pilate, who sendeth him to Herod.

Lu 23:8-11 Herod, disappointed in his expectations, mocketh him, and sendeth him back.

Lu 23:12 Herod and Pilate are made friends.
Lu 23:13-25 Pilate, willing to release Jesus, is prevailed on by the clamours of the people to release Barabbas, and give Jesus to be crucified.
Lu 23:26-31 Being led to the place of execution, Jesus biddeth the women who lamented him to weep rather for themselves and their children.
Lu 23:32,33 He is crucified between two malefactors,
Lu 23:34 prayeth for his enemies,
Lu 23:35-38 is scoffed at,
Lu 23:39-43 reviled by one of the malefactors, but confessed by the other, to whom he promises a place in paradise.
Lu 23:44,45 The unusual darkness, and rending the veil of the temple,
Lu 23:46 Christ crieth unto God, and expires.
Lu 23:47-49 The centurion's confession of him.
Lu 23:50-54 Joseph of Arimathea begs his body and buries it.
Lu 23:55-56 The women prepare spices, against the end of the sabbath.

Ver. 1-25. The history of our Saviour's examination and trial before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, is recorded by all four evangelists, nor can it be distinctly and perfectly understood without the comparing together of what they all say, where our reader will find all such passages opened as occur in any of the evangelists about it, and stand in need of explication. The high priests, and the chief priests, and the elders had before determined our Saviour guilty of death, for blasphemy. They stoned Stephen in that case, Ac 7:59, without carrying him before the Roman governor at all, that we read of in that history; how came it to pass that they did not so by our Saviour, but make a double work of it?

1. Some think that that was rather done in a tumult, though he was carried before the council, Ac 6:12, than in a regular judicial way; for conquerors in those times, though they sometimes allowed the conquered nations courts of judicature, wherein they judged in ordinary matters according to their own laws, and had, judges of their own nations, yet ordinarily reserved capital causes to the cognizance of governors constituted by them; and this seemeth confirmed by Joh 18:31, where when Pilate said, *Take ye him, and judge him according to*

your law, we read that the Jews replied, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*

2. Others think that they had a power to put to death, but it was not lawful for them to put any to death upon the feast day: it was now the first day of unleavened bread. But the former seemeth more probable.
3. Or was it because they had sedition and treason to lay to his charge, which were crimes cognoscible only before the Roman governor? And possibly they were willing enough (knowing the reputation our Saviour had with the people) to lay the odium of his death upon Pilate, rather than take it upon themselves.
4. Whatever were the causes, it is most certain that it could be no otherwise, that all righteousness might be fulfilled.

Not a word of what our Saviour said could pass away. He had foretold, Mt 20:18,19 Mr 10:33,34 Lu 18:32,33, that he should not only be *betrayed to the chief priests and scribes*, and by them be *condemned to death*, but that he should be *delivered to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him*; and indeed that way of putting to death by crucifying could only be done by the Gentiles, and that death he was to die. In the history of our Saviour's examination before Pilate is observable ...

1. How much more justice and equity our Saviour found from a heathen, than from the Jewish churchmen: the latter condemn him without any proof, after all attempts of subornation, and seek to destroy him right or wrong; Pilate useth all endeavours to deliver him and set him at liberty.
2. How desperate the hatred is that groweth upon the account of religion in the hearts of wicked men; they prefer a person guilty of the highest immoralities and debaucheries, viz. sedition and murder, before the most innocent person that ever lived, who differed only from them in some points of religion, and those chiefly relating to traditions and ceremonies; but indeed he interpreted the will of God more strictly than their lusts would suffer them to interpret it, and lived another kind of life than they lived. Strictness and holiness of doctrine and life is that which enrages the men of the world against the preachers and professors of the gospel.

See Poole on "Mt 27:1", and following verses to Mt 27:66, more fully.

Luke 23:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 27:32", See Poole on "Mr 15:21".

Luke 23:27

Ver. 27-31. What is in these verses is only found in this evangelist; but being part of what happened in the way, while our Saviour was leading to his cross, we have before opened what is here in Mt 27:32-34. They are another prophecy of the dreadful calamities which happened about forty

years after this, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 23:32

Ver. 32,33. Mark saith here, *The scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.* We met with this before, both in Matthew and Mark. See Poole on "Mt 27:33", See Poole on "Mt 27:38". See Poole on "Mr 15:27", See Poole on "Mr 15:28".

Luke 23:34

Ver. 34-46. See Poole on "Mt 27:35", and following verses to Mt 27:50. See Poole on "Mr 14:24", and following verses to Mr 14:37. This part also of the history of our Saviour's passion is best understood by a comparing together what all the evangelists say, which we have before done in our notes on Matthew, so as we shall only observe some few things from it as here recited.

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, Lu 23:35. Matthew saith, Mt 27:41, the chief priests, scribes, and elders were there mocking. So saith Mark, Mr 15:31. How doth malice and hatred for religion's sake, not only out show men's reason, but also all their moral virtue! And make nothing accounted uncharitable, unjust, or indecent to them, into whom this devil hath once entered. To say nothing of the injustice and indecencies obvious to every eye, which these men showed upon our Saviour's examination and trial: it was now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the day following the passover night; or, as some think, the preparation both for the weekly sabbath and for the passover, though the most judicious interpreters be of the first opinion: one of them it was, be it which it would. If atheism and irreligion had not been at the height amongst this people, had it been possible that the high priest, and the chief of the priests, and the rulers of the Jews, should have spent

this day, the whole time, from break of the day till noon, in accusing or condemning Christ; and then have spent the afternoon in mocking and deriding him on the cross as he was dying, breaking all laws of humanity and decency, as well as religion? Admitting Annas and Caiaphas were not there, yet some of the chief of the priests, the scribes, and the elders were certainly there; and betraying themselves there more rudely and indecently than the common people.

The people were there *beholding* him. These were there *mocking* and *deriding* a dying person. But as we say in philosophy, *corruptio optimi est pessima*; so we shall find it true, that men who are employed in sacred things, if the true fear of God be not in them, to make them the best, they are certainly the vilest and worst of men. We read of no rudenesses offered to our Saviour dying, but from the scribes, chief priests, rulers, and soldiers. These verses also afford us great proof of the immortality of the soul; otherwise the penitent thief could not that day have been with Christ in paradise, as Christ promised, Lu 23:43. Nor would Christ have committed his soul into his Father's hand, if it had been to have expired with the body, and have vanished into air. For other things which concern this part of the history of our Saviour's passion, See Poole on "Mt 27:35", and following verses to Mt 27:50.

Luke 23:47

Ver. 47-49. For a perfect knowledge of all those things which did happen after our Saviour's nailing to the cross, till he died, and was taken down to

be buried, all the evangelists must be consulted. We have made a collection of them in our notes on Mt 27:51-56, to which the reader is here referred. See Poole on "Mt 27:51", and following verses to Mt 27:56. This passage about the centurion is taken notice of both by Matthew and Mark; only they say he said, *Truly this was the Son of God*. Luke saith that he said, *Certainly this was a righteous man*. Possibly the sense is the same, and the centurion by *the Son of God* did not mean the Son of God by eternal generation, but one highly favoured of God, a righteous man, and very dear to God, and highly beloved of him; for it must be by a very extraordinary revelation and impression if he, had so early a faith in Christ as God blessed for ever. I think Mr. Calvin, on Mt 26:54, expounds it well, *Non vulgarem esse hominem, sed divinitus excitatum statuit*. The centurion determined that Christ was no ordinary person, but one stirred up by and sent of God. It is observable, that Christ had a testimony from all orders of men almost, except the scribes, and priests, and Pharisees. Pontius Pilate and Herod declared him innocent. Pilate's wife acknowledgeth him a righteous person. The thief on the cross testifieth he had *done nothing amiss*. Judas the traitor confesseth he had *betrayed innocent blood*. The centurion owneth him to be no ordinary man, but *a righteous man, the Son of God*. The multitude always owned him: they see they are now run down; they smite their breasts, say nothing, but depart. Only those that were to have been the teachers of others are blinded and hardened to their ruin.

Luke 23:50

Ver. 50-53. See Poole on "Mt 27:57", and following verses to Mt 27:60.

Luke 23:54

Ver. 54. Greek, *σάββατον ἐπεφώσκει*, the sabbath shined. What preparation was here intended, whether to the weekly sabbath of the Jews,

(that it was most certainly), or to the passover also, which some will have to have been this year put off to that day, because of the concurrence of the weekly and the annual feast, I shall not determine, though the most judicious interpreters skilled in the Hebrew writings, think the passover this year was kept in its season, the night before.

And the sabbath, that is, the seventh day, *drew on*. The Greek word signifies shined, the propriety of which term hath cost critics some pains to make out, for it rather began to be dark than lightsome, their sabbath beginning after the setting of the sun. Some think the word referred to the evening star, which began to shine. Others, that it referred to a lamp or candle, which they were wont to set up, they call it *luminare discriminationis*, the light of discrimination, which being set up in their several families, the sabbath was accounted to be begun. Others think it referred to the following day. But there need not much labour in the case, for by the same reason that it is said, the evening and the morning made the sabbath day, the sabbath might be said ἐπιφωσκειν (that is, to begin) when it began to be dark, not taking the word in a proper, but in a metaphorical sense.

Luke 23:55

Ver. 55,56. See Poole on "Mt 27:61". It is Beza's observation upon these verses, that Christ, being opposed by the devil and all his instruments, being now dead, leaveth two or three poor women, as it were, in the front of the battle, intending within a very short time, without much ado, to triumph over all these terrible adversaries.

Luke 24:1

Chapter Summary

Lu 24:1-11 Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that came to the sepulchre, who report it to others, but are not believed.

Lu 24:12 Peter visiteth the sepulchre.

Lu 24:13-35 Christ appeareth to two disciples going to

Emmaus,

Lu 24:36-48 and to the apostles, eating before them, and explaining the Scriptures concerning himself.

Lu 24:49 He promises them the Holy Ghost,

Lu 24:50-53 and ascendeth into heaven.

Ver. 1. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were the two women that took up their seat right over against the sepulchre, to see where Christ was laid, Mt 27:61 Mr 15:47. They had bought spices some time of that day after they knew he must die, or else they bought them immediately after his burial, as they went home, for they rested on the sabbath day. They had now got some others into their society, and came very early upon the first day of the week, (See Poole on "Mt 28:1", as to the particular time), intending to show their last act of love to their friend by embalming his body.

Luke 24:2

Ver. 2. The stone which Joseph had rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre, when he had laid in the body, Mt 27:60, and the Jews had sealed, Mt 27:66, and which, as they came walking, they were so troubled about, how they should get it removed, Mr 16:3. How it came to be rolled away Matthew telleth us, Mt 28:2.

Luke 24:3

Ver. 3. Probably when they entered in they saw no angels, for one may reasonably suppose, that if they had they would hardly have adventured to enter in; but at their coming out, being satisfied that the body was not there, the angels made themselves visible to them; for it followeth, (see Lu 24:4-8).

Luke 24:4

Ver. 4-8. These two men were two angels in human shape. See Poole on "Mt 28:5" and following verses to Mt 28:7.

Luke 24:9

Ver. 9-12. See Poole on "Mt 28:8", and following verses to Mt 28:10, but more fully, See Poole on "Joh 20:2", and following verses to Joh 20:9, who repeateth this piece of history more largely than the rest. It is plain that scarce any of the disciples gave credit to the first relation of the women; but yet, it being near the city, Peter and John thought it worth the while to go and see. For though Peter alone be mentioned here, yet John is mentioned, Joh 20:3-5, under the notion of *that other disciple*; and he is said to have *outrun Peter*, and to have come first to the sepulchre. But concerning that part of the history relating to the resurrection, we shall reserve ourselves till we come to Joh 20:1-31. We now pass on to a piece of history relating to the evidencing of Christ's resurrection, which is neither touched by Matthew nor by Luke. Mark toucheth it shortly, Mr 16:12,13, *After that he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them.* We shall now hear Luke giving us a more full and perfect account.

Luke 24:13

Ver. 13. Who those two were is variously guessed; that the name of the one was *Cleopas*, appeareth from Lu 24:18. Some will have the other to have been Luke, but he in the beginning of his Gospel distinguishes himself from eyewitnesses, Lu 1:2. Some will have it to have been Nathanael; others will have it to have been Simon, from Lu 24:34, and 1Co 15:5. But these things are so uncertain, that all the instruction we can learn from them is the vanity and uncertainty of traditions. This Emmaus was from Jerusalem about sixty furlongs, which make seven miles and a

half, according to our computation.

Luke 24:14

Ver. 14. There is nothing more ordinary, than for persons walking and riding upon roads to make the present news of the time. The subject of their discourse. There had great things happened in Jerusalem, the death of our Saviour was such; and those things which attended his death were very extraordinary; and it is not at all to be wondered that a discourse of them should fill every mouth, especially every disciple's mouth.

Luke 24:15

Ver. 15. He overtook them upon the way, and joined himself to their company. It is a good thing to be discoursing of Christ, it is the way to have his presence and company with us.

Luke 24:16

Ver. 16. God by his providence restrained their eyes, that though they saw a man, yet they could not discern who he was. We may learn from hence that the form or figure of Christ's body after his resurrection was not changed. His body had the same dimensions, the same quantity, colour, and figure, and was in itself a proper object for human eyes; for otherwise there had been no need for their eyes to be held. From hence also we may learn the influence which God hath upon all our members and senses, and how much we depend upon God for a daily power to exercise our natural faculties. Our Lord had no mind that these two disciples should at first discern who he was, that he might draw out their following discourses, and from them take occasion to prove from Scripture the certainty of his resurrection. From this text we may gather, how hard the Lutherans are put to it to maintain the real presence of the body of Christ, wherever the sacrament of the Lord's supper is administered; for this they must maintain, that although the body of Christ after his resurrection was the same that was crucified, and so obvious to sense, yet he had not only a power to make it insensible and invisible, which we grant, but that he hath

also a power to multiply it, and make it in one and the same instant to be in so many places as his supper is administered in; and also that he willeth it at the same time to be imperceptible by any human senses in all those places: for it is apparent from hence, that it was not at all times imperceptible; it might at this time have been seen, had not the disciples eyes been held, that they could not know him.

Luke 24:17

Ver. 17. Not that he, from whom the secrets of no hearts are hidden, did not know what they were discoursing about, but that he had a mind to hear them repeated from them, that from their repetition of them he might take the better advantage to instruct them.

Luke 24:18

Ver. 18,19. The things which had lately happened in Jerusalem were so many, and so unusual, that the disciples wonder that any one coming from Jerusalem should ask, *What things?* They therefore ask him if he were a mere stranger in Jerusalem, coming from some other country, or from some remoter parts of Judea or Galilee? Or, if he were the only man who had been unconcerned in what was the common discourse both of the town and country? Still our Saviour draws out the discourse from them, by asking them, *What things?* They tell him, *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in deed and word;* in which phrase Stephen celebrated Moses, Ac 7:22; that is, one who did not only in an extraordinary manner reveal the will of God unto men, but also did many great and mighty works, and lived a most holy and most exemplary life and conversation, so as that he was not only highly favoured of God, but in great repute and estimation also amongst the people.

Luke 24:20

Ver. 20,21. It is from hence evident, that as yet they neither had a true notion of Christ as God man in one person, nor yet of the Messiah, but still

remained in an opinion of a temporal deliverance to be effected for the Jews by the Messiah, when he should come. The words also showed a great weakness in the disciples' faith as to Christ; they speak as if they were quite out of breath, and their faith began to fail. We were, say they, once of the mind, and maintained some hope, that this Jesus of Nazareth had been he whom God had designed for the Messiah, and now it is *the third day since these things were done*. This mention of *the third day* is a good argument to prove that these were some old disciples of Christ, who had taken notice of his promise, or prophecy, that he should rise again the third day, Lu 18:33. They ought to have had patience till night, and to have considered, that though the third day were begun, yet it was not yet past.

Luke 24:22

Ver 22-24. It is plain from the relation of these two disciples, that they had whatsoever might conduce to a moral persuasion. They had the revelation of the word, from the mouth of Christ himself. They had evidences from the women, from the apparition of angels, from some among themselves, that his body was not there. The angels said he was risen. Why do they hesitate then? Why do they not believe? Is the fault in the perverseness of their wills? Had they no mind to believe, that the thing they had hoped, longed, waited for, was true? Certainly there was nothing they more desired. Let the patrons of the power of man's will to believe, or perform any actions spiritually good, tell us (if they can) what could hinder these disciples actual believing the resurrection of Christ, but the impotency of their wills, God not yet pleasing to influence and assist their wills actually to believe what they had the greatest propensions and inclinations imaginable to have believed.

Luke 24:25

Ver. 25-27. By our Saviour's form of reprehending his disciples, we may both learn:

1. That it is not every saying, *Thou fool*, but a saying of it from a root of hatred, malice, and anger, which our Saviour makes to be a breach of the sixth commandment, Mt 5:21,22. Our Saviour's reprehension of them was out of a principle of love, and a root of good will to them.
2. That the best of us are very *slow of heart to believe* what cometh to us upon the mere credit of a Divine revelation. It is also observable from what we have, Lu 24:27, that Moses and the prophets are not to be rejected by Christians; they also have much concerning Christ; out of them Christ instructs these two disciples in the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:28

Ver. 28,29. I do not understand how some conclude from hence the lawfulness of dissembling, or telling a lie, in some cases, because the evangelist saith our Saviour *made as though he would have gone further*, and did not; for without doubt our Saviour had gone further if the disciples had not been urgent with him to have staid: nor did he stay long there, as we shall hear by and by.

Luke 24:30

Ver. 30,31. Some would have this bread to be sacramental bread, as if our Lord at this time celebrated his supper; and some of the papists are mightily zealous for that interpretation, thinking that they have in it a mighty argument to justify their lame administration of it in one kind (for here is no mention of the cup at all); but they do not consider, that this text will prove (if it be taken with relation to the supper) more than they would have it; as,

1. That priests may consecrate without wine, which themselves will not grant, though they say that, both elements being consecrated, the people sufficiently partake if they share but in one.

2. It will also prove that a priest may consecrate without using those substantial words, *This is my body*. But it is a most improbable thing, that our Saviour coming just out of his journey should fall upon his administration of this ordinance.

The text is certainly to be meant of bodily bread, which our Saviour never took without a previous blessing of it, Mt 14:19. How their eyes were opened the evangelist tells us. Some think they knew him by his form of blessing. It is a wonder then they did not know him before by his style in three or four hours discourse by the way. Others think they knew him by taking upon him the office of the master of the feast, to bless the table, and to carve to the guests. But all this is vain. He withdrew the veil from their eyes, which alone hindered their discerning him before, for the object was visible, only the medium of their sight was indisposed.

And he vanished out of their sight. Our Saviour had now obtained his end, viz. to satisfy them that he was indeed risen; now he disappears, for that he had a power to make his body imperceptible to the disciples' senses is out of doubt.

Luke 24:32

Ver. 32. There was a mighty difference, no doubt, between Christ's preaching and his ministers': he preached as one who had authority, not as the scribes, not as ordinary ministers, but with more majesty and power; but as to the saving efficacy of his words, that depended upon his will; where he pleased to put forth such efficacious grace, there his words became effectual; where he did not, they were not so: Christ preached in the hearing of hundreds, who yet continued unbelievers, and perished in their unbelief. There is a great deal of difference also between one minister's preaching and another's; some kind of preaching of itself makes men's hearts to freeze, others make them to burn; but where preaching makes our heart to burn within us, Christ throws in the coal, which the best preacher doth but blow up: only the Spirit of God is pleased to work (as Erasmus saith) *secundum quod nactus est organon*, according to the instrument it worketh by, and to concur with rational and spiritual means

in order to rational and spiritual ends. But wherever any soul is baptized with fire at hearing a sermon, it is also baptized with the Holy Ghost. Christ will not always cure blind eyes with clay and spittle, though he did it once. These were disciples before the fire was kindled in their hearts; Christ's preaching did but blow it up. We ought so to speak in our preaching, so to open and apply the Scriptures, as our discourses may have a rational tendency to make the hearts of our hearers to burn within them, not so as to make them dead, and sleepy, and cold, or lukewarm; and then to know that it must be Christ's work to inflame them, when we have said all that we can say.

Luke 24:33

Ver. 33-35. Lu 24:34, compared with 1Co 15:5, makes some great authors think, that Simon was one of the two, and that Cleopas (who was the other) spake this. They make no stay at Emmaus, but come presently to Jerusalem, and acquaint the disciples, that for certain Christ was risen, and that he had appeared to them in the way, and was known of them at their breaking of bread.

Luke 24:36

Ver. 36. Of this appearance of Christ Mark speaks, Mr 16:14, and Joh 20:19,20. The salutation which he useth to them was common amongst the Jews, and answereth our God save you, or God be with you. It was an appreciation of all blessing and happiness, which they comprehended under the name of piece.

Luke 24:37

Ver. 37. Spirits sometimes (by God's permission or direction) assumed human shapes. They seeing a human shape, and not able on the sudden to conceive how a human body should come into the midst among them, without any more noise or notice taken of it, were affrighted, as we usually

are at the sight of apprehended apparitions. From hence we may conclude, that either the world, and the best men in it, have been in all ages deceived, and a few atheists have been wiser than them all, or there are such beings as spirits.

Luke 24:38

Ver. 38-40. If either the papists or the Lutherans could show us Christ's hands or feet, while they impose upon us to believe that Christ's body is really present at or in the Lord's supper, they would not so fright us, nor make so many thoughts arise in us, as they do, about their apprehensions of the nature of a body. But while the papists allow us to handle and to taste the bread, and we find no such things, and the Lutherans suffer our eyes to be open, and we can see no such things, we cannot but conclude, that the body of Christ which they talk of must certainly be a spirit, which (according to our Saviour's notion) is a substance which hath neither flesh nor bones, as we see the body they would have us to believe hath not; that is to say, that the body they talk of is no body. Our Saviour here proveth that it was his true body, which appeared to them, because,

1. It had integral parts, hands and feet.
2. Because it might be seen.
3. It might be handled.
4. It had flesh and bones, which a spirit hath not.

Then he shows them his hands and feet. So then our Saviour did not think that the judgment of our senses was to be rejected, concerning the nature of bodies, and his body in particular, and that in its state of exaltation, when it was raised from the dead; Do any of them say that Christ's body here came through the door, or it could not have been here? How shall that be proved? We can easily tell them how his body might be in the midst of them, though it were not discerned while he was there; even as the eyes of the two disciples were held, Lu 24:16, that they could not discern Christ, so the eyes of the disciples might be held now, till he was in the midst amongst them.

Luke 24:41

Ver. 41-43. *Believed not for joy;* yet if they had not now believed, they doubtless would not have rejoiced, but their faith was the cause of their joy; yet the excess of their joy was the hinderance of their faith; so dangerous are the excessive motions of our affections. Christ here gives them another evidence of the truth of his body, he *did eat before them*, though very ordinary country diet, *a piece of broiled fish, and of a honey comb;* such a meal as we read of that he had at the lake of Tiberius, Joh 21:9. He did not eat to uphold, but only to testify, his life. Thus when he had raised the daughter of Jairus, Lu 8:55, he bid them give her something to eat; and for this end Lazarus sat at meat with the rest, Joh 12:2 and Peter proves the resurrection of Christ from their eating and drinking with him, Ac 10:41. Let not profane wits seek knots in bulrushes, inquiring what became of this meat? &c. Let them first tell us what became of the meat the angels did eat with Abraham, Ge 18:8, and learn to believe, that it was easy with the power of God to annihilate again that meat, which was not necessary for the sustentation of the body of Christ, now freed from all the cravings of natural appetite, though he did eat it to satisfy them that he was truly risen from the dead.

Luke 24:44

Ver. 44. The Jews ordinarily divided the Old Testament into the law, the prophets, and the holy writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. The Book of Psalms was one of the last sort, and one of the most noted amongst them. So as by these three terms our Saviour understands all the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He tells them, that he had before his death, while he conversed with them, told them that *all things* (which were very many) which were found in any of these books concerning him must be fulfilled: he had told them so, Lu 18:31 Mt 16:21 17:22 20:18 Mr 9:31 10:34.

Luke 24:45

Ver. 45. He did not open their understanding without the Scriptures, he sends them thither; and he knew the Scriptures would not sufficiently give them a knowledge of him, and the things of God, without the influence and illumination of his Spirit: they are truly taught of God, who are taught by his Spirit to understand the Scriptures. Christ gives a great honour to the Scriptures. The devil cheats those souls whom he persuades to cast away the Scriptures in expectation of a teaching by the Spirit. The Spirit teacheth by, not without, not contrary to, the Holy Scriptures.

Luke 24:46

Ver. 46. All the Divine predictions are certain and infallible. The Jews did maliciously and freely prosecute our Saviour to death, and God did certainly foresee how their wills would be determined, and the event was accomplished accordingly.

Luke 24:47

Ver. 47,48. The few words in Lu 24:47 are comprehensive of the great duty of the apostles:

1. To preach *repentance and remission of sins*.
2. In Christ's *name*.
3. To *all nations*.
4. *Beginning at Jerusalem*.

They were to preach repentance, that is, a turning from sinful courses into a course of life consonant to the will of God; and remission of sins, that is, upon repentance; this they were to preach in his name, which may refer either to their preaching; then our Saviour lets them know that they were to be his ministers, and to preach by his authority, to be *ambassadors for Christ*, 2Co 5:20, stewards of his mysteries. Or else it may refer to repentance and remission of sins, which are to be preached in his name, for

the sake of merits and satisfaction. They were to preach this among all nations. This was prophesied of plentifully, Ps 2:8 Isa 49:6 Da 7:14 Ho 2:23 Joe 2:32. This was a piece of Divine revelation which Christ had till this time concealed in a great measure; when he sent out the twelve, Mt 5:5, he commanded them not to go to the Gentiles. Beginning at Jerusalem, that is, amongst the Jews. He was prophesied of under the notion of a King, to be set upon the Lord's holy hill of Zion, Ps 2:6. So Ps 110:2 Isa 2:3 28:16 45:1. In pursuance of this, we shall find the apostles preaching only in Judea, till they had judged themselves *unworthy of everlasting life*, then they, *turned to the Gentiles*, Ac 13:38,46.

Luke 24:49

Ver. 49. It is questioned by none, but by *the promise of the Father* our Lord meaneth the promise of the Spirit, as it came down in the days of Pentecost. This effusion of the Spirit was promised under the Old Testament, Isa 44:3 Jer 31:33 Eze 36:27; most eminently, Joe 2:28, the apostle himself interpreting this prophecy, Ac 2:16-18. See also Ac 1:8, where the fulfilling of this *promise of the Father*, as it is called Ac 1:4, is put before—and *ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria*; and is also expounded by, *But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you*. Our Lord also had said, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever*. Joh 14:16. In this text he saith, that he will send him; so also Joh 15:26 Joh 16:7; thereby confirming his disciples in this, that he was equal with the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was sent by the Father and him, yet sent by the Father upon the prayer of the Son, and in his name, Joh 14:16,26. This Holy Spirit is also called, *power from on high*; *the power of the Highest*, Lu 1:35. But here the gifts of the Holy Ghost may be understood, as also in Ac 1:8, where it is said this power should be received after that the Holy Ghost should come upon them: until this time should come, which was in the days of Pentecost, Ac 2:1, the disciples were bound to stay at Jerusalem, which accordingly they did. And we may from hence conclude, that these words of our Saviour were spoken to his disciples after his appearance to them in Galilee, (of which Luke saith nothing), which was the place where (as most think) *he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*, 1Co 15:6.

Luke 24:50

Ver. 50,51. This must be understood to have happened forty days after our Saviour's resurrection, for so Luke himself tells us, Ac 1:3.

And he led them out as far as Bethany; not the village Bethany, but that part of the mount of Olives which belonged to Bethany. Our Saviour had been often there praying; from thence he now ascendeth into heaven.

And he lifted up his hands and blessed them: some think that by blessing here is meant praying, and the lifting up of his hands was accommodated to that religious action. Others think that blessing here signifieth a more authoritative act; and that his lifting up of his hands was a stretching out of his hands, as a sign of that effectual blessing of them.

While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven; that is, he moved upward as if he had been carried, for it is certain that our Saviour ascended by his own power. Luke saith, Ac 1:9, *He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.* As Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, 2Ki 2:11, so Christ went up in a cloud; but with this difference, Christ ascended by his own power, Elijah could not without the help of an angel.

Luke 24:52

Ver. 52,53. We never before read of any act of adoration which the disciples performed to Christ. Their faith was now come to the highest pitch. They did no longer look upon him only as one sent of God, a great Prophet, nor only as the Son of David, the promised Messiah; in the mean time not rightly taking the notion of the Messiah, but looking upon him as one who should be a temporal saviour, and deliverer of his people; they now believe him to be the eternal Son of God, being so manifested by his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven before their eyes. According to his commandment, they return to Jerusalem, full of joy: *and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.* It is said,

Ac 1:13,14, that being returned *they went into an upper room, and continued in prayer and supplication*. Some think that this upper room was appendant to the temple. But *continually* here may reasonably be interpreted often, or ordinarily, or at temple hours of prayer; as the morning and evening sacrifice are called the *continual burnt offering*, Ex 29:42 Nu 28:3. Their work was to praise and bless God. It is not said for what, but easily understood: as for other mercies, so more especially for his sending the Messiah for our redemption, and the confirmation and perfecting their faith in him.

John 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

The penman of this Gospel is generally taken to have been John the son of Zebedee, Mt 10:2, not either John the Baptist, or John surnamed Mark, Ac 15:37. He was a person mightily honoured by Christ's personal favours, and therefore often called *the beloved disciple*; you may read of these favours in these scriptures following, Mt 17:1 Lu 9:28 22:8 Joh 13:23 19:26,27 20:2 Ac 3:3 Ac 4:13 Ga 2:9. Thus far the Scripture guides us. He is thought to have gone to and continued in Asia till the third of the ten persecutions in the time of Trajan. He was by Domitian banished into Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation.

The time when he wrote this Gospel is uncertain; some think about the latter part of his life: he died the last of all the apostles, judged about a hundred years after the birth of Christ. It is said that the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied Christ's Divinity, and of the Nicolaitanes, who held many absurd things about his person, gave occasion to the writing of this Gospel; himself mentions the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, Re 2:6; and Ebion and Cerinthus are thought to be those antichrists which he in his Epistles reflects upon.

Two things are observed of him:

1. That he insists more on the proof of Christ's Divinity, than any of the evangelists; producing his miracles most evidently to prove it.
2. That he mentions very little reported by the other evangelists:

to which I think may be added, that he delivereth the history of the gospel after Christ's resurrection more fully than any of them; he gives us also a more distinct account of the four passovers happening after Christ's baptism; the necessity of faith in Christ, and regeneration; the doctrine of our mystical union with Christ; the sending of the Holy Spirit, and end of his mission, and the advantage that the apostles and others should receive from it. His Gospel is most particularly remarkable for the sublimeness and mysteriousness of the matter, and sweetness of the phrase.

Chapter Summary

Joh 1:1-5 The Divinity of Christ.

Joh 1:6-13 The mission of John, and end of Christ's coming.

Joh 1:14 The incarnation of the Word.

Joh 1:15-18 Christ's superior dignity witnessed by John, and

evinced by his gracious dispensation.

Joh 1:19-28 John's record of himself to the messengers of the

Jews.

Joh 1:29-34 His public testimony to the person of Christ.

Joh 1:35-42 Two of his disciples, hearing it, follow Jesus: Simon

is brought to Christ, and surnamed Cephas.

Joh 1:43-51 Philip is called, who bringeth Nathanael to Jesus.

Ver. 1. In the beginning; in that beginning which Moses mentions, Ge 1:1, the beginning of all things, when the foundations of the world were laid, Pr 8:27,28; the beginning of time; for before that was no measure of time, all was eternity.

Was the Word, that is, the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom more is spoken afterward. Nor is Christ in this text alone called *the Word*, but 1Jo 1:1, *the Word of life*; so Re 19:13: and there are some who think he is so called, Lu 1:2, comparing that text with 2Pe 1:16, as also Ps 33:6. Nor is it an improper term by which to express the Son of God; for it both expresses something of his ineffable generation, as the word is begotten in our thoughts, and is the express image of them; and also his office in the revelation of his Father's will unto the sons of men, and revealing his Father to us, Mt 11:27: and there are some (if they be not too curious in their notion) who think by that phrase of David, 2Sa 7:21, *For thy word's sake*, (expounded *for thy servant's sake*, 1Ch 17:19, which is the title of Christ, Isa 42:1), that Christ is meant. Besides, it is observed, that this term was more acceptable both to the Jews and the heathens, than the term of *Christ*, or *the Son of God*, would have been; for there was

nothing more abhorred by the Jews than the latter; and the heathen writers made (as is noted by divers) a great use of this term, to express the name and the power of God. Nor is any thing more ordinary with the Chaldee paraphrast than this expression: Isa 45:12, *I have made the earth*; Chald. I in my word have made the earth. So Isa 48:13, *Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth*; Chald. By my word I have laid the foundations of the earth: this is taken from Moses's describing the creation by God's word of command, *Let there be light, and there was light*; the manner of expressing it by the word command, is significative that all things were made by his eternal Word; for would any Jew deny, that God by his word created the world? The evangelist therefore calleth Christ, to whom he was about to attribute the creation, *the Word*; not the word of God (so the Scriptures are called); to distinguish Christ in this notion from the revelation of the Divine will to the prophets, he is only called *the Word*, though he was the Son of God. Nor is it said, that in the beginning was the Word created, (as is said of the heavens and the earth, Ge 1:1), but *was* the Word: this proveth the eternal existence of the Second Person in the Trinity; for what *was* in the beginning did not then begin to be: the term *the Word*, without the addition of God, speaketh him a subsistence; and it being said, that in the beginning he *was*, speaks his eternal existence; for what had a being in the beginning of time must needs be eternal, nothing being when time began but what was eternal. To this purpose are those texts, Ps 90:2 Pr 8:22-31 Joh 17:5 Eph 1:4 2Th 2:13, which two texts compared show, *In the beginning*, here used, to be the same with *before the foundation of the world*: so 2Ti 1:9.

The Word was with God: lest any should say, Where was this Word before the foundations of the earth were laid? The evangelist saith, *with God*, which agreeth with Pr 8:27,30. This both distinguishes Christ from all creatures, (none of which were with God in the beginning), and also showeth the vanity of Sabellius, and those we call quakers, who will not allow Christ to be a distinct subsistence, or person, from his Father: it also denotes the Son's co-existence and his equality with his Father; and yet his filial relation; for God is not said to have been with the Word, but the Word was with God, which also speaks a perfect unity and consent between them.

And the Word was God: lest any should say, What but God can be eternal, or be said to have been and had an existence in the beginning of the world?

The evangelist addeth, that *the Word was God*: that is, the person or subsistence spoken of and intended by him was the Divine Being, which is but one; though in it there be three distinct subsistences, all make but one and the same Divine Being. The first thing spoken here of Christ attributes to him eternity; the second speaks his relation to the Father; this speaks the oneness and sameness of his essence with that of the Father. The term *God*, which in the foregoing words is to be taken personally for God the Father, is here to be taken essentially, as it signifieth the Divine Being.

John 1:2

Ver. 2. These words of the evangelist are a further confirmation and explication of what the evangelist had said before; asserting the eternity of the Son, and his relation to the Father, and oneness of essence with the Father. Whether the evangelist, forewarned by the Spirit of God, did add this repetition to forearm Christians against those errors which did afterward trouble the church, I cannot say; but certain it is, that these words do effectually confute the Eunomians, who distinguished between the Word which in the beginning was with God, and that Word by which all things were made; and the Arians, who make the Father to have existed before the Son; as also the Anomians, who would make the Father and the Son diverse both in nature and will. Some others make this verse a transition to Joh 1:4, and the sense to be, This same was not manifest to the world from the beginning of the world, but was with God until he came to be manifested in the flesh: thus, 1Jo 1:2, it is said, he *was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. He was manifested in the flesh, 1Ti 3:16.*

John 1:3

Ver. 3. *All things were made by him*: the Divine nature and eternal existence of the Lord Christ, is evident from his efficiency in the creation of the world: what the evangelist here calleth *all things*, the apostle to the Hebrews, Heb 1:2, calleth *the worlds*; and St. Paul, Col 1:16, calleth, *all things that are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible*; Moses calls, *the heaven and the earth*, Ge 1:1. These were all made by the Word; not as an instrumental cause, but as a principal efficient cause; for though it be true,

that the preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$ is sometimes used to signify an instrumental cause; yet it is as true, that it is often used to signify the principal efficient cause; as Joh 6:57 Ac 3:16 Ro 5:5 11:36 Eph 4:6, and in many other texts: it here only denotes the order of the working of the holy Trinity.

Without him was not any thing made that was made; nothing that was made, neither the heavens nor the earth, neither things visible nor invisible, were made without him. There is nothing more ordinary in holy writ, than after the laying down a universal proposition, (where no synecdoche is used), to add also a universal negative for the confirmation of it: so Ro 3:12, *There is none that doeth good;* then is added, *no, not one;* La 2:2, and in many other texts. The term *without him*, doth not exclude the efficiency either of the First, or Third Person in the Trinity, in the creation of all things; the Father created the world by the Son, his Word; and the creation of the world is attributed to the Spirit, Ge 1:1 Job 33:4 Ps 33:6.

John 1:4

Ver. 4. *In him was life;* in this Word was life corporal, spiritual, eternal; it was in him as in the fountain. Some understand this of corporal life, both in the first being and preservation of it; it is certain that this is in Christ, for he *upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, Heb 1:3 Ac 17:28; and thus it is another demonstration of the Deity of Christ. Others think that here is rather a transition from creation to redemption; *you hath he quickened*, Eph 2:1. Others understand it of eternal life, because our evangelist most generally taketh the term *life*, as a benefit flowing from Christ, in this sense, as Eph 3:16, and Eph 4:14, and in a multitude of other texts. I know no reason why we should not understand it of all life; all life being in Christ, as God equal with the Father; and spiritual and eternal life flowing also from him in a more peculiar consideration, as Mediator.

And the life was the light of men: but though as God he distributes life according to their degree to all his creatures, yet he is the peculiar *light of men*, enlightening their minds with light of which vegetative and sensitive creatures are not capable; so as by *light* is not here to be understood the emanations of any lucid bodies, as that of the sun or stars, for other creatures as well as men are capable of that; nor is it to be understood of the light of reason, though that be the candle of the Lord in the soul; but

that light by which we discern the things of God; in which sense the apostle saith, Eph 5:8, *Ye were darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord*. And therefore he saith *of men*, exclusively to angels, who though lightsome, noble creatures, yet had not their nature assumed by Christ, Heb 2:16. Besides that it is said in the next verse, that this light *shineth in darkness*, that is, amongst many men who yet had reasonable souls, *but the darkness comprehended it not*. That cannot be, that men did not comprehend reason, but even rational men comprehended not this light of supernatural revelation. So John is said to have come to testify of that light; who did not come to testify of Christ, as the author of reason. Nor is there any text of Scripture in which the term light signifieth reason.

John 1:5

Ver. 5. *The light shineth in darkness*: he had said before, that life was in Christ, in him as in the fountain; and the life in him was the light of men, giving light to men. Now this light which was in him had its emanations (as light in the sun); *and the darkness*, that is, men of dark minds, (the abstract being put for the concrete), *comprehended* (that is, received) *it not*. This was true concerning the Jews in former times, upon whom Christ the true Light had shined in many types and prophecies; it was also true concerning the Jews of that present age, to whom, through the favour of him who had undertaken the redemption of man, the means of grace were continued; through the blindness of their minds and hardness of their hearts, they wilfully rejected those means of illumination which God granted to them.

John 1:6

Ver. 6. *There was a man sent from God*; not the Christ, not an angel, but *a man*; yet one, than whom (as our Saviour saith) there had not risen a greater amongst those that were born of women. He did not come of his own head, but was *sent*; for it was he of whom it was written, Mal 3:1, *Behold, I will send my messenger before thy face, &c.*, Lu 7:27, he was not sent of men, but *from God*, foretold by the angel, as to his existence, name, work, and success, Lu 1:13-17.

Whose name was John; his name was John, named by the angel, Lu 1:13, before he was born; by his father and mother, Lu 1:60,63, when he was born. John signifieth *grace*; and doubtless the Baptist obtained that name, because he was to be the first and a famous preacher of the grace of the gospel which came to the world through Jesus Christ.

John 1:7

Ver. 7. *The same came for a witness:* John was called a *messenger* to denote his authority; a *witness*, to denote his work, which is the work of every true minister of the gospel. John was the first witness, and witnessed a thing wholly unknown (before him) to the generality of the world; for though the shepherds, and Simeon, and Anna, had given some testimony to Christ, when he was born, and brought into the temple to be offered to the Lord, yet that was thirty years since, and generally forgot; neither could they bear a testimony to him as an actual minister of the gospel. The apostles were to be *witnesses* to Christ, Ac 1:8; *witnesses of his resurrection*, Ac 1:22 4:33 5:32 10:41 13:31. All the prophets bare witness to him, that whosoever believeth in his name should be saved, Ac 10:43. So did John also; and John further pointed to him passing by, and witnessed that it was he of whom the prophets spake. So that the apostles, and so following ministers, were and are greater witnesses than John the Baptist. The prophets witnessed that he should come, John Baptist witnessed that he should come; the apostles witnessed that he was not only come, but had died, and was again risen from the dead. *To bear witness of the Light;* for John's office was to give a testimony to Christ the true Light, mentioned before; so called, because he maketh manifest, Eph 5:13. He revealeth his Father, Mt 11:27. He is *the brightness of his Father's glory*, Heb 1:3, who *is light*, 1Jo 1:5, and the world is by him enlightened. It was prophesied of his times, Isa 11:9, that *the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord. That all men through him might believe;* the end of John's testimony was, that multitudes of all sorts might believe by him, or by it, as an instrumental cause of their faith. If we read it *by him*, it is most proper to understand the pronoun of John the Baptist; for we are not said to believe by Christ, but *in him, in his name, &c.*

John 1:8

Ver. 8. *He was not that Light:* John the Baptist was a light, as all saints are *light in the Lord*, Eph 5:8; nay, in a peculiar sense our Saviour beareth him witness, that he *was a burning and shining light*; but he was not that Light before mentioned, Joh 1:5, that *shineth in darkness*; and again Joh 1:9 *which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. John borrowed his light from that original Light; that Light was God, he was but a man sent from God. The men of the world are ordinarily in extremes, either wholly rejecting God's ministers and witnesses, or else adoring them; as the world is concerned to take heed of the former, so the ministers of Christ are also highly concerned not to admit the latter. See Lu 7:33 Ac 14:13,14; but both John here, and Paul there, were very cautious not to rob their Master of the honour due unto him alone.

But was sent to bear witness of that Light: John, as was said before, came only *to bear witness of that Light*, that he was come, and shined forth, and was the true Light, as it followeth.

John 1:9

Ver. 9. *That was the true Light:* *true* is sometimes opposed to what is false, Eph 4:25; sometimes to what is typical and figurative, Joh 1:17; sometimes to what is not original, and of itself: in opposition to all these Christ is the *true Light*; he who alone deserved the name of light, having light in himself, and from himself, 1Jo 2:8, and shining more gloriously than the prophets or apostles.

Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; he lighteth not the Jews only, (as the prophets of old), but both the Jews and Gentiles. Some understand this of the light of reason; but besides that reason is no where in holy writ called light, neither did this illumination agree to Christ as Mediator. It is rather therefore to be understood of the light of gospel revelation, which Christ caused to be made to all the world, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15. Those who interpret it of the more internal illumination by the Holy Spirit of God, by which Christ is not revealed *to us* only, but *in us*, say, that Christ hath done what lay in him (as a Minister of the gospel) so to enlighten all that came into the world; and that Christ is said to enlighten

every man, because none is enlightened but by him, and that some of all sorts are by him enlightened; in one of which two latter senses the terms *all* and *every man* must be interpreted in a multitude of texts in the Gospel. The words in the Greek are so, as they may either be translated as we read them, or thus, who coming into the world, enlightened every man: a more universal spiritual light, or means to come to the knowledge of God, overspreading the world after Christ's coming, than before. So Joh 7:46, *I am come a light into the world*. And it is by some observed, that the phrase *cometh into the world*, doth not barely signify a being born, but being sent into the world by the Father, being sanctified, as in Joh 10:36 17:18.

John 1:10

Ver. 10. *He was in the world;* he was in the place called *the world*, and amongst the men of the world; for so the term *world* is often taken, Joh 16:28 2Pe 3:6. Christ, before he came in the flesh, was in it; filling both the heavens and the earth, and sustaining it by the word of his power, and manifesting his will to it, more immediately to Moses and to the prophets, and more mediately by Moses and by the prophets.

And the world was made by him; and the heavens and the earth, all things visible and invisible, (as was said before), were made by him.

And the world knew him not; and the men of the world took no notice of him, did not acknowledge him, believe in him, nor were subject to him; so the word *knew* often signifies, (according to the Hebrew idiom), Joh 10:14,15,27; not a bare comprehension of an object in the understanding, but suitable affections: so Mt 7:23 1Jo 3:1. This is not to be understood of all individual persons in the world; for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David, and many particular persons, did in this sense know him; but the generality of the world did not. The heathens did not, (who are sometimes called the *world*, distinctively from the Jews, 1Jo 2:2 1Co 1:21), and most of the Jews did not, though some did.

John 1:11

Ver. 11. *He came unto his own;* Christ came into the world, which being

made by him, was in the most proper sense his own; or, to the Israelites, which were as his own house, land, and possession, Ps 85:1 Joh 16:32. The Greek word is in the plural number, and used in the places before mentioned, as also Ac 21:6; sometimes signifying men's proper country, sometimes their proper house. But it is a further question, what coming is here spoken of: though it be generally (or by many at least) interpreted of Christ's coming by his incarnation, yet that seemeth not to be the sense; partly, because that coming is spoken of, Ac 21:14; and partly, because in that sense the Jews did receive him; nor was it in their power to hinder his manifestation in the flesh. The coming therefore here mentioned seemeth to be intended of his coming by his prophets, John the Baptist, and his own personal preaching of the gospel.

And his own received him not; whom in this way of coming they did not receive, believing neither the testimony given by his prophets, nor by the Baptist, nor by himself, Joh 5:43.

John 1:12

Ver. 12. *But as many as received him;* though the generality of those amongst whom Christ came received him not in the manner before expressed, yet some did own him, believed in him and submitted to him; and to as many as thus received him, not into their houses only, but into their hearts, *to them gave he power to become the sons of God;* he gave a power, or a right, or privilege, not that they might if they would be, but to be actually, to become, or be, the sons of God by adoption; for believers are already the sons of God, Ga 3:26, though it doth not yet appear what they shall be in the *adoption*, mentioned Ro 8:23, which the apostle calls the *redemption of our body*, viz. in the resurrection; hence the children of God are called the *children of the resurrection*, Lu 20:36.

To them that believe on his name; this is the privilege of all that believe in the name of Christ; by which term he opens the former term of receiving: to receive Christ, and to believe in his name, are the same thing. To believe in his name, is either to believe in him, Ac 3:16 or in the revelation of himself in the promises of the gospel. The proposition of God's word is the object of faith of assent: but the person of the Mediator is the object of that faith which receiveth Christ; and those alone have a right to be the

sons of God, and to the privileges peculiar to sons, who believe in Christ as revealed in the promises of the word of God, and there exhibited to men.

John 1:13

Ver. 13. *Which were born, not of blood;* not of the blood of men and women; or, not of the blood of Abraham (which was the boast of the Jews, *We have Abraham to our Father*).

Nor of the will of the flesh; nor from the lusts of the flesh.

Nor of the will of man; nor from a power in man's will, or men's free act in adopting other men's children. To be born, signifieth to receive our principle of life: those who are the children of God had not the principle of their life, as they are such, from the motions of nature, nor from the will of men.

But of God: whatever be the sense of the former words, these words plainly affirm God to be the principal efficient, and procreant cause, of all those who are the sons of God; for faith, by which we are the children of God, Ga 3:26, is the work of God, Joh 6:29, his gift, Php 1:29; and men are *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of that which is incorruptible, 1Pe 1:23; they are sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word, Eph 5:26; *the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit 3:5.**

John 1:14

Ver. 14. *The Word was made flesh;* the Son of God, called *the Word*, for the reasons before specified, was made truly man, as *flesh* often signifieth in holy writ, Ge 6:12 Ps 65:2 Isa 40:5,6; not a vile, despicable, mortal man. The evangelist rather saith he was made flesh, than he was made man, more plainly to distinguish the two natures in Christ; to assert the truth of his human nature; to let us know that Christ assumed human nature in common, not the particular nature of any; to commend the love of God, and to let us see, that his plaster was proportioned to our sore, it reached

all flesh.

The evangelist saith not he was changed into flesh; but, by assuming, *he was made flesh. And dwelt amongst us:* and he tabernacled amongst us; amongst us men, or amongst men that were his disciples: the word signifieth properly, he made no long stay.

And we beheld his glory; and we beheld the signs and effects of his glory; many of which were seen, both at the time of his transfiguration, and at his passion, resurrection, and ascension; the glory of his grace, holiness, truth, miraculous operations, &c.

The glory as of the only begotten of the Father; which glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father; for the particle *as* here doth not signify likeness, but truth, Ne 7:2 Job 24:14.

Full of grace and truth, as he was God manifested in the flesh. *Grace* signifieth love and good will, out of which it was that he delivered us from the curse and rigour of the law (to which grace is opposed). He was also full of *truth*, both as truth is opposed to falsehood, and to the shadows and figures of the law; and Christ was full of truth as he was the antitype to all the ceremonies, and all the promises had and have their completion and reality in him: see Joh 14:17 Rom 15:8 2Co 1:20. Truth also may signify the sincerity and integrity of Christ's life, as he was without guile.

John 1:15

Ver. 15. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying:* John was not he, but only a witness to him; and he continueth to bear witness (the verb is in the present tense); nor did he give an obscure or cold testimony, but an open, and plain, and fervent testimony, according to the prophecies, his testimony was the *voice of one crying in the wilderness. This was he of whom I spake;* he first testified that Christ was he of whom he had before spoken; possibly when he was preaching in the wilderness, and Christ came to him to be baptized of him, Mt 3:11,14.

He that cometh after me is preferred before me; be that cometh after me, in order of time, or in the ministerial office and employment, or, as if he were

my disciple, Joh 8:12, is become, or is made, before me.

For he was before me, both in the eternal destination, and in respect of his Divine nature; as also in dignity and eminency, considered as a prophet, i.e. one that revealeth my Father's will. This John said before, though not in terms, yet in effect, when he said, Mt 3:11, *He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, &c.* So Mr 1:7 Lu 3:16. This is the first thing which is here mentioned, as John's testimony concerning Christ, respecting the excellency of his person.

John 1:16

Ver. 16. *And of his fulness have all we received;* of that plenty of grace which Christ hath, (who hath not the Spirit given him *by measure*, Joh 3:34, as other saints have, Ac 2:4,6,8), we who by nature are void of grace, whether taken for the favour of God, or gracious habits, have received, as the skirts of Aaron's garment received the oil which was plentifully poured out on Aaron's head.

And grace for grace: nor have we received drops, but grace upon grace; not only knowledge and instruction, but the love and favour of God, and spiritual habits, in proportion to the favour and grace which Christ hath (allowing for our short capacities); we have received grace freely and plentifully, all from Christ, and for his sake; which lets us see how much the grace receiving soul is bound to acknowledge and adore Christ, and may be confirmed in the receiving of further grace, and the hopes of eternal life; and it may mind all (according to that of the apostle, 2Co 6:1), to take heed that *they receive not the grace of God in vain.*

John 1:17

Ver. 17. *For the law was given by Moses;* the law, moral and ceremonial, came not by Moses, but was given by Moses as God's minister and servant; that law by which no man can be justified, Ro 3:28. In this was Moses's honour, of whom you glory, Joh 5:45. God indeed made an eminent use of him, as his minister, by whom he revealed his will to you; both in matters of his worship, according to that dispensation; and in

matters which concern you in your whole conversation; but yet there is an eminent difference between him and Jesus Christ. The law is no where called grace, neither doth it discover any thing but duty and wrath; it showeth no remission, in case that duty be not done, nor affordeth strength for the doing of it.

But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; all that is from Christ; all the favour of God for the remission and pardon of sin, and for strength and assistance to the performance of duty, is (not given from God by Christ, as the law by Moses, but) from Christ as the fountain of grace; and not grace only, but *truth*, whether taken for solid and real mercy, or with respect to the law; the fulfilling of all the types and prophecies in it was by and in Christ.

John 1:18

Ver. 18. *No man has seen God at any time;* no man hath at any time seen the essence of God with his eyes, Joh 4:24; nor with the eyes of his mind understood the whole counsel and will of God, Mt 11:27 Ro 11:34. Moses indeed saw the image and representation of God, and had a more familiar converse with God than others; upon which account he is said to have talked with God face to face; Nu 12:7,8, God saith he would speak unto him *mouth to mouth, even apparently;* but he tells us how in the same verse, *and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold;* and God, who had spoken to the same sense, Ex 33:11, saith, Joh 1:20, *Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live.* Now to whom he did not discover his face, he certainly did not discover all his secret counsels.

The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father; but he who is the only begotten and beloved Son, hath such an intimate communion with him in his nature, and such a free communication of all his counsels, as it may be said, he is continually in his bosom.

He hath declared him; hath declared him, not only as a prophet declareth the mind and will of God, but *as the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work,* Ps 19:1; being *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person,* Heb 1:3. So as the Father can only be seen in the Son; nor is so full a revelation of the

Father's will to be expected from any, as from the Son.

John 1:19

Ver. 19. John's former testimony was more private to the common people; this testimony was given to a public authority. *The Jews* (most probably the rulers of the Jews, who made up their sanhedrim, or great court, answering a parliament with us, for the cognizance of false prophets belonged to them) *sent priests and Levites*, which were Pharisees, Joh 1:24, of the strictest sect of the Jews as to rites and ceremonies; these came from Jerusalem, where the sanhedrim constantly sat, and the chief priests were, (if the message were not from the sanhedrim itself), to ask John Baptist who he was; that is, by what authority he preached and baptized? What kind of prophet he was? For they could not but know his name and family, he descending from a priest amongst them: and this appeareth to be their sense from what followeth.

John 1:20

Ver. 20. *And he confessed;* he being asked openly and plainly, professed, *and denied not;* and did not dissemble nor halt in his speech. These negatives are in Scripture often added to affirmatives, to exclude all exceptions, Job 5:17 Ps 40:10-12. *But confessed:* he did not tell them once so, but again and again, because many were musing about it, Lu 3:15.

I am not the Christ; I am not that great Messiah which God hath promised you, and in the expectation of whom you live, Lu 2:26,38 Lu 19:11 Joh 4:25. The diligence we shall constantly observe in the servants of God in holy writ, to avoid the arrogating of that honour to themselves which is due only to God and Christ; and this, together with John's steadiness and plainness, doth very well become all professors, but the ministers of the gospel especially.

John 1:21

Ver. 21. John was at Bethabara when these messengers came to him, Joh

1:28. They asked him if he were *Elias*. The Jews had not only an expectation of the Messiah, but of Elias to come as a messenger before him, according to the prophecy, Mal 4:5; as appeareth, Mt 17:10 Mr 9:11; of which they had a gross conception here, that Elias should come out of heaven personally, or at least that his soul should come into another body, according to the Pythagorean opinion. Now the meaning of the prophecy was, that one should come like Elias; and this was fulfilled in John, Lu 1:17, as our Saviour tells us, Mt 17:12 Mr 9:13; but they asked the question according to that notion they had of Elias. To which John answereth, that he was not; neither that Elias that ascended in a fiery chariot to heaven; nor any body informed with Elias's soul: and thus the words of our Saviour, Mt 17:12 Mr 9:12, are easily reconciled to this text. They go on, and ask him if he were *that prophet*, or a prophet. Some think that they meant the Prophet promised, De 18:18; but that was no other than Christ himself, which he had before denied himself to be; nor doth it appear from any text of Scripture that the Jews had any expectation of any other particular prophet; but it is plain from Lu 9:8, that they had a notion that it was possible one of the old prophets might rise again from the dead, for so they guessed there concerning Christ. But others think that the article in the Greek here is not emphatical, and they only asked him if he were a prophet; for the Jews had a general notion, that the spirit of prophecy had left them ever since the times of Zechariah and Malachi; which they hoped was returned in John the Baptist, and about this they question him if he were a prophet. To which he answereth, *No*; neither that Prophet promised, De 18:18, nor yet any of the old prophets risen from the dead; nor yet one like the prophets of the Old Testament, who only prophesied of a Christ to come; but, as Christ calls him, Mt 11:9, *more than a prophet*, one who showed and declared to them a Christ already come; for the law and the prophets prophesied but until John; the law in its types foreshowing, the prophets in their sermons foretelling, a Messiah to come; John did more. His father indeed, Lu 1:76, called him *the prophet of the Highest*; but there *prophet* is to be understood not in a strict, but in a large sense, as the term prophecy is taken, Ro 12:6. And the term prophet often signifieth one that revealeth the will of God to men; in which large sense John was a prophet, and yet more than a prophet in the stricter notion of the term; and in that sense no prophet, that is, no mere prophet: so, Nu 11:19, Moses tells the people they should not eat flesh one, or two, or five, or ten, or twenty days, because they should eat it a whole month together.

John 1:22

Ver. 22. Hitherto John had given them only a negative answer, and told them who he was not; he was neither Christ, nor the Elias, nor that prophet they expected; neither any of the old prophets risen from the dead; nor any prophet at all in a strict sense (as were the prophets of the Old Testament): they press him to a direct, plain, positive answer, that they might give an answer to those that sent them, who did not send them to inquire what he was not, but what he was. And there were various talks and discourses of the people about him, which they were not willing to take up and run away with; but they desired to have it from himself.

John 1:23

Ver. 23. We had the same, See Poole on "Mt 3:3", See Poole on "Mr 1:3". Chemnitius thinks, that John chose rather to preach and fulfil his ministry in the wilderness, than in the temple; to make an illustrious difference between himself, who was but the Lord's messenger, and whose office was but to prepare the Lord's way, and his Lord himself, of whom it was prophesied, Mal 3:1, *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his holy temple;* upon which account Haggai prophesied. Hag 2:9, that *the glory of that latter house* (built by Ezra, and Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah) *should be greater than of the former.*

John 1:24

Ver. 24. Who these Pharisees were hath been before explained in our notes on Mt 3:7. They were of the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, Ac 26:5. The greatest part of their councils was made up of those of this sect, as may be learned from Ac 23:1-10. They were the men most zealous for and tenacious of the Jewish rites; and would allow nothing to be added to the Jewish worship to what they had received concerning it, either from the law of God, or the traditions of the elders.

John 1:25

Ver. 25. The Pharisees themselves would allow the Messiah, or Elias, or a prophet, to make any additions to or alterations in the worship of God, but none else: hence it is they ask, by what authority he baptized, if he were none of these? From whence we may learn, that although they might have some umbrage of that baptismal washing which was under the gospel, to commence into a sacrament, or federal sign, in the washing of their proselytes, or of Jewish children when they were circumcised; yet John's action was looked upon as new, who baptized adult Jews: now the care of the sanhedrim was to keep the worship of God incorrupt, and the Pharisees amongst them had a particular zeal in the case, especially so far as the traditions of the elders were concerned.

John 1:26

Ver. 26. This was no strict answer to their question, which was not, how, but why he baptized? But proper replies are often called answers in Scripture, though not apposite to the question. *I baptize with water; I baptize you with mere water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; but there hath stood one amongst you, εστηκεν, or (by a usual putting of one tense for another) there standeth one; Christ had been there with the crowd, Lu 3:15,21, and possibly was amongst them still when John spake these words; whom you know not, not so much as ore tenus, by face.*

John 1:27

Ver. 27. John the Baptist had before told them, *He that cometh after me is preferred before me, See Poole on "Joh 1:15".* He now repeateth those words; and it is observable, that the three other evangelists all put this passage before the history of Christ's coming to him to be baptized. So as it is probable that these messengers came to John as he was baptizing; and either immediately before or after Christ's baptism, Christ being yet in the crowd, he repeateth to his hearers what he had a little before said of him, that he was to be preferred before him.

Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he here enlargeth upon it with a proverbial speech, which the other evangelists have, with a very little variation: Matthew saith, *Whose shoe's I am not worthy to bear;* that is, to perform unto him the very meanest service or office. We have such forms of speech in use at this day amongst us; when we would express the great preeminence of some one above another, we say of that other, He is not worthy to tie his shoes; or, to carry his shoes after him. There is a vast difference between Christ and the most excellent of his ministers; which as to baptism lieth here; the ministerial baptism is but with water; Christ baptizeth *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Mt 3:11, or, *with the Holy Ghost*, as Mr 1:8.

John 1:28

Ver. 28. The evangelist had before told us what was done, these words tell us where. Some ancient writers will have the place to have been Bethany; but they seem not to have so well considered Joh 11:18, where Bethany is said to have been but fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and consequently on this side Jordan; whereas the evangelist saith, that this place was *περαν, beyond Jordan*, in the tribe of Reuben, in the country of Peraea, *where John at this time was baptizing*, and probably had been so for some time.

John 1:29

Ver. 29. *The next day;* the most think, the day following that day when the messengers from Jerusalem had been examining the Baptist. Heinsius thinks it was the same day, and saith, the Hellenists usually so interpret *εν επαυπιον*, for *μετα ταυτα*, after these things; but the former sense is more generally embraced.

John seeth Jesus coming to him, out of the wilderness, as some think, where he had been tempted by the devil; but then it must follow, that he was not amongst the crowd, Joh 1:2, standing in the midst of them, when the messengers were there; and it should appear by Joh 1:32,33, that this which is here recorded happened after Christ's baptism by John (of which this evangelist saith nothing): it seemeth rather to be understood of another coming of Christ to John after he had been baptized, when John, seeing

him, pointed as it were with his finger to him, (for the term *Behold* seemeth to be here used demonstratively), showing them the person whom he would have them cast their eye upon; whom he calls, *the Lamb of God*, not only to denote his excellency, as we read of the *night of the Lord*, Ex 12:42, and *the bread of God*, Le 21:21; which indeed Christ was, being *without blemish*, 1Pe 1:19; but with reference to the lambs used in the Jewish sacrifices, not only at the passover, Ex 12:5, but in the daily sacrifice, Ex 29:38 Le 1:10, or the burnt offering; and in the peace offering, Le 3:7, and in the sin offering, Le 4:32. He calls Christ *the Lamb of God*, probably, because divers of the priests were there to hear, and (as appears, Joh 1:39) it was nigh the time of their daily sacrifice; that so he might remind them that Christ was the truth and Antitype to all their sacrifices.

Which taketh away the sin of the world; ο αἰρῶν, the word signifies both to take up, and to take away: *which taketh away the sin of the world*, as God, to whom it belongs to forgive sin; and this he did by taking it upon himself, (so it is translated, Mt 16:24), expiating it, which expiation is followed by a plenary remission, and taking it away, both the punishment of it, and the root, and body, and power of it; redeeming them as from the grave and hell, due to man for sin; so from a *vain conversation*, 1Pe 1:18; and not doing this for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also, 1Jo 2:2, for many in the world, being he without whom there is no remission, Ac 4:12. Nor doth his gracious act cease at any time, it is a work he is always doing, and which none but he can do: ministers may persuade, priests of old offered lambs and other beasts in sacrifice; but he alone taketh away sin. So that, as what he said to the messengers of the sanhedrim gave all the honour of any valuable effect of baptism to Christ; so, what he saith here gives him all the honour of any good effect of preaching, or any good effect of our ministry; it is he alone, who (when we have said or done what we can) taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:30

Ver. 30. And (saith he) this is he of whom I said, (as Joh 1:15), He cometh after me in order of time and ministry, but is more excellent than I am. See Poole on "Joh 1:15".

John 1:31

Ver. 31. This verse is best expounded by Joh 1:33, where the same words are repeated, *I knew him not;* and it is added, *but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, &c.* Lest any should think that Christ and John had compacted together to give one another credit, or that there was some near relation between John and Christ, John saith, *I knew him not;* for Christ had spent his time at home, Lu 2:51, John had lived in desert places; the providence of God so ordering it, that John should not know Christ so much as by face, until that time came when Christ was to be made manifest to Israel. But that God might make his *Son manifest unto Israel*, when God by an extraordinary mission sent John to baptize with water, he gave him this token, That he upon whom he should see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, as Joh 1:33, that was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, that should take away the sin of the world; he who should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

And *therefore* (saith John) *am I come baptizing with water.* I did not run without sending, nor introduce a new rite or sacrament without commission; but being thus sent of God, and that I might give Christ an opportunity of coming to me, that I might see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him. From whence we learn, that none but Christ can institute a sacrament. John baptized not, till he was sent to baptize with water.

John 1:32

Ver. 32. Saith John, According to the revelation which I had, when I received my extraordinary commission to baptize, so it fell out to me, I did see, when he was baptized, the heaven opening, and a representation of the Spirit of God (for no man can see God and live) descending. The form of the representation was like that of a dove. And it was not a mere transient sight, but it did for some time abide upon that person, in that sensible representation; by that token I knew that he was the Son of God.

John 1:33

Ver. 33. *And I knew him not;* I was a stranger to him; I knew him in a sense, when I leaped in my mother's womb, upon his mother's coming to see my mother, Lu 1:41; but that (as impressions made upon infants use to do) wore off. I had some impression upon me at that time when he came towards me to be baptized, which made me say to him, (as Mt 3:14), *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* But yet I was not certain, though I knew he was in the crowd of people, that he was the person designed, and whose work it should be to baptize with the Holy Ghost, until the same God that had given me that sign fulfilled it to me.

John 1:34

Ver. 34. But when I saw that, I could not but believe, and also bear an open testimony to the world, that this man was not mere man, but the eternal Son of that God, who sent me to baptize with water; reserving still to himself the Divine power of blessing that holy sacrament, and conferring the Holy Ghost in regenerating habits, working like fire, in purging away the dross of souls, and like water, washing away the filth of sin, Mt 3:11 Joh 3:5.

John 1:35

Ver. 35,36. *The next day after that the messengers who came from Jerusalem had been with John, John stood, and two of his disciples;* whether he was preaching or no it is not said; but John standing with them, saw Christ walking, whence, or whither, is not said; but as a good man is always taking opportunity to commend Christ to others, so John upon this occasion took advantage further to make Christ known to those two men, (who they were, we shall hear in the following verses), and repeats the words he had said before, *Behold the Lamb of God!* (See Poole on "Joh 1:27"). Thus good and faithful ministers will continually be inviting their disciples to Christ, taking them off from further consideration of themselves, and, as ministers, to show them the way to Christ.

John 1:37

Ver. 37. God blessed the verbal testimony that John had given so far, that they stood in no need of any miracle to confirm it, but upon their hearing John *speak, they followed Jesus*: as yet, not as his apostles; for their call to that office was afterward (as we shall hear); nor yet, so as no more to depart from him: but there was created in them a further desire of knowledge of him and acquaintance with him.

John 1:38

Ver. 38. Christ, as he walked, turning him, and seeing two men following him, inquires of their end, what they sought; to teach us, in all our religious motions and actions, to do the like; for the end will contribute much to specify the action, and to make it good or bad. They gave him that honourable title which was then in fashion, by and under which they were wont to speak to those upon whom they relied for instruction, whose doctrine they desired to know, and with whom they desired to converse, and to learn of him. They asked him where he abode, or where he lodged.

John 1:39

Ver. 39. Our Lord discerning the end of their following him to be sincere and good, invites them to *come and see* where his lodging was; for he elsewhere telleth us, that he had not a house wherein to hide his head.

They came and saw his lodgings; where, or of what nature they were, we are not told, but we never read that he during his whole pilgrimage amongst us had any stately or splendid lodgings.

The text saith that these two disciples *abode with him that day*; whether only the two or three remaining hours of the same day, (for it was now about four of the clock afternoon, which answers the tenth hour according to the Jewish account), or another whole day, being the sabbath day, (as some think), we are not told, nor can conclude; certain it is, they abode with him the remaining part of that day, from four of the clock till night.

John 1:40

Ver. 40. Concerning the call of this Andrew to the apostleship, See Poole on "Mt 4:18". See Poole on "Mt 4:19". See Poole on "Mr 1:16". See Poole on "Mr 1:17". That was at another time, and in another manner: Christ here only invited them to come and see where he lodged.

John 1:41

Ver. 41. It should seem that both the disciples (after their converse with Christ at the place where he lodged) went together to look for Peter, Andrew's brother. Andrew first found him, and tells him (with great joy) that he and that other disciple had *found the Messiah*, prophesied of by Daniel, and in the expectation of whom the disciples and the Jews lived. The term *Messiah* in Hebrew is the same with *Christ* in Greek, and both signify the same with *Anointed* in English. The article in this place is emphatic, not merely prepositive, as in other places, but signifying, that Anointed; for other kings, and priests, and prophets were also anointed, and God's people are called anointed; but he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, having the Spirit not given him by measure.

John 1:42

Ver. 42. Andrew having found his brother Simon, conducts him to Jesus. Andrew, and Simon, and Philip were citizens of Bethsaida, Joh 1:44, which was a city of Galilee; how near to the place where John baptized, or Christ lodged, we cannot say. Probably Simon was one of John's disciples, and came to attend his ministry; so as the disciples only sought him in the crowd, and came with him to Christ. When Christ beheld him, he said, *Thou art Simon*; he knew him, and called him by name, and told him his father's name, *Jonas*, and giveth him a new name, *Cephas*, which by interpretation doth not signify a head, (as the popish disputant at Berne urged, to prove him the head of the church, as if it had been a Greek word, and came from κεφαλη; or, as he pretended, ridiculously enough, from an old Greek word, κεφας), but *a stone* (as this text tells us); by which name

we find him called, 1Co 1:12 3:22 9:5 15:5 Ga 2:9: in other places *Peter*, which signifieth a stone also, or a rock. Cephas is a Syriac word, Peter a Greek word: Christ gave him the name. Both Cephas and Peter are by interpretation, a stone. Beza thinks that our Saviour did not here give him that name, but foretell that he should be so called. Casaubon thinks that the name was here given to him, and with it a new spirit; that whereas before he was (according to his father's name Jonas, which signifies a dove) fearful and timorous, from this time forward he was as a rock, steady, firm, and full of courage and constancy: but it is a greater question how this text is to be reconciled with Mt 4:18-20, where Andrew and Peter are both said to be espied by Christ, *walking by the sea of Galilee*; and Lu 5:10, where Simon is reported to be called after they had taken a great draught of fish; and with Mr 3:13, and Lu 6:13, where all the apostles are named as called at one and the same time. Doubtless the calls were different. This in John seems rather to be a prophecy than a call. Those texts, Mt 4:18-20, and Lu 5:10, seem to be their calls to a discipleship. The other texts, Mr 3:13 Lu 6:13, respect their election to the apostleship, and the mission of them.

John 1:43

Ver. 43. All this while Christ seemeth to have been in Judea, which was the most famous province. The day after Peter had thus been with him, he had a mind to go *into Galilee*; out of that he designed to choose his disciples; and that being the country where he had been educated, he designed in a more special manner to honour it with the first fruit of his public ministry. There *findeth Philip* (the name signifieth, a lover of horses). He calleth him to be his disciple.

John 1:44

Ver. 44. This Philip was a citizen of Bethsaida (the word signifies in the Hebrew, The house of fruits, or of huntsmen). Andrew and Peter (mentioned before) both of them lived there. It was one of those cities where Christ did *most of his mighty works*, Mt 11:20.

John 1:45

Ver. 45. Philip having himself discovered Christ, is not willing to eat his morsels alone, but desires to communicate his discovery to others; he finds (whether casually, or upon search, is not said) one Nathanael, he was of Cana in Galilee, Joh 21:2. (The name is a Hebrew name, signifying, The gift of God; some think it the same with Nethaneel, 1Ch 15:24.) Having found him, he tells him with great joy, that they had found him of whom Moses had wrote in the law, *the Shiloh*, mentioned Ge 49:10, the Prophet, mentioned De 18:15, *the Branch of the Lord*, mentioned Isa 4:2, the *Messiah*, mentioned by Daniel, Da 9:25,26, and all the other prophets, him whom they usually called *Jesus of Nazareth*, (there he was conceived, there he was bred, Lu 2:4,51, though he was born in Bethlehem of Judah, Lu 2:4), and who was commonly thought to be *the son of Joseph*. If Philip did only *cum vulgo loqui*, speak as was commonly said, though himself knew and believed other things, he is not to be blamed; but the most think Philip discovered here his own weakness, both in thinking Christ the son of Joseph, and to have been born at Nazareth. It is certain that the apostles themselves at first, yea, and till Christ's resurrection from the dead, had a very imperfect notion of Christ as the true Messiah. Grace may consist with great weakness as to knowledge.

John 1:46

Ver. 46. The words of Philip begat a prejudice in Nathanael, as to what he said. It was prophesied, Mic 5:2, that the Messiah should come out of Bethlehem. So, Joh 7:41,42, some of the people said, *Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* Nazareth was not only a poor little place, (for so Bethlehem also was), but a place which the Scripture never mentioned as the place from whence the Messiah should arise; a place that God had not honoured with the production of a prophet. By *any good thing* seems to be meant, the Messiah, or any prophet, or (more generally) any thing which is noble and excellent, and of any remark. So prone are we to think that the kingdom of God comes with observation, that we know not how to fancy how great things should be done by little means, and great persons should arise out of little, contemptible places. Whereas God chooseth the *foolish things of the*

world to confound the wise; and the weak things to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, to confound the wise, 1Co 1:25-28.

Philip saith unto him, Come and see; Philip, not knowing how to answer Nathanael's objection, and to remove his prejudice, wishes him himself to go, and make up a judgment. Wise men ought to do this, and not to take up prejudices from reports and common vogue.

John 1:47

Ver. 47. *They are not all Israel, which are of Israel, Ro 9:6. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, Ro 2:28,29. Christ seeing Nathanael (though he was prejudiced by Philip's mistake, or the common mistake of his nation) coming to see him, and seeing not only his body and bodily motion, but his heart also, and the motions of that, saith of him, Behold one who is not only born an Israelite, but is a true Israelite, like his father Jacob, a plain man, Ge 25:27; in whom is no guile; in whom there is no deceit, no doubleness of heart. Such ought Christians to be, no crafty, deceitful, double minded men, but men of great sincerity and plainness of heart, laying aside all malice, and all guile, 1Pe 2:1, like little children, Mt 18:3.*

John 1:48

Ver. 48. Nathanael wonders how Christ should know him, having not been of his familiar acquaintance. Christ tells him he saw him under the fig tree, before ever Philip called him. That was a very hot country, wherein people sought shadowy places; hence we read of sitting under their own vines and fig trees, Mic 4:4 Zec 3:10; and it is likely that those being two luxuriant plants, that had large leaves, and ran out in long boughs, in hot weather they might under the covert of these plants not only sit as in an arbour to converse one with another, but also perform religious duties. Whether Christ saw him there eating and drinking, or conversing with friends, or reading, or praying, the Scripture saith not, and it is but vainly guessed; it is enough that by his telling this to him, he let him know that he saw him,

though he was not in his view, and so was omnipresent and omniscient. Christ seeth us, where we are, and what we do, when we see not him; and he seeth our hearts, whether they be single or double, plain, or false and deceitful; which as in many cases it affords us much comfort, so it admonishes us to be at all times in the fear of the Lord.

John 1:49

Ver. 49. The term *Rabbi*, which Nathanael here giveth to Christ, is of the same significance with Rabban, and *Rabboni*, Joh 20:16, Rabban, Rabhi, Rabbi, all which signify Master, and my Master; a name which in that age they usually gave their teachers, as a title of honour, Mt 23:7,8, titles that began about the time of our Saviour; for Buxtorf tells us, purer antiquity gave no such titles to their teachers or prophets, thinking it not possible to give those persons (extraordinarily sent of God) titles answerable to their dignity. They say, Hillel, about our Saviour's time, was the first who was so called; Rabban was counted the highest, Rabbi the next, Rabbi the least. Rabban, they say, lasted about two hundred years, given to seven after Hillel. Nathanael calls him also *the Son of God*, as Peter and the other disciples did, Mt 14:33, and Peter, Mt 16:16. But it appeareth, by many following passages, that they had but a faint persuasion of this, till he was *declared so with power, by his resurrection from the dead*, Ro 1:4. He acknowledgeth Christ also the *King of Israel*, that is, the true Messiah. This was the title of the Messiah, Mt 21:5 27:11.

John 1:50

Ver. 50. Christ encourages the beginnings of faith in the souls of his people, and magnifies Nathanael's faith from the revelation which he had, which was but imperfect; for Christ had said no more, than that he had seen him under the fig tree before Philip called him. He tells him that he should *see greater things than these*. To him that hath, shall be given. What those greater things are, which our Lord here meaneth, he telleth him, in part at least, Joh 1:51.

John 1:51

Ver. 51. These things he ushers in with a *Verily, verily,* and declareth them spoken not to Nathanael alone, but *unto you;* viz. all you that are my disciples indeed, who are (like Nathanael) true Israelites, in whom there is no guile. For the terms, Amen, Amen, (by us translated, *Verily, verily*), some of the ancients accounted them an oath; but the most learned modern writers have seen no reason to agree with them. Surely (see a large discourse about these particles in our learned Fuller, his *Miscellan.* 1.1. cap. 2, to which nothing need be added) if Amen is never used in the Old Testament but as a term of prayer or wishing, in the New Testament it is used to assert or affirm a thing, or as a particle of wishing and prayer. The word in the Hebrew properly signifies, *truth*, Isa 65:16; whence Christ (the truth) is called *the Amen*, Re 3:14. As the prophets were wont to begin their discourses with *The word of the Lord*, and *Thus saith the Lord*, to assert the truth of what they were about to say; so Christ, to show that himself was God, and spake from himself, begins with Amen; and Amen, Amen, sometimes: it is observed that John constantly doubles the particle, and saith Amen, Amen, that is, *Verily, verily;* either (as interpreters say) for further confirmation of the thing, or to get the greater attention, or to assert as well the truth of the speaker as of the thing spoken. Now the thing spoken followeth as a thing promised, not to Nathanael only, but to all believers, that they should *see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man*. Some think that hereby is meant the spiritual, metaphorical opening of heaven to believers by Christ. But it seems more properly to signify such an opening of the heavens as we read of, Mt 3:16. Some understand it of the appearances of angels to Christ at his passion, and resurrection, and ascension; but it seems rather to refer to the day of judgment, when ten thousands of angels shall wait upon Christ, as the Judge of the quick and the dead, and minister unto him; which ministration, they say, is expressed by the terms of ascending and descending, with reference (doubtless) to Jacob's vision, Ge 28:12: Jacob saw it sleeping, Nathanael and other believers shall see it with open eyes. Others interpret it more generally, viz. You shall see as many miracles as if you saw the heavens opened, and the angels ascending and descending. Others think it refers to some further appearances of the angels to Christ in their ministration to him than the Scripture records. Christ doth not say, You shall see angels ascending and descending upon me, but *upon the Son of man;* by which our learned Lightfoot saith, he did not only declare

himself to be truly man, but the Second Adam, in whom what was lost in the first was to be restored. It is observed, that only Ezekiel in the Old Testament, and Christ in the New Testament, are thus called; and that Christ was never thus called but by himself. Ezekiel was doubtless so called to distinguish him from those spiritual beings with which he often conversed: Christ, to distinguish his human nature from his Divine nature, both which (in him) made up one person. Christ's calling himself so was but a further indication of his making himself of no reputation, while he was in the form of a servant. Others think, that *the Son of man* in the gospel, used by Christ, signifies no more than I, and me; (it being usual in the Hebrew dialect for persons to speak of themselves in the third person); so, *upon the Son of man*, is, upon me, who am truly man. Chemnitius thinks, that as the term *Messiah* (by which the people commonly called Christ) was taken out of Daniel; so this term, by Christ applied to the same person, is taken out thence too, Da 7:13, where it is said, *one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, &c.*; and that Christ did ordinarily so call himself, to correspond with the prophecy of Daniel, to assert himself truly man, and to declare himself his Father's servant, according to the prophecy, Isa 42:1.

John 2:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 2:1-11 Christ turneth water into wine in Cana of Galilee.

Joh 2:12 He goeth to Capernaum.

Joh 2:13-17 Thence to Jerusalem, where he driveth the buyers and

sellers out of the temple.

Joh 2:18-22 He giveth his own death and resurrection for a sign.

Joh 2:23-25 Many believe in him because of his miracles, but he

would not trust himself unto them.

Ver. 1. Whether it was the third day after that our Saviour had left the province of Judea or the third day after Philip came to him, or after Peter or Nathanael came to him, is hardly worth the disputing; if it be to be

interpreted with relation to Joh 1:43, (which speaks of the day following), it must be the third day after Simon came to Christ, there happened to be *a marriage in Cana of Galilee*. Some reckon three cities of this name; one in the lot of Manasseh, another in the lot of Ephraim, another in rite lot of Asher. This Cana is concluded by most interpreters to be the same mentioned, Jos 19:28, which was in the tribe of Asher, which was in Galilee: some others say, it was another Cana, near to Capernaum. At this wedding feast was the virgin Mary, our Lord's mother; and it is probable that the persons for whose marriage the feast was solemnized were some of the virgin's kindred or near relations. Some think, from the virgin's taking notice of the want of wine, that it was a family where she had either a constant charge, or the charge for that day.

John 2:2

Ver. 2. Whether only the five disciples mentioned in the former chapter, or some others also, the Scripture doth not say. Christ and his disciples being at this marriage feast, both lets us know that feasting at such a time is proper, and that the most severe religious persons may lawfully be present at such meetings; only they are obliged to keep to rules of frugality, modesty, and sobriety, to a breach of which possibly such meetings may give more temptations.

John 2:3

Ver. 3. The word $\upsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\eta\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ may as well be translated, coming short, or behind, as wanting; and so some think it is to be understood; but Mary tells Jesus, they had *no wine*: they either had none, or she discerned it came short; they had not enough. It lets us know the frugality of him who made the feast. But whether Mary told her Son of it in expectation that he should supply it by a miracle, or that he should entertain the company with some pious discourse while the want should be supplied, is not so easy to determine: that which seems to oppose the first (and most generally received) opinion, is, that this was the first miracle he wrought, which we have upon record; nor had our Saviour by any words given her hope to see any miraculous operations from him; for though some say he had, from the last verse of the former chapter, yet the words can hardly be strained to

such a sense, nor doth it appear that Mary was in Judea to hear them. But yet it seems probable she had some such expectation, both from our Saviour's answer, Joh 2:4, and from her saying to the servants, Joh 2:5, *Whatsoever he say unto you, do it*; and though Christ had as yet done no public miracle, yet what the virgin might have seen of him in thirty years time, while he lived at home with her, we cannot tell.

John 2:4

Ver. 4. That it was ordinary with the Jews, speaking to women, to call them by the name of their sex, is plain from Mt 15:28 Lu 13:12 Lu 22:57 Joh 4:21. But that, speaking to their relations, they were wont to own their relation in their compellation, sometimes is also evident, from 1Ki 2:20, *Ask on, my mother*. So as our Saviour's here calling the blessed virgin, *Woman*, not mother, is agreed by most to signify to her, that in this thing he did not own her as his mother, and so clothed with an authority to command him. And indeed so much the next words (*what have I to do with thee?*) signify, which is a form of speech that both signifies some displeasure for her unseasonable interrupting him, and also that she had no right nor authority upon him in this thing. See the use of the same phrase, Jud 11:12 2Sa 16:10 Ezr 4:3 Mt 8:29 27:19. None was more obedient and respective to his parents than our Saviour, Lu 2:51, therein fulfilling the will of God, Jer 35:13,14; but in the business of his calling he regarded them not, Mt 12:48; Lu 2:49; and hath hereby taught us our duty, to prefer our obedience to our heavenly Father before our obedience to any earthly relation, Mt 5:37 Lu 14:26. He hath also hereby taught us, that the blessed virgin is not to be preferred before her Son (as the papists do). Besides this, our Lord giveth another reason for his not present hearkening to his mother, *mine hour is not yet come*; either, because the time was not yet come to work miracles publicly; or to show her, that she was not to prescribe the time to him when he should work miraculously; thereby also showing us, that for things in this life we are to submit our desires to the Divine will, and to wait God's leisure; yet by this expression he also gives her some hopes that he would in his own time supply this want.

John 2:5

Ver. 5. She plainly by these words declareth her confidence that Christ (notwithstanding the repulse he gave her) would supply this want; and therefore taking no notice of Christ's reprehension of her, she orders the servants to be absolutely obedient to him, doing, without disputing, whatsoever he bid them; and indeed such is the obedience which we all owe to God and Jesus Christ.

John 2:6

Ver. 6. The Jews were wont in their dining rooms to have waterpots standing; whether one for every guest (upon which account some think here were six) doth not appear. For the contents of these vessels, it is uncertain; the reason is, because the Jewish measures, both for things dry and liquid, are much unknown to us, most countries varying in their measures. According to our measures, these vessels should contain three hogsheads, or near it; but it is not probable that so great vessels of stone should stand in a room: the end of their standing there was for the people to wash in, before they did eat, Mt 15:2 Mr 7:3, and to wash their vessels in, Mr 7:4. We are certain of the number of the vessels, but not of the contents of them. Some say, they held so much water as, being turned into wine, was enough for one hundred and fifty persons; but we can make no certain judgment of it.

John 2:7

Ver. 7. Either the water was defiled by some persons washing in it, or else the vessels were not full. Our Lord commands them to be filled (the water pots, not wine vessels) *with water*, pure water; he commands them all to be filled by the servants, who could attest the miracle, that there was nothing in the vessels but pure water. Here was no new creature to be produced; he doth not therefore command the production of wine out of nothing; but only the transformation of a creature already existent into a creature of another kind. The servants dispute not his command, nor ask any reason of his command, but yield that ready and absolute obedience which we all of us owe to Divine precepts. They fill them, and so full that they could hold no more.

John 2:8

Ver. 8. The Jews had one who was to order the affairs of their feast, and who is upon that account called the master, or *governor*, of it; to whom our Saviour directs, that some of this newly made wine should be carried; either that they might not suspect it was by some art provided by him, or because he was of the best judgment in those affairs. The servants yield the same ready obedience to his commands which they had before yielded.

John 2:9

Ver. 9. Our Saviour's action, by which he turned the water into wine, being not obvious to the senses of any; but only the secret motion of his will, willing the thing to be; is not recorded, only the effect and the consequents of it are. The papists would from hence argue, that the bread in the sacrament may be called bread, though it be transubstantiated, as the water here is called water, though it were turned into wine; but it must be observed, that it is not here called water, without the addition of *that was made wine*: we have no such addition in the gospel, where the sacramental bread is called bread; it is not said, the bread which now is turned into the flesh of Christ; nor doth the Scripture any where (as here) attest any such transubstantiation. The governor of the feast had a cup of wine presented to him, but knew not whence it came; only the servants, who by Christ's command first filled the vessels, and drew out this cupful, they knew.

John 2:10

Ver. 10. The governor calls the bridegroom, (at whose cost the provision for the feast was to be provided), and minds him, that he seemed to have done contrary to the common practice of such as made feasts; for they used to bring forth their best wine first, when men's palates were quickest, and least adulterated; and worse after that they had drunk well; so the word $\mu\epsilon\theta\upsilon\sigma\theta\omega\sigma\iota$ signifies, as appears by the Septuagint's translation of the Hebrew word so signifying, Ge 43:34 Hag 1:6; not only men's distemperring themselves with wine, which it also sometimes signifieth; and this speaketh our translation of it, 1Co 11:21, *are drunken*, something

hard, the word not necessarily nor always so signifying; and they must be very uncharitable to the primitive church of Corinth, who can think that it would permit persons actually drunken to come to the Lord's table. But the custom, it seems, was, if they had any wine worse than another, to bring it out to their guests after that the edge of their palates was a little blunted with the taste of better. Now this bridegroom, as the governor of the feast (who knew nothing of the miracle) thought, had kept his briskest and most generous wine to the last; thereby giving a great approbation of the miracle, not only owning it to be true wine, but much better than they had before at the feast.

John 2:11

Ver. 11. The sense is not, that this was the first miracle which Christ wrought in Cana of Galilee; but this was the first miracle which Christ wrought after he was entered upon the public ministry, and it was wrought in that Cana which is within the confines of Galilee, either in the lot of Zebulun or Asher: yet there are some who would not have it the first miracle which Christ wrought, but the first which he wrought in that place; but there is no reason for such an interpretation; for then there had been no reason for the following words, for Christ did not manifest his glory there only; though some object those wonderful or miraculous things happening at our Saviour's birth, of which we read, Mt 2:9 Lu 2:9. Yet as some distinguish between *mira* and *miracula*, so others give a more plain and satisfactory answer, telling us those were miraculous operations more proper to the Father and the Spirit, thereby attesting the Deity of Christ, than to Christ considered as God man. This was the first of those miraculous operations which were wrought by Christ Jesus as God man, by which he *manifested his glory*, the glory mentioned in Joh 1:14, *as of the only begotten of the Father*; his Divine majesty and power.

And his disciples, who before believed on him, Joh 1:41,45, now more firmly *believed on him*, Joh 14:1, as Mediator. In Scripture that is often said to be, which doth not commence, but increase from that time and occasion.

John 2:12

Ver. 12. *Capernaum* was a city lifted up to heaven, for mercies of all sorts, which Christ foretold, Mt 11:28, should be brought down to hell, for their contempt of his doctrine and miracles. It was in the tribe of Naphtali, whose lot was contiguous to Zebulun, and lay on the north east of it; a place where Christ afterwards preached much, and wrought many miracles, Mt 8:13,14 9:18 Mr 2:1 5:22; a place brought so low in Hierom's time, that it scarce consisted of seven poor cottages of fishermen. Thither at this time went Christ, *and his mother, and his brethren*, (by which term the Scripture often expresses any near kinsmen), *and his disciples*; whether only the five mentioned in the former chapter, or others also, is not said. But they did not at that time stay long there, probably because the passover time (when they were to be at Jerusalem) was so nigh, as would not admit any long stay before they began their journey; and it is likely that the company mentioned here to be with Christ at Capernaum, did also design to go along with him to the passover, of which we next read.

John 2:13

Ver. 13. Concerning the Jewish passover we have once and again spoken in our notes on the other evangelists. The institution of it was Ex 12:1-51. It was to be solemnized yearly in the place which the Lord should choose, according to the law, De 16:6. Christ, though he was not naturally subject to the law, yet to fulfil all righteousness, and to redeem his people from the curse of the law, Ga 4:5, kept the passover yearly, taking also advantage from the conflux of the people to Jerusalem at that time, to make himself and his doctrine more known. None of the other evangelists make mention of more than one passover between the time of Christ's baptism and death: John plainly mentions three, one here, another in Joh 6:4, the last, Joh 18:39; and some think that he mentions another, though more obscurely, Joh 5:1. Our Lord was at them all.

John 2:14

Ver. 14. Mt 21:12 Lu 19:45, is a piece of history so like this, that some have questioned whether it mentions not the same individual matter of

fact; but it is apparent that it doth not:

1. Because St. John mentions it as done three years before it, at the first passover; all the other evangelists mention what they report as done at the fourth passover.
2. The circumstances of the narrative make it appear.
 - a) John mentions only the ejection of the sellers; all the others mention the ejection both of the buyers and sellers.
 - b) Here, he only saith they had made his Father's house a place of merchandise; the others say, that whereas it was written, it should be called a house of prayer, they had made it a den of thieves.
 - c) Here he only bids them that sold doves take their goods away; the others say he overturned the seats of them that sold doves: so as our Saviour plainly appeareth to have done this twice, at his first passover and at the last.

For the more full explication of the parts of this history, See Poole on "Mt 21:12". See Poole on "Mr 11:15". See Poole on "Lu 19:45". The reason of their bringing oxen, and sheep, and doves into the temple, was to supply those that came afar off, and could not bring their sacrifices with them, with such sacrifices as the law required in several cases. The money changers were there, to change the people's money into half shekels, every one being obliged to offer his half shekel, Ex 30:13. Our Saviour did not condemn this course of accommodating of people; but blames the covetousness of the priests, who for their private lucre had made the temple their marketplace, whenas there was room enough elsewhere.

John 2:15

Ver. 15. It concerns not us to inquire where our Saviour had the small cords, of which he made his whip; there were doubtless cords enough at hand, taken off from beasts brought thither, though he was himself in no Franciscan habit, as the papists idly dream. But herein was the mighty power of God seen, that Christ, a single, private, obscure person, should

without any more noise or opposition drive out the multitude of these hucksters, and overturn their tables. Nor I think (after the consideration of this circumstance) need we inquire by what authority he did this? It was prophesied of him, Mal 3:1, that he should *come to his temple*; Mal 3:3, should *sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver*. Christ here, according to that prophecy, cometh to his temple, and begins to purge it.

John 2:16

Ver. 16. At this his first coming, he gives them that sold doves a liberty to take their goods away; but at the last coming, Mt 21:12, it is said, he overturned their seats. Those that think this precedent sufficient to vindicate private persons tumultuous pulling down images, seem not to consider, that Christ was no private person, (though so esteemed), and did what he did as Lord of his house. Those who urge it as inferring magistrates and superiors duty in this case, urge it well; for it may well be from hence concluded, that it is the will of Christ, that places set apart for public worship, should neither wickedly be made dens of thieves, nor yet indecently made places for men to buy and sell in; though we can ascribe no such holiness to any place as to the temple, which had not only a particular dedication, but was built by God's order, his acceptance of it declared, and had peculiar promises annexed to it; besides its prefiguration of Christ (of which we shall speak more afterward); yet even nature itself teacheth, that there is a decent reverence and respect due to such places. This action of Christ's also, before he had published the doctrine of the gospel, instructs us, that those who have authority are not always to refrain from removing instruments of superstition and idolatry, or gross and indecent corruptions, until people be first by the preaching of the true doctrine persuaded willingly to part with them. But if this were to make God's house a place of merchandise for men, there to sell oxen, and sheep, and doves, and keep shops for changing money; what do papists make such houses, by their showing their relics and images to people, thereby to get money for their priests, and for selling pardons, indulgences, &c.? Never were God's houses to that degree made places of merchandise, and dens of thieves, if every one that cheateth for his profit be (as he is) a thief.

John 2:17

Ver. 17. The disciples, as well as the rest of the people there present, could not but be astonished at this so strange a thing, to see a single person, and he in no repute but as a private person, to make a whip, and with authority drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and nobody to oppose him; but they remembered the words of David, Ps 69:9. Some think that John here reports what they did after Christ's resurrection; and, indeed, whoso considereth the following part of the gospel history, would think that it were so; for they did not seem so early to have had a persuasion of Christ's Divine nature, nor that he was the Messiah; or if they at this time remembered it, and apprehended that Christ was the Son of David, the impression seems to have worn off. It is a greater question whether Ps 69:1-36 (from whence this quotation is) is to be understood of Christ, properly and literally, or merely as the Antitype to David, of whom that Psalm is literally to be understood? Some of the Lutherans think that Psalm primarily concerned Christ. Mr. Calvin and others think it only concerned Christ as David's Antitype. The former, for their opinion, take notice of the frequent quotation of it in the New Testament, Mt 27:48 Joh 19:28 Ac 1:20 Ro 15:3. The other urge that there are some things in that Psalm which cannot agree to Christ. The matter is not much. Zeal is nothing but a warmth of love and anger. It is good to be zealous, yea, swallowed up with zeal, in a good cause; but men must take heed of the Pharisical zeal, not according to knowledge. Christ was zealous, but the cause was good.

John 2:18

Ver. 18. Which of the Jews, whether some of the magistrates, or the priests, (who were more specially concerned for their profit), or the common people, or all together, is not said. They undertake not to justify their fact, nor could they deny it, but they ask him *what sign* he could show them to justify his Divine authority. For this seemeth to have been their principle, that let corruptions and abuses in a church be never so great, yet they were not to be reformed, but either by the ordinary authority of the magistrate, or by all extraordinary authority from God. Such an extraordinary authority they would acknowledge in prophets; but they expected that those who pretended to such an extraordinary Divine

mission, should be able to confirm that mission by some miraculous operations, as Moses did, Ex 4:30. They had had no prophets now for four hundred years amongst them; the Jews required therefore a sign, 1Co 1:22. The papists were at the same point with the first reformers; but they mistook, for they brought no new doctrine, but still cried, *To the law and to the testimony*; and where the true doctrine and sacraments are upheld, there is a true church, which hath power to call and send out preachers.

John 2:19

Ver. 19. Our Saviour refuseth to give them any sign, but that of his resurrection the third day from the dead. This was the sign to which he afterwards refers the Pharisees, Mt 12:39 Lu 11:29. Our Saviour's words must not be understood as commanding or licensing them to destroy him, but as foretelling what they would do. It is in Scripture very ordinary to use the imperative mood for the future tense of the indicative; see Ge 42:18 De 32:50 Isa 8:9,10 54:1 Joh 13:27. *Destroy*, is as much as, I know you will destroy, or, If you do destroy this temple, I will build it up in three days. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is ordinarily in Scripture attributed to the Father; but here Christ saith he would do it; and the Spirit, by whom he is said to have been quickened, equally proceedeth both from the Father and the Son. Nor is this the only text where it is attributed to Christ; see Joh 20:17,18. It was the work of the Trinity, out of itself, and so the work of all the three Persons. These words were three years after this made a great charge against Christ, Mt 26:61; but they reported them thus, *This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*. He said only, *this temple*, meaning his body.

John 2:20

Ver. 20. The Jews understood his words of that material temple in which they at this time were, which the best interpreters think was the temple built by Ezra and Zerubbabel; but how to make it out that it was forty six years building, they are not well agreed. Some say, Cyrus reigned thirty, Cambyses eight, Darius six; these added together make forty four. Others say that the Magi reigned two years more. Some reckon to Cyrus thirty

one, to his son Cambyses nine, Darius six. Others say that the years wherein the building was hindered during Artaxerxes's time, Ezr 4:21, added to the two years of Darius, Ezr 4:24, in whose sixth year it was finished, are reckoned together. The Jews thought it strange that our Saviour should undertake in three days to rear a building which had cost their forefathers so many years.

John 2:21

Ver. 21. But, alas, our Saviour spoke not of their material temple, but of the temple of his body; which yet was proper speaking: for if the apostle calleth our bodies *the temple of God*, as he doth, 1Co 3:16 6:19 2Co 6:16; it much more may be said so of the body of Christ: for as God dwelt in the temple, and there revealed his will, and would be there worshipped; how properly must the notion of *the temple* agree to Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, Col 2:9, who revealeth his Father's nature and will to men, Mt 11:27, and in whom all must worship him? So as the temple at Jerusalem was every way a most illustrious type of Christ, and Christ might well, speaking concerning his body, say, *Destroy this temple*; and thus Christ (would these blind Jews have seen it) drew off the Jews from glorying in their temple, Jer 7:4; and from the temple, which was but a type, (as the tabernacle was before, Ac 7:44 Heb 9:23,24), to himself, prefigured by those houses, Heb 9:11. Nor doth he think fit at this time to speak more plainly; for as he knew that the perverse Jews, in seeing would not see, nor bear any such doctrine; so he also knew, that his better disciples were as yet weak in faith; and none putteth new wine into old bottles.

John 2:22

Ver. 22. Even Christ's own disciples at the first rather admired than perfectly understood their Lord. It is said of Christ, Lu 24:45, a little before his ascension into heaven, *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scripture*. The disciples did not distinctly understand many things till after Christ's resurrection from the dead, when they saw the things accomplished, and when Christ further opened their eyes; which was also further done when the Holy Ghost came upon them

in the days of Pentecost. Thus we hear for the time to come; and the seed which lieth a long time under the clods, at last springeth up through the influence of heaven upon it.

And they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said; the disciples then more clearly and more firmly believed the Scriptures, and were able to make a clearer application and interpretation of them. By *the Scripture* here, are meant the Scriptures of the Old Testament; to which is added, *and the word which Jesus had said*. Christ's words gave them a clearer insight into the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and the harmony of the writings of the Old Testament with Christ's words under the New Testament, confirmed the disciples' faith in both.

John 2:23

Ver. 23. To believe in Christ's name, and to believe in Christ himself, are one and the same thing; as it is the same to call upon God, and to call upon the name of God: so Ac 3:16. The meaning is, that they believed the things which were published concerning his person and office: yet the periphrasis, *Believed in his name*, is not vain; but declareth a mutual relation between God and the word, by the preaching of which he maketh himself known to the world.

True faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. I think it is to no purpose disputed here by some, whether the faith here mentioned was true faith, yea or no. It appeareth by what followeth, that it was not true justifying faith; but it was true in its kind. To make up true justifying, saving faith, which the apostle calls *the faith of God's elect*, three things are required:

1. A knowledge of the proposition of the word revealing Christ: this is acquired by reading, hearing, meditation, &c.
2. The second is assent, which is the act of the understanding, agreeing in the truth of the word revealed, when such an assent is given to a proposition, if merely upon the Divine revelation of it: this is faith, a true faith in its kind.

3. Upon this now (in those who savingly believe) the will closes with Christ as an adequate object; for it receiveth him, accepteth him, relies on him as its Saviour, and moveth by the affections to love, desire, hope, rejoice in him; and commandeth the outward man into an obedience to his law.

Now it is very possible, that, through a common influence of the Holy Spirit of God, men upon the hearing of the word, especially having the advantage of seeing miraculous operations confirming the word, may give a true assent to the proposition of the word, as a proposition of truth, and yet may never receive Christ as their Saviour, close with him, trust in him, desire, love, or obey him; this was the case of these persons, many at least of them. They believed, seeing the miracles which Christ did: they wanted a due knowledge of Christ founded in the word; neither had they any certain, steady, fixed assent, founded in the discerning the truth of the proposition; their assent was sudden, founded only upon the miracles they saw wrought; so as though they might have some confidence in him, as a famous person, and some great prince, from whom they might expect some earthly good, yet this was all, which was far enough from true saving faith.

John 2:24

Ver. 24. Christ did not take all these seeming believers into his bosom, nor call them after him, nor maintain any familiar fellowship and communion with them; but made haste again into Galilee, till his time was come, knowing that in so public a place of danger they were not to be trusted; for being God blessed for ever, he had knowledge of the hearts of all men.

John 2:25

Ver. 25. And needed not any information concerning the principles and humours of all men; for he perfectly knew men, not only from their more external acts and behaviours, (as we know them), but he knew what was in them, searching the hearts, and trying the reins, which is the property of

God alone, 1Ki 8:39 Ps 33:15. Here what we formerly observed is again observable, that oft times in holy writ, for the further confirmation of a proposition, to a universal affirmative is added a contrary negative. Here ariseth a question, agitated between the Lutherans and the Calvinists, Whether Christ as man knew all things, and what is in the heart of man. They affirm it, because of the personal union of the Divine and human natures in Christ. We say, that although there be such a personal union, yet the properties of each nature remain distinct; upon which account Christ denieth that he, as the Son of man, knew the day and hour of the end of the world. Besides, by the same reason that omniscience belongeth to the human nature of Christ, omnipotence, infiniteness, and omnipresence, also must; which last indeed they affirm, seeing that without it they were not able to defend their doctrine of consubstantiation, or the presence of the body and blood of Christ, wherever the sacrament of his supper is administered; but this being a matter polemical, we shall not here discourse it. Those who would be satisfied as to what is said on either side, may find enough in Gerard, Hunnius, and Farnovius, on the Lutherans' side; and in Zanchius and others on the Calvinists' side, Zanchius de Natura and Attributis Dei, lib. 3. cap. 2. qu. 16.

John 3:1

Chapter Summary

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>Joh 3:1-13</u> | Christ, in a conference with Nicodemus, teacheth him |
| | the necessity of regeneration, |
| <u>Joh 3:14,15</u> | the efficacy of faith in his death. |
| <u>Joh 3:16,17</u> | God's great love to mankind in sending his Son for |
| | their salvation, |
| <u>Joh 3:18-21</u> | and the condemnation for unbelief. |
| <u>Joh 3:22</u> | Jesus baptizeth in Judea, |
| <u>Joh 3:23,24</u> | as doth John in Aenon. |
| <u>Joh 3:25-36</u> | John's doctrine concerning Christ. |

Ver. 1. The particule *there* being put in only to fit our idiom to the Greek, where is nothing but the verb, signifies nothing to prove that what we read

in this chapter was done at Jerusalem. It is a dispute amongst some interpreters, whether he was there or no. It should seem by Joh 7:50, that Nicodemus's chief residence was there. He was one of the Pharisees, who were a sect (as we have showed before) which had their name either from a Hebrew word, which signifieth to explain, (because they were expounders of the law), or from another word, which signifieth to divide, because they were separate from others: the opinions have both learned patrons. This man's name in Greek signifies, The victory of the people. He was either the head of a family among the Jews, or a ruler of the synagogue, or one of the sanhedrim: it seemeth most probable he is here called *a ruler* upon the last account, if we consider Joh 7:50.

John 3:2

Ver. 2. He came *by night* to Christ, not, as some (too charitably) possibly may think, that he might have the freer and less interrupted communion and discourse with him; but either through fear, or possibly shame, being a master in Israel, to be looked upon as a scholar going to learn of another. He saluteth him by the name they usually gave to their teachers, (as we showed, Joh 1:49), and saith, *we know*, by which he hints to us, that not only he, but others of the Pharisees also, knew that he was a teacher sent from God in a more extraordinary manner; and he giveth the reason of this their knowledge, because of those miraculous operations which he had wrought. God hath his number among all orders and sorts of men; and those that are his shall come unto Christ. There was a weakness in the faith and love of this Nicodemus; (his station amongst the Jews was a great temptation to him); but yet there was a truth of both in him, which further discovered itself, Joh 7:50, and more upon Christ's death, Joh 19:39. But here ariseth a greater question, viz. How Nicodemus could conclude that Christ was a teacher sent from God, by his miracles.

Answer. It is to be observed, that he doth not say, in the general, that no man does signs or wonders of any kind, unless the power and favour of God be with him. But he speaks particularly and eminently of those things which Jesus did; they were so great in their nature, so real and solid in their proof, so Divine in the manner of performing them by the empire of his will; so holy in their end, to confirm a doctrine most becoming the wisdom and other glorious attributes of God, and that were the verification

of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, whose coming it was foretold should be with miraculous healing benefits; that there was the greatest assurance, that none without the omnipotent hand of God could do them; for it is clear by the light of reason and Scripture, that God will not assist by his almighty power the ministers of Satan, to induce those who sincerely search for truth to believe a lie. The magicians indeed performed divers wonders in Egypt, but they were outdone by Moses, to convince the spectators that he was sent from a power infinitely superior to that of evil spirits. Real miracles, that are contrary to the order and exceed the power of nature, can only be produced by creating power, and are wrought to give credit to those who are sent from God. And when God permits false miracles to be done by seducers, that would thereby obtain authority and credit amongst men, the deception is not invincible; for it is foretold expressly to give us warning, that the man of sin shall come with *lying wonders, by the working of Satan*, 2Th 2:9; and the heavenly doctrine of the gospel has been confirmed by real miracles, incomparably greater than all the strange things done to give credit to doctrines opposite to it.

John 3:3

Ver. 3. We observed before, that the term *answered* doth not always in the New Testament signify a reply to a question before propounded; but sometimes no more than a reply, or the beginning of another speech: whether it doth so here or no, some question. Some think Christ here gives a strict answer to a question which Nicodemus had propounded to him, about the way to enter into the kingdom of God; which question the evangelist sets not down, but leaves to the reader to gather from the answer. Others think that our Saviour knew what he would say, and answered the thoughts of his heart. Others, that he only began a discourse to him about what was highly necessary for him, that was a master in Israel, to understand and know. He begins his discourse with *Verily, verily*, the import of which we considered, Joh 1:51. The word translated *again*, is *ανωθεν*, which often signifieth *from above*; so it signifieth, Joh 3:31 Jas 1:17 3:15-17. It also signifieth *again*: Ga 4:9, *How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?* That it must be so translated here, and Joh 3:7, appeareth from Nicodemus's answer in the next verse. But the expression of the second or new birth by this word, which also signifies *from above*, may possibly reach us, that the new birth must be wrought in

the soul from above by the power of God, which is what was said before, Joh 1:12,13, the necessity of which our Saviour presseth from the impossibility otherwise of his seeing the *kingdom of God*; by which some understand the kingdom of his glory (as the phrase is used, Lu 18:24,25); others understand it of the manifestation of Christ under the gospel state, or the vigour, power, and effect of the gospel, and the grace thereof. By seeing of it, is meant enjoying, and being made partakers of it, as the term is used, Ps 16:10; Joh 16:10 Re 18:7. The Jews promised their whole nation a place in the kingdom of the Messiah, as they were born of Abraham, Mt 3:9; and the Pharisees promised themselves much from their observation of the law, &c. Christ lets them know neither of these would do, but unless they were wholly changed in their hearts and principles (for so much being *born again* signifieth; not some partial change as to some things, and in some parts) they could never have any true share, either in the kingdom of grace in this life, or in the kingdom of glory in that life which is to come. It is usual by the civil laws of countries, that none enters into the possession of an earthly kingdom but by the right of birth; and for the obtaining the kingdom of heaven, there must be a new birth, a heavenly renovation of the whole man, soul, body, and spirit, to give him a title, by the wise and unchangeable constitution of God in the gospel, and to qualify him for the enjoyment of it.

John 3:4

Ver. 4. By the answer of Nicodemus, it should seem that he was an old man; which is also probable, because he was one of the rulers: he puts the case as to himself; I am, saith he, an old man, how should I be born? Can a man *enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born*? How true is that of the apostle, 1Co 2:14, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!* What a gross conception doth Nicodemus (though doubtless a learned as well as a great man) discover of regeneration, as if it could not be without a man's mother travailing in birth with him a second time! Nicodemus's question discovers a great deal of ignorance and weakness, but yet a great deal of simplicity and plainness in him; that he did not come, as the Pharisees generally were wont to come to Christ, to catch him by captious questions, but brought *discendi pietatem*, a pious desire to learn from him, and to be instructed by him. The Pharisees had been used to study the traditions of the elders, and spent

their time about unprofitable niceties, as to the meaning of the law; so were not at all versed in the great things which concerned the kingdom of God. The like instance hath been in later ages, the popish divines spending their time generally about nice school questions, showing themselves much ignorant of spiritual things, and the great mysteries of the kingdom of God.

John 3:5

Ver. 5. To excite his spirit and attention, our Saviour again expresses the authority of his person, *I say*; and twice repeats the solemn asseveration, *Verily, verily*, to show the infallible certainty and importance of what he propounds, that it is a truth worthy of his most serious consideration, and to be embraced with a stedfast belief. After this preface, he declares, If any one be not born of water and the Spirit, to rectify the carnal conceit of Nicodemus about regeneration. In Joh 3:3 our Saviour compared the spiritual birth with the natural, and with respect to that a reviewed man is born a second time. But in this verse he expresses the cause and quality of the new birth, that distinguishes it from the natural birth, and resolves the vain, carnal objection of Nicodemus. He speaks not of the terrestrial, animal birth, but of the celestial and Divine; that is suitable to that principle from whence it proceeds, the Holy Spirit of God. There is a great difference among interpreters about the meaning of being *born of water*. The Romanists, and rigid Lutherans, understand the water in a proper sense, for the element of baptism, and from hence infer the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation; but the exposition and conclusion are both evidently contrary to the truth. Indeed the new birth is signified, represented, and sealed by baptism, it is the soul, and substance of that sacred ceremony; and if our Saviour had only said, that whoever is born of water and the Spirit shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, it might have been congruously understood of baptism; because it is an undoubted truth, that all who are truly regenerated in baptism shall be saved. But our Saviour says, He that is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven: the exclusion of the unsanctified is peremptory and universal. And our Saviour shows a manifest difference between an affirmative and negative proposition; when having declared, that whoever *believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; and coming to the negative, he only adds, *but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mr 16:16. The

reason why he does not say, Whoever is not baptized shall be condemned, is evident; for without faith it is impossible to be saved; but without baptism, even as the Romanists themselves grant, many have been saved. For if we consider the time when our Saviour spake these words, they acknowledge that believers were not then, obliged to receive the baptism of Christ for salvation; for our Saviour had this conference with him some years before his death; and they hold, that before the death of Christ baptism was not necessary, neither by virtue of Divine command, nor as a means to obtain salvation; therefore the believers that lived then might enter into heaven without baptism. They also declare, that martyrdom supplies the want of baptism; and that persons instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, and sincerely believing it, if prevented by death without being baptized, their faith and earnest desire is sufficient to qualify them for partaking of the heavenly kingdom. But if by *water* here be meant the elementary water of baptism, the words of our Saviour are directly contrary to what they assert; for neither the blood of martyrs, nor the desire and vow of receiving baptism, are the water of baptism, which they pretend is properly and literally named by our Saviour. And certainly, if as the apostle Peter instructs us, it is not the cleansing of the flesh in the water of baptism that says, 1Pe 3:21, it is not the mere want of it, without contempt and wilful neglect, that condemneth. By *water* then we are to understand the grace of the Holy Spirit in purifying the soul, which is fitly represented by the efficacy of water. And this purifying, refreshing virtue of the Spirit is promised in the prophecies that concern the times of the Messiah, under the mystical expression of *water*. Thus it is twofold by Isaiah, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground*, Isa 44:3. And this is immediately explained, *I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed*; and the Divine birth follows, *they shall spring up as among the grass*. In the same manner the effects of the Holy Spirit are expressed by Ezekiel: *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean*; and presently after, *I will put my Spirit within you*, Eze 36:25,27. Our Saviour instructing a Pharisee, to whom the prophetic writings were known, expressly uses these two words, and in the same order as they are all set down there, first *water*, and then *the Spirit*, that the latter might interpret the former; for water and the Spirit, by a usual figure when two words are employed to signify the same thing, signify spiritual water, that is, his Divine grace in renewing the soul; as when the apostle says, *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, to signify the powerful Spirit. Thus John the Baptist foretold of Christ, that he should *baptize with the*

Holy Ghost and fire, that is, with the Spirit, that has the force and efficacy of fire to refine us from our dross and corruptions. Thus our Saviour plainly instructs Nicodemus of the absolute necessity of an inward spiritual change and renovation, thereby showing the inefficacy of all the legal washings and sprinklings, that could not purify and make white one soul, which were of high valuation among the Jews. Entering into the kingdom of God, is of the same import and sense with the seeing the kingdom of God, in Joh 3:3: that is, without regeneration no man can truly be joined with the society of the church of God, nor partake of the celestial privileges and benefits belonging to it, here and hereafter.

John 3:6

Ver. 6. *That which is born of the flesh:* that which is born of natural flesh; for flesh sometimes signifies the man. So the prophet saith, *All flesh is grass*, Isa 40:6. So Ge 6:12, *All flesh*, that is, all men, *had corrupted their way*. Or, that which is born of corruption, from vitiated and corrupted nature; so flesh is oft taken in Scripture, Ro 8:4,5,8, &c.

Is flesh; that is, it bringeth forth effects proportionable to the cause; a man purely natural brings forth natural operations. Man, as man, moveth, and eateth, and drinketh, and sleepeth. Corrupted man brings forth vicious and corrupt fruit, which often are called *the works of the flesh*, Ga 5:19.

Flesh here signifieth the whole man, whether considered abstractly from the adventitious corruption of his nature, or as fallen in Adam, vitiated and debauched through lust.

And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit: but that man or woman who is regenerated by the Spirit of grace is spiritual; he is *after the Spirit*, Ro 8:5; he is one spirit with God, 1Co 6:17; he is made *partaker of the Divine nature*, 2Pe 1:4; he *doth not commit sin*, 1Jo 3:9. Nothing in operation exceedeth the virtue of that cause which influences it; so as no man from a mere natural principle can perform a truly spiritual operation; and from hence it is absolutely necessary that man must be born of the Spirit, that he may be qualified for the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:7

Ver. 7. There is a twofold admiration, that which is joined with infidelity, and that which is the effect of faith. Our Saviour forbids Nicodemus to marvel at the doctrine of regeneration, as strange and incredible, upon an imaginary impossibility supposed by him of the thing itself. But he that believes will judge that supernatural work of the Spirit, whereby a sinful man is made a partaker of the Divine nature, worthy of the highest admiration. And what our Saviour had said in the general before, that a man must be born again, he now particularly applies to Nicodemus, with those of his order, *Ye must be born again*. For Nicodemus would easily consent that the pagans, and possibly the vulgar Jews, had need of regeneration, to partake of the kingdom of God; but that the doctors of the law, (of which number himself was), esteemed the lights of the world, should be under the same necessity, was astonishing to him. Therefore our Saviour, to undeceive and humble him, saith, *Ye must be born again*, for that all are defiled with the corruption that is universal to mankind.

John 3:8

Ver. 8. The word which is translated *wind*, being the same which both here and ordinarily in Scripture is translated spirit, hath given interpreters a great liberty to abound in their several senses. Some thinking that it should be translated, The spirit, that is, the spirit of a man, breatheth where it listeth; and that our Saviour's sense was, Nicodemus, thou needest not to wonder that thou canst not with thy senses perceive the spiritual new birth, for thou canst not understand the natural birth. Others think it should be translated, The Spirit, that is, the Spirit of God, bloweth where it listeth; but that seemeth not probable, because of these words, *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*; which will hardly be sense if we understand the first part of the verse concerning the same Spirit; and our Saviour saith, Joh 3:12, *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not*: they seem therefore best to understand it, who interpret it of a terrene spirit, particularly the wind, which is of a spiritual nature: and thus, by their translation, it is apparent that our interpreters understood it. So as, though our Saviour speaketh of the motions of the blessed Spirit, yet he speaketh of them by way of comparison, comparing them to the motion of the wind, of which he said, that it *bloweth where it listeth*; not that it is its own

mover, and under no government of the First Cause; for the Psalmist tells us, Ps 148:8, that the stormy winds fulfil God's word; nor is any such thing compatible to any creature; but the original of its motion is to us imperceptible.

But canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: we can speak something philosophically to the cause of it, and can tell whither it bloweth, from the east, west, north, or south; but we cannot tell the particular place, where or from whence it riseth.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit: so every one, who is regenerated from the working of the Holy Spirit of God, is changed and renewed, so as we can give ourselves or others no account of it in all points, as to the inward operation, though in the effects it be discernible.

John 3:9

Ver. 9. Nicodemus had before spoken as if he thought it a thing impossible, understanding our Saviour of a carnal generation, which he knew could not be repeated: perceiving that he spake of a spiritual birth, he is now posed at the mystery of it; it being a thing the doctrine of which he had not been acquainted with. His carnal stupidity hindered his understanding the first lesson of Christianity, though explained by the Sun of righteousness; and his pride hindered him from confessing his ignorance; he rather judges the doctrine to be absurd and impossible. The like darkness is in every unrenewed mind; regeneration being like that new name, which none understand but those that have it.

John 3:10

Ver. 10. Our Saviour doth not so much wonder at as upbraid the ignorance of Nicodemus, and all of his sect, who went for masters, or teachers, and that in Israel; who had the law and the prophets, and yet were ignorant of those things which were necessary to be known to every ordinary person's salvation. Will any say, But where was there any thing spoken in the books of the law and the prophets about regeneration, or a being born again?

Answer. What other things could be meant by the circumcision of the heart, commanded by Moses, De 10:16, promised in De 30:6; by the *new heart*, and the *new spirit*, promised Eze 36:26; by the *clean heart* prayed for by David, Ps 51:10? A teacher in Israel should from hence have understood the necessity of a new and of a *clean heart*; but the whole sect of the Pharisees were so taken up with the trifles of the rites and traditions, and the works of the law, that as to these spiritual things of nearer and much higher concernment to people's souls, they knew and spake little of them.

John 3:11

Ver. 11. Christ speaketh only of himself, though he speaketh in the plural number, for in the next verse he saith only, *If I have told you earthly things*; he lets Nicodemus know that he spake nothing but he was certain of. This he expresses by two words, *know* and *have seen*, which are terms expressive of the greatest certainty of a thing imaginable; for the terms express a certainty of the mind, arising both from the rational deduction and sensible demonstration: and herein our Saviour lets his ministers know what is their duty to teach unto people, viz. what they know and have seen. Those that think that the doctrine of the gospel would have no certainty but for the authority of the church, stand highly concerned to reflect upon this text.

Ye receive not our witness; ye ought to believe what I tell you upon the authority of my revelation; but such is the hardness of your heart, such your stubbornness and unbelief, that you receive not my testimony.

John 3:12

Ver. 12. If I have spoken to you plain things, and in a plain style, humbling my phrase to your apprehensions, and illustrating sublime, spiritual mysteries, which in their own nature are more remote from your apprehensions, by plain and obvious similitudes and parables, and speaking thus, you understand and believe not; what would you do if I should discourse to you sublime and spiritual things, without these advantages for your understandings?

John 3:13

Ver. 13. No man hath so ascended up to heaven, as to know the secret will and counsels of God, for of such an ascending it must be meant; otherwise, Elijah ascended up to heaven before our Saviour ascended. Thus the phrase is supposed to be used, Pr 30:4. None but Christ (who as to his Divine nature came down from heaven) hath ever so ascended thither; *even the Son of man, who was in heaven;* we translate it *is*, but the participle *ὢν* is of the preter imperfect tense, as well as the present tense: or, *who is in heaven*, by virtue of the personal union of the two natures in the Redeemer; as we read. Ac 20:28, *the church, which he hath purchased with his own blood*. By reason of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, though the properties of each nature remain distinct, yet the properties of each nature are sometimes attributed to the whole person. The Lutherans have another notion, ascribing an omnipresence even to the human nature of Christ, because of its personal union with the Divine nature; and so affirm that Christ's human nature, while it was on earth, was also substantially in heaven; as, on the other side, they are as stiff in maintaining that, although Christ's human nature be now in heaven, yet it is also on earth, really and essentially present wherever the sacrament of the Lord's supper is administered; but this is to ascribe a body unto Christ which is indeed no body, according to any notion we have of a body.

John 3:14

Ver. 14. The history of the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness we have, Nu 21:8,9. The people being stung with fiery serpents, as a righteous judgment of God for their sins, as a merciful remedy God commanded Moses, Nu 21:8, *Make thee a fiery serpent*, (that is, the image or representation of one of those fiery serpents), *and put it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live*. This brazen serpent in the wilderness was a lively type of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour having before spoken of the new birth as necessary to those who shall be saved, here comes to show it in the causes, and instances first in the meritorious, then in the instrumental, cause. The meritorious cause was his death; he saith, As the serpent was lifted up in

the wilderness, so he, who was the Son of man, must be lifted up; that is, die upon the cross: the phrase is used twice more in this Gospel, Joh 8:28 12:32,34, in allusion, doubtless, to this type. Yet Mr. Calvin thinks the *lifted up* here more properly interpreted of the doctrine of the gospel, and by the preaching of it; and others apply it to Christ's ascension into heaven. And this he tells Nicodemus *must* be, for the fulfilling the Scripture, and the counsels of his Father.

John 3:15

Ver. 15. Here our Lord openeth the instrumental cause of justification and salvation, that is, believing εἰς αὐτόν, *in him*. It is one thing to believe in him as a teacher, another thing to believe in him as a Saviour. The object of the first is a proposition; we believe a person when we assent and give credit to what he saith, because he saith it. The object of the latter is the person and merits of the Mediator. As the looking up to the brazen serpent healed the person, not by any physical operation, but from the goodness of God, as it was an act of obedience to the Divine institution for that end; so neither doth faith in the Mediator justify and obtain pardon for any soul from any meritorious virtue in that act, but from God's gracious ordination, that so it shall be; he hath so ordained, that whosoever shall rest upon Christ, and receive him by faith as his Mediator and Saviour, should not perish, but live for ever. There are other things besides faith necessary to salvation, such are repentance, love, and new obedience; nor is faith only mentioned because they are ingredients into it, but because faith is the root of all those, and that from which they must necessarily flow; for it is as impossible that any should truly hope, and trust in, and rest upon Christ for that life which he hath only promised to those that obey him, as it is impossible that any should indeed trust in and rest upon a man who hath promised a reward upon a condition for that reward, without any care to fulfil that condition. But by this and other places, where faith alone in Christ is mentioned as necessary to salvation. Nicodemus was taught, that no obedience to the works of the law without this faith in the Mediator would bring the soul to eternal life and salvation.

John 3:16

Ver. 16. For God the Father, who is the Lord of all, debtor to none, sufficient to himself, *so loved the world*, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews. There is a great contest about the signification of the term, between those who contend for or against the point of universal redemption; but certain it is, that from this term no more can be solidly concluded, than from the terms *all* and *every*, which in multitudes of places are taken in a restrained sense for many, or all of such a nation or kind. As this term sometimes signifies all persons, so, in 1Jo 2:21, the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews. Nor, admitting that *the world* should signify here every living soul in the place called the world, will any thing follow from it. It is proper enough to say, A man loved such a family to such a degree that he gave his estate to it, though he never intended such a thing to every child or branch of it. So as what is truth in that so vexed a question cannot be determined from any of these universal terms; which must, when all is said that can be said, be expounded by what follows them, and by their reconcilableness to other doctrines of faith.

God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for a sacrifice for their sins, to die in their stead, and give a satisfaction for them to his justice. And this Son was not any of his sons by adoption, but his *only begotten Son*; not so called (as Socinians would have it) because of his singular generation of the virgin without help of man, but from his eternal generation, in whom the Gentiles should trust, Ps 2:12, which none ought to do, but in God alone, De 6:13 Jer 17:5.

That whosoever, &c.: the term *all* is spoken to above; these words restrain the universal term *world*, and *all*, to let us know that Christ only died for some in the world, viz. such as should believe in him. Some judge, not improbably, that Christ useth the term *world* in this verse in the same sense as in 1Jo 2:2. Our evangelist useth to take down the pride of the Jews, who dreamed that the Messiah came only for the benefit of the seed of Abraham, not for the nations of the world, he only came to destroy them; which notion also very well fitteth what we have in the next verse.

John 3:17

Ver. 17. The word we translate *condemn*, κρινη, signifies to judge, as well as to condemn. The Jews were mistaken in their proud conceit, that

Christ came to judge and destroy all those that were not of their nation; thus, Joh 7:47, he saith, he *came not to judge, but to save the world*. Nor is this contrary to what he saith, Joh 9:39, *For judgment I am come into this world; for that is ex accidenti*, from the corruption of men, shutting their eyes against the light, and hardening their hearts against the offers and tenders of Divine grace. Christ will come in his second coming to condemn the world of unbelievers; but the tendency of his coming was not for condemnation, but to offer the grace of the gospel, and eternal life and salvation, to men in the world.

John 3:18

Ver. 18. Whose firmly and steadily assenting to the propositions of the gospel, revealing Jesus Christ as the only and all sufficient Saviour, commits the care of his soul unto him trusting and hoping in him alone for eternal salvation, which no man can indeed do without doing what in him lieth to fulfil the condition upon which Christ hath promised life and salvation, that is, keeping the commandments of God, is exempted from condemnation by the law of grace. But he that believes not the doctrine of Christ, and does not upon the terms of the gospel receive him for his Saviour, is already condemned for his obstinate infidelity, which is the certain cause of damnation: as we say of one mortally wounded, that he is a dead man, though he breathes for a while; and we speak in the same manner of a malefactor, convicted and attainted of a capital crime, though the sentence be not executed; because their death is inevitable. The not believing in the only Son of God, who is able to save to the utmost all that regularly trust in him, is such a contempt of the merciful, all sufficient, and sole means of salvation, that it is absolutely necessary, and most just, that all those who refuse to be saved by him, should perish by themselves. From this scripture arise two questions: the first concerning the heathens, who never heard of Christ. The second concerning infants, who die before they come to years of knowledge. As to the former, the apostle hath determined, Ro 2:12, *As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law*. There is the same reason for those who sin without the gospel; they shall not perish for not believing *on him of whom they have not heard*, Ro 10:14, but for not obeying such revelation of the Divine will as they had. The case of infants is excluded from this text (speaking only of adult persons). It is certain, that so many of them as belong to the

election of grace shall he saved, and that by virtue of the blood of Christ; but which way God brings them to heaven is a secret to us. Some from this text have concluded, that unbelief is the only damning sin; which is no further true, than that no sin will damn that soul which shall truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:19

Ver. 19. This is the reason, the evidence and great cause of condemnation, *that light is come into the world.* Christ is the Light, foretold by the prophet, Isa 9:2 42:6 49:6. He is styled, in the beginning of this Gospel the true Light, Joh 1:4; that is, he hath in perfection all the excellent qualities of light; the power to enlighten the minds of men in the knowledge of saving truth, to warm the affections with the love of it, to revive the disconsolate, and to make the heavenly seed of the word to flourish and fructify in their lives. This Light is come into the world; that signifies not only his incarnation, but his revealing the merciful counsel of God for our salvation, which the clearest spirits could never have discovered; he has opened the way that leads to eternal life.

But *men loved darkness rather than light;* they preferred, chose, and adhered to their ignorance and errors, before the light of life, the saving knowledge of the gospel. Their ignorance is affected and voluntary, and no colour of excuse can be alleged for it; nay, it is very culpable and guilty, by neglecting to receive instruction from the Son of God.

Because their deeds were evil; the vices and lusts of men are the works of darkness, the fruits of their ignorance and errors; and they are so pleasant to the carnal corrupt nature, that to enjoy them securely, they obstinately reject the light of the gospel; this aggravates their sin and sentence.

John 3:20

Ver. 20. He that makes a trade of sin, and doth evil presumptuously, loving and delighting in it, doth not love the light, nor, if he can avoid it, will come near it; for the light is that which makes things visible, and discovereth them. As it is of the nature of natural light to show things to

others as they are; and therefore thieves, and adulterers, and drunkards, care not for the light, but choose the darkness for their deeds of darkness, and come as little abroad in the light as they can when they do them: so it is of the nature of Christ and his gospel to discover men's errors, both as to the obtaining of justification and eternal salvation, and the errors also of men's lives; and therefore men and women possessed of errors in their judgments, or delighting in a filthy conversation, hate Christ and his gospel; because that a discovering the right ways of God discovereth the crookedness of their ways, opposite to the truths and ways of God.

John 3:21

Ver. 21. *Truth* here is put for true things. He who purposeth, designeth, and acteth nothing but what is just, and holy, and good, and what is consonant to the will of God; he is not afraid to bring his notions and actions to the test of the Divine rule, published by him who is the true Light. For he desires that what he doth *may be made manifest*, both to himself and others, *that they are wrought in*, with, or according to, by, or through *God* (for the particle εἰ, here used, is used in all these senses, 1Co 7:39 Re 14:13). Those works are said to be wrought in, with, by, or through God, which tend to the honour and glory of God as their end, and flow from him as their cause, which are done with his strength and assistance, and for his honour and glory.

John 3:22

Ver. 22. Soon after our Saviour had had the forementioned conference with Nicodemus, which it is believed he had at Jerusalem, not (as some think) in Galilee, for then Nicodemus would hardly have come to him by night, he *came into the land of Judea*. He had before been in the province of Judea, and in the metropolis, or great city, of Judea, which was Jerusalem; but now he goeth into the country of Judea. Judah and Jerusalem are often mentioned distinctly. The chief city of a country is oft distinguished from the country, though within the same province and tribe; see Jos 8:1, *the king of Ai, his city, and his land*; and in particular as to Jerusalem, 2Ch 11:14 20:17 2Ch 36:23 Ezr 2:1 Lu 5:17 6:17, Christ and his disciples went into the country part of Judea; *and there he tarried with*

them, and baptized, by his disciples, for himself personally baptized none; but as in our common speech, so in the language of Scripture, there is nothing more ordinary than for persons to be said themselves to do what they do by others, 1Sa 26:11,12 2Ki 22:16 2Ch 34:24 Ac 7:52.

John 3:23

Ver. 23. *Aenon* is here said to be *near Salim*: it was the name of a city, as some think; others say, a river or brook near that city: neither the river nor the city are elsewhere mentioned in Scripture; but topographers place it on the eastern part of the lot of Manasseh, not far from Bethshan or Scythopolis. There John was baptizing; because this Aenon was a brook or river that had much water, which in Judea was rare. There is no water more holy than the other. John baptized in Jordan, and in Bethabara, and in Aenon. The ordinance sanctified the water, but did not require consecrated water for the due administration of it. It is from this apparent that both Christ and John baptized by dipping the body in the water, else they need not have sought places where had been a great plenty of water; yet it is probable that they did not constantly dip, from what we read of the apostles baptizing in houses, Ac 9:17,18 10:47,48. The people came to John and were baptized, that is, great numbers of them did so.

John 3:24

Ver. 24. For John was yet in the exercise of his public ministry, not cast into prison, as he was soon after.

John 3:25

Ver. 25. The Jews had so many purifyings, some legal, instituted by God, ordained by Moses as God's minister; some traditional, brought in by the Pharisees, as their washings before meat, Mt 15:1-20 Mr 7:1-23; that seemeth a hard thing to determine what the question was between John's disciples and the Jews, about what purifying; and the boldest determiners in this case are no better than guessers. Some would have baptism to be meant here by *purifying*. It would much conduce to the resolution of the

question if we knew what these Jews were with whom John's disciples argued. If they were of the Pharisees, it is probable the question was about John's baptism, considering the frequent washings and purifyings that they had in use amongst them. If they were other Jews, the question might be about the virtue and efficacy of the ceremonial washings, ordained by the law of God, whether they were mere types, and now to cease? Whether in themselves they conduced any thing to the washing and cleansing of a soul? If these Jews were (as some think, but I know not how it can be proved) disciples of Christ, the question might be about John's and Christ's baptism. This notion seemeth to be favoured by what went before; where the evangelist had been speaking of baptism, as administered by Christ's disciples, and by John; as also from what followeth, viz. John's disciples coming to him and complaining, that Christ by his disciples baptized more than their master. But there seemeth to be this great prejudice against the notion of those learned men that have embraced that notion, viz. That the question is said to have risen between *John's disciples and the Jews*; now we want an instance in Scripture, where the disciples of John are put in opposition to the disciples of Christ, and under notion of the Jews; the term *Jews* generally signifying that part of the people who adhered to the Judaical rites and religion; especially where (as here) it is used in opposition either to the disciples of John or of Christ. It is most probable therefore the question was, either about the washings ordained by the law of Moses, or about the traditional washings observed by the Pharisees.

John 3:26

Ver. 26. The disciples of John coming unto him, give him the usual title, under which in that age they were wont to speak to those whom they owned as their teachers, which was *Rabbi*. Their business was to complain, that Christ, whom they do not think fit to name, nor to give him any title, but mention him as one much inferior to their master, one that came to him to Bethabara, and to whom he there gave testimony, Joh 1:7,34, as if Christ had from him derived all his credit and reputation. Their master did not go to Christ, but he came to their master; he was not baptized of Christ, but Christ was baptized of him; he did not give testimony to their master, but their master gave testimony to him: now, say they, he baptizeth by his disciples, and multitudes, many of all sorts of people, (for the universal

particle *all men* can here signify no more), come to him. Love is jealous; they were afraid that their master's reputation would by this means flag and be diminished. Such a passage we find, Nu 11:28. And thus John, our Saviour's disciple, was jealous for Christ his Master, Lu 9:49. They all sinned, as appears by the answer given by Moses to Joshua, Nu 11:29, and Christ's answer to John, Lu 9:50, and by the following reply of John to these disciples, envying for his sake.

John 3:27

Ver. 27. The ministry, and the success of the ministry, must both be given a man from heaven: doth he baptize? It is a sign he is sent of God. Do all men come to him? That also is from God. An excellent corrective of ambition, envy, and jealousy: no man hath in the church of God authority, but he to whom it is given from heaven; no authority over his Son.

John 3:28

Ver. 28. I appeal to you that are my disciples, Did not I always plainly tell yea that I was not the Christ? It belongeth unto Christ alone, who is the Head of the church, to send out such as shall labour in it, and to restrain those that labour in it; would you have me silence or suspend him? I told you, that I was but one of his ministers, *sent before him* to prepare his way, Joh 1:20,23.

John 3:29

Ver. 29. Christ, whose the church is by a right of redemption, and by its having given up itself to him, 2Co 8:5, he is the Bridegroom of it, Mt 22:2 2Co 11:2 Eph 5:23,25,29; as his Father was the Husband of the Jewish church; it belongeth to him to give laws to it, and to order matters and affairs in it. I am but as one who is *the friend of the bridegroom*, one of *the children of the bride chamber*, Mt 9:15, and have by my preaching prepared the people of the Jews for him; and instead of being troubled to hear that he is come, I rejoyce greatly to hear his voice. So far am I from repining to hear that multitudes go to him, that *my joy is fulfilled*; that is, I

have no greater satisfaction than to hear it.

John 3:30

Ver. 30. *He must increase*, in honour, and dignity, and reputation in the world; he is the rising sun, (to give you notice of which I was but as the morning star), he must shine every day more and more.

But I must decrease; God hath indeed used me as a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, not to foretell Christ alone, but to point him to you. I have had my time, and finished my course, and God hath given me a reputation proportioned to the work he gave me to do, and to the time in which I was to work; but I must every day decay, and grow less and less, as Christ increaseth and groweth more and more.

John 3:31

Ver. 31. He that cometh from heaven, (for it appeareth by the latter part of the verse, that is the sense of *from above*), as Christ did, not only in respect of his Divine nature, but being (as to his whole person) clothed with majesty and authority from above, infinitely excelleth any one who is a mere creature: he that is of an earthly original, *speaketh of the earth*. Such as is a man's original, such is his nature, such is his discourse. Though I be sent of God, as Joh 16:27, and my baptism be from heaven, (so our Saviour himself testifieth, Mt 21:25), yet my original is of the earth, and my relations and expressions are suitable to a mere man: but he that is from heaven excels all, as in the dignity of his person, so in the sublimity of his knowledge.

John 3:32

Ver. 32. Another great difference which the Baptist teacheth his disciples to put between his testimony and Christ's, is, that he, and so all other ministers of the gospel, testify by revelation; Christ testifieth not by revelation, but from his own personal knowledge, what himself *hath seen and heard* from his Father. See Joh 3:11, where our Saviour had spoken to

Nicodemus much the same. So Joh 1:18 Joh 8:26 15:15. By these two terms is signified the most certain and infallible knowledge of those things which he testified, which made them worthy of all acceptance: but yet very few received his testimony, so as to believe in it: see Joh 1:11 3:11.

John 3:33

Ver. 33. He who hath so believed the testimony of Christ, as to accept him, and to believe in him as his Saviour, hath, by that his believing, set to his seal that God, in all his promises of the Messiah under the Old Testament, is true; that a word hath not failed of whatsoever God hath there spoken of that nature. According to this is that 1Jo 5:10, *He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*. This saying doth notably commend faith, and defame unbelief. Faith in Christ as the only true Mediator and Saviour, giveth testimony to the truth of God, and sealet it. Unbelief defames God, and doth in effect say that God is a liar.

John 3:34

Ver. 34. *He whom God hath sent out of heaven, out of his bosom, not merely authorizing him as a minister, as the prophets and as John were sent, speaketh nothing but the words of God*. The prophets and the apostles were sent of God in a sense, but not as Christ was sent; they sometimes spake the words of God, when the Spirit of God came upon them; but they sometimes spake their own words, as Nathan did to David, when he encouraged his thoughts to build a house to the Lord; and Paul, when he said, *To the rest speak I, not the Lord*; but whatsoever Christ spake was the words of God: for God did not give out the Spirit to him sparingly, (as out of a measure), as he doth to his ministers or saints, who have but their proportion of revelations and graces, as was requisite for their offices to which they were called, and the several periods of time that were gradually illuminated. But in him the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily; he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; he had the spring of all in himself, not the streams only.

John 3:35

Ver. 35. The eternal Father loved the world, Joh 3:16, but he loved the Son with a more singular and peculiar love; so that all things were by the Father delivered to him, Mt 11:27, *all power in heaven and earth*, Mt 28:18; to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him, Joh 17:2; *the keys of hell and of death*, Re 1:18. So as every man hath reason to receive and embrace Christ and his testimony, and to believe in him.

John 3:36

Ver. 36. He that, hearing the proposition of the gospel, so agreeth to it, as with his heart he receiveth him as his Saviour, and trusteth and hopeth in him, *hath everlasting life*; that is, a certain and just title to it, nay, in the first fruits; being actually delivered from condemnation, Ro 8:1, to which, without faith, he is exposed: he already liveth a spiritual life, Ga 2:20; and having Christ in him, hath the hope of glory, into the possession of which he shall most certainly come. But he that receiveth not the gospel published by him who is the Son of God, and doth not embrace him as his Saviour, and yield obedience to him, shall not be saved. The word here translated *believeth not*, is $\alpha\pi\epsilon\theta\omega\nu$, which often signifieth, one that is not obedient. But this is the command of God, That men should believe on his Son, 1Jo 3:23. The commandment doth not only respect love, but faith in the first place; for *faith worketh by love*; so as there is an $\alpha\pi\epsilon\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$, a disobedience in the understanding, as well as in the conversation; and he that so believeth not, as to obey, shall never come into heaven, which felicity is here expressed by seeing life; as not seeing death is not dying, so not seeing life is dying. And as he was by nature a child of wrath, Eph 2:3, subject and exposed to the wrath of God, so that *wrath abideth on him*: being justified by faith, he hath peace with God, Ro 5:1.

John 4:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 4:1-26 Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her.

Joh 4:27-30 His disciples marvel; the woman calleth the men of

her city to see him.

Joh 4:31-38 Christ showeth his own zeal to do God's work, and the

blessedness of his disciples, who were to reap the

fruit of his labours.

Joh 4:39-42 Many Samaritans believe on him.

Joh 4:43-54 He goeth into Galilee, and healeth a nobleman's son

who lay sick at Capernaum.

Ver. 1. Our Saviour knew as God, from that omniscience which is inseparable from the Divine nature, or as man, by the relation of others, that the Pharisees, (who had the greatest stroke in the sanhedrim), and the government of the church of the Jews, had received an information concerning him, that he had, by his doctrine which he preached, and confirmed by miraculous operations, *made and* (by his disciples) *baptized more disciples than John*, thereby initiating them into a new church.

John 4:2

Ver. 2. For he himself did not personally baptize any, but left it to his disciples, himself attending to the greater work of preaching the gospel, by which men and women were made fit for the ordinance of baptism.

John 4:3

Ver. 3. He left the province of Judea, which was near to Jerusalem, where the Pharisees had their chief residence and greatest power; and went the second time into Galilee, whither he went once before, Joh 1:43, where he found Philip and Nathanael. Galilee was a province under the jurisdiction of Herod, Lu 3:1. This motion of our Saviour's into Galilee, is reported by Matthew in Mt 4:12, and also by Mark in Mr 1:14 and Luke in Lu 4:14. The two former give another reason of his motion, viz. his hearing that John was cast into prison; of which, and the cause of it, see Mt 14:3-6; so as after that he publicly preached no more, which might possibly augment

the number of Christ's disciples; John's disciples following him. Both these causes probably concurred, to cause this motion. John, who by preaching and baptizing had laid the foundation of a gospel church in Galilee, was imprisoned; and our Saviour knew that, the number of his disciples increasing upon John's confinement, an information had been carried against him to the Pharisees; this made him, knowing that his time was not yet come, withdraw himself out of the province of Judea into that of Galilee, as well to supply the want there (John being in prison) as to provide for his own security.

John 4:4

Ver. 4. Josephus tells us that Samaria is seated between Judea and Galilee, and begins at a town called Ginea: see Lu 9:51,52 17:11. There were two passages from Judea into Galilee; the one was through the midst of Samaria, Lu 9:51; the other through the eastern parts, by the royal valley, by Jordan, in which it is said that Sichem was. By *Samaria* must not be understood the city of Samaria, built by Omri, but the whole country so called, and possessed by the Assyrians, with a mixture of Jews amongst them. Some think that the evangelist addeth this, to excuse our Saviour for going amongst the Gentiles.

John 4:5

Ver. 5. The most valuable interpreters agree, that this *Sychar* is the city called Shechem; it was originally a parcel of a field bought by Jacob of Hamor, the father of Shechem, Ge 33:19. Jeroboam built the city there, called Shechem, 1Ki 12:25. It was in the lot of Mount Ephraim. Joseph's bones were there buried, Jos 24:32. Jacob gave it to his son Joseph, as a parcel above his brethren, Ge 48:22; a parcel of ground near unto which was this city called Sychar, anciently Shechem.

John 4:6

Ver. 6. It was called Jacob's, either because he digged it, (as we read of Abraham's digging a well), Ge 21:30, and Isaac, (Ge 26:18), or because he

and his family used it, as Joh 4:12. Our Lord used no horse or chariot ordinarily in his travels, but went on foot; we never read of him in a coach or chariot, but once upon the back of a beast (that was when he rode into Jerusalem upon an ass); he ordinarily travelled on foot; and the evangelist taketh notice of his weariness, to let us know that he was truly man, and subjected to weariness, and other human infirmities. And he rested himself upon the sides of the well, and it was about now time; for that was, according to their computation, *the sixth hour*. Joh 4:8 tells us his disciples were gone to the city to buy meat, so as he was alone.

John 4:7

Ver. 7. It is uncertain whether this woman was a citizen of Samaria, which city is said to be at two miles distance from this place, or one of that country, which went by that name (for Samaria was the name of that region, as well as of a city). She came not out of any design to meet with Christ there, but came to draw water; they having not pumps and wells so common as we have, were forced to travel for water for their necessary uses. Thus it often happeneth that we meet with Divine mercy when we think not of it. God is found of those who seek him not, nor inquire after him, Isa 65:1; which lets us see how all our motions and actions are at the Divine disposal and government. Rachel went not to the well to meet with the tidings of a husband, but to water her father's flock; but yet there she met with Jacob, Ge 29:9; as it had happened to Rebekah before, Ge 24:15. This woman (as appeareth by what followeth) was no better than a harlot; to her Christ (fleeing from the Pharisees, the great doctors of the Jews) bringeth the glad tidings of the gospel, and she receives them. So admirable are the dispensations of Divine Providence. He prevents this woman, saying unto her, *Give me to drink*.

John 4:8

Ver. 8. This is added, lest any should say, How came our Saviour in this discourse with the woman of Samaria? They were travelling upon the road, and came near to Sichem. Our Lord's disciples were gone to the city to buy some food for them; in the mean time, our Saviour coming to the well, called Jacob's well, sets him down, and this Samaritan woman cometh to

that well to draw water; our Saviour, being thirsty, asks of her some water to drink; this giveth occasion to the following discourse.

John 4:9

Ver. 9. There was a great estrangement of the Jews from the Samaritans, the Samaritans having a peculiar temple built upon Mount Gerizim, in opposition to that at Jerusalem. It is said that the Jews did buy of and sell to the Samaritans, but were restrained by an order of the sanhedrim from using any familiarity with them, or borrowing or receiving any thing as a gift from them; which was the cause of this reply of the woman of Samaria, knowing our Saviour, either by his habit or by his dialect, to be a Jew: this is thought to be the sense of συγχρῶνται in this text, though it hath a larger significance, extending to all kinds of commerce.

John 4:10

Ver. 10. Many by *the gift of God* here understand Christ, whom God gave to the world, Joh 3:16; and who is the greatest gift that God ever gave to the world; so as the latter words, who it is, &c., expound the former.

Thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee, either a true knowledge of the doctrine or the grace tendered in the gospel; or the Holy Spirit, called *water*, because it washes and cleanses the soul; and *living water*, because it is always running and flowing.

John 4:11

Ver. 11 What our Saviour spake metaphorically, comparing his grace, or his Spirit, or the doctrine of his gospel, to living water, this poor woman understandeth literally; and knowing that the well was very deep, (some say forty cubits), and seeing him, as a traveller, not provided with any thing to draw with, or into, she asks him whence he had that living water? A question much like that of Nicodemus, Joh 3:4. So ignorant are persons of spiritual things, till they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God.

John 4:12

Ver. 12. She asks him if he judged himself wiser than Jacob, whom she calleth their *father*? It is often observed, that the Samaritans would ordinarily claim kindred with the Jews when the Jews were in prosperity; but in their adversity constantly disowned any relation to them. There were some Jews, (Ephraimites especially), mixed with a far greater number of Assyrians, which made up this body of people called the Samaritans. Now, saith the woman, Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, from whom we claim, was a wise man, and he could find no better water hereabouts for himself and family than that of this well; art thou wiser than he?

John 4:13

Ver. 13. Our Saviour in his reply justifieth the excellency of that living water, which he had before declared to be in his power to give, and his readiness to have given to this woman, if she had asked it of him, from the perishing virtue of the water of this well, and the continuing virtue of his grace, which he compared to this living water: no man so assuaged his thirst by drinking of the water of Jacob's well, but he was subject to thirst again.

John 4:14

Ver. 14. But he who receiveth the Holy Spirit, and the grace thereof, though he will be daily saying, Give, give, and be continually desiring further supplies of grace, yet he shall never wholly want, never want any good thing that shall be necessary for him; the seed of God shall abide in him, and this water shall be in him a spring of water, supplying him until he come to heaven. But this text was excellently expounded by our Saviour, Joh 7:38,39, *He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* From which it is plain, that our Saviour here by the living water he speaketh of understood the Holy Spirit.

John 4:15

Ver. 15. I am not of their mind, who think that this woman understood our Saviour speaking about spiritual water, only she had a mind to talk; and indeed it is hard to conceive how a woman of her education, and way of life, should understand any such thing; but it is plain that she did not understand him in what he was discoursing about, but doth, as it were, deride him, believing that he had no such thing to bestow. She taketh no notice of the water which our Saviour had spoken of, springing up to eternal life; but regarding only the present life, and her ease in that, desires favour of Christ only to supply her wants in this life, and that she might live more at ease: so true is that of the apostle, Ro 8:5, *They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.*

John 4:16

Ver. 16. Not that Christ did not know, what she afterward confessed, that she lived in whoredom, and had no legitimate husband; but he said this probably to check her petulancy, and mocking at what he spake about the living water, and to bring her to a sense of her sin, that she might be more fit to receive the glad tidings of a Saviour, which he was about to publish to her; and this seems rather to be our Saviour's design in bidding her go call her husband, than (as some of the ancients thought) that he might better instruct her, or avoid any scandal to himself, by a longer private discourse with a woman alone, who was of no better reputation.

John 4:17

Ver. 17. *I have no husband;* that is, none who is my lawful husband she denieth not that she had one whom she used and lived with as a husband, but that she had any legal husband, to whom she clave, and to no other: still she goeth on, thinking to deceive Christ, and to put tricks upon him. Christ tells her, she in this did speak truth; he knew she had no legal husband.

John 4:18

Ver. 18. He tells her, that she had *had five husbands*; whether successively, the former being dead, and she marrying another, or five from whom she had been divorced for adultery, is not agreed; the best modern interpreters judge, that she had had five men to whom she had been in marriage, but so behaved herself toward them, that either for her adultery, or some other froward behaviour towards them, they had given her a bill of divorce; and though she now used and lived with one as her husband, yet in this she said truly, because, her former husbands yet living, he was not her husband. This seemeth more properly the sense, than that after five legal husbands' death, she lived in whoredom with a sixth person. By this discovery, our Saviour both bringeth her to the sense of her sin, and also to an acknowledgment of him as the Messiah.

John 4:19

Ver. 19. Whose office is to reveal the will of God, and to whom God revealeth secret things; one to whom the Lord maketh known himself in a vision, and speaketh in a dream, Nu 12:6. The woman's reply seemeth to signify both. Her acknowledgment of Christ as a prophet, upon his telling her secret things, justifieth her looking upon him as one to whom God revealed things not known ordinarily to men; and this report of her meaning appeareth by what she said Joh 4:29, to her fellow citizens, *Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did*; but the following verse, in which she entereth into a discourse with our Saviour about the controversy betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans about worship, lets us know that she looked upon him as a prophet in the more ordinary sense as prophet signifies one influenced by God to reveal his mind and will unto men; and indeed there was no prophet in the former sense, but was also in the latter; though there were many prophets in the latter sense, sent of God, and enabled to reveal the will of God unto men, who were not influenced so far as to foretell things to come. The difference betwixt a hypocrite and one truly brought to a sense of sin, is very conspicuous in the example of this woman; she doth not deny her sin, as Cain, Gehazi, and Ananias and Sapphira; neither doth she discover any anger upon the discovery of it, as the scribes and Pharisees, the wicked princes of Israel and Judah, and Herod did; neither doth she go about to excuse or mitigate

her sin; but she applies herself to Christ as a prophet, to teach her what to do. The example also of this woman informs us what use we ought to make of prophets, to guide us into the right way, and faithfully to acquaint us with the will of God.

John 4:20

Ver. 20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;* the mount Gerizim, which was an exceeding high mountain, and near unto Sichem. Jacob made an altar thereabouts, which he called El-elohe-Israel, Ge 33:20. Some say that it was upon this, mountain that Abraham should have offered up Isaac, Ge 22:1-18, but that had another name. Certain it is, that from that mountain Moses pronounced the blessings, De 27:12. But it is very probable that the woman had respect to none of these, but to the common usage of the Samaritans, to worship in a temple built upon this mountain, in opposition to that at Jerusalem: the story of which will be very proper here to relate, for the full understanding of this text. Sanballat was governor of Samaria, constituted by Darius; of this Sanballat we read in Nehemiah, who tells us that *one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to this Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I chased him from me,* Ne 13:28. This son-in-law's name (as Josephus tells us) was Manasses. He was driven out of Jerusalem upon the account of the covenant made, Ezr 10:3, that those who had married strange wives would turn them away. The sacred story here leaving us, we must supply it out of Josephus, who (Antiq.

1. 11. cap. 8.) tells us, that he being thus driven from the sacrifice, applied himself to Sanballat, and would have put his wife away, who was Sanballat's daughter; but Sanballat promised him, that if he would keep his daughter as his wife, he would not only continue him in the priesthood, but make him a high priest, and build him a temple like that at Jerusalem, upon Mount Gerizim, with the leave of Darius; upon this Manasses staid with Sanballat, and there also resorted many to him whom Nehemiah had turned out of the priesthood at Jerusalem for marrying strange wives. Sanballat was very near losing his opportunity through the favour of Darius, by the conquest of Darius by Alexander the Great. But it was regained by his brother Jaddus's stubbornness, who was high priest in Jerusalem, and refused to own the new conqueror; which advantage Sanballat took, and offered Alexander the surrender of all places in his

trust to him; and being by that means ingratiated with Alexander the Great, he thereby obtained leave of him to build a temple in Mount Gerizim, where his son-in-law Manasses should be the high priest, promising Alexander that by this means the force of the Jews would be broken, so as there would be no danger of their conspiring. Accordingly he presently built this temple, and soon after died, leaving his son-in-law Manasses, brother to Jaddus the high priest in Jerusalem, high priest in this new temple, which afterwards proved an asylum or sanctuary for any who were accused amongst the Jews at Jerusalem. Thus these two temples stood for about two hundred and twenty years; then Hircanus, a high priest of the Jews at Jerusalem, destroyed it; but still they looked upon the ground as holy, and came thither to perform their devotions. With reference to this superstitious practice, the woman of Samaria saith, *Our fathers worshipped* (that is, have used time out of mind to worship) *in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship;* and the Jews hold, that none might worship God by sacrifice any where but at Jerusalem, according to the law, De 12:14,26.

John 4:21

Ver. 21. Woman, thou ownest me as a prophet, whose office it is to reveal the will of God unto men; it is therefore thy duty to give credit to what I shall reveal to thee about the true and right way of worshipping God. The time is coming, yea, at hand, when you shall neither in this Mount Gerizim, (where your fathers have long worshipped God superstitiously without any direction from him), nor yet at Jerusalem, (which is the place which the Lord made choice of for his worship), worship my Father, or your Father. God is putting an end to both these places, and to all that worship which I shall not institute under the gospel.

John 4:22

Ver. 22. You have no certain rule for your worship, but only do things which your fathers did, without any revelation of the Divine will, by which you may be assured that what you do is acceptable to God. We know that God hath revealed his will, that his people should worship him at Jerusalem by such rites and performances as he himself hath instituted in

his word, so as we are certain that what we do is acceptable to God: for unto the Jews (of old) were committed the oracles of God, the ordinary means of salvation; *Out of Zion went forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Isa 2:3*.

John 4:23

Ver. 23. Under the gospel, and the kingdom of the Messiah, which is yet further coming, and is already began in the world, the true worshippers of God shall not worship him, as you Samaritans, who worship you know not what, without any rule or prescript of the word; nor yet as the hypocritical Jews, who rest upon their sacrifices and ritual performances, as if they should purge away their sins, Ps 50:8 Isa 1:11 66:3 Mic 6:7; no, nor yet as the more sincere Jews, who indeed do truly and with their hearts worship God; but, *while the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present, by sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, —by meats and drinks, and divers ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation, Heb 9:8-10*. That time of reformation is now come, when the true worshippers of God shall offer up to him a more spiritual worship, not that carnal worship; and a more true, and real, and solid worship: for God my Father *seeketh such to worship him*, as shall not worship him with a mere bodily labour and homage, but with their hearts and spirits; nor with those ceremonial performances now in use by God's prescript at Jerusalem, but without them, I being come, whom all those services did but prefigure and point unto.

John 4:24

Ver. 24. God is not a corporeal being, made up of blood, and flesh, and bones, having senses as bodies have, to be pleased with sensible things; but he is a spiritual Being, the Father of spirits, and requireth a spiritual service proportioned to his being; and therefore those that pay a religious homage to him, must do it with their spirits, and according to the rule that he hath prescribed, in truth and reality. This is now the will of God; and though he required of his people under the law a more ritual, figurative service, yet that is now to cease; and therefore the woman of Samaria need

not trouble herself which was the truest worship, that at Mount Gerizim, or at Mount Zion, for both of them were very suddenly to determine, and a new and more substantial spiritual worship was to succeed, to the learning of the way and method of which she was more to attend, and not to spend her thoughts about these things which were of no significance, and tended only to minister questions of no use.

John 4:25

Ver. 25. The woman by this reply, though a woman of Samaria, showeth herself to be a Jew, for she was one of them who lived in an expectation of one whom the Jews called the Messiah, prophesied of by Daniel under this notion, Da 9:25,26, and by the psalmist, Ps 2:2; which term *Messiah* signifieth *Christ* (that is, *anointed*) in the Greek. She had a further notion, that this Messiah should be a great Prophet, De 18:15; yea, she appears to have had a further notion of the Messiah, viz. that when he came he should reveal to them the whole will of God as to the salvation of man, and the worship of God: this lets us know, that she was none of the Assyrian part of the inhabitants of Samaria. If any ask, how she, being a Samaritan, should know any thing of the Messiah, the Samaritans receiving only the five books of Moses? It is easily answered, That even the five books of Moses make mention of the Messiah, under the notion of *the seed of the woman*, Ge 3:15, *the seed of Abraham*, Ge 12:3, *Shiloh*, Ge 49:10, *the Prophet* like to Moses, De 18:15. And for the name Messiah, she might easily learn it from other Jews, that the Person called *Shiloh*, and the *Prophet*, was called by Daniel the *Messiah*.

John 4:26

Ver. 26. The same Messiah, of whom thou declarest thyself to have some expectation, and from whom thou expectest to hear all things necessary to salvation. Some here inquire, why our Saviour maketh to this woman such a plain discovery of himself, whereas we find in the Gospel so cautious, and so often charging his disciples not to make him known. Some think our Saviour thus gratified the honesty and simplicity which he discerned in this woman, not coming to catch him, but to be instructed from him; but possibly, if we wistfully consider those texts wherein he charged his

disciples not to make him known, we shall find that the thing which he cautioned them against, was their publishing of him as the Son of God, which our Saviour desired should be concealed, till he should be so declared with power by his resurrection from the dead, Ro 1:4; that his enemies, by a charge of blasphemy against him, might not cut him off before his hour was come. Now we shall observe that the Jews, though they expected a Messiah, yet had no such notion of him.

John 4:27

Ver. 27. The disciples, as we heard before, were gone into the city Sichem to buy food, and were kept there by the providence of God till our Saviour had finished this discourse with the woman of Samaria, but came after the discourse was done. They *marvelled*, possibly at his talking with a woman in the road, (a thing forbidden by their traditions), especially a woman of Samaria, with whom the Jews had no commerce. But yet they had so much reverence and respect for their Master, that they inquired not curiously into the matter or reason of his discourse.

John 4:28

Ver. 28. She had no sooner tasted of the living water spoken of by Christ, but she left her water pot: thus Peter tells our Saviour, that they had left all and followed him. She goeth into the city Sichem (no doubt) or Sychar, mentioned Joh 4:5; and doth not herself enter into a long discourse with the citizens, only invites the citizens to come and see Christ, that they might judge from the hearing of their own ears, and the sight of their own eyes.

John 4:29

Ver. 29. She invites them to him under the notion of a man, who had told her all things that she ever did. Christ doubtless had told her, and spoken to her, much more than John hath left us upon sacred record; yet not all things she ever did, but *all things* (as often) signifies many things, and those such things as she might know that he who could tell those things

could have told her all things, if they had been so proper for him to have repeated to her as those things which he did tell her. This induced her to believe that he was the Messiah; she offereth it to their opinion and judgment.

John 4:30

Ver. 30. Sitting still at the well, they (many of them at least) did not contemn the news as the relation of a woman, but went (possibly but out of curiosity) to see and to hear this man.

John 4:31

Ver. 31. While the woman was fetching her citizens to come and see and hear Christ, his disciples, knowing that he must be weary and hungry with his journey, and having brought him some food out of the city, where they had been to fetch it, put him upon refreshing himself with the food they had brought.

John 4:32

Ver. 32. But our blessed Lord was more intent upon gospelizing the Samaritans, than satisfying his hunger: what this meat was, he opens himself, (see Joh 4:34).

John 4:33

Ver. 33. His disciples, being yet carnal, did not understand him, but thought that he had spoken of bodily nourishment. See the like instances, Mt 16:7 11:13. They were wondering how he came by meat, and who should bring it him: so hard are we to conceive of spiritual things, till God openeth our eyes.

John 4:34

Ver. 34. Our Lord, without any reproof of them for their dulness in understanding, and having compassion on their infirmity and ignorance, tells them what he meant by his former words; telling them, that the doing of his Father's will, and the finishing of his work, was that which he more hungered after, and look more delight in, than in eating and drinking: this is what he sought, Joh 5:30, that which he came down from heaven for, Joh 6:38. As the law of God was sweeter to David than the honey or the honey comb, so the publishing of the gospel was to Jesus Christ, the calling sinners to repentance, and publishing the glad tidings of the Messiah; that was his work, which he tells his Father he had finished, Joh 17:4. Hereby teaching ministers, and people also, to prefer spiritual things before temporal; and the ministers of the gospel especially, to prefer the publishing of the gospel (which is their work) to any other employment whatsoever.

John 4:35

Ver. 35. There was in those countries but four months' space betwixt seed time and harvest; yet they fed themselves (as soon as they had sown) with the expectation of it. My harvest, saith our Saviour, is the gaining of souls for my Father: look yonder what a troop of the citizens of Sichem are coming to me, upon my revelation of myself to the woman of Samaria; I have but just sown my seed, and the fields are white to this spiritual harvest, Mt 9:37. In the judgement of the, best interpreters, our Saviour in this verse useth a comparison, and passeth from his similitude used in the former part of the verse, fetched from a worldly harvest, to discourse of that spiritual harvest, which he by and by reaped of the citizens of Sichem coming to him; it is of that he saith, that the fields were already white, by which (as will appear from the following verses) he quickeneth his disciples to put in their sickles. Some critical authors, understanding both the former and latter part of the text of a worldly harvest, have used their wits to determine how the fields should be *white to harvest* four months before it came; but the most and best interpreters interpret the latter part of a spiritual harvest, and that will be also justified by what followeth.

John 4:36

Ver. 36. You that are the Lord's instruments, to reap what the prophets of old, and John Baptist lately, have sown, shall not lose your labour, you shall receive wages; and your wages shall not be small, it shall be no less than eternal life: *They that turn man, to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever,* Da 12:3. Thus the prophets, and John the Baptist, who sowed the seed of the gospel, and you that succeed them, and reap the fruit of what they did sow, shall have the same reward in glory and *rejoice together. The ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed,* as Amos speaks, Am 9:13. This text is of great use to those godly ministers who faithfully sow the seed of the word, but do not in their lifetime see any great effects of it; it may be it comes up when they are in their graves. The reward of a faithful preacher doth not depend upon his success in his labours, but upon his faithful discharge of his work; though one soweth and another reapeth, yet both he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.

John 4:37

Ver. 37. It was a proverbial expression, most commonly used with reference to those who unjustly invaded the rights and possessions of other men; but as applicable unto those who, by the disposing providence of God, rightly inherit the fruit of other men's labours, as the Jews inherited the land of Canaan; *A land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not,* Jos 24:13. This saying (saith our Saviour) is fulfilled in you.

John 4:38

Ver. 38. I have sent you to reap that which you did not first labour for; the prophets, and John the Baptist, and myself, have sown the seed, and by their doctrine prepared for the Lord a people; you enter upon their labours, gathering them into a gospel church.

John 4:39

Ver. 39. *That city* was Sichem, or Sychar, but it was within the province of Samaria, from whence it is that they had the name of Samaritans as well as Sichemites. *Many* of them, upon the testimony of the woman; That he had told her such secret passages of her life, as he could not have told her if he had not been able, if he had pleased, as well to have told her all things, *believed on him*; that is, they owned him as a prophet, and agreed to what the woman said in that particular, and were by it excited to come to see and further discourse with Christ. This justifieth what our Saviour said, that there was then a people prepared for the Lord, the fields were white unto the harvest; that they were thus far wrought upon by the discourse of a woman, and she one not of the highest reputation, and only telling them that he had told her all things she had done. Small means have great effects when God's time of working is come.

John 4:40

Ver. 40. The Sichemites being come to Christ, had some discourse with him, as appeareth from Joh 4:41,42. What the subject matter of their discourse was we are not told; we may know that it was spiritual, and something proper to excite faith in them, for believing was the effect of it. They desire that he would abide with them: thus their faith wrought by love. Our Saviour, that he might not discourage the beginning of their faith, did stay with them two days: for although, when he sent out his disciples, he commanded them not to go into the way of the Samaritans, yet himself was not obliged by that law, and did sometimes, by preaching to heathens, and converting of them, give an earnest of the calling of the Gentiles, whose fuller calling was reserved to after times; yet, probably, the reason why he would not stay longer with them than two days, was because the time was not yet come for the fuller calling of the Gentiles, and he was not willing by a longer abode with them to give offence to the Jews, between whom and the Samaritans was a rooted hatred upon the account of their differing religion.

John 4:41

Ver. 41. Believing seemeth here to be taken in a different sense from what it was taken in Joh 4:39, from what followeth, Joh 4:42. There it seemeth

only to signify a lower degree of assent, that he was a prophet, upon the woman's saying that he had told her all she had done; here it signifieth a giving credit to him as the Christ, the Saviour of the world, of which they were convinced by what they heard from himself. Thus that of the apostle, Ro 10:17, is justified, that *faith cometh by hearing*; and the influence of Christ upon the souls of believers is also justified. We read of no miracles our Saviour wrought here; they believed not because of any signs they saw, but because of his word; wherein also they further showed themselves the first fruit of the Gentiles, the generality of which were afterward converted to the faith of the gospel, after that miracles were ceased, by hearing the gospel preached.

John 4:42

Ver. 42. Several things may be the occasion of faith, which are neither the principal efficient causes, nor the proper instrumental cause of it. The principal efficient cause of the faith of these Samaritans was, undoubtedly, the finger of God upon their souls, enlightening their minds with the saving knowledge of the gospel, and bowing their wills to the obedience of it. The proper instrumental cause was their hearing the words of Christ; but the occasion of this was what the woman had told them: so as, though they in a sense believed because of what she had said, because that occasioned their coming out to see and hear Christ; yet the proper instrumental cause was their hearing Christ, God upon their hearing him working in their hearts an ability and a willingness to receive and to close with Christ. Thus the church gives us the first occasion of receiving the Scriptures, and believing them to be the word of God: we, having them put into our hands by the church, read them, and find such impresses and stamps of Divinity in them, that we conclude, from our reason very probably, that they are more than human writings; but never firmly and fixedly receive them as such, until persuaded of it by the Holy Spirit. These Samaritans do not only own Christ as a prophet, nor do they only suspect that he must be the Messias, but they profess to *know* that he was *the Christ, the Saviour of the world*.

John 4:43

Ver. 43. Christ (as we heard before, Joh 4:3) was upon his journey into Galilee, only he stopped two days at Sichem to gratify the desires of the Samaritans of that city; which two days being now spent, he keepeth on in his journey. But here ariseth a question, viz. Whether he first went to Nazareth, or to Cana? For the opinion of those who think he first went to Nazareth, is quoted Mt 4:12. Besides, it is said that Nazareth was in his road to Cana, and, Lu 4:24, he is said to have uttered these words there. Chemnitius thinks he went first to Cana, according to what John relates in the following verses. And, Lu 4:16, he is said to have gone out of Galilee to Nazareth: and besides, the next mentioned miracle is (Joh 4:54) said to have been Christ's second miracle, which it could not have been had he first gone to Nazareth, for, Lu 4:23, those of Nazareth mention some miracles which he had wrought at Capernaum.

John 4:44

Ver. 44. Christ spake those words more than once, Mt 13:57 Mr 6:4 Lu 4:24. But the question is, what force of reason this hath why he went into Galilee, whereas Nazareth, which was in Galilee, was his own country; for though he was born in Bethlehem, yet he was educated at Nazareth; upon which account, Lu 4:23, it is called his own country? The best resolution of this difficulty is, that by Galilee here is to be understood, the country part of Galilee, exclusive to Nazareth; and this is not given as a reason why our Saviour went into Galilee, but why he did not go to Nazareth, but into the country part of Galilee, because Nazareth was his own country, and *a prophet is not without honour, except in his own country.*

John 4:45

Ver. 45. When he came not to Nazareth, but to some parts of Galilee, the Galilaeans entertained him hospitably; and this they did because of those miracles they had seen wrought by him at the passover feast, where Christ was, Joh 2:1-25. For these Galilaeans, though they lived at a great distance from Jerusalem, yet were observant of the law which commanded all the males of the Jews to be present at that solemnity. The Samaritans saw no miracle, but believed Christ upon his word. The Galilaeans also received Christ, but their seeing of his miracles at the feast is given as the cause of

their receiving him; their faith was not so noble as that of the Samaritans. *Blessed* (saith our Saviour) *are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

John 4:46

Ver. 46. Our Saviour, coming into Galilee, made choice of Cana, the place where, being at a marriage feast, he turned water into wine, Joh 2:1-25, first to fix in: the reason is not expressed, and therefore vainly guessed at by interpreters. There he worketh a second miracle, not upon the person of any one of Cana, but upon the son of one who was at Capernaum, which was a city in the tribe of Naphtali, upon the shore of the famous river Jordan. This person is described to be one that was βασιλικος, a *nobleman*; whether of the blood of Herod, that was tetrarch of Galilee, or some courtier or principal servant of his, it is not said.

John 4:47

Ver. 47. Christ had been in Galilee before, and in this town, and wrought a miracle, and if this courtier were a disciple of John, (as some think, but it is hard to prove), it is probable he had been at the passover, and seen the miracles he wrought there, or at least might have heard of them from some who were there. Though it was a good way from Capernaum thither, yet his love to his son carried him, and humbled him to beseech Christ that he would come down and heal his son; by which he showed a great weakness of faith, as if he thought that Christ could not put forth his healing virtue at a distance, but his personal presence was necessary; as Naaman the Syrian thought that Elisha must come down and lay his hand upon him. His son, it seems, was in human appearance dying.

John 4:48

Ver. 48. It may seem strange to such as do not well weigh all circumstances, that our Saviour, who at other times went without asking, showed himself so hard to be entreated by this courtier, and answereth him so roughly; but we must not take ourselves to be able to give a certain

account of all Christ's actions, and different dealings with persons, whose hearts he well enough knew. Thus much is certain, that our Saviour always preferred that faith which was given to his bare word, before that which waited for a miracle confirmative of that word, Joh 20:29. Our Saviour saw that this courtier came to him purely upon a natural account, for the recovery of his dying son, without a desire to be instructed in his heavenly doctrine; therefore (as it may be presumed) he checks this courtier; and not him alone, but the generality of the Jews, who were only struck with admiration of his works, and drawn from curiosity, or some temporal benefit, to follow him, without a due regard of his person, or the heavenly, saving truths preached by him.

John 4:49

Ver. 49. The courtier, though probably of spirit enough to have shown some discontent at our Saviour's no kinder answer to him before, yet was so intent upon his son's life, that he takes no notice of it, but renews his request, still discovering the weakness of his faith, as thinking that Christ's personal presence was necessary to the life of his son.

John 4:50

Ver. 50. Our Saviour would neither discourage the weak faith of this nobleman, nor yet encourage his weakness: he healeth his son for the encouragement of his faith; he doth it by his word, without going down to him, that he might not gratify his weakness, thinking his personal presence was necessary; he bids him go, for his son was recovered (that is here meant by *liveth*). Upon this his faith groweth, and he who before only believed Christ to be a prophet, probably upon others' hearsay, now believeth his word, that is, was persuaded that his son was indeed recovered.

John 4:51

Ver. 51. The servants that met him to bring the acceptable news of his son's recovery, knew nothing of the passages that had been betwixt Christ

and their master, but merely came to tell their master what they knew would be acceptable to him.

John 4:52

Ver. 52. He inquires the precise time; they tell him it was about *the seventh hour*. The miracle appeared in the suddenness of the recovery, and also that it was without the application of means, at least any that could have produced so sudden an effect.

John 4:53

Ver. 53. The circumstance of the time when his son recovered agreeing with the very hour when Christ had said unto him, *Thy son liveth*, was a mighty confirmation to him, that he was beholden to Christ for his cure, and consequently that Christ was no ordinary man, more than a prophet, even the Son of God. This works upon his faith to a higher degree: he first believed the report of him, then he gave credit to the word that he spake, now he believeth savingly, and not he alone, but his whole family became Christians. Such instances we have concerning Lydia, Ac 16:14,15, the jailer, Ac 4:34, and Crispus, Ac 18:8.

John 4:54

Ver. 54. His turning water into wine (Joh 2:1-25) was the first, this was the second, and so in order of time before any of those miracles which he wrought in Galilee, of which we read, Mt 4:23.

John 5:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 5:1-9 Christ cures an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda

on the sabbath day.

Joh 5:10-16 The Jews cavil, and persecute him for it.

Joh 5:17,18 He justifieth himself by the example of God his Father,
Joh 5:19-30 and asserts the power and judgment committed unto him
by the Father,
Joh 5:31-35 he appeals to the testimony of John,
Joh 5:36-38 of the Father,
Joh 5:39,40 and of the Scriptures.
Joh 5:41-44 He showeth that his humility caused their rejection of him,
Joh 5:45-47 but that in disbelieving him they disbelieved Moses also.

Ver. 1. Though there are some that think the feast mentioned here was that of Pentecost, and others that it was the feast of tabernacles, yet the most and best interpreters judge it was the feast of the passover that is here mentioned; and that this was the second passover which happened after our Saviour had entered upon his public ministry. We read of the first, Joh 2:13; and from that verse of that chapter to this chapter the evangelist (as they think) hath been relating so much of our Saviour's actions, until the second passover, as it was the will of God we should have upon public authentic record, and had not been recorded by the other evangelists, who give a further account of his actions done this year, Mt 4:1-25 8:1-34 9:1-38 Mr 1:1-45 2:1-28 Lu 4:1-44 5:1-39. In the time of our Saviour's public ministry (which was three years and a half) there were four passovers. The other evangelists take notice but of one of them, and that the last. John is thought to have mentioned all the four; the first, Joh 2:13, the second in this place, the third, Joh 6:4, the fourth, Joh 8:1. Another reason they give why the feast of the passover should be here intended is, because from about that time to the harvest were four months, according to what our Saviour had said, Joh 4:35.

Jesus went up to the passover, to Jerusalem, to show his obedience to his Father's law, De 16:16.

John 5:2

Ver. 2. We read in Scripture of *the sheep gate* in Jerusalem, Ne 3:1. There was also a market for sheep and other cattle, De 14:26. Some therefore add

market, others add *gate*, to the word in the Greek signifying *sheep*. Near to this gate or market there was a *pool*, κολυμβηθρα: some translate it, a fish pool; others, (more properly), a place to wash or to swim in (the word derives from a verb that signifies, to swim). They say there were two such pools within the compass of the mount on which the temple stood; the one eastward, called *the upper pool*, 2Ki 18:17; the other westward, near to the sheep gate. The one was called *Bethesda*; the other, *the pool of Siloah, by the king's garden*, Ne 3:15, mentioned also by our evangelist, Joh 9:7. They say the waters of these pools were supplied from a fountain called Siloam, which was not always full of water, but the water bubbled up in it at certain times with a great noise, coming (as was thought) through hollow places of the earth, and quarries of hard stones. These *waters of Shiloah* are mentioned, Isa 8:6, and said to *go softly*; from which place these waters are concluded a type of the kingdom of David and of Christ. This being admitted, it is not to be wondered that they had that healing virtue given unto them (as some judge) just about the coming of Christ; for it should appear by Joh 9:7, that the pool of Siloam, as well as that of Bethesda, had so; for in former times it is thought to have been of use chiefly to wash garments in, and sacrifices when they were slain. Some will have them to have derived their healing virtue from thence; but that is vain, their healing virtue was doubtless derived from the Lord that healeth us. This pool *in the Hebrew* was called *Bethesda*, which some interpret, The house of pouring out, because, as some fancy, the blood of the sacrifices was there poured out; (but that is a great mistake, for that was to be poured out at the altar); or because rain water (as some think) was poured into it; or (which is more probable) because waters were poured into it out of the conduit mentioned 2Ki 20:20. But others interpret it, The house of grace, mercy, &c., because of God's great goodness showed the people, in giving this healing virtue to these waters. The *five porches* belonging to this pool seem to have been five apartments for impotent men to walk in, or rest themselves in, when they came to wash themselves in the pool.

John 5:3

Ver. 3. In these apartments (called here porches) there were a great number of sick persons, some labouring under one infirmity, some under another, some blind, some lame, waiting for the time the water should be troubled.

John 5:4

Ver. 4. This water had not always in it this healing virtue, but only when it was *troubled*, and this was *at a certain season*, how often the Scripture hath not determined; some will have it to be only at their great feasts, of the passover, and Pentecost, &c., but the Scripture saith no such thing. None must think that the angel appeared in any visible shape, but the rolling or troubling of the waters was a certain sign, that that was the time when alone they were medicinal; nor were many healed at one time, but only one person, that could first get into this water, he was healed, let his disease be what it would. The waters not being constantly medicinal, but, first, at a certain time, when they were troubled; and then, secondly, not for all, but only to him who could first get in; and, thirdly, for any disease, of what sort or kind soever his disease was; sufficiently confutes the opinion of those who fancy that the waters derived this healing virtue from the entrails of the beasts offered in sacrifice being washed there; for besides that this is denied by some, who say those entrails were washed in a room on purpose for that use within the temple; if they had derived their healing virtue from thence in a natural, rational way, they would have exerted their virtue upon more than him who first stepped in, and not at the time only when they were troubled, nor would their virtue have extended to all kinds of diseases. Of whatever use this pool therefore was before, certain it is at this time God made use of the water in it to heal, and so as men might see that it healed not by any natural, but a miraculous operation. The Scriptures of the Old Testament make no mention of it. And it is observed by those who are versed in the Jewish Rabbins, that neither do they make the least mention of it. Which makes it very probable, that they had this virtue, not from the time of the building of the sheep gate by Shallum, Ne 3:15; nor from the time when the Asmonean family was extinct; or the rebuilding or further building and adoring the temple by Herod; but a little before the birth of Christ, as a figure of him being now coming, who, Zec 13:1, was *a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*; and from whom is both our cleansing and our healing, as these waters, which before had a cleansing, and now received also a healing virtue.

John 5:5

Ver. 5. What this man's name was, or what his circumstances in the world, or what his particular disease, we are not told; nor is it said that he had lain there thirty-eight years, but that he had so long laboured under his weakness: which, whether it was the palsy or no, is uncertain: probably it was a disease hardly curable by human art and ordinary means; for it cannot be thought but in that time he had used all rational means, which he finding of no value as to his case, he came and lay at this fountain, waiting for a cure in this way of miraculous operation.

John 5:6

Ver. 6. Christ, as God, knew the particular time when this infirmity seized him, which was eight years or upward before our Saviour's birth, and about the time when the temple was re-edified, or rather enlarged and further adorned, by Herod. As man, he pitieth his case; he asketh him if he was willing to be made whole. Not that he doubted of his willingness; for what sick man was ever unwilling to be healed? Besides that, he knew that the poor man lay there for that very purpose; but that he might make him declare his miserable, helpless state and condition, and draw out his faith and hope in himself; and from his answer take an occasion to heal him, and make the spectators more attentive to his miracle.

John 5:7

Ver. 7. What his particular impotency was the Scripture doth not tell us. Some have (not improbably) judged it the palsy, which deprives the person of motion, by the stoppage of the animal spirits, so that without help he cannot move from one place to another, which it is manifest this poor man could not; for he complains for want of help, that he could not get into the pool.

John 5:8

Ver. 8. Our Lord will let this poor man know, that the waters and the angel

derived their power from him; and that he with a word could do as much for him, as the waters troubled by the angel could effect: he therefore bids him arise, and take up his bed and walk, that others might see and be assured that he was perfectly cured.

John 5:9

Ver. 9. The man's strength returneth immediately; he is able immediately to arise, take up his bed, and to walk. All this was done on the sabbath day; on which day it was unlawful to carry any burdens, Jer 17:21,24; and by the Jewish canons it was punishable by death, or scourging. But our Saviour had a mind to let the Jews know that he was Lord of the sabbath, and what had been unlawful without his special command, became lawful by it. Neither was this against the sense of the law, though against the letter of it; the law only prohibited civil labour, and carrying burdens for their own profit, and in the way of their trade; it forbade the doing of nothing which was to be done as a public testimony of the goodness and mercy of God showed to persons: and by this our Saviour opens a way for his correction of their erroneous opinions about the true sanctification of the sabbath. We shall observe, that our Saviour used the like phrase to him that had the palsy, Mt 9:6; and to the centurion's daughter, Mr 5:41, *Damsel, arise*; and to Lazarus, Joh 11:43, *Lazarus, come forth*; which our Saviour did for the testification of the miracle to all that should see them. It is further observed by Heinsius, that our Saviour did many miracles on the sabbath day, because that day was the usual time when the Jews were wont to consult the prophets for help, as may be learned from 2Ki 4:23.

John 5:10

Ver. 10. That is, according to the letter of the law: they understood not that Christ was the Lord of the sabbath; their cavil argued their want both of faith in Christ, and charity also toward their neighbour.

John 5:11

Ver. 11. He makes them as good an answer as could well be imagined; the

sum of which was, he believed that he that had thus healed him was a prophet, and so did what he did by a Divine authority, which it was lawful for him to obey, contrary to their traditions: though who this particular person was, or what his name was, were things as yet not known to him, (as we shall by and by read), yet he seemeth sensible that he was healed by a power more than human.

John 5:12

Ver. 12. The impotent man that was healed seemed to oppose the authority of God (by virtue of which he believed himself healed) to the authority of man, which made it unlawful for him on the sabbath day to take up his bed and walk. The Jews, taking no notice of Christ's being God, or so much as a prophet sent from God, do not ask, Who was he? But, *What man is that which said, &c.?* opposing the command of God to the command of man. It is as much as if they had said; The law of God hath commanded that no burdens should be carried on the sabbath day; now, what is that *man* that dare teach thee or any one to do what is contrary to the law of God?

John 5:13

Ver. 13. Christ came as a stranger to the pool, and only wrought this miracle, so as the impotent man that was healed had no time to inquire who he was: and there being there a crowd of people, Christ had through the people conveyed himself away; so as the man could not find him, to show them the man who had so said unto him.

John 5:14

Ver. 14. *Jesus findeth him in the temple;* walking in the outward court of the temple, or some part of it, where people ordinarily walked. He charges him to *sin no more, lest a worse thing* betided him; hereby letting him and us know that sin is the usual cause of diseases, and a holy walking the best preservative of health; and that God hath further revelations of his wrath against sin and sinners, than what do or can befall them in this life.

John 5:15

Ver. 15. It were very uncharitable to judge that this poor man went to the Jewish magistrates to inform against Christ, who had been so kind to him; and much more probable that he went in the simplicity of his heart, desirous both to publish what Christ had done to his honour, and also to do good to others, who might also stand in need of his help.

John 5:16

Ver. 16. But the Jews made another use of it, seeking from hence an advantage against him, because he had violated the sabbath, which they often made a capital crime.

John 5:17

Ver. 17. We read of no objection they made to Christ, as to what he had done, only that they persecuted him, which they might do without speaking to him: but it should seem by what we read in this verse, that some of the Jews had objected to him his violation of the sabbath (as they thought); yet, as we before noted, *answered* (in the dialect of the gospel) doth often signify no more than the beginning of a discourse upon some proper occasion offered. Our Saviour defends himself from the example of his Father, in the remembrance of whose resting from his work of creation on the seventh day from the beginning of the creation, the Jews kept their sabbath; who, though he rested from his work of creation, yet hitherto *worketh*, as well on the sabbath day as any other day, by his preservation of created beings: so (saith he) *I, who am the Son of this Father, also work; upholding all things by the word of my power, Heb 1:3*. So that works of Divine Providence are lawful on the sabbath day; such was this. I work no other way than my Father still worketh, though he rested on the seventh day from the creation.

John 5:18

Ver. 18. This yet enraged the Jews more: they had before against him a charge of breaking the sabbath, or, at least, teaching another to break it (in their opinion); but now he had (as they judged) spoken blasphemy, calling God *Father*; not in the sense the Jews so called him, and all good Christians are licensed to call him; but *πατερα ιδιον*, his proper Father, or his own Father; by which (as they truly said) he made himself *equal with God*. Nor did he by that alone make himself equal with God, but he ascribed also to himself a cooperation with God, in works proper to God alone: nor did he think this any *robbery*, Php 2:6. This was their charge; we shall now hear how our Saviour defends himself against it.

John 5:19

Ver. 19. Consider Christ as God, so he can do nothing but what the Father doth, that is, nothing that respected created beings: for it is a known rule, That the works of the Trinity out of itself are not divided; whatsoever one person doth, the others do; though, to denote the order of the Trinity's working, some works are most ordinarily ascribed to the Father, such are the works of creation and providence; some to the Son, as redemption; some to the Holy Spirit, as sanctification; yet they are not so ascribed to any Person, but that other Scriptures justify the cooperation of all three Persons. Consider the Son as the Messiah; so also it is true, that *the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do*. Nor is this any diminution to the glory of Christ, nor doth it speak any impotency in him, from whence the Arians and Socinians would conclude his inferiority to his Father; but rather his perfection, that he did only what pleased the Father: so that phrase, *what he seeth the Father do*, is to be interpreted; and that term, *can do nothing*, signifies no more than, he doth or will do nothing. See such a usage of the phrase, Ge 19:22 Lu 16:2 Joh 12:39. From this he leaveth them easily to conclude, that what he had done, in curing this impotent man upon the sabbath day, was the Father's work, though by him; for whatsoever the Father doth, or willeth, the same doth the Son likewise. From hence will appear an easy solution to the difficulty arising upon the first view of the words, viz. How these words can prove Christ equal with the Father, when they rather prove the contrary, because he can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do? Some seek a solution in the words *can do nothing*; he that cannot do those things which God cannot do, is equal with God. Some seek it in the word *seeth*;

which they say signifieth here an identity of nature and will. Some seek the solution in the word *do*, which they say signifieth to will and consent to. The best solution is to be taken from those words, *of himself*; the Son hath done many things which he did not see the Father do, but he did them not of himself. Our Saviour's meaning is plainly this: The Son neither willeth nor can do any thing, but what the Father willeth and doth in him; therefore he is one in essence with the Father, and equal to him.

For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise: the Son doth those things which the Father doth; and, as the Messias, he doth those things which the Father willeth to be done.

John 5:20

Ver. 20. *For the Father loveth the Son;* both as his Son by eternal generation, Mt 3:17, and also as the Messias sent by him into the world, to finish the work the Father had given him to do: and look, as a father will make his son acquainted with all that he doth; and not only so, but communicates all his power and skill to his son, so far as he can: so the Father communicates all his power to the Son, working all things in him, and by him; and he will in and by him work greater things than this, healing this poor man; he will by him raise the dead, &c. *That ye may marvel:* Christ knew that they would not believe, and all the effect that his miracles had upon the generality of the Jews, was but causing in them a stupefaction, amazement, and admiration, as Joh 11:47; whereas it was their duty, not only to marvel, but to have believed also, without which their admiration did but cause that they had no cloak for their sin.

John 5:21

Ver. 21. He seemeth not to speak of what God will do in the general resurrection, but of those whom the Lord raised up from the dead in the Old Testament, by Elijah and Elisha. The giving of and restoring unto life, are things proper unto God, De 32:39 1Sa 2:6. *So the Son quickeneth whom he will:* God hath given unto me a power to raise from the dead whom I will; as he did raise up Jairus's daughter, Mt 9:25, and the widow's son, Lu 7:14, and Lazarus. Joh 11:43. This was one of those

greater works, of which our Saviour spake in the former verse.

John 5:22

Ver. 22. Alone he judgeth no man, he judgeth no man but by the Son, no man without the Son; but committed all judgment in the administration of the mediatory kingdom in the church to his Son, and by his Son will judge the world at the last day.

John 5:23

Ver. 23. That his Son might be honoured by all men, Ps 2:11,12 Php 2:10, with the same honour which is given to the Father; for the Son is sent by the Father, not as one inferior to him, as a servant is sent by his master, but as an equal is sent by his friend, Joh 4:34 6:38 7:28. And look, as a great prince, when he sendeth his ambassador, expects that those of whom he is sent should give him honour, and the same honour as to himself; so doth the Father: so that *he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*. It is a text which reflects dreadfully upon such as honour not Christ, especially, the Jews and Socinians, who professedly do not honour him with the same honour with which they yet pretend to honour the Father, and are concluded by this text not in truth to honour the Father.

John 5:24

Ver. 24. He that so heareth my words, that they are not a mere sound in his ears, nor affect his heart with some mere sudden and vanishing passion, but so that he gives an assent to them upon my authority; and that firmly and steadily believeth him that sent me, (the particle *on* seemeth not well put in by our translators; in the Greek it is τῷ πεμψαντι με, giveth credit to the words of my Father that sent me), believing that I am his only begotten Son, whom he hath sent into the world, and receiving me as such, hearing me, according to the command of the voice from heaven. Mt 17:5; he hath a certain title to everlasting life, and hath received the first fruits of that harvest, Ro 8:23, the incorruptible seed of the word, 1Pe 1:23; and

already sitteth *in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. Eph 2:6, and hath the kingdom of God within him. Lu 17:21, and shall not come into that judgment which shall issue in eternal condemnation; but is passed out of a state of spiritual death into a state of spiritual life; and shall be at last eternally saved, and pass into the actual fruition and enjoyment of life eternal.

John 5:25

Ver. 25. *The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:* some understand this concerning the special resurrection of such bodies as Christ raised while he was upon the earth from death to life, of which number was Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus, &c. Others understand it of the general resurrection, spoken of Joh 5:28,29. That which favoureth this sense is, because here is no mention of believing, but only hearing a voice. But the most and best interpreters rather understand these words of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and the quickening and life mentioned Eph 2:1, which is called *the first resurrection*, Re 20:5, because of what was said immediately before, that such a one *is passed from death to life*; and what was said before, *He that heareth my word*, agreeth with what is said here of hearing the voice of Christ; and what followeth seemeth better to agree with this sense. And Joh 5:28,29 speak plainly of the second and general resurrection of the body.

They that hear shall live; those who so hear the voice of Christ in the gospel, as to give a firm and steady assent to it, and, upon the credit of it, shall receive Christ as their Mediator and Saviour, shall live eternally; they do live the life of grace, and shall live the life of glory.

John 5:26

Ver. 26. How the eternal Father *hath life in himself*, is obvious to every capacity; for he is the First Mover, and therefore must have his life in and from himself, and not from any other; and he is the First Cause, and therefore that life which floweth from him to all created beings, must first be in him, as in its fountain. But in what sense it is said, that he hath *given to the Son to have life in himself* whether as God, by his eternal generation,

or as the Messiah and Mediator between God and man, and so the fountain of spiritual life to believers, is more questioned. Those who understand it as to the Divine nature, say, that this phrase, *hath life in himself*, is expressive of the name Jehovah; and that Christ is proved to be the true Jehovah by what is here said, that he *hath life in himself*. But they distinguish betwixt having life from or by himself, and having life in himself; the text saith, it is *given to Christ to have life in himself*. But there are other interpreters, who seem better to understand it of Christ as Mediator, to whom it is given to have life in himself, to communicate to his creatures; and think it is well interpreted by Joh 1:4, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*.

John 5:27

Ver. 27. *To execute judgment also;* to have the power of life and death, the keys of both; to rule and govern the world, and to judge it at the last day.

*Because he is the Son of man: Ac 17:31, He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, &c. So Php 2:8, Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even, the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c. Some think that the sense is, because he was that Son of man, who was the Seed of the woman, promised Ge 3:15; the Son of man prophesied of by Daniel, Da 7:13,14. And that the term, *Son of man*, here, signifieth his office as Mediator.*

John 5:28

Ver. 28. Do not marvel at this power which I tell you the Father hath given me, to execute in the world justice and judgment; to raise some particular persons from a natural death, and whom he pleaseth from the spiritual death of sin: for the hour is coming, when all those who are in the graves, shall, by an archangel, Mt 24:31 1Th 4:16, hear my voice, commanding them to arise; and they shall obey my command.

John 5:29

Ver. 29. *And come forth;* not all to be made partakers of eternal life and glory; there shall be a resurrection unto life, which only they shall obtain *who have done good*, walking in the commandments of God; not because they have done good, as if their goodness had merited any such thing, for eternal life is *the gift of God*, Ro 6:23. But others, who have, wrought iniquity, and died without repentance and faith in me, shall arise, that the justice of God may by me, the Judge of the quick and the dead, be exceeded upon them unto eternal condemnation. This Daniel, Da 12:2, calleth *shame, and everlasting contempt*. Our Saviour, Mt 25:46, calls it *everlasting punishment*.

John 5:30

Ver. 30. *I can of mine own self do nothing;* neither considered as God, nor as Mediator. As God, the Father and Christ were one, and what one Person in the Holy Trinity doth, all do; so that has did nothing in that capacity separately from his Father. As Mediator, he did nothing of himself; he finished the work which his Father gave him to do.

As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just; as the Father revealed his will to him, for the administration of his mediatory kingdom in the world, so he judged; and therefore his judgment must necessarily be just and true.

Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me; for his will was not a will proper to himself, so as it was not also common to his Father, but diverse from the will of his Father; but as his essence, so his will, was the same with his Father; and he being by the Father sent into the world to do his will, accordingly did nothing as Mediator but what was his Father's will as well as his own, in nothing diverse from his Father's.

John 5:31

Ver. 31. This seemeth to contradict what he saith, Joh 8:14, *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true:* but our Saviour here speaketh

according to the common opinion of the Jews, or indeed of men, who are ready to suspect any one's testimony who testifieth of himself. He tells them, he could grant them this, though his record of himself was true, yet he could allow them their common received opinion and saying, Joh 8:13, that the testimony of one testifying of himself is suspicious; for it is certain that a man may testify truth of himself, only such a testimony is suspicious: he tells them, he did not only testify of himself, his reputation did not stand upon his own single word.

John 5:32

Ver. 32. The Father by a voice from heaven testified of Christ, that he was his well beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, Mt 3:17. Some understand it of John the Baptist, of whom he speaketh, Joh 5:33. But he naming John in the next verse, it seems most proper to understand this of the Father testifying of Christ, both at his baptism, and also at his transfiguration; and to interpret the next verse, as speaking of another testimony distinct from that of John.

And (saith our Saviour) *I know*, that is, I am fully assured, that his testimony of me is true; for God is that God who cannot lie, but is truth itself. So that I do not barely testify of myself; for my Father, whom you all own to be a God of truth, and who cannot lie, and whom know to be such, he testifieth of me, and none can contradict his testimony.

John 5:33

Ver. 33. Ye sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John, Joh 1:29; he was a man of reputation among you, for all the people judged him a prophet; and he had an interest in Herod's court: *he bare witness* (he doth not say to me, but) *to the truth*.

John 5:34

Ver. 34. *I receive not testimony from man*, that is, not for my own sake; for otherwise he did receive testimony from man, Joh 15:27 Ac 1:8. That

must be truth, to which any one can give a true testimony. John by his testimony added nothing to me. I was what I am before John testified concerning me. I only spake of John's testimony for your sake, that you might believe, and be saved.

John 5:35

Ver. 35. I do not speak this to lessen John in any of your thoughts; he was a famous light, burning in the knowledge and love of the truth; shining both in his doctrine, in publishing the truth, and also in holiness of life and conversation.

He was not that light, Joh 1:8, but he was a light, not το φως το αληθινον, but λυχνος, Mt 5:14 Lu 8:16. And you for a small time pretended a great affection for John, and came with great zeal to hear him, Mt 3:5 21:26 Mr 1:5, hoping that he was the Messiah, or at least Elias, or that prophet in him revived again. But when they saw that John did only bear record to Christ, they grew cold in their affection, not liking either his doctrine, or the strictness of his life, or the tidings that he brought; looking for a far more splendid and glorious Messiah than Christ appeared to them to be.

John 5:36

Ver. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of John;* not than that of my Father, mentioned Joh 5:31,32, but *than that of John*, last mentioned; nor doth he say a truer, but a *greater witness. The works which the Father hath given me to finish;* the works which his Father sent him to do, his fulfilling of the law, his publication of the gospel, the miracles which he wrought, were all of them works which his Father had given him to finish. Christ often appeals to the works which he had done, as sufficiently testifying of him, Joh 10:25,37,38 14:10,11 15:24. And it is plain, that the people looked upon them as a great testimony, Joh 3:2 9:32,33. The Jews avoided the force of this testimony impudently, some of them saying that he did them by the help of the devil, Mt 12:24; others pretending (more lately) that the Messiah was to work no miracles; but that is expressly contrary to what we have, Joh 7:31, and is doubtless a device of later

years. But it is a greater question, how the miracles of Christ *bear witness* of him; and whether they were only a probable, or a certain and infallible, testimony of his Deity. Those that think them an infallible testimony, say:

1. That he did works which none else did, Joh 15:24.
2. That he did them by his own power; *There went virtue out of him, and healed them all*, Lu 6:19.
3. That they were done in confirmation of the doctrine to that purpose which he preached, which God would not have confirmed by miracles, had not he been sent of God to work such things.

Those that think they were not a certain and infallible testimony, say,

1. That the prophets and apostles also wrought miracles.
2. That our Saviour tells his apostles, they should do greater works than he had done.
3. That the doing of them from his own power, was a thing could not be known to others; so could be no testimony to them.

But our Saviour did not only himself raise the dead, cast out devils, and work other miracles; but he gave others also a power to do it; which argued an original power in himself; and is more than we read of any prophets or apostles; who, though they wrought such miraculous operations, yet having not that power originally in and from themselves, could not communicate it to others.

John 5:37

Ver. 37. *Hath borne witness of me;* not only in my baptism, and at my transfiguration by an audible voice from heaven, but by the voice of his prophets, by whom he spoke to your fathers.

Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape; you have no knowledge of him, nor any acquaintance with him. It is expounded, Joh

5:38, *Ye have not his word abiding in you*: for though indeed God appeared to the Jews in no shape or similitude; yet they (that is, their forefathers) had heard his voice, De 4:12, *speaking out of the midst of the fire*, Joh 5:33. God, being an incorporeal Being, hath no such organs of speech as we have, by which we declare our minds unto others; but God had formed an audible voice, by which he revealed his will unto the Jews; so as it could only be said of the Jews of that generation and their forefathers, from the time of giving the law, that they had not heard his voice; for, Ex 20:19, they then desired that Moses might speak to them, and that God would speak no more immediately. Accordingly, he did by the prophets speak to them; but they would not believe them, no, not when he spake to them by his Son, who knew his will, Heb 1:1,3.

John 5:38

Ver. 38. Though they had heard the word of the Lord, their forefathers by the prophets, and in that generation by John the Baptist, (the messenger sent before Christ's face), and now by Christ himself, whom the Father had sent; yet the word of the Lord had no place in their hearts, Joh 8:37; it was unto them as a tale told; they received the sound of it, but it was not graven in their hearts. And this appeared, because as of themselves they had no intimacy of communion with God to know his mind; so, when the Son was sent out of the bosom of the Father to reveal God unto them, yet they would not receive him, so as to give any steady, fixed assent to what he revealed, and to yield him any just and true obedience.

John 5:39

Ver. 39. *Search the Scriptures*; the words may be read either imperatively (as our translation readeth them) or indicatively, You do search the Scriptures; that is, of the Old Testament, for the books of the New Testament were not at that time written; but as they had the books of the Old Testament, so they made use of them: Moses was read in the synagogues every sabbath day; and they (the Pharisees especially) were very well versed both in the law and the prophets.

For in them ye think ye have eternal life; they did agree that the way of

salvation and everlasting life was revealed unto them in the Holy Scriptures; nay, they did judge, that eternal life was to be obtained by their observation of the law.

They are they which testify of me: they (saith our Saviour) are my principal testimony; he doth not only say, they testify, but *they are they which testify*. No writings but those testify of me; I principally appeal to them to give you an account of me.

John 5:40

Ver. 40. You will not own, embrace, and receive me as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, though that be the only means by which you can obtain that eternal life which you pretend to be seeking after, and rightly think that the Scripture alone can show you the way to. These two verses teach us,

1. That the Holy Scriptures are the only writings which show us the way to life eternal.
2. That not only the Scriptures of the New, but also of the Old Testament, are of use in order thereunto, though the Old Testament Scriptures show us it more darkly, and those of the New Testament show it to us more clearly.
3. That both the one and the other point us to Christ, and to the receiving and embracing of him, as our Saviour, if we would have life.
4. That it is not sufficient for us to search the Scriptures, to be versed in and acquainted with them, unless we, in obedience to them, come to Christ.

John 5:41

Ver. 41. I depend not upon the single testimony of men; or, I seek not, nor hunt after, the honour of men, nor regard what they think or say of me.

John 5:42

Ver. 42. You pretend a great deal of religion, and to do many things out of love to God, and a zeal for the glory of God; but though you can cheat others, yet you cannot deceive me: I, that search the heart, and try the reins, and am a witness to your actions, know that, whatsoever you pretend, the true love of God dwelleth not in you; and that is the reason why you do not receive me.

John 5:43

Ver. 43. I am come clothed with an authority from my Father, sent by him for this very purpose, to reveal his will to men for their salvation; I speak, I do nothing but by the authority of my Father which sent me; nor do I aim at my own glory, but the glory of him that sent me: yet you give no credit to my words, nor embrace me, as him whom God hath sent for the Saviour of man.

If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive; through the corruption of your hearts, and the just judgment of God, giving you up to strong delusions to believe lies, 2Th 2:11. If any seducers come, without any authority from God, never sent of him, nor speaking his words, nor seeking his glory, or your good, you will readily enough receive them.

John 5:44

Ver. 44. It is evident that by receiving *honour from one another*, is here to be understood the seeking and pursuing of honour and applause from men, without regard to the praise of God: so also Joh 12:43. For otherwise it is lawful for parents to receive honour from children, masters from servants, princes and other magistrates from people. But for men to be ambitious of honour and applause from men, in neglect of the honour and praise of God, this is highly sinful; and it cannot be expected that any such persons should so far deny themselves, and renounce their own works of righteousness, as to accept of Christ and his righteousness, and rely upon him alone for life and salvation. It is said, Joh 12:42, that *among the chief*

rulers many believed; yet it is added, Joh 12:43, For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. But those words, Joh 12:43, seem rather to refer to the Pharisees, mentioned in the latter part of Joh 12:42, where a reason is given why, though many great rulers believed, yet they did not confess Christ, because of the Pharisees. Or if those words, Joh 12:43, be to be applied to those of whom it is said, they believed, Joh 12:42, we must distinguish concerning believing, which in Joh 12:42 signifieth no more than an assent given to him as a great prophet, upon the miracles they saw wrought by him; in this place, a true and lively faith, receiving Christ as our Mediator and Saviour.

John 5:45

Ver. 45. There will be no need of my accusing you, you will need no other accuser than that Moses for whom you have so great a reverence, and for whose sake you contemn me. Joh 9:28,29, they said, *We are Moses's disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.* This Moses (saith our Saviour) will accuse you unto the Father.

John 5:46

Ver. 46. Had you given a hearty credit and understanding assent to Moses, that is, to the writings of Moses, for so the term is oft taken, Lu 16:31 24:27, you would have received me: as all the law of Moses pointed to and prefigured me, so he in particular wrote of me, Ge 3:15 De 18:15.

John 5:47

Ver. 47. But if you believe not his writings, who so plainly wrote of me, and whose writings you own, and have so great a veneration for, how can I expect that you should believe the words of one whom you so vilify and condemn? For though my words be in themselves of greater authority, yet I have not so much credit with you as Moses had. But how doth our Saviour affirm, Joh 5:45, that they trusted in Moses, and deny here that they did believe him?

Answer. Some say, they believed with an implicit faith, presuming upon the merits of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; but not with an explicit faith. Others say, they believed in the general, that whatsoever he wrote was true; but they did not believe them in the true sense of them. Tarnovius thinks, that they trusted in Moses, that they might be saved by their own works done in obedience to his law; but they did not believe him, because they rejected him of whom Moses wrote, and to whom the law of Moses was but a schoolmaster. They refused him who was *the Head of the corner*, Ps 118:22 Mt 21:42.

John 6:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 6:1-14 Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and

two fishes.

Joh 6:15-21 He withdraweth himself from the people, who would

have made him a king, and walketh on the sea.

Joh 6:22-29 The multitude flocking to him, he reproveth their

carnal views, and requireth their faith in him whom

God hath sent.

Joh 6:30-59 They ask a sign like that of the manna in the

wilderness; he declareth himself to be the bread of

life from heaven, and that none can live but by

eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

Joh 6:60-65 Many of his disciples taking offence thereat, he

showeth his meaning to be spiritual.

Joh 6:66-71 Many leaving him, Peter in the name of the twelve

professes stedfast faith in him: Jesus

pronounces

one of them to be a devil.

Ver. 1. Some good time (some think near a year) after the passages in the former chapter Christ went over the lake of Galilee (for the Jews called all great collections of waters seas); it is also called the lake of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesaret, Lu 5:1. These waters received their name from the whole province whose coast they washed, so they were called *the sea of Galilee*; or the particular shore or cities they washed, so they are sometimes called *the sea of Tiberias*, sometimes *the lake of Gennesaret*. It appeareth by Mr 6:31, that he went upon the apostles coming to give him an account of what they had done and taught.

John 6:2

Ver. 2. Our Saviour (as appeareth by Mr 6:31) only spake to his apostles to withdraw into a desert place, and to rest a while; but, Mr 6:33, though our Saviour went by ship, yet the people *ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him*. That which induced them was their knowledge of the miracles which he had wrought.

John 6:3

Ver. 3,4. That is, the third passover after our Saviour had entered upon his public ministry; by which we may observe, that John omitted many things spoken and done by our Saviour in the year immediately following the second passover, for he giveth us no further account than what we have in the former chapter, and in this. The other evangelists give us a more full account of them. The place whither our Saviour went seemeth to have been toward the end of the lake, so as the people could go on foot, and turn at the point of the lake, and be there before the ship could cross the water.

John 6:5

Ver. 5. This is apparently the same history which we have met with in all

the former three evangelists. Mt 14:15-21 Mr 6:35-44 Lu 9:10-17. See the differing circumstances considered in our annotations on those chapters. The other evangelists observe, that Christ had first been preaching to them, until it was near night; and then bring in the disciples first moving him (because they had eaten nothing) to send them away to provide themselves food. This evangelist begins with some words Christ should speak to Philip.

John 6:6

Ver. 6. Now this he said to try what Philip would say, for he was himself resolved what to do.

John 6:7

Ver. 7. This discourse between our Saviour and Philip is reported by none of the other evangelists, and probably was after that which they report of the other disciples' motion to Christ to dismiss the people, because it was now towards evening. The number (as we shall find afterward) was five thousand, besides women and children; amongst whom five hundred pennyworth of bread was very little to be divided.

John 6:8

Ver. 8-13. The story is the same, in all substantial parts, with the relations of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in the before mentioned places. See the annotations on those chapters.

John 6:14

Ver. 14. When they had seen the miracle of Christ's multiplying five loaves and two fishes, to the feeding of five thousand persons, besides women and children; a miracle of that nature, that never any such was wrought either by Moses or any prophet, and to the working of which a creating power was necessary; this brought them to a strong persuasion that this was the Messiah; for he is signified by that phrase, *that prophet that should come into the world*, as appeareth from Lu 7:19.

John 6:15

Ver. 15. This motion of Christ into a mountain alone, after he had sent away the multitude, (thus miraculously fed), and after that his disciples had taken ship again, is mentioned by two other of the evangelists; by Mt 14:23 by Mr 6:45,46. But this occasion of it is expressed by neither of them; who both say, that he went thither *to pray*? And indeed John (who rarely mentions any thing set down by the others) is judged to have recorded this history, as for the excellent discourse of our Saviour's following this miracle; so for some particular circumstances in and about the miracle, not mentioned by the other evangelists; of which, as the discourse he had with Philip was one, so this about their going about to make him a king was another. The Jews were a people exceedingly jealous of and zealous for their liberties, the Galilaeans especially, amongst whom our Saviour was at that time; so as they never wanted any thing but a leader for a sedition or rebellion. The Scriptures mention two, Ac 5:36,37, under the conduct of one Theudas, and Judas of Galilee. Ecclesiastical history mentions more. Their error as to the Messiah (whom they dreamed of as a temporal prince) gave them a colour for these insurrections, whenever they could get any to take upon him that pretence. These men seeing these great miracles wrought by Christ, particularly that of the loaves multiplied to feed five thousand, thought Christ had been such a Messiah as they expected; not understanding that the kingdom of the true Messiah was not to be of this world, Joh 18:36, but within men here, and more evident in the day of judgment, Mt 25:34. But our Saviour, who never came into the world to disturb the civil order and government in it, constantly avoided the giving the least occasion for such a suspicion: when he therefore knew, either by his insight into the hearts of men, or by hearing their discourses, that they had such seditious thoughts, he withdrew himself into a mountain. How he withdrew himself, so as they

did not follow him, no, not his disciples, is a matter which hath exercised the thoughts of many. The papists say, that he had a power, by virtue of the personal union of the Divine and human nature in his person, to make his body invisible, and so passed from them, not discerned by them. The Lutherans are not so confident in this, yet seem to incline it might be thus. Indeed both of them are concerned to maintain the possibility of such a thing; for without such a possibility, neither can the papists maintain their doctrine of transubstantiation, where they hold, that the bread in the sacrament of the Lord's supper is turned into the very body of Christ, and the wine into his blood (though no such thing be obvious to our senses); nor the Lutherans their doctrine of consubstantiation, who hold, that the very body and blood of Christ is really present in, with, or under the elements, though the elements be not changed into it. But the Greek words are no more than *ανεχωρησεν παλιν*, which signify no more than that he again changed his place, which he might easily do through a multitude in a disorder, without their notice of him; and if his disciples did see him, it is not probable that they, knowing his aversion to any seditious practices, as also his custom to withdraw to places of privacy for devotion, would take any notice at all of him.

John 6:16

Ver. 16. This piece of history is related much more fully by the other evangelists, Mt 14:23-33 Mr 6:46-52. See Poole on "Mt 14:23", and following verses to Mt 14:33. See Poole on "Mr 6:46", and following verses to Mr 6:52.

John 6:17

Ver. 17-22. By *the sea* is here meant the sea of Galilee, or lake of Tiberias, or of Gennesaret. There our Saviour and his disciples had left the multitude; the disciples having taken a boat, and passing over on the other side, and Christ having followed them, the multitude, probably having gone in the night to rest themselves at their several houses, came again in the morning, expecting to have found Christ, and have seen more miracles; being disappointed, understanding that both Christ and his disciples were gone over.

John 6:23

Ver. 23,24. They also took shipping, made use of some other boats that were come over the water, and went over to seek Jesus; not out of any love to his person or doctrine, (as we shall anon hear), but out of a curiosity to see some further miracles wrought by him. Our Lord disappoints them, but preacheth a most admirable sermon to them.

John 6:25

Ver. 25,26. They asked him, *When camest thou hither?* A curious and impertinent question, to which he doth not think fit to give an apposite answer, but at first letteth them know, that he knew their hearts, and what designs they had in following him; which was not to see the miraculous effects of the Divine power, the credentials of his commission from heaven, and to receive him as the true Messiah, and believe his doctrine; but they came upon so low an account as to be fed by him.

John 6:27

Ver. 27. By the bread *which perisheth*, is not strictly to be understood bread, but whatsoever is necessary or accommodating to us in this life; all things of this nature are perishing, and perish with the using: nor is all labour as to them forbidden us; for we are to the contrary commanded, In the sweat of our face to eat our bread; and the apostle commandeth, that those that will not labour should not eat; and, Pr 31:27, the good woman is commended for not eating *the bread of idleness*: but excessive labour for these things is forbidden. So also is a first and greater labour for and

seeking after them, than after *that meat which endureth to everlasting life*; under which notion also unquestionably cometh whatsoever is necessary by God's revealed will, that we may have in us the hopes of glory here, and may enter into the actual possession of that glory hereafter. Such as are, first, the knowledge of the gospel; then the believing of it, and the acceptance of that Saviour, and way of salvation, which God hath revealed in it for lost sinners; and that holiness of life which God hath made necessary to it. All which (saith he) I, who am the Son of man, (a name he ordinarily giveth to himself), will give unto you freely. Not that you are to do nothing; no, labour for it; though it be a gift, yet it is a gift upon labour, for all your labour will not procure it; there will be a great deal of free grace seen when you have given all diligence. And Christ must give it; for the Father, in whose hand this life is, hath (as men by their seals use to confirm the commissions they give out to any persons to do any thing for them, and in their name) confirmed Christ as his commissioner, to give out this eternal life to whomsoever he pleaseth.

John 6:28

Ver. 28. They easily understood that our Saviour did not speak of any worldly food, by his opposing the labour he mentions, and persuadeth for, to a labour for the world; but still they did not understand what labour he spake of, but dreamed of the works of the law; knowing of no other work which God commanded, but which was prescribed in the law; and they (probably) being some, or many of them, strict observers, especially of the law contained in ordinances, and probably many of them of the moral law also, according to the sense of it given by their teachers; in which sense the young man, Mt 19:20, being bid by our Saviour to keep the law, and naming most of the precepts of the second table, told him, All these things have I kept from my youth: what lack I yet? They wondered what works our Saviour meant; what labour, when he said, *Labour for that bread*, or that *meat which endureth to everlasting life*; thinking that those who kept the law (in the sense before expressed) had no more to do.

John 6:29

Ver. 29. Our Lord calleth them to a work they never thought of, the

owning and acknowledgment of him to be the true Messiah; the embracing and receiving him as such, and trusting him with all the concerns of their souls; which was necessary, notwithstanding all their acts of obedience to the law, though most certainly productive also of that obedience, and inseparable from it. This our Saviour calleth *the work of God*, in answer to what they had said about working the works of God. Yet this will not prove that we are justified by works, because we are justified by faith; for here is no discourse concerning the causation of faith in the justification of a soul, but only concerning what is the will of God, as to all those that shall be saved.

John 6:30

Ver. 30. They thought it reasonable, that he who brought forth a new doctrine into the world (such as faith in him was, they having never heard any such thing from their doctors the Pharisees) should confirm his mission by some miraculous operation. But this was a strange stupidity, considering the sign he had so lately showed them, of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. So it was manifest they sought for a sign, not to promote or confirm their faith, but merely to feed their curiosity; and what our Saviour said, Mt 12:39, *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign*, was truly applicable to them; and those words, *believe thee*, eminently confirm it; for the aforesaid miracle speaking in him a creative power, and being such as was never wrought by any creature, they were obliged to believe him, without any further sign. God ought to be believed upon his bare word.

John 6:31

Ver. 31. Here they magnify Moses; he did not bring them a law only, but confirmed it by signs from heaven to be the will of God, by obtaining for them bread to be mined from heaven to satisfy their hunger, Ex 16:15 Nu 11:7; which is also confirmed by the psalmist, Ps 78:25. This Moses did for the whole congregation of Israel forty years together. From hence they would seem to conclude, that they had more ground to believe Moses than Christ, who, though he had indeed lately fed five thousand with five loaves, yet had done no such thing. Not considering that Moses, in what he

did, was but an instrument to obtain of God by prayer such a miracle, for supporting his people in the wilderness; and that what he had done, was done by a creating power inherent in himself, by which he multiplied that little proportion of bread which they had, to make it sufficient to feed such a quantity as five thousand, besides women and children; to which effect it bare no proportion.

John 6:32

Ver. 32. You are mistaken in your opinion of that manna, which indeed was bread from heaven, *spiritual meat*, (as the apostle calleth it, 1Co 10:3), but it was not given you by any power or virtue in or from Moses. Moses said otherwise; when it was first rained down, he told them, *This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat*, Ex 16:15. It was the Lord, not Moses, that gave you that bread. Nor was that true spiritual bread; it was only spiritual (as the apostle calleth it) because it was typical, and prefigurative of me.

My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; it was he that gave your fathers manna, not Moses; and it is he who giveth you me, who am the true bread of which that bread was but typical, a shadow, and a figure.

John 6:33

Ver. 33. Moses gave you spiritual, heavenly bread; but that was only spiritual as it was typical and prefigured me; heavenly, as it came from the lower heavens, was mined down from thence, not made upon the earth by the art of man; and was therefore called *the bread of angels*; but I am the true *bread of God*, signified by that type, who came not down from the lower, but from the highest heavens; and who do not only maintain and uphold life in men, (as that did), but give life to men; and that not a mere natural life, but a spiritual and eternal life; and that not to the Jews only, for whose use alone manna was, but to the world.

John 6:34

Ver. 34. Most interpreters agree that they spake this seriously, that is, that they were willing enough to have such bread (if any such were to be had); but yet not conceiving aright the nature and excellency of the bread our Saviour mentioned; and this occasioned his clear explication of it in the following verse.

John 6:35

Ver. 35. *I am the bread of life;* the bread that giveth spiritual and eternal life, and the bread that upholdeth and maintains spiritual life; the Messiah, whom God hath sent into the world, to quicken those that are *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph 2:1; and to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given me. But those that have this life, must come unto me; which he interprets in the next phrase by believing in him. Thus he taketh them off all gross and carnal conceptions of eating and drinking in a carnal manner; and minds them to think of getting and maintaining another kind of life than they dreamed of. By believing in him, we have formerly showed is to be understood a receiving of him as the Mediator and Saviour of men, and closing with him, and committing their souls in all their spiritual concerns unto him; and he that doth so (saith he) shall never hunger nor thirst; that is, shall never want any thing necessary for him for life and eternal happiness. And for things of this life, he shall have food convenient for him; he shall *be fed*, Ps 37:3. See such a promise, Isa 49:10.

John 6:36

Ver. 36. You have seen me in the flesh, you have heard my doctrine, you have seen the miracles which I have wrought, confirming that doctrine, and me to be the true Messiah; for I have done amongst you those works which never any man did: but you are of the generation of those of whom it was prophesied: That in seeing you should not see, nor yet perceive; for though you have seen me with your bodily eyes, and could not but conclude by what works I have done that I am the true Messiah; yet you do not own and acknowledge me as such, nor will by faith close with me, and come unto me for life and happiness.

John 6:37

Ver. 37. Here ariseth a great question amongst interpreters of various persuasions, what giving of the Father is here meant; whether an eternal designation of persons to eternal life, in order to the obtaining of which the persons so predestinated are given to Christ, as he who was to be the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer of the world; or the infusing the habits of special, saving grace, by which persons are enabled actually to believe. If the former, the words do not only infer an infallible connexion betwixt faith and eternal life and salvation; but also betwixt the decree of election and the collation of special grace, by which men are enabled to believe, and, believing, are saved. That which seemeth to favour the latter opinion is, that the verb is in the present tense; it is not, all that the Father hath given, but *all that the Father giveth*; which would incline us to think, that though in other texts the Father's giving of souls to Christ may signify his eternal election, yet in this text it rather signifieth the donation or giving the habits of special grace. But there are very learned and pious interpreters of another mind, who think by the Father's giving, is meant the Father's choosing souls in him, Eph 1:4. Certain it is, that there are some chosen to life, and the certain means by which that life is to be obtained, Eph 1:4,5. And as certain it is, that persons so chosen in him, shall neither miss of that life, nor yet of that effectual means by which it shall be obtained. Whether that eternal election, or donation, be here intended or no, is not so momentous to determine. For the Jesuits' argument, that if we understand it of such an eternal gift, our Saviour rather excuses than accuseth them for their unbelief, by telling them they could not believe, because they were not given unto him; it holdeth as strong against special grace as against particular election; so as if that were true, it could be interpreted in neither of those senses: but by their leaves it doth not at all excuse them, unless they did what in them lay to come to Christ: but this question belongs rather to polemical writers than interpreters. Certain it is, that it is such a giving here mentioned, as shall be followed by a coming to Christ; that is, believing in him, and by a true faith receiving of him.

And those that do so, our Lord saith, he *will in no wise cast out*. Out of heaven, say some; others understand it of perseverance; but certainly the phrase denotes no more than the freeness and readiness of Christ to receive every one who truly believeth in him, and to preserve him to eternal life

and salvation. Who they are that are given to Christ, and that will or shall believe in him, is a secret that is known unto God alone: but this may be known to all, that Christ will not throw off any soul that is willing to receive him as its Saviour, and that no such soul shall perish for ever.

John 6:38

Ver. 38. Our Lord confirmeth what he had before said concerning his gracious reception of believers, and preserving them by his grace in their state of grace, so that they shall not be cast out with reprobates in the day of judgment, from this, that he came not to execute any particular will of his own, but what was also the will of his Father, who sent him into the world.

John 6:39

Ver. 39. For this he revealeth to be his Father's will, that of all his Father had given him, he should lose none; where by the Father's giving must be meant, either his eternal act (having chosen some to eternal life) in giving them to his Son, for the work of their redemption; or, which is but the effect and product of that, the working, preserving, and upholding in them those habits and exercises of grace, by which that eternal life is to be obtained. Our Lord declareth it to be the will of his Father, that he should not suffer any of these to miscarry; but though their bodies die and turn into dust, yet Christ at the last day should come to raise the dead, and, in particular, raise them up: not that they only shall rise, (for how then shall all appear before the judgment seat of God, to receive according to what they have done in the flesh?) but they are those alone who shall receive any benefit by the resurrection; and therefore they are called the children of the resurrection; and the resurrection is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as if it were to be peculiar to them, Php 3:2. By this the certainty of the resurrection is established; it being asserted as the effect of the will of God, which none hath resisted at any time.

John 6:40

Ver. 40. Our Lord having asserted the will of God, as to the final issue and happiness of believers, goes on to assert the means by which, in this life using, they must obtain this life: those are, seeing the Son, and believing in him; seeing him, not with the eyes of their bodies, or seeing his miraculous operations, both which these Capernautes did, and yet did not believe, (as he told them, Joh 6:36), but a seeing them with the eye of their minds, discerning him as the Messiah, and Saviour of the world; so seeing him, as to believe on him. As to these, he confirmeth it again to be the will of his Father, that they should live eternally, and that they should be raised again at the last day; and that by him, whom God had enabled to be the Judge both of the quick and the dead, Ac 10:42, which agreeth with what he had before said, Joh 5:28.

John 6:41

Ver. 41. The Jews were exceedingly prone to this sin of murmuring, which is a complaining either through indignation, or impatience of what men hear spoken, or see done: the thing which offended, seemeth not to be his calling himself the true bread, and the bread of life; but because he said, that he came down from heaven.

John 6:42

Ver. 42. For Capernaum, where our Saviour now was, was not far from Nazareth, where he had been educated, and lived near thirty years with Joseph his reputed father. Understanding therefore nothing of our Saviour's miraculous conception by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin, they were much offended at his discourse of his coming down from heaven.

John 6:43

Ver. 43. By this our Saviour gives them another proof of his Divine nature, viz. in his knowing of their hearts and thoughts; for though they were inwardly angry, and in a rage, yet we read not of any words spoken by them; but our Saviour needed not their words to tell him what was in the

secret of their hearts. Our Saviour bids them not murmur at this, for he had much more than this to tell them, as followeth.

John 6:44

Ver. 44. That by drawing here is not to be understood any coercion, or force upon the will, is a thing on all hands out of question; but whether by it be only to be understood a rational drawing by arguments, (used in the ministry of the gospel), or a further powerful influence upon the soul, inclining it to be willing and obedient, that is the question. The patrons of a power in man's will to do what is spiritually good and necessary in order to eternal life and salvation, understand it of the former only (of which the compelling, mentioned Lu 14:23, is to be understood, for the ministers of the gospel have no other power to compel); but in regard the drawing here mentioned is the act not of the servants, but of the Master; not of the ministers, but of the Father; it is more reasonably concluded that it here signifies a Divine power put forth upon the soul of man, by which it is made obedient to the heavenly call, and willing to close with the offer of Christ in the gospel; for though no such thing can necessarily be concluded from the word draw, yet it is easily concluded from the nature of the motion, in coming to Christ, which is the soul's motion to a sublime, spiritual object, to which no soul hath any power of itself; such is the darkness of the human mind, the obstinacy of the will, the depravation of the affections, unless it be illuminated and drawn by the Spirit of God. No soul is able of itself to discern spiritual things, so as to see that goodness and excellency that is in them, much less to move towards the participation of them.

John 6:45

Ver. 45. *It is written in the prophets;* either in Isa 54:13, or in the book of the prophets; for though the words be to be found only in Isaiah, yet words of the same import are also to be found in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Micah. All they whom the Lord hath chosen shall be taught of God.

Therefore (saith he) said I to you, *Every man that hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Our Saviour proveth the doctrine which he had

delivered to them, from the prophets, not because their authority was greater than his, or in any degree equal with his; but because the prophets and their writings were in greater authority and reputation with them.

John 6:46

Ver. 46. None must dream that the Father should visibly appear in the world to teach men; for the essence of God is invisible, none hath seen it at any time, saving he alone who is the only begotten Son of the Father; he hath seen the essence of the Father, he knoweth his will, and most secret counsels.

John 6:47

Ver. 47,48. See Poole on "Joh 3:18". See Poole on "Joh 3:36". See Poole on "Joh 6:35".

John 6:49

Ver. 49. *Your fathers* by nature, or in respect of unbelief, *did eat manna in the wilderness, and they are naturally dead;* (manna would not always preserve their natural life); and those of them who were unbelievers, are also dead eternally; their eating of manna, which was a type of me, without believing in me, would not save them.

John 6:50

Ver. 50. But I am that bread of life, who came out of the highest heavens, from the bosom of my Father; that bread, which if a man eateth thereof, he shall never die eternally. Eating Christ in this text signifieth no more than believing in him, so often before mentioned under the notion of coming to him, believing in him, &c. And believing is fitly expressed by this notion of eating; because as eating is the application of meat to our stomachs, for the sustenance of our bodily life; so believing is the application of Christ

to the soul, for the beginning and increase of spiritual life, and at last obtaining life eternal.

John 6:51

Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven:* See Poole on "Joh 6:33". See Poole on "Joh 6:35". Our Saviour's so often inculcating this, and what follows, lets us see both how necessary this is to be known, and also how difficult the work of believing is.

Those words, *he shall live for ever*, expound those that went before in the Joh 6:50, *that a man may eat thereof, and not die*. His saying that the bread which he giveth is his flesh, expounds what he said before, viz. how he is the bread of life, viz. by giving his flesh, that is, his life, for the life of the world, that many might be saved; hereby showing us, that the object of our faith is a Christ crucified, 1Co 2:2.

John 6:52

Ver. 52. They will still understand spiritual things in a carnal sense; yet it is hard to conceive how they could imagine that Christ spake of giving them his flesh to eat, as men eat the flesh of oxen or sheep; but which way soever they did understand it indeed, their captious temper inclined them to conceal any other sense they had of it, and to represent what our Saviour said as exceedingly absurd.

John 6:53

Ver. 53. The short and true sense of these words is, that without a true believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as he who died for our sins, no man hath any thing in him of true spiritual life, nor shall ever come to eternal life. Here are two questions arise from this verse and what follows.

1. Whether the flesh of Christ, that is, his human nature, giveth life, or all our life floweth from the Divine nature? That is a question between the Lutherans and the Calvinists; the former affirming, that there is a

quickenings virtue in the human nature of Christ by virtue of its personal union with the Divine nature. It is a curious question, serving to up great edification; those who have a mind to be satisfied in it, and to read what is said on either side, may read Tarnovius on this text, and Zanchy, in his book De Incarnatione, p. 540.

2. The other is a question between the papists and us, Whether this and the following verses spake any thing about the eating of the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ in the sacrament. All protestants deny it, both Lutherans and Calvinists. The papists most absurdly affirm it, to maintain their most absurd doctrine of transubstantiation.

The vanity of their assertion, as to this text, appears:

1. Because it was a year and upwards after this before the sacrament of the Lord's supper was instituted; and it is very absurd to think that our Saviour should speak of an institution not in being, his doctrine about it being what it was impossible people should understand. Nor:
2. Is the proposition true, of sacramental eating; for many may have never sacramentally eaten the flesh and drank the blood of Christ, and yet be spiritually alive, and be saved eternally. Besides that mere sacramental eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ will not give life; but the eating here spoken of giveth life, eternal life, Joh 6:56,58.
3. Besides, it is plain from Joh 6:29, that the eating here spoken of is believing; but it is plain, that eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ in the sacrament is not believing. By all which, it is apparent, that our Saviour saith nothing in this text of a sacramental eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

John 6:54

Ver. 54. *Hath eternal life;* he hath it in a sure and just right title, and he shall have it in a certain actual possession: and in order to it, he shall have a joyful resurrection unto it at the last day. This is no more than what our Saviour had often said, particularly Joh 3:18,36, admitting what was before said, that by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, is to

be meant believing in him; only here is a clearer discovery than was there, of the true object of that faith which justifieth, viz. a Christ crucified, for that is signified by the flesh and blood mentioned.

John 6:55

Ver. 55. I, as a Christ crucified, not merely considered as to my Divine nature, but as to both natures united in one person, and particularly with respect to my death and suffering, am indeed the food of souls; not a typical food, as manna was, but a true and real food, which nourisheth them to eternal life, and the most excellent food for them. In which sense Christ is called *the true light*, Joh 1:9, and *the true vine*, Joh 15:1.

John 6:56

Ver. 56. He that acknowledgeth and receiveth me, though he seeth me as a man, consisting of flesh and blood, and that particularly applies himself to me as dying for the sins of the world, and committeth his soul in all its concerns for life and salvation to me, is united to me, and I to him: he is united to me by faith and love, Eph 3:17 1Jo 3:23,24 4:16; and I am united to him by a mutual love, Joh 14:23, and by my Holy Spirit. As our bread and meat, which we are nourished by, doth not dwell in us, and nourish, unless we eat it; so neither doth Christ do good to any soul, unless such a soul as by faith receiveth him, and believeth in him. What is said in this verse maketh it evident that these verses cannot be understood of any sacramental eating, for it is not true that Christ dwelleth in every soul, or that every soul dwelleth and abideth in Christ, who doth sacramentally eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ. All unions are either natural or political unions. The strictest natural union is that of the head and members, the vine and the branches. The strictest political union is that of the husband and wife, Ge 2:24. The union betwixt Christ and a believing soul is set out by all these, Joh 15:1 Eph 5:30,31 Col 1:18. For the nature of this union, see divines who have wrote on this argument.

John 6:57

Ver. 57. God is often in holy writ called *the living God*, not only because he hath life in himself, but because he is the fountain of life to all his creatures. Christ here declareth his Father to be *the living Father* upon the latter account, as he is the author and fountain of all life.

And I live by the Father, saith he. Some translate it *for the Father*; as indeed the preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$, joined with an accusative case, (as it is here), doth most ordinarily signify; but not always, either in profane authors, or in the dialect of Scripture, as Mr 2:4 Mr 12:24 Joh 4:41,42. It seemeth here (as in those texts) to denote not so much the final as the efficient cause; and so better translated *by*, than *for* the Father: for Christ in this text seems to be giving his hearers an account how he came to be living bread; and to be in a capacity of giving life to the world. Saith he, I live by the Father, who by an eternal generation hath communicated to me all that life which is in him; and hath also communicated to me a quickening power, as I am Mediator, and sent by the Father into the world, to give life unto the world. Now look, as I have life in myself from him who is the fountain of life, so, according to the Father's ordination, *he that eateth me*, that is, by a true faith receives and closes with me, as Mediator, *he shall live by me* both spiritually and eternally.

John 6:58

Ver. 58. There is no more said in this verse than Joh 6:49-51: See Poole on "Joh 6:49", and following verses to Joh 6:51. From this whole discourse it is as evident as the light, that the justification of the soul depends upon believing; and the spiritual life of the soul floweth not from love or obedience to the works of the law, but from faith in Jesus Christ: though it be true, that true faith cannot be without works, and no man without obedience in sincerity (though not in perfection) to the will of God, shall ever obtain eternal life and salvation; but this obedience is not faith, nor doth it enter into the justification of the soul, but is the certain and necessary product of that faith which justifieth, which cannot be justified as true and saving without obedience. In all this discourse here is no mention of love, or obedience, as that to which the promises of life everlasting and a joyful resurrection are so often made; but only of eating Christ; eating his flesh and drinking his blood; eating him as the bread which came down from heaven, &c.; which are phrases no way expressive

of obedience to the works of the law, but of believing, Joh 6:47-49. The other texts of Scripture make it plain enough, that there can be no believing without obeying, nor any eternal life and salvation obtained without both.

John 6:59

Ver. 59. Though the state of the Jewish church at this time was corrupt enough, both as to matters of doctrine, worship, and discipline; yet it being constituted by his Father, he did not decline their assemblies either in the temple at Jerusalem, or in the places of the public worship, which were called synagogues, and were both in their cities and villages; for he had a liberty to teach in them, as appeareth both from this and many other texts; which he accordingly used, and usually spent the sabbath, or a great part of it, in those places and assemblies: yet by his presence he no way owned or declared his approbation of their corruptions, but frequently and freely reprov'd them; only because of those superstitious impertinencies (there being at this time no idolatry practised amongst them) he would not disown what was of God his Father among them. The same practice we shall observe amongst the apostles, till the Jews declared themselves hardened, drove them out from their synagogues, and spake evil of the way of the gospel before the multitude, Ac 19:9. Then indeed, and not before, *Paul separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus*. This also is further to be observed in the practice of our Saviour, that although he went to the temple and the synagogues, and there joined with the Jewish worship instituted by his Father, and reprov'd (as he had occasion) the corruptions they had introduced and superadded; yet he did not forbear himself teaching the gospel in other places besides the temple and the synagogues. The evangelist also notes, that the synagogue where he taught these things was in Capernaum, a city of Galilee, which in this was *exalted to heaven*, that it had not only the gospel preached in it, but by Christ himself; but for the contempt of the gospel is since *brought down to hell*, as much debased as it was before exalted, being long since reduced to a poor inconsiderable place, and at this day under the tyranny of the Mahometan prince.

John 6:60

Ver. 60. *His disciples;* his followers, not those that were his disciples indeed, but in name; for many followed him that did not believe in him; and many (in a sense) believed, to whom he did not commit himself, Joh 2:23,24. Now, many of these disciples, having heard these sayings, and being no way able to comprehend so great mysteries, nor having their eyes opened by the Spirit of illumination, said within themselves, These are sayings hard, or impossible, to be understood; who is able to hear or to understand them? or who is able to bear them?

John 6:61

Ver. 61. Christ, though clothed with our flesh, yet being also the eternal Son of God, knew by virtue of his Divine nature, personally united to the human nature, what was in the heart of man; hence is this phrase, *knew in himself;* which is opposed to a knowledge from the hearing of his own ears, as man heareth, whether more immediately from the sound of their words, (for we read of nothing they spake audibly), or from the relation of others, as what they had heard: he knew in himself their thoughts by his Divine prerogative and property of searching the hearts, and trying the reins, and discerning the thoughts of men afar off. Knowing their thoughts, he saith, Doth this give you occasion of stumbling?

John 6:62

Ver. 62. Our Saviour by these words may seem rather to increase than to abate their offence. That which stumbled them was, his calling himself the bread of life; his affirming that he came down from heaven; that he gave life to the world; that the way to obtain this life was eating his flesh and drinking his blood. How doth what he now tells them any way tend to satisfy them? He now speaks of ascending up to heaven, and asserts that he was there before.

Answer. The former assertions were no way to be justified but upon this foundation, that though he appeared now in the form and shape of a man, and was indeed the Son of man, yet he was also God, the eternal Son of

God: he therefore here plainly asserts, that he was in heaven before he appeared as the Son of man upon the earth; and descending from thence, did assume the form of a servant; and for a further proof of this, he refers them to what they were to see or hear (to know) within some few months after this discourse, (for this was after his third passover, which was to be the last year of his life), viz. that he should ascend up to heaven; which it is very probable that some of them did see with their bodily eyes; for he was in Galilee when he ascended, and Capernaum was a city of that province; and when he ascended, the men of Galilee stood gazing up to heaven after him, as appears from [Ac 1:11](#), and had a revelation, that they should see him so come again, and descend from heaven, as they had seen him go up.

John 6:63

Ver. 63. As it is not the bread or flesh that a man eateth for the sustenance of his animal or natural life, that doth the main work, but the soul of a man within him, which putteth forth its virtues and powers in causing the digestion, concoction, and alteration of it, without which it nourisheth not the body; so the flesh of Christ eaten carnally can be of no profit for the nourishment of the soul: nor can the flesh of Christ considered alone, or by any virtue in it, profit; it only profiteth by virtue of the Divine nature, which being personally united to the human nature, addeth all the virtue and merit to the sufferings and actions of the human nature; so as the human nature of Christ hath all its quickening virtue from the Divine nature. It is not therefore the carnal eating of my flesh that I intended, that is a very gross conception of yours; nor can any such thing as that do you good: but the words that I speak to you, they are spiritual, and such by the belief of which you may obtain a spiritual and eternal life; for by believing those words, and obeying them, you shall come to believe in me, which is that eating my flesh and drinking my blood which I intended, not any corporeal or carnal eating.

John 6:64

Ver. 64. I may say what I will to you; the Spirit quickeneth, but it doth not quicken all; it only quickeneth whomsoever it pleaseth. You understand not these things, but have most gross conceptions of sublime spiritual

things; the reason is, because you believe not: though some of them, questionless, did truly believe, yet the most did not; for we read, Joh 6:66, that many of them *went back, and walked no more with him*. And though faith be an inward, secret act of the soul, yet Christ knew, and from the beginning, who were believers, and who were not; nay, he had a particular knowledge of that disciple who was to betray him.

John 6:65

Ver. 65. He said this in Joh 6:44, See Poole on "Joh 6:44".

John 6:66

Ver. 66. His disciples at large, so called because they followed him, partly to hear what he would say, partly to see his miracles, followed him no more. Many professors and seeming disciples of Christ may draw back and fall from their profession, though none that truly receive Christ shall fall away, but be by the power of God preserved through faith unto salvation.

John 6:67

Ver. 67. It is probable that some stayed besides the twelve, for it is said only that many of his disciples turned back. Nor was our Saviour (who knew the hearts of all) ignorant what they would do; but he had a mind both to try them by this question, and also to convince them that there was a false brother amongst them, whose wickedness (though it lay hid from them) would in a short time discover itself.

John 6:68

Ver. 68. Peter, who is observed in the whole history of the gospel to have discovered the hottest and quickest spirit, and to have been first in answering questions propounded to the twelve, as Mt 16:16, &c., replies, *Lord, to whom shall we go?* &c., thereby teaching us under temptations to apostasy, first, to consider what we shall get by it, as the following words

teach us, that an abiding with Christ in a steady adherence to the truths of his gospel, is the best choice that we can make.

John 6:69

Ver. 69. *We believe* (saith Peter) *and are sure*, both from what we have heard from time, and from the miracles which we have seen wrought by thee, *that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*. The very words by which St. Matthew (Mt 16:16) expresses that noble confession of his, which our Saviour calleth the rock, upon which he would build his church. But notwithstanding this acknowledgment, which speaks the seeds of this faith now sown in the heart of Peter, and the hearts of the rest; yet whoso considereth the passages of the other evangelists after this, will see reason to believe, that their persuasion as to this was but faint, till Christ by his resurrection declared himself the Son of God with power.

John 6:70

Ver. 70. *Chosen*, not to eternal life, but to the great office of an apostle. I chose but twelve amongst you, Mt 10:1-4, and of those twelve one is *δισβολος*, an accuser, or informer; a name by which the devil (who is the grand accuser of the brethren) is ordinarily expressed in holy writ.

John 6:71

Ver. 71. This *he spake of Judas Iscariot*, (so called, as most think, from the name of the city where he lived), and to distinguish him from the other Judas, the brother of James, who wrote the Epistle that goeth by his name, and is a part of holy writ: for he *being one of the twelve*, chosen and sent out with the rest to preach the gospel, and empowered by miraculous operations to confirm the truth of it; yet it was he that was to betray Christ, as we largely read in all the evangelists' relation of the passion: to teach us, that no office to which God calleth us, no gifts (except those of special grace) with which God blesseth any man, can secure him of an eternal happy state; nothing can do that but a true saving faith in Jesus Christ, with the obedience of a holy life becoming the gospel of Christ.

John 7:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 7:1-10 Jesus, exhorted by his unbelieving kinsmen to show

himself at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, refuseth, but afterwards goeth up in secret.

Joh 7:11-13 The Jews seek him, and differ in their sentiments of him.

Joh 7:14-29 He teacheth in the temple.

Joh 7:30-32 Some are ready to lay hands on him, others believe;

the rulers send officers to apprehend him.

Joh 7:33-39 Christ foretells his departure to the Father, and

promises the Holy Spirit to believers.

Joh 7:40-44 Divers opinions concerning him.

Joh 7:45-53 The officers, struck with his discourse, return

without him, and are rebuked by the Pharisees, who

chide with Nicodemus for taking his part.

Ver. 1. After the third passover, which happened after our Saviour had entered upon his public ministry, of which we read, Joh 5:1, and all those things which we read of, Joh 5:1-6:71, done by our Saviour, both at the feast at Jerusalem, Joh 5:1-47 and after he went into Galilee, Joh 6:1, and had made that excellent discourse, of which we had a large account, Joh 6:1-71; Jesus continued still to converse in Galilee, where he was; for he would not go into Judea, nor converse there, *because the Jews*, for the causes mentioned Joh 5:18, *sought to kill him*. They had two things (as appeareth from thence) against him:

1. His violation of the sabbath (as they thought) by healing him that lay at

the pool of Bethesda.

2. His making himself equal with the Father.

John 7:2

Ver. 2. *The feast of tabernacles* was a feast which God ordained the Jews to keep the fifteenth day of the seventh month, (which some make to answer our September, others our October), Le 23:34,39, after they had gathered in the fruits of the land. It was to be kept seven days, the first and last of which days were to be kept as sabbaths; they were all the seven days to dwell in tents, or booths, in remembrance of the forty years they so dwelt in the wilderness, passing from Egypt to Canaan, as we read there, Le 23:43. Now this festival was near at hand; so as we must understand the things following to have happened about the September or October before Christ's suffering, which was at the next passover; that is, the March or April following, as we count the months.

John 7:3

Ver. 3. *His brethren;* his friends and kindred; See Poole on "Mt 12:47". See Poole on "Mt 12:48"; either such as did believe in him, or such as did not believe; for, Joh 7:5, all of them did not believe in him; would have him leave Galilee, which was the far more obscure and ignoble part of the country, and go into Judea, which was the more noble and famous province; that those who in that province followed him, might also see the miracles which he wrought.

John 7:4

Ver. 4. The things which thou doest, thou doest out of a desire by them to be made known, and to spread thy own fame and glory: for this, Galilee is not a proper place, because it is an obscure part in the country. The phrase which we translate *to be known*, is in the Greek εν παρρησια ειναι. The usage of it here seemeth to be something different from the use of it in other places of holy writ. It sometimes signifies confidence and security;

and we translate it boldness, Ac 13:46 26:26 28:31 Php 1:20 Heb 3:6 10:19. But this cannot be the sense of this text; for it were no sense to read it, seeketh to be known boldly, confidently, or securely. Sometimes we translate it *openly*, as in this text, and Joh 11:54 Col 2:15. It sometimes signifieth a freedom of speech, Ac 2:29 4:13 2Co 7:4. Sometimes it signifieth clearness and plainness of speech, Joh 10:24 Joh 11:14. Sometimes it signifieth a speaking in public meetings, as in Mr 8:32 Joh 18:20. Dr. Hammond notes, that it also sometimes signifies to speak with authority, Ac 4:29,31 Eph 6:19. Certainly the word in its primary signification signifieth a freedom and boldness of speech; which freedom and boldness is necessary to him that speaketh openly, and in public meetings; and is advantaged by the authority which any man hath to speak: hence in a secondary sense it may signify both to speak with authority, and also to speak in public assemblies; and this last I take to be here signified. It is (as our Saviour's friends tell him) both against reason, and the ordinary course of the world, for men desirous of opportunities to speak boldly and freely in public assemblies, to keep themselves in obscure places, where are no such public assemblies. They therefore advise him, that if indeed he wrought these miraculous operations, and were able to produce such effects, he would not bury up himself and his reputation in such a hole as Galilee, but show himself to the more noted and famous part of the world, which was, as to that part of the world, Jerusalem, and at the feast now, where multitudes of the people would be to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

John 7:5

Ver. 5. Not all his own friends and kindred; he came not only among his own countrymen, but among his own relations, and they received him not; or if they had some opinion of him, and some little hopes concerning him, yet they did not believe as they ought to have believed. Certainly there cannot be a greater proof and demonstration that faith is not of ourselves, nor a thing in our own power, no, not with all the external aids of gospel doctrine and arguments, than is in this text. We cannot imagine but our Lord's brethren were willing enough to have believed in Christ as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; the very honour of their family would have so far inclined them. It is impossible that they, or any others, should have had greater external means, aids, and assistances for their faith, than

Christ's preaching amongst them, and confirming his doctrine by miraculous operations before them; if now they had a power in their own wills, to have looked upon Christ as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, and accordingly to have received and embraced him, what was the matter they believed not, or as yet at least they believed not in him?

John 7:6

Ver. 6. *My time is not yet come;* the time of my death, say some; of my manifestation to the world, say others: but questionless our Saviour intends no more than his time for going up to this feast, for we shall read that he did go up afterward; but, saith he, as yet I cannot go up.

Your time is alway ready; you may go when you please: and this he further openeth, saying, (See Joh 7:7).

John 7:7

Ver. 7. By *the world,* our Saviour plainly understandeth the men of the world; men not regenerated, renewed, and sanctified. These men, saith he, *cannot* as yet *hate you.* There was a time afterward when this part of the world hated all the disciples of Christ, as Christ foretold, Joh 15:18; but that was after the doctrine of the gospel was more preached, and made known to the world by the preaching of the apostles: and therefore Christ saith (in that place) that it hated him before it hated them. Christ first published the doctrine of the gospel, and so became the first object of the world's hatred on that account. These his brethren were not concerned (that we read of) at this time in the publication of it, nor had any occasion to make themselves known and odious to the world upon that account; therefore he saith, *The world* (the wicked Jews, here so called) could not be reasonably imagined to have any spite or malignity to them.

But, saith he, *me it hateth:* that is apparent from what we met with Joh 5:18. But this was not for any fault in Christ, but only for his preaching the doctrine of the gospel, and free reproving them for the evil of their works, the corruption of their doctrine, and the errors of their life and conversation.

John 7:8

Ver. 8. *Go ye up unto this feast;* let not my forbearance to go up hinder your going up according to the law.

I go not up yet unto this feast; I have some particular reasons why as yet I will not go to be there at the beginning of it.

For my time is not yet full come; I know my time to go, when it will be most safe and proper for me. I shall be there some time during the feast, but my time is not yet come; I shall not be there at the beginning of it. It appeareth that he came not into the temple till about the middle of it, Joh 7:14, which was three or four days after it was began, for it held seven days, Le 23:34. Or his time was not come, because he designed to go very privately without any notice taken of his coming; which must have been, if he had at that time gone up with his kindred and acquaintance.

John 7:9

Ver. 9. He let them take their journey to Jerusalem to the feast without him, and himself still abode in Galilee.

John 7:10

Ver. 10. He went up to show his obedience to his Father's commands, Ex 23:17. The feast of tabernacles was the same with the feast of ingathering in the end of the year, when they had gathered their labours out of the field, mentioned Ex 23:16; and that was one of those three times (as appears from that chapter) when all the males in Israel were to appear before the Lord, Joh 7:17. Christ being born under the law, showeth a punctual obedience to it; and therefore, in obedience to it, he would go up: but his wisdom dwelt with prudence; and therefore he did not go up openly, not in any crowd of company, so as a public notice could be taken of him; but secretly, to teach us that we are not so strictly tied up to ritual precepts, which concern only rites and circumstances of worship, that we

may not abate them sometimes for the performance of moral duties. It was a moral duty incumbent upon our Saviour to preserve himself, with what wisdom and prudence he could, from the rage of his enemies, till his time should fully come to yield up himself to their rage; which was the reason why he, who went up now singly, without any company, when he went up to the last passover, where he was to suffer, went up with all imaginable boldness and alacrity, leading the way, to their amazement, Mr 10:32.

John 7:11

Ver. 11. Our Saviour's constant going up to the Jewish feasts, made the rulers of the Jews, who sought to slay him at the feast of the passover, Joh 5:18, (which was but six months before this), because he had violated the sabbath, (as they interpreted his healing the impotent man on that day, and bidding him take up his bed and walk), and because he had made himself equal with God his Father; seek him the first days of the feast, speaking of him with great contempt and slight.

John 7:12

Ver. 12. Our Saviour's constant attendance at these public festivals, did not only create an expectation of his being there amongst his enemies, who therefore sought him there, that they might destroy him; but amongst the generality of the people, who had very different opinions about him. Some having heard his doctrine, and hearing nothing from him but what was good and spiritual, tending to show them the way of holiness, and the true path way to eternal life and happiness, concluded that he was a good man; others said he was a mere impostor, one that deceived and cheated the more ignorant common people.

John 7:13

Ver. 13. Though many, both of the Galilaeans, among whom he had conversed, and of the common people of Judea, had a very good opinion of Christ, yet the rulers of the Jews were in such a rage against him, that his friends durst not freely discourse their thoughts concerning him.

John 7:14

Ver. 14. About the third or fourth day of the feast (which continued seven days) our Lord, being (as was said before) come up privately and by stealth, as it were, to Jerusalem, first appears in the temple preaching. What our Saviour at this time discoursed about the evangelist doth not tell us; but doubtless it was the things of the kingdom of God, which were the usual themes or arguments of his discourse, as we may also understand by the latter part of it. Our Lord probably deferred his preaching to the middle of the feast, partly, because the Pharisees' heat in hunting after him was now a little over; and that there might be a fuller concourse of people to hear him.

John 7:15

Ver. 15. Having never sat as a constant disciple at the feet of any of the Jewish doctors, nor been educated in their schools of the prophets, they wonder how he should come by such knowledge of the law of God, as he discovered in his discourses; wherein he made it appear, that he did not only know the letter of the law, but the more mysterious sense of it, the great mysteries of the kingdom of God.

John 7:16

Ver. 16. *My doctrine is not mine,* considering me as the Son of man; not taught, or to be taught, me by men; not learned out of books, or by the precepts of men; not invented by me; but it is mine as it is the doctrine of the Father that sent me, and I and my Father both are one, and agree in one, 1Jo 5:7,8; and being so, there was no such need that Christ should be learned, in their sense, viz. at the feet of their doctors, and in their schools. But enthusiasts vainly argue from hence, that there is no need of human learning for him who is to be a preacher of the gospel; for Christ was not mere man, but one in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. No such thing will follow from the prophesying of Amos, who was a herdsman, or the apostles, who were fishermen; much less from the

preaching of Christ. We must distinguish betwixt an extraordinary and an ordinary calling. And though it be truth, that the ministers of the gospel preach doctrine which is not theirs, but his that sent them; yet it doth not follow, that they must come by the knowledge of this doctrine in the same manner that Christ did, who was in the bosom of the Father, and knew his will, and came from him to communicate it to the world; nor yet in the same manner that the prophets and the apostles came to the knowledge of it, as by Christ's vocal instruction. So also by the influence of the Holy Spirit upon them in the days of Pentecost, which abode upon them.

John 7:17

Ver. 17. Here our Saviour seemeth to obviate an objection which the Jews would make, viz. How they should know that the doctrine which he preached was the doctrine of God? He indeed said so, but how should they have any evidence of it? How could he make it appear to them to be of God?

If any man (saith our Saviour) *will do his will, &c.;* that is, If any man hath a heart truly disposed to know and embrace whatsoever shall be revealed to him to be the will of God, how contrary soever it be to the interest of his own lusts, and ready to do it in all things, and live according to the prescript and revelation of it, having a serious purpose of heart to obey God in every thing; if he seeketh for truth seriously, and in the fear of the Lord, laying aside all wrath, malice, hatred, and any corrupt passions or affections; God will reveal the truth to him, so as he shall know the doctrine that is of God; and that I do not speak of or from myself, but by authority from my Father. Now, from hence indeed followeth, that corrupt affections, passions, and prejudices, and an ill life, may prejudice, yea, and will prejudice, men from receiving of the free grace of God, spiritual illuminations, and the gift of faith; so as men that give way to such prejudices, or nourish such passions, or live such lives, shall be left of God to their native blindness, and to strong delusions, and not discern the truth in the light that openly shineth in their faces. But from hence it will not follow, that a moral life, and a study of and seeking after truth, are the cause of faith, or effective of it, with the working of our own will.

John 7:18

Ver. 18. Here our Saviour giveth them another note, by which they might know that his doctrine was of God, because he spake not of himself, nor sought his own glory in what he delivered. No man doth an action of and from himself, but he maketh himself the end of his action; for to what purpose should a man devise and broach new notions, but for some selfish advantage, that he may get some profit, or some honour and applause from men? But if a man acts as servant to another, and seeketh only the honour and applause of another, he is true, and cannot be presumed to have spoken of and from himself, but of and from him whose honour and glory he seeketh to advance; and in reason ought to be judged sincere and faithful in the execution of the trust committed to him, and to be without fraud and deceit, having no unrighteousness in him; there being no just cause to be presumed which should move him to speak any thing that is false. Hence also may be learned a good rule or direction, which divines ordinarily make use of to help us to judge of the truth of doctrines. Those doctrines which most tend to the advancing the honour and glory of God, and least to the advancement of the creature, those are most likely to be of God. And this also much tendeth to confirm the reputation of holy writ, and the penmen of it; for it is manifest that the penmen of it sought not their own glory in their writings, but the honour and glory of God, taking all shame to themselves.

John 7:19

Ver. 19. Moses was God's instrument in delivering his law to the people, Ex 24:3 De 33:4; a law which none of them exactly kept, but daily broke. Why do you (saith our Saviour) make it such a capital crime (suppose you were not in an error, but I had in this one point of the sabbath violated the law) in me to break the law, that you for it would have my blood? How cometh it to be a more heinous offence in me to break the law in one thing, than it is in you, who violate it in so many things? Or, do not you think it a capital crime maliciously to go about to destroy an innocent person? Is not that a greater breach, think you, of the sixth commandment, than what I have done is of the fourth? Supposing that had been any breach of the law at all, which indeed it was not.

John 7:20

Ver. 20. The Jews had an opinion, that whosoever was beside himself, and talked distractedly, was influenced with an evil spirit; so as, *Thou hast a devil*, is no more than, Thou art mad; unless we will take the phrase as a mere term of reproach, such as we ordinarily hear at this day from some men in their passions, when they hear any speak what is false, and hath no congruity with truth, according to their apprehensions, saying, The devil is in you: the former is the milder interpretation, though in that was sin enough, considering who it is that spake.

Who goeth about to kill thee? It is very probable that the common people (to whom our Saviour was now speaking) knew nothing of the design of their rulers, mentioned Joh 5:18, so spake this innocently, (though in their passion), having no such design in their hearts; but they ought not so peremptorily to have denied what our Saviour positively affirmed, who knew the designs and counsels of all men's hearts, though they knew them not.

John 7:21

Ver. 21. By the one miracle it is plain, by what followeth, that he meaneth healing the man who lay at the pool of Bethesda; at this, he saith, they marvelled, by which is to be understood offended, for so it is expounded by $\chiολατε$, Joh 7:23; and to this sense is our Saviour's subsequent discourse.

John 7:22

Ver. 22. The particule *therefore*, or, for this, $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron$, maketh in this verse a great difficulty, what the meaning of it should be. The most probable account of it is, that it belongeth to the former verse, which should end thus, *and ye all marvel for this*. This indeed maketh all plain; otherwise it is very hard to give an account what force it can have, if we consider it as a note of a cause.

Moses gave you circumcision, that is, a law about circumcision; yet that law had not its rise from Moses: the law was given to your father Abraham, Ge 17:10, long before Moses's time. In obedience to that law, you circumcise a male child, or a proselyte, that is, a man grown, on the sabbath day.

John 7:23

Ver. 23. The strength of this whole argument seemeth to be this: If a ritual law (such was that for observation of the sabbath, given in Mount Sinai, Ex 20:1-17) may give place to another ritual law which is more ancient, (such was that of circumcision, given to Abraham long before), much more ought it to give place to a law of nature written in every man's heart, viz. that it is our duty to help those that are in great degrees of misery and affliction; which is what I paid obedience to in curing the impotent man that lay at the pool of Bethesda. Do you yield this in your daily practice, that a man may be circumcised, yea, and ought to be circumcised, on the eighth day, though it happeneth to be the sabbath day; and not to do it were a violation of the law of Moses about circumcision, which was a law given you by Moses, though, before him, to Abraham also? What reason then have you to be angry with me, who on the sabbath day have only healed a man, and made him *every whit whole*? That is, (as some think), I have not only cured him as to his body, but as to his soul; but that hardly seemeth probable; for if it were so, the Jews could have no evidence of the spiritual cure. Others therefore think that the term $\text{o\lambda\omicron\nu\ \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu}$, signifieth no more than perfectly, or completely whole, as to his body.

John 7:24

Ver. 24. Do not judge persons, and condemn me for what I have done, merely out of your hatred, prejudice, and malice against me. Or, do not judge according to the first appearance of this fact. It looketh to you as a violation of the sabbath; it is not indeed so, but the performance of a duty greater than that of sanctifying the sabbath is. Judge righteously, and do not condemn in me what you yourselves do in other causes, because of your hatred to and prejudice against me; nor condemn an action which is in itself a righteous action, and not deserving condemnation.

John 7:25

Ver. 25. Those who here speak are said to be of Jerusalem, (probably citizens), who knew more of the designs and counsels of the chief priests and elders, than those who said before, Joh 7:20, *Thou hast a devil: who seeketh to kill thee?*

John 7:26

Ver. 26. The first search being over, it is probable that the rulers had not heard that Christ was come up to the feast; this made the people think that they had some knowledge that he was the Messiah, otherwise they would have taken some course to have restrained his so free and open discoursing: but we shall in the latter part of this chapter find that they were mistaken; for as soon as they heard where he was, and what he was doing, they used all means they could to apprehend him.

John 7:27

Ver. 27. *We know this man whence he is;* we know he is of Nazareth, and that Joseph is his reputed father. They also knew whence the Messiah was to come, that he was to be of the family of David, of the tribe of Judah, of the town of Bethlehem: the chief priests and scribes answered Herod to that purpose, without the least hesitation, Mt 2:5,6, but they had no revelation to guide them to know of what particular family he should be: thus this verse is easily reconciled to Joh 7:42. Others think that they speak of the second manifestation of Christ. They had a tradition, which was bottomed on holy writ, That he was to come out of Bethlehem: but then they had another tradition, that he should be taken away from thence, and hidden for some years, and then again appear as a person unknown whence he came. Which opinion, say some, was bottomed on the revelations of the Old Testament concerning a double regeneration of Christ, Isa 53:8, *Who shall declare his generation?* and Mic 5:2; the one of which is to be understood of his eternal generation, which none can declare; the other, as to the generation of his human nature. But the Jews not understanding that

the Messiah was to be God man, understood both of his human nature; which made them fancy, that though he was to be born at Bethlehem, according to Mic 5:2, yet he was to be carried away for some years some where; so as when he came to appear to the world, none should know whence he came, but he should appear as a man dropped down from heaven. Now Christ having been offered in the temple at his mother's purification, went back again with his parents, Lu 2:39, came to Nazareth, and ordinarily went up to Jerusalem; there he was found disputing with the doctors, Joh 7:46; and at last we find him resting with his parents at Nazareth, and being subject to them; after which we read no more of him, till he came to John to be baptized: so as the Jews had known and observed the whole course of Christ's life.

John 7:28

Ver. 28. *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am;* you might have known me by the doctrine which I have taught, and the miracles which I have wrought among you; and you had known me, if you had not shut your eyes against the light, which shone in your face: or, you say and think that you know me. Others think that it is an irony, or as a question, Do you know me so well? If you did, you would know that I came not of myself, but was sent by my Father; and he that sent me is truth itself: but you know not the Father, and therefore cannot know me as indeed I am.

John 7:29

Ver. 29. *I know him,* so as no man else knoweth him, Mt 11:27; I know his essence, his will, his counsels, his laws; *for I am from him* by an eternal generation, his only begotten Son; and I am sent by him, as the Mediator and Saviour of the world, to declare and to execute his will and pleasure, as to man's salvation.

John 7:30

Ver. 30. By this time the news was come to the sanhedrim, the great court of the Jews, to whom belonged the cognizance of church affairs, false

prophets, blasphemy, violation of the sabbath, &c.: they took counsel, and used endeavours to apprehend him; or it may be, some of the ruder sort of people that were his enemies used some such endeavours, but not with any effect; for by the mighty providence of God, who had set the time when Christ should suffer, till that hour was come, mentioned also Joh 8:20 12:23, there was such a restraint upon the rage of the rabble, yea, (as we shall hereafter hear), upon the spirits of the officers, who were sent from the sanhedrim to apprehend him, that they had no power to lay hold upon him. Men shall do us no hurt, till God's time comes. A sparrow falls not to the ground without the will of our Father.

John 7:31

Ver. 31. *And many of the people believed on him;* not as the true Messias; for the next words let us know, they did not believe him to be the Christ, but looked for him to come; but they gave credit to him as a great prophet sent from God; and doubted whether the miracles which he wrought were not as many and as great as ever the Messiah would do when he came. For though John reports but a few miracles wrought by Christ, yet they were such as required a Divine power to produce; such as turning the water into wine, multiplying the loaves, raising Lazarus from the dead, &c. And John tells us, Joh 20:30 Joh 21:25, that he did many more works than he hath recorded in this book; and many more are recorded by the other three evangelists. From hence may be observed the falsehood of the later Jews, who deny that the Messiah is to work any miracles; for it is apparent from hence, that they had in our Saviour's time a general expectation that great miracles should be done by the Messiah; and their expectation was truly founded upon Isa 35:5,6, as appeareth by Mt 11:5.

John 7:32

Ver. 32. *Murmured* here is taken in a different sense from what it was before, and signifieth as much as whispered, or talked privately among themselves. The chief priests, who were afraid that their honour would abate amongst the people; and the Pharisees, who were afraid the credit of their traditions would be lost, if they suffered him to go on; and being more especially troubled for the miracles which he daily wrought, as Joh

11:47; they send messengers from their great court (kept at Jerusalem) to apprehend him.

John 7:33

Ver. 33. Whether Christ spake these words to the officers sent to apprehend him, or to the people in the temple, is not much material to be known: he by them plainly declareth, that all their endeavours against him were vain and foolish; for he should yet live with them six months, (this was in September or October, he died at the next passover, which was about six months after this), and then he should go and willingly lay down his life for the sins of the world, rise again from the dead, and ascend unto his Father who sent him into the world.

John 7:34

Ver. 34. Some think the meaning is, *Ye shall seek me* to execute your malice upon me, but to no purpose, for you *shall not find me*. Or, You shall seek me to destroy me in my church, and to root out my name; but to no purpose. But the most probable sense is this: You wicked Jews, that now contemn the means of grace by me offered to you, shall one day be in distress and calamity enough; and when you are so, then you will wish I were again amongst you; but I shall be ascended to my Father, and as deaf to your prayers as above the reach of your malice. There is much the same thing said in Mt 23:39. That he here speaketh of his ascension is plain from Joh 13:33. He speaketh of heaven as a place where he was at that time, for so he was as to his Divine nature. It is $\upsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\omega$, whither I go, which makes some think it should not here be $\epsilon\iota\mu\iota$, but $\epsilon\iota\mu\iota$, *vado*. But others reject it, because it is a poetical word, hardly used in the New Testament.

John 7:35

Ver. 35. The Jews, not at all believing the Divine nature of Christ, notwithstanding all that Christ had said, and all the miracles he had wrought, are at a mighty loss to conclude what our Saviour spake of, and

whither he would go; they thought he could go no where in the land of Jewry, but they should hear of him, and be able to come where he was; they conclude therefore that he would go into some pagan country. In the Greek it is, Will he go into the dispersion of the Grecians? There were two most famous dispersions, of which we read in history. The first was of the Jews, of which we read in sacred history, in the captivities of Assyria, whither the ten tribes were carried, 2Ki 17:6; and Babylon, whither the two tribes were carried, 2Ki 24:14. And that of the Grecians by the Macedonians; when also many of the Jews were dispersed by Alexander the Great, and his successors. Peter directeth his Epistle *to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, 1Pe 1:1. And James directs his Epistle *to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*. They fancy that our Saviour would go into some of these places, and preach; by which means the Gentiles would be taught the mysteries of the Jewish religion, which was what above all things they were impatient of hearing; and yet had reason from the prophecies of the Old Testament to fear, viz. their own rejection, and the receiving in of the Gentiles, which afterward came to pass, Ro 11:15.

John 7:36

Ver. 36. This saying stuck in their stomachs, and they knew not what sense to put upon it; owning nothing of the Divine nature of Christ.

John 7:37

Ver. 37. Our Saviour thinketh not fit to take any notice of their guess, whither he would go, nor replies any thing to it. The feast of tabernacles was to hold seven days, Le 23:34, in which they were to offer up burnt offerings, Le 23:36. The eighth day was to be kept as a sabbath; there was in it to be a holy convocation, no servile labour was to be done. Christ on that day discoursed again to the people, crying aloud, and publicly, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink*; that is, If any man stand in need of any spiritual good, righteousness, strength, comfort, &c., it is to be found in me; let him come to me, by faith acknowledging, receiving, and embracing me, as the Mediator and Saviour of the world, and he shall have from me whatsoever spiritual influence of grace he stand in need of. Those

who remember what our Saviour told the woman of Samaria, Joh 4:10,14, where he compared himself to *living water*, will easily understand this the sense of these words. The condition on our parts is expressed under the notion of thirsting; which we know is the natural appetite, craving some liquid thing to refresh the man under his drought; and it is expressive of an exceeding great passion, and so made use of both in the Old Testament and the New to signify a soul's passionate desire of spiritual things, Isa 55:1 Mt 5:6.

John 7:38

Ver. 38. We have had frequent occasion to open the term of believing on Christ. It may be doubted, whether those words, *as the Scripture hath said*, be to be referred to the first or latter part of the text. If to the former, they are words expressive of that faith to which the following promise is made, which is not any assent, or slighty credit given to the word; but such a faith as the Scripture hath spoken of, as that faith which is justifying and saving.

Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; the general sense of the promises, that his soul shall abound with all saving and comfortable influences of saving grace.

The *belly* signifieth the heart, that part of man which is called the heart being in the belly. So Job 15:35 Ps 40:8.

The flowing of *rivers of water*, signifieth the plenty of spiritual influences with which believers shall be supplied; whether joy, knowledge, spiritual gifts, or graces. If any ask, where the Scripture speaketh this? I answer, in all those promises we meet with in the Old Testament, about pouring out the Spirit.

John 7:39

Ver. 39. For the evangelist tells us, that this referred to the Spirit, which believers were to receive after that Christ should be ascended into heaven. Those scriptures, Isa 49:10 58:11 Zec 14:8, seem, among others, to be referred to in this promise of our Saviour.

John 7:40

Ver. 40. *The Prophet* mentioned De 18:15. Some think that the Jews expected an eminent prophet, besides Elias, to come before the Messiah; and Joh 1:21 would incline us to think so. But others say, it cannot be proved from their writers, that they had any expectations of any but Elias and the Messiah. But the words may be read as well, this is a prophet, as this is the prophet; and I think that is the true sense of them. A prophet had now for more than four hundred years been a great rarity amongst them, they having had none but John the Baptist who had such a repute.

John 7:41

Ver. 41. The people were divided in their opinions about Christ. Some of them were very well inclined to believe that he was the promised Messiah; but they stumbled at the country where alone they took notice of him. For though he came not out of Galilee, but was born in Bethlehem, Lu 2:4, according to the prophecy of him, Mic 5:2, suitable to which was their tradition, Mt 2:5; yet they had seen nothing of this, though possibly they had heard some relation of it, it being two and thirty years since his birth: but he was ordinarily called Jesus of Nazareth, and of Galilee, there he had lived and been educated; so as they knew no better, probably, than that he came out of Galilee, which was contrary to the prophecy, Mic 5:2.

John 7:42

Ver. 42. The Scriptures of the Old Testament had both described the family from whence the Messiah was to arise, viz. the family of David, Ps 132:11, and the town, which was Bethlehem, Mic 5:2; which was David's father's town, where he lived also, till God called him out to the kingdom, 1Sa 17:15 20:6.

John 7:43

Ver. 43. A division as to their opinions about him, as was before expressed.

John 7:44

Ver. 44. There were some that had an ill opinion of Christ, and put on the officers that came for the purpose to apprehend him; but there was none so hardy as to do it.

John 7:45

Ver. 45. Probably the officers, Christ being amongst a multitude of the people that had a high opinion of him, durst not adventure to apprehend him. Some of them, as appeareth from what follows, were astonished at his doctrine; all of them agreed to return to their masters without him; at which they are angry, and ask them how it came to pass that they did not execute their commands, in bringing Christ before them as a malefactor, to answer what they should lay to his charge.

John 7:46

Ver. 46. With so much authority, evidence of truth, &c. Yet they did not cordially believe in Christ; being under the power of carnal and worldly affection, which only supernatural special grace could subdue. These were some of those, in whom the prophecy of Christ, Isa 11:4, was to be fulfilled—*He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.* The word of the Lord doth often restrain, astonish, and amaze those on whom it hath no powerful effect to eternal life and salvation. So it was with these poor officers.

John 7:47

Ver. 47. You, who have us not only for your masters, whose commands you ought not to dispute, but to execute; but for your teachers also, from whom you might have learned better doctrine; are you seduced? For so

wicked men count all who embrace not their notions, and follow not their ways.

John 7:48

Ver. 48. You ought to be ruled by us, and guided by us, who are your rulers, and your teachers: so early did the doctrine of implicit faith and obedience creep into the world; which is indeed to suppose an infallibility in teachers and rulers; to whom indeed we owe all imaginable reverence, but we must live by our own faith. And though the Jews were bound to do according to the sentence that the priests and Levites in Jerusalem should show them, De 17:10,11; yet it must be *the sentence of the law*, and it was in civil matters, as appeareth by Joh 7:8, controversies *between blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke*.

John 7:49

Ver. 49. Out of the great pride of their hearts they vilify the people, as not learned in the law, and so were cursed, contemptible, and not to be regarded, as to their judgment and sentiments.

John 7:50

Ver. 50. Of Nicodemus we read, and of his coming by night to Jesus, Joh 3:1,2. He now, being one of this great court, stands up to speak for Christ, yet faintly, or at least very prudently and warily. He saith no more for him than he ought to have spoken for the greatest malefactor, viz.

John 7:51

Ver. 51. That no law of God or nature condemneth any man before they had heard him speak, or had what he did deposed by witnesses before them, that they might know what he did.

John 7:52

Ver. 52. *Art thou also of Galilee;* not that they thought Nicodemus was a Galilean; they knew him well enough; but they take up this as a term of reproach against him, for that he would offer to speak one word (though never so just) on the behalf of one against whom they had such a perfect hatred.

Search (say they) the Scriptures, *and look* if ever there came a prophet out of Galilee. Suppose this had been truth; yet,

1. What did this concern our Saviour? Who was not born in Galilee, but in Judea, in Bethlehem, the city of David, Lu 2:4.
2. Could not God when he pleased influence one of Galilee with the Spirit of prophecy? But,
3. Neither was it true; for Nahum and Jonah were both Galilaeans, 2Ki 14:25, compared with Jos 19:13, (for the tribe of Zebulun had their lot in Galilee), Isa 9:1.

John 7:53

Ver. 53. As little as Nicodemus said for Christ, it put a stop to their further proceedings against Christ at present. Some think that the party of the Sadducees in the council, who valued not the Pharisees' rites and traditions, took part with Nicodemus; so as by the overruling hand of God Christ at this time escaped their wicked counsels against him. So much is certain; but what parties in the council concurred in it, is uncertain.

John 8:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 8:1-11 Christ letteth go uncondemned the woman taken in adultery.

Joh 8:12-30 He declareth himself to be the light of the world,

and justifieth his doctrine against the Pharisees.

Joh 8:31-32 He promises freedom through knowledge of the truth

to those Jews who believed on him,
Joh 8:33-47 confutes their vain boast of being Abraham's seed,

and the children of God,
Joh 8:48-58 answereth their reviling by showing his authority and

dignity,
Joh 8:59 and by miracle rescueth himself from their attempts

to stone him.

Ver. 1. A mountain within less than two miles of Jerusalem, whether our Saviour, when he was at Jerusalem, was wont often to withdraw, for privacy and devotion, Mt 24:3 26:30 Lu 21:37 22:39.

John 8:2

Ver. 2. So at our Lord's last passover Luke notes, Lu 21:38, that *all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him*. Our Saviour's early going into the temple to teach, and the people's diligence in coming so early to him to hear, ought to check our slothfulness in sacred business. Multitudes of people came to him; for so the universal particle *all* must be expounded in a multitude of Scriptures.

He, after the manner of the Jewish teachers, *sat down, and taught them*. Of this custom of theirs, for their doctors, while they taught, to sit down, we have had occasion to speak before.

John 8:3

Ver. 3. There were (as they say) three sorts of scribes amongst the Jews. The first were secretaries to princes and great men; so Sheva was scribe to David, 2Sa 20:25. A second sort were such as we call scribes, or public notaries, who made instruments for people, and were employed in their

more private bargains and contracts. Neither of these seem to have been of authority enough to have done this act; and besides, the Pharisees being joined with them makes it evident, that these scribes were those who expounded the law in the temple and in the synagogues, and are therefore called lawyers. They are often joined with the Pharisees in our Saviour's discourses, Mt 23:13-15, &c. And we find them often joining with them in their discourses and actions, tending to entrap our Saviour: such was their design at this time.

John 8:4

Ver. 4. They bring to our Saviour a woman taken in the act of adultery, and set her before him.

John 8:5

Ver. 5. Moses in the law, Le 20:10, commanded that such malefactors should be put to death; but we read of no law commanding this kind of death. And their rule was, that when the law had set no kind of death for an offence, there the mildest kind of death was to be their punishment, which they counted strangling to be. But they ordinarily entitled Moses to their traditional additions to the law; and death being commanded by the law, as the punishment of such offenders, they took themselves to be at liberty to determine the kind of death, as prudence and reason of state ruled them; so as, probably, they, seeing that that sin grew very frequent amongst them, appointed stoning to be the kind of death such malefactors should be put to. The manner of which we are told was this: The guilty person was to be carried up to some high place, and thrown down from thence headlong by such as witnessed against him; then they threw stones at him till they had killed him, if not killed by the fall; or covered him, if he were dead. This they tell our Saviour Moses commanded, because he had commanded in the general, that such a person should die, and their sanhedrim had determined this particular death to such malefactors. But they would know what our Saviour said to this.

John 8:6

Ver. 6. Their design was from his answer to take some colourable pretence to accuse, and either to discredit him with the people, or to expose him to the displeasure of the superior powers. If he had directed to send her to be punished by the Roman governors, who administered justice in capital causes, the people would be fired with indignation; for they looked upon them as invaders of the rights of government that belonged to the Israelites. If he had advised them to put her to death by their own power, they would have accused him of sedition, as an enemy of the Roman authority. If he had dismissed her as not worthy of death, they would have accused him to the sanhedrim, as an infringer of the law of Moses, as a favourer of dissoluteness, an enemy to civil society, and worthy of universal hatred. This malicious design, so craftily concerted, our Saviour easily discovered and defeated; whereas they thought it would require his most attentive consideration to extricate himself from the snare. He seemed not at all to attend to what they said, but, stooping down, wrote on the ground: what he wrote, or how he could write upon the floor of the temple, (which was of stone), are very idle questions; the first not possible to be resolved, the second impertinent; for it is not said, that he made any impression upon the ground, though it be said, he wrote upon it. It appeareth plainly to have been but a divertive action, by which our Saviour signified that he gave no ear to them.

John 8:7

Ver. 7. They will not let our Saviour alone, but importune him for an answer. He saith, *He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her.* The law of God was, De 17:7, that in the execution of malefactors, *The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death.* In reason those who are zealous for the punishment of others, should neither be guilty of the same, nor of greater crimes, themselves. By this saying of our Saviour, we must not understand it the will of God, that those who are magistrates, and employed in executing the Lord's vengeance on malefactors, should themselves be free from all guilt, for then no justice should be done. The vengeance is God's, not theirs; it is the law of God which they execute. He only by this minds them of that compassion which ought to be found in persons prosecuting others justly, that they may

execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and such moderation as the law will allow them, considering that they are not free from guilt, but as obnoxious to the justice of God for other sins, as those poor creatures whom God hath suffered to fall into sins punishable by human judges.

John 8:8

Ver. 8. When our Saviour had said this, he returneth to his former posture and action, (it being not a thing wherein he was concerned, who was not sent into the world to be a secular judge), as not at all regarding them.

John 8:9

Ver. 9. This was an age of very great corruption as to men's lives and manners, as well as to doctrine, and corruption of worship; and as other enormities of life were very common and ordinary amongst them, so it is very probable were adulteries, and that their rulers and teachers were not without great guilt. Now, see the power of conscience, when set on work by God; these accusers' consciences were to them as a thousand witnesses; they were reprov'd and convicted by them, and not able to stand under the reflections of them, or to say any thing in answer to what our Saviour had said: they went away one after another; and possibly it is particularly noted that they began *at the eldest*, because the consciences of the eldest of them charged them more deeply for more and greater sins. Jesus was left not wholly alone, for the next words tell us, that the woman was still left standing in the midst; and no doubt but his apostles were there, for they constantly attended him; and no doubt divers others were also there: but the meaning is, that he was by this means quit of the scribes' and Pharisees' company, who were gone out of shame, being thus convicted by their own consciences, which told them, that whatsoever this woman was, they were no fit accusers.

John 8:10

Ver. 10. The close of the former verse told us, that though the scribes and

Pharisees were gone, yet the woman was left in the midst, expecting Christ's sentence. Christ knew well enough that the scribes and Pharisees, this poor woman's accusers, were gone; but yet he acts warily, and calls for her accusers, and asks if no man had condemned her? Thereby intimating, that the law against adultery was a just law; and if the crime were proved against her, she deserved to die; but she must first be convicted, and condemned. He asks her, If she were condemned? For then he had nothing to say.

John 8:11

Ver. 11. She tells him, None had. He replies, Neither did he. He did not acquit her, for he was not to make void the law of God; nor did he condemn her: he was neither a witness in the case, nor yet a secular judge, to whom such judgments did belong; he was only to speak to her, as the Mediator and Saviour of man.

Go, I discharge thee, as being *coram non iudice*, before one who in my present capacity am no judge to hear this cause, and to give sentence in it.

Sin no more; whatever becometh of thee as to man's judgment, thou hast reason to fear the greater judgment of God, if thou goest on in a course of sin. Nor doth he say, Commit adultery no more; but, *sin no more.* No partial repentance or sorrow for any particular sin will suffice a penitent that hopes for any mercy from God; but a leaving off all sin, of what kind soever it be.

John 8:12

Ver. 12. *I am the light of the world;* this is what John the Baptist had said of Christ before, Joh 1:4,5, and what Christ saith of himself afterward, Joh 9:5. It was prophesied of him, that he should be *a light to the Gentiles*, and God's *salvation to the ends of the earth*, Isa 46:6. And old Simeon saith of him, Lu 2:32, that he was to be *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel*. Light is a thing glorious in itself, and communicative of itself unto others to guide them. So as Christ is most aptly compared to light, and spoken of under that notion; as for his own

innate glory, so for the communicativeness of himself to creatures; which latter appeareth to be chiefly here intended: for he saith, that he who followed him, believing his doctrine, and obeying his precepts, living according to his direction and his example, should not be at a loss how to guide himself, nor remain in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and spiritual death; but should have that light which bringeth life along with it, and is sufficient to guide a man in all the works of a spiritual life, and at last bring him to life eternal.

John 8:13

Ver. 13. It was a known rule of law, that none ought to be believed upon a testimony given to himself: this is that they object to our Saviour, that though he spake great things of himself, yet he was not to be believed in his own cause.

John 8:14

Ver. 14. There is a seeming difficulty to reconcile the words of our Saviour, Joh 5:31, *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true*, and his assertion here, *Though I bear record of myself, my record is true*: but the resolution of it is clear by considering that he speaks in the former chapter of his own single testimony with respect to them, as not of sufficient validity to authorize his Divine vocation, according to the rule of their law, that required a double testimony for confirmation of things; but here he speaks of the verity of it in itself.

For I know whence I came, and whither I go; that is, I know from whom I have received my commission, (though secret to the world), even from the Father: and yet, after the accomplishing of my embassy for his honour, I shall return to heaven, and be glorified with the glory I had with him before the world was, Joh 17:5. The reason alleged implies his being the Son of God; and his Father's entire approbation of his office, and fidelity in the discharge of it; and the concurrent testimony of the Father with him: therefore his record was authentic and true. But they did not believe his mission from heaven, nor that he was to ascend thither, and accordingly did not value his testimony.

John 8:15

Ver. 15. According to my outward appearance to you, so you judge of me; or, according to your own passions, and corrupt affections. I judge no man in that manner; or, I judge no man alone, as it followeth in the next verse.

John 8:16

Ver. 16. My testimony is not to be looked upon as a single testimony for myself; though I do judge, yet my judgment is true; for no act of mine is a single act: I and my Father are one; and what I do, my Father also doth, that sent me into the world as his ambassador. So as if the judgment of God be true, which you all own, grant, and acknowledge; then my judgment is true, because it is not mine only, but the judgment also of that God, whom you own, acknowledge, and worship, and who sent me into the world.

John 8:17

Ver. 17. It is written, De 17:6 19:15. God so ordered it by his Divine law, that every thing should be established by the testimony of two witnesses.

John 8:18

Ver. 18. I (saith our Saviour) have two witnesses; I am one, I bear witness of myself; my Father is another, for he beareth witness of me. Our Saviour's argumentation seemeth weak, unless we look upon him as exempt from the condition of ordinary men, and no mere man, by reason of the personal union of the Divine and human nature in his person. Nor must our Saviour be understood here to distinguish himself from his Father, in respect of his Divine being, for so he and his Father are one; but in respect of his office, as he was sent, and his Father was he who sent him. And indeed in the whole he seemeth to accommodate himself to the people's apprehensions of him.

John 8:19

Ver. 19. Thou talkest much of thy Father, where is he? We know no father which thou hast but the carpenter, Joseph; we do not look upon him as so credible a witness in the case, as to take his testimony in such a matter as this is. Christ tells them, that the reason why they did not know the Father, was because they did not know and acknowledge, receive and believe him; for if they had received and believed him, they would not then have been at such a loss to have known where his Father was, or who he was. The eternal Father is not to be known but in, and by, and through the Son.

John 8:20

Ver. 20. *The treasury* was a public place in the temple; concerning which, See Poole on "Mt 27:6", See Poole on "Mr 12:41", See Poole on "Mr 12:43" and See Poole on "Lu 21:1". Christ taught sometimes in one part of the temple, sometimes in another: but that no man should lay hold on him, considering the search made for him in the beginning of the feast, and their sending messengers to take him, as we read Joh 7:32, and the affront he had given to the scribes and Pharisees, of which we read in the beginning of this chapter, was very miraculous; nor can any account be given of it besides what is here given, viz. that his *hour was not yet come*; which was the reason we heard given before in the same case, Joh 7:30. Men shall be able to do nothing against Christ, or any that belong unto him, till the time cometh that God hath set in his wise and eternal thoughts.

John 8:21

Ver. 21. The greatest part of what is said here, was said by our Saviour before, Joh 7:34; (see the explication of it there); only here, instead of *ye shall not find me*, is, *ye shall die in your sins*; a phrase we shall find in Eze 3:18,19, which doubtless signifieth, in the guilt of your sins, not removed from you; and is a threatening of eternal death, as well as temporal in the destruction of Jerusalem: and those who do so, cannot come into heaven, where Christ is.

John 8:22

Ver. 22. Before they guessed that he would go to the dispersed amongst the Gentiles, Joh 7:35. Now they fancy that he would kill himself; or else speak this in mockery.

John 8:23

Ver. 23. Ye are not only of an earthly extraction, creatures of the earth, not descended from heaven, as I am; but also of earthly spirits and principles; you savour nothing that is sublime and spiritual, and therefore you do not understand me. I tell you, *I am not of this world;* my original is not from it, nor am I to determine my being in it. I shall die, but I shall rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven, where you cannot come. Still our Saviour asserts his Divine nature; and the stress of all, he saith, lieth there; their unbelief of which was the cause of all their disputings and errors. He had given them the greatest evidence of it imaginable in the works which he had done in their sight, which were not only above the power of nature, but such as God had never authorized, or enabled any creature to do; yet they, being destitute of supernatural grace, did not believe in him. And they were inexcusable, because that grace was denied them for their wilful corruption and wickedness, which they might have avoided by the use of that common grace which was not denied them.

John 8:24

Ver. 24. In the Greek it is only, *if ye believe not that I am*. Some refer this to Christ's Divine nature; (*I am*, is the name of God, Ex 3:14); but others rather think that Christ here speaketh of himself as the Messiah and Mediator, and so the object of people's faith; and he out of whom there is no salvation: the latter indeed includes the former; for *cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm*, Jer 17:5. The text plainly holds forth an impossibility of salvation for those who, under the revelations of the gospel, receive not and believe not in Christ as Mediator.

John 8:25

Ver. 25. What good Christian will not learn to contemn the slights and reproaches of sinful men, when he readeth of a company of miscreants thus using their Lord and Master, saying to him, *Who art thou?* It is no wonder if the world, which knew him not, doth not know us. The latter part of the verse, as it lies in the Greek, is exceedingly difficult; word for word it is, The beginning, because also I speak unto you. Some think that our Saviour calleth himself *The beginning*. Others think the noun is in this place put for an adverb: of which we have many instances in Scripture, though none as to this noun. But I shall leave those who desire satisfaction as to what is said by critics about this verse, to what Mr. Pool hath collected in his *Synopsis Criticorum*, and only consider it as our interpreters understood it; in which form it seemeth to be a mere slighting of them, as much as if he had said, I have often enough, even from the beginning, told you who I am; I can say no more to you upon that head than I have said. I am the same, and no other, than I at first told you I was.

John 8:26

Ver. 26. Judging is not put here for judicial condemnation; but for reproving and accusing, which is one part of judging. You accuse and reprove me; I have many things of which I could also accuse and convince you; but let me say what I will, you will not believe me. But you will not escape the judgment of my Father, who is true, he will judge you. I speak unto men nothing but what it is his will that I should declare to them.

John 8:27

Ver. 27. The Jews (as we are told) used to call God *The Father*, in a way of eminency: they understood that he spake to them of his Father; but they would not understand when he spake to them of his Father, or the Father, he meant God the Father of all; their minds were blinded, that they could not see, and their hearts hardened, that they could not understand.

John 8:28

Ver. 28. It is your unhappiness, that while I am alive, and preaching the gospel to you, inviting you to repentance, and faith in me, as the true Messiah, you will not believe me to be indeed what I am; but you shall lift me up upon the cross, (for that is meant by lifting up, as Joh 3:14 12:32), and when that time cometh, you shall know that I am *the light of the world*, as Joh 8:12; for after that, the gospel began to be preached to all nations: or, that I am the true Messiah, he whom the Father hath sent into the world. Some of you shall then know it by those signs and wonders that shall attend my death and resurrection, and to your shame and confusion: others of you shall know it to your eternal joy and salvation; believing on me then, whom you will not now acknowledge; and that what I have done, I have only done by commission from my Father, not of myself; and that what I have taught, I have had in commission from my Father to teach.

John 8:29

Ver. 29. I have the presence of God with me, as I am Mediator; the Father hath not sent me into the world to do his will, and left me alone without his presence; for I do his will; I drive no separate design from my Father, but always do those things which please him. From whence all faithful ministers and Christians may learn how to conclude of God's presence with them, which they can no longer promise to themselves, than they speak and do those things that please him.

John 8:30

Ver. 30. Believing on him is not here to be understood strictly of saving faith; but rather, of some preparations toward it: they began to believe that he was the true Messias, and to have more honourable thoughts than they had of him: that this was all, will appear from what we find in the following verses; and believing often signifieth no more in the New Testament than a light assent given to some propositions of the gospel relating to Christ.

John 8:31

Ver. 31. *Believed on him*, in the sense before expressed. Our Saviour well enough saw their hearts, and in what manner they believed, and what sort of disciples they were, viz. only nominal: they have the name of disciples who come after Christ to hear him; but they are his disciples indeed, who make his doctrine the rule of their lives. He therefore tells them, That not a mere saying to him Lord, Lord, and yielding some light assent to some propositions of truth in the gospel, would make them his disciples in truth and reality, without an abiding and continuance in the words which he taught them.

John 8:32

Ver. 32. *And ye shall know the truth*; that is, you shall more fully and clearly know the truth; by which may be either understood Christ, who styles himself, *The way, the truth, and the life*; or those propositions of truth which Christ hath revealed. There must be some knowledge of truth in a soul before it can believe; for *how shall they believe* (saith the apostle) *in him of whom they have not heard?* but a fuller and clearer knowledge of the truth is got by degrees, by those who studiously seek after it, and walk close with God.

And the truth shall make you free: it appears by Joh 8:36, that by *the truth* he means himself; there he saith, *If the Son make you free*: and indeed, though the knowledge of the proposition of truth gives men some liberty from the bondage of ignorance and some lusts, yet it is only the saving knowledge of Christ which brings men into a perfect liberty from the law, the rigour, curse, and terror of it, and from the dominion of sin and corruption.

John 8:33

Ver. 33. How carnally doth a carnal heart understand spiritual mysteries! Thus Nicodemus, hearing of being *born again*, grossly dreamed of entering into his mother's womb, and being born again. The woman of Samaria, hearing of *living water*, dreamed of water that should so satisfy

her thirst, as that she should never come again to the well to draw. The Jews here hearing of being made free, dream of a freedom from human bondage and slavery. To what our Saviour had said, that if they knew the truth, the truth should make them free; they reply, *We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any.* Admitting that they were Abraham's seed, that is, Jews, were not the Jews in bondage, first to Pharaoh, king of Egypt; then to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon? They were now in bondage to the Romans. They must either understand it of their own persons, though they were tributaries they were no slaves; or else concerning their right, they had a right to liberty though they were under an extrinsic servitude to their conquerors. This made them angry, that Christ should speak of their being *made free*; for those that are free are not in a capacity to be made free. The Jews were a people very tenacious of their liberty, and gloried much in the right they had to it.

John 8:34

Ver. 34. Our Saviour here correcteth their mistake, letting them know, that he was not speaking about any corporal, but spiritual servitude; not of the freedom of men's bodies from the power of enemies, but of the freedom of men's souls from the slavery and dominion of lusts and corruptions. He that doth sin (saith he) is the servant of sin. The committing or doing of sin here intended, is not to be understood of single acts of sin, for in that sense who lives and sinneth not? (the righteous man sinning seven times in a day); so as all men would be concluded the servants of sin; but of living indulgently and habitually in a course of sin, and in the practice of gross sins; in which sense workers of iniquity is to be taken, Mt 7:23; and this very phrase, 1Jo 3:4. And indeed, the very heathen could see, that there was no such slavery as a servitude to lusts and passions: men are *the servants of corruption*, 2Pe 2:19; under the dominion of sin, Ro 6:20.

John 8:35

Ver. 35. The servant of sin abideth not in the church (which is the house of God) for ever. Look as it is with slaves, and servants; they are no fixed members of families; they may be turned out, they may be sold over to others; they abide in families according as in them they behave

themselves: so you, who, as you are Abraham's seed, as you boast and glory, are now servants in the church of God; yet if you continue to be servants of sin, you shall not for ever abide in God's house; if you be not cast out of the church militant, you shall certainly be cast out of the church triumphant; that is, you shall never come there.

But the Son; some think he speaks of himself who was the eternal Son of God, he *abideth ever*; but I rather think he speaks of him that is a son by adoption, Joh 1:12 Ro 8:15,16. So as this text showeth us the remarkable difference betwixt a nominal professor, and one who is a true believer: the one is but as a servant in God's house, to whom belongeth no inheritance; though while he is in the family, he enjoys some common privileges which a mere stranger hath no right to: the other is a son, and hath a right to the inheritance, and so shall never be cast out of the family, but abideth in it for ever.

John 8:36

Ver. 36. If that term *the Son* in this verse be the same with *the Son* mentioned in the former verse, they must both be understood of Christ: for it is most certain, that here *the Son* can signify no more than Christ, to whom alone it belongeth to make souls free from the slavery of the law, sin, death, hell, &c. Now, saith our Saviour, this is the true freedom. Alas! What is the freedom you boast of and glory in? It is not the freedom of your inward man, if you were in the fullest actual possession of it; many a one in that sense free, hath a base, servile, slavish mind, and is a servant to corruption and lusts. It is only the freedom which I give unto souls, that is a true and perfect liberty, and is alone worthy the name of it.

John 8:37

Ver. 37. According to the flesh you are descended from Abraham, that I know; but of what advantage is or can this be to you, while in the mean time you are implacable enemies to me, and seek to murder me, who am not only an innocent person, but am the Lord of life, and came to save the world? And the root of this is your unbelief: did you receive and believe the word that I have spoken to you, you would do otherwise; but although

the sound of my word pierceth your ears, and then you receive a little of it, yet it passeth not into your hearts, it hath no place within you; you do not believe it, you are not affected with it, it doth not dwell in you as it ought to do, so that you are not turned into the likeness and obedience of it. Men may be professors and members of the church of God, in whom yet the word of God hath no rooting, and findeth no true place; so as that their condition may be sad enough.

John 8:38

Ver. 38. My Father is God; I declare unto you his mind and will; no uncertain things, but what I have seen with him, that is, what I certainly know to be his will. You declare by your actions who is your father; and as I do my Father's will, and what he teacheth me to do, so you do the works which the devil, who is your father, Joh 8:44, prompts you to do.

John 8:39

Ver. 39. *Abraham is our Father*; this was their continual boast, as may be learned from Mt 3:9; glorying in their birth privilege, Abraham being the father of the whole Jewish nation; and in their church privilege, Abraham being the head of the Jewish church, and he to whom the promises were made. But Christ taketh them off this glorying, by reminding them, that the blood of Abraham running in their veins would be of little significance to them, so long as they did not walk in Abraham's steps. Men are truly to be accounted the children of those, not from whom they are naturally descended, but whose steps they walk in, and whom they imitate in their conversations.

John 8:40

Ver. 40. You declare by your actions that you are very far from the spirit and temper of Abraham: I am one who, being sent of God, whom you own as your Father, have faithfully revealed the will of God to you, and have never told you any thing but the truth; and this is all my crime, for which you seek to murder me: this was none of your father Abraham's practice;

so as though you have something of Abraham's blood, yet you have nothing of Abraham's spirit in you.

John 8:41

Ver. 41. *Ye do the deeds of your father;* you imitate him who is indeed your father; by whom our Saviour (as we shall hear more afterwards) meaneth the devil. This they fume at, and tell him they were not *born of fornication*, which is, in our English dialect, as much as, We are no bastards; but it hath another sense in this place, as appeareth by the next words.

We have one Father, even God; that is, we own and worship one God, who is our Father; which makes very good interpreters think, that their meaning in those words, *We are not born of fornication*, is, We are no idolaters; idolatry in holy writ being very ordinarily compared to whoredom and fornication.

John 8:42

Ver. 42. This agreeth with what we have 1Jo 5:1, *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* But here our Saviour rather seemeth to speak of his proceeding forth and coming from God, as sent into the world to fulfil the will of God as to the redemption of man, than of his proceeding from his Father by eternal generation. It is true, that he who loves the father will also love the child, so far forth as he resembles his father, and acts like unto him; and it is as true, that he who loveth him that sends a messenger will also love the messenger, executing the commission of him that sent him.

John 8:43

Ver. 43. It is manifest all along this discourse, that Christ spake riddles to the Jews, and that they understood not the import and sense of his discourse: Now (saith our Saviour) the reason is, *because ye cannot hear*, that is, believe, *my word*: they could and did hear it with their ears; they

heard the sound of it, but they could not discern the spiritual sense and meaning of it: it was not given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, Mt 13:11. And the reason was, because they suffered themselves to be blinded by prejudice, and by their own lusts and corrupt affections, till God gave them up to a judicial blindness, that hearing they heard, and did not understand; and seeing they saw, and did not perceive.

John 8:44

Ver. 44. Our Saviour now plainly tells them what he meant by their *father*, mentioned Joh 8:38; viz. the devil, whose children though they were not by natural traduction, yet they were by imitation, wilfully doing the things which the devil would have them do. He instances in two of these lusts: 1. Murder. He saith, The devil from the beginning of the world had a mind and design against the sons of men; and he ever since (as the apostle tells us, 1Pe 5:9) hath gone about like *a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. And in this they were his true children, using all arts imaginable to destroy him whom God had sent into the world for man's salvation. In another thing also they were the true and genuine children of the devil; the devil had *no truth in him*, nor did he abide in the truth. God indeed created the angels (who afterward fell) in a state of rectitude, without unrighteousness; but they did not keep their first station. So, neither did they love the truth, nor abide in it, but were wholly false and liars, and could not abide the truth.

John 8:45

Ver. 45. Such is your hatred to the truth, that you hate me for no other reason but because I reveal my Father's will (which is the truth) to you; than which nothing can evidence a greater hatred to truth, nor conformity and likeness to the devil. There cannot be a greater evidence of any one's hatred of the truth, than the hatred of those who tell them the truth, and for this very reason, because they do so.

John 8:46

Ver. 46. If any of you can prove that I have spoken to you any thing that is false, and not consonant to the will of my Father, do it; but which of you is able to charge me with any such thing? If there be no such thing, but I have told you what is the very truth, and the will of my Father, as to what you are to believe and do, why do you not believe me? For every reasonable soul is a debtor to truth.

John 8:47

Ver. 47. *He that is of God;* to be of God, here, is opposed to a being not of God, and so may be understood to comprehend election, as well as regeneration.

Heareth God's words; he heareth, acknowledgeth, believeth, and patiently submits to the will of God revealed in his word.

The reason why you, though with your ears ye hear the word of God, yet do not in heart receive, and embrace, and believe it, nor can submit to it, is *because ye are not of God,* not chosen of him, not savingly enlightened and regenerated by him. So as this text affords us an excellent note, by which we may know whether we be regenerated, and of God, yea or no. That is, our believing and yielding obedience to the will of God revealed in his word. By this saying of our Saviour, he seemeth to acquiesce in the will of God, concerning these refractory and unbelieving Jews, notwithstanding all the pains he had taken with them to enlighten and bring them to the saving knowledge of the truth. It pleased not his Father to open their eyes that they might see, or their hearts that they might understand. This ought in like manner to satisfy all the true and faithful ministers of the gospel, when they see they have laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nothing and in vain. When they have done all they can, they will find this of our Saviour true, That the work must be God's, and not theirs; and no more hearts will be changed, than theirs who are of God.

John 8:48

Ver. 48. A *Samaritan* signified to the Jews as much as an impostor, or

seducer; for the Jews looked upon the Samaritans as a detestable sort of men, who had corrupted the worship of God with their horrible superstitions in Mount Gerizim.

And hast a devil; that is, art mad: See Poole on "Joh 7:20".

John 8:49

Ver. 49. *I have not a devil;* that is, I am not possessed with an evil spirit, as you blaspheme; or, (as others think), I am not mad, I speak the words of truth and soberness, (for it is said, that the Jews held an opinion, That all who were distracted were influenced by all evil spirit, and had a devil). It is true in both senses, Christ had no devil. He did nothing that he did, but for the honour of his Father; this was but a term of scandal and reproach they cast upon Christ. In the mean time it must be observed, with how much meekness the Lamb of God received these most unworthy reproaches cast upon him; that we may learn to behave ourselves in like manner under such temptations.

John 8:50

Ver. 50. Christ very often reminds them of this, that in what he spake and did, he sought not his own honour and reputation; which both obviated an objection they might make against him, and also convinced them of his truth and sincerity in what he did. But, saith he, though I seek not my own honour, yet there is one who cometh himself in my honour and glory; and you must expect that he should judge and condemn you for all your hard speeches which you have spoken against me.

John 8:51

Ver. 51. To *see death*, in this text, signifieth to die, but in an apparently differing sense from what it is taken in Lu 2:26, where it is to be understood of a natural death; of which it cannot be understood here, for the holiest men shall die: *the body is dead* (that is, in dying) *because of sin;* or, shall die because of sin, Ro 8:10. It must therefore be understood

of death eternal; and in that sense the proposition is certainly true, That a holy man that keepeth the sayings of Christ shall not see death, that is, shall have eternal life; which is no more than what we have often before met with, viz. the promise of life eternal to faith and holiness.

John 8:52

Ver. 52. *Thou hast a devil:* this is the third time we have met with this blasphemous imputation from these wretched men, Joh 7:20, in this chapter, Joh 8:48, and here. What we have here, may strongly incline us to believe, that by the phrase they did not intend that he was possessed with the devil; for they here declare themselves confirmed in what they said, from his speaking that which was contrary to sense and demonstration. Abraham was dead, (though the father of the faithful), and the prophets were dead; and therefore to speak of any mortal man's not seeing death, was contrary to every day's experience, and to the experience of the holiest men who ever lived. To them therefore who understood him speaking of a natural dissolution of the soul and body, this looked like the language of one beside himself; which probably was all they meant, when they said he had a devil, unless they used it as a term of reproach and passion; of all which none can give any just account.

John 8:53

Ver. 53. If thou canst so effect it, that those who keep thy sayings shall not die, thou canst also make thyself immortal: neither Abraham nor the prophets could save themselves from death, they are all dead: what art thou? What dost thou make thyself? And by the way, this was another charge upon our Saviour, the Jews having no patience with any that should prefer himself before their father Abraham or Moses.

John 8:54

Ver. 54. *If I honour myself, my honour is nothing;* this is much the same with what our Saviour said, Joh 5:31, which he seemed to contradict, Joh 5:14; (see the notes on both those places); the meaning is, If I seek mine

own honour and glory; or, If I arrogate to myself what indeed doth not belong to me; or, If I alone honour myself, which (by the next words) seemeth to be the true sense of the phrase here. My Father is he who honoureth me, by witnessing from heaven that I am his beloved Son; by sending me into the world to accomplish his work; by many signs and wonders: and you say, that this my Father is your God. If therefore you will not give credit to me and my testimony, yet you ought to give credit to him, whom you own as your God.

John 8:55

Ver. 55. Knowing here signifies more than a notional knowledge, or comprehending in our understanding so much of God as may by natural powers be comprehended; it signifies affections, and a conversation suitable to such a knowledge. But I (saith our Saviour) fully and perfectly know him, both as to his essence, counsels, and will, and am fully obedient to him.

John 8:56

Ver. 56. You glory much in this, that you have Abraham to your father. This father of yours foresaw my coming into the world, and my dying upon the cross. He saw it by the eye of faith, in the promise which was made to him, That in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He saw it in the type of Isaac's being offered, then receiving him in a figure, Heb 11:19. He saw it in the light of Divine revelation. He saw my coming in the flesh; my dying upon the cross for sinners; the publication of my gospel to the whole world, by which means all the nations of the earth became blessed in his seed. And he *was glad*, with the joy of faith, which gives the soul a union with an absent object by faith made certain to it, Heb 11:1.

John 8:57

Ver. 57. Christ was at this time but three and thirty years old, and upward: they dream of Abraham's seeing him, and his seeing Abraham, with bodily

eyes, of which Christ said nothing; that indeed had been a thing impossible, for Abraham was dead many hundred years before Christ appeared in the flesh to the world: neither doth our Saviour say, that he had seen Abraham, or that Abraham had seen him; but that he had seen his day, his coming in the flesh, his death, which Abraham had seen, not with bodily eyes, but with the eye of faith.

John 8:58

Ver. 58. Some will have the meaning to be, that Christ was before Abraham's time constituted Mediator; as he is said to be *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Re 13:8: so 1Pe 1:20. But thus it might have been said of any of the elect, that they were chosen before Abraham was. It is therefore undoubtedly to be understood of Christ's eternal existence, as to his Divine nature; and this will appear, as from other arguments, so from the whole scope of our Saviour's former discourse in this chapter, which was to assert his Divine nature and equality with the Father.

John 8:59

Ver. 59. *Then took they up stones to cast at him;* as they also did, Joh 5:31. It is vain to inquire where they had stones in the temple; they might be repairing some part of it, or some parts of it paved with stones might be loose, &c.; it is enough that we are assured that some they found. He did not go *through the midst of them* that were in this uproar, but first thrust himself into the more innocent crowd, then passed through the midst of them. Some make a question here, how he could pass through the midst of them? Whether he made his body invisible? (so the Lutherans think); or whether he struck his enemies with blindness, or thickened the air before their eyes? But what needs that dispute? Admit some few of the rabble to be in a rage, the greatest part innocent, it is no hard thing for us to conceive how a person, discerning the disorder, may thrust himself into the more innocent crowd, and pass by, escaping the rage of his enemies.

John 9:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 9:1-7 A man that was born blind receiveth sight.

Joh 9:8-12 He relates to his neighbours the means of his cure.

Joh 9:13-33 He is brought to the Pharisees, who examine strictly

his into the fact, and are offended with

his acknowledgment of the Divine mission of the author.

Joh 9:34 They excommunicate him.

Joh 9:35-38 He is received of Jesus, and confesseth him.

Joh 9:39-41 Christ taxes the Pharisees with spiritual blindness.

Ver. 1. The evangelist doth not tell us where our Saviour was passing by, but the word seemeth to import a passing by the highway side, when he saw this poor man, who was born blind; which is particularly noted, because such blindness is judged incurable as to the art of man.

John 9:2

Ver. 2. The disciples question supposed two things for truth:

1. That all bodily punishments and afflictions come upon men for sin.
2. That as some come upon them for personal sins, so others come upon them for the sins of their parents.

The latter is unquestionably true: so is the former, but not universally: as there are afflictions which are punishments of sin, so there are some that are trials.

John 9:3

Ver. 3. Our Saviour must not be understood here, as either asserting the blind man or his parents free from sin, and a degree of sin deserving such a punishment; but as speaking to his disciples question strictly, and answering, that this affliction came not upon him, either for any personal sin of his own, (for he could not be guilty of any actual sin before he was born), nor yet for any sin that his parents had committed: but that the works of God might be made glorious in him; both his work of power in afflicting, and his work of mercy in healing him.

John 9:4

Ver. 4. The Father, who sent Christ into the world, gave him work to do: his general work was, to glorify God upon the earth, Joh 17:4, as by working out the redemption of man, so by revealing his will to the sons of men, and working miracles for the glorifying the name of God. Saith Christ, I have a set time to work in; that is, that which he here calleth *day*, the time wherein Christ was to live upon the earth.

The night cometh, when no man can work; I am not to be here always, there will come a time when I must be absent from the earth, then none of this work can be done. A good argument to persuade every Christian to work while the time of his life lasts, for the night of death will come, when no man can any longer work out his salvation; but as the tree falleth, so it must lie, Ec 9:10.

John 9:5

Ver. 5. Those words, *As long as I am in the world*, let us know what our Saviour meant by the *day*, mentioned Joh 9:4, viz. the time he should be in the world. Saith he, So long as I am in the world, it is a part of my work to show light to the world. Christ indeed, though he hath left the world, is yet the light of the world; but he was the light of the world, that part of the world especially where he was, in a more eminent sense, so long as the world enjoyed his bodily presence in it.

John 9:6

Ver. 6. Several mysterious allegories are found out by men of luxuriant fancies, with reference to the manner of our Saviour's curing this blind man; as if our Saviour had made choice of clay, to show, that as he at first made man of the dust of the earth, so he could again cure him with dust; and that his spittle denoted the efficacy of Christ's humanity, being now personally united to the Divine nature. Others think, he made use of spittle, because the Jews had a great opinion of the medicinal virtue of spittle; and, they say, forbade the medicinal use of it on the sabbath day, on which day this miracle was wrought. But all these things are great uncertainties, for which we want any guidance from holy writ. It is most probable, that our Saviour made use of the spittle in working this miracle because he had no water at hand, for water was a very scarce thing in those hot countries. That which we are chiefly to attend in this great miraculous operation is, Christ's demonstration of his Divine nature, for the confirmation of the truth of which he doubtless wrought this great work, as well as to show his charity to this poor creature. To this purpose,

1. He maketh choice, not of a blind man only, but one who was born so, and so incurable according to all judgment of human art.
2. He maketh use of no means that had any appearance of a natural virtue in it; nay, which was more likely to put out the eyes of one that saw, than to give sight to one that was blind.

John 9:7

Ver. 7. He doth not only anoint his eyes, but sendeth him also to *wash in the pool of Siloam*. We read of this pool, Ne 3:15; and we are told, that it was a fountain which sprang out from Mount Zion. It should seem, that there was a brook of that name, which supplied part of the city with water, Isa 8:6. Some think they have also found a mystery in this name, because it signifieth *sent*; and think that it hath an allusion to Shiloh, which was the Messiah, mentioned Ge 49:10. The name is plainly an old name, as appears from the place I noted out of Nehemiah; probably given to it anciently, in acknowledgment of the mercy of God given them, in sending them such a

brook, or rivulet, from those mountains, so commodious for that great city: or, because (as some think) the water did not run always, but at certain times, as it were sent of God. We read of nothing medicinal in this water, only, as a probation of the blind man's faith and obedience, it pleased our Lord to send the blind man to wash himself there; as of old Naaman the Syrian was sent to wash in Jordan. He went, and the evangelist, to let us see that true faith joined with sincere obedience never faileth the expectation of them that exercise it, lets us know that he returned seeing.

John 9:8

Ver. 8. The evangelist now reports the consequence of this miracle. He, being cured, returneth to his friends: those who lived about that place, had taken notice of his ordinary sitting there, and begging; now, seeing him perfectly recovered, they ask one another, if this were not the blind beggar that used to sit there.

John 9:9

Ver. 9. Some conclude it was he, others doubted, but did think he was like him: he puts it out of doubt, and saith that he was the man.

John 9:10

Ver. 10. According as is the nature of most men upon the sight of any new and strange accident, they are curious to know how it came to pass, who did it, and where he was. The blind man tells them, that he was cured.

John 9:11

Ver. 11. By one that was *called Jesus*; probably he had heard some of the people mention him by that name; and he describeth to them the manner how he did it.

John 9:12

Ver. 12. They would know where he was; this he knows not.

John 9:13

Ver. 13. Whether the neighbours, or his near relations, is not said. Nor is the place mentioned where this convention of Pharisees was, whether in the temple, or in some synagogue, or in the great court which they called the sanhedrim; nor is it material for us to inquire into.

John 9:14

Ver. 14. It was observed before, that Christ made choice of the sabbath day, as the day wherein he did many of his mighty works. It was on the sabbath day that he cured the impotent man who lay at the pool of Bethesda, Joh 5:10; and upon the sabbath day that he cured him who had the withered hand, Mt 12:10; and now again upon the sabbath day that he cured him who was born blind. Possibly he chose that day, because that was a day wherein he ordinarily preached that heavenly doctrine, which he confirmed by these miraculous works; or, perhaps, that he might take occasion from thence to instruct the Jews, if they would have received instruction, in the true doctrine of the sabbath, that they might not superstitiously think that it was not lawful to do acts of mercy on the sabbath day: certain it is, that himself maketh that improvement of it, Mt 12:1-8. Or to show them, that he was the Lord of the sabbath; and that, as his Father by his works of providence worketh on the sabbath day, so did he, being equal with his Father: by which argument he before defended himself for the cure of the impotent man on the sabbath day, Joh 5:17.

John 9:15

Ver. 15. *The Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight;* they had before heard it from others, but they now desire to hear it from himself; not (as appears) out of any good design, that they might be convinced of the truth of the thing, or that he who had wrought this miracle was the Son

of God; but that they might have something to object against Christ, and to quarrel with him for, upon their traditions, with reference to the observation of the sabbath; of which we are told this was one. That it was unlawful for any to anoint their eyes with spittle on the sabbath day; they having a conceit that it was a medicinal application. The blind man is not ashamed to own the goodness of God to him to the Pharisees, but relates the same story which he before had related to the people.

John 9:16

Ver. 16. They are so far from owning Christ as God, the eternal Son of God, and equal with his Father, that they will not allow him to have any relation to God, as one sent of him. It is true, the sanctification of the sabbath is so great a piece of religion, (the whole of which is sometimes expressed by it, Isa 56:4,6), that whoso maketh no conscience of it, may reasonably be concluded to have little or nothing of God in him: but we must rightly understand what the will of God is as to that sanctification, and not think that it lieth in a performance of some ritual services, while in the mean time we neglect moral duties. Christ had kept the sabbath, though not in that superstitious sense they thought it was to be observed, keeping to all their traditions about it. Others of the Pharisees had a something better opinion of Christ by reason of the miracles he had wrought; concluding, that if he had been so bad a man, as some of their brethren would have him taken to be. God would not have assisted him to the doing of such miraculous works as he had done. Thus the wise God made a division amongst the counsels of Christ's enemies, his work being not yet finished, nor the time come when he was to die for the redemption of man.

John 9:17

Ver. 17. *What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? What opinion hast thou of this man, who hath opened thine eyes? To make the question perfect, interpreters think, there ought to be this supplement, on the sabbath day. What dost thou think of such a man as this, who would make clay, and apply it to thy cure upon the sabbath day? How can such a act be defended?*

The blind man answered, *He is a prophet*. It was taken for granted by the Jews, according to their traditions, that at the command of a prophet it was lawful to violate the sabbath; which indeed is no more than, that God hath not, in giving us a law, bound up himself, but he may dispense with his own law. Their prophets had an extraordinary mission from God, and immediately revealed the will of God; so as they looked upon what they said as spoken by God himself. The blind man declareth, that he believed that Christ was a prophet; and being so, his words and actions had an extraordinary warrant, and therefore were not to be judged by ordinary rules.

John 9:18

Ver. 18. That is, the rulers of the Jews did not, or the multitude or rabble of the Jews did not; for we before heard that many of the common Jews did: they had seen him for a long time sit begging; (begging being allowed in that their corrupt and miserable state, they being tributary to the Romans; though in their settled, prosperous state, there was such a liberal provision made for their poor, that there was no beggar in Israel); besides, they had it from his own mouth, Joh 9:9: but the rulers had no mind to believe it; and many others of the Jews (possibly) had been no eyewitnesses of his begging, but had only heard the relation from others: the rulers therefore send for the parents of the blind man.

John 9:19

Ver. 19. The parents of this man that was blind, in their answer show a great deal of discretion and prudence. Three things the Pharisees ask:

1. Whether this was their son?
2. Whether (as they said) he was indeed born blind?
3. How he came now to see?

The manner of the propounding their question, *who ye say*, lets us know what answer they would have had, and that they did not send for the

parents of this blind man out of a desire to know the naked truth of the thing, but hoping to fright them into a speaking doubtfully (at least) whether it was their son, yea or no; or whether he was stark blind when he was born, yea or no. But, alas! The providence of God ordering his condition to be so poor, that he was glad to beg for his livelihood, made this design vain, would his parents have gratified the Pharisees by any shuffling and indirect answer.

John 9:20

Ver. 20,21. But besides this, the parents of this man proved more honest and stouter than, it may be, the Pharisees did expect. They affirm, that they knew that he was their son, and that he was born blind. But for the third question, How he now saw? They avoid an answer to that, being possibly no eyewitnesses of Christ when he wrought the miracle. For this they refer them to their son, who was no babe, but a man grown, one of age, able to speak for himself; of whom they might inquire, and he was best able, as to this thing, to give them satisfaction.

John 9:22

Ver. 22. The reason why his parents answered so very warily, and avoided saying any thing to the Pharisees third question, which probably they could not go of their particular personal knowledge, was, that they were afraid of the rulers of the Jews. Solomon saith, *The fear of man bringeth a snare*, Pr 29:25; it is often a temptation to men to deny the truth, or, at least, not to own and confess it when God calls to them for a public owning and confession of it: but nothing of that nature appeareth in this case; for it doth not appear that his parents were present when Christ wrought this great miracle; which if they were not, they were not obliged to tell the Pharisees what themselves had only received by rumour and hearsay: so that their answer seems but a prudential answer, to avoid an eminent danger. For they were not ignorant of a decree made by the Jewish sanhedrim. That if any did publicly say, or declare, that Jesus was Christ, he should be excommunicated; for that is meant by being *put out of the synagogue*.

John 9:23

Ver. 23,24. They were not able to obtain their design from the parents of this poor man; now they again call him, and advise him to give glory to God. Thus far they spake well, if they had been hearty and serious in what they said; for the man indeed had great reason to give God the glory, by whose power alone, exerted by his Son Christ Jesus, he had received his sight: but moral actions are made good or bad by their ends; and if we consider the end of these wretched men in this action of theirs, wherein they persuaded the poor man to his duty, the words will appear to have been spoken from hearts minding nothing less than the glory of God, and out of a design to vilify and depreciate his Son; whereas God hath set up his rest in his Son, and cannot be glorified but with, in, and through him; whom in the next words they maliciously defame, not only speaking of him contemptuously, calling him *this man*, but affirm him αμαρτωλος, not a *sinner* only, but a notorious, scandalous *sinner*, as that word imports.

John 9:25

Ver. 25. This poor man being of no higher quality than a beggar, can be presumed to have had no great education; yet his answer is as good as could be expected from one of the greatest breeding, both for security to himself, and his stout asserting what was truth. As to their charge upon our Saviour of his being a great sinner, he avoids it, telling them, as to that he knew nothing, nor was it his concern to inquire; but this he knew, that he had wrought a great work on him, for whereas he had been blind from his mother's womb, he now had his sight by his means: so as all their frowns could not tempt him to deny the miracle wrought upon him, nor yet to speak the least in abatement of it.

John 9:26

Ver. 26. They cannot frown him into a denial of the miracle wrought; he

stood stoutly to affirm, that he was born blind, and that he was cured by Christ: now they put him to tell the story over again, either hoping they should entrap him, contradicting himself in his story; or, at least, find something, upon his repeating the story, for them to take advantage from, to persuade the people that it was but a cheat, and indeed there was no such miracle wrought upon him.

John 9:27

Ver. 27. It is wonderful to see how the boldness and confidence of the poor man increased; God giving him that wisdom and courage which they were not able to resist. He refuseth to repeat the story to them, telling them he had once already told it them, but they would not give credit to him; and to what purpose was it for him to say it over again, unless they were inclined to be his disciples? Some think the form of speech implies a hearty wishing and desiring that they would be so: but others think he speaks ironically, as if he had said, I know my repeating again the story will not induce you to be his disciples, you are resolved against that, and therefore why do you put me upon a needless trouble? And this seemeth to have been his sense by what followeth in the Pharisees reply, full of indignation.

John 9:28

Ver. 28. If this were all their reviling, for them to tell this poor man that he was Christ's disciple, it was a very tolerable imputation, and what the blind man had reason to glory in: their guilt in reviling is to be judged not so much from what they spake, for there was nothing of greater honour, as from what heart and spirit they spake it. A *disciple* signifies, one that followeth another, and learns of him. To be a disciple of Christ indeed, was the greatest thing that any could glory in; yet the imputation of it to this blind man is here called a reviling: whence we may observe, that the guilt of reviling is to be judged not so much from the words which a man speaketh, as from the frame of his spirit, and design of that in the speaking of them. If a man speaketh that of another which is good and true, yet if he doth it out of a design to expose him, to do him mischief, and make him odious unto others, God doth account this reviling, because it proceedeth from the hatred of our brother in our heart, and a design to do him harm.

Again, though indeed it was no reproach to be called Christ's disciple, yet they affixed this term upon this poor man out of a design to reproach him, and to expose him to the hatred of others. We are in the government of our tongues not only obliged to take heed what we say, but with what heart, and out of what design we speak it. A malicious design turns terms of the greatest honour into terms of reviling. Besides, they here oppose Christ and Moses: whereas, Moses was but the type, Christ the antitype; Moses prophesied of Christ, Christ was that Prophet which God had promised to raise up like unto him; Moses but the school master, who led them unto Christ.

John 9:29

Ver. 29. Concerning Moses indeed they speak honourably, and say, they knew God spake to him; yet did they know it no otherwise than by tradition, and the revelation of the will of God in the law and the prophets. For Christ, they call him *τουτου*, *this fellow*; and say, they know not whence he was; that is, they know of no Divine authority that he had. They were blinded through malice and prejudice. Indeed they did know whence he was as to his human nature, for they often made that the cause of their stumbling at him; that he was of Galilee, that his father was a carpenter, and his mother called Mary: but they knew of no Divine mission or authority that he had: this they might have known also, for he did those things which no man ever did, nor could be effected by any thing less than a Divine power; but their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were judicially hardened; they studied to shut out the light by which they should have seen, and would not know whence he was.

John 9:30

Ver. 30. The opening of the eyes of the blind without the application of means rationally probable for the producing such an effect, nay, by the application of means which to all human reason seemed of a quite contrary tendency; and this cure wrought upon one who was not blind by some accidental cause, but by some defect in nature, who had been so from his mother's womb, was so manifest an effect of the Divine power, as this poor man was astonished at it, that they should not understand that it was

done by such a power, either immediately or mediately; especially considering the prophecy concerning the Messiah, Isa 35:5,6, to which Christ refers John and his disciples for an evidence of it, Mt 11:5.

John 9:31

Ver. 31. This poor man proveth that Christ was from heaven, because he had opened his eyes; not as yet apprehending that Christ did it by putting out an immediate Divine power for his healing; but as a great prophet, obtaining such a power from God for the confirmation of the things which he delivered.

Now (saith he) we know that God heareth not sinners. But the question is, what truth there is in this axiom, or proposition. Doth not God hear sinners? Then he can hear none; for who liveth, and sinneth not against God? How did he hear Ahab, and others who were notorious sinners?

Answer.

1. By *sinners* here must be understood notorious and presumptuous sinners, that live and go on in courses of sin with hardened hearts: the word here used signifieth bold, presumptuous sinners; not such as sin merely through ignorance, weakness, or human infirmity.
2. God is under no covenant obligation to hear sinners; they can challenge no such favour upon the account of any promise: but God, out of the aboundings of his goodness, may hear them, as he heard Ahab and others; he may hear them as his creatures crying in their misery, though he hears them not as children, or upon the account of any covenant.
3. As to the sense of this maxim in this place, it seemeth to be particular and special; and the words seem to be restrained to that particular degree of favour here spoken of; God useth not to honour notorious and flagitious sinners, by giving them a power to work miracles, by which they should confirm any thing which they say.

This poor man bringeth this as an argument, why Christ should not be such a notorious sinner as they spake him, because it was not God's way to

honour such persons with his presence and assistance to the doing of those things which none could do but by a Divine power committed to him. Two things this man assumes, or taketh for granted:

1. That no man can work miracles, without a power obtained of by prayer, as we saw it was in the case of Elisha, 2Ki 4:33.
2. That what Christ did, he did as a man.

The first is true, the second was false. He was not yet convinced of Christ's Divine nature, nor looked upon him higher than as a prophet, one sent of God to reveal the will of God, and to work great works in the world by prayer; as to which he affirms, that if he were such a sinner as they clamoured, God would not hear him. So as the question, How far God may hear sinners, in giving them any thing they ask of him, seemeth not at all proper to this place; though it be enough clear from other scriptures, such as Ps 66:18 Isa 1:5, that none that live in a course of sin can expect that God should hear or give answer to their prayers; and though God may give to such sinners such things as they ask him for, which are of a mere external concern, yet it is not with respect to any promise which he hath made to them, but out of the aboundings of his own goodness. But if a man feareth God, and worketh righteousness, him the Lord heareth, accepteth, and answereth. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, Ps 25:14 Pr 3:32.

John 9:32

Ver. 32. He proveth Christ to be sent from God, (though it appears by Joh 9:33 that he looked as yet upon him in no higher notion than a man), from the nature of the miracle that was wrought; which was not the recovery of a blind man's sight only, but giving sight to one who was born blind. Now, saith this poor man, this is such a work as was never done by Moses, or by any of the prophets who have been since the creation of the world. Some who have been blind from some accidental cause, and something which hath befallen them, films and cataracts, &c., have been cured; and possibly God by his almighty power may have given sight to one born blind; but we never heard of any such thing done by Moses, whom we magnify; nor by the prophets, for whom we have the greatest veneration.

John 9:33

Ver. 33. If therefore this man (for still he apprehended him no more) had not some special authority from God, and there were not some special presence of God with him, he could do nothing that is of this nature. It is a work beyond the power of man, and beyond that power first we read God did ever trust any man with.

John 9:34

Ver. 34. The Pharisees seeing that they could by no arts bring this poor blind man to their lure, either to deny, or speak any thing in abatement of the miracle which Christ had wrought upon him; nor yet to agree with them, that Christ was a great sinner; fall at last to a downright railing; they tell him, he was *altogether born in sins*. So were all of them. David had taught them, that there was none righteous, no not one; and confessed concerning himself, Ps 51:5, that he was conceived in iniquity, and that in sin his mother had brought him forth. They had learned from Job, that none can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean; nothing can be clean that is born of a woman, Job 14:4. Their meaning therefore in this phrase must be something more; and possibly the adjective ολος, which signifieth whole, (we translate it as if it were ολως, *altogether*) doth import thus much. They do not only tell this man that he was born in sin, but that he was whole or altogether born in sin, that is, under the guilt of sin: nor do they mean only the common corruption and contagion of human nature, derived from the loss of God's image in man upon the fall of Adam, but some notorious sin. If any say, How could they think that he was guilty of any such thing before he was born?

Answer. It was the opinion of Pythagoras, one of the heathen philosophers, that when men and women died their souls went into other bodies that were then born, and in those bodies often suffered punishment for those enormous acts which they had been guilty of in former bodies. It is apparent that the Jews were some of them tainted with this notion, from Herod's saying, Mt 14:2 Mr 6:14, when, after the beheading of John the Baptist, he heard what great works Christ did, that John the Baptist was

risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works did show forth themselves in him; by which the best interpreters think, that Herod meant no more than that John the Baptist's soul was gone into another body, according to their notion borrowed from the heathens; for it had been easy for Herod by search to have found whether John the Baptist's body was risen from the dead.

So it is thought that the Pharisees here saying, *Thou wast altogether born in sins,* meant that his soul was a sordid, filthy soul, which in another body had committed vile and abominable things; and for those sins God set a mark upon him, even in his birth, and he was born blind. Or perhaps this phrase signified no more than a term of reviling; of which no great account can be given, as passionate men in the madness of their passions oft throw out words of reproach, of which neither themselves nor others can give any just and reasonable account.

And dost thou teach us? Thou that art such a marked villain from thy mother's womb, or that art such an ignorant idiot, dost thou think thyself fit to instruct us about true and false prophets, who are of God, and who are not? Surely we are to be thy teachers, and not thou ours.

And they cast him out: some think that casting out here signifieth no more than a turning him out of the place where they were; as the word signifieth, Ac 7:58 13:50. Others think its here to be understood of a judicial excommunication, or casting him out of communion with the Jewish church; which latter seemeth more probable, because of the notice or it brought to our Saviour, and the notice which he took of this poor man, upon this occasion. If it had been only a turning him out of the place where they were met, it is not probable that it would have made such a noise.

John 9:35

Ver. 35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out,* as was said in the former verse, probably by excommunication.

When he had found him, (whether casually, or upon an industrious search for him, the Scripture doth not say), he said unto him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Art thou one who art ready truly and seriously to embrace

the Messiah and Saviour of the world, who must not be only the Son of man, but also the Son of God? Art thou willing to accept, receive, and close with him, and to give up thyself to his obedience?

John 9:36

Ver. 36. It is as much as if he had said, Lord! How should I believe on him, of whom I have not heard? (So the disciples answered Paul, asking them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*, Ac 19:2). But, saith he, Lord, I am ready to believe on him, may I but know who he is. Our Lord had prepared this poor man's heart for the receiving of him; there wanted now nothing but the due revelation of the Messiah unto him. This our Saviour giveth him.

John 9:37

Ver. 37. This is as much as, I am he. Thou hast not only seen him with the eyes of thy body, but thou hast had experience of his Divine virtue and power, in giving thee sight who wert born blind: thus seeing also signifieth, Joh 14:9. It is very observable here, that miracles do not work faith, but confirm it. The blind man had experienced here a miracle wrought upon himself, but yet he is an unbeliever, until the Lord cometh to give him the revelation of his word: *faith cometh by hearing*: but together with this word we must also conceive a mighty power to have flowed from Christ, inwardly enlightening him, and enabling him to discern the truth of what he told him, and making him yet further willing to receive him, and close with him.

John 9:38

Ver. 38. Now is the work of faith with power wrought in his soul: he saith, Lord, I do acknowledge and receive thee as the Son of God; I am fully persuaded that thou art more than what thou art in thy external form and appearance, more than a mere man, and I give up myself to thee, to be ruled and guided by thee. And as a testimony of this, he performed some

act of external adoration to him. The word signifies prostration; he kneeled down to him, or he fell upon his face before him: we are not able to determine what particular act or posture of adoration he used; but there is nothing plainer, than that it is to be understood of such a Divine adoration and homage as is due unto God alone, for it was such as testified his faith in him as the Son of God, whom he had professed that he believed him to be, in the words immediately preceding: although therefore the word in the Greek be a word used sometimes to signify that civil respect which men show to their superiors, yet it cannot be so interpreted in this place, considering what went before.

John 9:39

Ver. 39. There is a great variety in interpreters notions about the *judgment* here mentioned. Some think that by it is meant the Divine counsel and decree: I am come into the world, to execute the just will, and counsel, and pleasure of my Father: and the event of it is this, that some who saw not, see; and some who see, in a sense are made blind. Others understand it of condemnation; I am come to execute the judgment of condemnation: but thus it is hardly reconcilable to Joh 3:17, where it is said, that *God sent not his Son to condemn the world*. The best notion of it is theirs who interpret it of the spiritual government of the world, committed to Christ, and managed by him with perfect rectitude and equity. One eminent part of this was his publishing the gospel, the law of faith. The event of which is, that many spiritually blind, and utterly unable to see the way that leads to eternal life, might (as this person that was born blind is now clear sighted) be enlightened with the saving knowledge of the truth; and many that think they see, should by their obstinate infidelity be more blind than they were from their birth. Not that I cast any such ill influence upon them; but this happeneth through their own sore eyes. I am *the light of the world*; and as it is of the nature of light to make other things visible to men; and it hath its effect, and doth so, where men's eyes are not ill affected with humours and the like; so the light of my gospel, by which I shine in the world, makes the way of salvation by me, ordained by my Father, Ac 3:18, evident and clear to many souls who are in darkness and the shadow of death: but it so happeneth, through the prejudices that others are prepossessed with against me, and the doctrine of my gospel by which I shine in the world, so full of ignorance, malice, and hatred against me and

the doctrine which I bring; that through their own perverseness, and the righteous judgment of God, at last giving men over to their own delusions, they are made more blind. In this sense this scripture agreeth with what was prophesied by Isa 8:14, *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;* and the words of Simeon in Lu 2:34, *Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;* as also with that of Paul, Ro 9:33.

John 9:40

Ver. 40. The Pharisees attended our Saviour almost in all places where he went, to catch something from him whereof they might accuse him: they could not but understand, that the import of our Saviour's last words was, that this poor blind man, now not only receiving bodily sight, (though born blind), but a spiritual illumination, by which he discerned that Christ was the Son of God, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, was an instance of those mentioned, who, not seeing before, upon Christ's coming saw; and that themselves and their masters were an instance of those whom he intended by such as saw, and by his coming were made blind; for our Saviour had often called them blind, and so represented them to the people to whom he preached, Mt 15:14 Lu 6:39. They therefore grew very angry, being very proud, and not patient to be thought or called blind, looking upon themselves as the greatest lights of the Jewish church.

John 9:41

Ver. 41. *If ye were blind;* if your ignorance were simple, and not affected, and you were sensible that your blindness were not incurable, and your sin might be pardoned. This appeareth to be the sense from the opposition of it, *now ye say, We see,* in the latter part of the verse. They were indeed blind, as to any true and saving sight of Christ, and of the true way of salvation by believing in him; seeing (as they apprehended) a way of salvation without Christ, by the works of the law, and wilfully shutting their eyes against the glorious light of the gospel shining on them.

Ye should have no sin; you should not have so much sin, so much guilt

upon your souls, as you now have: though your ignorance had been sin, yet it had not been so great a sin as a wilful shutting your eyes against the light.

But now ye say, We see; now that you have an opinion that you see, and boast in your knowledge of the law, as if you were the only men that saw; and upon this presumption reject the doctrine of salvation; *therefore your sin remaineth,* by it you not only conclude yourselves under the guilt of sin, but your sin remaineth upon you, not pardoned to you: which teacheth us, that without a true and saving sight of sin, and such a one as carrieth the soul out of itself to Christ for pardon and remedy, there is no hope of pardon and forgiveness from all the mercy that is in God.

John 10:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 10:1-18 Christ declareth himself to be the Door, and the good Shepherd.

Joh 10:19-21 Divers opinions concerning him.

Joh 10:22-30 He proveth to the Jews by his works that he is the

Christ, and asserts his unity with the Father.

Joh 10:31-38 The Jews go about to stone him: he justifieth his doctrine,

Joh 10:39-42 and escaping from them, goeth beyond Jordan, where

many believe on him.

Ver. 1. In this famous parable, which reacheth to Joh 10:30, our Saviour seemeth to drive two great designs:

1. To prove himself the true Shepherd.
2. To prove the Pharisees and teachers of those times thieves and robbers.

It should seem, that the sheepfolds in those countries were houses, which

had doors by which the entry was into them: there is no doubt but by *the sheepfold* is meant here the church of God, in which the people of God are gathered together in one.

By *the door* he apparently meaneth himself, as he himself speaketh, Joh 10:9. Or rather, more generally, that way which God hath appointed for any that are to take charge of his church to enter. He is both the Shepherd (the true Shepherd) and the Door: the Shepherd, as the care, conduct, and government of the church belongeth to him, and is upon his shoulders: the Door, as he is he whom the Father hath ordained to be the chief Shepherd, from whom all who pretend to any right to teach or govern in the church must derive both their authority and abilities. Now saith our Saviour, Whosoever they be, that thrust themselves into the care, conduct, and government of the church, without any call or warrant from my Father or me, who am the true Door, through which whosoever entereth into the church must enter; and the chief Shepherd, from whom he must derive, or be *a thief and a robber*; his very entrance makes it appear, that his end is not to feed the flock, but to feed himself; and that he drives only private designs of advantage to himself.

John 10:2

Ver. 2. As it is amongst men, the true shepherd goes into the sheepfold by the door; so it is in the church of God. He that taketh not the honour of governing the church to himself, but being called of God, as Aaron was, he is the shepherd of the sheep. This very argument the apostle useth to prove Christ to be the true High Priest, Heb 5:4,5, because he *glorified not himself to be made a High Priest*, but was made one by him who said unto him, Ps 110:4, (quoted there also, Joh 10:6), *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*. God (whose the church is, called his *heritage*, his *peculiar people*, &c.) was the Door, by which Christ, the chief Shepherd, entered into the flock; he made him the *Head of the church*. Eph 5:23. For this he is said to be sent; and often makes himself known to us under the notion of him whom the Father hath sent. And the under shepherds must also derive from Christ: as the Father's will in sending Christ was his door, so the will of Christ in sending others is their door; that is, their only true way of entering upon the charge of the flock of Christ. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*, Joh 20:21. There is

a double sending; the one is extraordinary, of which mission Christ speaketh to his apostles in that place; thus the apostles and first ministers of the gospel were sent; Christ breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Joh 20:22: and there was yet a fuller sending of these first shepherds, in the days of Pentecost, Ac 2:17. And there is a more ordinary sending, as to which God revealed his will, 2Ti 2:2, *The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others*. Thus the apostles, Ac 14:23, did themselves *ordain elders in every church*. And Paul for this purpose left Titus in Crete, to *set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city*, Tit 1:5. Whosoever entereth into any place in the church, for the feeding and governing of it, that way which God hath directed in his word, he entereth in by the door, he is the true shepherd. Concerning Christ's title, and his way of entrance, and the first preachers of the gospel, immediately sent by Christ, and declared to be sent by the effusion of the Spirit in the days of Pentecost, there can be no question made by any who believeth the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. This text declares, that whosoever cometh into the church with right, and as a true shepherd to it, must come in at the door, by a call from God, (as Christ was sent), or from Christ; either by an extraordinary mission, or in such a method and order as Christ hath in his word directed, either from his own mouth, or by the mouths of his apostles, whom he, ascending up into heaven, left in the first charge of his church. This is that which every one ought in the first place to look after. We shall observe in God's whole course with his church, that in the corruption of the state of the church, when it was eminently deviated from the rule he had set, he sent some by an extraordinary mission. Such were the prophets, whose writings make up a part of Scripture. Such were the apostles, and first ministers of the gospel. Such, we say, were our first reformers in Germany, and other parts: nor is it any prejudice to it, that they were able to work no miracles; we read of no miracles wrought by the prophets of old, unless by two or three of them. Their faithful declaring the will of God, and calling men back to the plain law of God in a time when the generality were obviously departed from it; together with their spirit of courage and boldness in their work, was evidence enough that God had sent them. But this text only declareth this general truth, That every true shepherd coming into the church, must come in the right way, by the door. So the great Shepherd of the sheep did, being sent by his Father, whose the church is, to take care of it: so must all inferior shepherds do, by him whom God the Father hath

made the door; according to whose directions all the affairs of the church must be ordered.

John 10:3

Ver. 3. By *the porter* is understood God; or more particularly, (to show the order of the Holy Trinity in working), the Holy Spirit, who openeth the hearts of men to receive and embrace Jesus Christ, who is the chief Shepherd; and the sheep are able to distinguish his voice from the voice of thieves and robbers. Probably they had in those countries particular words and phrases, which, their shepherds having used them to, the sheep understood, and moved according to the direction of them. Some think they had also names for their sheep, (as we have for our dogs and horses), which they understood. Otherwise, it only signifieth that particular knowledge which Christ hath of all those that are truly his: as the former phrase signified, that judgment of discerning spirits and doctrines, which was in an eminent degree in the first ministers of the gospel, and is yet in a measure in believers; by which, though they cannot perfectly and infallibly judge concerning truth, and the will of God, in all things, yet they can in a great measure do it; and are not ordinarily led aside into pernicious and damnable errors, to the ruin of their souls. And, saith our Saviour, the true shepherd leadeth the sheep out; that is, into their pastures and true feeding places. This is eminently true concerning Christ the chief Shepherd: when he came into the world, God opened to him the door of his church; so as though he was rejected by many, (the builders and rulers of the Jewish church in particular), yet he was by many received; multitudes followed him; many truly believed on him, and truly heard his voice; he had a particular knowledge of them who truly were his sheep; he knew Nathanael while he was yet under the fig tree; he led them out into their true pastures, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to them, and showing them the way of life and salvation. It is in its measure true of every inferior shepherd, that truly derives from Christ; God giveth unto such favour in the eyes of his people. The true sheep of Christ hear them, receive and embrace the truth delivered by them. They take a particular charge of them, and they lead them to Christ, and to the embracing of his gospel; as by the holy and true doctrine which they preach to them, so by their holy lives and conversations before them.

John 10:4

Ver. 4. In our country at this day, shepherds generally follow their sheep, which go before them. In other countries, as France, &c., it is otherwise at this day; the shepherds go before their flocks, and their flocks follow them, upon some sounds they make. In Palestine (which was the Jews country) it should seem that the shepherds sometimes went before their sheep, and sometimes followed them. David followed his father's sheep, 2Sa 7:8 Ps 78:71. On the other side, God is spoken of, Ps 80:1, under the notion of the *Shepherd of Israel*, who leadeth Joseph like a flock. And the psalmist, Ps 23:1, speaking of God as his Shepherd, saith, Ps 23:2, *he leadeth me beside the still waters*. Christ here speaketh of himself under the notion of a shepherd that went before his sheep, and whom the sheep followed; and thereby lets us know the duty of all faithful pastors in the church, so to live, that their flocks may follow them with safety; which cannot be, unless they follow Christ, 1Co 11:1. For, saith our Saviour, those that are my true sheep, they know my voice; thereby signifying that power of discerning between truth and damnable errors, which the Lord gives unto all true believers, 1Jo 2:27.

John 10:5

Ver. 5. This he further enlargeth upon, telling them, that his sheep would not follow those that did not lead them into his truth, and in his ways, for they understood not such voices. Here ariseth a question, Whether the elect of God, or such as, being truly called, and believe in Christ, are the sheep of Christ in the most strict and proper sense, may not be seduced into errors, and led away by strangers?

Answer. First, We must distinguish between single persons and the generality of believers. As in a flock the generality keep together, following the voice of the true shepherd, though some particular sheep may wander; so the generality of believers will be found keeping close to the truth and doctrine of Christ, though amongst them some particular persons may be seduced, and be led away by seducers. Secondly, We must distinguish between errors and damnable errors; a pertinacious adherence to which will divide the soul from Christ, and end in the ruin of souls.

Christ's sheep may follow strangers, dissembling the spiritual voice of the true Shepherd, a little way, but they will not follow them into such errors as will plunge their souls in eternal ruin and destruction. Thirdly, They may hear even this voice of strangers speaking to them perverse and damnable things; but it will be but for a short time; God will reduce and bring them back again; *they shall never perish*, Joh 10:28.

John 10:6

Ver. 6. Our Saviour was wont to instruct them in the mysteries of the kingdom of God by parables, that is, similitudes taken from reasonable actions of men, which might be, and were, proper to express spiritual things by. Wherefore he used this method in teaching, we are told, Mt 13:10-13. They well enough understood the words in which those parables were delivered; but the inward sense, the spiritual mysteries shadowed out in those similitudes, these they understood not; neither the common sort of his disciples understood them, nor did the better sort of his disciples understand them without a further explication of them. Our Lord therefore, in the following verses, comes to give them a large explication of the parable.

John 10:7

Ver. 7. Our Saviour had before been speaking of *the door* in another notion; there he spake of the door of the shepherd; here, of the door of the sheep: there, of the door, that is, the true and regular way of entrance into the care, conduct, and government of the church; here, of the true way of entrance, not into the church militant only, but into the church triumphant. It may be also understood of the door, or way of entrance and admission, into the church visible here upon the earth. Circumcision, baptism, external profession, are the doors into the visible Church; but none, unless by Christ, that is, by a true and lively faith wrought by the Spirit of Christ in the soul, can be a true member of Christ's invisible church here upon the earth, much less a member of his glorious church in heaven.

John 10:8

Ver. 8. This must not be understood of the prophets, but of such only as came before Christ, not being sent by him: all those that taught people another way of life and salvation, than by believing in the Messiah, who was to be revealed for the salvation of the world; all such did but seek themselves, not the good of the people's souls; and destroyed souls instead of profiting or doing them any good. But those that were mine by an eternal election, or by my special grace bestowed upon them, did not embrace them.

John 10:9

Ver. 9. Our Saviour here lets us know, that he meant by *the door*, in the former verse, the door of salvation; the way by which every man must enter into life that findeth life; not the door only by which every true pastor must enter into the church, but by which every soul that shall be saved must enter into heaven; which is the doctrine which he before taught, Joh 3:16,18,36. And he, who so believeth in me, shall be so guided, and governed, and taught, that he shall be secure, and want nothing for the management of his whole conversation in the world. Under the notion of pasture here, are signified all good things that the soul can stand in need of: it is much the same promise with that Joh 6:35, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst;* and with that Ps 84:11; as also with the Ps 23:1-6; to which Psalm our Saviour is thought in this parable to have a special reference.

John 10:10

Ver. 10. Look as it is with the true shepherd, that owneth the sheep, and whose the flock is; he cometh regularly into the care and conduct of it; he cometh into the sheepfold, to take care of the life and welfare of his sheep: but a thief and a robber, that climbeth into the window, and so gets into the sheepfold, he comes not there out of any good will to the sheep, but merely, by destroying the sheep to provide for himself. So it is with them that, without any call or derivation of authority from me, thrust themselves into the care and conduct of the church of God; they do it with no good

design to the souls of people, not out of any care or respect unto their good, but merely that they may serve themselves in the ruin of my people's souls. But that is not my end in coming into the world: I am not come to destroy them, but to save them; I am come, that they might have a spiritual life, and at last eternal life; that they might live the life of grace here, and not fail of the life of glory hereafter; and not only that they may barely live, but that their life may abound, through the upholdings, strengthenings, quickenings, and comfortings of my holy and gracious Spirit; that my beloved may not only drink, but drink abundantly; not only live, but live abundantly furnished with all the affluences and accommodations of a spiritual life.

John 10:11

Ver. 11. That good Shepherd prophesied of, Isa 40:11. I cannot agree with those who think that Christ here speaketh not of himself as *the good Shepherd*, with reference to his office, as he was the Messiah, but only in opposition to the hirelings after mentioned. I can allow that he thus calleth himself, both in the one respect and the other; but I cannot allow the latter sense exclusively to the former; for what followeth is peculiar to the Messiah, of whom it was prophesied, Da 9:26, that he should be *cut off, but not for himself*: and though it be true, that the true shepherd will hazard his life for his sheep, as David did, when he encountered the lion and the bear, 1Sa 17:34,35; yet it cannot be said to be the duty of the best shepherd to lay down his life for the sheep, for the life of a man is much more valuable than the life of any beast. Our Saviour therefore, doubtless, in this place showeth wherein he was the most excellent Shepherd, far excelling the best shepherds in the world, because he was come, not only to expose, hazard, and adventure his life, but actually, willingly, and freely to lay it down.

John 10:12

Ver. 12. Those that deal in sheep, either keep them themselves, or by their near relations, as Jacob's sons, and David, and Laban's daughters did; or else they hired persons to keep them for them. There is a great deal of difference between the care of an owner, and the care of a hired servant in

any thing; the owner taketh a more natural, diligent care, because the whole profit of the sheep, thriving and doing well, returneth unto himself. The hired servant may be careful in his measure and degree; but no such servant will take the care that an owner will take, nor run the hazards that he will run, because he knoweth that, let the flock thrive never so well, he shall have no more than the wages he is hired for: therefore what our Saviour saith is true concerning the generality of such hired servants, they will take some care of the flocks of sheep in their trust so long as there appeareth no danger, but if any danger appeareth, they leave the sheep, and flee, and the wolf cometh, and scattereth the sheep.

John 10:13

Ver. 13. The reason why he that is a mere hired servant, and hath no property in the sheep, fleeth, is, because he is a hireling, and doth what he doth merely for his wages; and when a danger ariseth, which his wages will not balance, he will never encounter it; he hath no property in the sheep, nor any love to them, nor care for them.

John 10:14

Ver. 14. I am no hireling; the sheep are mine own; I have a true love and affection for them, which obliges me to a just and true care of them; I know them by name, (as was said before), by a particular distinct knowledge; or I love them, and have tender bowels for them. And as I know them, so I am mutually known, and owned, and acknowledged by them; they have heard my voice, and discerned between my voice and the voice of such as are strangers, refusing to follow them, but following me, going before them. Thus our Saviour in the same parable giveth us both notes to know a true and good shepherd, and particularly to know that himself was the true, good, and most excellent Shepherd; and also notes by which we might know who they are that are the true sheep of Christ.

John 10:15

Ver. 15. By these words our Saviour openeth how he knew his sheep, and

should be again known of them, even as the Father knoweth him, and he knows his Father: this mutual knowledge between the Father and Christ was joined with perfect love and delight. Thus our Saviour knoweth those that are his sheep, not only fully and distinctly, so as to call them all by their names; but so as to love them, delight in them; so as to be ready to lay down his life for their good, and eternal salvation. Christ, to show not only the sincerity, but the degrees, of his love to his people, doth often compare it to the love wherewith his Father loved him, Joh 15:9 17:23,26. So that if we can believe that God the Father loved Christ his only begotten Son, we may also believe that both the Father and Christ love those that are truly the sheep of Christ. The love that Christ hath to his people is as true and as certain as the Father's love to Christ, or Christ's love to his Father; and this could be showed by no higher act than that of laying down his life, Joh 15:13. Now, saith he, *I lay down*, that is, I am ready to lay down, or I shall shortly lay down, *my life for the sheep*: whether *sheep* can signify all and every person born into the world, is their concern more strictly to inquire, who are so tenacious of that point. That Christ died equally for all and every man: as also, whether upon that principle that absurdity must not follow. That Christ loved those who shall yet perish eternally, with such a love as the Father loved him, and he loved the Father.

John 10:16

Ver. 16. *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold;* our Saviour meaneth the Gentiles, who belonged not to the Jewish state and church, so were not under the same laws and government; for, 1Jo 2:2, he was not only *a propitiation* for the sins of the Jews, *but for the sins of the whole world*: he calleth those sheep, because the Lord knew who were his from eternity; and they were sheep in the counsels of God, and they were suddenly to be made his sheep by calling, the gospel being soon to be preached to all nations.

Then also (saith he) *I must bring in;* it is so written in God's book, the promises and prophecies to that purpose must be fulfilled. They shall not only hear the voice and sound of my gospel, though going out of Zion, yet not terminated in Zion; but they shall embrace, receive, and believe that joyful sound.

And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd; and there shall be but one church; as I am one Shepherd, so there shall be but one flock of sheep; one body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, as there is one God and Father of all, as the apostle speaketh, Eph 4:4-6.

John 10:17

Ver. 17. Christ here asserts two things.

1. That he was about to lay down his life, and should now very shortly lay it down; but yet so as he should take it again; that is, rise again from the dead; death should not have dominion over him: by which he comforteth his disciples concerning his death, declaring,
 - a) That he was a freewill offering, as he further openeth it in the next verse.
 - b) That he should not perish in the grave, but rise again from the dead.
2. That therefore the Father loved him; for:
 - a) By this means he declared himself with power to be the Son of God, and the Father could not but love his Son. And:
 - b) By this means also *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Php 2:8.*

So as that the Father had many reasons to love the Son; and amongst others, this obedience of his to death, even the accursed death upon the cross, to fulfil his Father's will, for the redemption and salvation of the sons of men, was not the least: and by this also he commendeth his Father's love to those that are his sheep, in that his Father loveth him with the more exceeding love, for laying down his life, to purchase their redemption and salvation.

John 10:18

Ver. 18. *No man taketh it from me by force, without my willing it and consenting to it; the Jews and Pilate will take it from me, but not without my free and voluntary surrender of it: and this is that which we read, Ac 4:27,28, For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Plate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* By which he asserts his Divine power, and so comforteth his disciples against the disturbances they were like to have from the sight of his passion, at this time not many months off. And this, saith he, is the will of my Father, that which my Father hath given me commission to do, and for which he hath sent me into the world: and thus he declareth his death to be a fulfilling of his Father's purpose, and an act of obedience to his Father's will; and indeed, in his obedience in the thing lay much of the virtue of his death.

John 10:19

Ver. 19. Christ by his words often caused a division amongst the Jews, so as they could not agree in their sentiments and censures about him; which was either caused through the mixture amongst them of such as truly believed with those who believed not; or else from the mixture of a more considering part amongst them with others who were more brutish, irrational, and full of passion. We met with much the same, Joh 7:43, and again, Joh 9:16. It is one method of God's providence for the deliverance of his servants from unreasonable men, to cause divisions among them, so as they cannot agree among themselves.

John 10:20

Ver. 20. Some of the people said, *He hath a devil, and is mad;* for (as was said before) this was the opinion of the Jews concerning all that were mad and distracted, that it was by the influence of the devil, and they were infested with an evil spirit.

John 10:21

Ver. 21. But others, that were less passionate and brutish in their expressions, and more thinking and considerate in passing their judgments, said, *These are not the words* (so we translate it; the word in the Greek is ρηματα, which signifies things, and matters, as well as words; and by what follows, one would think that were the more proper translation of it here) *of him that hath a devil*. They instance in no words, but in a matter of fact; asking if a devil could open the eyes of the blind? That is, of one that was born blind; for they certainly speak with reference to that miracle which he had so lately wrought upon such a person.

John 10:22

Ver. 22. This verse affords two questions, which have not a little troubled interpreters.

1. What feast of dedication this was?
2. Whether dedications of places to the worship of God be warrantable or no, in that manner as they are dedicated amongst the papists at this day?

As to the first of these, that which we have about it in Scripture is this: Ex 40:1-15, we have God's command and direction for the hallowing, or dedication, of the sanctuary, or the tabernacle, which was the first house we read of in Scripture set apart for the public worship of God. We have a particular account of Moses's punctual obedience to that command, Le 8:1-36. When the temple was built by Solomon, we read of Solomon's dedication of it; but nothing of ceremony used at it, only a multitude of sacrifices offered, (which was God's ordinary worship in the Jewish church), and a feast kept fourteen days: we read of no law that he made for the annual keeping of it; no obligation upon all the males in Israel to be present at it. As concerning the other solemn feasts which God appointed, Le 23:1-44, Solomon's feast of dedication in this differed from them, that it held double the time, for seven or eight days was the longest time that any of those feasts were kept. This temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans and Babylonians, and rebuilt by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, as we read in the books known by those names. In analogy to the practice of

Solomon, when they had finished the building of the temple, there was another feast of dedication kept; of which we read, Ezr 6:16-18; but we read of nothing done in that dedication but the offering of one hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve he-goats; and setting the priests and Levites in order for the service of God. This temple was defaced by Antiochus, but not wholly ruined; and was repaired and purified by Judas Maccabeus, of which we read, Apc 2Mac 2:23 10:6-8 Apc 1Mac 4:52,58; which books of Maccabees, though they be no canonical Scripture, yet are as good a piece of ecclesiastical history as any: and Josephus also giveth us an account of it, (Antiq. 1. 12.

c. 11.). We do not read of any thing they did, saving offering sacrifices, and setting things in order, according to the law of Moses, and feasting; Josephus tells us they used all lawful pleasures. We do not read, that either God appointed an annual feast of dedication for the sanctuary; nor Solomon, nor Ezra, for either of the temples; but we read twice in the book of Maccabees, and Josephus (writing the Jewish history) tells us, that Judas Maccabeus made it a law, That the feast should be kept yearly for eight days, in memory of that mercy which God had showed them. This was without doubt the feast of dedication here mentioned: for this feast began upon the twenty-fifth day of the month Chisleu, which answereth our months of November and December, and took in part of each; so it agreeth with the text, which saith that *it was winter*; whereas Solomon's dedication was in autumn; Ezra's in the spring. Some make a question, Whether Judas Maccabeus did well in appointing this annual feast, neither Solomon nor Ezra having, that we read of, before done any such thing: and that our Saviour was not at this feast in any honour to the feast, but only to take advantage of the multitude of people that met, to preach the gospel. For my own part, as I will not defend, so I durst not condemn him: I see no more that he did in this, than was done, Es 9:27,28, as to the days of Purim. Magistrates certainly have a power to appoint public days, yea, annual days of thanksgivings, for mercies never to be forgotten. Indeed they cannot make a day holy, so as it shall be a sin against God to labour in it, or to use any pleasures (as in the case of the sabbath); but they may command the public worship of God to be performed on particular days, and men ought to attend it when with convenience they can; only they ought to take care that such days be not spent in luxury and profaneness, and that they be for signal providences, and not so multiplied, and frequently renewing, as that the service of them degenerate into mere matter of form. Whether Christ went up in order to the feast, or because of

the great concourse of people he knew would be there at that time, cannot be determined.

For the second question, it is not so much a question, whether it be lawful in a solemn and decent manner to consecrate a house to the public worship of God, by such acts of worship as God hath appointed under the gospel, such as prayer and praise, reading, preaching, and hearing the word; as whether it may be done by such rites and ceremonies as the papists do it with, for the which there is no institution. For the former, though it may be some will not agree it necessary; yet, certainly, no sober person can deny, but if a place be made for people ordinarily to meet in to worship God, there they may as well meet at the first to praise God for his mercy, and to beg his presence when they shall there meet together to worship God, and to hear his word, as they may meet there afterwards for prayer, praise, preaching, or hearing. But this satisfieth not the papists. They first do it by many superstitious ceremonies. Secondly, they plead for the holiness of the place when so consecrated. As for the ceremonies of their consecrations, or dedications, Bellarmine reckoneth up eight.

1. The painting twelve crosses in the several parts of the house to be consecrated, and lighting up twelve lamps, one at every cross; to signify the twelve apostle, who carried the banner of the cross throughout the world.
2. The bishop's knocking at the door with a pastoral staff, commanding the devil to give place and invoking of God, the angels, and the saints, to grant their presence in that place; which they make to signify the opening of people's hearts by the preaching of the gospel.
3. The scattering of ashes upon the floor of the place, upon which the bishop writes letters of the Latin and Greek alphabet, in the figure of the cross.
4. The sprinkling of the place with holy water, and lighting up wax candles.
5. The anointing of the crosses before mentioned, and painted on the walls.
6. The sprinkling of the place with a mixture of water, wine, salt, and

ashes.

7. The anointing of the temple and the alter.
8. The keeping of a festival upon it. And for all these they have devised several significances, too vain and fanciful to repeat.

For none of which we know the least warrant in holy writ; nor can we conceive how any consecration can imprint any character of holiness upon a place, or make prayers offered up in or toward it more acceptable; though we know it did so as to the temple, both because it was an eminent type of Christ, and also because of the particular promises made to it, 1Ki 9:1-28; which were not applicable to the synagogues, which were the Jews' ordinary meeting places for public worship; but only to the temple, upon the account before mentioned. Though we say that all places for that use ought to be used with all imaginable decency, and we ought during the public worship of God to carry ourselves in them with all reverence, because of the angels, and because of the special presence of God, promised to the assemblies of his people in his name, and for his public worship.

John 10:23

Ver. 23. Of this *Solomon's porch* we read, 1Ki 6:3, that Solomon *built the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad*. This was the place where they walked in winter. Though this was destroyed when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians; yet it seemeth that there was one built that was like it, and kept that name. It should seem that it was a place better defended from the weather, than those other parts of the temple where in summer time they used to walk.

John 10:24

Ver. 24. Our Saviour was at this time within three months of his crucifying: he had often before told them that he was the Light of the world, the true Shepherd; he had preached doctrine to them, from whence they might easily have concluded what he was; he had wrought works

among them which none could do but by a Divine power; but he had been very wary of telling them in plain terms that he was the Messiah, the Christ; when at any time he had so declared himself to his disciples, or they had owned him as such, he still laid a charge upon them to tell no man of it, Mt 16:20, &c. They therefore come to him, demanding a plain resolution in the case, as some of their minds were in some suspense about it. It was but a captious question; for had he denied it, besides that it had been the denial of a truth which he came to bear a testimony unto, they had had a great advantage to have lessened his reputation amongst those who had believed on him as such. Had he affirmed it, he had brought himself in danger of the Roman governor; for the Jews indeed expected a Messiah, a Christ, but to be a temporal prince, to deliver them from their enemies; and for him to have declared himself such a Christ as they expected, had been fatal to him. He therefore answers with his usual prudence and wariness to this question.

John 10:25

Ver. 25. I have in effect told it you more than once; I have told you that I am sent of the Father, &c., I have said enough for you to conclude it; but you will not understand, you will not receive it, you will not believe what I say. What need you any further witness of it, than those works which I do by Divine power; by virtue of my oneness with my Father, and of that power and authority which he hath committed to me, that by them I might confirm the doctrine which I have taught you?

John 10:26

Ver. 26. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,* Ac 13:48. Here our Saviour giveth this as one reason of the Jews' unbelief, that they were not of his sheep. Were they not Israelites? Yes, but all are not Israel that are descended of Israel. It seems a very hard interpretation that some would put, upon these words, Ye believe not, because you are not teachable, and fit to be made my sheep; the words are ου γαρ ετε εκ των προβατων των εμων. Nor can such interpretation be paralleled from any other scripture. That by *sheep*, here, cannot be meant members of the church, is plain; for they were of the church of Israel, whom the Lord led

as a flock, as the psalmist speaks, Ps 80:1. That believers, and such as are truly called and sanctified, are not meant, is as plain; for then the sense would be: You believe not because you believe not; besides, our Saviour had before said, he had other sheep that were not of that fold, (by which he meant the Gentiles), such for whom he prayed, Joh 17:20, being such as should believe on him. By *sheep* therefore he meaneth, certainly, such as were *ordained to life*, as Ac 13:48. Nor will it therefore follow, that God's not ordaining of them to life, was the near and immediate cause of their not believing; but their own stubborn and perverse wills in not repenting, that they might believe; as our Saviour tells them, Mt 21:32: that is, not turning from their gross and sinful ways, which they might have done by virtue of that common grace of God which was afforded them in the gospel, by the preaching of John the Baptist, and of Christ himself.

John 10:27

Ver. 27. This is the same which he said: See Poole on "Joh 10:4".

John 10:28

Ver. 28. I do give them, and I will give them, eternal life; as soon as they shall come to hear, and believe my voice, and to follow me, they shall have a sure right and title to it; and when my Father by his providence shall remove them out of the world, and in the great day, they shall be taken up into the actual possession of it. For *they shall never perish*, but though they may fall, they shall rise again by repentance. They are in my hand, and my hand shall preserve them, none shall ever pluck them out of it; they shall be preserved through faith, by the power of God, to eternal life and salvation.

John 10:29

Ver. 29. All that are my sheep became so by my Father's donation and gift, so as my Father is equally with myself concerned in the preservation of them to that happy end, to which he hath ordained and designed them. Those that would pluck them out of my hand, and deprive them of that

eternal life which I will give them, must be too strong, not for me alone, but for my Father also; which none is, for who can be too strong for omnipotence?

John 10:30

Ver. 30. My Father and I are one, not only in counsel and will, (as Joh 17:11,22, and believers are said to be *of one heart*, Ac 4:32), but in nature, power, and essence; for it is plain that our Saviour here ascribes the preservation of his sheep, not to the will, but to the power of his Father: *None is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*. And it is plain by what follows, that the Jews thus understood our Saviour. Some eminent protestant interpreters expound this of a oneness in consent and will, doing the same things, and driving the same design, both agreeing to preserve the sheep unto eternal life; but (with all respect unto them) I think the context implies more, though this be not excluded.

John 10:31

Ver. 31. Tumultuously, as we read they did once before, Joh 8:59. From whence we may learn with what design they came to Christ, Joh 10:24, plainly to tell them whether he were the Christ. By the law of God the false prophet was to be stoned; but he was first to be judicially tried and judged. This was but a tumultuous action of an enraged multitude.

John 10:32

Ver. 32. The word translated *good* is of a very large signification; signifying excellent, useful, profitable, beauteous, &c., whatsoever in common speech cometh under the notion of good. I (saith our Saviour) never did harm to any of you, but I have been the instrument of a great deal of good to you. I have given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, healed many that were sick of grievous diseases, cast out many devils out of those which were infested with or possessed by them. Do any of these deserve any such usage at your hands? What maketh you in such a rage against me?

John 10:33

Ver. 33. *The Jews answered him,* These are not the things we are incensed against thee for; we grant that thou hast done many good works amongst us; these we gratefully acknowledge. But this is that which we are not able to bear, that whereas thou art but a mere man, by thy discourses thou makest thyself equal with God, and so art guilty of *blasphemy*; which is committed as well by arrogating to ourselves what is proper to God, as by imputing to God the natural or moral imperfections of the creature; and the blasphemer deserveth to be stoned, according to the law of God. By this it is manifest, that the Jews understood our Saviour, affirming that he and his Father were one, as asserting himself one in essence with his Father, not in will only.

John 10:34

Ver. 34. This was written, Ps 82:6. The whole Scripture of the Old Testament, being wrote by holy men, inspired of God, and directive of men's conversation before men, and towards God, is sometimes called *the law*, Ps 19:7. It was spoken concerning magistrates, and the governors of God's people, who, being God's deputies and vicegerents, intrusted to execute the judgments and vengeance of God, are dignified with the name of gods.

John 10:35

Ver. 35. If God dignified those men (and many of them were also vile and sinful men) with the title of gods, because they had a commission to govern people according to the law of God; and none must contradict what God hath said in his word; there can be no falsehood in the revelation of any part of the Divine will.

John 10:36

Ver. 36. Suppose I were no more than a mere man, yet being *sanctified*, that is, set apart of God for the special work of man's redemption, and sent of God into the world with commission both to reveal and to do his will, yet dare you say that I blaspheme, *because I said, I am the Son of God?* In the place (viz. Ps 82:6) where God said of magistrates, *Ye are gods*, he also added, *all of you are children of the Most High*; you have therefore no reason to rage at me, though I did say I was the Son of God; being one whom the Father hath in his eternal counsels set apart for this great and special work, and actually by his providence sent into the world for the finishing and despatching of it. But we must take heed that we do not understand our Saviour here, as if he in another sense assumed to him the title of the Son of God; it was enough for him at present to assert, that the title well enough belonged to him, if he indeed had been no more than the Son of man, as they said.

John 10:37

Ver. 37. Our Saviour doth often appeal to his works to testify concerning his Divine mission and power; these works he here calleth the *works of his Father*; by which he doth not only mean works that are pleasing and acceptable to God, as acts of obedience to the will of God performed by men may be called, and are, Joh 6:28,29; nor (as I conceive) only those works which he did by commission and authority from his Father, which, Joh 17:4, he calleth the work which his Father had given him to do; but those works which none but God could do; such were the multiplication of the loaves, Joh 6:1-14, the curing of him who was born blind, Joh 9:1-41, &c. If (saith our Saviour) I do not do those works which no mere man ever did, give me no credit; but if I do those works which can be done by no human art or power, you have reason to believe me.

John 10:38

Ver. 38. If I do such works as can be done by no less than a Divine power, being beyond the power and ability of all creatures; then, though you will not give credit to any bare affirmations of myself, because I say I am the Son of God, yet believe the things for the testimony that my works give unto it. Proper effects give testimony to the proper cause; he who doth

those things which none but God can do, must needs be God, or empowered by God to do them. This is the way for you to know, be persuaded, and believe, that the Father is in me by his mighty, Divine, working power: Joh 14:10, *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*; and I work in and together with him. This phrase, *The Father is in me, and I in him*, teacheth us three things concerning Christ:

1. His oneness in nature and essence with the Father.
2. His personal distinction from his Father: here are two mentioned, *the Father*, and *me*: none can properly be said to be in himself.
3. The most perfect and intimate indwelling of one of the Persons in the Holy Trinity in the other.

John 10:39

Ver. 39. *Therefore they sought again to take him*; because he said, that the Father was in him, and he in the Father; by which they well enough understood, that he asserted a union with the Father. They did not again go about to stone him, as they did before; he had sufficiently stopped their mouths as to their imputation of blasphemy; but they seek to apprehend him, with a design (no doubt) to carry him before the sanhedrim, their great court, which had cognizance of those things. But as he had once and again before, so he now again escapeth out of their hands; whether by darkening the air before their eyes, or (as some would have it) making his body invisible, by his Divine power, or what other way, the Scripture tells us not, and it is great rashness to determine.

John 10:40

Ver. 40. Christ's time was not yet come when he should be betrayed and crucified; it was yet three months and more to it; he saw the Jews at Jerusalem were in such a rage and fury, that there was no staying in that place: he goes beyond Jordan to Bethabara, where he found John at first baptizing, Joh 1:28, before he baptized in Aenon near Salim, Joh 3:23. See Poole on "Joh 1:28". Possibly he chose that place as being a place where

John had been preparing a way for him, by turning men's hearts in some measure for receiving the gospel, and pointing out Christ to his disciples, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

And there he abode: how long he abode there we cannot tell; probably till he took his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem; of which the other evangelists speak, Mt 20:17 Mr 10:32 Lu 18:31. What he did in Galilee during these three months John reports not, only saith ... (see Joh 10:41).

John 10:41

Ver. 41. God so ordered it in the wisdom of his providence, that though Elijah and Elisha under the law wrought miracles, by which they confirmed their Divine mission; yet John, coming immediately before Christ, as his messenger and forerunner, wrought none; that so the glory of Christ in working miracles when he came might be more clear and evident. This made the people, that came to Christ while he was in Galilee, say thus amongst themselves, We paid a great veneration to John the Baptist, yet he never did those things which Christ hath done: and whatsoever John told us of this person hath proved true; he hath done, and doth, greater things than ever John did, and is in the judgment of sense to be preferred before him, should we not now believe in him? John told us he was *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world;* and told us much more concerning him, which our eyes see is true.

John 10:42

Ver. 42. Some believed on him as such whom John Baptist had spoken him to be; others possibly believed on him in the sense mentioned Joh 2:23; not to the saving of their souls, but as one sent of God, a great Prophet, no ordinary man. The rage of men shall not hinder the progress of the gospel.

John 11:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 11:1-46 The sickness and death of Lazarus: Jesus raiseth him to life after he had been dead four days: many Jews believe.

Joh 11:47-54 The Pharisees hold a council against Christ: Caiaphas prophesieth: Jesus retires from places of public resort.

Joh 11:55-57 At the approach of the passover the Jews inquire about him: the rulers give orders to apprehend him.

Ver. 1 *Bethany* (as appears by Joh 11:18) was *nigh unto Jerusalem*, not wholly at two miles distance from it: but our Saviour was not at this time in Judea, for, Joh 11:7, he saith to his disciples, *Let us go into Judea again*. He was at this time in Galilee, or in Peraea; and we shall find, Joh 11:17, that Lazarus had been in his grave four days before our Saviour got thither: so as we must allow at least six or seven days between the time when Christ heard of Lazarus's sickness, and the time when he came to Bethany. This Bethany is here only described to us as the place where Martha and Mary lived, or at least where they were born. Some think that Bethany was only a part of the Mount Olivet; but others, more probably, think that it was some little town or city, standing within that part of the Mount Olivet; for it is here called a town, and, Lu 10:38,39, the place where these two sisters lived is called a village.

John 11:2

Ver. 2. We read of a woman, Lu 7:37,38, that came behind our Saviour while he was at dinner, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, brought an alabaster box of ointment, stood at his feet behind him weeping, washing his feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair; but it appears by the story, she had been before a notorious sinner. We read of another woman, Mt 26:6,7 Mr 14:3, that poured a box of ointment on our Saviour's head as

he was at dinner in the house of Simon the leper: but we, in those two evangelists, read nothing of her washing his feet with her tears, or wiping them with her hair; but in the next chapter of this Gospel, Joh 12:3, we have a story which (whether it be the same with the other or no, I cannot tell) is that doubtless to which this verse refers: the names and circumstances much agree. There were other Mary's, (for Mary was a very ordinary name among them), but this was that Mary which is mentioned Joh 12:3, that anointed the Lord with ointment, &c. It was her brother was sick.

John 11:3

Ver. 3. Christ (as was said before) seems to have been very familiar at the house of these two sisters, and often to have made them his hostesses; and it should appear by this verse that in those visits he had showed particular kindnesses to this their brother Lazarus, who was now sick; this makes them style their brother, *he whom thou lovest*. They plead no merits either of their own or his, but only plead with him for his own goodness and love. Nor do they express in particular what they desired for their brother, though it is easily understood by their representation of his state and condition.

John 11:4

Ver. 4. God hath not sent this sickness upon Lazarus to determine his being upon the earth; or such a separation of the soul of Lazarus from his body, as there shall be no reunion of it before the general resurrection (which is our ordinary notion of death); God hath not sent this sickness for that purpose, but that he might be glorified by his Son raising him from the dead. God is glorified when his Son is glorified; and Christ is glorified when his Divine power is manifested, so as men acknowledge him to be what indeed he is.

John 11:5

Ver. 5. He doubtless loved them with a special, distinguishing love, as

persons chosen in him to eternal life before the foundation of the world, given unto him by an eternal donation, called by him with an effectual calling, to own and receive him as their Saviour; but this text seemeth to speak of him as loving this family with a human love, which inclineth man to a complacency in an object beloved: he had a kindness for the whole family; they had showed them kindness in his state of humiliation, and he loved those that so loved him, Pr 8:17.

John 11:6

Ver. 6. Though he loved him and his sisters with a tender love, yet he did not presently go to them, to comfort Mary and Martha in their sorrow; nor yet to cure Lazarus, and prevent his death; but stayed still two days in the place where he was. He loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, but he more loved the honour and glory of his Father, which was to be manifested in his raising of Lazarus from the dead. We must not judge of Christ's love to us by his mere external dispensations of providence; nor judge that he doth not love us because he doth not presently come in to our help, at our times, and in such ways and methods as we would think reasonable.

John 11:7

Ver. 7. This lets us know, that Christ was not in Judea when he received the tidings of Lazarus's sickness, but in Peraea, or Galilee; but he presently upon it takes up thoughts of returning again into that province, and indeed he was now preparing for his last journey thither: however, the sickness of Lazarus, and his raising from the dead, was one occasion of his so soon going up; from which his disciples would have discouraged him, as followeth ... (see Joh 11:8).

John 11:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Joh 10:31". There were not three months elapsed since the Jews had so sought to have stoned him, and there was no reason for him to think that their fury was in any whit abated. We read in the other evangelists of other words they used (Peter especially, Mt 16:22), to

dissuade our Saviour from this journey to Jerusalem. They were afraid for their Master, and they were afraid also for themselves.

John 11:9

Ver. 9. Look as in the day there are twelve hours, in which the sun shineth, and by giving its light directs men in their courses; so as they know how to guide their feet, and do not stumble, because they have the light of the sun, which God hath ordained, to direct men that walk up and down in the world.

John 11:10

Ver. 10. And there is a night also, wherein if men walk they will be very prone to stumble, because they are in darkness, and have no light to guide their feet. So there is a set time for all the issues of men; a time for their peace and liberty, and a time for their troubles and sufferings. God rules and governs the world. While men are in their callings and places, faithfully discharging their trust, and finishing the work which God hath given them to do, and their time is not come for their glorifying of God by suffering, they shall not stumble, nor be given up to the rage of their eagerest enemies; they are in their callings and places, and God will be light unto them: but when their working time is over, and the time of their night is come, then they will stumble; because then God withdraweth his light from them; they are not then under such a special protection of God, who hath done his work by and with them. This is as much as he had said before, Joh 8:20, *No man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come*; the twelve hours of his day were not all spent. This duty digested, is of infinite use to quiet the spirits of God's people in the worst of times; every man hath his twelve hours, his day and set time, to honour God upon the stage of the world: he shall not stumble, he shall not miscarry, while those hours are spent; he shall not die, he shall not be disabled for duty, so long as God hath aught for him to do. But every man hath his night too, when he must not expect to converse in the world without stumbling.

John 11:11

Ver. 11. There is such an analogy between death and sleep, that there is nothing more ordinary than to express death by sleep in Scripture, De 31:16 2Sa 7:12 1Ki 1:21 2Ki 20:21 Job 7:21 14:12 Da 12:2, and in a multitude of other texts, both in the Old Testament and in the New; so as it was evident our Saviour meant he was dead, which he knew as he was God, though as yet he had received no relation of it from the friends of the deceased.

But I go (saith our Saviour) to raise him up again from the dead, which he calls awaking him; pursuing the former metaphor, where he had compared death to a sleep.

John 11:12

Ver. 12. Sleeping moderately is a good sign, we know, in most diseases; this makes the disciples say, that if Lazarus slept he should do well.

John 11:13

Ver. 13. But that the disciples should not understand our Saviour not speaking of ordinary sleep, but of death, is wonderful, considering that there is nothing more ordinary in holy writ than to read of death expressed under this notion; but possibly by our Saviour's making such haste to him, they conceived that he was not dead, but only in an ordinary sleep, upon the abatement of his disease.

John 11:14

Ver. 14. You will mistake me; my meaning was, not that Lazarus was fallen to rest upon the abatement of his distemper, but his soul is parted from his body.

John 11:15

Ver. 15. Had I been upon the place, my kindness to his sisters, and pity, would have prevailed far with me to have prevented his death; but it is better, for your sakes at least, and I am glad. I was not there. For by this means I shalt have an advantage, by putting forth my Divine power in raising him from the dead, to confirm your faith in me as the Son of God, and the true Messias; therefore, though he be dead, *let us go unto him.*

John 11:16

Ver. 16. *Thomas* and *Didymus* were names of the same signification, only *Thomas* was the Hebrew, and *Didymus* the Greek name. This is that *Thomas* who to the last showed a greater difficulty in believing than many others of the disciples did, Joh 20:25. His words here signified great rashness and unbelief: *Let us also go, that we may die with him;* with Christ (say some). Seeing that our Lord will not be persuaded from going into Judea, where his life will be in apparent danger, for they will put him to death, let us also go and die with him. But it is more probable that *Thomas* meant with *Lazarus*, who, as our Saviour told them but now, was dead; and in that sense it was not only an expression of great passion, but great unbelief also. We ought not to be so affected with the death of our friends, as to wish or desire ourselves out of the world, where God hath set us in stations which we ought to keep, until God be pleased to remove us. Besides, *Thomas* ought to have believed our Saviour, who had told them, that though *Lazarus* slept the sleep of death, yet he went to awake him; which could have no other sense, than to raise him out of that sleep of death, of which he had spoken. Ah! To what errors do our passions betray us!

John 11:17

Ver. 17. Christ *came* to Bethany where *Lazarus* died; *he found he had lain in the grave four days;* so as probably Christ came not to Bethany till four days or more after the death of *Lazarus*, or near upon. But possibly it is better judged by others, that Christ was not yet come into Bethany, but only to the place where he met *Martha*; because it is said after this, Joh

11:30, that *Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him*; which it is probable was at Lazarus's sepulchre, out of the town, but near it, as all the Jewish burying places were; where he heard from the relation of Martha how long Lazarus had been buried. Our Saviour could have come sooner had he pleased, for though Bethabara was on the other side of Jordan, (so out of the confines of Judea), yet, if we may give any credit to those who have laboured in the study of places, it was not above four miles off Jerusalem, so as it could not be six miles from Bethany, which our Saviour could have travelled in a less time than four or five days. Some think Lazarus died the same day news came to Christ of his sickness; after which we read, Joh 11:6, that he stirred not of two days; after which it was, Joh 11:7, that he took up thoughts of going into Judea. After this, possibly, he lingered one or two days; Joh 11:14, he tells them Lazarus was dead. Our Saviour was willing to protract the time, that the miracle might be more conspicuous and remarkable.

John 11:18

Ver. 18. That, as we count, wants of two miles half a quarter.

John 11:19

Ver. 19. Not to pray with them for the soul of their brother departed. That departed souls are in a capacity to be advantaged by the prayers of their friends, or any such thing, are corruptions of latter times; but they had a civil usage of mourning for their friends, the time for which was anciently thirty days. They mourned for Jacob forty days, Ge 50:3; for Aaron thirty days, Nu 20:29; so for Moses, De 34:8. It is probable the days were fewer for persons of an inferior quality, but they had some days for all; during which days their neighbours and friends came to visit them, and relieve them in their sorrow, with such arguments as they had.

John 11:20

Ver. 20. It should seem by the story, Lu 10:41, that Martha had the care of the house keeping upon her, (Mary was more retired), so that the news of

Christ's coming might come to her first. She in great joy ran out to meet him; how far she went we are not told, but it appeareth from Joh 11:30 that she went out of the town.

John 11:21

Ver. 21. Mary saith the same, Joh 11:32. They were both in an error, for Lazarus's death was appointed and determined by an eternal counsel; and he was both sick and died for a wise end, that God might be glorified and his Son glorified in raising him from the dead; as we were before told, Joh 11:4. But it lets us see the vanity of our natures, who in the loss of our friends are ready to think, if such or such means had been used, we had not lost our friends; never considering our days are appointed, and we cannot pass the number of them. If any rational, probable means for continuing their lives be omitted, that also is not without the counsel of God, who having determined the issue, concealeth diseases, or the true and proper means for their cure, from physicians, or such as are about the sick persons. Nor did Martha and Mary fail in this only, but in that they made the Lord's presence necessary to the preserving of the life of their brother, who, had he pleased, could, though absent, have kept him from death.

John 11:22

Ver. 22. She showed some unbelief in her former words, but here again she showeth her faith, but not without some weakness mixed with her faith; for by these words she seemeth not to be satisfied, that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ, and that he was equal with the Father, and able by his own power to raise the dead; her faith extendeth no further than a belief, that he was in so much favour with God, that if he would please to intercede with God, he would restore her brother to life: this she meaneth; though the raising of persons from the dead was a thing so rare and unusual, that she dares not to mention that particular thing, though uppermost in her thoughts.

John 11:23

Ver. 23. Christ takes no notice of Martha's failings before mentioned, (he can have compassion upon his people's infirmities), but applies himself to the relief of her under her affliction. He doth not tell her that her brother should be raised to life presently, nor that he would do it; but only saith he *shall rise again*: to let us know, that a belief of the general resurrection is enough, and ought to be improved by us, to curb our immoderate mourning and passions for those of our friends who are dead in the Lord.

John 11:24

Ver. 24. From hence we learn, that the general resurrection of the dead is no novel doctrine. Job believed it, Job 19:26,27. Daniel published it, Da 12:2. The Pharisees owned it, though the Sadducees denied it; and possibly the Pharisees had but a confused notion of it. Martha here makes it an article of her faith.

John 11:25

Ver. 25. Martha by her speech seemed not to have a true notion of Christ; she believed that there should be a general resurrection from the dead in the last day, by the mighty power of God, but she did not truly understand what influence Christ had upon this resurrection, that the raising of the dead should be the peculiar work of Christ, not without the Father, but as he was ordained by the Father to be the Judge of the quick and of the dead. Christ doth therefore here further instruct her, and tell her, he was *the resurrection*; where (as is usual in Scripture) the effect is put for the cause: *I am the resurrection*, is no more than, I am, and shall be, the principal cause of the resurrection: the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, Joh 5:28. He also adds, *and the life*; that is, the cause of life; both that life which the dead shall in the resurrection recover, and also that eternal life which shall follow. And whosoever looketh upon me in that notion, and committeth himself unto me, though he doth die, yet he shall rise again, and live eternally; and this power being in me, I am not tied to the last day, but have a power when I please to raise the dead. Our Saviour indeed hath more in his answer than respected the present case; but there was nothing more usual with him, than in his discourses to raise up the hearts of his people to higher things, as he doth in this place raise Martha

beyond the thoughts of a resurrection of her brother's body to a natural life, to the thoughts of a spiritual and eternal life.

John 11:26

Ver. 26. He had before proved himself to be the *resurrection*, now he proveth himself to be *the life*. He saith, he that liveth, that liveth a natural life, if he be one who receiveth and embraces me as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, and committeth himself and all the concerns of his soul to me, shall never die. Though his body shall die because of sin, yet his spirit shall live because of righteousness; and God shall in the great day quicken again his mortal body, through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in him, and is united to him, Ro 8:10,11. He asketh Martha if she believed this. We shall observe, that our Saviour, not here only, but Mt 9:22,28, before he wrought his miraculous operations, required people's faith as a prerequisite. And, Mt 13:58, he could not do many mighty works in his own country, because of their unbelief. And, Mt 17:20, he tells his disciples, that the reason why they could not cure the man possessed with the devil, was because of their unbelief: so great an honour hath God given to the exercise of faith.

John 11:27

Ver. 27. This is the nearest to the confession of Peter, Mt 16:16, which our Saviour calleth, the rock upon which he would build his church, of any that we have in Scripture; yea, and more full than that, for those words, *which should come into the world*, are not in Peter's confession. The sum of this is, Martha doth here profess a full assent to our Saviour as the Messiah, the Son of God; he who was prefigured, prophesied of, promised, as he who should come into the world.

John 11:28

Ver. 28. Mary was left at home, while Martha went out of the town to meet Christ. It seemeth by this verse, Christ had asked for her, though that be not mentioned before. Martha goeth secretly to her, and tells her that the

Master was come. (It was a name they usually called their most famous teachers by).

John 11:29

Ver. 29. Mary's love and readiness to attend upon Christ, appeareth by a former story concerning her and her sister Martha, recorded Lu 10:38-40. But the present sorrow she was in for her dead brother, together with the hopes she conceived of having him restored to life by Christ's coming, added wings to her motion; therefore the evangelist saith, *she arose quickly, and came to him.*

John 11:30

Ver. 30-32. Coming, she falls down at his feet, which was a posture (as we have heard before) very usual in those countries, by which they testified both their civil respects to princes and great persons, and also which they used in the worship of God, Mt 2:11. Whether Mary did it upon the one account or the other, depends upon what we cannot know; viz. whether she at this time was fully persuaded of his Divine nature; of which the best of the disciples, till Christ's resurrection, had but a faint and uncertain persuasion. The words which she useth to him are the same which Martha used, See Poole on "Joh 11:21".

John 11:33

Ver. 33. The apostle speaks of Christ, Heb 4:15, *as an High priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, and one that *can have compassion*, Heb 5:2. Martha's and Mary's passion for their dead brother was their infirmity; Christ is touched with the feeling of it: he, to show himself truly man, *groaned* in himself; it being natural to us to be affected with the afflictions of others, and to weep with those who weep. But here ariseth a question, whether Christ was troubled from a natural necessity, as we sometimes cannot forbear weeping to see others weep bitterly, or out of

choice? Some of the ancients think it was out of choice. Mr. Calvin and others think that it was out of a natural necessity; not that he could not govern his passions (as we sometimes cannot) by reason, but that he could not, as man, forbear his passion.

I shall translate what Mr. Calvin speaks, most judiciously, in the case, determining neither way, but leaving it to the reader's judgment. "But how", saith he, "do gnawing and trouble of spirit agree to that Person who was the Son of God? Because to some it looketh very absurd to say, that Christ, as one of us, is subject to human passions; they think Christ no otherwise at any time either grieved or rejoiced, than as he, so often as he thought fit, voluntarily assumed to himself those passions by a secret dispensation. Augustine thought that Christ in this sense is said to have groaned, and to have been troubled; whereas other men's passions transport them, and exercise a tyranny over them, to the disturbance of their minds: he therefore thinks the meaning is, that Christ, being otherwise sedate, and free from passions, sometimes voluntarily took these passions. But in my judgment, it is a much plainer and simpler sense of this scripture, if we say, that the Son of God, taking upon him our nature, did also freely with it put on our affections (which are our natural infirmities); so as he in nothing differed from us, but in this, that he had no sin. Nothing by this is derogated from the glory of Christ; for he voluntarily submitted to take our nature upon him, by which he became like to us in our human affections. And we must not think, that after he had voluntarily submitted to take our perfect nature upon him, that he was free from the passions and affections of it: in this he proved himself to be our Brother, that we might know that he is a Mediator for us, who can easily pardon our infirmities, and is ready to help us as to those infirmities, which he hath experienced in his own person. If any one object, That seeing our passions are sinful, it doth not agree to the nature of him who was the Son of God to share with us in them; I answer, There is a great deal of difference (as to these passions) between us and Christ; for our affections are therefore faulty, because they are intemperate, and inordinate, and keep no bounds; but in Christ, though they be, yet they are composed, and moderate, and in obedience to God. The passions of men are faulty upon two accounts:

1. As they are turbulent, and not governed by the rule of moderation.

2. As they often rise without any due ground or foundation, or are not directed to a right end.

They are in us a disease, because we neither grieve nor rejoice in measure, and to that degree alone which God permits and allows; many rather give the reins to their passions. And such is the vanity of our minds, that we are grieved and troubled for little or no causes, being too much addicted and cleaving to the world. There was no such thing in Christ, no passion in him ever exceeded its just bounds, or was exercised but upon a just and reasonable cause. To make this yet clearer, we must distinguish between man in his creation, and the degenerate nature of man, as it is corrupted through sin. When God at first created man, he created him with natural affections, but such as were under the command of reason: that our passions are now inordinate, and rebellious, is accidental to our nature. Christ indeed took our affections upon him, but without that disorder which fell into them by the fall, which causeth us that we cannot obey them and God. He was greatly troubled, but not so as by his trouble to become disobedient to his Father. In short, if we compare our affections with his, there will appear as great a difference, as between pure water and that which is dirty and filthy. And the single example of Christ is enough to make us reject the stoical apathy (or want of passion); for from whom, if not from him, should we fetch the highest rule of perfection? Let us therefore rather study to correct and tame that disorder in which our passions are entangled, and follow Christ as our guide, that we may bring them into order. Thus Paul, 1Th 4:13, doth not require of us a stony stupidity, but commands us to govern our grief, that we may not mourn as men without hope. For Christ therefore took our affections upon him, that we by his grace may be enabled to subdue whatsoever is vicious in them."

John 11:34

Ver. 34,35. Weeping is not of itself a sinful, but a natural passion, which (as was said before) doth very well agree with Christ, having voluntarily taken upon him our nature, and natural infirmities.

John 11:36

Ver. 36. Love showeth itself, as in a complacence in the object beloved, while we enjoy it; so in a grief for it when we are deprived of it: the Jews therefore rightly concluded Christ's kindness to Lazarus, from his human affection expressed at his death.

John 11:37

Ver. 37. Some only concluded Christ's love to the deceased from his affection showed at his grave; but others made a worse conclusion, in derogation to Christ's reputation, from the miracle he had wrought, Joh 9:1-34, in restoring him that was born blind; for their speech soundeth in this sense, If he had indeed cured one that was born blind, certainly he could as well have kept this man, to whom (dead) he expresses so great affection, clear from death. A learned interpreter therefore calleth this, a devilish sarcasm; they go about to weaken the reputation of our Saviour, from the miracle which he had wrought, apparently showing his Divine power, because he did not keep his friend from dying. It is much like the scoff with which they afterward scoffed him, while he flung upon the cross, Mt 27:42, *He saved others; himself he cannot save*. Or the words may have been spoken, if not with an irony, yet with admiration, that having cured the blind man, a stranger to him, he did not heal his sick friend; or as if they were uncertain whether his power of working miracles were not limited to some times, that he could not perform all things when he pleased. But how weak must this their argumentation be, which could stand upon no other foundation than this, That if Christ were the Son of God, he would at all times, and in all cases, have put forth his Divine power. As if God acted necessarily, not freely, governing his actions by his own wisdom, as he saw most conducing to the wise ends of his glory.

John 11:38

Ver. 38. *Groaning in himself* as before, Joh 11:33, so showing himself yet further to be truly man, and not without human affections. He cometh to the place where Lazarus's dead body was laid, which, the evangelist telleth us, was *a cave*, or a hollow place in the earth, or some rock. And they

were wont to roll some great stones to the mouth of those graves, as we see in the burial of our Saviour, Mt 27:66.

John 11:39

Ver. 39. Our Lord commandeth the removal of the stone, which was at the mouth of the sepulchre, that the miracle might be evident; for Lazarus to have come forth, the door of the cave being shut, and a great stone making it fast, would have looked more like an apparition than a resurrection. It is very probable that Martha thought that our Saviour commanded the removal of the stone, not in order to a commanding him to life again, but out of a curiosity to view his dead body; and therefore she objects the putrefaction of his body, from which the soul was now departed four days, as that which our Saviour would not be able to endure the savour of.

John 11:40

Ver. 40. Christ now begins to open to Martha and Mary, and the rest, his resolution to raise Lazarus from the dead by and by Christ saith that to us in his word, which he saith by a just consequence, though he doth not speak it in so many words: we do not read in this history, that Christ had spoken this in so many words and syllables, but he had spoken it in effect; he had told her, Joh 11:25, that he was *the resurrection and the life*, that he had power to raise dead bodies from a natural death to life; and that for those who believed in him, though they were dead, they should live. This could not be without a great manifestation of the glory of God: the power of God is his glory. *God hath spoken once*, (saith the psalmist), *yea, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God*, Ps 62:11. Thou shouldest see God by me manifesting the glory of his Almighty power; God glorifying himself, and glorifying his Son. Believing brings us in experiences of God; whereas unbelief, as it were, limiteth God, and ties up his hands.

John 11:41

Ver. 41. The servants, or friends, about the grave, removeth the stone from

the mouth of the cave, within which the dead corpse of Lazarus lay. Christ, before his thanksgiving to his Father, is said to have *lifted up his eyes*; a posture often used in men's addresses to God, Ps 121:1, and Ps 123:1, as an indication of their belief that heaven is God's throne: though he filleth heaven and earth, yet heaven is his court, where he most gloriously showeth himself, the earth but his footstool. We read here of nothing that Christ had said before, yet he giveth thanks here to his Father that he had heard him. The meaning is, thou hast willed, or pleased to grant, those things which I desired. It is very hard to determine, whether Christ had used some audible words before this, upon this occasion, in prayer to his Father, which the evangelist could not or did not set down; or whether he only groaned in his spirit, as was said before, by those groans not only expressing his sorrow for Lazarus's death, or rather sympathy with the afflictions of Mary and Martha, but also his desires to his Father, that he might be again restored to life; and his second groaning, Joh 11:38, was of that nature: which groanings in the saints God understandeth, knowing the *mind of the Spirit*, making *intercession for the saints according to the will of God* (as the apostle teacheth us, Ro 8:27); much more did the Father, who was one in nature, essence, and will with the Son, understand them in him. Nothing in these cases can be determined, much less can any conclude from hence, that there is no need of our using any words in our prayers; for although there be no simple, absolute necessity that we should use them in order to God's knowledge of what we need, and would have; for he that searcheth the heart, knows what we need, and what we desire, Mt 6:8; yet there is a necessity for our words, in order to our obeying God's command, Ho 14:2 Lu 11:2. There is a great deal of difference between God's hearing of Christ, and hearing us: Christ and his Father have one essence, one nature, and will.

John 11:42

Ver. 42. I know that thou always willest those things which I will; and I will nothing but what thou willest, and hast sent me to do in the world; so as in these things it is impossible but that thou shouldest always be ready to grant what I ask of thee; nay, there is no need of my asking. I only give thee thanks for the people's sake, who here stand by; who believe thee to be the true God, and to have an Almighty power; but will not as yet believe that I am thy Son, by thee sent into the world, and that I do the

works which I do in thee and from thee. We read of many miracles wrought by Christ without any prayer first put up to his Father, Mt 8:3 9:6 Mr 5:41 9:25 Lu 7:14, using only an authoritative word; nor need he have used any here, but only for the further conviction of the people that he was sent of God, that God whom they owned as their God: he prayeth and giveth thanks to God before them all.

John 11:43

Ver. 43. When he had groaned in his spirit, and audibly given thanks to his Father for hearing of him, and testified that he did this, not because he ever had any doubt of his Father's willing what he willed, but that the people might take notice of his favour and power with God, and that he was sent of him; *he cried with a loud voice*; not whispering, nor, like wizards, peeping and muttering, Isa 8:19, but speaking aloud, so as all might hear, and understand, that what was done was done by his powerful word. He calls him by his name, he bids him come forth; they were not the words that raised Lazarus, but the mighty, quickening power of Christ, which attended these words.

John 11:44

Ver. 44. The fashion of their dressing up the dead differeth, according to the fashion of several countries; among the Jews, we understand by this text, they tied a napkin about their head, and some clothes about their hands and feet. They wound the whole body in linen clothes with spices, Joh 19:40; this was (as is there said) their manner to bury. So, Ac 5:6, the young men are said to have wound Ananias, and carried him out, and buried him. And this is that which certainly is meant here by these words, *bound hand and foot*: and here is a second miracle, that one so wrapped and bound up should be able to move and come forth. Christ bids, *Loose him, and let him go*, to evidence him truly recovered to life again, and that the miracle was perfectly wrought. About this miracle there are two curious questions started:

1. Whether the raising of Lazarus to life was done by the mere Divine power of Christ, or by the person of Christ; so as the human nature,

being personally united to the Divine nature, had also a share in it; the Divine nature communicating its property of quickening the dead to the human nature? That it was the person of Christ that raised Lazarus, and he who did it was truly man and truly God, is out of doubt. But that there was any such communication of the properties of the Divine nature to the human nature, that it also had a share in this effect, is justly denied, and doubted by many great divines: but it is a question tending to no great profit for us to know.

2. Where Lazarus's soul was these four days wherein it was separated from the body? The Scripture hath not told us this, and it speaks too great curiosity to inquire too strictly. Though we are taught from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that the souls of departed saints do ordinarily and immediately pass into heaven, or Abraham's bosom; yet what should hinder, but that in these cases, where it appears to have been the Divine will that the souls of persons departed should again be returned into their bodies in a short time, they might by a Divine power be kept under the custody of angels, until the time of such restoration of them.

John 11:45

Ver. 45. That is, which came to visit Martha and Mary in their mourning; and, coming to Mary, did go along with her to the sepulchre to meet Christ, and there meeting him, saw all the passages relating to this miracle, truly *believed on him* as the true Messiah, Joh 12:11,18. Or it may be, it is to be understood more largely of such a faith as is but preparatory to true and saving faith; for there was a double use of miracles.

1. To prepare men for faith, disposing them to give an ear to him, to whom God hath given so great a power; so as after the sight of them they were more fitted to hear, and inclinable to believe.
2. To confirm faith in those that believed, so as they believed the more firmly, seeing the doctrine they heard confirmed by such miraculous operations.

John 11:46

Ver. 46. These Jews had the same means for believing the others had; they had heard the same words from Christ, they had seen the same miracle wrought by Christ. Whence is it that any of the other Jews believed? These, instead of believing, run to the Pharisees to accuse him. Can any account be given of this, unless from the freedom of Divine grace, showing mercy where God will show mercy? Though possibly the former wickedness, of these Jews was the cause of God's not giving that grace to them which he gave to others.

John 11:47

Ver. 47. The chief priests and Pharisees were a great part of that great council amongst the Jews, which went under the name of the sanhedrim; and this (probably) was the council they gathered; for, Joh 11:49, we read, that Caiaphas, the high priest, the standing president of that court, was amongst them. The miracles wrought by Christ were the things that disturbed them, and they reflect upon themselves for conniving so long at him: what they should have improved (viz. the miracles which he wrought) to have begot or increased faith in them, they mention and misimprove to their destruction.

John 11:48

Ver. 48. They are afraid, that if they should any longer suffer Christ to go on working miracles, he would have a great many followers, who upon the credit of his miracles would own him as the Messiah, and the effect and consequence of this would be, they should by the Romans (to whom they were already in subjection) be utterly deprived of that little liberty they indulged them. They say, the Romans would come (that is with an army) and destroy their temple, which they call their *place*, their most famous place, where they met to worship God, and in which, as a token of God's presence amongst them, they so much alerted; yea, and their *nation*; that is, miserably destroy their nation, and bring it to utter ruin. Whether they really thought so or no, or only spake this as an argument to hasten the death of Christ, is not much material for us to know. There was this colour

for it, the Jews were a people very prone upon all occasions to rebel, and rise up in the defence of their liberties, whenever they could get any head, to give them any countenance and conduct. They also lived in a general expectation of the Messiah, when the sceptre should be departed from Judah, (as it now was), and when Daniel's seventy weeks, mentioned Joh 9:24, should be determined, which were now fulfilled; so as there was about this time a general expectation of the Messiah; of whom also it is apparent they had a false notion, and generally expected under the notion of the Messiah, not the Son of God taking human nature, and to die for their redemption, and then rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven; but a temporal prince, who, conquering all their enemies, should deliver them from all captivities and servitudes, and restore them to their ancient liberties. This their expectation was known well enough to the Roman governors, (as appeareth by Herod's question to the wise men in Mt 2:4), and they were very jealous of the Jews on this account, which caused Herod's bloody act in killing the children in and about Bethlehem. So as the rulers of the Jews (according to the notion they had of the Messiah) might reasonably think, that if Jesus were taken to be the Messiah, and he went on confirming the opinion of himself by these miracles, so as people generally ran after him, the Romans would reasonably suppose they had a design to rebel, and therefore would come upon them, destroy their temple, and utterly ruin their nation. But how will they avoid this? That which they agreed upon we shall meet with Joh 11:53, they took counsel to put him to death. How they were led on to that fatal counsel we shall hear.

John 11:49

Ver. 49. The high priest by the Divine law was to be but one, and he the eldest son of Aaron's house; nor was he to be for a year, but for his life, as appeareth by a multitude of texts in the books of Moses: but all things were now out of order in the Jewish church; they were under the power of the Romans; all places, especially that of the high priest, were bought and sold amongst them: some say they had two high priests, others say but one, only he had an assistant, called by that name, that had a partnership in the honour. After Herod's time there was no regard to the family of Aaron, or the Asmoneans, but the Romans made what high priest they pleased; so as Josephus tells us, that the Jews, who had but thirteen high priests from

Aaron's to Solomon's time, which was six hundred and twelve years; nor more than eighteen in four hundred and sixty years after, to the captivity of Babylon; nor more than fifteen from thence to the time of Antiochus, which was four hundred and fourteen years; had twenty eight between the time that Herod began to reign and Jerusalem was destroyed; of which this Caiaphas was one, and certainly the chief, (if there were two at this time), and consequently the president of their great court, whom all attended to, and his words went a great way with the rest. He charges the rest of the council with folly, as not considering what was fit to be done.

John 11:50

Ver. 50. Never was any thing spoken more diabolically: he regards not what was their duty, nor what was lawful for them to do; whether they might upon any pretence shed innocent blood, much more the blood of one whose life was spent in nothing but a going up and down in doing good; only, like a wretched politician, who was concerned for nothing but the people's safety, he saith not, it is lawful, but, *it is expedient for us that one man, be he never so good, never so innocent and just, should die for the people,* that is, to save the whole nation from destruction.

John 11:51

Ver. 51. So far as this was a prophecy, *he spake not of himself*: take the words of Caiaphas in the sense that he spake them, they were such as might well enough come out of such a wretched mouth, speaking out of the abundance of a vile and wretched heart; *Melius pereat unus quam unitas*, That it was better that one man should die, let him be never so good, just, and innocent, than that for his sake mischief should come upon a nation. This was now suitable enough to the religion of such a high priest. But that in this (the words being capable of a double sense) Caiaphas should deliver a great truth, That this year *one should die for the people*; that is, The Messiah should *be cut off, but not for himself*, as we read, Da 9:26; this was no more from himself, than the words which Balaam's ass spake were from itself. The Spirit of prophecy sometimes fell upon wicked men; God revealed to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar (both of whom were pagans) the things which he intended to do. There was a time

also when Saul (though a man rejected of God) did also prophesy; and the worst of the princes of Judah had a use of the Urim and Thummim. So also here, Caiaphas, though a vile and wicked man, was here influenced by God to prophesy, and speak an oracle. Nor are those words, *being high priest that year*, superfluously put in; for it being consistent with the holiness of God, sometimes to make use of the tongues of the worst of men to declare his will, it seems agreeable to the wisdom of God in doing it, to make use of principal men, they being persons whose words are most likely to be regarded, and so make impression upon people. The papists would from hence infer the infallibility of the pope, because he is the high priest: but they ought to prove:

1. That the office of the pope hath any foundation in the word of God.
2. That this was a gift given to particular priests, and at particular times; for the Jewish high priests were fallible enough ordinarily; witness Aaron's making the golden calf, and Urijah the altar after the pattern of Damascus, 2Ki 16:10,11.

The words, *being high priest*, are not given as a reason why Caiaphas prophesied, though they are a good reason why God was pleased to choose his tongue, and overrule it beyond his own thoughts and intentions, to serve his design in this revelation. He did not prophesy intentionally, as designing such a thing, only materially: the matter of his words were indeed a Divine revelation, though his intention and scope was fit for none but a base, carnal politician. God made him a prophet in what he said, though he meant not so.

John 11:52

Ver. 52. *Not for that nation only*; not for the Jews only. The words used in Caiaphas's speech were $\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\theta\nu\omicron\varsigma$, words not significant of the Jews only, but of other people also: for Christ was to gather into one body all the elect of God, (who are here called *the children of God*, because they were to be so after their being begotten by the immortal seed of the word, and born again of water and the Spirit), those that at present were *scattered abroad* over the face of the whole earth: Christ was to *gather together in one all things in heaven and earth*, Eph 1:10. The evangelist extendeth the

sense of Caiaphas's prophecy to Gentiles as well as Jews, according to the extent of the death of Christ, declared 1Jo 2:2.

John 11:53

Ver. 53. They had taken such counsel before; but now they were more intent than before, having found a more just pretence, viz. to prevent a sedition and rebellion; and learned of their high priest, that it was more convenient that one should die, than that a whole nation should be destroyed. The high priest had satisfied their consciences; now they make all the haste they can to put their malicious designs in execution.

John 11:54

Ver. 54. *Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews;* for he being the true paschal Lamb, was to be slain at that feast, and put an end to that type, and would therefore reserve himself for that time, which was now at hand. *A city called Ephraim:* what this Ephren or Ephraim was, interpreters vainly busy themselves in inquiring; it was some obscure city, and near the wilderness; some think it was in the lot of Benjamin, others think it was in the lot of Ephraim, and obtained its name from the tribe in whose lot it was. The Scripture no where mentions it; and it cannot be expected, but that in so many changes of government as had befallen the Jews, the names of places should be so altered, that we should be at loss for many of them: wherever it was, it is said that Christ and his disciples continued there in some privacy.

John 11:55

Ver. 55. Christ's last passover, which was the fourth after he had entered upon his public ministry, was nigh. He doth not say all, but *many went up to purify themselves*. There was no general legal purification required before men did eat the passover; but there were several legal uncleannesses, and purifications necessary to cleanse men from them; now those who had any special purification to pass, went before others, that they might have time to do what the law required of them.

John 11:56

Ver. 56. I find good interpreters expounding this verse of the friends of Christ, who having used to meet Christ at these feasts, and see some miracles wrought by him, did out of a good design seek for him, and inquire of each other whether they knew if he intended to be at the feast: yet it may also be understood of his enemies, though it seemeth something too early, being six or seven days before.

John 11:57

Ver. 57. For their great court had issued out orders for the discovery and apprehending of our Saviour, if they could any way learn where he was. This was in pursuance of that wicked counsel of which we read before, Joh 11:53: there they decreed; now they cannot rest until they bring their bloody devices to pass, for which we shall soon find God giving them an opportunity.

John 12:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 12:1-8 Mary anoints the feet of Jesus: Judas murmurs at the cost.

Joh 12:9-11 The people flock to see Lazarus: the chief priests

consult to kill him.

Joh 12:12-19 Jesus rideth into Jerusalem in triumph.

Joh 12:20-22 Certain Greeks desired to see him.

Joh 12:23-36 He showeth the benefit of his death to believers;

a voice from

prayereth to his Father; is answered by heaven; signifies the manner of his death; and

exhorteth to make good use of the present light.

Joh 12:37-41 The generality of the Jews believe not, Joh 12:42,43 yet many chief rulers believe, but dare not confess him.

Joh 12:44-50 He urges faith in his Divine mission.

Ver. 1 From the *country near to the wilderness*, where Jesus *continued with his disciples*, Joh 11:54, he came to Bethany, within less than two miles of Jerusalem, upon the sabbath day, or possibly the night before, *six days before the passover*: it was the place where (as we read in the former chapter) Lazarus died, and was by Christ *raised from the dead*.

John 12:2

Ver. 2. That this supper was made in Bethany is no question; but at whose house there it is questioned. Some think that it was at the house of Simon the leper. We read indeed of a supper made for our Saviour at his house, both Mt 26:6,7, and Mr 14:3, and that Simon is said to have been of Bethany: only the supper here mentioned is said to have been six days before the passover, and that mentioned by Matthew and Mark seems to have been but two days before, Mt 26:2 Mr 14:1. That which is probably said to solve that difficulty is, the circumstances of the supper, and history about it, seem the very same, both in Matthew, Mark, and John; but it seems in Matthew and Mark to be a little put out of order; they do not say that this supper was two days before the passover, (that indeed had been a contradiction to what John doth here relate), but both Matthew and Mark first tell us, that Christ told his disciples that the passover was to be within two days, and of the counsel taken by the chief priests and elders against Christ, and then relates the story of this supper: John first gives us an account of this supper, which was six days before the passover; so John seems to have related it in its proper time and order.

John 12:3

Ver. 3-8. Both Matthew and Mark relate this story with some different circumstances: see the notes upon those two places, where all the differing circumstances are considered and explained, and the parts of this history are more largely explained.

John 12:9

Ver. 9. Bethany was so near to Jerusalem, that many of the Jews came thither, as well to see Lazarus, raised from the dead, as to see Christ: nor was this without the special providence of God, that the name of Christ might be made more famous just before his suffering.

John 12:10

Ver. 10. Never was there a more unreasonable madness and rage, to justify the apostle's calling of the enemies of the gospel *unreasonable men*, 2Th 3:2. Suppose that Christ had broken the sabbath, or had spoken blasphemy, yet what had Lazarus done?

John 12:11

Ver. 11. Being raised from death to life, he possibly spake of it to the honour and glory of God; for this they consult to put him to death also; and their only reason was, *because that many of the Jews believed on Jesus for his sake.*

John 12:12

Ver. 12-15. This whole history is much more largely reported by the other evangelists; See Poole on "Mt 21:1", and following verses to Mt 21:16. See Poole on "Mr 11:1", and following verses to Mr 11:10. See Poole on "Lu 19:29", and following verses to Lu 19:40.

John 12:16

Ver. 16. The evangelist, amongst others, confesseth his own ignorance also. The disciples saw the thing done, Christ riding into the city upon the foal of an ass, the people strewing of boughs, and throwing their clothes in the way; but to what purpose these things were done, or what fulfilling of prophecies was in this thing, that they understood not, so long as Christ was alive: their eyes were upon the Messiah a temporal prince, that should come in great state and majesty, so as they were wholly blinded from seeing any thing of the truth and faithfulness of God fulfilled in this little triumph of their Lord's. But after that Christ had died, and was risen again from the dead, and ascended up to heaven, so declaring himself with power to be the Son of God; then they began to remember these things, so as to confirm their faith in him as the true Messiah, whom God had sent into the world. The word of the Lord which we hear, and the works of God which we see, though oft times they do not profit us, nor are improved by us at the present, yet afterward become of use and profit to us: it is therefore good to hear, and see, and observe God's words and works, and to lay them up in our hearts, as it is said Mary pondered the sayings of the angel; expecting fruit afterwards of what at present we see no fruit and effect.

John 12:17

Ver. 17-19. These three verses let us know the external cause of the people's coming to see Christ, which was the fame of the miracle wrought by our Saviour on Lazarus; this increased the number of those who came to see his entrance into Jerusalem; but the unseen cause was, doubtless, the influence of God upon their hearts, directing them to it, for the further glorifying of his Son before his passion. But this enraged the Pharisees, to see that their decree that those who owned Christ should be turned out of the synagogue should have no better effect: but the multitude rather more owned him, and ran after him. Here again we find the term *world* signifying many, though those many made up but a very small part of the world.

John 12:20

Ver. 20. It is not easy to be determined what these *Greeks* were; whether Jews, who, being scattered in the Grecian country upon the conquests which the Grecians had made upon the Jews under Alexander the Great, and those who succeeded him, still remained in those countries, but kept so much of the religion of their country, as to come up to the passover; or Gentiles, which are ordinarily called Greeks in contradistinction to the Jews, Ac 14:1 16:1 18:17 Ro 1:16 1Co 1:23,24 Ga 3:28. But it is most probable that they were Gentiles; for though some say that the Jews would never have suffered the Gentiles to have come into the temple to worship, yet the contrary is plain from the instance of the eunuch, Ac 8:27; who was a heathen, and came to Jerusalem to worship. And, Ac 17:4, we read of *a great multitude of devout Greeks*; in the Greek the word is *σεβομενων*, worshipping Greeks. And it is plain that from the beginning there was a liberty for strangers, not of Israel, but such as came out of a far country, for the Lord's name's sake; and Solomon prayeth at the dedication of the temple, that the Lord would hear them, 1Ki 8:41-43: and there was belonging to the temple a court of the Gentiles for that purpose; it is called *the court without the temple*, Re 11:2. What worship they there performed is a greater question: some think they only prayed; others think they offered sacrifices in that court, from Apc 2Ma 3:35; but certain it is, that there were divers of the Gentiles devoutly disposed, that, hearing of the Jewish temple, and the solemn worship performed there at their solemn feasts, came, some as spectators at those great conventions, others with a true design to worship the God of the Jews.

John 12:21

Ver. 21. If these Grecians (as is probable) were Syrophenicians, their country was so near to Bethsaida of Galilee, which was Philip's town, that it is probable they might have some knowledge of him, and that might bring them to him to be spokesman; but it should seem they came only to satisfy their curiosity, for they ask for no more than that they might *see*

Jesus.

John 12:22

Ver. 22. The news of their coming, and their errand, is brought to Christ by Philip and Andrew, who possibly might stumble at it, because they were Gentiles, and Christ had forbidden them to go into the way of the Gentiles; they therefore first acquaint him with the desire of those Greeks, before they bring them to Christ.

John 12:23

Ver. 23. Christ replies, that the time was now come when he (who was the Son of God) *should be glorified*; that is, by the Gentiles receiving of the gospel, according to the many prophecies of it in the Old Testament; but he goeth on telling them that he must first die.

John 12:24

Ver. 24. Look as you see in your ordinary husbandry, the grains of wheat are first buried in the earth, and lose their form, before they spring and shoot up again, and bring forth fruit; so it must be with me; I must be first lifted up, before I shall draw men after me; I must first be crucified, before my gospel shall be preached to all nations, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come: but if I have once died, and risen again from the dead, then you shall see this abundant fruit.

John 12:25

Ver. 25. We had much the same in the other evangelists, Mt 10:39 Lu 14:26. Some think that our Saviour repeateth it here, to show, that as Christ first suffered, and then entered into his glory; so his disciples must also lay the foundation of their glory in their sufferings and *through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Ac 14:22. Or what if we should say, that our blessed Lord doth here prophesy what sufferings would attend

the first preaching of the gospel, and encourage his disciples to what he knew they must meet with and undergo, by letting them know that the ready way to lose their share in life eternal, was to be so fond of this life, and the comforts of it, as not to be ready to lay them down for him; but if any person hated, that is, less loved his life, and all that in this world is dear to him, than Christ and his service, he should, if not be preserved from enemies' rage, yet most certainly be recompensed with eternal life?

John 12:26

Ver. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me:* this is much the same with that, Mt 16:24, unless following here be more restrained to suffering, *let him follow me* to my cross; for otherwise it seemeth the same with serving; we must be ready not only to do, but also to die for Christ, to follow him to the cross, if he calleth us to it. And if any man so serveth me, he shall be in heaven where I am; *If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together*, Ro 8:17. For my Father, with whom I am one in nature and essence, will honour those that are my servants; so great a thing it is to be a servant to the Son of God. The Father will honour those that are so, and especially those who are so in suffering, with eternal life and felicity.

John 12:27

Ver. 27. *Now is my soul troubled;* by *soul* is not here to be understood only the sensitive part of the soul, but his whole human soul. So Joh 13:21, *He was troubled in spirit*. Our inward troubles arise from our passions; and there are passions of grief and fear, which give us most of our inward trouble; fear respecteth some evil at a distance from us; grief is caused by evil fallen upon us, or so near that we seem to be already in the power of it. The word here used is *ταρακται*, which signifieth no mean, but a great and more than ordinary, degree of trouble. Christ was greatly troubled, though not so as we sometimes are, when our trouble leadeth us to despair: Christ was capable of no sinful trouble. Hence two questions arise:

1. For what the soul of Christ was troubled?

2. How such a degree of trouble could agree to the Lord Jesus Christ?

He tells us, Mt 26:38, that he was *exceedingly sorrowful*, so as sorrow was one part of his trouble; and we may learn from what he afterward saith in this verse, *Father, save me from this hour*, that fear made up the other part of it. He was grieved, and he was afraid; some say it was at the apprehension of that miserable death he was to die; others say, at the sense of the Divine wrath which he was to undergo, death being not yet overcome, and his conflict with his Father's wrath for the sins of men being yet to be endured. Though Christ at this time was in the most perfect obedience to his Father's will, offering up a most acceptable and well pleasing sacrifice unto God; yet he, sustaining our persons, had a conflict to endure even with his Father's wrath upon that account, though not upon his own personal account; for so he was at this time doing that which was most acceptable and well pleasing in his sight. As to the second question, nothing could more agree to Christ than this, both with respect to his human nature, which had the same natural (though not sinful) infirmities which other men have; and with respect to his design and end, to help and relieve his people under their troubles of spirit; and, as the apostle saith, Heb 2:15, *to deliver them who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage*. So as this trouble of spirit agreed to him both as man and as Mediator. But there must be a vast difference observed between this trouble of spirit in Christ, and that which is in us. Our troubles are upon reflections for our own sin, and the wrath of God due to us therefore; his trouble was for the wrath of God due to us for our sins. Our troubles are because we have personally grieved God; his was because those given to him (not he himself) had offended God. We are afraid of our eternal condemnation; he was only afraid by a natural fear of death, which naturally riseth higher according to the kind of death we die. Our troubles have mixtures of despair, distrust, sinful horrors; there was no such thing in his trouble. Our troubles in their natural tendencies are killing and destroying; only by accident, and the wise ordering of Divine providence, prove advantageous, by leading us to him, as the only remedy for troubled souls: his trouble was, in the very nature of it, not only pure and clean, but also sanative and healing. But that he was truly troubled, and that in his whole soul, and that such a trouble did very well agree, as to the human nature he had assumed, so to his office as our Mediator and Saviour, and the foundation of a great deal of peace, quiet, and satisfaction to us, is out

of question. The chastisement of our peace in this particular lay upon him; and they were some of those stripes of his, by which we are healed.

And (saith he) what shall I say? It is the natural language of a spirit troubled.

Father, save me from this hour; this hour of my passion; it is the same with that in our Saviour's last prayer, *Let this cup pass from me;* and must be understood with the same qualifications there expressed, *if it be thy will, if it be possible, &c.* By his blessed example he hath taught us, under the distresses of our spirits, whither to flee, what to do.

For my love (saith David to his enemies, Ps 109:4) they are mine adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer; I give up myself to prayer. God hath bidden us, *Ps 50:15, call upon him in the day of trouble;* and St. James saith, *Jas 5:3, Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.* Herein Christ hath himself set us an example, that we should follow his steps. But how doth our Saviour pray to be saved from that hour, when for this cause he came into the world? Here was in Christ a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit; not like ours, which is between corrupt flesh and the Spirit, but between his natural flesh, and the natural affections of it, and his spirit; that was fully conformed to the will of God, and gets a present conquest.

But for this cause (saith he) came I to this hour: he checks himself, correcteth the language of his natural flesh, acquiesceth, rejoiceth in the will of God. I was not (saith he) forced, I came of my own good will to this hour; and I came on purpose to die for my people.

John 12:28

Ver. 28. *Father, glorify thy name;* that is, make thy name glorious, make it to be known and famous over all the earth. A general petition, but such a one as all our particular requests must be reduced to, if they be according to the will of God. It is as much as, Father, do thine own will: for God is then glorified when his will is done. But it here signifies more: Not my will, but thy will be done. My flesh indeed saith save me from this hour; but, Father, do thy own will, let that be done concerning me which will most tend to make thy name renowned. Such a prayer never goes without

an answer.

Then came there a voice from heaven, &c.; the Lord caused a voice as from heaven to be heard. *I have glorified it;* I have by thee caused my glory to be published and proclaimed in the world, by thy preaching, by thy miracles; and I will perfect that which I have begun, *I will glorify it again;* thou shalt further glorify me by thy death, by thy resurrection from the dead, by the preaching of the gospel, and carrying it to the ends of the earth.

John 12:29

Ver. 29. *The people said that it thundered;* nor, it may be, were they mistaken, saving only in this, that they thought it was nothing else but thunder (being possibly at such a distance, as they could not distinctly hear the voice); for it was God's way, when he spake unto his people by a voice, to have that voice, for the greater declaration of the Divine majesty, attended with thunderings and lightnings: thus it was at the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai; thus we read in John's visions, Re 4:5 8:5, of lightnings, and thunderings, and voices, which proceeded from God's throne.

Others said, An angel spake to him: it was the general opinion of the Jews, that God always, when by voice he revealed his mind to his people, made use of an angel to do it by; hence, probably, as those who were at such a distance that they heard no voice, thought it was nothing but thunder; so those who are so nigh as, besides the thunder, to hear a voice, said, It was an angel that spake with him.

John 12:30

Ver. 30. This voice came not to instruct me, I very well knew, before it came, that my Father had glorified his own name, and would do it again; it came not principally nor solely for me, but chiefly to confirm you in this great truth, that I am the Son of God, and he whom he hath sent into the world, by and in whom he designs to glorify his own great name.

John 12:31

Ver. 31. The terms *judgment* and *world* are taken so variously in the New Testament, and particularly in this very Gospel, that they have given interpreters a great liberty to vary in their senses of this passage. It seemeth reasonable to agree that our Saviour doth expound in this verse what the voice from heaven uttered; that the Father had already glorified his name, and would yet further glorify it. How? *Now* (saith he) *is the judgment of this world*; that is, (say some), the condemnation of the wicked men in it: and certain it is, that the term *world* doth sometimes so signify, Joh 15:19 Joh 17:6,9 1Co 6:2 1Co 11:32. But this sense seemeth not to agree with Joh 3:17, where Christ tells us, that this his first coming was not to condemn the world. Others do therefore here by *judgment* better understand, the dispensation of Divine providence, by which a great change or catastrophe was to be made in the world by the reformation of it; the beginning of the time of the *restitution of all things*, Ac 3:21. But it seems best to be understood of the deliverance and vindication of mankind from the power of the devil, who had a long time held mankind in an unjust possession. The devil had got a dominion over mankind by the fall of Adam, and had exceedingly tyrannized over them, keeping the far greatest part of the world in slavery by idolatry, and keeping many others, who were no open idolaters, yet captives to his will. Now, saith our Saviour, the time is come when this shall be altered; Satan shall be bound up; I will deliver a great part of the world from the yoke of idolatry; another part of them from the power and dominion of sin. The devil, who is not by any right *the prince of this world*, but boasteth himself to be so, Mt 4:9, and acts in it like a prince, powerfully working *in the children of disobedience*, Eph 2:2, and as *the god of this world* blinding men's eyes, 2Co 4:4, taking the world as his house, and keeping it as a strong man, Mt 12:29, shall be cast out of my redeemed ones; so as though he will still be going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and molesting the best of men by his temptations, yet he shall not prevail over them, God will bruise him under their feet; he that had the power of death shall (as to his dominion) be destroyed, and those who are in bondage through the fear of it, shall be delivered, Heb 2:14,15; the tempted shall be succoured, Heb 2:18, and God with the temptation shall give a blessed issue. And the devil's kingdom kept up by idolatry, shall also in a great measure be destroyed in the world; many nations now under that slavery

shall embrace the gospel, and throw away their idols.

John 12:32

Ver. 32,33. However this term of lifting up Christ is taken in some other scriptures, it is by the evangelist himself in this text expounded concerning his death, so as there is no room for any other interpretation of it in this text. The word that is used, is hardly to be found in any place (except where in Scripture it relates to Christ) signifying to die, or put to death; but is very proper, both to express the kind of his death, which was a lifting up upon the cross, from the earth into the air; and to let us know that his death was a lifting up of his name: as it was the lowest degree of his humiliation, so it was nearest to his exaltation. It was his highest act of obedience to the will of his Father, that for which his Father *highly exalted him*, giving him *a name which is above every name*, Php 2:9; and also that which made his name famous over all the world, by the preaching of the gospel; for as the apostles, so all the ministers of the gospel since their times, preach a Christ crucified. Saith our Saviour, If, or although, I be put to death by the hands of the Jews, lifted up upon the cross between heaven and earth, yet this shall not hinder my Father's glorifying of himself in and by me; for instead of obscuring or hindering my Father's glory, by this I shall further promote it. For by the preaching of my cross, and publication of my gospel to all nations, and by the efficacious concurrence of my Holy Spirit, together with the preaching of the gospel, I shall draw (though not all, and every man, yet) multitudes of men and women after me, so as they shall embrace and believe in me, having died and risen up again from the dead, and being by my apostles, and other ministers of the gospel, held forth as the object of people's faith, to be by them laid hold upon in order to their eternal life and salvation. He used the term of lifting up, (saith the evangelist), to signify the particular death he should die, by being crucified; in which death the bodies of the crucified abode not upon the earth, as when they were at any time stoned, or strangled, or beheaded, &c., but were lifted up from the earth to be nailed to the cross, and hung in the air until they died.

John 12:34

Ver. 34. Here again *the law* is taken in a larger sense than in some places, where it is only significant of the books of Moses, in opposition to the prophets and other holy writings, as we had it before, Joh 10:34; for the places of Scripture which the people seem to refer to, seem to be Ps 110:4, where Christ is called a *priest for ever*; or else Da 7:14, where the kingdom of the Messiah is said to be *an everlasting dominion*, which should *not pass away*, a kingdom that should *not be destroyed*: so also, Da 2:44 Mic 4:7. These old prophecies of the Messiah the people could not reconcile to what our Saviour here told them of his death; the reason was, their not understanding the true notion of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, which they fancied not to be a spiritual and eternal kingdom, but a temporal kingdom here on earth. This made them ask, how, (that is, with what consistency to those prophecies), if he indeed were the Messias, he said, The Son of man should die; for that they understood by the term *lifted up*, which maketh it very plain, that it was a phrase they used to express that kind of death by. They ask who he meant by the Son of man.

John 12:35

Ver. 35. Our Saviour thinketh not fit further to open himself as to that point concerning the Messiah, and his Divine nature; into a direct assertion of which he must have entered, had he given a direct answer to their questions; otherwise what they had objected might easily have been answered by our Saviour, by distinguishing between the two natures in his own person: according to his Divine nature he was not to die, though he died according to his human nature; and after his suffering and resurrection, his whole person, in which both the Divine and human nature were united, were to endure for ever: but he thinks not fit to discourse this point, but returns to what John had told them, Joh 1:9, and what he himself had said, Joh 9:5, that he was *the light of the world*, though possibly by *light* he here understandeth those beams of gospel doctrine which issued out from him as the fountain of light. Yet a little while, I, who am the great Light, and the true Light of the world, am with you: or, Yet a little while, the gospel, which is light, and directs you in the way to heaven, is with you, for within a few years (under forty) after this, their city was destroyed, and their nation ruined; and before that time the apostles were turned away from the generality of that nation to the Gentiles, Ac 13:46 19:9. He in the next verse expounds himself as to what he meant by

walking, viz. believing: Make use of the light, both to guide your understandings and judgments, and also to direct your feet: for look on men in the world, while they have the guidance of the light of the sun, they know how to order their steps, and to direct their feet; but if once it be dark, they know not how to direct their feet in their way, but err, and stumble, and fall. So it will be with you, when I shall be gone, who am the great Light of the world while I am in the world (as he spake [Joh 9:5](#)); and not only I gone, but the gospel, which is that light which I shall leave behind me, be gone, by my apostles turning to the Gentiles, through your perverse refusal of the salvation of it, as [Ac 13:46 19:9](#): when you shall be utterly ruined, (as it will be at the destruction of your city), then you will walk in darkness, having no means of salvation left you.

John 12:36

Ver. 36. He either expounds what he meant before, by his calling to them to walk in the light, viz. believing in him who is the true and great Light of the world; or else he declares faith in him to be their duty, as well as obedience to him, which is a point our Saviour had often before pressed. While I am amongst you, and when I shall be gone from you and the light of the gospel yet stayeth behind amongst you, embrace me, and receive me as your Saviour, and yield all obedience to the prescriptions of my gospel, *that ye may be the children of light*: this the apostle expounds and enlargeth upon, [Eph 5:8-11](#). After Christ had spoken these things in Jerusalem, he departed to Bethany, where he obscured himself from his enemies.

John 12:37

Ver. 37. The miracles of Christ did not work faith in any, yet they had a tendency both to prepare souls for an assent to the proposition of the gospel, and also for receiving Christ as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, as they evidenced a Divine power in him by which he wrought those mighty works; but yet they had not this effect upon the generality of the Jews.

John 12:38

Ver. 38. So as that which Isaiah prophesied, Isa 53:1, appeared to be fulfilled in them; for the term $\tau\upsilon\alpha$, which we translate *that*, doth not in Scripture always denote the final cause, with respect to the counsel and intention of God, but oft times the event. So Joh 5:20 Ro 5:20 2Co 1:17. *The arm of the Lord* may either signify the gospel, which is called *the power of God to salvation*. Ro 1:16 1Co 1:18; or else the Messiah, who is thought to be mentioned under this notion by Isaiah, Isa 51:5 Isa 52:10 59:16 63:12, because the Father worketh by him, as a man worketh by his arm, Isa 1:3,14.

John 12:39

Ver. 39. Some will have, *they could not believe*, to be the same with, they did not; as, Mr 6:5, it is said Christ could not do mighty works at Nazareth; or the same with, they would not, as Ge 19:22; but this seemeth a hard interpretation of ουκ ηδυναντο . It is most certain, that in all there is a natural impotency and disability to believe; but this text seemeth to speak of a further degree of impossibility than that, occasioned through their wilful obstinacy, and God's judicial hardening of them. *Because Esaias said*, is no more than, for Esaias said; the particle doth not denote the cause influencing them, but the effect of the prophecy: God's word (saith the evangelist) must be made good, and Isaiah had prophesied of what now came to pass.

John 12:40

Ver. 40. We have this text (than which there is not one more terrible in the whole book of God) no less than six times quoted in the New Testament, and in all places quoted and given as a reason for the Jews unbelief in the Lord Jesus Christ, Mt 13:14,15 Mr 4:12; Lu 8:10 Ac 28:26,27 Ro 11:8. It is not quoted alike in all places, but for substance the same. The original from whence these quotations are, is Isa 6:9,10. By comparing the texts we shall find several authors, instruments, or causes of these dreadful effects. In the original, the prophet Isaiah is made the instrumental cause: *Go*, (saith God), *and make the heart of this people fat*, &c. Matthew, and Luke

in Ac 28:27, mention themselves as the cause. Matthew saith, *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed.* And the Acts it is, *For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed.* All the other texts speak of it as God's act. The thing is easily thus reconciled: God sent to the Jews his prophets, and gave them the means of salvation; it is true, without the inward efficacy of his Spirit they could not savingly believe, but they did not do what was in their power to have done, nay, they did do what was in their power to have avoided, they slighted and contemned the Lord's prophets, and killed them, and stoned such as were sent unto them. Thus they first shut their own eyes, and hardened their own hearts; and as their forefathers had done in their generation, so the Jews in our Saviour Christ's time did also in their generation, shutting their eyes against the revelation of the gospel by Christ himself. They thus behaving themselves, God judicially gave them up to their own lusts, permitting their hearts to harden, and suffering them to close their own eyes, so as they could not repent, believe, or return, and be saved; not that God infused any malice into their hearts, but withdrew his grace from them after such provocations on their parts: so that as the prophets in their age laboured with them in vain, and all the event of their ministry was but the generality of that people's growing worse and more obdurate; so all the event of Christ's ministry and miracles, which he personally wrought amongst them in his age, did accidentally but increase their sin and their judgment, and ripen them for their ruin, through their wilful abuse of those sacred means of life and salvation. The judgment itself was but one, viz. a judicial hardening of them; but it is set out by a great variety of expressions, both by the prophets, and the writers of the New Testament: in Isaiah, by making their hearts fat, their ears heavy, shutting their eyes: in Matthew, making their hearts gross, their ears dull of hearing, shutting their eyes: in this text, by blinding their eyes, and hardening their hearts: in the Acts, by the same phrases as in Matthew: in Ro 11:8 is added, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber.* All the phrases are expressive of the same dreadful judgment of God; yet it may be expressed in this variety of phrase, to signify the distinct, particular plagues (comprehended in this one plague) which fall upon the several powers and faculties of those souls upon whom this dreadful judgment falls; blindness in the mind, stubbornness in the will, &c., vileness in the affections, reprobacy in the mind, &c.

John 12:41

Ver. 41. The evangelist saith, that these things *Esaias said, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* Isaiah's sight of God's glory is described, Isa 6:1, *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, &c.* The evangelist expounds this of Christ, which is an evident proof of the Deity of Christ, that he is Jehovah; for it was Jehovah whom the prophet there saw: and that the revelation of that dreadful wrath of God, did not only concern that particular age in which Isaiah lived, but the successive generation of the Jews, whom the prophet saw by the eye of prophecy would tread in the same steps, and use Christ (the Heir) as their forefathers had used him, and the prophets of that age.

John 12:42

Ver. 42. Though the Pharisees made up a great part of the sanhedrim, yet there were divers others also mixed with them, amongst which there were many of a better temper; and it may be ἀρχοντων here may not signify members of that court, but principal men in the magistracy. We must not understand by *believed*, that they believed with a saving faith; what follows will evidence the contrary; but they had some convictions upon them as to the truth of what he said, and his being the true Messiah; but they durst not openly declare what themselves thought, nor publicly own and aver Christ to be what he indeed was, and they were inclinable to think he was, lest the Pharisees, who were Christ's most implacable enemies, should have put the decree they had made (of which we read, Joh 9:22) in execution upon them.

John 12:43

Ver. 43. For they were not willing to part with their great places in the magistracy, which brought them respect, honour, and applause from men; they valued this more than God's honouring and praising them. How hard it is for great men to enter into the kingdom of God!

John 12:44

Ver. 44. The words, at first view, seem to contain a contradiction, and denying the same act as to the same person; as if any man could believe, and yet not believe on Christ; but there is nothing less in them. By the same figurative way of speaking God tells the prophet Samuel, 1Sa 8:7, the people had not rejected Samuel, (that is, not Samuel alone), but they had rejected him. So Mr 9:37, *Whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me*, (that is, not me alone), *but him that sent me*. So 1Th 4:8. Or else thus, He that believeth on me, doth not believe on a mere man, as I appear at present to the world, but he also believeth on God that sent me. The Jews owned one God the Father, and acknowledged him the object of their faith, Joh 14:1, *Ye believe in God*; but they were blinded as to Christ, appearing only in the form of a man. So that our Saviour again by these words asserts his Divine nature, his oneness and equality with his Father; so as he was also the object of their faith, as well as his Father.

John 12:45

Ver. 45. No man hath seen God at any time; but he that by the eyes of his mind knows, and understands, and believeth in me, seeth him that sent me: or, he that seeth me in my works which I do, seeth also him that sent me, by whom I do these mighty works. Thus, afterward, Joh 14:9, he saith to Philip, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; he that hath seen me, hath not indeed seen the Divine nature and essence, but hath seen that Person who is one with the Father; *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, as the apostle speaks, Heb 1:3.

John 12:46

Ver. 46. *I am come a light into the world*; this is no more than what our Saviour hath often said, Joh 3:19, and Joh 9:5; and it was according to the prophecy of him, Isa 42:6. *That whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness*; that he who receiveth and embraces me, as his Priest and Prophet, though he may be in darkness naturally, Eph 5:8, yet should not abide in a state of ignorance, and sin, and guilt, Joh 3:36 8:31. Men and women, before they believe in Christ are in darkness; but upon believing,

they are translated out of their state of darkness into a state of marvellous light; they do not abide in darkness.

John 12:47

Ver. 47. *I judge him not*; I alone judge him not, or rather, it is not my present business to pronounce sentence of condemnation against him; I am now doing the work of a Redeemer and Saviour, not of a Judge: he *is condemned already*, Joh 3:18, and he hath another that accuseth and condemneth him; as the Jews had Moses, Joh 5:45, so he hath my Father as his Judge, and will have my word as his accuser (as in the next verse): I shall one day condemn him; but that is not my present business, that was not my errand in coming into the world. I came to offer the world the means, and to show them the way to salvation; if they do perish, their blood will be upon their own heads: it is not my business to condemn them.

John 12:48

Ver. 48. These words, *and receiveth not my words*, expound the former: not to receive in heart, to believe, and embrace the words of Christ in the gospel, is to reject Christ. So Lu 10:16, *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me*. And he that doth so, *hath one that judgeth him*, that is, my Father who hath sent me, and will vindicate mine honour. Nay, *the word that I have spoken* shall rise up in judgment against him at the last day, and prove that he hath judged himself unworthy of everlasting life.

John 12:49

Ver. 49. I do not speak what I say to you as mere man, or any thing but what is my Father's will, and mine only as one with him, and as sent by him; I have said nothing but what my Father hath willed me to reveal to the world as his will.

John 12:50

Ver. 50. I am assured that the way to life everlasting is to obey his commandments; and that makes me speak, and deliver all that, and nothing but that, which I have in charge from my Father: *as the Father said unto me, so I speak.* Therefore look you to it, in rejecting me, you reject my Father, whom you own and acknowledge for your God; and in disobeying me, you disobey my Father, and him whom you own as your Father also.

John 13:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 13:1-17 Jesus washes his disciples feet; and exhorteth

them to follow his example of humility and charity.

Joh 13:18-30 He foretells the treachery of Judas, and points

him out to John by a token.

Joh 13:31-35 He speaketh of his glorification as near at hand,

and commandeth his disciples to love one another.

Joh 13:36-38 He forewarns Peter that he shall thrice deny him.

Ver. 1. That this was the fourth passover after that he entered upon his public ministry is out of doubt, and the last he ever celebrated. We have taken notice of this evangelist's mention of the other three: but how long what follows was before the passover, which is here expressed by *before the feast*, is a great question: some will have it the day, others immediately before, as $\pi\rho\omicron$ (the very same particle) is used. Lu 11:38, *before dinner*, and Lu 22:15, *before I suffer*. The resolution of it much depends upon another question as difficult, viz. What supper it is which is mentioned? Joh 13:2. Those who would be satisfied in these cases, may find a collection of what is said by most valuable interpreters in Mr. Pool's Synopsis Criticorum, upon Mt 26:1-75. It is our happiness, that though some such knots occur in holy writ, yet they are about things in which our

salvation is not concerned; so as without danger to our souls we may be ignorant of what is the truth about them. When Christ knew that the hour (which he had once or twice before said was not come) was now come, that he must die, rise again, and in a short time ascend to his Father; he having loved his disciples, not with a mutable, but with an unchangeable love; he resolves upon the washing of their feet, as a demonstration of that love.

John 13:2

Ver. 2. *And supper being ended;* possibly it were better translated, while they were at supper, or in supper time, Greek, δειπνου γενομενου, but the great question is, What supper is here intended? Our most learned Lightfoot is very confident this was not the paschal supper. The most interpreters, ancient and modern, seem to be of another mind. Or it may be rather a common supper, which they ate before the passover: for whereas some think this supper was that in the house of Simon the leper, mentioned Mt 26:6, it seemeth no way probable, no circumstance inclining us to believe any such thing; and the evangelist having told us that it was after that supper that Christ rode into Jerusalem and again went from thence, and hid himself, Joh 12:36, and then reporting this as a thing subsequent to it in this chapter; it seemeth very clear to me, that it could not be the supper in the house of Simon the leper. Concerning the influence of the devil upon Judas, to put it into his heart to betray his Master, see Lu 22:3,4.

John 13:3

Ver. 3. Our translating the Greek participle ειδως, *knowing*, (which properly signifies having known), createth a difficulty, viz. How Christ's knowledge of this, that the Father had given all things into his hand, should be assigned as a reason of, or motive to, his subsequent action of washing the feet of his disciples? The sense therefore must certainly be, though he knew; and so it doth not import a reason of his following action, but only signifieth Christ's great humiliation and condescension. Though he well enough knew, that *all power was given him in heaven and earth*, as in Mt 28:18; that he was his disciples' Lord, that he came from God,

and was now going to God again; yet to show how much he loved his disciples, and to set them a pattern of humility, and teach them brotherly love, and that he *came not* in the estate wherein he yet was *to be ministered unto, but to minister*, Mt 20:28.

John 13:4

Ver. 4. *He riseth from supper.* What supper? Is the question. We are told, that the Jews had two suppers upon the paschal night, which was the 14th day of the month Nisan. The first was the passover supper, which was a religious rite in obedience to the law. The second, a common supper (as on other nights); to which our Saviour added a third, which was the Lord's supper. To me it seemeth rather that their common supper was first, then the passover supper; and that Christ arose from this common supper to do this act. Augustine understood it of the common supper; so doth Beza, Heinsius, Tarnovius, and others; which seemeth to me most probable, though others understand it of the passover supper. Whatever supper the evangelist meaneth, Christ rose up from it before it was done. Calvin, Pareus, Beza, Petargus, Tossanus, and divers others amongst the protestant interpreters; Tolet, Maldonate, and Jansenius, amongst the papists; do agree a common supper this night, besides the paschal supper, and the Lord's supper: from which it is most probable that Christ, as is here said, rose up, and laid aside his garment; that is, his outward loose garment, (for such they used), which servants were wont to gird up when they waited at table, Lu 17:8: Christ laid one aside, and girdling up the other, takes a towel.

John 13:5

Ver. 5. Poureth water into a bason; begins first to wash his disciples feet, then to wipe them with the linen cloth he had taken. All this was done in the form of a servant; so they used to do, as to guests that came to dine or sup with their lords or masters.

John 13:6

Ver. 6. Christ in the performance of this ceremony cometh to Simon Peter; whether first, or last, it is not said; and therefore the papists argue ill from hence, to prove the primacy of Peter over the rest of the apostles. Peter looks upon it with a modest, but sinful and superstitious, indignation. Samuel of old determined, that obedience to God is better than sacrifice; it is then certainly better than a compliment. Peter in this case ought not to have contradicted his Master out of a compliment to him, but to have suffered him to go on in this act of ministration. There may be a voluntary humility, and pretended reverence to Christ, which is indeed but superstition, and can be no other, if contrary to any revelation of the Divine will.

John 13:7

Ver. 7. Our Lord, seeing Peter's general design good, though he mistook as to this particular act, tells him, that at present he did not understand his counsel and design in this action, but it should be more intelligible unto him afterwards; as indeed he made it by his discourse upon this his act of humiliation, Joh 13:13-16.

John 13:8

Ver. 8. Peter rashly replies, *Thou shalt never wash my feet.* Here was a seeming reverence for his Master, but (like the Jewish zeal mentioned by Paul, Ro 10:2) *not according to knowledge.* Christ tells him, that except he washed him, he had no part with him; that is, he should never be saved. But will some say, Was not this too severe, for our Saviour to threaten Peter with an exclusion from a co-inheritance with him in heaven, for modestly refusing to suffer him to wash his feet?

Answer.

1. The least disobedience not repented of, is enough to exclude a soul from the kingdom of heaven.
2. But Christ seems to take an advantage here, from this ceremony of his washing their feet, to discourse to him the necessity of his washing his

soul with his blood, from the filth of sin and corruption; and of this washing it undoubtedly is that Christ here speaketh, the necessity of which is very often inculcated in holy writ.

John 13:9

Ver. 9. Peter now understandeth what washing it is which our Saviour last spake of, and wholly submits to the will of his Lord and Master; acknowledging himself to be wholly defiled, and to stand in need of a washing all over: *Lord, saith he, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;* that is, my whole man.

John 13:10

Ver. 10. Look as it is with persons that have been washing themselves in a bath, when they are washed, yet walking abroad barefoot, or with thin sandals or coverings for their feet, will be again subject to pollute and dirty their feet, so as they will have frequent need to wash them again; but they need not soon again wash their whole bodies: so it is as to souls that are washed with my blood; washed, and sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God, (as the apostle speaketh, 1Co 6:11), their state is not to be renewed; they need not be justified a second time; but they will have need to have their feet washed, in regard of their remainder of sin and lust that is in them, and will be so while they are in the world, and the temptations which every where he in the world, as snares for their feet; they will have need of a daily washing by repentance, and fresh applications of their souls to my blood, by the repeated exercises of faith, according to their renewed and repeated acts of sin.

Ye are clean; you, who are my apostles, are clean; you are washed, you are justified, I have forgiven your sins, accepted your persons.

But not all; the most of you are so, but not all.

John 13:11

Ver. 11. By these words the evangelist expounds only what our Saviour meant in the former verse, when he had told them they were not all clean; for though the disciples did not yet know that they had a traitor amongst them, Satan had before this put the design into the heart of Judas, Joh 13:2; and Christ, who knew all hearts, knew what was in the heart of Judas, and he soon after (as we shall hereafter in this chapter read) revealed it; yet at this time he had not revealed it to his disciples: now he begins to discover it, telling them, that though the most of them were clean, justified and sanctified, yet all of them were not so.

John 13:12

Ver. 12. After that our Saviour had finished this ceremony, and washed his disciples' feet, (some question whether all or no, but I see no reason to doubt it), he returned again to the supper, which probably now was near finished, which certainly was the common supper which the Jews had besides the passover supper, and probably before it, though some think after it. He asketh them if they knew the meaning of this which he had done unto them; lest they should not fully understand it, he openeth it to them in the following discourse.

John 13:13

Ver. 13. The disciples in their ordinary discourses called Christ *Master and Lord*; nor was it a name improper for him, for he was their Master to instruct them, their Lord to rule, guide, and govern them: now, saith our Saviour, disciples ought to obey their master, servants ought to obey their lord, and disciples also ought to imitate their master.

John 13:14

Ver. 14. I have by this my action taught you to love, and to be ready also to serve, one another, and not to think much to serve them even in the lowest and meanest offices by which you can do them good; for we must not think that these words lay a literal obligation upon Christians to wash the feet of others; washing the feet is mentioned but as *species pro genere*,

a single act of service, put for all other acts by which we can be serviceable unto others: so it is also used, 1Sa 25:41 1Ti 5:10. Some of the ancients seem to have judged this washing of feet to have been instituted as a sacrament, (though in an improper sense), and from hence, though Bellarmine, Maldonate, and others deny it to be a sacrament as well as we, yet probably is the practice in use amongst the papists, to wash certain persons' feet every Thursday before Easter; a theatrical ceremony, rather than any thing of solid and profitable use. Our Saviour certainly intends no more by *ye ought to wash one another's feet*, than, ye ought to serve one another in all offices of love, and not to think yourselves too good, or too great, to do the meanest services to those who are my disciples: and this is that as to which he tells them he had set them an example that they should do as he had done, in other acts of the same kind, though not as to this specific act.

John 13:15

Ver. 15,16. The apostles were to take up a very high station in the gospel church, and our hearts are very prone to swell in a high opinion of ourselves, for which the nature of man taketh advantage from every thing in which we either really do excel, or can conceit that we do excel, our neighbours. Our Lord therefore, though speaking to the apostles, (some of the best of men), yet knowing they were (like Elijah) men subject to like passions with other men, addeth this to arm them against, any temptation to pride: they owned themselves as servants to Christ who was their great Lord; they had seen what he had done; he therefore applies a proverbial expression to them, which he also made use of in other cases, as Mt 10:24 Joh 15:20; in both which places he maketh use of it to arm them against persecutions; here, to persuade them to humility, condescension, and brotherly love.

John 13:17

Ver. 17. He tells them, that it is not the bare comprehension of these things in their notion that would do them any good, unless they brought their knowledge into practice; for *to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it*

not, it is sin, Jas 4:17. Faith without works is dead, and the knowledge of our Master's will, if we do it not, doth but expose us to many stripes.

John 13:18

Ver. 18. I am about to tell you what will make your ears tingle; but be of good comfort, what I shall now tell you doth not concern all of you, it concerneth but one man amongst you.

I know whom I have chosen to the work of the apostleship; so some interpret it, as Joh 6:70, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* But the generality of the best interpreters understand the choosing here mentioned, of a choosing to eternal life, and perseverance in the way of God as a means in order to it, as Eph 1:4; and so understood, here is a greater argument in this text to prove the Godhead of Christ, as the Author of eternal election: Though one of you be a devil, a traitor, yet I have chosen the rest of you to eternal life: and this is no more than was prophesied of me, and fulfilled in David as a type of me: the Scripture must have its accomplishment; that Scripture is now fulfilled in me.

John 13:19

Ver. 19. What I now tell you should be so far from prejudicing your faith in me, that it ought rather to confirm and increase your faith in me as the true Messiah; when (the thing coming to pass) you shall understand that I know the hearts, counsels, and secret thoughts of men: and when you shall see the Scriptures have their accomplishment, and those things which were long ago prophesied concerning the Messiah have their just accomplishment, and fulfilling in me as the person intended in those ancient revelations.

John 13:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 10:24", the words of which place are but here repeated; either to commend to them brotherly love, and offices of love, which he had before recommended to them under the notion of washing

one another's feet; or else to comfort his disciples, who might think that this treacherous villany of Judas would make them odious to the whole world: No, saith our Saviour, you are my messengers, persons sent by me; I will provide for you, there shall be those who will receive you. And I declare to all the world to encourage them, that I shall take their receiving of you as kindly as if they received me, and it shall turn to the same account, and that is all one as if they had received my Father himself, for he sent me. Some think that by these words Christ aggravates the sin of Judas, as being committed against the Father as well as against Christ; and a most treacherous failure as to the duty of an apostle, or one dignified so much as to be sent out by Christ.

John 13:21

Ver. 21. How, and in what sense, trouble of spirit could agree to Christ, was noted before, Joh 12:27: see the notes on that text. This seemeth to have been rather a trouble of grief, that one of his apostles, one whom he had chosen, should commit so great a villany, than arising from fear of death; for his next words are a further discovery of the person that should betray him: he had said before, that he should be betrayed, and that it should be by one that used to eat bread with him; but now he cometh closer, and tells them that it should be by one of them, that is, one of the twelve; this was a closer discovery than he had as yet made.

John 13:22

Ver. 22. It seemeth they had no suspicion of Judas, but our Saviour telling them that it was one of them, they begin to look about one upon another, rather suspecting themselves than Judas. There may be a great deal of villany, and the greatest villany, in the hearts of professors, in whose conversation appeareth nothing that may give a just suspicion to others; and the true disciples of Christ will have so much candour and brotherly love, that they will not rashly judge and censure their brethren.

John 13:23

Ver. 23. This *leaning on Jesus' bosom*, and the *laying on Jesus' breast*, mentioned Joh 13:25, cannot be understood without the understanding of the usual posture the Jews used at their meals, and particularly at the paschal supper; of which we have spoken largely; See Poole on "Mt 26:20": see the annotations there. Their posture seemeth to have been kneeling, and resting their bodies back upon their legs, with a leaning upon their left elbow; and this seemeth not to have been so close, but that he that so sat might use his other hand to take his meat; hence he who sat before any, sat with his back towards him, but leaning towards the bosom of the other, which is here called a leaning on (that is, towards) his bosom, and laying on his breast; for it cannot be understood of such a sitting, or leaning, as to touch the other's breast or bosom, for that would have hindered him upon whom the person so leaned from any use of his right hand to take his meat or drink. It is apparent from hence, first, that at this supper there was none but Christ and his disciples. Secondly, that they sat in this posture of leaning. These two things make it very probable, if not certain, that the supper here mentioned was either the paschal supper, or a common supper, which immediately went before, or followed after, the passover supper. For,

1. We have no record of any other supper, at which were only Christ and the twelve disciples; and:
2. If we may believe the Jewish writers, though their ordinary posture at their common meals was discumbency, that is a kneeling on their knees, with a resting their bodies backward upon their legs; yet this posture of leaning was constantly added only upon the passover night, as a further testimony of their liberty, that they were not now servants, as in the land of Egypt. The person who sat next to our Saviour, with his back next our Saviour's bosom, was John, often in Scripture dignified with the title of the beloved disciple, and him *whom Jesus loved*, Joh 19:26 Joh 20:2 21:7,20.

John 13:24

Ver. 24. Peter, knowing the particular affection that Christ had for John, maketh a sign to him, to ask of Christ which of them he meant, when he said, *One of you shall betray me*.

John 13:25

Ver. 25. John accordingly, doth propound the question to Christ.

John 13:26

Ver. 26. *Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it;* we have the same, though not mentioned as spoken in particular to John, Mt 26:23 Lu 22:21; though neither of them mention Christ's own dipping the sop, but Matthew saith, he dipped his hand with him in the dish; and Luke saith, his hand was with him on the table. Without question all the evangelists speak of the same time; for it is not reasonable to think that this discovery should be made, and Judas gone out, and that afterward he should return again to eat the passover. This maketh me very inclinable to think, that though the washing of the feet might be during the time of a common supper, preceding the passover, yet the supper they were now at was the passover supper: where,

1. Were none but he and the twelve disciples.
2. It is plain they were in that leaning posture, not used at common meals, but on the passover nights (as Dr. Lightfoot tells us from their writings).
3. The discourse passed at the table is the very same (though not in words, yet in sense) with that mentioned by Matthew and Luke, at the passover supper.
4. It is not reasonable to think that after such a discovery as Christ now made of the traitor, he should come again to be pointed at and exposed.

Concerning the sop, what it was, hath been some question; and a learned writer of our own (but in this point I think much too critical) hath increased the difficulty, by affirming the word here used, ψωμιον, signifies a piece of bread, or the lower part or chippings of the bread; for which he quotes Hesychius, who indeed doth say so of ψωθιον, but not ψωμιον. The learned annotator thinks ψωθιον is a false print for ψωμιον,

but it cannot be: for,

1. There are in Hesychius several words in alphabetical order, between ψωθιον, and this word.
2. Though ψωμιον be not in Hesychius, yet ψωμη is, and expounded by him τα μερη, parts; now all know that this ψωμιον, which is but a diminutive derived from ψωμος or ψωμη, can signify no more than a little part, let it be of what it will; for it is manifest out of Homer, that, joined with an adjective, it signifies a mouthful of man's flesh, which came out of the Cyclops' mouth.

So as the sense of these words is, He it is to whom I shall give a little part or portion of meat, when I have dipped it. And having dipped it, *he gave it to Judas the son of Simon*: not the Judas who wrote the Epistle, and who is mentioned, Joh 14:22, but he that was the son of Simon, called from his place which he lived in, Kiroth, *Iscariot*: by which he did as perfectly describe the traitor as if he had named him.

John 13:27

Ver. 13. That the devil did ever so enter into Judas as to possess him, as we read of many who were possessed, and violently acted by the devil, is more than we read and, where in holy writ: the entrance into him, signifies Judas's free and willing giving up of himself to the devil's suggestions and conduct; and in this sense the devil also before this time was entered into Judas, Lu 22:3. But as holy men are said to be filled with the Spirit of God, who had before received the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit came after upon them with fuller and stronger impulses and motions; so though the devil had formerly been moving Judas to this vile act, and had had his consent to it, yet after he had taken this mouthful, the devil plied him with stronger motions, impulses, and suggestions: and now he had mastered his conscience, and hardened his heart, so as he was more prepared for the villany about which he had some thoughts before. He had now, with an unbelieving and unthankful heart, been eating the passover, which was a type of Christ; and had so mastered his conscience, as to come and do this, with a vile heart, reeking before with treacherous and bloody designs against his Lord and Master. See what is the effect. His heart is more vile,

more treacherous, and bloody; he is twice more the servant of the devil than he was before. The sop given him by Christ was but an accidental occasion of it; as the devil took more advantage from his now hardened and further emboldened heart, and he is twice more the child of the devil than he was before. Christ, knowing this, doth not command, advise, or exhort him; but, in a detestation, bids him go and do what he was resolved to do, and which he knew would be quickly; letting him know both that he knew what was in his heart, and that he was now ready to receive the effects of his malice.

John 13:28

Ver. 28,29. How innocent are honest hearts! *Charity thinketh no evil*, saith the apostle. Although our Saviour had plainly enough deciphered him as the traitor, by telling John that he to whom he should give the sop was he, and then by giving it to Judas; yet whether they all did not hear what our Saviour said to John, or did not think of so sudden a tragedy, they do not suspect that the hour was at hand when Judas should perfect his intended villany: though they heard our Saviour bid him get him out, and do quickly what he had to do; yet Judas being he who carried that little stock of money which Christ had, Joh 12:6, they thought that that which our Saviour bid him do, as a work he had undertaken to do, was laying out some money, either to buy some things which were necessary for them, for the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread; either for food for them to eat, or for sacrifices for them to offer; or that it was our Saviour's mind, that he should out of this little stock distribute something to the poor: they little thought that our Saviour's words argued a giving him over to perfect the treacherous designs which he had conceived in his heart.

John 13:30

Ver. 30. From hence appeareth:

1. That it is impossible to prove that Judas was with our Saviour when he instituted and celebrated the supper; though if he were, it proveth nothing of a liberty for ignorant and scandalous persons to be there, (for

Judas was not such a one), nor yet of a lawfulness for ministers of the gospel, knowing any to be such, to give the Lord's supper to them. For although Christ knew Judas's heart, yet he acted not according to his omniscience, but as the first and prime minister of the gospel, setting us an example, not to judge of secret things, but of things open only.

2. It also appeareth from hence, that it is not probable that this was any other supper than the passover supper; for if it were not, the passover supper must be after this, and this same supper preceding it. Our famous Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was a supper in Bethany, at two miles distance (or near so much) from Jerusalem. But then it must follow:
 - a) That John speaks nothing of the paschal supper, or the Lord's supper; and:
 - b) It doth by no means appear probable to me, that Judas, after such a discovery of him, should come again to eat the passover with Christ and his disciples.

These things, together with what I noted before, that here is no mention made of more guests than the twelve; that the posture used (especially as to leaning) was peculiar to the paschal supper; that the discourse mentioned by this evangelist as had at this supper about the discovery of the traitor, is the same in substance (though not in terms) with what Matthew and Luke report, as passed at the passover: all these things confirm me, that it is the paschal supper that John speaketh of. Whether Judas was at the Lord's supper, which we know followed the passover immediately, depends upon the sense of the particle εὐθεὺς, which we translate immediately; but doth not signify necessarily such a present departure, but the action of the Lord's supper might be first over; though in reason it seemeth to me more probable, because of those words, *having received the sop, he immediately went out*, that it should be here interpreted strictly, and that shame and horror should not suffer him to stay so long, as till the action of the supper was over: though whether he were at the Lord's supper (as I said before) signifieth nothing at all to the questions about mixed communion, either as to the part of the minister administering, or the people communicating.

John 13:31

Ver. 31. He speaketh of that which was presently to be, as if it were already done; the meaning is, Now the time cometh when the Son of man shall immediately be glorified, by finishing the work which God hath given him to do; by rising again from the dead, and declaring himself to be the Son of God with power; by ascending up into heaven, to be glorified with the same glory which he had with the Father before the world began: and God will appear to be glorified in him, by his finishing the work which God hath given him to do, manifesting his name to the sons of men; and by the many signs and wonders which God will yet further show at the time of his death and resurrection, and by the coming down of the Holy Ghost.

John 13:32

Ver. 32. God was glorified in Christ by his death upon the cross in obedience to his Father's will; (thus Peter, Joh 21:19, is said by his death to *glorify God*); and as he was declared to be the Son of God; and as by him the world was brought to the knowledge of God, as by his spiritual and heavenly doctrine, so by the miracles he wrought. From hence our Lord concludes, that God should glorify Christ *in himself*; so as the glory of the Father and the Son are the same, they are mutually glorified each in other: if the Son be glorified, the Father is also glorified; and if the Father be glorified, the Son is also glorified; the Father and the Son are mutually glorified each in other. And the Father (saith our Saviour) in a short time will further glorify him, by taking him up into heaven, and making the whole person of the Mediator glorious in heaven.

John 13:33

Ver. 33. Our Saviour's time of death being very nigh, (for it was the next day), he begins to speak of it to his disciples more freely and plainly, and to let them know that he, though now dying, bare a fatherly tender affection to them: he calls them *little children*. Parents have a natural affection to their children; a more tender affection to their children when little, because in their tender age they are more ignorant, and unable to provide for themselves. We find this compellation used by Christ's

apostles, Ga 4:19 1Jo 2:1,28. And he tells them, that he had but now a little time to be with them before his death, and not long after his resurrection; in which, too, his converse was not such with them as it hitherto had been.

Whither I go, ye cannot come; he told this to the Jews in Joh 7:31, and now he tells them the same, that they would miss him when he was gone, and should seek him; but even the disciples at present could not follow him to heaven, whither he was going. The unbelieving Jews should never follow him thither, but even those who were his disciples, who were born again, and whom he loved as little children are beloved by their parents, should not yet follow him; his work in the world was done, but they had yet a great deal of work in it to do.

John 13:34

Ver. 34. The commandment of loving one another is strictly no new commandment, we find it in the law of Moses, Le 19:18; often pressed in the New Testament, Joh 15:17 Eph 5:2 1Jo 4:21. 1Joh 2:7 saith, it is *no new commandment*, ; see also 2Jo 1:6. It is therefore called *a new commandment*, either because of the excellency of it, as *new* seemeth to be taken, Ps 33:3 Isa 65:17 Mt 26:29; or because it is expounded in the gospel in a new manner, pressed more plainly and in new arguments, and urged by a new example of their Lord and Master.

John 13:35

Ver. 35. A disciple hath his name, either from learning from his master, or from following his master and treading in his steps: take it in either sense, loving one another is a certain note of being Christ's disciples; for as Christ continually pressed this by his precepts, so he set them his own example, by showing the greatest love to them he could show.

John 13:36

Ver. 36. Peter yet understood not his Lord and Master, and therefore asked him whither he went? Our Saviour spake of his ascension into heaven,

after his suffering death upon the cross; whither he tells Peter he could not at present follow him, but afterwards should. Believers shall be ever with the Lord, but they must wait the Lord's time, and first finish the work which he hath given them to do upon the earth.

John 13:37

Ver. 37. Still Peter doth not understand our Saviour, but fancies some earthly motion from the place where he was; but it should seem by what followeth, that he thought our Saviour spake of some motion which might be very dangerous to him; and therefore he adds, according to his usual courage and mettle, expressed on all occasions, *I will lay down my life for thy sake*: we had such a resolution of his, Mt 26:33,35.

John 13:38

Ver. 38. Mark saith, *before the cock crow twice*. So the other three evangelists must be expounded, who say no more than *before the cock crow*, not mentioning how often; but the history makes it good, that our Saviour meant twice, for it was not before the second crowing of the cock that Peter *went out, and wept bitterly*.

John 14:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 14:1-4 Christ comforteth his disciples with the promise of

a heavenly mansion.

Joh 14:5-7 He professes himself the way, the truth, and the life,

Joh 14:8-11 and that he is one with the Father.

Joh 14:12-14 He promises them power to do greater works than his own,

and the grant of all that they should ask in his name.

Joh 14:15-26 He requireth their obedience as a proof of their love,

and giveth them a promise of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.
Joh 14:27-31 He leaveth his peace with them.

Chapter Introduction

The three ensuing chapters contain either one or more consolatory discourses of our Saviour to his disciples, (as appeareth from Joh 14:1), made, as is probable, to them in the guest chamber (at least that part of them which we have in this chapter); for we read of no motion of our Saviour's till we come to the last verse of this chapter. That which troubled them was, what he had told them in the close of the former chapter, that he was going from them. By our Saviour's discourse in this and the two following chapters, it should seem that there were three things that troubled them.

1. The sense of their loss as to his bodily presence.
2. The fear, that with the loss of that they should also lose those spiritual influences which they had received from him, and upon which their souls had lived.
3. The prospect of those storms of troubles and persecutions, which were likely to follow his departure from them; for if we wisely consider what our Saviour saith in these three following chapters, it all tends to comfort them as to troubles that might arise in their spirits, upon one or other of these accounts: the general proposition is laid down in Joh 14:1.

Ver. 1. *Let not your heart be troubled*, through grief, or fear, which are the two passions which ordinarily most disturb our minds. Our Saviour himself was troubled, but not sinfully; his trouble neither arose from unbelief, nor yet was in an undue measure; it was (as one well expresses it) like the mere agitation of clear water, where was no mud at the bottom: but our trouble is like the stirring of water that hath a great deal of mud at the bottom, which upon the roiling, riseth up, and maketh it the whole body of the water in the vessel impure, roiled and muddy. It is this sinful trouble, caused from these two passions, and rising up to an immoderate degree, and mixed with a great deal of unbelief and distrust in God, against which

our Saviour here cautions his disciples; and the remedy he prescribes against those afflicting passions, is a believing in God, and a believing on him. The two latter passages in the verse are so penned in the Greek, that they may be read four ways; for the verb *believe*, twice repeated, may be read either indicatively or imperatively, or the one may be read indicatively and the other imperatively; so as they may be translated, You believe in God, you believe also in me. And so they teach us, that there is no such remedy for inward troubles, as a believing in God, and a believing in Jesus Christ; and those that do so, have no just reason for any excessive heart troubles. Or else they may be read, Believe in God, believe in me: or else as we read them, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me:* or, Believe in God, ye believe in me. But the disciples' faith in Christ as Mediator, and God man, being yet weak, and their weakness being what our Saviour hath ordinarily blamed, not magnified, or commended, the best interpreters judge the sense which our translators give to be the best sense; and judge that our Saviour doth inculcate to them his Divine nature, and again offer himself to them as the proper object of their faith. You (saith he) own it for your duty to trust in God, as your Creator, and he that provideth for you: *believe also in me,* as God equal with my Father; and in me, as the Messiah, your Mediator and Redeemer: so as you have one to take care of all your concerns, both those of your bodies, and those of your souls also, so as you have nothing to be immoderately and excessively, or distrustfully, troubled for; therefore *let not your hearts be troubled;* only, without care or distrust, commit yourselves to me.

John 14:2

Ver. 2. Our Lord's first argument brought to comfort them, from the place whither he was going, and the end of his going thither. The place whither he was going was his *Father's house*, so as they needed not to be troubled for him, he was but going home; nor was God his Father only, but theirs also, as he afterwards saith, *I go to my Father, and your Father.* And here he tells them, that in his Father's house there was not only a mansion, that is, an abiding place for him, but for many others also.

Our days on the earth (saith David, 1Ch 29:15) *are as a shadow, and there is no abiding;* but in heaven there are $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\iota$, abiding places. *We shall* (saith the apostle, 1Th 4:17) *be ever with the Lord.* And the mansions there

are many; there is room enough for all believers. I would not have deceived you; if there had been no place in heaven but for me, I would have told you of it; but there are many mansions there.

I go to prepare a place for you: the place was prepared of old; those who shall be saved, were of old ordained unto life. That *kingdom was prepared for them before the foundation of the world;* that is, in the counsels and immutable purpose of God. These mansions for believers in heaven were to be *sprinkled with blood:* the sprinkling of *the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry,* were typical of it; *but the heaven things themselves with better sacrifices than these,* saith the apostle, Heb 9:21,23. By his resurrection from the dead, and becoming the first fruits of those that sleep; by his ascension into heaven, as our *forerunner,* Heb 6:20; by his sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for us; he prepares for us a place in heaven. And thus he comforteth his disciples, (as to the want of his bodily presence), as from the consideration of the place whither he went, so from the end of his going thither, which was, to do those acts which were necessary in order to His disciples' inheriting those blessed mansions which were prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.

John 14:3

Ver. 3. The particle *if* in this place denotes no uncertainty of the thing whereof he had before assured them; but in this place hath either the force of although, or after that: When, or after that, I have died, ascended, and by all these acts, as also by my intercession, shall have made places in Heaven fully ready for you, I will in the last day return again, as Judge of the quick and the dead, and take you up into heaven, 1Th 4:16,17; that you may be made partakers of my glory, Joh 17:22. This is called, Ro 8:17, a being *glorified together* with him; and elsewhere, a reigning with him. So as this is a third argument by which our Lord comforteth his disciples as to their trouble conceived for the want of His bodily presence with them, from the certainty of his return to them, and the end and consequent of his return: the end was to receive them to himself; the consequent, their eternal abiding with Christ where he was.

John 14:4

Ver. 4. Christ, Joh 13:33 of the former chapter, had dignified his disciples with the familiar, loving title of *little children*. It is pleasant to consider how he continueth his discourse to them in such a dialect as a mother would speak to a little child crying after her, seeing her preparing herself to go abroad. The child cries: the mother bids it be still, she is but going to such a friend's house. It still cries: she tells it, she is but going to prepare a place for it there where it shall be much happier than it is at home. It is not yet satisfied: she tells it again, that though she goes, she will come again, and then it shall go along with her, and she will part no more from it. The child is yet impatient: she again endeavours to still it, telling it that it knoweth whither she goeth, and it knows the way, by which, if need be, it may come to her.

John 14:5

Ver. 5. Reason tells every one, that he who knoweth not the term whither a person is going, must needs be ignorant of the way. It is plain, that Thomas, and so (probably) divers others of the apostles, notwithstanding what our Saviour had so plainly told them, Joh 14:2, yet dreamed of some earthly motion our Saviour was making, which makes Thomas to speak thus: so dull are we, and hard to conceive of spiritual things. But will some say, Doth not Thomas here contradict his Master, who had told them, Joh 14:4, that they both knew whither he went, and the way also?

Answer. Some think that our Saviour meant no more than they ought to have known, both whither he went, and the way also; active verbs in Scripture phrase, often signifying no more than duty, or ability. But possibly others answer better, They had some knowledge, but it was more confused and general; not distinct, particular, or certain.

John 14:6

Ver. 6. Christ was his own way to his Father; *By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place*, Heb 9:12. See Lu 24:26 Php 2:8. But both the former words, where the apostle spake of the way they should go, and the

following words, hint to us, that Christ is here speaking of their way, not his own.

As to them, he saith, *I am the way*; that is, the way by which those must get to heaven who will ever come there. Christ is our way to heaven by the doctrine which he taught; by his death, by which he purchased this heavenly inheritance for us; by his holy life and conversation, setting us an example that we should follow his steps; by the influence of his Spirit, guiding us to, and assisting us in, those holy actions by which we must come unto glory.

He is *the truth*; that is, say some, the true way to life eternal: but he is *the truth* as to His doctrine, the gospel being *the word of truth*, Eph 1:13: and as truth signifies reality and accomplishment, in opposition to the prophecies and promises, all being but words till they were in him fulfilled; in which sense we read of the *true tabernacle*, and the *true holy places*, Heb 8:2 Heb 9:24: or as truth is opposed to falsehood, as *truth* is taken Joh 8:44 Ro 3:7.

And he is *the life*, the Author and Giver of eternal life, Joh 11:25 1Jo 5:11; and the purchaser of it by his death; he who by his doctrine showeth the way to it, and by his Holy Spirit begins it, and carrieth it on to perfection. The Jews thought the way to it was by the law of Moses; but our Saviour beateth his disciples out of that opinion: for if the law could have given life, Christ had died in vain, as the apostle argues. Therefore (saith he) there is no coming to the Father *but by me*; no way for you or any other, to come to heaven, but by receiving, and embracing, and believing in me.

John 14:7

Ver. 7. If ye had known me as you ought to have known me, as I am indeed the eternal Son of God, sent by my Father into the world, you should have known my Father, with whom I am equal, and one and the same God, so as in knowing one of us, you must have known both: but you stick in my outward form and appearance, while I appear to you in the form of a man; and you stick in your prejudices sucked in from the notion you have of the Messiah, expecting I know not what temporal prince: these things blind you as to my Divine nature, (personally united to my human

nature), that you see nothing of my Godhead, which if you had clearly known and believed, you would not have been at a loss to know the Father, the brightness of whose glory, and the express image of whose person, I am, though my glory be veiled by my human nature. And if you will yet believe what I say, from henceforth you do know the Father, and you have seen the Father so oft as you have seen me.

John 14:8

Ver. 8. Still Philip understandeth not our Saviour, and further discovereth a very gross conception of the Divine Being, as if it could be seen with mortal eyes; whereas God had told Moses, Ex 33:20, *Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live.* It is a hard thing to determine what degrees of ignorance are consistent or inconsistent with saving grace in souls; the resolution of which doth much depend upon those degrees of revelation and means of knowledge which men have.

John 14:9

Ver. 9. Our Saviour still insists upon the oneness of himself with his Father, and the personal union of the Divine and human nature in him; for otherwise the apostles might have been with Christ a long time, and known him, and yet not have seen nor known the Father. But that supposed, none that had seen Christ, but must have seen the Father also, there being but one God.

John 14:10

Ver. 10. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* It is the opinion of Mr. Calvin, that these words are not here spoken so much to express his Divine nature and being, (for so Christ is no more known to us than his Father), as to express his manner of revealing it. Yet is the Divine nature of Christ fully proved from hence. Others judge, that these words do clearly signify both the distinction of persons, for nothing is in itself, and also the union of the persons in the Divine Being. He proveth his union with the Father, because he spake not those words which he spake of himself; that is, not of

himself solely; he revealed but his Father's will, and declared his Father's mind; and because the works which he did, he did not by his own sole power, without the concurrence of his Father's power in those operations.

John 14:11

Ver. 11. Believe my words (for that is your duty); but yet if you will not believe my words, declaring to you my union with my Father, yet when you see me doing such works as none but God can do, believe me for their sake. It is true, that both the prophets and the apostles spake God's words, not their own, to the people, and also did many great and mighty works; but still their doctrine led unto another, that was Christ; and their miracles were not wrought in their own names, but in the name of Christ. Elijah raised the Shunammite's dead child to life by prayer to God that he would do it; and the apostles bid the lame man arise and walk, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's doctrine terminated in himself; he called men to believe in him, and he wrought miracles by his own power, and by a virtue proceeding out of and from himself, though by the power of his Father also, because he and his Father were one in essence.

John 14:12

Ver. 12. *He that believeth on me;* not every individual soul that believeth on me; but some of those, particularly you that are my apostles, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost in the days of Pentecost; you shall preach the gospel, and work miracles for the confirmation of the truth of the doctrine of it. Yea, and you shall do *greater works* than I have done: not more or greater miracles: the truth of that may be justly questioned; for what miracle was ever done by the apostles greater than that of raising Lazarus? Much less do I think that it is to be understood of speaking with divers tongues. It is rather to be understood of their success carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, by which the whole world, almost, was brought to the obedience of the faith of Christ. We never read that of Christ which we read of Peter, viz. his converting three thousand at one sermon.

Because I go unto my Father, he afterwards expounds, telling us, that if he did not go away, the Comforter would not come. The pouring out of the

Spirit in the days of Pentecost, was the proximate cause of those great works. Now Christ's going to the Father had an influence upon that mission of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:13

Ver. 13. The *whatsoever*, in this text, must be limited by what the will of God hath revealed in other texts, as to the matter of our prayers; viz. they must be things that are for our good; such things as we stand in need of, and as God hath given us a liberty to ask: and indeed no other things can be asked in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; for to ask in Christ's name, signifieth not only the making use of his sacred name in our prayers, (though the constant practice of the church in prayer, hath evidenced it the general opinion of divines, that this is a part of the sense), but also in asking for his merits, and such things as shall be conformable to his will, and for his glory. Whatsoever (saith he) you shall ask of this nature, I will do. He doth not say, my Father will do, but I will do it; to testify his Divine power, and oneness in power with his Father.

That the Father may be glorified in the Son: God hath set up his rest in Christ, and will be glorified in and through him; and hath therefore given him all power in heaven and earth.

John 14:14

Ver. 14. The words are doubled for the further confirmation of them, that we might not doubt when we put up our petitions to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of God.

John 14:15

Ver. 15. Do not show your love to me in mourning, and being troubled for my going from you; but show it by your obedience to what I have commanded you. True love must not evaporate in compliment, but discover itself in a strict observance of the commandments of God.

John 14:16

Ver. 16. This verse containeth a new argument by which our Saviour relieveth his disciples under their affliction for the want of his bodily presence; that is, the mission of the Holy Spirit, *another Comforter*, as our translation reads it. For this he saith that he *will pray the Father*; not that himself had no concern in the mission of the blessed Spirit; for himself telleth us, Joh 16:7, that he would send him; only for the attestation,

1. Of his human nature;
2. Of himself, as our Mediator; and:
3. Of his Father's concern, as well as his own, in sending the Holy Spirit; he here saith, *I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter.*

That term *another*, signifieth the personal distinction of the Third from the First and Second Person in the blessed Trinity. And the name here given to the blessed Spirit, Παρακλητον, (which we too narrowly translate *comforter*), is a term exceedingly proper to signify all the operations of the blessed Spirit in and upon the souls of his people. The same word, 1Jo 2:1, where it is applied to Christ, (as here it is to the Spirit), is there much better translated *Advocate*; and it is most probable that our translators here translate it *Comforter*, because he is here promised to the disciples troubled, as fitted to their present distress. The verb from whence the word derives, signifies not to comfort only, but to exhort, and to be an advocate for another. Now it belongs to the office of an advocate to suggest to his client what may be for his advantage; which is also the office of the blessed Spirit: if he seeth his client in an error, to reprove and to convince him; which is also the work of the Spirit, Joh 16:8: if he seeth him weak and discouraged, to uphold, strengthen, and encourage him; this is also the Spirit's work, Eph 3:16: if he seeth him running into an error, to restrain him; if he findeth him dull and heavy, to quicken him; if he seeth him ready to be run down, to defend him; if he hath any thing to do in the court, to prepare and dram it up for him, and, as occasion serveth, to speak for him. All these things (as might be largely showed) fall within the office of an advocate, and under the

comprehensive term here used. And (saith our Saviour) he shall *abide with you for ever*: I shall be with you but for a while, but he shall abide with you to eternity (as some observe this word is constantly used by this evangelist). So that the promise of the Spirit is not to be restrained only to the apostles and their successors in the ministry, or to be understood only of those extraordinary gifts bestowed on the apostles and first ministers of the gospel; but to be extended further, both with reference to persons and influences: and without doubt the influences of the Spirit, both as to gifts and graces, both upon ministers and more private Christians, are much more plentiful since the sending of the Holy Ghost, after Christ's ascension, in the days of Pentecost, than ever they were before: not as to particular persons; a David, a Solomon, or some particular persons, might have greater measures than any or the most have since had; but as to the generality of ministers and Christians. Doubtless, since the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of Pentecost, there have been greater measures of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit given out, and will be to the end of the world, than ever was in any age before Christ's ascension; which is no more than what was prophesied, Isa 44:3 Joe 2:28, applied to the days of Pentecost, Ac 2:17, but not to be limited to that time or age, either for gifts or gracious habits: for as the extraordinary gifts and powers held in some degree after the apostles' age, (if we may give any credit to ecclesiastical history), so both in those ages, and ever since, as to the generality both of ministers and Christians, (that is, such as are mentioned Joh 14:15, that love Christ, and keep his commandments), there have been fuller measures of gifts, of more constant, standing use for the church, such as those of knowledge and utterance, &c., and also of inward graces, than ever before was.

John 14:17

Ver. 17. He here explains himself, and tells them, that by that other Comforter, mentioned Joh 14:16, he meant the Spirit; whom he here calls *the Spirit of truth*, either because he is a Spirit that declareth and revealeth the truth, as in 1Jo 5:6, or because he teacheth us truth, 1Jo 2:27, he guides us into all truth, Joh 16:13; or in opposition to the lying spirit of the devil, 1Ki 22:22. Most probably the Holy Spirit is here called *the Spirit of truth*, because of the efficiency he hath as to it. It is he who hath revealed all the truth contained in the Scriptures to the world. Holy men wrote as they

were inspired by him, Ac 1:16 2Pe 1:21. It is he that more particularly and specially revealeth truth to the particular soul, 1Co 2:12; hence persons enlightened, are said to be *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*, Heb 6:4. He leadeth his people into truth, Joh 16:13; he sealet and confirmeth truth to the soul: hence we read of the *demonstration of the Spirit*, 1Co 2:4. This Spirit of truth, *the world*, that is, men of carnal hearts, that are of the world, and in whom worldly lusts predominate, 1Jo 2:16 Joh 17:9; this world, through natural impotency, 1Co 2:14, through wisdom, 1Co 1:21, through lusts and passions, *cannot receive*, that is, be made partakers of; because it neither seeth him, who is not to be seen with mortal eyes, nor knoweth him affectionately and experimentally; he being not to be known by men whose hearts are carnal and full of lusts: *but ye know him* believingly, experimentally, affectionately, savingly; for he dwelleth in you by a mystical union, Ro 8:11 1Co 6:17; and he shall abide with you, by his dwelling in you, and influences upon you.

John 14:18

Ver. 18. *Comfortless*; the word in the Greek is, orphans, persons without father and mother, who for the most part are the most comfortless persons; therefore it is translated *comfortless*: Christ hath a care, not only of the people's salvation and life, but also of their comforts while they are here; he will not leave his people without proportionable comfort for their distresses.

I will come to you; in the Greek it is, I do come to you, to denote the certainty and the suddenness of his coming; which is either to be understood of his resurrection, which was (as we know) after the absence of three days; or, which is more probable, (for after his resurrection he stayed with them but a few days), in and by his blessed Spirit, (for the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ), who was to come, and to abide with them for ever. Though it may also have a reference to his coming again to judge both the quick and the dead, to receive them to himself, that (as he said before) they might always be where he was; but the two former senses are understood as more specially relating to their present distresses, upon account of his bodily absence from them.

John 14:19

Ver. 19. The world seeth me now only with fleshly eyes; it will be but a little while, and the men of the world shall be able to see me no more; I shall be crucified, and laid in the grave; and though I shall rise again, yet I shall not be seen of them: (we read of no appearances of him after his resurrection, but to his disciples): *but ye see me,* or shall see me; so they did often after his resurrection with their bodily eyes; or it may be understood of a spiritual sight by the eye of faith, or of a sight of experience; as seeing often in Scripture signifieth enjoying.

Because I live, that is, I shall live by my resurrection from the dead, and by my glorious ascension into heaven, *you also shall live* the life of grace here; and though your bodies must die, because of sin, yet your souls shall upon the death of your bodies live; and in the resurrection, both your souls and bodies shall live, and together be glorified with the: all this grace and mercy shall flow out to you from me as Mediator, and because I live.

John 14:20

Ver. 20. Some understand our Saviour here speaking of the day of his resurrection; others interpret it of the days of Pentecost, when there should be such an effusion of the blessed Spirit: but the following words discover, that it is best interpreted of the day of judgment, and the general resurrection: for they speak of two great mysteries, which the disciples should understand in that day which is here spoken of; to wit, the personal union of Christ with his Father, and the mystical union of believers with Christ: as to both which, though the apostles and believers knew much more after Christ's resurrection, and the pouring forth of the Spirit in the days of Pentecost, than they knew before those times; yet it is a very imperfect knowledge they ever had, or yet have, of those mysterious unions; but in the resurrection we shall understand these things clearly.

John 14:21

Ver. 21. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:* our Lord here doth repeat what he had before said, Joh 14:15,

declaring that there is no infallible indication of our love to Christ, but obedience, which is here expressed under two notions.

1. Having Christ's commandments and keeping them: they must both concur to make a true indication of our love to Christ. It is possible that men may have Christ's commandments in their ears, in their notion, in their mouths, and yet not keep them; they may hear them, they may know and remember them, they may talk of them, yet they may not keep them; for keeping them denotes universal, diligent and industrious, steady and constant obedience to them; and this alone will speak our love to Christ.
2. And if any man thus declareth his love to Christ, Christ declareth, that both he and his Father will take a pleasure and delight in him to do him good; and he shall not live only under the real benefits of his love to him, but under the sensible manifestations of it. Here is no mention of the Spirit's coming with the Father and the Son, because the Son dwelleth in us by the Spirit.

John 14:22

Ver. 22. Jude the brother of James, Jude 1:1, the son of Alphaeus; not Judas the son of Simon, who, from the city whence he was, was called Iscariot, and was the traitor; asks our Saviour, how it was, or wherefore it was, that he would manifest himself to them, and not to the world? This question either proceeded out of ignorance, not aright understanding of what manifestation of himself Christ here spake; or out of a pious desire that all might be made partakers of the same grace with them; or out of the apostle's modest opinion of himself and his brethren; as if he had said, Lord, what are we that thou shouldest speak of any more special manifestation of thy love to us, than to the rest of the world? Or out of a deep admiration of God's unsearchable judgments in leaving some of the world, while he made choice of others to dignify with such special distinguishing favours, hiding those things from the wise and prudent which he revealed to babes.

John 14:23

Ver. 23. If any man love Christ, he will keep Christ's words; that is, he will study and endeavour to keep the commandments of Christ; for if nothing evidenced a true love to Christ but a perfect obedience to his will, none could comfort himself from his obedience, or conclude his love to Christ from it; but he that loveth Christ, will make it his business to be obedient to him in those things first he hath commanded, and are within his power.

And my Father will love him; and my Father will manifest his love to him in further dispensations of his grace; for it cannot be understood of God's eternal love, nor yet of his love in justification and regeneration; for till the man or woman be justified and regenerated, he will never study and endeavour obedience to the will of God. This love of God is the cause, not the effect of our obedience; but *love* in this verse must be expounded by manifesting in the former verse; and this is certain, that the *manifestations* of Divine love to our souls depend upon our walking with God. This is also meant by God the Father and Christ's coming to those that love him, and keep his commandments; viz. a coming in the sweet influences of Divine grace, suited to the soul's various necessities: nay, our Lord promises, not only his and his Father's coming to, but their making an abode with such as love him, and keep his commandments. Here the abiding of the First and Second Person in the Trinity with believers; the abiding of the Third Person with them is also promised, Joh 14:16; which all make that presence of God with them, so often promised to them in holy writ. Thus our Saviour answereth one part of what Judas said, *How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us?* Because, saith our Saviour, you love me, and keep my words: for though no love, no works of ours, foreseen or seen, be the cause of eternal love, or the first grace; yet it is so much a cause of further grace, especially in the sensible manifestations of it, that no soul must expect it that doth not love Christ, and keep his words. He also further gives them a reason, as to the second thing he asked, why he did not manifest himself to the world?

John 14:24

Ver. 24. Because they did not love him, nor keep his sayings, their sin was

aggravated; because the words which he spake were not his will only, but the will of his Father who had sent him into the world, to reveal his will to the sons of men.

John 14:25

Ver. 25. That is, as to his bodily presence: For more than three years I have been fulfilling a ministry amongst you, and have spoken many things to you.

John 14:26

Ver. 26. The word is the same which was so translated before; (see the import of it, Joh 14:16,17;) he is there called the *Comforter*, and *the Spirit of truth*; here, *the Holy Spirit*. The Father here is said to send in the name, that is, with the authority and upon the mediation, of the Lord Jesus Christ: and two pieces of the Spirit's work, besides comforting, are here expressed.

He shall teach you all things; he shall more fully explain to you all things. Three of the apostles themselves had already in this chapter discovered great degrees of ignorance as to the doctrine of the Trinity, Christ's union or oneness with his Father, &c. You shall not be left (saith our Saviour) in this ignorance; for when the Holy Spirit shall come, he shall more fully and perfectly instruct you in all things, in which I have already instructed you, and which are necessary for you to know in order to your eternal happiness.

And bring all things to your remembrance; whatsoever I have said unto you; and shall bring to your remembrance the things I have taught you, so as you shall more fully and clearly understand them; and though you may have forgotten them, yet they shall by the Holy Spirit be revived in your memories; so as they shall not be like water spilt on the ground, which cannot again be gathered up, but like seed sown in the earth; which, though it may at present rot, and die under the clods, or at least not spring up, yet it shall spring up, and bring forth desired fruit. It is one great work of the Holy Spirit, to bring the revelations of holy writ to our

remembrance, and withal to clear to us the sense of them, and confirm our faith in them, and chiefly quicken us to practise what is our duty: but it is to be observed, that the Spirit doth not make revelations of new notions; it only brings to our remembrance what Christ hath said, and further revealeth what was before in the word revealed, though possibly particular persons were ignorant of such revelations of the word: so things may be new, and newly revealed to us, which in themselves are not so. There are no new truths, but particular persons may have new discoveries of old truth, which they had before misapprehensions of.

John 14:27

Ver. 27. Peace be with you, or to you, was the Jewish common salutation, 1Sa 25:6; under that general name they comprehended all manner of good: with this good wish they both saluted their friends when they met them, and took their farewell of them when they left them. Christ, being now about to take his leave for a time of his disciples, wishes them *peace*; nay, he doth not only wish it to them, but he *leaves* it to them; he giveth it them as a legacy; and that in another kind of peace, and in another manner, than was common. He therefore calls it his peace revealed in the gospel, Eph 6:15; purchased with his blood, Ro 5:1; brought to the soul by his Spirit, by which we are sealed to the day of redemption. Christ's peace is either union or reconciliation with God, or the copy of it, which is a quiet of conscience, and assurance of his love; or a union with men by brotherly love, so often commended and pressed by Christ. Nor doth Christ give this peace as the men of the world give peace; who often wish peace earnestly, never considering what it is they say; often falsely, formally wishing peace, when they are about to strike those to whom they wish it under the fifth rib; and when they are most serious, wish it, but cannot give it. Christ leaves it to his disciples for a legacy, giveth it to them as a gift; if they want it, it is their own fault: therefore, as in the first verse, so here again he saith, *Let not your heart be troubled*; and adds, *neither let it be afraid*. Fear is one of those passions which most usually and potently doth disturb the hearts and minds of men; but there was no reason it should have this ill influence on Christ's disciples, because he had left them peace for his legacy, and the gifts of God are without repentance; and, *if God be for us*, (saith the apostle, Ro 8:31), *who*, or what, *can be against us*?

John 14:28

Ver. 28. *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you;* they had heard our Saviour saying so, Joh 14:3. It is of the nature of true love, to rejoice in the good of the object beloved, as much as in its own, nay, before its own.

Saith our Saviour, *if ye loved me*, that is, as ye ought to love me, (for our Lord had before owned that they did love him, giving it as a reason why he rather revealed himself and manifested himself to them, than to the world, Joh 14:23), you would not have been so unreasonably disturbed at my telling you that I shall leave you; because I not only told you that I would come again to you, but because I told you that I was going to my Father, Joh 14:2; from whom though I was never separated, as I am God over all blessed for ever, yet my human nature was yet never glorified with him; so that I shall be there much happier than here; being highly exalted, and having a name given me *above every name*, Php 2:9.

For my Father is greater than I; not greater in essence, (as the Arians and Socinians would have it), he had many times before asserted the contrary; but greater,

1. Either as to the order amongst the Divine Persons; because the Father begat, the Son is begotten; the Father is he from whom the Son proceeded by eternal generation: in which sense, divers of the ancients, amongst whom Athanasius, Cyril, and Augustine, and some modern interpreters, understand it. Or:
2. As Mediator sent from the Father, so he is greater than I. Or:
3. In respect of my present state, while I am here in the form of a servant; and in my state of humiliation:

which seemeth to be the best interpretation, if we consider the words before, *ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father;* for the true reason of that joy must have been, because Christ in his glorious state of exaltation would be much more happy than he had been in his state of humiliation, while he was exposed to the scoffs, reproaches, and injuries of

men, the temptations of Satan, &c.

John 14:29

Ver. 29. Evils that surprise us are always the most heavy, and load our spirits. Saith our Saviour, Before these things come to pass, I have given you notice of them, that, when you see them come to pass, you might not be overwhelmed with sorrow and trouble, to the hinderance of your faith in me; but understanding that I have told you the truth before the thing come to pass, you may be assured that I am not mere man, but truly God; and receive and embrace me, and rest upon me as your Saviour.

John 14:30

Ver. 30. I shall not have much time hereafter to reveal my mind to you, my suffering is very near; the devil, who is *the prince of this world*, See Poole on "Joh 12:31", See Poole on "Joh 16:11" and See Poole on "Eph 6:12" he *cometh* by the evil angels, or rather by vile and wicked men, as his instruments, Judas and the soldiers. He doth not say wherefore he came, but it is easily understood. And he *hath nothing in me* that he can justly fault, and take advantage against me, for he findeth no guilt in me to give him any advantage against me; I shall die as an innocent person, and be cut off, but not for myself, (as it was prophesied of the Messiah, Da 9:26), but (as it is there, Joh 14:24), *to finish transgression, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.*

John 14:31

Ver. 31. I die not for my own sin; but *being found in fashion as a man, I humbled myself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, (as Php 2:8), to let the world know, that I love the Father, and am obedient to him, doing even so as he hath commanded me.

Arise, let us go hence; arise from supper, (after which they were wont sometimes to lengthen out discourse), the supper in Bethany, as some think; but to me it seems more probable (as I said before) to be the

passover supper, and the Lord's supper which immediately followed that; and *let us go hence*, out of the guest chamber, where the passover was to be administered. So as it is most probable, that the discourses in the two next chapters were as they went along in the way to Mount Olivet. In this discourse our Saviour hath most applied himself to relieve his disciples upon their disturbance for their want of our Saviour's bodily presence.

John 15:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 15:1-11 Under the parable of a vine Christ sets forth God's government of his church, and exhorts his disciples to abide in his faith and doctrine.

Joh 15:12-17 He commands them to love one another, according to the great love he had showed for them,

Joh 15:18-25 forewarns them of the hatred and persecution of the world,

Joh 15:26,27 and telleth them of the testimony which the Holy Ghost, and they also, should bear to him.

Chapter Introduction

As our Saviour in the former chapter had chiefly spent his discourse for the relief of his disciples under their trouble for the want of his bodily presence, so he seemeth in this chiefly to bend his discourse for the comfort of them under their disturbance, for fear they should, together with the want of the comfort they had in his bodily presence, want also his spiritual influences; to prevent which, he compares himself to a vine, then to the branches; and showeth by that similitude the near union they had with him, and the influence he would and must have upon them, so long as they did abide with him. From Joh 15:18-27, he comforts them by a variety of arguments against that black storm of persecution, which he had

so often told them would arise after his departure from them, from the hatred of the world, of wicked men, both Jews and Gentiles, that were enemies to the cross of Christ; as to which he comforts them by a variety of arguments to the end of the chapter, and counteth his discourse of that nature also in the following chapter.

Ver. 1. Christ had but newly come from his last supper, wherein he had sanctified the fruit of the vine, by setting it apart as one of the elements in that holy sacrament, and told them, that he would no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God should come, Lu 22:18. This (as some suppose) gave occasion to this parable, or discourse about the vine. Others think, that in this passage from the guest chamber to the Mount Olivet he saw a vine, which gave occasion to this discourse, it being with him very ordinary to graft spiritual discourses upon sensible objects occasionally occurring; as, Joh 4:1-39, he raised a discourse of living water upon the sight of the water at Jacob's well, and the woman's discourse about it; and, Joh 6:1-14, he founded another discourse concerning the bread of life, upon the loaves that were multiplied. Whatever the occasion was, (of which we can affirm nothing certainly), certain it is, that the notion of a vine, with respect to the root and body of it, (for he calls his disciples the branches) excellently agreeth to Christ, whether in respect of his present low condition, and mean appearance to the world, (as a vine hath less beauty than most plants), or in respect of its exceeding fruitfulness; or as it is the basis and foundation of the branches, in which they are, and thrive, and are fruitful; which seemeth here to be chiefly intended; as all the branches are united to the vine, in it they live, bud, bear fruit. There are three principal things which our Saviour teacheth us by this similitude:

1. That we have no ability to do good but from Christ.
2. That believers have a trite and real union with the Lord Jesus, which while they uphold by faith and holiness, they shall not want his influence upon them, nor his Father's care over them, in purging them, that they may bring forth much fruit.
3. That if any professing him prove unfruitful, God will take them away; they shall wither, be cast into the fire, and burned.

He calls himself *the true vine*, to show them that their fruit was not in themselves, but must be found in him; or that their fruit could not proceed from Moses, the observance of the ritual or moral law given them by him; but it must flow from their spiritual union with him and that influence of grace which should flow from that union. Or else *true* (as sometimes it doth in Scripture) may signify excellent. As he compares himself to *the true vine*, by which he signifieth to us that he is the true root and support of our spiritual life and fruit; so he compares his Father to *the husbandman*, to let us know, that his people are not only under his, but under his Father's care; which he afterwards more particularly openeth. He also, Joh 15:2, compares believers, or members of the church, to branches in a vine.

John 15:2

Ver. 2. And concerning his Father's care, he tells us, that as the good vine dresser cutteth off those branches in the vine which bring forth no fruit, so his Father will take away such branches in him as bring forth no fruit. But here ariseth a question, viz. Whether, or how, any can be branches in Christ, and yet bring forth no fruit?

Answer.

1. Some say, there is no need of translating the words so, which may as well be translated, Every branch not bringing forth fruit in me. Indeed no true fruit can be brought forth but in Christ; but yet much that looks like fruit, much that men may call fruit, may be brought forth without any true spiritual union with Christ. All acts of moral discipline, or any acts of formal profession in religion, may be brought forth without any true root and foundation in Christ; and God will in the end discover and cut off those who bring forth no other fruit. But:
2. Men may be said to be branches in him, by a sacramental implantation, being baptized into him, Ro 6:3; and are hereby members of the visible church, and make a visible profession of adhering to him, with respect to their own good opinion and persuasions of themselves, though they be not so in respect of any true, spiritual, and real implantation. But those who in the last sense are not in him, bring forth no fruit unto

perfection, and God will cut them off, either by withdrawing his restraining grace, and giving them up to strong delusions to believe lies; or to a reprobate mind, and vile lusts and affections; or by taking away their gifts; or some way or other, so as they shall never have an eternal communion with God in glory. But if any man bringeth forth true spiritual fruit in Christ, him God the Father will purge, by the sprinkling of Christ's blood yet further upon his conscience, Heb 10:22; and by his Holy Spirit working on him like fire, to purge away his dross, and like water, to purge away his filth; and by his word, 1Pe 1:22, by faith, Ac 15:9, by crosses and trials. Isa 1:25 Isa 27:9; that he may be more fruitful in works of holiness and righteousness.

John 15:3

Ver. 3. Now that the traitor is gone out from you, ye are all clean; not by any works which you do, much less upon the account of any legal and ceremonial rites and purifyings; but through my word, your believing and obeying, Eph 5:26 1Pe 1:22. Our cleansing is in holy writ attributed sometimes to the blood of Christ, sometimes to the Spirit, sometimes to the word. By the blood of Christ we are made clean as to justification, washed; but yet we had need wash our feet, contracting soil every day in a sinful world, from which we are cleansed by the purifying virtue of the Holy Spirit, working by and together with the word, which purgeth us of our dross, and maketh us obedient to the will of God.

John 15:4

Ver. 4. This our abiding in Christ is expounded, by an abiding in his words, Joh 15:7, by abiding in his love, Joh 15:10, an abiding in his Spirit, 1Jo 2:27, a walking as Christ walked, 1Jo 2:6, an abiding in the light, Joh 15:10, not sinning, 1Jo 3:6. The exhortation is, without doubt, to a holiness of life and conversation, by which our union and communion with Christ is upheld and maintained, and which is in itself an abiding in the love of Christ: nor is there a want of sufficient reason for this exhortation, though our union with Christ cannot be dissolved, nor our communion with him wholly interrupted; because,

1. It must be upheld and maintained on our part by the exercises of faith and holiness.
2. The sense of it in our souls may be eclipsed, and wholly fail, Ps 22:1.
3. We may fall away foully, though neither totally, (as Lutherans say), because the seed of God abideth in the believer; nor yet finally (as papists say).

We had need therefore of all exhortations and arguments imaginable, to persuade us to do what in us lieth that we may abide in him. We have a great encouragement to the use of all possible endeavours to abide in the love of God, from the promise annexed, *and I in you*; that is, I will abide in you; do you strive, and I will help you to perfect; do you fight, and I will help you to overcome; I will continue to you such gradual influences of grace, as shall be sufficient for you; grace wherein and whereby you shall stand, Ro 5:2. You shall be *kept by the power of God through faith to salvation*, 1Pe 1:5. But look as it is with the branch, it cannot bear fruit of itself; but if it be once separated from the influences of the stock, it dies and withers; so it will be with you, you can bring forth no fruit unless you abide in me.

John 15:5

Ver. 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches*; that is, I am as the vine, you are as the branches: without the continual influence of the vine upon the branches, they bring forth no fruit; but that influence continuing, no plant is more fruitful than a vine is: so without the continual influence of my Spirit of grace upon you, you will be altogether barren and unfruitful; but if you have that influence, you will not be fruitful only, but very fruitful: for without my continuing such influence, you will not only be able to do little, but you will be able to do nothing that is truly and spiritually good and acceptable in the sight of God.

John 15:6

Ver. 6. Our Lord yet pursueth the metaphor of the vine, the branches, and

the husbandman: Look (saith he) its it is with a vine, when the time of pruning the vine cometh, the vine dresser cutteth off the fruitless, luxuriant branches, and throws them by; which being done, their greenness presently abates, and they wither, and after a time some come and gather them up, and cast them into some fire, where they are burned: so it will be with you; if you do not bring forth fruit, God will take from you his common influences, which have for a while made you to look speciously; and your profession, or your parts and gifts, will wither and decay; and in the day of judgment the angels shall gather you up, and God shall cast you into hell, Mt 13:40,41, where you shall perish as miserably, nay, infinitely more miserably, than if you were burned with fire.

John 15:7

Ver. 7. Here our Lord expounds what he meaneth by that abiding in him which he before mentioned by another phrase, *and my words abide in you*, my precepts and promises; so its you by faith embrace the promises, and by obedience live up to the precepts which I have given you: for without these, though the words of Christ may come unto men in the preaching of the gospel, their ears may receive the sound of them, yet the word doth not dwell and abide in the soul: but if the word abides in the souls of men and women, then they may in prayer ask of God what they will, keeping to the conditions and limitations elsewhere required in holy writ, according to God's will, 1Jo 5:14, believing, Mt 21:22, in the name of Christ, Joh 14:13,14, for the honour and glory of God, (to which end all our actions must be directed), and they shall be granted to them.

John 15:8

Ver. 8. Here are two arguments to press his disciples' abiding in him, that so they might bring forth much fruit.

Herein (saith our Saviour) *is my Father glorified*. The glorifying of God is the great end of our lives, 1Co 10:31. God is glorified by men and women's bringing forth much fruit, Mt 5:16, the *fruit unto holiness*, Ro 6:22: fruit is the product of the plant, from the natural moisture that is in it, nourished and augmented by the fatness of the earth in which it stands, and

by the warmth of the sun drawn out to the producing of such effects, according to the nature of the plant. According to the different nature of plants they bring forth various fruits, Mt 7:16-18. Hence we read of the fruit of sin unto death, and the fruit of righteousness unto life. The first is every man's natural fruit, until he be ingrafted into Christ: being ingrafted into him, the soul having a new nature given to it, being regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost, it no longer bringeth forth fruit from its old principle, and according to its old nature, but from its new principle, and according to its new nature. As the cultivated earth, that is ploughed and harrowed, doth not bring forth weeds and ordinary grass, according to its nature, but bringeth forth fruit according to the seed that is cast into it, yet not without the influence of heaven, both with respect to the dew of it, and the warmth which it hath from the sun; so the soul, being regenerated, the fallow ground of it being ploughed up, and the seed of righteousness being sown in it, no more brings forth the weeds of lusts and corruptions, or only ordinary acts of human nature, but it brings forth fruits according to its new nature, and the new seed of the word now sown in it, and dwelling in it. And look, as it tendeth to the honour of the husbandman, when the ground by him ploughed and manured brings forth much fruit; so it tendeth to the honour and glory of God, when the souls renewed, manured, and influenced by him, bring forth much of the fruit of righteousness and holiness. And though men must be Christ's disciples before they bring forth any fruit, yet their bringing forth much fruit is that which alone can evidence and make them appear to be the disciples of Christ. And often in Scripture being signifieth appearing, as Joh 8:31; Ro 3:4.

John 15:9

Ver. 9. What our Saviour before called an abiding in him, and his words abiding in us, and a bearing and bringing forth much fruit, he here calleth a continuing in his love; though indeed this phrase also may be interpreted by a continuance in the favour of God and Christ, in that state of love into which God hath put the souls of those who are his true disciples: but I had rather interpret it of that love wherewith they loved Christ, than that wherewith Christ loved them. So the former words are an argument to persuade perseverance, or a continuance in those acts of holiness by which men alone can show their true love to Jesus Christ, from Christ's love to them, which he there expresses, *As the father hath loved me, so have I*

loved you; where the particle *as* is only a note of comparison, but doth not denote an equality; only signifieth truth and greatness; as truly and sincerely as the Father loveth me: or, I have loved you with a great love, bearing some proportion to the love wherewith my Father loveth me. The Father's love to Christ is eternal immutable, constant, full and perfect, wise and just, free: in all these respects Christ loveth his people as the Father loveth him: this ought: to engage them again to love him, and so to walk as they may continue in that state of favour into which his goodness hath advanced them.

John 15:10

Ver. 10. Abiding in Christ's love, in this verse, may be interpreted as before; either actively, you shall continue your love to me, according to what we had, Joh 14:15; obedience to the commandments of Christ being the only way to show and declare the truth of our love to Christ. Or else passively, you shall keep yourselves in my favour, I will love you. Thus I abide in my Father's love; I do not show love to my Father by my words and expressions only, nor by performance of some ceremonial ritual services, which he hath required; but by fulfilling his whole will and counsel, by yielding an obedience to him in all things. I love you as my Father loveth me; and you must abide in my love by the same ways and means that I abide in my Father's love. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

John 15:11

Ver. 11. The end of my pressing so much the duty of holiness upon you, under the notions of abiding in me, abiding in my love in my words, bringing forth much fruit, &c. is, that I might have a continual cause to rejoice in you. Joy is nothing else but the satisfaction of the reasonable soul in its union with an object which it loved and desired. Christ, willing and desiring the perfection of his disciples, according to the rational workings of human nature, is properly said to rejoice in the satisfaction of his will; in which sense joy and rejoicing are often in Scripture attributed to God. Nor doth Christ press them to this, that he might rejoice in them, but also that their joy might be full; that joy and peace which attends and

follows believing, Ro 15:13; called *the peace of God*, Col 3:15; a peace which passeth all understanding, Php 4:7. No man maketh Christ to rejoice over him, but he thereby also procures unspeakable joy and peace to himself; as no man grieves his Spirit, but also purchases grief and sadness to himself in the latter end.

John 15:12

Ver. 12. This is that which our Lord called the *new commandment*. Joh 13:34; See Poole on "Joh 13:34". He had before pressed the keeping of his words, continuing and abiding in his words, keeping his commandments, &c. Here he tells them what was his commandment: not his only commandment, but that which he laid a very great stress upon; a commandment most necessary to be pressed, because so necessary to keep up and uphold his church in the world, (love being the very ligament of that society), and because there was a greater failure in obedience to this than in some others, as may be learned from our Saviour's correction of the Pharisees' interpretation of that law, Mt 5:1-48. This he presseth to a higher degree, as he had loved them; not that it is possible that our love to our brethren can rise up in any proportion to that love wherewith Christ hath loved us; but to mind us to eye him, to press forward toward this mark. As here again doth not signify equality, but a comparison; as truly and sincerely as I have loved you, and pressing after the highest degree of love.

John 15:13

Ver. 13. The reason of this is because life is the greatest earthly good to men under ordinary circumstances: *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life*, Job 2:4. Now it is impossible that a man should show a greater love to another, than by parting with the greatest good he is in possession of for his sake. Hence our Saviour proves, that he loved them with the greatest love, because he for their sake was about to part with what in the common judgment of men is the greatest good. The greatness of the love of Christ to us is from hence often commended to us in Scripture; and our mutual love to our brethren is pressed upon this argument, Eph 5:2 1Jo 3:16. But how did Christ lay down his life for his

friends, when the Scripture tells us, that *the just died for the unjust*, 1Pe 3:18, and that *while we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son*, Ro 5:10?

Answer. Friends must not here be taken as a name of relation, but only as it signifieth the objects of love; persons we have set our love upon, whether they mutually love us or not; as the world was the object of that love in God, which moved him to send his only begotten Son, Joh 3:16. Though they for whom Christ died were enemies by their wicked works, yet by his death they were reconciled. But possibly the first answer is best; for by Christ's death they were only meritoriously reconciled, and after this enemies to God, till they received the word of reconciliation, and believed in Christ.

John 15:14

Ver. 14. Our Lord presseth obedience to his commandments as a means, and indeed the only means, by which we can declare our love to Christ; and also useth a new argument to press their obedience, from his assuming them into the state and dignity of his friends.

John 15:15

Ver. 15. By his saying, *I call you not servants*, he doth not discharge them of that duty and service which they owed to him; for in pressing them to obey his commandments, he declares that duty they owed to him; he only showeth that they were no ordinary servants, but taken into a state of dignity, favour, and familiarity, beyond that of servants, and that he had not treated them like servants, but like intimate, familiar friends. For look as ordinary masters in the world communicate their counsels and whole heart to their friends, especially in things which are of any concern, or may be of any advantage for them to know and understand; whereas they keep themselves at a distance from servants, and they only know so much of their minds as is by them to be done in their masters' service: so he had not only revealed to them their duty, what was to be by them done in his service, but had been more free, giving to them *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, as he told them, Mt 13:11; as well telling them his

Father's counsels on the behalf of them, and whatsoever he might communicate to them, as his Father's will, what he would have them to do in obedience to his commandments.

John 15:16

Ver. 16. *Ye have not chosen me to be your Lord, Master, Saviour, but I have chosen and ordained you;* so we have it in our translation; but the Greek is, εθηκα, I have set you, or placed you in a station. What choosing Christ here speaks of is doubted amongst various divines. Some think that our Saviour here speaks of his choice of them to the apostleship, as Lu 6:13 Joh 6:70: those who thus understand it, understand by going and bringing forth fruit, the apostles' going out, preaching, and baptizing all nations, bringing forth fruit amongst the Gentiles. But others understand it of election to eternal life, and the means necessary to it; for our Saviour brings this as an argument of his greatest love: Judas was in the first sense chosen, yet not beloved with any such love: and this seemeth to be favoured by Joh 13:18, *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen:* and certain it is, Augustine and others of the ancients from hence proved the freedom of election and special grace. Both senses may be united, for the eleven (to whom Christ was now speaking) were chosen in both senses; they were chosen for this end, *to bring forth fruit* amongst the Gentiles, turning many to righteousness, and that they might bring forth the fruit of holiness, in obedience to the gospel of Christ. Yea, not only to bring forth fruit, but that they might persevere in bringing forth fruit; and that thus doing, they might have a freedom of access to the throne of grace, and obtain whatsoever they should ask of the Father, in the name, for the merits, and through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Poole on "Joh 14:13". See Poole on "Joh 14:14".

John 15:17

Ver. 17. This is but the repetition of the same precept we before had; unless we will understand it as a more special charge upon them, considered as ministers of the gospel; the mutual love of ministers being highly necessary for the good and peace of the church of God, over which God hath set them.

John 15:18

Ver. 18. In the latter part of this chapter our Lord cometh to comfort those who were his true disciples, against that third trouble, from the prospect they had of that hatred which the world would pour out and execute upon them, as soon as he should be withdrawn from them. Hatred is rooted and originated in the heart, and is properly a displeasure that the mind taketh at a person, which, fermenting and boiling in the mind, breeds an abhorrence of that person, anger, and malice, and a desire to do him mischief, and root him out; and then breaks out at the lips, by lying, slanders, calumnies, cursings, wishing of evil, &c.; and is executed by the hands, doing to such persons all the harm and mischief within the power of him that hateth: all this is to be understood under the general term *hate*. By *the world* here must be meant wicked men, in opposition to good men, who are often in Scripture called *the world*, because they are of the earth, earthly; they relish and savour nothing but worldly things, and pursue nothing but worldly designs. Against this our Saviour comforts them; first by telling them, that this part of the world hated him before it hated them, which must needs be so, because they hated them as his disciples, and for that very reason.

John 15:19

Ver. 19. Men and women may be in the world, yet not of the world. *Of the world* here signifies carnal men, such as are like to the men of the world in their studies, designs, counsels, affections; as *of the devil*, and *of God*, signifies, Joh 8:44,47. If you had affections, lusts, and dispositions like them, and drove no other designs than they drive, you might expect, that as it is of the nature of all men to love such as are like to them in manners and studies; so they would love you, take a delight in you, be kind to you, and do you all offices of love: but because you are not of such tempers, dispositions, and inclinations; but that I, having chosen you out of the world, have given you new hearts, new frames and dispositions, quite contrary to theirs; therefore the world, disliking you, and seeing that your principles are quite opposite to theirs, abhor and hate you, and will be ready to do you all that evil and mischief, which is the product of a rooted

hatred and malice in the heart. This is a second argument by which our Lord comforts them. It is drawn from the cause and root of that hatred which they would meet with: it was not for their faults or sins, but because they were the objects of Christ's love, which being also shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, produced again in them holy affections and dispositions, making them wholly unlike to men in the world.

John 15:20

Ver. 20. *The word that I said unto you, Joh 13:16, to press you to humility, and a mutual serving of one another in love; and which I spake to you, Mt 10:24, when I first sent you out; and I spake it then to you upon the very same account that I now speak it. You that are my servants cannot look to fare better with the world than I that am your Master; you know they have hated me, you must expect they should persecute you: if there be any of them whose hearts God shall incline to keep my sayings, they will also keep your words, which are but my sayings explained to them, and further pressed upon them.*

John 15:21

Ver. 21. *For my name's sake here signifies no more than for my sake, as Mt 10:22; for your preaching, owning, and professing me and my gospel. And this they would not do, if they had any true knowledge of faith in or love for him that sent me: for knowing, (as hath been often said), in holy writ, and particularly in this Gospel, signifieth not the bare comprehension of the object by our understanding, but such a comprehension of it as is operative and efficacious to the bringing forth of all such effects as are proper to such a knowledge and comprehension. So as this text containeth two arguments more to arm them against the hatred of the world: the first, from the honourableness of the cause, for Christ's name's sake; the second, from the ignorance and blindness of the persons.*

John 15:22

Ver. 22. They had not had this particular sin, of not knowing him that sent

me; or they had not had such degrees of sin as they now have; or they had had more to say in excuse, or for a cover for their sin. Ignorance of the will of God will not excuse sinners wholly, but it will excuse them in part. And this last seemeth to be the sense of the words by the latter part of the verse, because it is opposed to a having no cloak nor excuse for their sin. If Christ had not come in his incarnation, in his preaching the gospel, &c, they could not have been guilty of that hatred and malice which they showed against him, which was their greatest guilt; and they would have had this to say, Lord, we knew not what Christ was, as Mt 25:44: but now, saith our Saviour, they have no cloak, no colour, no pretence; I am come, I have revealed my Father's mind and will to them, yet they will not receive me; no, though I have done those works before them which no man ever did, nor could do but by a Divine power.

John 15:23

Ver. 23. This agreeth with what we had, Joh 5:23. It is a common error of the world, that many in it would pretend to love God, while yet they are manifest haters of Christ and his gospel. Now, saith our Saviour, this is impossible; whosoever hateth him who is sent, hateth also him that sent him. God the Father and Christ are one, and no man can hate Christ, or be an enemy to Christ, but he must be an enemy to his Father: and as this is an aggravation of their sin, so it is a great argument of consolation to the disciples of Christ, that those who should be their enemies were such as were in reality God's enemies.

John 15:24

Ver. 24. Our Saviour often appeals to his works, both to own his mission from God, and also to prove the Jews inexcusable in their not receiving and embracing him; for which latter purpose he mentions them here, and saith, that he had done such works as no man did, and by his own power and virtue. Christ did some works such as we do not read that ever man did; as the multiplying of the loaves, the giving sight to those that were born blind, the healing of so many desperate diseases: and for such as he did which God had also given men a power to do, he did them in a quite different manner from that in which men did them. Elisha raised the

Shunammite's child to life; but it was by prayer. Peter cured the lame man, Ac 3:6; but it was *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*. We read indeed of Christ's praying at the raising of Lazarus; but his ordinary way was by his word of command, which was a quite different way than that used by those men by whom miracles had been wrought. Besides, it is manifest that the generality of the Jews did not look upon Christ as one sent from God, though many of them did: and admit that there had been nothing in the miracles wrought by Christ, more than Elijah, or Elisha, or the prophets had done; yet it had been sufficient for to have convinced them, that he acted by a Divine power, and must be sent and authorized by and from God to do what he did. Now saith our Saviour, If I had not done before their faces such works as no man could do but by a power derived from God, and some such as God never authorized men to do, their sin had been nothing to what now it is: but now they have understood that I am sent from my Father; and knowing this, yet going on in their most malicious designs against me, they both declare a hatred and malice against my Father who sent me, and me as sent by him.

John 15:25

Ver. 25. The particle *that* here again denotes not the final cause, but only the consequent; and the *law* here signifieth not strictly the law of Moses, but the whole Scripture, in which sense we have once and again met with the term. Saith our Saviour, This is no more than was prophesied of me by the prophet David; or no more than was fulfilled in me, being first done to David as my type: which also hath the force of another argument to uphold and encourage his disciples under their sufferings, that they were but the fulfilling of prophecies, no more than was foretold in holy writ.

John 15:26

Ver. 26. Concerning the Holy Ghost as a Comforter we have spoken largely, Joh 14:16,26; as also his mission from the Father and the Son, and in what sense he is called *the Spirit of truth*: See Poole on "Joh 14:16". See Poole on "Joh 14:26". What proceeding from the Father is here meant, is questioned amongst divines: some understand it only of his coming out from the Father, and being poured out upon the disciples in the days of

Pentecost: others understand it of the Holy Spirit's eternal proceeding. Those that interpret it of the first, urge the use of the Greek word, here used to signify God's manifestation of himself by some external sign, as they say the Septuagint useth the same word. They also urge the same use of a parallel word, Joh 8:42 16:28. But the generality of the best interpreters think it is best understood of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit:

1. Because Christ here distinguishes the Spirit's proceeding from the Father from his sending.
2. Having himself promised to send the Spirit, he seemeth further to describe him as proceeding from the Father.
3. The word here used is not any where used in the New Testament to signify a temporal mission.

Some will say: But doth not the Spirit proceed from the Son?

Answer. The Greek Church in latter ages hath denied this, and this is the principal text they rest on; but those churches that are more orthodox have constantly affirmed it:

1. Because he here saith he would send it.
2. Because he is often called *the Spirit of Christ*, Ro 8:9 Ga 4:6.
3. Because otherwise there were no personal relation between Christ and the Spirit.

Our Saviour here having first said he would send him, here only nameth his proceeding from the Father; that they might not suspect his testimony, or think that he spake arrogantly.

He shall testify of me; the Spirit, he saith, should testify of him, both by those gifts with which he was to fill the apostles, and to the hearts of God's people.

John 15:27

Ver. 27. He adds also, they should testify, &c.: the apostles, and their successors, by the preaching of the gospel; but particularly the apostles, Ac 10:39 1Jo 1:2,3, being chosen witnesses, Ac 10:41. And they were competent witnesses, because they had been with Christ from the beginning of his public ministry. We shall find the testimony of his apostles and of the Holy Ghost both joined together, Ac 5:32.

John 16:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 16:1-4 Christ warns his disciples of their sufferings for his sake.

Joh 16:5-15 He comforteth them by a promise of the Holy Ghost.

Joh 16:16-28 He intimates his death, resurrection, and ascension, telling them that their sorrow should soon be succeeded by joy, and that their prayers in his name would be accepted of the Father.

Joh 16:29-33 His disciples confess their faith in him; he foretells their desertion of him, and promises them peace in him amidst their tribulation in the world.

Ver. 1. That is, that when you see these storms of persecution arise, and fall heavily upon you, they may not give you any occasion, or be any temptation to you, to desist from your duty, and be afraid or ashamed to own me, and the profession of my gospel. Evils unthought of we are not ordinarily prepared for, so as, being surprised by them, they the more sink us.

Offended here therefore may signify, either immoderate trouble and

affliction, or being tempted to any apostasy, or remission of duty.

John 16:2

Ver. 2. The term *synagogue*, as it is used often in Scripture to signify those places of public worship which they had in country towns and cities, is proper to the Jews; but as it signifieth an assembly of people met together in any place, it as well agreeth to other people as to them. Our Lord here, in pursuit of the argument which he hath been upon from Joh 15:18, forewarns his disciples, that when he should be taken from them, the Jews first should excommunicate them as heretics, or schismatics: and I know not why what our Saviour here saith may not also be extended as a prophecy of what hath since been done, and is yet doing, under the tyranny of the pope. As also the latter clause, which, though at first applicable to the Jews, who stoned Stephen upon a charge of blasphemy, in which it is apparent that they thought they did God good service, and doubtless slew many others; yet certainly it also referred to others, even as many as shall do the same thing to the end of the world.

John 16:3

Ver. 3. This is but what our Lord said as to his Father, Joh 16:21 of the former chapter, (See Poole on "Joh 16:21"), and teacheth us, that all persecutions of good men speak in persecutors an ignorance both of God the Father and of Christ; and whoever they are that continue in such ignorance under the light of the gospel, though they be baptized, and make never so great a profession of religion, yet will be under daily temptations to turn persecutors; for ignorance is here made the cause of persecution. And it is some alleviation of trouble to God's suffering people, to consider that the persons that are the cause of their sufferings neither know God the Father, nor Jesus Christ; and it is no wonder, if they know not God, that they will not know, love, nor approve of them.

John 16:4

Ver. 4. Whatsoever I have discovered to you formerly, of my going to my

Father, the coming of the Holy Ghost, your sufferings from the world, I have told you of before; you will see that they will most certainly come to pass: then you will remember what I have said unto you; and I have told you them on purpose that you may remember them, and thereby know, that although I am in the form of a man, yet I also am God blessed for ever, and did know things that should afterward come to pass, and could tell you the truth about them. And having been with you, I have not from the first of your converse with me told you these things; that is, those which relate to the world's dealing with you (which he had told them, Mt 10:16, &c, but that was after some good while's converse with them); nor yet had he spoken to them at first about his death, resurrection, and ascension, because he was with them, and to stay with them some time, during which time he bare the brunt of all; the whole hatred of the Jews was poured out upon him: and for those other things relating to his death, and ascension, and the sending of the Spirit, he, who taught his disciples as they were able to bear them, Mr 4:33, had concealed these things till by his other doctrine he had prepared them to receive this revelation, and there was a necessity of his relieving them against his bodily absence, by the promise of that other Comforter the Holy Ghost.

John 16:5

Ver. 5. Though I did not tell you this from the beginning, for many wise reasons; yet I now tell you, that I must die, but shall rise again from the dead, and go to my Father who sent me into the world to finish that work which I now have done, and so am returning from whence I came. And though indeed some of you have cursorily asked me whither I go, (as Peter Joh 13:36), yet none of you seems to understand, or so seriously as you ought to inquire, whither I go, or so much to be busied in the thoughts of that.

John 16:6

Ver. 6. But all your thoughts are taken up about yourselves, what you shall do for want of my bodily presence; and sorrow for that hath so overwhelmed your hearts, that you cannot enough deliberate with yourselves, as to consider either mine or your own advantages, from my

death, resurrection, and ascension.

John 16:7

Ver. 7. He doth not say it was expedient for him, though this was truth; for his human nature was not till his ascension glorified, as afterward, Joh 17:5; but he saith it was expedient for them. The saints may desire a dissolution, but it is for their own advantage, Php 1:23. Christ desires it for their advantage; because the Holy Spirit could not come upon them (as in the days of Pentecost) until he by his death had made reconciliation for iniquity; and God had so ordered the counsels of eternity, that Christ should first die, rise again, and ascend into heaven, and then he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, as one eminent fruit of Christ's meritorious death and passion, Ac 2:32,33 Eph 4:11. We are not able to give certain reasons of the counsels of God; but the reasonableness of them in this very particular may easily be concluded: that the sending of the Spirit might appear to be the fruit of Christ's death: that the Messiah's influence upon the sending of him jointly with the Father, might appear; for he was to be sent from Christ glorified, Joh 7:39: that the Spirit might glorify Christ, as we have it, Joh 16:14; for (saith that verse) *He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you*: and that the world might better understand the mystery of the Trinity. The Father was by all owned to be in heaven. The Son ascended up to heaven in the presence of many witnesses. The Spirit descended from heaven with great majesty and glory, as may be read. Ac 2:2,3.

John 16:8

Ver. 8. When the Holy Spirit is come in the days of Pentecost, he, by his inward operation in men's hearts, and by his gifts bestowed upon you that are his apostles, *will reprove the world*.

By *the world* here, may be meant all men and women, as it is used in some texts; neither is the operation of the Spirit here mentioned to be restrained to carnal and wicked men.

The word translated *reprove*:

1. Lets us know, that the Holy Ghost is here mentioned, not in the notion mentioned Joh 14:16, as a *Comforter*, but in the larger notion, (there mentioned), as an Advocate; which possibly had been a better translation of it, Joh 16:7, than *Comforter*, as we translate it; for it is not the proper work of the Spirit considered as a Comforter to reprove, but it is proper enough to the notion of an Advocate to do it.
2. The word here translated *reprove* doth often so signify, and is so translated, Lu 3:19 Joh 3:20 Eph 5:11,13. It signifieth real rebukes, Heb 12:5 Re 3:19. But it also signifieth to convince, Joh 8:9,46 1Co 14:24 2Ti 4:2 Tit 1:9; and in several other texts. Yet it is one thing to convince the understanding and judgment; another thing to prevail upon the will, by reason of the total corruption of our souls; so that we will not embrace what we confess is truth, nor do what we know is best; but, through the stubbornness of our will, we resist the light and conviction of our understandings.

The Holy Spirit is here promised, not only (as before) to lead men into truth, by a work of illumination, but to bow the hearts and wills of some in the world, to the embracing of it, and living up to it, while others yet remain without excuse. The things of which the Spirit is promised to convince the world, are *sin, righteousness, and judgment*, which are further opened in the following verses.

John 16:9

Ver. 9. Here may arise some doubt, whether these words import that the Holy Ghost should convince the world of sin in general, or of that particular sin of not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ: the first seemeth best to agree with Joh 16:8, where convincing of sin is mentioned, without the addition which we have here; and it also best agreeth with the effect of the Spirit, for the Holy Spirit doth not convince the world of one sin only. The second seemeth to be favoured by the addition of those words, *because they believe not on me*; which yet may be understood only as a particular great instance of sin, of which the Spirit convinceth the world. It was the great sin of that age, that, though Christ was come into the world, and had given such manifest evidence that he was sent of his Father, yet

the generality of the men and women in that part of the world into which he was come, would not receive and embrace him as the true Messiah. Now, saith our Saviour, when I am gone to my Father, I will send the Spirit, and he, by his gifts given to my apostles, saith so convince a great part of the world, that they shall have nothing to say, but be wholly inexcusable in their not receiving me as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. Others he shall, by his inward influence upon their hearts, so convince of sin in not believing on me, that they shall believe on me, and be saved.

John 16:10

Ver. 10. A second thing of which the Spirit is promised to convince the world, is *righteousness*, by which all interpreters agree is meant the righteousness of Christ. Only some would have it to be understood of Christ's personal righteousness, which is inherent in him; upon which account he is called *the just One*, *the righteous One*, &c. Then the sense is this:

The Jews now say I have a devil, and cast out devils by Beelzebub; they accuse me as an impostor and seducer, call me a friend of publicans and sinners; but when the Holy Spirit which I will send shall come, he shall convince the world that I was a just and righteous person, and not such a one as they have vilely represented me: which was fulfilled in a great measure, Ac 2:1-3:26, when so many were converted and joined to the church.

But the best interpreters understand it of that righteousness of Christ which is communicated to men in justification, of which so much is spoken in holy writ, Isa 53:11 56:1 Jer 23:6 Da 9:24; and in many other texts: so as the Spirit is here promised as instructing the world in that true righteousness by which a soul can be justified; and therein both correcting the errors of the pagan world, who thought the light of nature enough to show them the way to heaven; and also of the Jewish world, who thought the righteousness of the law sufficient; by showing them, that no righteousness would do it but the righteousness of Christ, reckoned unto them for righteousness, and apprehended by faith. Christ's going to his Father, did both evidence him to be a just and righteous person, however

wicked men in the world had represented and traduced him, for his Father would not have received him if he had not been such a person; and also evidence that, as was prophesied of the Messias, Da 9:24, he had finished *the transgression*, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in *everlasting righteousness*: for it could not be imagined, that he should have an access to his Father before he had finished the work which his Father had given him to do, Joh 17:4.

And (saith our Saviour) *ye see me no more*; that is, after my ascension you shall see me no more; or after my death you shall see me no more, to have any such ordinary converse with me as hitherto you have had: for I shall not ascend to return again to you; but to sit at the right hand of my Father, till I return again to the last judgement.

John 16:11

Ver. 11. The third thing to convince the world of which the Spirit is promised, is *judgment*. There is a great variety amongst interpreters in their senses, what is to be understood by judgment in this text. Mr. Calvin thinks that by it is to be understood a right order of things: the devil, who is the prince of the world, had made a great disorder and confusion in the world; Christ, having judged him, brought in a reformation, and restored things into order again. Others understand the term, of that judicial power which Christ obtained after his ascension into heaven, when the Lord said unto him, *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, Ps 110:1 Ac 2:34,35. Others understand it of that government which Christ exerciseth over and upon the souls of his people, once delivered out of the power of Satan by the obedience of Christ's death. Others understand it of that *all power* given to Christ *in heaven and earth*, mentioned Mt 28:18 Php 2:9,10. Others understand it of that perverse and corrupt judgment which the world exercised upon Christ and his apostles. Others understand it of the judgment of condemnation: the world should by the Spirit be convinced, that they lay in wickedness, and exposed to eternal condemnation, when they should see their father the devil, who arrogates to himself the title of the prince of the world, and exerciseth a tyranny over them, cast out, and overcome.

John 16:12

Ver. 12. Not any new articles of doctrine or faith, for, Joh 15:15, he had told them that he had made known unto them all things which he had heard of the Father of that nature; but some things (probably) which concerned them with reference to their office as apostles, the constitution, state, and government of the church: *but*, saith he, *ye cannot bear them now*; in regard of their passion, or rather of their more imperfect state.

John 16:13

Ver. 13. The word which we here translate *guide*, *οδηγησει*, is a word of great emphasis; it strictly signifieth to be a guide of the way, not only to discover truth as the object of the understanding, but the bowing of the will to the obedience of it. It is said, that the Spirit should *guide* the apostles *into all truth*; that is, all necessary truth, whatsoever Christ had revealed to them, because in their present state they were not able to bear it; whatsoever should be fit for them to know, in order to their planting, ordering, and governing the church of God, which Christ had not, while he was with them acquainted them with; and people were to expect from the apostles, upon whom the Spirit should come in the days of Pentecost, and so influence them, that in those things they should not be at a loss to understand the will of God, which they should communicate unto others. And they ought to look upon what the apostles so revealed, as the mind of Christ; for the Holy Spirit should *not speak merely of himself*, but as from Christ, with whom he was essentially one; as also from the Father: whatsoever the Father and the Son willed he should communicate, that he should reveal to the apostles: and he shall reveal to you *things* that are *to come*, being in you the Spirit of prophecy. The apostles in their Epistles, and in the book of Revelation, showed not indeed all things, but many things which were and are to come to pass.

John 16:14

Ver. 14. That is, he shall make me famous in the world; as by the extraordinary gifts which he shall dispense and give out, so particularly by showing you things to come: for he shall guide and lead you into no other

truth, but that which I have revealed, or which it is my will he should make known and reveal.

John 16:15

Ver. 15. All the Divine essence, wisdom, power, which is in the Father, are mine; I am, in all things that concern the Deity, one and equal with the Father; and that was the reason that I said that he should *take of mine, and show it to you;* which is the same as if I had said, he shall take of my Father's, and shall show it to you; for all that the Father hath is mine; I and my Father are one in essence, wisdom, power, &c.

John 16:16

Ver. 16. I must die, and so for two or three days you shall not see me; but after that you shall see me again, when I shall be risen from the dead: but because of the last words, *because I go to the Father,* which seem to give a reason of the first clause; possibly by the *little while* first mentioned, our Saviour means the whole time from the speaking of those words to his ascension into heaven, for all that time was not more than six weeks; and by the *little while* mentioned in the latter part of the verse, our Saviour intends the whole time from his ascension until his coming to judgment: and so the reason is proper which is added, *because I go unto the Father;* for being so ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God, we are told that there he must sit, till God hath made all his enemies his footstool; and by the apostle, that the last enemy to be destroyed is death; and, Ac 3:21, *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

John 16:17

Ver. 17. Christ had used much the same expression to the Jews, Joh 7:33, *Yet a little while I am with you;* he had spoken the same to his disciples, Joh 13:33; yet it is plain from this verse, that his disciples did not understand him. What need the best of us have of the illuminations of the

blessed Spirit, rightly to conceive of and understand spiritual things! These doctrines of his death resurrection, and ascension, and coming to judgment, our Lord had inculcated to his disciples, not only in the two texts aforementioned, but also Joh 8:21 12:33,36 14:2,4,12,28; and in this chapter, Joh 16:5,7.

John 16:18

Ver. 18. Still they do not understand what he meant. Who shall hereafter arrogate to man's reason or understanding a power to comprehend spiritual mysteries? Had not the disciples reasonable souls? Will any say they had no mind to understand them? Certainly none can say so. Some lay the fault of the disciples not understanding these things upon the obscurity of our Saviour's phrase, and his parabolical expression of them, others, in their ignorance of our Saviour's resurrection from the dead; others, in their not understanding the circumstance of time: but certainly it is best imputed to the disciples inability to conceive of these things, and the prejudices of their national error concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. Let it lie where it will, the weakness of the disciples may be reasonably conceived not to be greater than is incident to the best of men; and if they were so dull of hearing and understanding, we may reasonably conceive that we are not free from the like impotency and infirmity.

John 16:19

Ver. 19. In the terms of this verse there is nothing difficult, but in the matter of it there is much instructive. We learn from hence:

1. That though good men may as to some points be ignorant as to the mind and will of God, yet they will be desirous of further instruction in it. To be willingly and contentedly ignorant, is not consistent with a root of saving grace.
2. Christ knows the desires of our hearts, before they are made known to him by the words of our lips; but yet it will not follow, that we may satisfy ourselves with inward, secret desires, without making them known by our lips; for God requireth the calves of our lips, as well as

the desires and groans of our inward man.

3. Christ is very ready to teach those whose hearts he seeth desirous to learn; therefore he saith, *Do ye inquire among yourselves?* &c. Are you inquisitive? I am ready to teach and to instruct you.

John 16:20

Ver. 20. Our Saviour's reply is no literal answer to their question, or exposition of the term which appeared so difficult to them to understand; but yet it is a substantial answer, by which he lets them know, that he should be absent from them for some time, which time would be to them a time of mourning and sadness, as he had before told them; that when the Bridegroom should be taken from them, then they should mourn; that that time would be to the wicked part of the world a time of mirth and jollity: but their sorrow should be turned into joy when they should see him again, both upon his resurrection, and in the general resurrection. The time of this life is the worldling's hour, and for the most part *the power of darkness* to such as love and fear God; but as the worldling's joy shall at last be turned into sorrow, (they *compass themselves about with sparks*, but they shall at last *lie down in sorrow*, Isa 50:11), so the godly man's sorrow shall be turned into joy: Christ will say to the good servant, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*, Mt 25:23.

John 16:21

Ver. 21. Our Lord compares the state of the church in this life, and more especially in those first and most furious times, to the state of a woman that is big with child, and in her travail; when, he saith, she hath sorrow, that is, great pain, because God, when he cursed the woman for her transgression, made this her portion, Ge 3:16, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;* and when her weeks are fulfilled, her hour is come to feel the effect of this curse, the fruit of the first woman's transgression: but no sooner is she delivered of a child, but she forgetteth all her throes and pains, for joy of a child born into the world. Such (saith our Saviour to his disciples) is your state; you are as a woman in travail; so will all those that believe in me be,

to the end of the world.

John 16:22

Ver. 22. The whole church, Re 12:1,2, is compared to a woman with child, crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. During this time of your travail you must have sorrow. *All those that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution*, 2Ti 3:12. *It is appointed for all men once to die*, Heb 9:27. It is appointed for God's people (especially under some periods of time) to be dying daily, *killed all the day long*, as the apostle expresses the state of Christians in his time, Ro 8:36, quoting Ps 44:22, which showeth the state of the church in the Old Testament to have been the same. But (saith our Saviour) it is but as the hour of the woman's travail; it will be sharp, very sharp, but it shall be short; for *I will see you again, and then your heart shall rejoice*; which cannot be understood of Christ's seeing them again after his resurrection; for before that time we read of few or no sufferings of the apostles or other disciples. It must therefore be understood, either of the visitation of his Spirit, filling their hearts with joy and peace, or the visitation of his providence: or rather, of Christ's coming to the last judgment, when all that have believed in Christ shall see him with joy unspeakable; and then all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and they shall enter into the joy of their Lord, and sigh and sorrow no more, nor shall it be in the power of all their enemies to deprive them of their joy.

John 16:23

Ver. 23. That the day here spoken of is that before mentioned, Joh 16:22, when Christ promised to see them again, and that their hearts should rejoice, is without question; but what that day is (as we before showed) is not so well agreed: some understand it of the general resurrection, when Christ shall come to judgment, when all asking for satisfaction as to any thing of which we doubt shall cease; and this seemeth at first the plainest sense: You shall then be made perfect; as you shall want nothing, so you shall ask nothing, But because of the following words, which plainly refer to the time of this life, others distinguish concerning asking, and by asking here understand, asking by way of question, for further information, not by

way of prayer for supply: and indeed the Greek word enforces that sense; for it is not *αιτησετε*, which signifieth to ask or beg, as in prayer; but *ερωτησετε*, which signifieth to ask for a resolution in case of doubting. Now though it be true, that in the day of judgment, when we shall see Christ as he is, and know God as we are known, we shall have no occasion to ask any questions; yet because the following words speak of an asking in prayer, which is proper to this life, it should seem that the day here mentioned is some time before the last judgment: what that should be, is the question. It is certainly best understood of the time after the effusion or pouring out of the Spirit in the days of Pentecost; of which time it was prophesied by Joel, Joel 2:28, that God would *pour out his Spirit on all flesh; their sons and their daughters should prophesy, their old men should dream dreams, and their young men should see visions, Ac 2:17; and to which time Isaiah had a respect in his prophecy, Isa 11:9, *that the earth should befall of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*. So as these words, *ye shall ask me nothing in that day*, signify the great light that should, upon the coming down of the Holy Spirit, shine in upon their souls, so that they should no longer have any such doubts as they now had; and sound much the same thing that we have, 1Jo 2:27, *But the anointing (by which is meant the Holy Spirit) which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things*. We must not too rigidly interpret our Saviour's words here, as if they were a promise of such a state in this life, when either the present or succeeding disciples of Christ should be so filled with knowledge, as they should have no further doubts, or need not to ask any thing of Christ, that is, to be resolved in any thing. Our Saviour here speaketh only comparatively, to signify the great difference there would be as to knowledge, between them in their present state, and what should be after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit: they should then fully understand what Christ meant by his saying, *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father*: and should not need ask him questions about that, or many other things which they were now at a loss about: as Jer 31:34, where the prophet saith, *They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest*. It must not be interpreted (as some have done) to signify a needlessness of ministerial teaching; so neither must this text be interpreted to signify a needlessness of an inquiry of Christ for further satisfaction; but only as signifying the vast difference*

in the degrees of knowledge, after the Holy Spirit should be poured forth, from what was even in the best men before that time. In the latter part of the text another word is used, it is not ερωτησετε, but αιτησετε. Our Saviour there plainly speaketh of their asking in prayer; and the promise is, that to supply the defects of their knowledge, and the want of his personal instruction, they should obtain by prayer from the Father all that was necessary for their discharge of the prophetic office, Mt 7:7 15:7 16:24. See Poole on "Mt 7:7". See Poole on "Mt 15:7". See Poole on "Mt 16:24".

John 16:24

Ver. 24. All the prayers of believers under the Old Testament were accepted upon the account of the Mediator, who was typified by the temple, and the ark, where their solemn worship was performed by Divine appointment; but the explicit naming of him was not usual in their requests. Indeed the prophet Daniel enforced his requests for the Lord's sake, which may peculiarly respect the Messiah, the promised Mediator. Our Saviour, in the form of prayer dictated to his disciples, gave no direction of addressing themselves to God in his name. But now he was ready to accomplish the will of his Father, by offering himself as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, and thereby reconciling God to them; and the prevalence of his intercession depending upon his meritorious, all sufficient sufferings, he directs and encourages them to pray with a humble confidence in his name for all the blessings they stand in need of. And it is matter of exceeding joy, that notwithstanding their unworthiness of the least favours, yet they are assured of obtaining their petitions offered up in his name; for the Father was so pleased with his voluntary obedience to the death of the cross, that no blessing is so good or great, but he most willingly bestows for his sake to all humble supplicants.

John 16:25

Ver. 25. That by *proverbs* is meant any dark sayings, is plain from the opposition in the text of that term *plainly*. Christ had spoken, though not all things, yet many things to them in dark phrases, and under many figurative expressions; *but* (saith he) *the time cometh, when I shall show you plainly of the Father*: that time is either Christ's second coming, or

after the pouring out of the Spirit, which latter is most probably what our Saviour doth here intend, because of those great measures of knowledge which at and after that time were given out. He had before given to his disciples *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, far beyond others, Mt 13:11; but yet it appears by Joh 14:1-6, and many other texts, that they had a very confused and imperfect knowledge of the Trinity, and Christ's oneness with the Father, and their mutual personal relation one to another.

John 16:26

Ver. 26. When the Spirit shall come, then you shall fully and clearly understand how to put up your prayers to the Father in my name: hitherto have you done it imperfectly, not fully understanding what you did; but when I shall have poured out my Spirit, then you shall fully understand what it is to pray in my name, and you shall accordingly do it. He doth not deny that he would ask the Father; for the Scripture elsewhere plainly expresses it, Ro 8:34 Heb 7:25; but he only tells them, that he said not so to them; the reason of which he tells us in the next words.

John 16:27

Ver. 27. I need not tell you (to beget in you a confidence that your prayers should be heard) that I will pray to the Father for you; for my Father himself hath such a love for you, that you may from thence alone conclude that he will hear you. And though my Father's love to you be an everlasting love, which hath no cause in the creature; yet as to the manifestations of my Father's love, they are further drawn forth by the love which he seeth you bear to me, and by your receiving me, who am the Messiah, and came forth from God, to perform the work of man's redemption.

John 16:28

Ver. 28. Though I be in the world, yet my original is not from the world; I am one with my Father, equal with him, God blessed forever. I came forth

from him, as one sent in the fulness of time, to discharge the office of the Messiah; the world, the place so called, was neither my original, nor yet is my home. I am presently leaving the world again, and going to my Father.

John 16:29

Ver. 29. Our Saviour having now plainly told them that he was leaving the world, put an end to their inquiries whither he was going, and satisfied them that in his former expressions of going away, not for a while to be seen, he meant no earthly motion: this they confess had no obscurity at all in it; These words are so intelligible, that there is no reason for any of us to ask thee any thing about the sense of them.

John 16:30

Ver. 30. This confirmeth us in that faith, or persuasion, which we before had, though it was in us but weak, that indeed thou art come forth from God.

John 16:31

Ver. 31. Some read the words, (not as a question), You do now believe. It is well you believe at last, you had reason enough to have believed before this time.

John 16:32

Ver. 32. Though you profess that now you do believe, you had need look to your faith; there is yet a trying time coming upon you, when your faith will waver, and you, who have been so long my followers, will leave me to shift for myself, and every one of you shift for yourselves: this came to pass presently after, Mt 26:56. Those who think they stand, had need take heed lest they fall; those who think their faith strongest, ought to be thinking with themselves, what they shall do, how they shall be able to stand, in a day of sharp trial. Many in a calm time appear to be professors

and believers, who, when affliction and persecution ariseth for the gospel's sake, will fall away, and leave Christ alone.

Yet (saith our Saviour) I am not alone, because the Father is with me. No man is alone who hath the presence of God with him. Christ knew that in all his sufferings he should have the presence and assistance of his heavenly Father.

John 16:33

Ver. 33. By *peace* here is not so much to be understood peace with God; which yet we have from Christ, and through Christ, according to Ro 5:1, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;* nor yet peace of conscience, which is the copy of our peace with God; as a peace of mind, a quiet, serene, calm temper, which indeed is the effect of the other, as the cause: that you might not to troubled and disturbed, neither for my sake, nor yet for your own. Though in the world ye meet with troubles, which you will certainly do, because the world hateth you, *be of good cheer,* (saith he), *I have overcome the world;* where by *world* is to be understood, all temptations from it, whether from the flatteries or from the frowns and troubles of it. We are said to overcome the world, but we overcome it as soldiers, fighting under Christ, who is the Captain of our salvation, and his victory is our victory, 1Jo 4:4 5:4,5. Christ overcame the prince of the world, and cast him out, as we heard before; and he hath overcome sin, and we in him, in the midst of all tribulations, *are more than conquerors through him that loved us,* Ro 8:37. This was our Saviour's last sermon which we have upon sacred record in holy writ.

John 17:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 17:1-5 Christ prayeth to his Father to glorify him,
Joh 17:6-14 and to preserve his apostles in unity of faith,
Joh 17:15,16 and from all evil,

Joh 17:17-19 and to sanctify them with the word of truth,
Joh 17:20-26 and for the perfect union of all believers, and
their admission to a share of his glory in heaven.

Ver. 1. When our Lord had finished his discourses, of which we have had a large account in Joh 14:1-16:33, he goes to prayer. As he taught us when we pray to direct our petitions to the Father, so in this he setteth us an example; and before he speaketh it is said he *lifted up his eyes to heaven*, as his Father's mansion house who, though he filleth heaven and earth, yet doth in heaven most manifest his glory: and therefore, teaching us to pray, he commandeth us to say, *Our Father which art in heaven*; not exclusively, as if God were not on earth also; but eminently, as heaven is the place where he most gloriously manifests himself. Lifting up the eyes was a usual gesture in prayer, and but an indication of the soul's being lifted up, Ps 121:1 123:1; yet no necessary gesture, for we shall at another time find our Saviour falling upon his face when he prayed, Mt 26:39 Mr 14:35. The lifting up of the soul to God, wherein the main and spiritual part of prayer lies, doth not necessarily require the lifting up of the eyes. The publican cast down his eyes upon the earth, in the sense of his unworthiness. Our Lord lifted up his eyes, and said, *Father, the hour is come*; that is, the hour of my passion, the time wherein thou hast determined that I should die; now make thy Son glorious, by raising me from the dead, by taking me up to heaven, or by giving me assistance from thee to do the work which I have to do, to drink this bitter cup: that so I, being risen again from the dead, and ascending up to heaven, may make thy name famous by publishing thy justice, goodness, and truth, upon the preaching of the gospel to all nations.

John 17:2

Ver. 2. I see no reason for any to contend here, that by *all flesh* the elect only, who shall be eternally saved, are to be understood; Christ's power undoubtedly extendeth further than to the elect, though to them only for salvation; he hath a power over reprobates and unbelievers to condemn them, as well as over his elect, to bring them to eternal life and salvation.

The former part of the text speaketh of the more general power and authority, by which the Father had already made Christ glorious; putting all things under his feet, and causing all knees to bow down unto him; which are other phrases by which the same things are expressed, 1Co 15:27 Php 2:10. This general power our Saviour executeth according to the counsels of God, with respect to their faith or unbelief. As to those given to Christ, that he should die in their stead, and with the price of his blood purchase eternal life for them; Christ executeth his power in giving them eternal life: under which notion (as appeareth from many other scriptures) is comprehended, not the end only, which is eternal life and happiness, but all the necessary means in order to that end; from whence we are to observe, that eternal life is a free gift, that the Son gives only to such as the Father hath given him by his eternal counsels; so that all shall not be saved; for the term *as many as*, &c., is plainly restrictive, and limits the gift to a certain number. And to examine our right to it, we need not ascend up into heaven, to search the rolls of the eternal counsels; for all whom the Father hath given him shall come unto him, and not only receive him as their High Priest, but give up themselves to be ruled and guided by him, by the efficacious working of the Spirit of his grace. By such a receiving of Christ, and giving up of ourselves to his conduct and government, we shall know whether we be of the number of those that are given to Christ; and till we find this, we have no reason to conclude it, but to fear and suspect the contrary.

John 17:3

Ver. 3. Those who deny the Divine nature of Christ, think they have a mighty argument from, this text, where Christ, (as they say), speaking to his Father, calleth him *the only true God*. But divines answer, that the term *only*, or alone, is not to be applied to *thee*, but to the term *God*; and the sense this: To know thee to be that God which is the only true God: and this appeareth from 1Jo 5:20, where Christ is said to be the true God, which he could not be if the Father were the only true God, considered as another from the Son. The term *only*, or alone, is not exclusive of the other two Persons in the Trinity, but only of idols, the gods of the heathen, which are no gods; so 1Ti 6:15,16, and many other Scriptures: so Mt 11:27, where it is said, that *none knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any the Father, save the Son*; where the negative doth not

exclude the Holy Spirit. Besides, the term alone is in Scripture observed not always to exclude all others, as Mr 6:47. Our Saviour saith, it is life eternal to know him who is the only true God, that is, it is the way to eternal life, which is an ordinary figure used in holy writ. He adds, *and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*; by which he lets us know, that the Father cannot be savingly known, but in and by the Son. Knowing, in this verse, signifies not the mere comprehending of God and of Christ in men's notions; but the receiving Christ, believing in him, loving and obeying him, &c.

John 17:4

Ver. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth*; by preaching the gospel, by living up to the rule of thy law, by the miracles which I have wrought. God could not be glorified by Christ, by the addition of any thing to his essential glory; only by manifesting to the world his Father's goodness, justice, mercy, truth, wisdom, and other of his attributes. One way by which he had glorified his Father, is expressed, viz. by finishing the work which he had given him in commission. But how could Christ say this, who had not yet died for the sins of men, which was the principal piece of his work?

Answer. It was so nigh, that he speaks of it as already done: so, Joh 17:11, he saith, *I am no more in the world*, because he was to be so little a time in the world. Again, he speaks of what he was fully resolved to do, as if it were already done.

John 17:5

Ver. 5. Let the glory which, as to my Divine nature, I had with thee before the foundation of the world, be communicated also to my human nature, that my whole person may be made glorious. From hence is easily concluded, against those who deny the Godhead of Christ, that Christ was glorified with his Father before the world was, which he could not have been if he had not been eternal God. He here begs of his Father, that that glory might shine upon his person as Mediator.

John 17:6

Ver. 6. Here he openeth this former phrase, *I have glorified thee on the earth*: it was done by manifesting the Lord's name, proclaiming his goodness and mercy, publishing his will, making famous all whereby God can be made known: this Christ did both by his words and by his works. This he had done (as he saith) to all those whom the Father had given him; whom the Father had given him by an act of his eternal counsel, and by inclining their hearts to own and receive him when he came into the world. He tells his Father, that his they were, his chosen ones; and he had given them unto Christ, that he should redeem them with his blood, and take the care of their salvation: and he saith, When I came and revealed thy will unto them, they have not stubbornly and obstinately, as the generality of the Jews, shut their eyes against the light, and rebelled against thy will revealed; but they have heard, received, embraced, and obeyed thy word.

John 17:7

Ver. 7. They have thus far made proficiency in the doctrine which I have taught them; that though the Pharisees say, that *I cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils*, yet they believe, and are persuaded, that the doctrine which I have taught them is from thee, and that it is by a Divine power that I have wrought those miracles which I have wrought; and so I have manifested thy name unto them, and they have received the manifestation and revelation of thy name unto them.

John 17:8

Ver. 8. Our Lord here doth both justify himself, and commend those whom in this former part of his prayer he is commending to his Father. He justifieth himself that he had not delivered any thing to them but what he had from his Father; thereby teaching all those who claim the name of his ministers what is their duty, viz. to give to their hearers no word but what God hath given them. If Christ confined his discourses to words which his Father had given him, certainly we ought to do so also. We are not to speak what we list, nor what men would have us we are tied up to God's

word. He commendeth these his disciples, that they had *received them*; not only the sound of them in their ears, not only the notion of them in their understandings, but they had embraced and believed them; and had, from the force and, authority of them, given credit to him as the true Messias, who *came out* and was sent from God. Though they were not yet come up to a perfect faith in him as the eternal Son of God, yet they believed him one that came from God, and was sent of God as the promised Messias; which seemeth to have been that degree of faith which Christ most insisted upon as to his disciples, until by his resurrection from the dead he declared himself to be the Son of God with power; though all along this Gospel, his discourses, and the miracles which he wrought, had a particular tendency to prove himself one with the Father, and the eternal Son of God; and the disciples had some weak persuasion of this also.

John 17:9

Ver. 9. *The world* seemeth here to signify all mankind, for whom Christ in this place doth not pray; though some interpret it of reprobates, others of unbelievers. Christ afterward prays for the world, Joh 17:20; that is, for such who, though they at present were unbelievers, yet should be brought to believe by the apostles' ministry. But to teach us to distinguish in our prayer, our Saviour here distinguishes, and prays for some things for his chosen ones, which he doth not pray for on the behalf of others: these he describes to be such as his Father (whose they were) had given him, either by an eternal donation, or by working faith in them.

John 17:10

Ver. 10. In the Greek the adjectives are of the neuter gender, so as the sense is not, All my friends, or all my disciples, are thine also; but, All my things are thine, and all thy things are mine; which is no more than he hath before often said. Christ and his Father have all things common, neither of them have any thing that is not the other's: they are one, and they agree in one; they have the same essence, the same will, the same attributes, the same friends.

And I am (saith our Saviour) *glorified*, or made glorious, *in them*, by their

owning, receiving, and embracing me, and accepting me as their Saviour. So as this verse containeth two arguments more, enforcing his petition on the behalf of his elect:

1. His Father's propriety in them, as well as his.
2. Their love to him, and the glory which redounded to him from their faith and holiness.

John 17:11

Ver. 11. The term *world* in this verse signifies not the men of the world, nor any particular party of them, (as it often signifies), but the habitable part of the earth. Our Saviour saith he is *no more in the world*, because he was to continue on the earth but a very small time; *but* (saith he) *these* any disciples *are* like to abide *in the world* when I have left it; they will stand in need of this help, to be armed against all the temptations they will meet with from the world. I am coming to thee, therefore I commend them to thee, beseeching thee, that thou through thy power wouldst keep those, who, in giving themselves up to me, have also given themselves up to thee; let their owning thy name (which is as a strong tower, Pr 18:10) keep them from all the temptations and dangers to which they will be exposed in the world, wherein they are to live and converse; *that they may be one*, one body, and in one Spirit: that they may own one Lord, one faith, one baptism, &c.; that they may be one in love and affection, *as we are*; in some proportion to that union which is between thee and me, though not in an equality. This prayer of our Saviour's doth both oblige all those who in any sincerity own Christ, to study union both in opinion and affection; and also give us ground of hopes, that there is a time coming, when there shall be greater measure of it than we have seen in those miserably divided times wherein we have lived, and do yet live.

John 17:12

Ver. 12. Christ speaks here of himself as one who had already died, was risen, and ascended, though none of all these things were past, because they were so suddenly to come to pass. I have, (saith our Saviour), for all

the time that I have abode in the world, and conversed with them, *kept them in thy name*, i.e. in the steady owning and profession of thy truth; or (if we read it, through thy name) it signifieth through thy power, and the influence of thy grace. I have not so kept all that came to hear me, but all *those* whom thou gavest me by the act of thy eternal counsel; or *whom thou gavest me* to be my apostles: and none of them is proved an apostate, but *the son of perdition*: none of them is lost whom thou gavest me by thy eternal gift, none of them whom thou gavest me to be my apostles, but one who, though he was my apostle, and in that sense given to me, yet was never given me by thy eternal gift, as one to be by me redeemed, and brought to eternal life and salvation; for he was a *son of perdition*: we have this term applied to antichrist, 2Th 2:3. As *the son of death*, 2Sa 12:5, signifies one appointed to die, or that deserveth to die; and *the child of hell*, Mt 23:15, signifieth one who deserveth hell; so *the son of perdition* may either signify one destined to perdition, or one that walketh in the high and right road to perdition, or rather both; one who being passed over in God's eternal counsels, as to such as shall be saved, hath by his own wilful apostasy brought himself to eternal perdition, or into such a guilt as I know thou wilt destroy him. And by this the Holy Scripture is fulfilled, Ps 109:8, for that is the portion of Scripture here intended, as is apparent from Ac 1:20, where the apostle applies that text to Judas, who is here spoken of. Other scriptures also were thus fulfilled, as Ps 41:9, compared with Joh 13:18.

John 17:13

Ver. 13. He speaketh still in the present tense. These words were not fulfilled six weeks after this, for he conversed with his disciples forty days after his resurrection, Ac 1:3; but Christ was now shortly coming, therefore he saith, I come. And, saith he, while I am in the world, *I speak these things*; I put up this prayer, that the joy of my people may not be diminished by my going from them, but that when they can no longer (as hitherto) rejoice in my bodily presence with them, they may yet rejoice that I am ascended to my Father, that they stand commended to the care of thee, my Father, by this my last prayer.

John 17:14

Ver. 14. I take more to be understood here, by Christ's giving his word unto his disciples, than his preaching the gospel in their ears: otherwise Christ had no more given these his disciples his word, than he had given it to many thousands of others who were yet in the world, and whom the world hated not. The sense therefore is, I have not only preached thy word in their ears, but I have opened their hearts to receive and believe it and bowed their wills to a compliance with it; so as the word dwelleth in their hearts, is ingrafted in them, and they are turned into the likeness of it. And here it is observable, that when any soul is given to Christ by his Father, Christ will most certainly, first or last, give unto that soul his word in that sense; that is, so as it shall receive, believe it, and be turned into the likeness of it. And for this *the world hath hated them*, for thy word hath made them to be of another spirit from carnal, loose, and worldly men; they have other affections, other inclinations, other designs and studies; *they are not of the world* in that respect *as I am not of the world*: though in other respects not so; for Christ, as to his original, was not of the world, which they were, *of the earth, earthy*.

John 17:15

Ver. 15. Christ doth not pray that his Father would take up his saints out of this sinful and troublesome world into heaven, because he knew that they were to be of use to him for a time in the world; but he prays that the Lord would keep them from the evil one, (so some would have it translated), or from the evil thing; by which we must not understand what is penally and afflictively evil, but only what is sinfully evil: and by his example he hath directed us how we ought to pray; not for death, nor absolutely for a deliverance from the evils and miseries of this life; but that we may be delivered from those temptations to sin, to which a multitude of sharp trials and afflictions will expose even the best of men.

John 17:16

Ver. 16. This is the same thing which he had said before, Joh 17:14, which he again repeateth, either to fix it in their memories, that they, calling it to

their minds, might direct their lives accordingly, or be thereby fortified against the hatred and malice of the world; for which purpose he told them so before, Joh 15:19, and again in this chapter, Joh 17:14: See Poole on "Joh 17:14".

John 17:17

Ver. 17. It is doubted amongst interpreters, whether sanctifying in this place signifieth the consecrating, deputing, or setting the apostles apart, and preparing them for the work of the ministry in which they were to be employed, as the word signifies, Jer 1:5; or the strengthening and confirming their habits of grace, so as they might be able to encounter the temptations they should meet with from the hatred or opposition of the world; or the perfecting of them in holiness. Mr. Calvin saith our Saviour here prayeth that God would appropriate them unto himself. And he showeth how this is done, *through*, or in, *thy truth*; that is, some say, through thy truth engraven and imprinted upon their hearts by thy Holy Spirit, which was promised to lead and to guide them into all truth, Joh 16:13: say others, through thy Spirit, which indeed is the Sanctifier; and we have met with twice, called, *the Spirit of truth*, Joh 14:17. Some say, *Sanctify them through thy truth*, is no more than, Sanctify them truly, in opposition to that legal sanctification of priests, &c., of which we read in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Others would have it, to thy truth, that is, to the preaching of thy gospel. But our translation seems to come nearest the meaning; *through thy truth*, that is, through the knowledge of thy truth; as the Gentiles are said to have had their hearts purified by faith, Ac 15:9. He opens what he meant by *truth*, adding, *thy word is truth*; that is, thy word and gospel, which I have preached to them, is truth (the abstract, as some think, for the concrete); that is, it is most true: it is not like the doctrine of false prophets, nor like the doctrine of the Pharisees, which is partly true, partly false; but it is truth itself: and though indeed it is the blood of Christ which cleanseth and purifieth the heart, yet this is applied to the conscience by the Spirit, which is the Sanctifier, in and through the word of God preached and applied to the soul.

John 17:18

Ver. 18. That is: My Father, they have not thrust themselves into their employment, they have not run without sending; for as I am thine apostle, as I was sent by thee, so I have sent them. The apostles indeed were not sent for the same end in all things that Christ was sent; who was sent to purchase salvation for men, as well as to preach the gospel: but they were sent in part for the same work for which Christ was sent, and they were sent by him who had authority to send them; and as it is but reasonable for princes to protect those whom themselves send upon their embassies, so it was but reasonable that God should defend and protect those whom his Son had sent out as his ambassadors.

John 17:19

Ver. 19. *I sanctify myself,* here, is no more than, I set myself apart, as a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of God: and indeed sanctifying, in the ancient notion of it under the law, did ordinarily signify the setting of persons and things apart to the special service of God; which was done legally by certain ritual performances and ceremonies, and is still done inwardly and spiritually by regeneration, and renewing of the hearts of men and women by the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost. Christ saith, that for his disciples sake he sanctified himself, being both the Priest and the sacrifice.

Christ set apart himself as a sacrifice for his people, *that they might be sanctified:* not only our eternal life and happiness, but all the means to it, fell within the counsel of God; hence we are said to be chosen of Christ, *that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,* Eph 1:4; and within the purchase of Christ: hence the apostle saith, Eph 5:25,26, that he *gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water:* and our Saviour here saith, that he set apart himself for a sacrifice for our sins, that his *people might be sanctified through the truth;* that is, by receiving the truth, not in their ears only, but in their hearts, in the love of it, and bringing forth the fruits of it in all holiness of life and conversation.

John 17:20

Ver. 20. Three things are evident from this verse.

1. That Christ did not pray for any reprobates, not for any that were and should die unbelievers: he prayed before for those who actually did believe; he prays here for them that should believe; but we never read that he prayed for any others. Now whether he laid down his life for those for whom he would not pray, lies upon them to consider, who are so confident that he died for all and every man.
2. That by persons given to Christ, cannot be understood believers as such; for Christ here prays for those that were not actual believers, but should believe.
3. That faith cometh by hearing; Christ here prays for those that should believe *through their word*, that is, the apostles preaching the gospel.

John 17:21

Ver. 21. Our Saviour here prays on the behalf of such as should believe on him, that they might be one in faith, and one in brotherly love. Whoso considereth this as a piece of Christ's prayer for believers, and that St. Paul hardly wrote one epistle to the primitive apostolical churches in which he did not press this by most potent argument, cannot but nourish some hopes, (how improbable soever it appears at present), that all the sincere disciples of Christ shall one day arrive at the keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and likewise look upon themselves in point of duty obliged to endeavour it. To which pitch of perfection possibly Christians might soon arrive, if superiors would, after the example of the apostle, Ac 15:28, lay upon their inferiors no more than *necessary things*; and equals would learn to contend for truth in love, and to walk with their brethren so far as they have attained; and as to other things, to forbear one another in love; and wherein any of their brethren are otherwise minded, then they are to wait till God shall reveal it to them, Php 3:15. But this is not all the union which Christ prays for; he also prays that they might be one in the Father and the Son; that is, that they might believe; for faith is that grace by which we are united to, and made one with, God and Christ; though others interpret it of obedience, or such things wherein God the Father and Christ are one, &c. For although so many as are ordained to life

shall believe, yet that they might believe is matter of prayer: this our Saviour prays for, for the further glory of God, which is that which he meaneth by the world's believing that God had sent him; there being no greater evidence that Christ is the true Messiah, than the general acceptance of the doctrine of the gospel, which he brought throughout the world; for who can imagine, that a new doctrine brought into the world by one of no greater reputation than Christ had in the world, and propagated by persons of no greater quality than the apostles were, should obtain in the greatest part of the world, if he that first introduced it had not been first sent by God into the world, and the apostles had not been extraordinarily influenced and assisted by God as to the propagation of it, after Christ was ascended into heaven?

John 17:22

Ver. 22. By *glory* here some understand the heavenly glory; but then they must understand the oneness mentioned in the latter part of the verse, of the union which the saints shall have with Christ and his Father in glory, in another world. Others understand the Divine nature, of which the apostle in, 2Pe 1:4, saith, believers are made partakers: this seemeth to come nearer, for the more men and women are made partakers of that, the more they will study the unity of the Spirit. Others understand the power of working miracles, by which Christ is said to have *manifested his glory*, Joh 2:11; and the effect of this power is called *the glory of God*, Joh 11:40. Others understand the preaching of the gospel, in which *the ministration of the Spirit is glorious*, 2Co 3:8; and the faithful ministers of the gospel are called *the glory of Christ*, 2Co 8:23. *That they may be one, even as we are one*; our Saviour either again repeats his prayer, that they might be one; or else declareth that he had communicated his power, his glory to them, that they might be one, as he and his Father are one.

John 17:23

Ver. 23. *I in them*; not only as my Divine nature is united to their flesh, but as I have made them partakers of my Spirit, and of the Divine nature; as I have loved them with a special and peculiar love, and am the head, they the members; I the vine, they the branches.

And thou in me, the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in me bodily; I being the brightness of thy glory, the express image of thy person; thou also doing whatsoever I do, and accepting and approving of it, as Joh 14:10.

That they may be made perfect in one; the Greek is, εἰς ἓν, into one; in one body, whereof Christ is the Head; which body is the church, keeping a unity of faith; all believing the same things in matter of faith, and those things no other than what thou hast revealed, and I have revealed as from thee. This, O Father, will be a great evidence, both that thou hast sent me, when the world shall see thee bowing men's hearts to the obedience of the truth of thy gospel; and that thou hast loved them with a tender and everlasting love, as thou hast loved me.

John 17:24

Ver. 24. Here our Saviour wills his disciples eternal life; or rather prays to his Father, that he would preserve his disciples unto, and at last bestow upon them, eternal life and salvation; so as the phrase, *whom thou hast given me*, is not to be restrained to the apostles, but to be extended to all those who, belonging to the election of grace, shall hereafter be made heirs of glory, and have everlasting life and happiness. This he expresses under the notion of being with him where he is, as Joh 14:3; which is called a being *ever with the Lord*, 1Th 4:17; and certainly this is the highest happiness, to be where the Son of God is.

That they may behold my glory, is the same thing with, that they may be made partakers of my glory: as to see death, is, in Scripture phrase, to die; and to see life, is to live; so, to behold the glory of God, is to be glorified.

For, saith our Saviour, *thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*, both as thy only begotten Son, and as the person in whom thou hast chosen all them, and whom thou hast set apart to be the Mediator between God and man; and therefore I know that thou wilt glorify me, and that thou wilt in this thing hear my prayers, and glorify them also, whom thou hast given to me to be redeemed by my blood.

John 17:25

Ver. 25. It is observed, that the servants of God, in holy writ, have used in their prayers to give unto God such compellations as have been suitable to the things which they have begged of God in their prayers, and proper to express their faith in God, for the hearing of such their prayers: Christ here calls his Father by the name of *righteous*, with relation to the argument which he here useth, which is from his disciples knowledge of him; under which term (as very often before) is comprehended their acceptance of him, believing in him, love to him, &c. Father, saith he, thou art righteous; it is a piece of thy righteousness to *render to every man according to his work*, Job 34:11 Ps 62:12 Pr 24:12.

The world hath not known thee; the men of the world hate thee, are ignorant of thee, rebellious against thee;

but I have known thee; I have known thee, and have made thee known, and I have been obedient to thy will; and these my disciples have known me, and known, that is, received, embraced me, as one sent by thee, as the Messiah.

John 17:26

Ver. 26. By the *name* of God, is to be understood God himself, and whatsoever God hath made himself known by his word and gospel, his attributes and perfections. And after my resurrection, I will yet further declare it to them, who are yet in a great measure ignorant and imperfect in their notions of thee; that thy love wherewith thou hast loved me may be further communicated to them, and be derived to them, and abide in and upon them for ever; because I am in them (so some would have it read, though the word be *καγω*, which properly is, *and I*, as we translate it). The words are but a repetition of what our Lord hath often said, and illustrated in, Joh 15:9, by the parable of the vine and the branches; and teach us this lesson, that Christ must be in those souls who can pretend to any share in that love of God wherewith he hath loved Christ: *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* 2Co 13:5.

John 18:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 18:1-9 Judas betrayeth Jesus: the officers and soldiers at

Christ's word fall to the ground.

Joh 18:10,11 Peter cutteth off Malchus's ear.

Joh 18:12-14 Jesus is led bound to Annas and Caiaphas.

Joh 18:15-18 Peter denieth him.

Joh 18:19-24 Jesus is examined by the high priest, and struck by

one of the officers.

Joh 18:25-27 Peter denieth him the second and third time.

Joh 18:28-40 Jesus, brought before Pilate, and examined,

confesses his kingdom not to be of this world;

Pilate, testifying his innocence, and offering to

release him, the Jews prefer Barabbas.

Chapter Introduction

Having so largely discoursed the history of our Saviour's passion, See Poole on "Mt 26:1", and following verses to Mt 26:71, See Poole on "Mt 27:1", and following verses to Mt 27:66, where (to make the history entire) we compared what the other evangelists also have about it; I shall refer the reader to the notes upon those two chapters, and be the shorter in the notes upon this and the following chapters.

Ver. 1. Matthew hath nothing of those discourses, and prayer, which we have had in the four last chapters; no more have any of the other evangelists, who yet all mention his going into the mount of Olives, after his celebration of his last supper, Mt 26:30 Mr 14:26 Lu 22:39. Our evangelist saith, he went over the brook Cedron into a garden. The others say nothing of a garden, but mention his coming to a place called

Gethsemane. It is probable that this village was at the foot of Mount Olivet; and the garden mentioned was a garden near that village, and belonging to it (for they had not their gardens within their towns, but without): now the way to this was over the brook Cedron; of which brook we read, 2Sa 15:23; David passed over it when he fled from Absalom; and 1Ki 2:37, where it is mentioned as Shimei's limit, which he might not pass. This brook was in the way towards the mount of Olives; which being passed, he with his disciples went into a garden belonging to the town Gethsemane.

John 18:2

Ver. 2. We read that Christ, when he was at Jerusalem, was wont at night for privacy to retire to the mount of Olives, Lu 21:37 22:39 and it should seem that he was wont ordinarily to go to this garden, which made Judas know the particular place where he might find him.

John 18:3

Ver. 3. The evangelist here passeth over all mentioned by the other evangelists about Judas's going to the high priests, and contracting with them, and cometh to relate his coming to apprehend him with a band of men that he had obtained from the chief priests and Pharisees for that purpose. By *band* we must not understand a Roman cohort, as the word signifies, but such a convenient number out of that band (probably) which at the time of the passover guarded the temple, as was sufficient to take him: they came with *lanterns and torches*, (though it were the time of full moon), to make the strictest search; and with *weapons*, fearing where no fear was; for Judas (their leader) could have told them that he was not wont to go with any great company to the mount of Olives.

John 18:4

Ver. 4. This evangelist saith nothing of what the other evangelists mention, of the sign that Judas had given them, by which they should know him; nor of Judas's kissing of him, or our Saviour's reply to him. (John, all along

his Gospel, mentions very little of what is recorded by the other evangelists). It must be supposed, that after Judas had kissed our Saviour, our Saviour himself came forth and asked him whom they looked for; hereby showing that he laid down his life, and no man took it from him: he could easily have delivered himself out of their hands, (though I think they are too charitable to Judas, who think that it was that which made Judas discover him; not that he designed his death), he had once and again before so escaped them; but now his hour was come, he freely offers himself unto his enemies, and asketh whom they looked for.

John 18:5

Ver. 5. They tell him, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Christ was born in *Bethlehem of Judea*, Mt 2:1; but his father and mother lived at Nazareth, a city of Galilee, Lu 2:4,39, where he lived with them, Lu 2:51; hence he was called *Jesus of Nazareth*, from the place where he lived, and most ordinarily conversed. Mt 21:11 Mt 26:71 Mr 1:24 10:47 14:67 16:6. Christ replies that he was the man; and it is particularly noted, that Judas was with this armed company.

John 18:6

Ver. 6. For a further evidence to the world that Christ was the Son of the Everlasting Father, it pleased God in all the periods of his life to show forth by him some acts of the Divine power. What had Christ said or done here to prostrate his armed adversaries? He had only asked them whom they looked for; and hearing that it was for him, told them he was the man: they are struck with a terror, and instead of apprehending him, start from him, and fall down to the ground. If there were so much majesty in and such an effect of the voice of Christ in one of the lowest acts of his humiliation, what will the voice of a glorified Christ be to sinners, when he shall return as a Judge to condemn the world! And what will the effect of that be upon his enemies! How easily might our Saviour have escaped, now that his enemies were fallen to the ground! But he suffered them to rise up again, to take him, and to carry him away, to show that he had laid down his life freely.

John 18:7

Ver. 7,8. Our Saviour's question, and their answer, are the same as before. They fell down, but they rose up again, and go on in their wicked purpose. This is the genius of all sinners; they may be under some convictions and terrors, but they get out of them, if God doth not concur by his Spirit, and sanctify them as means to make a thorough change in their hearts. Though those words, *let these go their way*, might be interpreted of the armed men that came with the officers, of whom there seemed no such need to carry away an unarmed man; yet the next words make it evident that they are to be understood of his disciples, being persons against whom they had no warrant. Our Lord hath a care of his disciples, that they might not suffer with him.

John 18:9

Ver. 9. But were those words of our Saviour, *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none*, to be understood as to a temporary losing, or of an eternal destruction? Some of the ancients were of opinion, that they were to be understood of a losing with reference to a spiritual and eternal state; but that they were applicable also to a losing as to this life. I think that they are applicable to both, and that in this text they are primarily to be understood of a losing as to a temporal death and destruction. It was Christ's purpose, that eleven of his twelve apostles should outlive him, receive the promise of the Father in the pouring out of the Spirit, and be his instruments to carry the gospel over a great part of the world: this they could not have done had they been put to death at this time; he therefore resolved not to lose them in this sense, but to uphold and preserve their lives, for these ends to which he had designed them; and therefore he said to these officers, *You have the person whom ye seek for; for these my disciples, you have nothing against them, let them go away: and by his power upon their hearts he effected it, so that they had a liberty to forsake him, and to flee and to shift for themselves.*

John 18:10

Ver. 10. It is thought that this action of Peter's was before the apprehension of our Saviour, though after the discovery of it, as our evangelist reports it; because upon the apprehension of our Saviour, both Mt 26:56, and Mr 14:50, agree, that the disciples fled; and it can hardly be thought that if Peter had seen his Master apprehended he would have adventured upon so daring and provocative an action; nor could Christ, had he been first bound, have stretched out his hand, to have touched his ear, and healed it. Lest any should wonder how Peter came by a sword, we may read, Lu 22:38, that the disciples had *two swords* amongst them, probably brought out of Galilee for the defence of themselves and their Master against assaults from robbers in that long journey.

John 18:11

Ver. 11. The other evangelists report this part of the history with many more circumstances; particularly our Saviour's miraculous healing Malchus again; See Poole on "Mt 26:51", and following verses to Mt 26:54. See Poole on "Mr 14:47", and following verses to Mr 14:49. See Poole on "Lu 22:50". See Poole on "Lu 22:51". With what pretence some, both of the ancient and modern writers, think that Peter did not sin in this action, I do not understand, when our Saviour did not only (as John saith) command him to put up his sword again into its sheath, but also (as Matthew tells us, Mt 26:52) told him, that *all they that take the sword*, that is, without commission from God, *shall perish with the sword*. He used that argument, according to the other evangelists. This evangelist tells us of another, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* That is, shall I not freely and cheerfully submit to the will of God in suffering what he willeth me to suffer? The term *cup* is often in Scripture used to signify people's measure and proportion of affliction and suffering, which God allots them; (possibly the metaphor is taken from the custom of some nations, to put some kinds of malefactors to death by giving them a cup of poison); See Poole on "Mt 20:22", See Poole on "Mt 26:39". It is a good argument to quiet our spirits roiled by any afflictive providences: they are but a cup, and the cup our Father hath given us.

John 18:12

Ver. 12. As is usual for officers to do with ordinary malefactors which are great criminals; they put no difference between Christ and the most villanous thieves and murderers. There are many conjectures why Christ was first led to Annas, whereas Caiaphas was the high priest that year, not Annas (as the next words tell us); but it is uncertain whether it was because his house was very near, and in the way to Caiaphas's house, or that he lived in the same house with his son in law; or out of an honour and respect to him, being the high priest's father, or to please the old man's peevish eyes with such a sight, or by this means to draw Annas to the trial of Christ, or because he had had a more than ordinary hand about the apprehending him, or to take direction from him what to do: we cannot give a certain account why they used this method; we are only certain they did it, and that they did not carry him before him as high priest; for the next words tell us ...(see Joh 18:13).

John 18:13

Ver. 13. That his son in law Caiaphas was the high priest that year; which we had also before, Joh 11:51, where we discoursed more largely about the disorder of the Jews, in that most corrupt time, when that place was bestowed without regard to the family of Aaron, and bought and sold, or conferred at the will of their conquerors. See Poole on "Joh 11:51".

John 18:14

Ver. 14. Of his giving that counsel, and the wickedness of it, (though it proved an oracle beyond his intention), we discoursed before: See Poole on "Joh 11:51". The meaning of the high priest was, that right or wrong, whether they had any just accusation against Christ or no, yet they might for expediency put him to death, because his death might prevent mutinies and seditions amongst the people.

John 18:15

Ver. 15. When Christ was apprehended, the other evangelists tell us, *all the disciples forsook him and fled;* but it should seem that Peter, who all along the gospel history hath appeared more forward, and bold, and daring than any of the rest, came back; but who that other disciple was that went in with him, and in favour of whom Peter was admitted, we are not told. It is but a conjecture of those who think that it was John, for John was a Galilean as well as Peter, and would have been as much to be questioned upon that account as Peter was. They judge more probably who think it was the master of the house where Christ had ate the passover, and celebrated his supper; or some person of note in Jerusalem, who by reason of his reputation might have more free access to the chief magistrate than one of the apostles, who were but mean persons in the account of the Jews. This disciple, whoever he was, was one that had some familiarity and acquaintance with Caiaphas, which it is no way probable that either John or any of the apostles had.

John 18:16

Ver. 16. This further confirmeth the conjecture of those, who think that other disciple was none of the apostles, but a favourer of Christ, that lived in Jerusalem, and was of some repute either for estate or place; so as he had not only an acquaintance with the high priest, but also with his family; and could gain admittance into his palace, not only for himself but also for his friend.

John 18:17

Ver. 17. This is Peter's first denial of his Master; between which and his second denial (of which John saith nothing till he comes to Joh 18:26) the evangelist interposes many things not mentioned by the other evangelists.

John 18:18

Ver. 18. Here is nothing in this verse which needeth any explication, unless any should ask how it could be cold weather at that time of the year, (about April 14), especially in a country where it now was the time of

harvest? Which may easily be resolved. It was now about three of the clock in the morning, and we know that in summer (the spring especially) nights are cold; besides that in those countries that are more equinoctial, the nights are longer, and consequently colder towards the morning, as the air hath had more time to cool.

John 18:19

Ver. 19. Questions about sedition or rebellion belonged not to the judge of this court, but fell under the cognizance of the Roman governor, they being now a conquered people, and tributary to the Romans; who, though themselves heathens, granted the Jews their liberty as to religion, and courts in order there unto; as also a liberty of courts for civil causes: the high priest therefore saith nothing to Christ about his being a King, but only inquires of him about his doctrine. What particular questions he propounded to him we do not read; only in general he inquired about the doctrine he had preached, and the disciples he had sent out, which was one and the same cause, to see if he could bring him under the guilt of a false prophet; for that, and blasphemy, and idolatry, were three principal causes that fell under the cognizance of this court, as appeareth from De 13.

John 18:20

Ver. 20. *I spake openly to the world;* to all sorts of men, my enemies as well as my friends.

I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; the Jews for instruction do use to resort to the temple, which was in Jerusalem, and whither three times in the year all the males were wont to come from all parts of the country: and in the public assemblies of the Jews, and in the places where they use to meet.

And in secret have I said nothing; I have said nothing in secret contrary to the doctrine which I have publicly taught; though I have preached in other places, yet it hath been the same thing which I have said in public.

John 18:21

Ver. 21. We are told by those that have written about the Jewish order in their courts of judgment, that their capital causes always began with the defensive part; and that it was lawful for any to speak for the defendants for a whole day together; (though they did not observe this in the cause of Christ); and their method was not to put the defendants to accuse themselves, but to examine witnesses against them. Our Saviour therefore appeals to their own order, and says, *Why askest thou me?* It was, saith he, no secret action; I spake publicly, ask them that heard me speak; they know what doctrine I preached, and can accuse me if I delivered any false doctrine.

John 18:22

Ver. 22. This lets us see in what indecent disorder the Jewish government was at this time, that an inferior officer dared to strike a supposed criminal, standing before the judgment seat, and defending himself by their own known rules and methods; for what had our Saviour said or done, more than making use of the liberty their own law allowed; not confessing any thing against himself, but putting them upon the proof of what they laid to his charge? Yet we read of no notice taken of this disorder.

John 18:23

Ver. 23. Our Saviour could easily have revenged himself upon this officer; but, to teach us our duty, he only gently reproves him, and lets him know that he did not behave himself as one ought to do in the face of a court of justice, where he had both a liberty and a present opportunity to have accused him, if he had spoken ill; and if he had spoken well, there was no reason for his striking him.

John 18:24

Ver. 24. These words are only to let us know, that these things were not done before Annas, but before Caiaphas the high priest, to whom (as to his

proper judge) Annas had sent him bound, as he was at first brought to him.

John 18:25

Ver. 25-27. This history of Peter's denial of his Master the second time we have before met with, Mt 26:71,72 Mr 14:69,70; Lu 22:58,59, with several circumstances not mentioned by John. See Poole on "Mt 26:69".

John 18:28

Ver. 28. The chief priests having in their sanhedrim done with our Saviour's case, and judged him worthy of death, as we read, Mt 26:66 Mr 14:64; which two evangelists, with Luke, relate this history of Christ's trial before the sanhedrim, with many more circumstances than John doth; they now lead him from the ecclesiastical court to the court of the civil magistrate; either kept in Pilate's house, who was then present civil governor under the Romans, or some where at least where he sat as judge, which was therefore called *the hall of judgment*. *And it was early*; how early it was we cannot tell, but probably about five or six of the clock. The Jews would not go into the judgment hall, that they might not be defiled, for they accounted it a legal pollution and uncleanness to come into a heathen's house, or to touch any thing which a heathen had touched: now the reason is assigned why they were afraid of contracting any legal pollution, viz. that they might the passover.

Object. But had they not eaten the passover the night before? That was the time prescribed by the law, to the letter of which there is no doubt but that our Saviour strictly kept himself.

Answer. Some say that they had not, because the day wherein they should have eaten it this year falling the day before their sabbath, the passover was put off to be kept on the sabbath, that two great festivals might not be kept two days successively; so as, though our Saviour kept it at the time appointed by the law, yet the Jews did not. But this is denied by other very learned then, who tell us the Jews never altered their day for keeping their

passover, neither for the succeeding sabbath, nor any other reason. They say therefore, that by *the passover* which is mentioned in this verse is to be understood the feast, mentioned Nu 28:17, which was to be kept *the fifteenth day*, which day was a day of great solemnity with them from the morning to the evening; all the seven days they also offered various sacrifices, which all went under the name of the passover, because they followed in the days of the paschal feast. Thus the term *passover* is taken, De 16:2, *Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd*. According to this notion, the meaning of those words, *that they might eat the passover*, is, that they might proceed in their paschal solemnity, keeping the feast according to the law. Be it as it will, these hypocrites in it notoriously discovered their hypocrisy, scrupling what caused a legal uncleanness, and not at all scrupling either immediately before their eating the passover, or presently after it, in their great festival to defile themselves with the guilt of innocent blood; nay, had Christ been such a malefactor as they pretended, yet the bringing him into judgment, their prosecuting, and accusing, and condemning him, and assisting in his crucifying, were not works fit for the day before such a solemnity, or the day after it, which was so great a festival: but there is nothing more ordinary, than for persons over zealous as to rituals, to be as remiss with reference to moral duties.

John 18:29

Ver. 29. The Roman governor humours them in their superstition (the Romans having granted them the liberty of their religion): they scruple to go into the ordinary place of judgment; he goes out to them, and calls for their *accusation* of Christ, according to the ordinary and regular course of judgments.

John 18:30

Ver. 30. They had in their sanhedrim before judged him guilty of blasphemy, Mt 26:65, but this they durst not mention, lest Pilate should have rejected them, as being not concerned in questions of their law; they therefore only exclaimed against him in the general as a great malefactor, but of what kind they do not say. It should seem they would have had

Pilate have added his civil authority to confirm and execute their ecclesiastical censure, without so much as hearing any thing of the cause (as at this day frequent in popish countries); but they met with a more equal judge.

John 18:31

Ver. 31. *Take ye him, and judge him according to your law;* I will judge no man before myself first hear and judge of his crime; you have a law amongst yourselves, and a liberty to question and judge men upon it, proceed against him according to your law. They reply, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* We are assured by such as are exercised in the Jewish writings, that the power of putting any to death was taken away from the Jews forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Some say it was not taken away by the Romans, but by their own court. They thought it so horrid a thing to put an Israelite to death, that wickedness of all sorts grew to such a height amongst them, through the impunity, or too light punishment, of criminals, that their courts durst not execute their just authority. And at last their great court determined against the putting any to death; nor (as they say) was any put to death by the Jews, but in some popular tumult, after their court had prejudiced the person by pronouncing him guilty of blasphemy, or some capital crime; which seemeth the case of Stephen, Ac 7:1-60.

John 18:32

Ver. 32. Christ had before this time told his disciples that he should die, and that by the death of the cross, as we read, Mt 20:19. God by his providence ordereth things accordingly, to let us know that the Scripture might be fulfilled to every tittle. Crucifying was no Jewish but a Roman death; had the Jews put him to death, they would have stoned him; but he must remove the curse from us, by being made *a curse for us*, being *hanged on a tree*, which was looked upon as an accursed death, Ga 3:13. The Jews therefore knowing nothing of this counsel of God, yet execute it by refusing themselves to put him to death, and putting it off to Pilate, though possibly their design was but to avoid the odium of it. Thus God maketh the wrath of men to praise him.

John 18:33

Ver. 33. *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again,* the ordinary place of judicature, from whence we read before he went out, in civility to the Jews, whose superstition (as we before heard) kept them from going there during the festival. He called Jesus to him privately, and asks him, if he owned himself to be the *King of the Jews*? The confessing of which (for without doubt they had suggested some such thing to Pilate, and could not prove it) had brought Christ under Pilate's power, he being governor for the Romans, and so concerned to inquire upon any that pretended to any regal power over that conquered people.

John 18:34

Ver. 34. Our Saviour neither affirms nor denies: though we are bound, whenever we speak, to speak the truth, yet we are not bound at all times to speak the whole truth. Our Saviour desireth to be satisfied from Pilate, whether he asked him as a private person for his own satisfaction, or as a judge, having received any such accusation against him? For if he asked him as a judge, he was bound to call them to the proof of what they had charged him with.

John 18:35

Ver. 35. The sum of this is no more than that he did not devise this captious question, for he was no Jew, not concerned in nor regarding what they had in their books of the law and the prophets; but he was accused to him by those of his own nation, and he was desirous to find out the truth, and to know what he had done.

John 18:36

Ver. 36. *My kingdom is not of this world;* that is, I cannot deny but that I am the King of the Jews, but not in the sense they take it, not such a king

as they look for in their Messiah; my kingdom is spiritual, over the hearts and minds of men, not earthly and worldly. And of this thou thyself mayest be convinced; for was there ever an earthly prince apprehended and bound for whom none of his subjects would take up arms? There is none of my disciples that takes up arms, or offereth to fight for me; which is a plain evidence, that I pretend to no kingly power in disturbance of the Roman government.

John 18:37

Ver. 37. *Art thou a king then?* Pilate seems to have spoken this rather in derision and mockery, than out of any desire to catch him in his words. Christ neither owneth himself to be a king, nor yet denieth it, but tells Pilate that he said so; and to this end he was born, and for this cause he came into the world, to bear testimony to the truth: i.e. I cannot deny but that I have a spiritual kingdom, that is truth, and I must attest the truth; it was a part of my errand into the world; and every one who is by Divine grace disposed to believe and love the truth, will hear and obey my doctrine.

John 18:38

Ver. 38. Pilate (as profane persons use to do) thought that our Saviour, speaking of truth, and a spiritual kingdom, did but cant, and therefore asking him what he meant by truth, he never stays for an answer, but goes out again to the Jews, whom he had left without the door of the judgment hall, and tells them he found no fault in him. Whatever the quality of the kingdom was of which our Saviour spake, he judged that his pretensions to it were not prejudicial to the authority of the emperor, nor the tranquillity of the state, and would have demissed him from their unjust prosecution.

John 18:39

Ver. 39. Whence this custom came is uncertain; most probably from the Romans, who in some honour of this great festival of the Jews, and in humour of them, granted them the life of any criminal whom they desired.

Pilate propounds Christ as the prisoner whom he had most mind to release, perceiving that his prosecution was of malice, rather than for any just cause.

John 18:40

Ver. 40. But such was the malice of his adversaries, that though Barabbas was one that had committed murder in an insurrection, yet they choose him rather than Christ. See Poole on "Mt 27:15", and following verses to Mt 27:18.

John 19:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 19:1-4 Jesus is scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked, and buffeted by the soldiers.

Joh 19:5-7 Pilate declareth his innocence: the Jews charge him with assuming the title of the Son of God.

Joh 19:8-16 Pilate upon further examination is more desirous to release him, but, overcome with the clamours of the Jews, delivereth him to be crucified.

Joh 19:17,18 He is led to Golgotha, and crucified between two malefactors.

Joh 19:19-22 Pilate's inscription on his cross.

Joh 19:23,24 The soldiers part his garments.

Joh 19:25-27 He commendeth his mother to John,

Joh 19:28-30 receiveth vinegar to drink, and dieth.

Joh 19:31-37 The legs of the others are broken, and the side of Jesus pierced.

Joh 19:38-42 Joseph of Arimathea begs his body, and, assisted by Nicodemus, buries it.

Ver. 1. It was the custom of the Romans, when any one was to be crucified, first to scourge him; but (as it appears) Pilate ordered it, hoping that, though he could not prevail by any other art with them, yet by this he might; and they might possibly be satisfied with this lighter punishment; for it appeareth by Joh 19:4,12, that Pilate had a mind to release him, if he could have satisfied the Jews; though he had not courage enough to oppose the stream, and to do what himself thought was just, in despite of their opposition.

John 19:2

Ver. 2. The other evangelists also mention a reed put into his right hand. The crown, and the purple robe, and a sceptre, are all regal ensigns; they give them to Christ in derision of his pretence to a kingdom, and in the mean time themselves proclaim what he had said, that his kingdom was not of this world; for though earthly kings wear crowns, yet they use to be of gold, not of thorns; and their sceptres use to be gold, not reeds.

John 19:3

Ver. 3. They mocked him when they said, *Hail, King of the Jews!* But yet spake a great truth, though not in their sense. The other evangelists speak of more indignities offered him: See Poole on "Mr 15:19".

John 19:4

Ver. 4. Pilate appeareth convinced in his own conscience that Christ had done nothing worthy either of death or bonds, and a great while resisted that strong temptation which he was under to please the people, and to secure his own station, lest any complaint made to the Roman emperor against him should have prejudiced him.

John 19:5

Ver. 5. He therefore, after Jesus had been scourged, and dressed up in this mock dress, brings him out again to the people to move their pity.

John 19:6

Ver. 6. Our Lord finds more compassion from Pilate, though a heathen, than he found from those of his own nation; yea, those that pretended highest to religion amongst them: Pilate would have saved him; they cry out for his blood. Pilate leaves another testimony behind him, that what he did, at last overcome with a great temptation, he did contrary to the conviction of his own conscience, and as yet declineth the guilt of innocent blood.

John 19:7

Ver. 7. The *law* they mean, is the law for putting false prophets to death, De 18:20. By *the Son of God here*, they mean the eternal Son of God, in all things equal with his Father; otherwise it was a term applicable to themselves, whom God calls his son, his firstborn, &c. Now for any in this sense to arrogate to himself this title who indeed was not so, was blasphemy, and that in the highest degree, and brought him under the notion of a false prophet of the deepest dye: but this was injuriously applied to Christ, who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, and who was so declared by God himself at his baptism and transfiguration; and who had made his Divine power appear by such works as no mere man ever did.

John 19:8

Ver. 8. It should seem that the Romans permitted judgments to the Jews according to their own laws, which the Roman governor was to see executed; or else, seeing the rabble in such a heat and disorder, he feared some breaking out.

John 19:9

Ver. 9. Our Lord, who knew the secrets of all men's hearts, very well knew, that though Pilate had for some time withstood his temptations, yet he would at last yield: he also was ready to lay down his life, as he knew was determined for him; having therefore made a reasonable defence, he thinks fit to add no more of that nature.

John 19:10

Ver. 10. Pilate seemeth something displeas'd that Christ would be no more free: men in worldly power are too prone to forget from whom they derive it.

John 19:11

Ver. 11. Our Lord checks Pilate modestly for boasting of his authority as a judge to absolve or condemn him; declaring, that all the power he had was derived from God, who in his eternal counsels had determined this thing, which must therefore come to pass: but withal lets him know, that this neither excused him, nor much less the Jews, who were to execute the Divine purposes. Pilate was to look to God's revealed will, not his secret counsels, of which he could have no knowledge; but he saith, they who had delivered him to him had the greater sin: he did act but as a judge upon their accusations; they procur'd the false witness, they would not be satisfied without his blood, and they sinned against much more light.

John 19:12

Ver. 12. He *sought* all fair and plausible means *to release him*, being convinc'd in his own conscience that he was an innocent man: but the Jews double their clamours, and (according to the usual acts of sycophants) quit their charge as to religion, though that was the true and real cause of all their malice, and pursue only the charge which was proper for the cognizance of the Roman governor, of sedition or rebellion; and

tacitly accuse Pilate as a traitor, and being false to his trust, if he should let our Saviour go; for no man could set up himself as a king, but he must proclaim himself a traitor to the Roman emperor.

John 19:13

Ver. 13. *That saying,* that if he let Jesus go he was not Caesar's friend. Pilate was a man that loved the honour that was from men more than the honour and praise which is from God; he was more afraid of losing his place than his soul, and could no longer resist the temptation he was under.

He brought Jesus forth, and sat down in a place called the Pavement, because it was paved with stone, *but in the Hebrew,* (mixed with the Syriac), *Gabbatha,* that is, a high place; for it was their manner to have their judgment seats higher than other parts of the room where they were.

John 19:14

Ver. 14. *The preparation* to any feast signifies the day before it, because on that day they prepared whatsoever according to the law was necessary for the solemnization. Some much doubt whether in this place *the passover* signifies strictly the paschal supper, which it could not do if the Jews strictly this year kept to the law; for the fourteenth day of the month Nisan at evening was the time when most certainly Christ kept it, who ate it the night before. It is therefore more probably thought, that by *the passover* here is meant their great festival, which was upon the fifteenth day. See Poole on "Joh 18:28". John tells us it was *about the sixth hour;* that is, in the latter part of the interval between nine o'clock in the morning and twelve at noon: for the division of the day according to the Jews was in four parts; the first was from the rising of the sun till our nine in the morning, and was called the third hour; the other was from the third hour to the sixth, that is, twelve o'clock at noon; the third division was from their sixth hour to the ninth, that is, three o'clock with us in the afternoon; the fourth division was from the ninth hour to sunset, that is, with us six o'clock in the evening, when the sun is in the equinox. Now, not only the time when any of these hours came was called either the third or sixth hour, but the space of three hours allotted to each division was so called,

when the next division began: so the time of our Saviour's crucifixion is recorded by Mark to be *the third hour*; that is, the whole space from nine o'clock to twelve was not quite gone, though it was near at an end; and by the evangelist here it is said, that it was *about the sixth hour*, that is, near our twelve o'clock. And thus the different relations are clearly reconciled.

John 19:15

Ver. 15. The more Pilate sought to quiet them, the more they rage, contrary to all dictates of reason; when God hath determined a thing, all things shall concur to bring it about. Pilate mocks them when he saith, *Shall I crucify your King?* Yet so fierce was their malice against Christ, that to compel the governor to condemn him, (though there were not a people under heaven more zealous for their liberties, nor more impatient of a foreign yoke), they cry out, *We have no king but Caesar*; that is, the Roman emperor, who had conquered them.

John 19:16

Ver. 16. This must be at or about twelve of the clock, for that must be signified *by the sixth hour*, Joh 19:14. Pilate condemned him, and delivered him to the executioner, who (as the manner is in such cases) *led him away*.

John 19:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 27:31", and following verses to Mt 27:33, where whatsoever needs expounding in this verse may be found, and this text is reconciled to that, which telleth us, that one Simon, a man of Cyrene, bore his cross. Their places of execution (as usually with us) were without their cities.

John 19:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 27:38".

John 19:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 27:37".

John 19:20

Ver. 20. *The place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city;* as all their places of execution were, within two furlongs, or thereabouts.

It was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin; it was written in all three languages, that not the Jews only, but all such strangers as were come up to the feast, might understand it.

John 19:21

Ver. 21. The Jews thought it would be a disgrace to them, that Christ should be reported abroad as their king, therefore they desire an alteration of the writing.

John 19:22

Ver. 22. But Pilate refuseth to gratify them, and lets them know he would not be directed by them what to write, nor alter any thing of it.

John 19:23

Ver. 23. Both Matthew, Mt 27:35, and Mark, Mr 15:24, mention this parting of Christ's garments amongst them, which must be understood of his inward garments; which some tell us might easily be done, because their garments were made up of four parts. But his outward garment, which is called his coat, was all of a piece.

John 19:24

Ver. 24. This made them choose rather to cast lots for that, than to divide it, as they had done his inward garments. But there was something more in it than the soldiers knew; Christ hereby proved a true Antitype to David, who said of himself figuratively, Ps 22:18, *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;* by which he meant no more, than that his enemies loaded themselves with his spoils: those words which figuratively were true of David, proved literally true as to Christ. Thus vile and wicked men are fulfilling the Scriptures when they little think of it.

John 19:25

Ver. 25. These words *the wife* are not in the Greek, but supplied by our translators; which leaves it doubtful whether that Mary was the wife, or the mother, or the daughter of Cleophas.

John 19:26

Ver. 26. We have often heard that John was the beloved disciple, and usually expressed under the notion of him whom Jesus loved. Our Lord commendeth his mother to the care of John, whom he had ordered to take care of her, as if he had been her own son: this letteth us know that Joseph was at this time dead, otherwise it is not probable that Christ would have committed his mother to any other guardian.

John 19:27

Ver. 27. He also reciprocally commendeth his mother to John, to be cared for as his own mother. From that time Mary went home, and lived with John.

John 19:28

Ver. 28,29. David said, Ps 69:21, to signify his enemies multiplying

afflictions upon him, *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;* which he spake metaphorically. Part of these words were without a figure literally fulfilled in Christ, who was the Son of David; for he crying out upon the cross that he thirsted, there being no other liquor at hand, or this being set on purpose for this end, they dip a sponge in it, and give it to him to drink; whether to stupify his sense, or to prolong his life in those torments, or barely to quench his thirst, is hard to determine. It is probable that it was such a kind of refreshment as they allowed to ordinary malefactors in his circumstances, the particulars of which usage we are not able to determine.

John 19:30

Ver. 30. When Christ had tasted the vinegar, *he said, It is finished;* that is, I have now done and suffered all things which lay upon me in this life to do and suffer. Having said this, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* They are terms expressive of death, and our Saviour's free surrender of his soul unto his Father.

John 19:31

Ver. 31. *It was the preparation;* not to the passover, (for that was celebrated the night before), but to the weekly sabbath; and they judged according to the law, De 21:23, that the land would be defiled if the persons executed were not buried that day, but their bodies should remain on the tree all night, especially on the sabbath, which began immediately after sunset. And this sabbath was a more than ordinary sabbath, for it was not only the weekly sabbath, but also their second day of unleavened bread; which, and the last day, were both very solemn days, as may be seen, Le 23:1-44. This makes them come and beseech Pilate that the bodies might be taken down, and in order to it, *that their legs might be broken,* lest any life remaining in them they should revive and escape.

John 19:32

Ver. 32,33. They brake the two other malefactors' legs, but not Christ's, because they found him dead. It is very possible in a natural course, that of three men dying in the same manner, one may die sooner than another; but it is but rationally presumed, that the cause of our Saviour's quicker death, was not the failure of his spirits sooner, but his own voluntary surrender of his soul.

John 19:34

Ver. 34. *But one of the soldiers, to make sure of him, pierced his side, out of which it is said that there presently came forth blood and water.* That there should come out blood is no wonder, nor yet that there should come forth water. Blood being congealed, it is ordinary to see water on the top of the vessel where it is. And besides, anatomists tell us, that in the hollow part of the breast there are watery as well as bloody humours in the membrane that encompasses the heart, which being pierced, and the water let out, the living creature dieth necessarily. But yet in regard of the next words, *He that saw it bare record, and he knoweth that he saith true, &c.,* most divines think, that there was some mystery in this water and blood which came out of Christ's side pierced. Some would have the two sacraments of the gospel signifies by this water and blood. Christ is said to have come *by water and blood, 1Jo 5:6;* that is, say interpreters, he brought in a true expiation of sins by his blood, and the laver of regeneration, washing the soul from its filthiness: and thus be proved the true Antitype, answering the Jewish types in sacrifices and divers washings.

John 19:35

Ver. 35. Nor was this a fable, for John *saw it, and bare record,* and knew it to be true; and published it, that men might believe that it was him in whom all the legal types and figures had their completion.

John 19:36

Ver. 36. Now was there any thing of this but in fulfilling of the Scripture; for it was God's law about the passover, Ex 12:46 Nu 9:12, concerning the paschal lamb, (which was a type of Christ, Joh 1:29 1Co 5:7), that a bone of it should not be broken. So as by this breaking no bone of Christ's body, they might have understood that he was figured out by the paschal lamb.

John 19:37

Ver. 37. So also by seeing Christ's side pierced, (a thing not very usual), they might have understood, that he was the person mentioned, Zec 12:10.

John 19:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 27:57", and following verses to Mt 27:59.

John 19:39

Ver. 39. The history of Nicodemus coming by night to our Saviour, and of their discourse together, we had Joh 3:1-21. We again heard of him standing up for Christ in the sanhedrim, Joh 7:50. We read no more of him till now, where he shows his love to his dead body; bringing a hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes, which were both of them drugs used in embalming dead bodies, as also in perfuming other things, Ps 45:8.

John 19:40

Ver. 40. That is, persons of fashion.

John 19:41

Ver. 41. As all their gardens were out of the city, so also their burial places, which usually were vaults, or caves within the earth.

John 19:42

Ver. 42. There they immediately buried Christ, because the time strictly called the *preparation* (for the whole day was so called) was nigh at hand. See a fuller account of the history of our Saviour's passion, death, and burial: See Poole on "Mt 27:1", and following verse to Mt 27:66, where what is said by all the evangelists is compared together, and made one complete history.

John 20:1

Chapter Summary

Joh 20:1-10 Mary Magdalene, seeing the stone taken away from the sepulchre, runneth to tell Peter and John, who go thither, and find not the body.
Joh 20:11-18 Mary seeth two angels sitting in the sepulchre; Jesus himself appeareth to her.
Joh 20:19-23 He appeareth to his disciples.
Joh 20:24,25 The incredulity of Thomas.
Joh 20:26-29 Jesus appeareth again to the disciples, and satisfieth the doubts of Thomas; who confesseth him.
Joh 20:30,31 The sufficiency of what is written for a ground of salvation.

Chapter Introduction

The evangelist St. John giving a fuller account than the other evangelists of Christ's resurrection, and his converse upon the earth forty days, until he ascended up into heaven, we have in our notes on the other evangelists been shorter, reserving ourselves for a fuller account of it till we should come to these two last chapters of this evangelist.

Ver. 1. Matthew saith, *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week;* he also mentions another Mary in company with Mary Magdalene. Mark tells us that other *Mary was the mother of James and Salome.* Luke saith, *they came,* referring to the *women which came with him from Galilee,* Lu 23:55. For the time, Luke saith it was *upon the first day of the week;* Mark saith it was *when the sabbath was past;* our evangelist saith it was *when it was yet dark;* so that Matthew's $\omega\psi\epsilon \delta\epsilon \sigma\alpha\beta\beta\alpha\tau\omega\nu$, which we translate, *in the end of the sabbath,* must be interpreted by Mark, *when the sabbath was past;* and indeed Matthew plainly expounds himself, adding, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week;* which must be seven or eight hours after the Jewish sabbath was ended, for that ended with the setting of the sun the night before. The other evangelists tell us, that the design of their coming was to show their last act of love, in anointing or embalming the body of Jesus; for which purpose they had bought materials the night wherein he was crucified, but rested on the sabbath day, which ending about sunset, probably they slept some hours, and early in the morning, in the twilight, they come with their spices. Hence appears, that there is no contradiction at all between the four evangelists about the time of these women's coming to the sepulchre. Matthew saith it was about the dawning of the first day of the week; Mark saith it was when the sabbath was past; Luke saith it was upon the first day of the week; so saith John: which would make one admire that so many words should have been spent by divines in untying a knot here, where there is indeed none. Though John, in his history of our Saviour's burial, saith nothing of any stone rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre; yet Matthew doth; and of the Jews' sealing of it, and setting a watch, Mt 27:64-66. Mark (Mr 16:3) tells us also, that these women were thoughtful as they came, who should roll the stone away; and Matthew also tells us how it came rolled away, viz. by an angel. John saith nothing but that the stone was rolled away. So then the history runs thus: Early on the first day of the week an angel, in a glorious appearance, (described by Mark), cometh down, rolleth away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, and Christ ariseth: soon after, these women came with spices, and were thoughtful as they came who should roll away the stone; but when they came to the sepulchre they found that, as to that, their cares were needless, for the stone was rolled away to their hands.

John 20:2

Ver. 2. *Then she runneth;* that is, Mary Magdalene ran into the city to tell Peter; and that seemeth to be the reason why John mentions only her going to the sepulchre: but yet Luke (Lu 24:10) makes not Mary Magdalene only, but Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, the reporters of the news to the apostles; but possibly she was the most forward and first reporter of it. She came to the eleven, and told all these things to them, Lu 24:9, but possibly her chief discourse was with Simon Peter, and John, the beloved disciple: she complains to them that her Lord was removed out of the sepulchre, whither and by whom she knew not. But how did they know that? Mark saith, they entered into the sepulchre, Mr 16:5. Or if that were after, as it should seem by Joh 20:11 of this chapter; they guessed that the body was gone when they saw the stone rolled away, and the door open.

John 20:3

Ver. 3,4. Luke, Lu 24:12, mentions Peter's going only, upon Mary Magdalene's report; but he must be expounded by this evangelist, who expressly saith, that Peter and John went together, and that John outran Peter, and got first to the sepulchre.

John 20:5

Ver. 5. John stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and saw the linen clothes lying, but he would not adventure to go in.

John 20:6

Ver. 6,7. But Peter, who all along the Gospel appears to have been the boldest spirit, goeth into the cave, and seeth all the linen clothes lying there, and the napkin that was about his head lying by itself.

John 20:8

Ver. 8. John seeing Peter adventure in, adventures also, and seeth the same things, and believeth that Christ was risen from the dead; or (as some think) that, as the women had said, somebody had taken him away.

John 20:9

Ver. 9. That is, they did not fully understand those scriptures of the Old Testament, Ps 2:2 16:10 110:1-7, and the types of the Old Testament, by which Christ's resurrection was foretold and prefigured.

John 20:10

Ver. 10. Peter and John, when they had been within the sepulchre, and seen that the body was not there, went home; believing verily that what the women at first told them was true, that somebody had removed the body out of the sepulchre; whither, they knew not.

John 20:11

Ver. 11. That the Mary here mentioned was Mary Magdalene appeareth from Joh 20:14, compared with Mr 16:9, which saith, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

John 20:12

Ver. 12,13. The other evangelists differing in their accounts of this part of the history, have raised some questions here not easily to be resolved. Matthew reports thus, see Mt 28:2-9. Mark saith, see Mr 16:2-8. Mr 16:2 Where by *the rising of the sun* must not be understood its rising above the horizon; but after midnight, (as the learned Casaubon hath noted), when the sun and stars begin to ascend. Luke reports this part of the history thus, see Lu 24:1-12. Concerning the persons that went to the sepulchre, and the time of their going, here is (as we have showed) little difficulty in

reconciling the evangelists. The greatest difference seemeth to be about the angels that Mary saw; whether she saw two apparitions of angels, or but one, and one angel, or two; and concerning the time when she saw them, whether before or after that Peter and John had been in the sepulchre. Matthew saith, the stone was rolled away, and the angel sat upon the stone; this must be without the sepulchre. Mark saith, *they, entering into the sepulchre, saw* (an angel in the shape of) *a young man sitting, &c.* Luke and John speak of two angels; but seen in the sepulchre, not without it. There is no doubt but the apparition was of two angels; one of which might be seen without first, sitting upon the stone, to let the women know that he had rolled it away: both of them within, sitting one at the head, the other at the feet, of the place where the body of Jesus lay. But the greatest question is, Whether the woman saw the angels before that Peter and John had been at the sepulchre, or after? Some think that it was before, but it is no way probable; for it can hardly be thought but that if they had seen the angel at the first, they would have told the eleven of it, or Peter and John at least; nor would Mary have told Peter and John (as Joh 20:2) they had taken away her Lord, &c., for the angels told them he was risen. So that although by some of the others' relation, who say nothing of Peter and John's coming to the sepulchre, it seems as if the women saw the angel before their coming to satisfy themselves, yet indeed it was after. The women first came, saw the door open, the stone rolled away, &c. In a fright they ran back, and told it the disciples. Peter and John came to see, and being satisfied, return, leaving Mary still standing at the sepulchre weeping; then she stooping down and looking into the sepulchre, both saw the angel sitting on the stone, and also the two angels within the sepulchre, who fully revealed the resurrection to her.

John 20:14

Ver. 14. And presently Christ himself appeareth to her, though at first she did not know him.

John 20:15

Ver. 15. Either these words passed before the angels had told her that he

was risen, Mr 16:6 Lu 24:5,6; or (which is most probable) Mary was hard to believe what the angels had told her so lately; but coming out of the sepulchre, Christ appeareth to her, whom she knew not, but thought him to have been the person that had the charge of that garden where Christ was buried, and that he for his own convenience had removed the dead body; she therefore desires to know where he had disposed of it, having a mind to remove it to some honourable place of burial.

John 20:16

Ver. 16. Christ calleth her by name, making such a sound as he certainly knew she understood. She calleth him *Rabboni*, which is as much as to say: My Master.

John 20:17

Ver. 17. There are in this verse two no mean difficulties: the one about the sense of the prohibition, when our Saviour forbade this woman to touch him; when after his resurrection (Mt 28:9) he suffered the women to hold him by the feet, and himself (Joh 20:27) called Thomas to thrust his hand into the hole of his side. There are many opinions about it: the best seems to be the opinion of those who think that our Saviour saw Mary too fond, and too much in the embraces of her Lord, as if she thought he had been raised up to such a converse with them as he had before his death; and this error is all which he tasks her of, not forbidding her any kind of touching him, so far as to satisfy herself that he was truly risen from the dead, but restraining any such gross conception. The other difficulty, What force of a reason there could be for her not touching him because he had not yet ascended? is much solved by that answer to the former; reminding Mary that he was to ascend to his Father, though he had not yet ascended, and therefore not to be enjoyed by them with so much freedom and familiarity as before. But (saith he) go and tell *my brethren*, that is, my disciples; whom the apostle tells us he is not ashamed to call brethren, Heb 2:11,12; that *I ascend*, that is, I shall shortly ascend, *to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*: though I shall very suddenly leave them, yet I shall go but to my Father and my God, and to their Father and their God.

John 20:18

Ver. 18. This was that first appearance of our Lord after his resurrection to Mary Magdalene, after that he was risen from the dead, mentioned Mr 16:9,10, which she reported to the disciples; but Mark saith, they believed her not, Joh 20:11. Matthew tells us of another appearance of his, Mt 28:9, to the women as they went from the sepulchre, when they *held him by the feet, and worshipped him*. Luke tells us of a third appearance to the two disciples as they were going to Emmaus; which is also shortly touched by Mark, Mr 16:12,13; but it is there said that they believed them not. John mentions neither of these. These were all the same day that he rose, so was also the next, which is mentioned by our evangelist in the following verses.

John 20:19

Ver. 19. Luke expounds this verse, Lu 24:29, where the two disciples told Christ it was *towards evening, and the day was far spent*; for the Jews called the afternoon evening, as well as the time after sunset; and John tells us expressly, it was yet *the first day of the week*. This appearance is unquestionably the same mentioned in Luke, Lu 24:36. For it is said, the two disciples went immediately to Jerusalem, where they *found the eleven gathered together*, and discoursed of the Lord's appearance to them; and while they spake, Jesus came and *stood in the midst of them, and said unto them*, (as here), *Peace be unto you*. The disciples had shut the doors of the place where they met, *for fear of the Jews*. Here is a great question between the Lutherans and Calvinists, how Christ came in amongst them when the doors were shut? Whether he went through the doors remaining shut? Which the Lutherans stiffly maintain, as a strong proof of the possibility of the real presence of the body of Christ in, with, or under the elements of the Lord's supper; though we object, that this is to destroy the nature of Christ's body, and to assign him a body which indeed is no body, being not obvious to the sense, nor confined to a place; and which must pierce another body, which is contrary to the nature of a body according to our notion of bodies. The Lutherans object:

1. That here is a plain mention of the doors being shut.

2. No mention of the opening of them.
3. Nor of Christ's entrance upon opening any doors, windows, roof, or by any ordinary way, as men use to enter into houses.
4. Nor, had he so entered, would there have been any occasion for the disciples taking him for a *spirit*, as it is plain they did, Lu 24:37.

The Calvinists on the other side object,

1. That it is not said that he went through the doors.
2. That if he had gone through the doors, he would not presently have called to them to have seen him, and handled him; by which he evidenced that his body had such dimensions as our bodies have, and so could not go through a door shut.

In the Lutherans' reason, the fourth is only considerable, the three first have no force, because all circumstances of actions are not recorded in holy writ. Nor is there much force in the fourth, for the doors by his miraculous power opened and shut, and he showed himself in the midst of them, and used to them the usual salutation amongst the Jews, *Peace be unto you*.

John 20:20

Ver. 20. *He showed unto them his hands and his side;* Luke adds his feet too; those parts of his body where were the most undeniable marks of the death he had suffered upon the cross. Then to disciples, who gave little credit to what Mary Magdalene, and the other woman, and the two disciples going to Emmaus, had reported, believed; seeing the Lord, and being exceeding glad at this confirmation of their faith.

John 20:21

Ver. 21. *Peace be unto you;* the repeating of this salutation speaketh it

more than an ordinary compliment, or form of salutation. It signifieth his reconciliation to them, notwithstanding their error in forsaking him, and fleeing; it prepared their attention for the great things that he was now about to speak to them; it also signified, that he was about to preach the gospel of peace to all nations.

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; I have now fulfilled my ministry, and am now going to my Father who sent me: now by the same authority that I am sent, I send you, to gather, instruct, and govern my church; I send, or I will send, you clothed with the same authority with which I am clothed, and for the same ends in part for which I was sent.

John 20:22

Ver. 22. The apostles could not but be apprehensive how great a work their Lord had laid upon them, in sending them as his Father had sent him, to carry the gospel over the world; *Who* (said Paul afterward) *is sufficient for these things?* Our Lord therefore fortifies them with an earnest of that more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, which they afterward received in the days of Pentecost. They before this had received the Spirit as a Spirit of sanctification, and had received a power to work miracles. They did not till after this receive the gift of tongues, &c. But he here assures them of the presence of the Holy Spirit with them, in their more ordinary ministry, in instructing and governing the church. This conferring of the Spirit upon them he confirms to them by breathing, as an exterior sign or symbol. The name, *Spirit*, signifieth a breath; and it is said, that in the creation God *breathed into Adam the breath of life*. Christ breatheth into his apostles the Holy Spirit; thereby showing, that the Holy Spirit proceedeth, as from the Father, so also from him; as the breath of a man proceedeth from him. He also useth words, expounding his action in breathing, and carrying with them an authority, which being once spoken, the thing was done.

John 20:23

Ver. 23. Whether Mt 18:18 be a parallel text to this, I doubt: See Poole on "Mt 18:18". Our Lord here speaks of the sins of persons, *Whose soever sins remit*, &c.; he saith there, *Whatsoever ye shall bind or loose*. This text

hath caused a great deal of contest. All remission of sins is either authoritative; so it is most true, that none can forgive sin but God; and if we had no Scripture to prove it, yet reason will tell us none can discharge the debtor but the creditor, to whom the debt is owing: or else ministerial; thus he who is not the creditor (amongst men) may remit a debt by virtue of a letter of attorney made to him, authorizing him so to do. The question therefore amongst divines is, Whether Christ in this text hath given authority to his ministers actually to discharge men of the guilt of their sins; or only to declare unto them, that if their repentance and faith be true, their sins are really forgiven them? The former is by many contended for; but it doth not seem reasonable,

1. That God should entrust men with such a piece of his prerogative.
2. That God, who knoweth the falsehood of men's hearts, and the inability in the best ministers to judge of the truth of any man's faith or repentance, as also the passions to which they are subject, should give unto any of the sons of men an absolute power under him, and in his name, to discharge any from the guilt of sin; for certain it is, that without true repentance and faith in Christ no man hath his sins forgiven; so as no minister, that knoweth not the hearts of men, can possibly speak with any certainty to any man, saying, his sins are forgiven.

What knowledge the apostles might have by the Spirit of discerning, we cannot say. But certain it is, none hath any such certainty of knowledge now of the truth of any man, declaring his faith and true repentance; from whence it is to me apparent, that no man hath any further power from Christ, than to declare to them, that if indeed they truly believe and repent, their sins are really forgiven. Only the minister, being Christ's interpreter and ambassador, and better able to judge of true faith and repentance than others, (though not certainly and infallibly), such declarations from a faithful, able minister, are of more weight and authority than from others. And this is the most I can conceive should be in this matter; and that if by those words any further power be granted to the apostles, it was by reason of that power of *discerning of spirits*, 1Co 12:10, which ordinary ministers since the apostles' times, or in latter ages, cannot with any modesty pretend unto.

John 20:24

Ver. 24. Whether Thomas had ever, since they all forsook our Saviour in the garden and fled, returned again to a communion with the rest, or was absent through some occasion, is not said; but upon this some have started a question, Whether Thomas, being absent, received the Holy Ghost at this time as the rest did? Some think he did not, because of his unbelief. Some of the ancients think he did; for, Nu 11:26,27, when God gave out the Spirit to the seventy elders, Eldad and Medad, though absent, had their share of it, Nu 11:27. The matter is not much.

John 20:25

Ver. 25. It is not said what disciples, whether any of the apostles, or some others, told Thomas of this appearing of the Lord unto them. But Thomas eminently declareth his unbelief, which argues him as yet much ignorant of the Deity of Christ, and having given too little heed to what Christ had told them of his rising again the third day.

John 20:26

Ver. 26. *After eight days* signifieth here the eighth day from the resurrection, counting the day wherein Christ rose for one; as we call those third day agues which have but one day's intermission, and those quartan agues which have but two days' intermission; so it is said, Mr 8:31, *after three days he shall rise again*, that is, the third day. This appears the most probable sense of the phrase: the disciples beginning from Christ's resurrection to keep the first day of the week for the weekly sabbath, and having met on the resurrection day, met again that day seven night, hoping (probably) for such a presence of Christ with them in their meeting as they had before experienced; nor was their expectation vain. It appears also there, from Ac 20:7, and 1Co 16:2, that the Christians were wont ordinarily to meet together the first day of the week for religious exercises; which from Christ's resurrection, or institution, or both, is thought to be called *the Lord's day*, Re 1:10. Nor indeed do we read in all the Scripture of any congregation of Christians on the Jewish sabbath, but upon this day;

though, indeed, we find that the apostles (and possibly some other Christians) did meet together with the Jews in their synagogues on their sabbath; but we have not so much as one instance after the resurrection of any congregation, where Christians only were assembled upon the Jewish sabbath. Thomas at this time was with them. It is said again that Christ came and stood in the midst of them, *the doors being shut*: concerning which phrase, See Poole on "Joh 20:19".

John 20:27

Ver. 27. We had need take heed what we speak wherever we are. Christ had not after his resurrection so ordinary and frequent a converse with his disciples as before. This is the fifth time that we read of Christ's appearing to them since his resurrection. He knew what words of unbelief Thomas had uttered, and accordingly applies himself to him, in a wonderful condescension to his weakness; he bids him reach his finger, and his hands, and behold his hands, and thrust his hands into his side. So pitiful is our Lord, and compassionate towards the infirmities of his people.

John 20:28

Ver. 28. *My Lord*, to whom I wholly yield and give up my self; *and my God*, in whom I believe. It is observed, that this is the first time that in the Gospel the name of *God* is given to Christ; he was now by his resurrection *declared to be the Son of God with power*, Re 1:4. So as Thomas did not show more weakness and unbelief at the first, than he showed faith at last, being the first that acknowledged Christ as *God over all blessed for ever*, the object of people's faith and confidence, and his Lord, to whom he freely yielded up himself as a servant, to be guided and conducted by him.

John 20:29

Ver. 29. Thou believest that I am risen from the dead upon the testimony of thy senses; thou doest well in that: thou hast seen, thou hast felt me; but it is a more noble faith to believe without any such sensible evidence. Faith is properly an assent given to a proposition upon the testimony of

revelation, which if it be but human it is no more than a human faith; as we give credit to what our neighbours tell us, though we have not seen it with our own eyes, nor heard it with our ears immediately, nor had it made evident to any of our senses. If the revelation to which the assent is given be from God, we call the assent that is given to it a Divine faith; so that to give credit to a thing upon the evidence of sense, is properly no believing, otherwise than as sense confirms what we have before received by a Divine revelation. This is a sure rule, that by how much our faith stands in less need of an external evidence of sense, the stronger it is.

John 20:30

Ver. 30. This passage plainly refers to whatsoever signs we read of in any part of St. John's Gospel; and lets us know, that the evangelist could have added abundance more to the history of the miracles which Christ wrought upon the earth.

John 20:31

Ver. 31. But he had wrote these to induce his readers to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; a thing of so great concernment to them, that their eternal life depended upon it; for through his name alone eternal life is to be obtained, Ac 4:12.

John 21:1

Chapter Summary

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <u>Joh 21:1-11</u> | Christ appeareth to his disciples at the sea of |
| | Tiberias, and maketh himself known by a great draught of fishes. |
| <u>Joh 21:12-14</u> | He eateth before them. |
| <u>Joh 21:15-23</u> | He thrice repeateth his charge to Peter to feed his flock; foretells the manner of his |

death; and

rebuketh his curiosity concerning

John.

Joh 21:24,25 John asserts the truth of his testimony, and that

Jesus did many acts besides, too numerous to be

recorded.

Ver. 1. After three several appearances of Christ to his disciples, which hitherto were all of them in Jerusalem, Christ showed himself again to them in Galilee, whither he had ordered his disciples to go, promising there to meet them, Mt 26:32 Mr 16:7. Here the occasion and circumstances of this his third appearance are related by St. John.

John 21:2

Ver. 2. All the disciples were either there in several places, or going thither, according to Christ's direction before mentioned: but either these seven were there before the rest; or else they lodged together, or near one another; so as these only are here mentioned as being together at this time, and so witnesses of this miracle which followeth.

John 21:3

Ver. 3. Peter and divers others were fishermen, as we have formerly heard, and had boats which they so employed. Though they were called to the work of the ministry, yet, churches not yet being gathered and constituted able to maintain them, they did not judge it unlawful to employ themselves in honest vocations, which might bring in something of a livelihood; no more did Paul afterward. The others resolve to go with Peter. They went, but *that night caught nothing*; the providence of God so ordering it, that Christ's Divine power might be seen in commanding fish into their nets.

John 21:4

Ver. 4. Probably their distance from him was the cause that they did not know him, though they had seen him once and again since his resurrection from the dead: others think, that by the providence of God *their eyes were holden that they should not know him*, as Lu 24:16.

John 21:5

Ver. 5. He asketh them if they had any thing to eat, not because he knew not, but in order to what he intended to do to make them more attentive to the miracle which he by and by intended to work.

John 21:6

Ver. 6. Though they had before laboured in vain, yet their Master's command encourages them to go to work again; then they take a multitude of fishes; a presage, say some, of that great success which the apostles should have in their fishing for men.

John 21:7

Ver. 7. There is a great dispute amongst critical writers what this *fisher's coat* was; whether a loose coat, or the garment next his skin, or a fisherman's slop. It is a point not worth the disputing: it was some garment that might modestly cover him when he came to Jesus, and yet not hinder him in his swimming.

John 21:8

Ver. 8. The other disciples came in a little fishing boat, dragging the net with fishes; probably, because it was too heavy to be lifted up into the boat.

John 21:9

Ver. 9. As to the question whence this fish came, there are three opinions: some think that our Saviour caught it out of the sea without a net, or by his power commanded it to come to his service; others think that the history is transposed, and this verse should in its true order come after the eleventh; but it is most probable that Christ by his Divine power created the fish, as well as the coals and the bread.

John 21:10

Ver. 10,11. In this one miracle there is a complication of miracles.

1. That having fished all night and caught nothing, they should at Christ's command throw out the net on the side of the ship next the shore, and so most unlikely to have plenty of fish, and catch so many.
2. That before their fish could be brought on shore, they should see a fish broiling on coals, and bread lying by.
3. That notwithstanding the multitude of fish, the net should not be broken.

John 21:12

Ver. 12. It was in the morning, and may as well be translated, Come and break your fasts, as *Come and dine*. They now knew it was the Lord, if not by his face and voice, yet by this miracle; therefore they durst not ask him, for fear of a sharp reproof, after he had by such a miraculous operation made himself known to them.

John 21:13

Ver. 13. Those who question whether our Saviour himself did eat, seem not to consider what is written Ac 10:41, where it is expressly said, *he did eat and drink with them after he rose from the dead*; which he doubtless did, to show that he was truly risen from the dead, and his seeming body was not a phantasm, and mere apparition of a body, but the same true body

which was crucified, though now more glorious, and not clothed with those infirmities which it had before his death; from whence it only followeth, that he did not eat to satisfy his hunger, but only to confirm the truth of his resurrection. He did before this eat with some of them, Lu 24:30.

John 21:14

Ver. 14. *The third time*; that is, the third day, for upon his resurrection day he showed himself,

1. To Mary Magdalene, Joh 20:14.
2. To the two disciples going to Emmaus, Lu 24:15,31.
3. To the women going to tell his disciples, Mt 28:9.
4. In the evening to his disciples, met, Joh 20:19.

All these are by John counted for one time, because they were upon one and the same day. That day seven night he appeared to them again, Joh 20:26. After this *at the sea of Tiberias*, mentioned in this chapter.

John 21:15

Ver. 15. *Lovest thou me more than these?* More than the rest of my disciples love me? For so Peter had professed, when he told our Saviour, Mt 26:33, *Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended*. Peter now having by his temptation learned more humility and modesty, doth not reply, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee more than these; he only avers the truth and sincerity, not the degree of his love. Christ replies,

Feed my lambs: by which he understands his people, his church; not the pastors of it, (as if Christ by this had made Peter the chief pastor over the rest of the apostles), but the community. The papists from this text argue for Peter's primacy and authority over his fellow apostles, as well as over the members of the church. But Christ said not to Peter only, but to all the rest of the eleven, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15, Go ye, preach the gospel to all nations; and it was to the rest as well as to Peter that he said, Joh 20:23,

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted. So as it is apparent, whether feeding only signifies instructing, or feeding by doctrine, or (as most judge) comprehends government, and signifies that universal charge which ministers have over the church, the same power which Peter had was also committed to the other disciples.

John 21:16

Ver. 16,17. Divines here raise a question, why our Saviour propounds this question thrice to Peter. The most of the ancients agree, that it was because Peter had thrice denied him. Some say, it was to show his great love to his church, which he could not commit to Peter but after three inquiries if he truly loved him, who was the Lord of it. Others refer it to the three ways by which good pastors ought to feed the church; prayer, preaching, and a holy life. Others think, that it hath reference to the three flocks that Peter was to feed; the Jews in Judea, the Gentiles, the dispersed amongst the Gentiles.

John 21:18

Ver. 18,19. Joh 21:19 gives us the general scope of Joh 21:15, viz. that it was a prediction of that particular death by which Peter should die, which was (if we may believe what the ancients have generally reported, and we can have no other proof) by crucifying; in which kind of death the hands of the person crucified are stretched out and nailed to the cross. But which way he died we cannot certainly affirm. The evangelist assures us, that our Saviour spake these words with reference to that kind of death by which Peter as a martyr was to glorify God; nor is it any objection against his martyrdom, that our Saviour here saith, that he should be carried whither he would not; for he was not better than his Lord, whose spirit was willing, and flesh weak. Whether our Saviour by his command, *Follow me*, intended the imitation of him, his death, or the particular kind of his death, is uncertain; unless we will allow this text to be interpreted by Joh 13:36 2Pe 1:14.

John 21:20

Ver. 20. That is, he saw John, whom we have often before heard so described.

John 21:21

Ver. 21. *Do* is not in the Greek, nor possibly is so properly added: the sense is, What shall become of this man? What shall be his fate? What shall he suffer?

John 21:22

Ver. 22. Our Lord only checks the curiosity of Peter, and minds him to attend things which himself was concerned in; telling him, he was not concerned what became of John, whether he should die, or abide upon the earth until Christ's second coming: it was Peter's concern, without regarding what others did, or what became of them, himself to execute his Master's command, and follow his example.

John 21:23

Ver. 23. But the disciples, knowing the particular kindness our Saviour had for John, upon these words, not duly attended to, concluded John should abide upon the earth to the second coming of Christ.

John 21:24

Ver. 24. John, who wrote this Gospel, was that disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on our Saviour's breast at supper, and inquired who should betray Christ; of whom Peter spake, Joh 21:21, and who testifieth these things, both concerning Peter, and concerning himself, and the church: the ancient church knew his testimony was true.

John 21:25

Ver. 25. But none must imagine that all Christ's sermons, or miracles, are recorded in this book, or in any of the other Gospels; the world would have been too much filled with books, if all spoke or done by our Saviour had been written. There is so much written as it pleased God we should know, or was necessary for us to know for the true ends of such revelation; to beget and increase faith in us, and to promote and direct holiness.

Acts 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

This book hath been held by all Christians to be canonical, and esteemed, though amongst the hardest, yet amongst the brightest jewels that shine in the word of God. It is a history concerning the church of Christ in its infancy, and shows God's wonderful care for it, and powerful providence over it. It begins where the Gospel ends, which the same author (St. Luke) had wrote; and is of great use to prevent and confute all feigned stories concerning the lives and doctrine of the holy apostles. St. Luke having accompanied St. Paul, and having been an eye witness, and an ear witness, was certainly the fittest to record what that great apostle did and said; and if most of this book be taken up concerning him, it is because (speaking of the rest of the apostles, 1Co 15:10) he *laboured more than they all*. In this book there is an account of many sermons, preached by the apostles and apostolical men, upon the most necessary parts of our holy religion, as the death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Saviour; of God's mercy through him, and of the life to come, &c.; and withal, how holy men lived answerably to their profession and hope. Who, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us, and tell us, (what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero), *Si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos*; If ye shall do as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then ye shall be (glorious and happy) as we are.

Chapter Summary

Ac 21:1-9 Christ, after his resurrection, having given instructions to his apostles, and commanded them to wait in Jerusalem the coming of the Holy Ghost, ascendeth into heaven in their sight.

Ac 21:10,11 Two angels warn them to depart, and to look for his second coming.

Ac 21:12-14 They return, and give themselves unto prayer.

Ac 21:15-26 Peter exhorting to fill up the place of the traitor Judas, Matthias is chosen by lot to be an apostle.

Ver. 1. *The former treatise have I made;* this refers unto the Gospel wrote

by this evangelist, St. Luke, who was undoubtedly the penman of this book, which bears testimony unto and confirms (if need were) that other.

Theophilus; esteemed the same name with Jedidiah, signifying beloved of God, or one that loved God. Who he was is not certain; some have taken the name appellatively. It is evident by the epithet given unto him, Lu 1:3, that he was one of great authority, having the same title which Tertullus gives unto Festus, Ac 24:3, and the chief captain unto Felix, Ac 23:26. Although *not many noble are called*, 1Co 1:26, yet God extends his grace unto some of all conditions.

Of all that Jesus began both to do and teach; this is the sum of the Gospel, viz. a history of the life, doctrine, and death of our blessed Saviour; although every particular word or deed of our Saviour's could not be expressed, Joh 21:25, yet the evangelist was faithful in withholding nothing which was necessary for the church to know, and leaving no room for unwritten traditions.

Acts 1:2

Ver. 2. *The day in which he was taken up*; that is, the day of his ascension. This is a translation from the former book (his Gospel) unto this, showing how far he had proceeded in setting down the doctrine of our salvation.

After that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen; which words may be referred, either to the commandments he gave, or the choice he made of the apostles; both being by the Holy Ghost. The apostles had their doctrine from God, and were appointed to publish it by God; especially to publish the gospel to the whole world, Mt 28:19; and to continue at Jerusalem till the coming of the Holy Ghost, Lu 24:49.

Acts 1:3

Ver. 3. *To whom*, i.e. the apostles, *he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs*; eating, drinking, speaking, walking with them; nay, showing them his very wounds, and permitting them to be

touched; God suffering Thomas's infidelity to contribute to the strengthening of our faith.

Being seen of them forty days; not continually, but upon occasion as he pleased; it was so long from his resurrection to his ascension; and the same space in which God showed himself unto Moses in Mount Sinai. So long also he was pleased to stay with them, that he might more abundantly testify the truth of his humanity, and of his resurrection.

And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; either his kingdom in heaven, the church triumphant or his kingdom on earth, the church militant; what future bliss and happiness he was going to prepare, and what means they ought to use towards the obtaining of it.

Acts 1:4

Ver. 4. *And being assembled together with them;* by his order, or conversing frequently with them, as those that table together.

Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem: otherwise the apostles would have abhorred Jerusalem, as reeking afresh in the blood of our Lord. And there Christ chose to pour out his Spirit, that he might show forth his glory in the same place where he suffered ignominy: there Christ would have his apostles to abide, that they might be closer to Mount Olivet, from whence he was to ascend; as also that both his ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, might more publicly be manifest; and that that prophecy, Isa 2:3, might be fulfilled.

The promise of the Father; of my Father, Lu 24:49; that is, the Holy Spirit, promised by our Saviour in his Father's name, Joh 14:26; and may well be called *the promise*, without which all other promises would be of no value unto us.

Acts 1:5

Ver. 5. *For John truly baptized with water,* Mt 3:11; water being of a purifying nature, plentiful, and easy to come by.

But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; his gifts and graces, which were (as water on baptized persons) largely bestowed upon them on the day of Pentecost:

1. That the apostles and all others might be assured of the doctrine of the Gospel.
2. That they might be enabled to fulfil their ministry, and obey our Saviour's commands left with them. Not many days hence; it was but ten days after his ascension; but our Saviour would not prefix a certain day, that they might watch every day.

Acts 1:6

Ver. 6. *When they therefore were come together; either the one hundred and twenty, mentioned Ac 1:15, or the five hundred, mentioned 1Co 15:6.*

That they might more readily obtain an answer, they join in the question, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Which was taken away by the Romans, and by Herod, and they expected should be restored to them by the Messiah; understanding the prophecy, Da 7:27, to this purpose.

Acts 1:7

Ver. 7. Our Saviour blames their curiosity about such things as are not necessary to be known; and yet though our Saviour does not in his answer tell them what they desired to know, he tells them what is more expedient for them to know. The petition of wicked men, nay, of devils, (as when they crave to go into the swine), is sometimes granted according to their will. But the prayer of the disciples of Christ is answered to their best advantage, though it does not seem to agree to the matter of their desire.

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons; how long any mercy shall be deferred; when it shall be given.

The Father; who is fons et origo Deitatis; to whom Christ, especially as Mediator, and in our stead, refers all things.

Acts 1:8

Ver. 8. *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; not till then, not of their own strength, but of God's grace, as appeared by Peter's denying and the others leaving of our Saviour.*

And ye shall be witnesses unto me, that I am indeed the promised Messiah; and of my doctrine, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, which ye shall testify to all the world by your preaching and holy living, working miracles.

Both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria; places where your testimony shall be most opposed. These words are both a command, to tell the apostles what they ought to do, and a prediction of what they should be enabled to do.

Acts 1:9

Ver. 9. Mr 16:19 Lu 24:51. *As he did not actually give up his life till all was fulfilled, so he did not leave the world till all was revealed by him that was necessary for us.*

While they beheld; that they might be eye witnesses, and most unexceptionable.

He was taken up; not by an external help of angels, but by his own power, and the agility of his now glorious body.

And a cloud received him out of their sight: this, though a true cloud, yet was a more than ordinarily glorious one, suitable to the majesty of him that used it.

Acts 1:10

Ver. 10. Christ's ascent was the more leisurely, that he might delight their eyes and mind; but especially confirm their faith the more.

Behold, two men stood by them, angels in the shape of men, in white apparel; which angels ordinarily appeared in, to show they retained their native purity, as also to represent the joyfulness of the errand they were usually sent upon.

Acts 1:11

Ver. 11. *Which also said;* the two angels (in the form of men) before mentioned.

Ye men of Galilee; that is, the apostles, who were of that country.

Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? They are roused out of the ecstasy they were in at that glorious sight, to learn what was so much to their and our advantage. Shall so come:

1. Visibly.
2. In a cloud.
3. By his own power.
4. With the like majesty.
5. With the same soul and body.

Acts 1:12

Ver. 12. *From the mount called Olivet,* which Bethany was a part of, as situate towards the bottom of it, remoter from Jerusalem. Hence Lu 24:50, differs not from this place. From hence the rather our Lord ascended, that he might receive his glory nigh the place where he began his suffering, (in the garden where he endured his agony, and was betrayed), and in the view of Jerusalem, where he had been condemned and scorned.

A sabbath day's journey; about a mile or two, or such a space as, by

God's appointment, was between the ark and the people, Jos 3:4.

Acts 1:13

Ver. 13. *And when they were come in, to the city, and to the house, they went up into an upper room;* the same probably where they had kept the passover, and partook of the Lord's supper; howsoever, for its largeness capable to receive so many.

Peter, as elder, and first called to the apostleship, is generally first named; and here especially his name is put first, and their names are repeated, to show, that though they fell in forsaking of Christ, they did rise again in professing of him; and that, notwithstanding their apostasy, they were continued after their recovery in their former office and dignity.

Acts 1:14

Ver. 14. *These all continued with one accord,* with great resolution, notwithstanding all opposition and contradiction they met with, *in prayer and supplication,* for mercies they wanted, or preventing of the evils they feared.

The women; their wives, or such women especially as we read of Mt 27:55,56.

His brethren; that is, his relations and kinsmen, which frequently in Scripture are called brethren.

Acts 1:15

Ver. 15. *In those days,* between our Saviour's ascension and Pentecost.

Peter, as generally, spake for and amongst the apostles; but now especially, to express his zeal and faithfulness to our Saviour, whom he had so lately denied, he being also designed the minister of the circumcision, which place he began now to execute.

The number of the names, or persons, together were about an hundred and twenty; probably Christ had converted many men, but these might be either men of name or quality, or meant of such as, Ac 1:21, had accompanied with Christ and his apostles, and were designed for the ministry.

Acts 1:16

Ver. 16. *Men and brethren,* an ordinary compellation; speaker and auditors were Hebrews of the Hebrews.

This Scripture, viz. Ps 41:9, must need, have been fulfilled; yet God's foreknowledge and prediction excused not Judas's sin.

Which was guide to them that took Jesus; not only leading them in the way when they took our Saviour, but being director of their counsels against him. This the apostle premises to abate the offence that the horrible fall of Judas might have occasioned.

Acts 1:17

Ver. 17. *Numbered with us;* being one of the twelve apostles.

Had obtained, ελαχε; not as if Judas was made an apostle by lot, as Matthias afterwards; but by the providence of God, by which every lot and casual matter is governed: and to show that the dignity did not befall him, or any of the other apostles, because of their descent, (from Aaron), or from nature, or from any desert whatsoever, but merely from God's good will and pleasure.

Part of this ministry; then the apostles office is ministerial, and they were not lords over God's heritage.

Acts 1:18

Ver. 18. *Purchased a field;* which Judas might have agreed for at that price, and yet the chief priests bought, (as Mt 27:7), by a strange providence, leading of them to that purchase; howsoever, eventually he bought it, as throwing back to them their money which paid for it, Mt 27:5.

Falling headlong, he burst asunder; it is said he hanged himself, which implying only his death by suffocation, whether he died out of horror of his fact, or laying violent hands on himself in such circumstances as may agree with this relation, it is not material to determine.

Acts 1:19

Ver. 19. *Their proper tongue;* the Syriac language then in use after the Babylonish captivity.

The field of blood; as bought with the price of Christ's blood, and sprinkled with his own blood.

Acts 1:20

Ver. 20. *For it is written in the book of Psalms;* viz. Ps 69:25. What there is in general spoken by David concerning his enemies, is here applied particularly to Judas, who betrayed our Saviour; whose type David was, as Doeg was of Judas.

His bishopric; his charge or office, or prefecture, as of a shepherd over his flock.

Acts 1:21

Ver. 21. There were to be twelve apostles in the Christian church, to answer unto the twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes in the Jewish church.

Companied with us, in ordinary conversation, *Went in and out among us;* in discharge of his ministry, and gathering of disciples among us.

Acts 1:22

Ver. 22. *Beginning from the baptism of John;* when Christ was baptized by him, and by that consecration began the ministry, and publishing of the gospel (which the history of his immaculate conception did preface to).

A witness with us of his resurrection; all other things being consummated in that, it being the most difficult to be believed; and therefore God was pleased to attest it by so many eye witnesses.

Acts 1:23

Ver. 23. *Joseph,* or *Joses,* the same name called *Barsabas* in their common tongue, and *Justus* (probably for his integrity) amongst the Romans, who then ruled over them. *Matthias;* some think the same with Nathanael.

Acts 1:24

Ver. 24. The other apostles being chosen by God immediately, it was necessary that he who was to act in the same office, should be chosen after the same manner.

Knowest the heart, which is God's prerogative only; all others may be, and often are, mistaken by outward appearances.

Acts 1:25

Ver. 25. *Ministry and apostleship,* κληρον, or every one's station in the world, is ordered by the providence of God, and their part or portion is assigned to them; and so the apostleship was unto the apostles.

His own place; hell, or destruction, not intended by Judas, but righteously by God appointed for him: whilst he was in the world (especially after his betraying of our Saviour) he was a usurper in it; and as bad as the world

was, it was too good for him. That these words should be understood of Matthias's succeeding to the apostleship of Judas as into his own place, is the less probable, because as yet he was not chosen into it.

Acts 1:26

Ver. 26. *They gave forth their lots;* the manner is not so certain, nor necessary to be known; but the whole disposing of the lot being from the Lord, as Pr 16:33, they were thus as it were immediately chosen by God, and were consecrated by Christ himself; no apostle ordaining another, but all of them being called and ordained by Christ.

He was numbered with the eleven apostles; the rest of the apostles, and the whole church, agreeing with that Divine choice which was made.

Acts 2:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 2:1-13 The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost: they speak divers languages, to the general amazement, but some deride them.

Ac 2:14-36 Peter shows that the inspiration spoken of by Joel was now fulfilled; that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was now risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, according to David's predictions, and had shed forth the promise of the Holy Spirit in full proof of his being the Messiah.

Ac 2:37-40 A great number are converted by Peter's preaching,

Ac 2:41-47 who, being baptized, converse devoutly and charitably

together, the apostles working many miracles, and God daily increasing the church.

Ver. 1. Pentecost; this feast was fifty days after the feast of unleavened bread, or passover, as Le 23:16, whence it had its name, and was called *the feast of weeks*, Ex 34:22, because it was to be observed seven weeks after the feast of unleavened bread, De 16:9. It was the feast of *the first fruit of wheat harvest*, Ex 34:22; and on this day (to answer the type) the Spirit was poured out in such a plentiful manner, as the first fruits of Christ's ascending into heaven: besides, the law was given on this day, Ex 19:1,11, and it was expedient that the gospel (Christ's law) should be published on the same day: and it being on the first day of the week, it did recommend and honour the Lord's day, as our Saviour had before by his resurrection on that day.

With one accord; as if they had but one mind, as sent in so many bodies.

In one place; probably that mentioned Ac 1:13.

Acts 2:2

Ver. 2. Suddenly, the apostles themselves not expecting it, *there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind;* to prepare them to attend the more unto what they should hear and see afterwards; also to signify the unexpected and powerful progress which the gospel should have: it may be, to cause the greater concourse to that place, it being a usual manner; and God would make this miracle more public.

It filled all the house; to show that the Spirit should be bestowed on them that were met there, and on all the church throughout the world.

Acts 2:3

Ver. 3. Cloven tongues; to signify the variety of languages which the apostles should be enabled to speak, to qualify them to preach the gospel unto all nations, and to remove the obstacle which the confusion of

tongues caused.

Like as of fire; which represented,

1. The light that the apostles should impart;
2. The fervent heat and zeal which they should be endowed with;
3. The gospel's spreading in the world, and carrying all before it, prevailing over all errors;
4. The purity and holiness which they and all that preach the gospel ought to appear withal.

And it sat upon each of them; remained, as far as was necessary for the founding of the Christian religion; and was not, as the gift of prophecy, bestowed only occasionally, as on Nathan, Samuel.

Acts 2:4

Ver. 4. *Filled with the Holy Ghost;* those gifts and graces which proceeded from him; the apostles having them all in a more excellent manner than formerly, and the gift of tongues superadded.

With other tongues, than what were vernacular or natural to them.

As the Spirit gave them utterance; ἀποφθεγγεσθαι, signifies more than barely to speak, implying they speak each language in its perfection, after an excellent, eloquent, and powerful manner, as from the Holy Ghost, whose works are perfect; *non vox hominem sonat.*

Acts 2:5

Ver. 5. Not only constant inhabitants, but such as had on occasion their lodgings there; partly out of a constant respect, which both Jews and proselytes had for that place, (for the temple and their worship sake; it being also a place for learning and education, as appears by the colleges

and synagogues mentioned, Ac 6:9), but especially now the concourse from all parts must needs have been very great, it being one of those times in which all the males were to appear before God: to which might be added, the great expectation they had of the Messiah made them to omit no occasion of inquiring concerning him, the prophecies concerning the time of his coming being fulfilled, and they could not be ignorant of the many and great things concerning the true Messiah.

Out of every nation under heaven; whither the Jews had been dispersed in the two or three greater or other lesser dispersions. Thus in part was fulfilled what was prophesied, Isa 43:5.

Acts 2:6

Ver. 6. *Noised abroad;* either the miraculous winds were heard, or the report of what had happened was spread abroad.

Were confounded; either out of shame that they had slain Christ, whom God thus extraordinarily glorified; or out of admiration at so extraordinary a matter.

Every man heard them speak in his own language; probably, not that the same words spoken by the apostles were diversified according to every one's understanding, for then the miracle had been wrought in their auditors, and not in the apostles; but that the apostles did speak to every one in their proper and most intelligible language: and this was the gift of tongues, which for some time after also was continued in the church.

Acts 2:7

Ver. 7. Without literature, or good education, they being worse thought of on that account than the ordinary sort of that nation were; besides, they thought no prophet was to be expected from Galilee, Joh 1:46.

Acts 2:8

Ver. 8. Διαλεκτος signifies commonly a different way of speaking, or pronouncing in the same language; as our southern, and northern men differ in some words and pronunciation, though speaking both the English tongue. God's works being most perfect, the apostles might speak, not only the same language which all understood, but in the same idiom and propriety of speech which agreed to every one best.

Acts 2:9

Ver. 9. *Elamites*; descended from Elam, Ge 10:22, thought to be the Persians.

Mesopotamia; between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates.

Judea; the apostles being Galileans, spake a distinct dialect from the rest of the Jews, till now enabled to speak as they did.

Asia; some particular district, at that time especially so called, as 1Pe 1:1; otherwise the places before named are in Asia in a larger sense.

Acts 2:10

Ver. 10. *Strangers of Rome*, who came either to Jerusalem to worship, or for any other business. It is evident that many in or about the city of Rome had embraced the Jewish religion; and of them it may be understood.

Jews: the others, mentioned Ac 2:9, were such as then dwelt in Judea; these were such as lived elsewhere, only now came to worship or sojourn there.

Proselytes; these were of two sorts: the one, such as came over from paganism unto the Jewish religion, and were bound only to observe the precepts of Noah, and enjoyed a liberty to buy and sell, live and converse, amongst the Jews: hence they were called *proselytes of the gate*. The other were called *proselytes of righteousness*; for these were circumcised, and took upon them the observation of the whole law of Moses, and had all the privileges belonging to the people of God.

Acts 2:11

Ver. 11. *Cretes*; such as belonged to the island of Crete, now called Candia.

The wonderful works of God; those things which God had wonderfully wrought, especially the resurrection of our blessed Saviour from the dead, which was a most wonderful work, and the main argument whereby the world was converted, and unto which the apostles bare witness.

Acts 2:12

Ver. 12. *They were all amazed*; so Ac 2:7; ἐξίσταντο, they were as in an ecstasy, (the object was too strong for the faculty), they could not fathom the cause or reason of these wonderful things; and therefore they desire one of another to be resolved concerning them.

Acts 2:13

Ver. 13. *Others*; viz. the scribes and Pharisees, and also the inhabitants of Jewry and Jerusalem; who not understanding the languages of other nations, might think the apostles did but babble, and talk idly or rudely, when they spake with other tongues.

New wine, or sweet wine; which done, may inebriate; and might be had at that time, though the full vintage was not yet.

Acts 2:14

Ver. 14. *Peter standing up*; it speaks his extraordinary courage; after his stumbling and fall, he runs the faster, being recovered; and begins to verify his name which our Lord had given him, showing himself as firm and stedfast as a rock.

With the eleven; the other apostles, probably, spake too in divers languages; but by reason of the shortness of St. Luke's intended narrative, and it being to the same purpose, their sermons are omitted.

Men of Judea; such as came from other parts of the country.

Ye that dwell at Jerusalem; such as were constant inhabitants in that city.

Acts 2:15

Ver. 15. *For these;* this proves that the other apostles spake as well as Peter, and were vindicated by him.

Are not drunken; he mildly and solidly confutes their calumny.

The third hour of the day, which answers to our nine o'clock in the morning, and was the ordinary time for their morning sacrifice and prayer, before which time they did not eat or drink any thing; nay, it is thought on festival days it was usual with them not to eat or drink until the sixth hour, that is, noon time, that they might be more intent upon and fit for the service of the day. How little soever (to our shame) such an argument would be of proof now, it was in their more sober times very conclusive.

Acts 2:16

Ver. 16. God does ordinarily, before that he sends his judgments, and does his *strange work*, endeavour to reclaim them by mercies: not only Joel, but Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and others, prophesied before the destruction of that people and country by Nebuchadnezzar; but now, before the final and total ruin, God sent greater and more than these, and endued them with a greater measure of the Spirit, clearer and fuller light to forewarn them of and deliver them from wrath to come.

Acts 2:17

Ver. 17. *In the last days;* in the time of the Messiah, called the *last days*

frequently, 2Ti 3:1 Heb 1:2 2Pe 3:3; as also called *the last time*, 1Pe 1:5 1Jo 2:18 Jude 1:18; because we are now under the last and most perfect dispensation of the things of God, and no other is to be looked for until the consummation of all things.

I will pour out of my Spirit; before the Spirit was given in lesser measures, and comparatively but by drops, *here a little, and there a little*; now more largely, even to overflow.

Upon all flesh; all sorts of men, as well Gentiles as Jews, contrary unto their proud conceit, that God dwelt in none out of the land of Israel.

Daughters shall prophesy; fulfilled in Anna the prophetess, Lu 2:36, and in the four daughters of Philip, Lu 21:9.

Visions; these were formerly either representations more inward to their mind, as Isaiah's and Jeremiah's were; or more outward, to their bodily eye, as Belshazzar's was, Da 5:5, and such as Peter had, Ac 10:11.

Dreams; by dreams God sometimes manifested his will, as to Joseph; but this is by St. Peter accommodated to the gospel times. The prophets spake suitably to them unto whom they preached; and the apostle rightly understands by these expressions, the manifold and more clear revelation of the will of God in Christ.

Acts 2:18

Ver. 18. *On my servants and on my handmaidens*; to show what all ought to be, that hope to receive any benefit or comfort from the promises of God, either in the law or gospel, the Old or New Testament; viz. such as seek and serve God; but to the disobedient and unbelieving there is not a comfortable word in all the book of God. Some read without the pronoun, on servants and handmaids; to show that God doth not despise men of the lowest rank and condition in the world, but that the promise of the Spirit is made unto them also.

Acts 2:19

Ver. 19. As St Peter had declared the promises unto such as would be drawn by the cords of love; so here, on the other side, he useth threatenings, and declares the terrors of the Lord, if so that they will be persuaded. These *wonders* were such as did precede the destruction of Jerusalem, or shall forerun the destruction of the whole world.

Acts 2:20

Ver. 20. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood;* this agrees with the other words in the forecited prophecy, Joe 2:31. How these amazing signs shall be fulfilled, whether literally, and by what means; or whether only that the consternation and dread upon men shall be so great, as expecting the change of the whole frame of nature, is not so material for us to know, as it is to be always prepared for it.

Great and notable day; επιφανη, manifest and illustrious day; and it may be taken in a comfortable sense, and will be a comfortable day indeed, to all that preparedly wait for it; for it is the *day of the Lord*, it is Christ's day, in which he will be magnified over his enemies, and in his friends, children, and servants.

Acts 2:21

Ver. 21. That he may prepare thus a people for the Lord, the apostle shows by what means they and we may escape. Pray in faith unto him. The name is that whereby any one is known; and the Lord's name is his attributes, goodness, power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe, Pr 18:10.

Acts 2:22

Ver. 22. *Jesus of Nazareth;* for so Pilate had called our Saviour through

contempt, in his superscription on the cross: and that they might certainly know of whom he spake, and that he was not now (as formerly) ashamed to own him, he mentions our Saviour under that name here.

Approved; demonstrated, and beyond any contradiction proved, to be the Messiah: for this was that great truth St. Peter preached upon, that Christ, whom Pilate had condemned, and called Jesus of Nazareth, was indeed the Son of God, and the true Messiah.

Miracles and wonders and signs; the critical difference is not so material; it was ordinary to add many words to show the greatness of the matter spoken of; indeed all sorts of wonderful works Christ did, and so many, and so great, as no variety of words can express.

As ye yourselves also know; those that are not convinced are self-condemned.

Acts 2:23

Ver. 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God:* that the apostle might take away the offence of the cross of Christ, he declares unto them that he did not suffer by chance, but by the wise and holy providence of God, who had ordered, and by his prophets foretold, what he should suffer before he did enter into glory, Lu 24:26. Yet this did no way excuse those who were instrumental in his death; for notwithstanding God's determinate counsel concerning it, he tells the Jews, *ye have taken, &c.* The determination of God, as it does not necessitate to, so it does not excuse any from sin.

Have crucified, by the Romans, who were truly ἀνομοί, without any law of God. What the Jews urged or occasioned the Romans to do, is charged justly upon them as their act.

Acts 2:24

Ver. 24. *Whom God hath raised up:* Christ rose by his own power as God: it being, perhaps, too strong meat to be given at first to such who were

under so great prejudices against our Saviour; but by consequence in the following discourse he sufficiently shows it.

Loosed; the same word חבל variously pointed, signifying either a cord or pain, the metaphor of loosing agrees with it.

The pains of death: though our Lord endured no more pain after he had said, It is finished, and had yielded up the ghost; yet whilst he was in the grave, being under the power of death, the pains of death are said to be loosed at his resurrection.

It was not possible that he should be holden of it long, much less for ever; being such a one as David spake of.

Acts 2:25

Ver. 25. *David speaketh concerning him,* Ps 16:8.

I foresaw the Lord always before my face: in the psalm it is, *I have set the Lord:* the apostle following the reading of the Seventy, then in use and known; and to the same sense; for by faith we both see God, and place our confidence in him; David, and especially our Saviour, doing and enduring all things as in the sight of God, whom he knew to be both careful of him, and ready to help him. Thus, in all troubles, there is no such approved comfort, as the seeing or acknowledging the will of God concerning them, his power to preserve us under them, and his promises to deliver us from them. Christ, and all that are Christ's, do conflict under the eye and in the sight of God, as soldiers whilst their general looks on.

On my right hand; the place of the advocate for one that is accused or endangered.

Acts 2:26

Ver. 26. *Therefore,* because of God's nearness to or presence with him, *did my heart rejoice;* Christ's and his people's joy is solid and true, real and inward, and may bear the test, *res severa est verum gaudium.*

My tongue; in Ps 16:9, it is *my glory*, as the tongue is frequently called; communicating our thoughts or apprehensions by speech, being the excellency of a reasonable creature.

My flesh; or my body.

Shall rest; or be in the grave, as in a tabernacle, ordinarily a movable, always no durable abiding place.

In hope; that is, of the resurrection, and going out of that tabernacle of the grave.

Acts 2:27

Ver. 27. *My soul;* that is, me: the soul is put for the person, as Ro 13:1, *Let every soul be subject;* and sometimes for a dead body, as Le 19:28 Nu 5:2, and in divers other places, נַפְשׁ that signifies a soul, is so used.

In hell; the word αἰδης is put either for the grave, or for the place of the damned. Being these words are alleged as a proof of Christ's resurrection, and that our Saviour's soul was certainly in paradise, where he promised to the penitent thief that he should be with him, it seems rather to be meant of the grave, which, according to this prophecy, could not hold our blessed Saviour's body so long as that it should corrupt in it. If David by his *soul* here did mean our Saviour, because he was as it were the soul of his soul, and life of his life, it shows how he did, and how we ought to value him.

Thine Holy One; as being anointed, sanctified, and sent by God.

Acts 2:28

Ver. 28. *Thou hast made known to me;* God is frequently said to make those mercies known to us which he bestows upon us.

The ways of life; of a true life, which is life indeed. David in these words celebrates God's delivering of him from his grievous afflictions and exile;

in which he was looked upon by others, and by himself, as a dead man, yet was brought again to see the temple, and enjoy the ordinances of God, without which his life was as no life unto him. So our Saviour, after his death and passion, arose, and ascended into heaven, and lives for ever to make intercession for us.

With thy countenance; that is, with thy presence, or manifestation of thy love and favour.

Acts 2:29

Ver. 29. *Men and brethren;* St. Peter bespeaks this attention and favour, intimating he was one of the same nation with themselves, than which nothing could more recommend him. David was had in great veneration, and his memory very precious amongst this people, as was Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's; who were the chief of their fathers.

He is both dead and buried; as in 1Ki 2:10, and elsewhere, is recorded of him, which they firmly believed.

His sepulchre, or monument, *is with us;* either not wholly spoiled by the barbarous enemies, who had destroyed Jerusalem; or rather repaired after the captivity, to keep up the memory of so great and good a man. But by this it appeared, that David did not speak these things concerning himself, who must needs have seen corruption, (themselves being witnesses), for on that account they respected his tomb, as being the repository of his ashes.

Acts 2:30

Ver. 30. *Had sworn with an oath;* not barely had sworn, which had been sufficient; but to show the excellency of the matter, and the necessity of our believing of it, as also the solemnity of the words, Ps 132:11.

Of the fruit of his loins; such as should descend from him, as the virgin Mary did.

According to the flesh; as to his human nature, which our Saviour did

truly partake of, being in the form of a servant.

He would raise up Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of his virgin mother, as to his incarnation; and by the same power out of the grave, in his resurrection.

To sit on his throne; as Lu 1:32,33: not as a temporal king, for his kingdom is not of this world; but as David ruled over all the people of God, so does Christ, and shall do for ever.

Acts 2:31

Ver. 31. *He seeing this before*; by a prophetic eye, unto which any thing that was revealed was as certain and manifest, as aught could be to the eye of the body. By the same prophetic Spirit, and with the same certainty, which he spoke of the incarnation, he *spoke also of the resurrection of Christ*. Of the rest, see Ac 2:27.

Acts 2:32

Ver. 32. *This Jesus*, whom ye crucified, and we preach, *Whereof we all are witnesses*: they had now received the power spoken of and promised Ac 1:6, and testify what they had heard, and seen, and felt, and all agree in; though they could get nothing by it, but hatred and persecution, nay, death.

Acts 2:33

Ver. 33. *By the right hand of God*, that is, by the power of God spoken after the manner of men, the right hand being that we commonly do any thing with. Some read *at the right hand of God*; and then the apostle preaches Christ's ascension too, and his being justified by God, though he had been condemned by men.

Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost: Ps 68:18 *Which ye now see*, in the fiery cloven tongues; *and hear*, in the divers

languages which are spoken.

Acts 2:34

Ver. 34. *For David is not ascended into the heavens;* hence St. Peter here proves, that these words, spoken by David, were not principally to be understood concerning himself, but concerning Christ the Messiah; for David, as to his body, was in the sepulchre, which on that account was kept amongst them.

The Lord said unto my Lord; the eternal Father unto his eternal Son, who was now made flesh—hence our Saviour proves his Divinity, Mt 22:45. The words here referred to are Ps 110:1.

Acts 2:35

Ver. 35. Christ is commissioned and empowered to reign over and govern all creatures, and all their actions, till the consummation of all things, so long as the world lasts, in which he, his people, and truths, will have enemies, Eph 1:20-22 1Co 15:27,28.

Acts 2:36

Ver. 36. This is the conclusion which the apostle infers from the premises, applying what he had said very close and home, or it would not in all likelihood have had so good an effect.

Ye have crucified; ye are the men.

Lord over all the creatures, beyond what the first Adam was; *and Christ*, King over all the people of God, to rule in them, and reign for them; for to this purpose he was the Christ, or the Anointed of God, declared by God to be so, and owned for such by all that believed in him.

Acts 2:37

Ver. 37. *They were pricked in their heart;* so great and true their grief, they were concerned as if they had been run through: (the pains the mind suffer are most acute): this was foretold, Zec 12:10.

Men and brethren; an ordinary compellation which the apostle had given them, Ac 2:29.

What shall we do? not, What shall we say, or believe? Conversion, if real, goes further than profession, and is in heart and deed, not in speech and word only: they desire to know if there be any hope, that such sinners as they might obtain forgiveness of their sins.

Acts 2:38

Ver. 38. *Repent,* which includes amendment of life, Mt 3:8 Lu 3:8. *In the name of Jesus Christ;* not excluding the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost, in whose name, as well as in the name of the Son, they were to baptize, Mt 28:19: but the name of Jesus is here mentioned, because they had not yet known (but persecuted and slain) him, whom henceforward they must profess; and that they look for pardon and salvation only through him. *For the remission of sins;* thus Saul, or Paul, is said to wash away his sins by baptism, Ac 22:16; and this apostle elsewhere says, that baptism saves us, 1Pe 3:21; which he explains to be, *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, &c. The gift of the Holy Ghost:*

1. His internal gifts, confirmation and strengthening in the faith.
2. External gifts, as that of speaking with tongues, which they heard. Both, or either of these, according to their conditions or stations, God would bestow upon them.

Acts 2:39

Ver. 39. *For the promise is unto you;* lest they should doubt of pardon and

grace, their sin having been so great. St. Peter gives them a ground of hope, they being the descendants from Abraham, unto whom especially this was promised, Jer 31:34.

And to all that are afar off; that is, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, who were said to be a people near unto God, as the Gentiles were said to be afar off, Isa 57:19 Eph 2:13.

Even as many as the Lord our God shall call; vocation, whether external by the word only, or internal by the Spirit also, depends on the pleasure of God; but the same promises of pardon and acceptance upon repentance made unto the Jews, are as effectually to be trusted unto by any of the Gentiles, as by any formerly amongst the Jews.

Acts 2:40

Ver. 40. *Many other words:* the sermons of the apostles, or of our Saviour, are not all set down by the holy writers; but only so much as God saw necessary for his church to know and believe.

Testify and exhort; using God's name and authority, and calling him as it were to witness.

Save yourselves: no less than the salvation of our souls depends upon our forsaking wicked and profane persons in their ungodly courses.

From this untoward generation; the whole world lies in wickedness; but especially the scribes and Pharisees, and other such declared enemies of Christ Jesus.

Acts 2:41

Ver. 41. *They that gladly received his word;* some still remained in their unbelief and hardness of heart; though never men spake as the apostles now spake, with divers tongues, &c.

Unto them; to the church, or the hundred and twenty formerly mentioned,

Ac 1:15. This was the effect of Christ's prayer for his persecutors, Lu 23:34; and of the promise of the Spirit now fulfilled, whereby in the day of his power they were made willing.

Acts 2:42

Ver. 42. *They continued stedfastly*, speaks the reality of their conversion, and that they were not only for the present affected with what they had heard and seen. These three parts of worship were frequently, if not always, in those purer times used together: though some understand by *breaking of bread*, their civil fellowship and community, yet breaking being a holy rite used by our Saviour, at the institution of his supper, Mt 26:26, and breaking of bread being here put in conjunction with preaching and praying, the celebration of the eucharist, if not only meant, is chiefly to be understood in this place.

Prayers; all those kinds of prayers mentioned by St. Paul, 1Ti 2:1, as also their frequent praying, is implied. Thus, by a united force, they laboured to pull down mercies upon themselves and others, and to do violence unto the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 2:43

Ver. 43. *Upon every soul*; that is, upon every man; not only on them that were present, and persuaded to believe on Christ, whom the apostles preached; but on such also as were informed of those miraculous things which now happened; so that by this means the apostles were had in great esteem and respect by the people.

Acts 2:44

Ver. 44. *All that believed were together*; not that they lived together in one house or street, but that they met (and that frequently) together in the holy exercises of their religion; and that manner of some, which St. Paul speaks of, Heb 10:25, to forsake the assembling of themselves together, was a sin not yet known in the church.

And had all things common; this was only at that place, Jerusalem, and at that time, when the wants of some, and the charity of others, may well be presumed to be extraordinary; and there is no such thing as community of goods here required or practised. Christ's gospel does not destroy the law; and the eighth commandment is still in force, which it could not be, if there were no propriety, or *meum* and *tuum*, now; nay, after this, the possession which Ananias sold is adjudged by this apostle to have been Ananias's own, and so was the money too which he had received for it, Ac 5:4. And these *all things* which they had in common, must either be restrained to such things as every one freely laid aside for the poor; or that it speaks the extraordinary charitable disposition of those new converts, that they would rather have parted with any thing, nay, with their all, than that any of their poor brethren should have wanted.

Acts 2:45

Ver. 45. Those proportions of their estate they set apart to this charitable work; whether they did arise out of the sale of house or land, called *possessions*, or of any chattels or movable estate, called here *goods*: but that they did not divest themselves of all property, appears in that we find soon after this, Ac 12:12, Mary the mother of St. Mark to have a house; and Lydia, after she was baptized, did not renounce any propriety in her house, Ac 16:15, but entreated St. Paul, and those who were with him, to come into her house, &c.

Acts 2:46

Ver. 46. *In the temple;* in the court and porches of the temple, whither the people did use to resort at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice and prayers, that by means of the great concourse at such times they might have the better opportunity to preach the gospel amongst them; casting that net where they found most fish.

Breaking bread; not only celebrating the eucharist, but their love feasts which they usually had at that time, as 1Co 11:21,22.

From house to house; now here, now there, as they could conveniently; the richer also entertaining their poorer brethren at their tables.

Did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart: if the former words be understood of the Lord's supper, then these words speak the great spiritual strength, cheer, and comfort they got by it: if we understand them of the ordinary meats which they willingly bestowed one upon another, the rich were more than recompensed with inward peace and satisfaction, for what they gave unto their poor brethren.

Acts 2:47

Ver. 47. *Praising God;* acknowledging him who teacheth one to want, and another to abound.

Having favour with all the people; that is, generally to be understood, amongst them that continued yet without the pale of the church; the goodness, meekness, and patience of the apostles, and the rest of the believers, did wonderfully prevail to beget a good opinion of them.

The Lord added to the church; salvation is (to be sure) only from the Lord; not Peter's sermons, no, nor the miracles of fiery cloven tongues, and the rushing mighty wind, could have converted any, but $\Delta\epsilon\iota\ \tau\iota\ \epsilon\nu\delta\omicron\nu$, that which was signified there, viz. the powerful operation of the Spirit of God in their hearts.

Acts 3:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 3:1-11 The lame man healed by Peter and John.

Ac 3:12-26 Peter declares to the people that this cure was not

wrought by any power or holiness in himself or John,

but by the power of God through faith in the name of

Jesus, whom they had ignorantly

crucified, but whom
God had raised from the dead according
to the
Scripture; exhorts them by faith to
seek remission of
sins and salvation in Jesus, whose
coming had been
spoken of by Moses and all the
prophets.

Ver. 1. *Went up together into the temple;* not to communicate with the Jews in their worship, which was now antiquated, but that they might have a larger field to sow the seed of the gospel into; and therefore it was most probably upon some sabbath or festival day, and not unlikely in the evening of that great day of Pentecost (of which in the former chapter).

At the hour of prayer: that God must be worshipped, and daily prayed unto, the law of nature and positive law of God requires; but, says Maimonides, there is no obligation by virtue of any command of God, unto any number of prayers, nor to any certain prayers, nor to any definite time of prayer. Howsoever, they did usually pray thrice a day, and thought each of those three times recommended unto them by one of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Howsoever, the time of offering up the morning and evening sacrifice was recommended or commanded by God, as a time of prayer; a sacrifice being an actual prayer, as the other is real or verbal.

The ninth hour; about three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of the evening sacrifice.

Acts 3:2

Ver. 2. *Lame from his mother's womb,* and not by any casualty, that so the miracle might be the greater, and the power of the God of nature appear.

They laid daily; by which it was manifest, that it could not be by any correspondence between the apostles and the lame man upon this occasion.

At the gate of the temple; where there must needs be the greater notice taken of him; none going in or out but such as might see him.

Called Beautiful, for the excellency of the workmanship: it was at the entering into the second court, or the court of the Jews from that of the Gentiles. This man, out of pride, being unwilling to beg of the Gentiles, though proselyted, (whom they did contemn), or out of policy, hoping to receive more of the Jews, whom he is nearer related to, *asked alms of them that entered into the temple.* Poverty is no sign of God's disfavour (our blessed Redeemer is in an especial manner called *Caput pauperum*); but lameness in this man, divers miseries and calamities in others, bring them to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation through him.

Acts 3:3

Ver. 3. *Seeing,* though lame: every one hath something that is truly valuable, and matter of praise and thanks unto God.

Acts 3:4

Ver. 4. The eye affects the heart, and speaks the compassion he had of this poor man, whom he did not disdain thoroughly and seriously to behold: he excites the lame man's expectation, and requires his attention, that he might the more mind the manner and means of his cure, and be the better prepared to give God the glory of it.

Acts 3:5

Ver. 5. *Gave heed,* with his eyes and mind too, being intent upon the apostles; this he was commanded to do, and it succeeds beyond all hopes. Thus we receive of God daily more than we can ask or think.

Acts 3:6

Ver. 6. *Silver and gold have I none;* that is, at hand, or about me; neither

had he much elsewhere; the apostles abounded indeed, but in grace, not in riches.

Such as I have; a power from Christ to heal.

Give I thee; I apply it to thee, and will make it effectual for thee.

In the name, in the power, or at the command, *of Jesus Christ,* and trusting unto his promised assistance, who can speak to things that are not as if they were.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth; our Saviour was usually so called, and being known by that name, the apostle does not decline it, though it had been by many (without cause) given him by way of reproach.

Acts 3:7

Ver. 7. *He took him by the right hand;* not disdain to take hold of a poor cripple or beggar; as also being fully persuaded of Christ's presence with him for his cure.

And immediately, that it might the more evidently appear that this was the work of God, who can without means, and on a sudden, bring aught to perfection, *his feet and ankle bones,* whence his lameness did proceed, *received strength:* thus God can say unto the weak, Be strong.

Acts 3:8

Ver. 8. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 35:6, *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart;* and thus the lame man manifested that he was perfectly cured, though in an instant, *walking, and leaping, and praising God,* to whom alone he attributed that sudden and perfect (and therefore miraculous) cure; nay, he attributes nothing unto the means; the apostle's words he knew did little or nothing, but God is all in all unto him: and he leaped, to evidence the truth of the miracle that was wrought upon him, and that his soul rejoiced in God his Saviour.

Acts 3:9

Ver. 9. This miracle was so publicly done, that none could deny the matter of fact; which the enemies of the gospel are forced to confess, Ac 4:16.

Acts 3:10

Ver. 10. *They knew that it was he;* the very same lame beggar, probably notoriously known to many.

They were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him; being so much contrary to what they had seen him but a little while before, when he had begged their alms; and, as he reasoned well, Joh 9:32, *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind;* so it was never heard, that any strengthened thus the feet of him that was born lame.

Acts 3:11

Ver. 11. *Held Peter and John,* in an ecstasy of thankfulness unto them, they having been the instruments of so great a mercy from God towards him; as also out of fear, lest when they were gone he might relapse: he that found so great a change in himself could not but be as much surprised as they that saw the change upon him.

The porch that is called Solomon's; not that which was built by Solomon, for that was destroyed by the Babylonians, as the rest of the temple was, 2Ki 25:9; unless some part of this porch might not be consumed by the fire, when the other parts of the temple were burned, some morsel often escaping the jaws of that devouring element, fire; or it may be it was built in the re-edification of the temple, in the same place where Solomon's porch had stood, and thence called by the former name that was so much remembered. If any wonder that a porch should hold so many thousands of people, inasmuch as five thousand of them are said to be converted, Ac 4:4; this porch is thought not only to have been the court of the Gentiles, and that of the Jews, that is, the outward and inward court; but to have

contained a great part of the court of the Gentiles, if the whole court of the Gentiles might not be so called, as being indeed but a porch, or an entrance into the court of the Jews.

Acts 3:12

Ver. 12. *He answered,* for he said, an ordinary Hebraism, though no question was put unto him: thus the evangelist tells us that our Saviour *answered and said,* when there was no previous question spoken of, Mt 11:25. Nay, *Jesus answered and said unto* the fig tree, Mr 11:14; that is, he spake powerfully unto it.

Ye men of Israel; an ingratiating compellation, they ever valuing themselves and others on that account.

By our own power or holiness: holiness, were it never so real and great in men, cannot cause the least miracle, although it is itself, all things considered, a very great one.

Acts 3:13

Ver. 13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob;* he mentions them, because the promise of the Messiah was made to them, *Hath glorified his Son Jesus;* or his servant, for so also he is called, Isa 53:11; and that he might redeem us, he took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to the death of the cross, and did that great work of redemption which God sent him into the world to do.

Whom ye delivered up; the rulers, at whose command our blessed Saviour was apprehended, bound, and delivered unto Pilate, Mt 27:1,2.

And denied him; this is charged upon the common sort of people also, who were earnest in crying, Mt 27:25, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* Their sin is here ripped up, and their sore searched to the quick, that they might entertain the word of salvation with the greater attention and desire.

Acts 3:14

Ver. 14. *But ye denied the Holy One;* Christ the anointed, when they cried out as with one voice, *We have no king but Caesar,* Joh 19:15; disclaiming our Redeemer, and his being anointed over them.

And desired a murderer; to wit, Barabbas, crying out, *Not this man, but Barabbas,* Joh 18:40; which much aggravated their impiety; when the choice was given unto them of two, so vastly different, the just Jesus, and the murderous Barabbas, they chose the latter, to their destruction and confusion unto this present day. Where will blindness of mind and hardness of heart end!

Acts 3:15

Ver. 15. *The Prince of life;* as God, he is the Author of our temporal life too, in whom we live, and move, &c., and in whose hand is our breath; but Christ, as Mediator, is the guide and way to eternal life, Joh 14:6. These are said to have killed our Saviour, though neither Herod, nor Pilate, nor probably many (if any) of them that nailed him to the cross, were present; but it was done for their sakes, and at their desires, and therefore by their means; and it is here charged upon them, as done by them.

Acts 3:16

Ver. 16. *His name;* his power; for by it he is known, as men or things are by their several names; or the *name* of Christ is put for Christ himself, as the name of God is put for God commonly.

Through faith in his name; calling by faith on the name of Christ, being thoroughly persuaded that he could and would heal this cripple.

The faith which is by him; not only faith, as on Christ as its object, but by and from Christ as its author; faith being twice made mention of in this cure, there being required faith in Peter to heal, and in the lame man to be healed.

Acts 3:17

Ver. 17. Lest the corrosive in Ac 3:13-15 should pierce too far, to prevent despair in his auditors the apostle useth in this verse a lenitive, calling them yet *brethren*, though guilty of so great a mistake in their judgment, and fault in their practice.

Through ignorance ye did it; whatsoever they did against Christ, whom St. Peter preached, was out of a double error:

1. About the place of Christ's birth, supposing him to have been born at Nazareth.
2. They were ignorant of the nature of his kingdom.

As did also your rulers; whose fault was the greater, as having seduced others, &c.; yet St. Peter opens a door of hope by repentance, even for them also.

Acts 3:18

Ver. 18. The prophets did all speak the same things, as if they had spoken out of one *mouth*, as they did speak by one Spirit. God used the ignorance of some, and the malice of others, for his own holy ends: and that it was prophesied *that Christ should suffer*, is very plain, Isa 1:5-7.

Acts 3:19

Ver. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted;* this is the true end, use, and application, both of the preceding miracle and sermon, to persuade unto repentance and conversion.

That your sins may be blotted out; alluding to the manner of writing upon tables in those times, and not much disagreeing from what is in use amongst us, who write upon paper or parchment. There is a book of

remembrance, and a record of all our sins kept: *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, Jer 17:1*. When sin is pardoned, it is said to be *blotted out*, Isa 44:22; and not to be found any more, though it should be *sought for*, Jer 50:20.

Times of refreshing; or times of cooling; as afflictions are called a fiery trial, so deliverance from them is a season of refreshing or cooling. Such a time of refreshing shall come in this life, commonly from many troubles; but when this life ends, a deliverance comes from all afflictions to them that truly fear and serve God.

Shall come from the presence of the Lord; God's presence is the cause and ground from whence all the refreshment his people take do arise; heaven would not be heaven (a place of bliss and glory) without it: and as God is the object of our beatitude, so he is the giver of all comfort, and his Spirit is the only Comforter.

Acts 3:20

Ver. 20. To remove all evils and miseries from his people; when that Sun shines all clouds and mists are scattered. This refers especially to Christ's second coming, which is here promised, to encourage us to do good, and to deter us from doing evil; as also to move us to repentance, and to comfort us when penitent.

Acts 3:21

Ver. 21. *Whom the heaven must receive*; that is, contain after it hath received him, as a real place doth a true body; for such Christ's body was, which was received into heaven: and heaven is the palace and throne of this King of kings and Lord of lords, where he shall reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet, 1Co 15:25.

Until the times of restitution of all things; or restoration of all things, when all things shall be restored to that condition from which sin put them: for the fall hath maimed and disordered the whole universe; and probably there is not that excellency in any of the creatures which there was at first,

before man (for whom they were made) by his sin brought death to himself, and as it were a dead colour over all them; this makes the whole creation groan and travail in pain until now, Ro 8:22. But the end of the world will be a time of *restitution of all things* unto man especially, who shall be then restored unto God, and to a blessed immortality: for unless this be granted, all their preaching and prophesying was in vain, 1Co 15:14.

Acts 3:22

Ver. 22. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers;* their ancestors in the wilderness, De 18:15, as also in the De 18:18. St. Peter names here but one of their prophets, but a most remarkable one.

Like unto me;

1. In wisdom.
2. In miracles.
3. In being a Mediator between God and his people.
4. In their being both and of their brethren, i.e. of the seed of Abraham.
5. In that they were both sent from God after an extraordinary manner.

Him shall ye hear in all things; if any prophet did come amongst them, and did foretell future things which came to pass, or did work a real miracle, they were bound to believe him, if he did not endeavour to draw them to worship a false god; and by consequence they were bound to have believed our Saviour, who taught them only to fear that true God, whom the law and all the prophets had spoken of.

Acts 3:23

Ver. 23. *Every soul;* that is every one.

Hear that prophet; that is believe and obey him.

Shall be destroyed from among the people; as those that disobeyed Moses were destroyed, many perishing by strange and sudden deaths: we read of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that belonged to them, swallowed up for this sin, Nu 16:1-50. The apostle demands, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb 2:3. For a greater than Moses is here, and God hath undertaken to require it of every one that will not hearken unto him, De 18:19.

Acts 3:24

Ver. 24. Though there were some prophets betwixt Moses and Samuel, yet they were but such as prophesied in some particular exigences and cases; and in Samuel's days *the word of the Lord was precious*, or rare, 1Sa 3:1; but then David, that lively type of Christ, appearing at the throne, the Messiah began to be more discovered in and by him: besides, Samuel was the first who wrote his prophecies, and erected the schools of the prophets, and therefore he is first mentioned; and the date of the prophets is here begun from him.

Acts 3:25

Ver. 25. *Children of the prophets;* the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are called *prophets*, Ps 105:15, and did prophesy, foretelling things to come, &c. The disciples of the prophets are also called their children, or sons, 2Ki 2:3; and so these pretended and desired to be accounted. *Children of the covenant* are sixth unto whom the covenant belongs, which God made with Abraham and his seed; hence they are called *the children of the promise*, Ro 9:8 Ga 4:28; and *the children of the kingdom*, Mt 8:12. And this covenant of God with Abraham was the cause, that notwithstanding all the sore and heavy calamities of that people. God did always preserve some, and there was a remnant saved.

Kindreds; families, or nations.

Be blessed: through Christ, who is this seed of Abraham, all mercies in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, are bestowed; grace and glory, and every good thing.

Acts 3:26

Ver. 26. *Unto you first;* the Jews and inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are the lost sheep of the house of Israel. St. Peter did not yet know, that the Gentiles should be called, until he was taught it by the vision, Ac 10:1-48; and though our Saviour had told the apostles that they should be his *witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth*, Ac 1:8, they understood it only of those of their own nation, scattered or dispersed abroad, 1Pe 1:1.

Raised up his son, Jesus; which word does not only refer to the resurrection of Christ, but to his being constituted and appointed to be a Prince and a Saviour; thus it is said, *a great prophet is risen up amongst us*, Lu 7:16; and, *God hath, raised up a horn of salvation*, Lu 1:69. Howsoever, it is by virtue of Christ's being raised from the dead, and carried into his kingdom, that we are blessed. In turning away everyone of you from his iniquities; this is the greatest blessing indeed; hence our Saviour hath his name imposed by God on him, Mt 1:21, and was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; and without this being saved from our sins, nothing can be a blessing to us, Isa 3:11; and, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*, Isa 57:21. Add to this, that if any be turned from their iniquities, it is through the blessing of God in Christ.

Acts 4:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 4:1-4 The rulers of the Jews, offended with the teaching of

Peter and John, imprison them.

Ac 4:5-12 Being brought before the council, Peter boldly

avouches the late cure to have been wrought in the name

of Jesus, and that men can be saved by no other name.

Ac 4:13-22 The council, struck with the boldness of the two

apostles, after conferring together,

dismiss them with

a threatening charge to speak more in the name of Jesus.

Ac 4:23-30 The church betakes itself to prayer.

Ac 4:31 The presence of the Holy Ghost is signified by the house

shaking, and the apostles thereby emboldened to speak the word.

Ac 4:32-37 The unity and charity of the church, who have their

possessions in common.

Ver. 1. *The captain of the temple;* the commander over those soldiers who were appointed to guard the temple, and provide that no disorder might happen, by reason of the multitudes that came to worship there; and most probably was a Roman, and not of the Jewish nation, much less the chief of any of the courses of the priests, to whom this term cannot agree.

The Sadducees; these were most inveterate against the gospel, whose main article is the resurrection, which they denied: and thus each man, Jews and Gentiles, agree against Christ, as was foretold, Ps 2:1,2.

Acts 4:2

Ver. 2. *Being grieved;* or angry to such a degree that it was a great trouble to them. The doctrine of *the resurrection* alone could not but vex the Sadducees, who denied it; but it did more afflict them, that the apostles *preached it through Jesus;* asserting, not only the resurrection of our Saviour, which the Jews gave so much money unto the soldiers to hinder the report of, Mt 28:12,13, but also that Christ was the author of the resurrection, and the first fruits of them that sleep; and because they inferred from Christ's resurrection that his disciples should rise from the dead also.

Acts 4:3

Ver. 3. *Put them in hold;* some think this not to have been so strait a

custody as that of a prison, but that rather the apostles were delivered to some who promised that they should be forthcoming. The prediction of our Saviour began now to be fulfilled, Lu 21:12.

They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you. Howsoever, God was pleased to suffer persecution to come by degrees on his church; after the sun was down, (Christ was gone from them), it was not presently pitch darkness with them. God always remembers his people's condition, and his own promise, and lays no more upon them than they are able to bear.

Acts 4:4

Ver. 4. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,* Ro 10:17. It being the ordinary means which God hath appointed; the apostles themselves make use of it towards the conviction of this people. The number of the hearers is not intended to be set here, or in any other place; but either these *five thousand* were such as were converted at this sermon, or rather the number converted by St. Peter's former sermon, Ac 2:14-40, were at this sermon made thus many; howsoever, the increase which God gave was very great.

Acts 4:5

Ver. 5. *Their rulers;* the sanhedrim, or great council.

Elders and scribes; the magistrates of the city, scribes, doctors, or teachers of the law, &c.; howsoever these might be distinguished, they are all as one against the doctrine of the gospel, and endeavour to put out the light as soon as it began to shine, as Herod would have killed Christ in the manger.

Acts 4:6

Ver. 6. *Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas;* both these are said to be high priests, Lu 3:2; whether they bare this office by turn each other year, as some think, or that the Roman power put in and out whom they pleased,

and in courtesy he that was laid aside still retained the title during his life, is not very material.

John, thought to be the son of Annas.

Alexander, a man of great repute amongst them, as Josephus says.

As many as were of the kindred of the high priest; their relation many times preferring them to a place in their great council, or sanhedrim.

Were gathered together at Jerusalem; or in Jerusalem; either such as were in the city, being called together on such an extraordinary occasion; or else they sent also unto men of greatest note, that lived nigh thereunto.

Acts 4:7

Ver. 7. *When they had set them in the midst;* the sanhedrim, or great council, did sit in a circular form; and the apostles being to answer for themselves, were placed so as they might better hear and be heard.

By what power; natural, or supernatural and Divine?

By what name? At whose command, or in whose authority? They inquire whether they did pretend to be prophets, or persons extraordinarily sent, &c. Though the miracle which they had wrought showed sufficiently by whose power it was done, yet of this they were willingly ignorant, and inquire only that they might find matter out of the apostles' own mouths, for which they might blame or punish them.

Acts 4:8

Ver. 8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost;* guiding and strengthening of him in what he did speak, by which so mightily Peter differed from himself, that though formerly he was afraid of a servant, and denied our Saviour, now he is not afraid before the rulers to confess him.

Rulers of the people, and elders of Israel: see Ac 4:5. These were

especially the great council, in imitation of the seventy, which Moses appointed by God's command to help him in the burden of his government, Nu 11:16,24.

Acts 4:9

Ver. 9. Examined; juridically called in question; it is a forensic word.

Of the good deed; though they disputed not the authority of the court, yet they assert their integrity; that it was no other than a good deed they had done, which rulers ought not to be a terror unto, Ro 8:3.

By what means, that is, in the words of the question which was propounded unto them, Ac 4:7, by what power, or by what name, *he is made whole*?

Acts 4:10

Ver. 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel; the apostles are not dismayed, but make their boldness, spoken of Ac 4:13, to appear; they preach Christ to all of them, and wish they could make him known to all others.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth: see Ac 2:22.

Whom God raised; i.e. God the Father: our Surety was discharged by God himself, who had laid him in the prison of the grave for our debts.

This man stand here before you whole; the lame man that was made whole being present, and an ocular demonstration of the miracle wrought upon him.

Acts 4:11

Ver. 11. Alluding to Ps 118:22, in which there is a prophecy of what was now fulfilled: see Ac 2:23.

You builders; so by their office they were, and ought to have been so indeed, and are here so called, that they might be minded of their duty, viz. to increase, strengthen, and beautify the building, and not to demolish, weaken, or deface it.

The head of the corner; or the corner stone: Christ is frequently so called, Mt 21:42 Mr 12:10; and that,

1. Because he sustains and upholds the whole building.
2. He is a *rock* or *stone of offense*, Ro 9:33; as many run upon and are hurt by a corner stone.
3. He is most precious, 1Pe 2:6, as the corner stones are usually the largest, firmest, and best.
4. Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of the people of Israel; and both Gentile and Jew are united in him, and saved by him, as the corner stone is equally necessary for both sides, which are united in it, and borne up by it.

Acts 4:12

Ver. 12. *Neither is there salvation, for soul or body, in any other person or thing.*

For there is none other name; because in distress men did usually call upon their false gods by name, as, *O Baal, hear us*, 1Ki 18:26.

Under heaven; whether patriarch or prophet, priest or king; especially referring unto Moses, in whom they did trust; and therefore under the gospel especially we must lift up our hearts.

Acts 4:13

Ver. 13. *They were unlearned;* not wholly unlearned, but such as were

without any polite learning, or more than ordinary education, such as every one amongst them had.

Ignorant men; idiots, so the Greek word, from whence ours come, signifying such as were brought up at home, and never acted in a larger sphere than the walls of their own house; having never been magistrates, or teachers of the law, or any way public persons; and spake only their mother tongue.

They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus; which these rulers might easily take notice of, many of them frequenting his company too, Mt 21:23 Lu 18:18 Joh 12:42.

Acts 4:14

Ver. 14. *Standing;* whereas, before he was either carried, or was forced to lay down.

They could say nothing against it; they could not deny but that it was a good deed, and that it was miraculously done.

Acts 4:15

Ver. 15. *To go aside out of the council;* the place where the council met; for the apostles were not dismissed to go away at their liberty.

They conferred among themselves; it was their joint endeavour to stifle the gospel, and would now consult about the best expedient, but they would not let the apostles hear, lest they might discover the weakness of their proofs against them, and against the truth.

Acts 4:16

Ver. 16. *What shall we do?* At what a loss are these great men, about the manner of their proceeding with the apostles! They might seem to have the victory in their hands, and yet they are evidently overcome by three

witnesses; viz. by both the apostles and the lame man, and especially by the evidence of this fact itself: though they did not boggle at being unjust, yet they were loath to seem to be so, and therefore they take counsel to hide it, or palliate it before men; more valuing their credit, than the salvation of their own or other men's souls.

Acts 4:17

Ver. 17. *Straitly threaten them;* the pleonasm here used implies a very sore and heavy threatening, as of the most grievous punishment upon the most heinous fact.

That they speak henceforth to no man in this name; either,

1. By preaching; or:
2. By praying in it; or:
3. By doing miracles again by it.

Acts 4:18

Ver. 18. *Not to speak at all;* neither privately nor publicly.

Nor teach in the name of Jesus; as his apostles and ministers sent from him.

Acts 4:19

Ver. 19. *Peter and John answered;* both spake by one and the same Spirit, and agreed in one and the same answer; they are not solicitous what will best bring them off at present, but *said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God,* from whom nothing is hid, and who is the avenger of all wrong, *to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* The apostles seem to refer to a commonly received rule amongst their rabbins, which also they make use of, Ac 5:29, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* In the greatest matters of our most holy religion, God hath not left himself without a witness, or a thousand witnesses, in our own breasts and

consciences, Am 2:11.

Acts 4:20

Ver. 20. *We cannot but speak;* in a moral, not in a physical sense; they could not restrain speaking, because of the necessity which was laid upon them, and the woe which would have befallen them, if they had not preached the gospel, 1Co 9:16. If any man denies to bear testimony for man to a truth, he sins; how much more does he sin, who forbears to witness for God, and at the command or the sending of God!

Acts 4:21

Ver. 21. *They let them go* for the present; for amongst them no acquittal was so peremptory or asolute, but that they might be tried again for the same fact upon further evidence.

Because of the people; it was not the sense of the evil or sin, nor the apprehensions of God's displeasure and wrath, which deterred them; but the fear or favour of the people. The corruptions that are in the world are overruled for the good of God's children in it.

All men glorified God; not only such as believed, but others also, could not but confess that this was the hand of God which had made the lame to walk, and rejoice in it, and by consequence have a very great veneration for the apostles, who were the instruments of it.

Acts 4:22

Ver. 22. Therefore:

1. The harder to be cured.
2. The man was the more credible, who had so long known what it was to be without the use of his limbs, which now he enjoyed.

3. Whom they could not themselves but have often seen and heard begging.

But if he had laid so many years in the porch of the temple through which our Saviour frequently entered, how came it to pass that he was not cured before? We do not read that our Saviour denied any who came for cure. There need no other answer, but that all times and seasons are in God's hands, who justly forbore to send deliverance till this very time, and now mercifully sent it; especially reserving this miracle for the confirmation of the truth of the gospel, and of the apostles themselves in the preaching of it.

Acts 4:23

Ver. 23. *They went to their own company,* the rest of the apostles and believers, who have a special propriety and delight in one another; sheep with sheep, and goats with goats: though the separation will be made at the last day, the foundation of it is laid here.

And reported all; to forewarn them of what they might expect, and encourage them to hope for the like deliverance.

Chief priests; to what hath been said concerning them might be added, that these, it may be, were the first or chief in the courses, which David divided the priests into, which division was observed till our Saviour's time, Lu 1:5.

Acts 4:24

Ver. 24. *And when they,* their own company, believers, unto whom they went, *heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord;* either jointly, with one heart and spirit, agreeing in the same words, or saying Amen to the same thing.

And said, Lord; they begin prayer with such a reverend compellation, as suited best to the matter of their prayer and praises: whether by *Lord* they meant their Saviour, who was usually so called by them, or God the

Father, (because the word here is not Κυριε, but Δεσποτα), is not material; for when any person in the Trinity is invoked, the others are included; for we worship the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity.

Which made heaven and earth, &c.; the creation and government of the world, is a good consideration to confirm us under all things that befall us here.

Acts 4:25

Ver. 25. *Who by the mouth of thy servant David;* through the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David; so it is read in many ancient copies; and shows, that what David and other holy men spake, was from the Holy Ghost, and is to be attended unto and believed as spoken by him.

Servant, or son; David's relation to God is mentioned as a greater dignity than his being ruler over so great a people.

Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? It shows the unreasonable fury where which the enemies of God persecute his people, without cause, but what themselves imagine or make, and the event failing of their end; for *all things work for good to them that love God,* Ro 8:28; and the blood of martyrs have been found to be the seed of the church. These words are quoted out of Ps 2:1.

Acts 4:26

Ver. 26. These words do not vary in sense from what we read, Ps 2:2, but are the same for substance.

The kings; not only such who in a strict sense we call kings, but any chief governors, as Herod and Pilate were.

The rulers; the sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews.

Against the Lord; God looks upon it as done against him, whatsoever is done against them that fear him; thus the Israelites are said to be *gathered*

together against the Lord, Nu 16:11, who were gathered against Moses and Aaron.

*And against his Christ; our Saviour was at the right hand of his Father, but they who afflict his members afflict him; he cries from heaven to Saul, *Why persecutest thou me?* Ac 9:4; and had before told his disciples, *He that despiseth you despiseth me*, Lu 10:16.*

Acts 4:27

Ver. 27. *Thy holy child;* it speaks Christ's dearness to God as a child, and obeying of God as a servant.

Whom thou hast anointed, to be a King Priest, and Prophet to his church.

Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c.: a strange agreement against Christ, his truths, and people; Gentiles and Jews never combined so together before. Henceforth it is no dishonour to any, if they follow that which is good, to have great and many enemies, for so had our Saviour: nor is it any honour to any to persecute and despise such; so did Herod, Pilate, Judas, &c.

Acts 4:28

Ver. 28. The apostles mind not so much second causes in what my Saviour or themselves suffered, but see and acknowledge God in all; who makes a straight line with a crooked stick; and is holy, wise, and good in overruling and permitting the greatest evils; and does deserve to have praise for all things, Eph 5:20: see Ac 2:23.

Thy hand and thy counsel; thy power and right to dispose of all persons and things; alluding to Le 16:8: as the lot cast for the two goats (the disposing of which being from the Lord, Pr 16:33) did determine which of the goats should be sacrificed, and which should escape; so it was not without a Divine disposition, that Christ was made a sin offering for us; though this no way excuses the wicked instruments of his death and suffering.

Acts 4:29

Ver. 29. *Behold their threatenings;* they had acknowledged God the Maker of heaven, Ac 4:24, and accordingly here they desire that from heaven his dwelling place he would behold them and their sufferings; as all things are visible to such as sit above us.

With all boldness; freeness, or presence of mind, here translated *boldness*, which in a good cause (for Christ and his truth) is (as all good gifts) *from the Father of lights*, Jas 1:17; and our Saviour hath promised that it shall be given unto us in that hour what to say, Lu 12:11,12.

Acts 4:30

Ver. 30. *By stretching forth thine hand;* they desire nothing else to embolden them, but God's owning them and their work.

That signs and wonders may be done: miracles were then necessary, as being the seal of their commission from God; they desire to have this patent with them, to show as often as occasion served.

By the name of thy holy child Jesus; by the power and authority of Christ; for Christ alone they sought to advance and magnify, and not themselves, by all the wonders they wrought.

Acts 4:31

Ver. 31. *The place was shaken;* miraculously moved up and down, as on the waves of the sea, to evidence God's presence with them, and acceptance of them and their prayers in an extraordinary manner.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost; according to their conditions, whether apostles (for whom these prayers were especially made) or private believers.

They spake the word of God with boldness: this was the grace they asked, Ac 4:29. God gave it them, and with it all other graces necessary for them. In their difficulties and wants, the greatest and holiest in the church of God must go to God to be supplied, and prayer is the most successful means.

Acts 4:32

Ver. 32. *Were of one heart and of one soul;* as if one heart and one soul had moved that multitude; to be sure there was one Spirit in them all, that is, the Spirit of God, by whose grace they agreed in all truths, and in hearty affections towards one another; insomuch, that they were as willing that what they had might be enjoyed by their necessitous brethren as by themselves. The community of goods was not commanded, but left at liberty, and was chosen as most expedient at such a time in that place; that it was not even then commanded, we may see, Ac 5:4; neither was it practised any where but at Jerusalem; and it was the rather practised there, that believers might show what credit they gave to our Saviour's prediction concerning the destruction of that place, in which they did not care to have or retain any thing. There might be something too to command this practice of the church in that season: the whole church, upon the matter, being in Jerusalem, and consisting of such as lived afar off, and were by persecution to be driven suddenly farther, had not such a means been yielded to it must have perished, without a miracle.

Acts 4:33

Ver. 33. *With great power;* by sundry miracles which they wrought, as also by their boldness with which they spake; it being no small wonder to see and hear such illiterate men testifying the truths of the gospel amidst so many learned rabbins.

The resurrection was the greatest point in controversy, which being granted, all things concerning Christ and the gospel could not be denied; and therefore here it is especially mentioned.

Great grace; favour and acceptance; men could not but think well of their doctrine and ways, whom they saw so innocent and holy, meek and good;

especially God's grace was manifest in their words and actions.

Acts 4:34

Ver. 34. So far forth as might relieve the present necessities of believers; not that every one parted with all that he had, for that had taken away (at least) the use and force of the eighth commandment; for where there is no propriety there can be no theft. Now Christ came not to dissolve any law, but to fulfil it: the meaning then is, that these early Christians would not only part with their revenue, but, rather than their brethren should want, they would and did sell their fee simple. See Ac 2:44.

Acts 4:35

Ver. 35. *Laid them down at the apostles' feet;* submitted them to the apostles' disposal: this metaphor is used, 1Co 15:27,

He hath put all things under his feet. According as he had need; the poor man's want is the fittest measure for our relief.

Acts 4:36

Ver. 36. *Joses;* some read Joseph; the Hebrew names, when turned into Greek, meet with divers terminations or endings.

Surnamed Barnabas; full of consolation; not only in that he gave so liberally towards the relief of the poor, parting with his possessions for them; but that he excelled in propounding inward and spiritual comfort unto poor and rich, being of a mild disposition, and fitted to handle gently such wounds as the terrors of the law had made.

Though *a Levite* he might have land, either in right of his wife, or given to him and his ancestors; as we read was to Phinehas, Jos 24:33; otherwise the Lord was the Levites' portion in an especial manner.

The Jews being dispersed all over the known world, some dwelt in *Cyprus*,

as Joses's parents; Saul's parents dwelt at Tarsus; though at this time both Saul and Joses dwell in Jerusalem.

Acts 4:37

Ver. 37. This is an instance of what was said Ac 4:34,35; and Joses probably is instanced in it, either because he sold a greater quantity of land, as having large possessions, or as being one of the first that was remarkable in this kind of charity. *Laid it at the apostles' feet*: see Ac 4:35.

Acts 5:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira, profanely tempting the Holy

Ghost with a lie, at Peter's rebuke fall down dead,

Ac 5:12-16 The apostles work many miracles, to the great increase

of the faith.

Ac 5:17-28 They are all imprisoned, but released by an angel, and

sent to preach openly in the temple: being brought

before the council,

Ac 5:29-32 they support their witness with great freedom.

Ac 5:33-40 The council are restrained from killing them by the

advice of Gamaliel, but beat and dismiss them with a

charge not to speak in the name of Jesus.

Ac 5:41-42 They rejoice in their sufferings, and cease not to

preach Christ both in public and private.

Ver. 1. A dreadful instance of God's indignation against hypocrisy and sacrilege, which we have an infallible testimony of; which is the more remarkable, because such sins escape punishment from men, either as not known, or not disliked; yet the *damnation* of such as are guilty of them *slumbereth not*, 2Pe 2:3, it being the glory of God to search out matters further than men can, or list to do.

A possession; an estate, house, or farm.

Acts 5:2

Ver. 2. *Kept back part of the price,* when they had vowed the whole to God and his service, which made it a robbing of God, whatsoever pretence they might possibly have of detaining some part for their own necessities in old age, or time of sickness; arguing a great distrust in that God, whom, when they had made their vow, they pretended to give themselves and their substance unto.

His wife also being privy to it; her subjection to her husband not excusing her partaking in his sin and punishment.

Brought a certain part; their ambition carried them thus far, they would seem devout, charitable, &c., and their covetousness hindered them from going farther.

Laid it at the apostles' feet: see Ac 4:35.

Acts 5:3

Ver. 3. *But Peter said;* Peter knew this deceit by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; it being most probably not otherwise likely ever to be discovered.

Satan filled thine heart: as when the heart is filled with hot spirits it is daring and bold, so when Satan filled their heart these wretches venture upon desperate courses and provoking sins.

To lie to the Holy Ghost; this sin is said to be lying to the Holy Ghost:

1. Because against their own consciences, and the Spirit of God too witnessing with their spirits, Ro 9:1. As also:
2. Because they pretended to holiness, and the service of God, when they intended only to serve their own turns; now the Spirit is in a peculiar manner the Spirit of holiness, and the author of it in us, whom they pretended to have been moved by, but falsely.
3. And, lastly: Defrauding the poor members of Christ of their right, (for so by their vow it became), they lied to the Holy Ghost, who constitutes and establishes the church, and accepteth these gifts as given to God, and not to men.

Acts 5:4

Ver. 4. *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?* A sufficient argument that there was no command (even then) to necessitate them to part with their estates, but only what the present and eminent necessity of the church did persuade them voluntarily unto. The doubling of this expostulation makes the conviction the more forcible.

In thine own power; as a steward under God, to do what thou wouldst with it according to his will; and none are, or can be, otherwise disposers of what they possess.

Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? It seems hence, that it was a deliberate and propensed iniquity.

Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God: in that lying unto God is so often charged, and no express mention is made of Ananias's vow, some excuse him of sacrilege, and charge him the more deeply with ambition, covetousness, lying, and hypocrisy, to the apostles, whom he intended to deceive.

Acts 5:5

Ver. 5. *Fell down and gave up the ghost;* expired and died. Some instances of God's extraordinary judgments upon sinners were in the beginning of the Jewish church; as upon the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day, Nu 15:35, and upon Nadab and Abihu, Le 10:1,2; and so here in the beginning of the Christian church; to be as marks to teach us to shun such sins, and to teach us that the God with whom we have to do is greatly to be feared. And this miraculous way of punishing notorious sinners in the church, was accommodated to such a time, in which magistrates were so far from defending the church, that they themselves were the greatest enemies unto it.

And great fear came on all them that heard these things: let others also hear, and fear, and do so no more.

Acts 5:6

Ver. 6. *The young men;* such as were present at that time, and fittest for that employ.

Wound him up; according as they were wont to do to such as they intended to prepare the sepulture. Read what was done to the body of our Saviour, Mr 15:46.

Acts 5:7

Ver. 7. *About the space of three hours after;* in his circumstance is expressed to confirm the truth of this history.

Not knowing what was done; not suspecting any such thing, she was the less inquisitive; and such a consternation and dread was upon all that were there, that they durst not tell her, lest they should offend Peter; also, probably, lest they should with so sudden and sad news grieve her.

Came in; into the church, or place, where they were met together.

Acts 5:8

Ver. 8. *Peter answered;* an ordinary Hebraism, by which one that speaketh first is said an answer, if it be tending towards my discourse especially.

For so much; the certain price is not mentioned, as not being necessary to the intent of the Holy Ghost in this narrative; but be it more or less, it was the same which her husband had said the land was sold for.

She said, Yea; she had agreed with her husband what to say; and one sin draws on another, till it ends in perdition.

Acts 5:9

Ver. 9. *To tempt the Spirit of the Lord;* this expression, of tempting God, or the Spirit of God, is not used amongst profane writers; and this sin is not (at least to such a degree) committed amongst pagans and heathens, and is to be dreaded by all that profess the gospel. As often as men sin against their conscience, and their consciences condemn them in what they do, so often they dare, tempt, or try, whether God be omniscient, and knows of, or holy hand powerful, and will punish, their sins; which they find at last to their cost.

The feet of them which have buried thy husband, are at the door; this the apostle foretells ere it came to pass, the more to confirm his authority and the truth of the gospel.

Shall carry thee out, after thou art dead, to thy burial.

Acts 5:10

Ver. 10. The same sins meet with the same punishment; God is no respecter of persons, Jew or Gentile, male or female.

Acts 5:11

Ver. 11. Thus upon the smiting of so many men in and about Bethshemesh, 1Sa 6:20, they wisely demand, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* And upon the slaying of Uzzah, 2Sa 6:9, *David was afraid of the Lord. Discite justitiam moniti. As many as heard these things*, out of the pale of the church: God's judgments do restrain in a great measure wicked men.

Acts 5:12

Ver. 12. *By the hands of the apostles;* by the apostles' ministry: though they were holy and excellent men, they were but instruments; the power they acted by was God's; which also they had prayed for and acknowledged, Ac 4:30.

Among the people; generally among the meaner sort, according to that question, *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* Joh 7:48.

Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, 1Co 1:26.

In Solomon's porch; a large and capacious place, where they might with greatest convenience hear and see what was done and said.

Acts 5:13

Ver. 13. *Of the rest;* such who were not of the common sort of people, and here seem to be distinguished from them: or, *of the rest* (more largely) who had not joined themselves to the church, being amazed at this judgment on these two hypocrites, durst not make a formal show of religion, unless they had a thorough persuasion in their mind concerning the truth of it, and a firm resolution in their conversation to live answerably unto it.

Acts 5:14

Ver. 14. This explains the former verse, and helps us against mistaking it,

for this wonderful judgment was so far from being a hinderance to the men of the gospel, that it is turned to the furtherance of it; for though great men, and such as were insincere, were terrified from owning Christ and his doctrine, others did more readily embrace them by reason of it.

Acts 5:15

Ver. 15. *Into the streets;* into every street generally taken, it being a common practice where they came, and not in one street only. These weak and unlikely means did more show the power to be of God, and was the greater confirmation to the truth of the gospel; and this was fulfilled what our Saviour had promised to the apostles, and such as should believe in him, Joh 14:12, that they should do greater works than he did.

Acts 5:16

Ver. 16. The variety and grievousness of these evils did but the more commend the power which was present with the apostles.

They were healed every one; an evidence that these cures were not wrought by second causes, for the best medicines do not always succeed; as also, in that they were perfectly and suddenly cured who were thus miraculously cured, the God of nature restoring nature beyond what means and art could do.

Acts 5:17

Ver. 17. *Then the high priest rose up;* moved at the report of these things, went out of the council to observe what was done.

And all they that were with him; there were both Pharisees and Sadducees in their sanhedrim or great council, as appears Ac 23:6; but the high priest and a great part were at this time Sadducees.

Indignation, or zeal, which is the best when kindled (as the fire on the altar) from heaven, regularly acting for God's truth and word; and the

worst when inflamed by carnal affections, and set upon wrong objects for self-ends. The pique these Sadducees had against the apostles and their doctrine, was, because they taught the resurrection, which the Sadducees denied.

Acts 5:18

Ver. 18. See Ac 4:3.

Acts 5:19

Ver. 19. God useth the ministry of angels, though he might otherwise do what pleaseth him. An angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Angels ministered to Christ, Mt 4:11; and are *all ministering spirits, sent forth to master for them who shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb 1:14; and encamp round about them that fear God, Ps 34:7.

Opened the prison doors; and shut them again, after that the apostles were gone out, as appears Ac 5:23.

Acts 5:20

Ver. 20. *Stand;* the word implies courage and stedfastness of mind, as well as such a posture of the body.

All the words; without preferring some acceptable truths before others more ungrateful, if necessary towards their salvation. Christ for a time did limit them; they might not tell any *that he was Jesus the Christ*, Mt 16:20, nor the vision which they had seen in his transfiguration, Mt 17:9. Now this prohibition is taken off. Thus the sun does not shine in his full glory all at once.

This life; some admit of an hypallage, and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading in this place, *these words of life*; and the rather because by *this life* is ordinarily understood the present, temporary life, as in 1Co 15:19: but there needs not this translatitious sense; by *this life*, the

angel might very well understand eternal life and salvation, for that was it which the Sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life the apostles were imprisoned.

Acts 5:21

Ver. 21. *When they heard that;* having received a command from God, they resolved to obey him rather than man.

Early in the morning; taking the first opportunity, though they could not but be sensible of the danger they ran into.

The council; the sanhedrim, or great council.

The senate; the judges of their inferior courts, or the chief amongst the priests or senators; either living in the city, or coming thither upon that festival occasion.

Acts 5:22

Ver. 22. These men, thus sent to hinder the spreading of the gospel, could not but be a means of confirming it, when they saw, and declared what they found; so easily can God make use of what is intended against his truth and people unto the advantage of either.

Acts 5:23

Ver. 23. All means imaginable were used to secure their prisoners; but when God will deliver, what can keep them? When God will work, who can hinder? Job 11:10. It is strange, that so great evidence of the innocence of the apostles, and truth of their doctrine, should be ineffectual; but prejudice is insuperable, unless to the mighty power of the grace of God; and this blindness cannot be cured, but by God's *Ephphatha*.

Acts 5:24

Ver. 24. *The captain of the temple;* the commander over the soldiers who were set to guard the temple, either to secure the treasure there, or to be in a readiness to suppress any tumult thereabouts; Pilate speaks of this, Mt 27:65.

The chief priests; the heads of the families, or chief of the courses of the priests.

They doubted of them; by what means these wonderful things were done; for they were loth to see and acknowledge God in them.

Acts 5:25

Ver. 25. So true is that in Isa 8:10, *Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought.* But, *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever,* Ps 33:11.

Acts 5:26

Ver. 26. *Brought them without violence;* they might, peradventure, think it needless or impossible to bind *them* against their wills, who had opened the prison, and so miraculously came out: however, another more certain reason is given of it;

they feared the people; they feared men more than God, who had done so great things amongst them.

Acts 5:27

Ver. 27. When they are about to do the greatest injuries, they pretend to right; and will not judge them, without giving them leave to answer for themselves.

Acts 5:28

Ver. 28. *Did not we straitly command you?* As indeed they had, Ac 4:18; hence they aggravated the apostles' crime, as done out of malice, and not out of ignorance.

This name, and this man's blood, are odious reflections, full of contumely against our blessed Saviour, as if he had not been worthy the naming by them.

To bring this man's blood upon us; they shunned not the sin of murder, but are afraid or ashamed of the imputation of it: as many scruple not to commit that wickedness which they would be loth to be thought guilty of, *Blood;* the punishment of his bloodshedding.

Acts 5:29

Ver. 29. This they all agree in, and it is the common sense of all considering men; as Socrates in his apology told the Athenians, I embrace and love you, O Athenians, and yet I will obey God rather than you. This the apostles had formerly asserted, Ac 4:19.

Acts 5:30

Ver. 30. *The God of our fathers;* this is the rather mentioned by the apostle, that they might not think our Saviour, or they his ministers, preached any other God unto them, but him whom they had worshipped from their forefathers.

Hanged on a tree; a tree, or wood, which is rather mentioned than a cross, that the allusion to De 21:23 might be more full, where he that is hanged on a tree is accursed; and in that Christ was *made a curse for us,* Ga 3:13.

Acts 5:31

Ver. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand:* see Ac 2:33. A Prince;

to conquer and subdue all his enemies, to defend and protect his subjects.

A Saviour; to save from sin, according to his name, *Jesus*, Mt 1:21; viz. from the condemnation that is due unto it, and the pollution that is acquired by it.

To give repentance; repentance is the gift of God; and nothing does more avail with us to repent, than the loss of Christ, (his bitter suffering and death), by whom the world is crucified unto us, Ga 6:14: and if repentance includes newness of life, (as it does), who would not walk in that way which our blessed Lord hath recommended, and in which only we can enjoy him; that doing as he did, we may come at last to be where he is?

And forgiveness of sins, which never fails to accompany true repentance, and is therefore also called *repentance unto life*, Ac 11:18.

Acts 5:32

Ver. 32. *We are his witnesses;* they refuse not to bear their testimony for Christ, who witnessed a good profession for us.

So is also the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost does witness,

1. By the apostles; through his grace and strength they bear their record.
2. By all the miracles that were wrought, for they were only done by his power.
3. By enabling any to believe these things; which belief is his work.
4. Not to say that the Holy Ghost was a witness of the things concerning Christ at his baptism, and the several attestations he gave, *saying, This is my beloved Son*, Mt 3:17.

Obey him; some read, believe in him, which is to the same purpose; for there is no true repentance where there is no faith; nor no saving faith where there is no repentance and amendment.

Acts 5:33

Ver. 33. *They were cut to the heart;* they grinned with their teeth, visibly showing the rage and fury that was within them, by which they were as sawn and divided asunder; malice and rage being a grievous torment to the cruel and malicious, ο γαρ μεγας πονος το μη ζην καλωσ.

Acts 5:34

Ver. 34. *A Pharisee;* this sect was accounted more mild than the Sadducees.

Named Gamaliel; it is thought that this man was the same at whose feet Paul sat, Ac 22:3: that he was the instructor to Barnabas and St. Stephen, with many other stories concerning him, are doubtful; howsoever, God made use of him, though as yet an enemy to his church and people, to plead for and protect them to his power. God can effect any thing without or against means, and suddenly to make such as were against him to be for him and his truth.

Commanded to put the apostles forth; that they might consult amongst themselves what to do with them: thus Ac 4:15.

Acts 5:35

Ver. 35. *A wise and good caution;* for he that injures another brings the worse mischief upon himself, both in the sense of having done evil, and in being exposed to the revenging hand of God, whose property vengeance is, Heb 10:30.

Acts 5:36

Ver. 36. *Before these days;* probably under the reign of Augustus, as he whom Josephus mentions was another under the reign of Claudius.

Theudas; some suppose it a contracted name of Theodorus, as Demas is thought to be of Demetrius; though others think it to be of a Hebrew original.

Acts 5:37

Ver. 37. *Judas of Galilee*; whether this was the same Judas who was called Gaulonite, from the place of his birth, a town in or near Galilee, and Galileus, from the province itself in which he was born, it is not so material to discuss, Josephus makes mention of two of this name.

The taxing; setting down all their names at the command of the Roman emperor, whereby,

1. They professed themselves to be his subjects.
2. They paid him a certain rate, in token of subjection, for every head, as poll money.
3. By this means he knew the number of his subjects, and the strength or weakness of every province. This was another tax than that mentioned Lu 2:2, which is there called the first.

Acts 5:38

Ver. 38. *And now I say unto you*; he undertakes to advise them what they should do in the present case.

Refrain from these men; have nothing to do with them, as Pilate's wife advised him concerning our Saviour, Mt 27:19. Gamaliel interposes, partly out of his moderate and mild disposition; partly out of fear, lest if they slew the apostles they might incense the Romans, who were very jealous of their authority, and had taken away the power of capital punishments from the Jews.

For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; this argument, or dilemma, which Gamaliel uses for the sparing of the apostles,

is of force either way; as that question our Saviour propounds concerning the baptism of John, Mt 21:25. This first part is evident, for that building must needs fall which is built upon the sand, Mt 7:27.

Acts 5:39

Ver. 39. The other part of the dilemma.

The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, Pr 19:21 Isa 46:10; and it must needs be so, for all power is his, in whom we live and move, Ac 17:28.

Fight against God; they who afflict and contend with his people unjustly, though they little think so, set themselves against God, who will overcome at the last, and triumph over his and his people's enemies.

Acts 5:40

Ver. 40. *To him they agreed;* they yielded to his reason and argument, being persuaded and convinced by it.

Beaten them; this was what our Saviour had foretold them, Mt 10:17; and thus the husbandmen took the householder's servants and beat them, Mt 21:35. They had power yet left them by the Romans to punish offenders in their synagogues, but not capitally nor publicly. In this they left the good advice of Gamaliel, who had warned them not to fight against God.

Acts 5:41

Ver. 41. *Rejoicing;* it argued full persuasion of the truth, and great resolution to abide by it, that they could account so foul a disgrace for Christ's sake to be an honour.

That they were counted worthy to suffer; it is a condescension and favour, when God uses any to give testimony unto his truth, although it be by their suffering: Php 1:29, *Unto you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer;* as if to suffer for Christ were as great, if not a greater gift than to believe in

him.

Shame; scourging being a servile and disgraceful punishment.

For his name; Christ's name, or for Christ's sake, to assert his truth, &c.: some do not read the pronoun, but *the name*, put absolutely for God, as was usual amongst the Jews, out of reverence to God's name, lest they should profane it.

Acts 5:42

Ver. 42. This is the same with what we read Ac 20:20, *publicly, and from house to house*; that is, in the temple, and public places, they preached unto the Jews; and in more private places, (or houses), where they saw it needful; unto such they conversed with. They visited their flock, and instructed, exhorted, comforted them as their condition required. See the power of the grace of God; these were the men who forsook Christ when the soldiers came to apprehend him, they durst not be seen in his company; yet now they profess his name, and abide by their profession, though they are derided and beaten for it.

Acts 6:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 6:1-4 The apostles, that the poor might not be neglected,

recommend,

Ac 6:5,6 and with, the church's consent ordain, seven chosen

men, deacons.

Ac 6:7 The word of God prevaieth.

Ac 6:8-15 Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, confuting

those with whom he disputed, is brought before the

council, and by suborned evidence falsely accused of

blasphemy against the law and the

temple.

Ver. 1. Grecians; these were not such as are elsewhere called Greeks, either as being of that nation, or more generally taken for all Gentiles at large; but they were (as to their authority) Jews, and descended from such of them who, in several national calamities, were forced (or chose) to leave their country, and fly to Alexandria, and divers other places; yet kept themselves unmixed with other nations, retaining the knowledge of God, and coming to worship upon the solemn feasts; only, disusing the Hebrew language, they were more acquainted with the Greek tongue, (then commonly spoken every where), and used the Holy Scripture translated into that language, which made them the rather called Hellenists or Grecians.

Their widows were neglected in the daily ministration; they were not taken, as others, into the college, or number of widows, who in that time had some care of the poor; or rather, because they were not so largely allowed, or carefully looked after; for those that sold their goods, being Hebrews, they might not be so tender over the Hellenists, whose estates laying farther off, could not so readily be sold for the relief of themselves or others.

Acts 6:2

Ver. 2. The twelve; for such was their number now again, Matthias having supplied the place of Judas; this is that blessed number, or the root of it, which God hath so much magnified.

The word of God; preaching of the word, and other duties belonging to it.

Serve tables; either providing for the agapae and love feasts, or distributing to the necessities whereby they might be fed, and their tables provided.

Acts 6:3

Ver. 3. *Look ye out among you seven men;* as carefully and circumspectly as ye would in any cases of your own concerns.

Of honest report; a good direction, that obliges to this day, in all elections of any for the service of God and his church.

Full of the Holy Ghost; of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which were not bestowed on the apostles only.

And wisdom; or prudence, and skill in the word of God, which only is able to make a man wise unto salvation, 2Ti 3:15.

Acts 6:4

Ver. 4. *We will give ourselves continually;* we will stick close, and with perseverance, to this work.

To prayer, and to the ministry of the word; the two great employs of a minister of Jesus Christ; to pray unto God for the people, and to speak unto the people from the Lord: these, though great businesses, they durst not delegate from themselves unto others to perform for them.

Acts 6:5

Ver. 5. All these being Greek names, it is likely they were all Hellenists, and descended from Hebrew parents, but born in foreign countries; or amongst the Jews they might have other names, which St. Luke, writing this history, translated into Greek.

A proselyte of Antioch: see Ac 2:10.

Acts 6:6

Ver. 6. *When they had prayed;* prayer is the salt which seasoneth and sanctifieth all things.

They laid their hands on them; a rite used in the church of old,

1. In their sacrifices, Ex 29:15;

2. In their blessings, Ge 48:14

3. In their designations unto a charge or office; thus Moses on Joshua, Nu 27:18;

and from thence it was more easily derived unto the gospel church; our Saviour blessing thus the children which were brought unto him, Mt 19:13; and this also were ministers ordained in the primitive times, 1Ti 5:22.

Acts 6:7

Ver. 7. *A great company of the priests;* none so violent opposers of the gospel as these were (their interest in all likelihood, heightening their opposition); yet great is truth, especially the Spirit of truth, and did prevail; and though in itself the number might not be so great as to be called a great multitude, yet, considering who they were that were converted, it was very wonderful, and the few might pass for many.

Were obedient to the faith; Christianity is not a bare speculation, but a practical religion; and we believe no more than we practise: *Fac quod dicis et fides est,* Aug.

Acts 6:8

Ver. 8. *Full of faith and power;* enabled to preach, dispute, do, and suffer all things through Christ.

Did great wonders and miracles among the people; of whom he cured many; or, *among the people,* in that he did these wonders publicly.

Acts 6:9

Ver. 9. *Certain of the synagogue;* synagogues were as colleges in our universities, being used for instruction and learning; and were distinguished according to the persons that frequented them.

Libertines; some think these were natives of a certain country in Africa, from whence they were so called; but more probably they were such as were manumitted or made free, (as the word is commonly used for such), and in a middle condition between such as were free born and such as were bond slaves, and might desire to frequent with those of their own rank.

Cyrenians, &c.; the Jews spake of no less than four hundred and eighty synagogues at Jerusalem; a vast number, and probably increased by them: though several places are called Cyrene, this (from whence they took their name) was in Africa in all likelihood, it being joined with that of the Alexandrians. So God pleased to sever the Hellenists, (or Jews by traduction), for the Gentiles were not yet called, that they might all hear the gospel in the language they understood best.

Acts 6:10

Ver. 10. *Not able to resist;* they did oppose it, but ineffectually.

The wisdom: The foolishness of God is wiser than men, 1Co 1:25. What then is his wisdom, through which this holy man spake?

The spirit; the Holy Ghost directing him, and putting a Divine power upon what he spake, according to the promise, Mt 10:20.

Acts 6:11

Ver. 11. What these *blasphemous words* were, we have, Ac 6:14; which show, that the veil was yet over their hearts, and that they could not endure to hear, that the shadows must flee away when the sun is risen, and the types be abolished when the substance of the things typified is exhibited; for this truth was all the blasphemy this holy martyr was guilty of.

Acts 6:12

Ver. 12. Being overcome by reason and arguments, they betake themselves to all the evil arts imaginable; they suborn witnesses against St. Stephen, as was done against Naboth, and (that we read of) never before; they make the people, and the number, (which is usually the worst), on their side; then they complain of him to the priests, &c.; and lest any, or all these, should fail, they lay violent hands on him themselves. Sin goes on as a current, and never stops, unless an Almighty word be spoken unto it to go no further.

Acts 6:13

Ver. 13. They mingled in their testimony false things with truths, as they who witnessed against our Saviour had done. St. Stephen might possibly have inculcated what our Saviour had foretold, Lu 19:43,44, and both have been very innocent; for neither of them spake with any abhorrence of, much less blasphemy against, the law or the temple; but in that the witnesses perverted and added to their words, they are deservedly branded as *false witnesses*. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, is a granted maxim in the case of witness bearing.

Acts 6:14

Ver. 14. This place; that is, the temple. Jeremiah had foretold this long ago, and did escape, though very narrowly, Jer 26:12-16; Daniel had prophesied of the destruction both of *the city and the sanctuary*, Da 9:26; and yet these were in great respect amongst them: and none could speak more plainly of the calling of the Gentiles than Malachi, Ac 1:11: and yet when the apostles came to apply these very things more home and close, they could not endure them.

Acts 6:15

Ver. 15. With an extraordinary lustre and radiancy, above what appears in men, whereby they might be distinguished, as Mt 28:2,3, affecting the

beholders with admiration; thus Moses's face did shine.

Acts 7:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 7:1-8 Stephen, called upon to answer the charge against him,

relateth how God called Abraham, and gave him and his

seed the land of Canaan by promise,

Ac 7:9-16 how Joseph was sold by his brethren, and Jacob with

his family went down into Egypt,

Ac 7:17-36 how, when they were oppressed by the Egyptians, Moses

was born, and sent to deliver Israel out of Egypt,

Ac 7:37-43 that this same Moses witnessed of Christ, received the

law, and experienced the disobedience and idolatry of

their forefathers,

Ac 7:44-50 who had the tabernacle of witness, till Solomon built

the temple,

Ac 7:51-53 He reproacheth his hearers with imitating their

fathers' rebellion against God, and persecution of his

Christ, and prophets, by having themselves murdered

transgressed the law they had received,

Ac 7:54-60 Stung with reproach, they stone him, looking up with

faith unto God, and calling upon Jesus to receive his

soul, and forgive his persecutors,

Ver. 1. *Then said the high priest;* who was resolved to condemn any, right or wrong, that should profess Christ, as appears Joh 9:22.

Are these things so? That he might seem just, he gives him a kind of liberty to answer for himself; not to defend his doctrine, but; to know out of his own mouth whether he preached it, or not.

Acts 7:2

Ver. 2. *Brethren;* to take away any prejudice they might have conceived against him, and to recommend, not his person as much as his doctrine to them, he calls them *brethren;*

1. As hoping in the same promises with them;
2. Observing the same law;
3. Worshipping the same God.

Fathers; a word of respect; especially the elder amongst them, or his judges: thus the Roman senators were called fathers; and magistrates ought to be revered as the fathers of their country.

The God of glory; who is also called, Ps 24:7, *the King of glory;* from whom all glory descends to angels or men. By this, and what follows, St. Stephen would show that he honoured the true God, and thought respectfully of the law, the temple, and the patriarchs, whom he was accused to contemn and disgrace. He names *Abraham*, because he was accounted the first father and patriarch of the Jews, and had the first clear promise that the Messiah should come of his seed.

Mesopotamia is sometimes taken strictly for that country which lies between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, from whence it had its name; sometimes more largely, including Chaldea; and so it is taken here.

Charran; a city of the Parthians, in the borders of Mesopotamia, towards the land of Canaan.

Acts 7:3

Ver. 3. This command given unto Abraham we read of, Ge 12:1,5,6; and it is here the rather spoken of by St. Stephen, to prove that Abraham was in the favour of God, and did truly serve him, before he ever saw the land of Canaan, and before the ceremonial law was given by Moses, and, much more, before the temple was built; and therefore it could not be blasphemy in him to hold that God might be served without those ceremonies, and worshipped elsewhere than in Jerusalem.

The land which I shall show thee; this was the glory of Abraham's faith, that it submitted absolutely to God, and enabled Abraham to go he knew not whither, Heb 11:8, for God did not so much as name the place he would have him go unto.

Acts 7:4

Ver. 4. Abraham had as great a love to his kindred and native country as others have; but he had a greater faith, which made him yield to God's call and command, and follow from place to place the will of God, who is said here to have removed Abraham, and does choose the inheritance and habitation for his people, Ps 47:4.

Acts 7:5

Ver. 5. *He gave him none inheritance in it;* it is true that Abraham had a field, and the cave of Mach-pelah, Ge 23:9; but that was of no use to Abraham whilst alive, but to bury him in when dead; besides, it was not as an inheritance by God's gift, but it was purchased with his money.

Not so much as to set his foot on; whereby the least parcel of ground is meant: hence St. Stephen would prove, that Abraham's happiness, and theirs too, if they rightly understood it, did not depend upon the enjoyment of that place and country.

And to his seed after him; faith met with a double difficulty, not only Abraham must believe he should have all that country given him for an

inheritance, in which he had not a foot of land, but he must also believe that it should be his seed's after him, whenas he had no children; but thus faith is *the evidence of things not seen*, Heb 11:1.

Acts 7:6

Ver. 6. *Should sojourn in a strange land*, as men which dwell in houses that are not their own; which seem to contradict the promise mentioned in the foregoing verse; but it is only to make Abraham the more believe against hope in hope, as it is said, Ro 4:18; though there were never so many difficulties more, for what God hath promised faith would overcome them all. This very space of *four hundred years* is also mentioned, Ge 15:13; which is thus computed: from the birth of Isaac (the promised seed) to the birth of Jacob, sixty years; from Jacob's birth to his going into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years; from thence to their deliverance out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; this period is accounted, Ex 12:40,41, to be four hundred and thirty years; which also St. Paul reckons by, Ga 3:17; but then thirty years is added unto the account, being the space of time between the first promise made unto Abraham of this seed, and the birth of Isaac, in whom the promise was to be fulfilled; St. Stephen here reckoning only from the birth of Isaac.

Acts 7:7

Ver. 7. *Will I judge*, or punish; and so the Egyptians were punished, not by human means, but by Divine power, and with God's own immediate hand, and that in the fulness of time, the very night in which God's promise was to take effect: and therefore it is *a night to be much observed*, Ex 12:42, as showing, that the sabbath of his people, and the destruction of his enemies, slumber not, 2Pe 2:3.

Serve me in this place; in Mount Horeb. The reason why God delivers his people is, that they may serve him, as Lu 1:74,75; and so long as God hath any work for them to do in this world, he will preserve and deliver them.

Acts 7:8

Ver. 8. *He gave him, Abraham, of whom he was speaking, the covenant of circumcision;* of which covenant, circumcision was the sign and seal by which, on the part of Abraham and his seed it was stipulated, that they should put off all carnal affections.

Begat Isaac, after the promise: so that the promises were not given for Isaac's sake, but Isaac was given for the promise' sake; which made these things more fit to represent gospel grace, of which St. Stephen was preaching.

The twelve patriarchs; the heads of the tribes, from whom they were denominated. Of this genealogy, see Mt 1:1,2, &c., and the history of it in Genesis.

Acts 7:9

Ver. 9. *Moved with envy;* enraged: the holy martyr accommodates his apology so, as that they may yet have occasion to reflect on themselves; for as they had sold our Saviour unto strangers, so had their fathers *sold Joseph. But God was with him,* to favour and bless him; for God's presence brings all good along with it: with this he comforts himself and others, that it was not without example or precedent that God should be with such whom their persecutors could not endure.

Acts 7:10

Ver. 10. *And delivered him out of all his afflictions;* the effect of God's presence with him, which to his people is always in an especial manner, not only as he is with all other creatures, but as the soul is with the body, most effectually, so is God with them.

And gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh: thus God brought Daniel into favour, Da 1:9, and hath all hearts in his hands.

Acts 7:11

Ver. 11. *A dearth*; this is mentioned, Ge 41:54, &c.

And great affliction; as seldom any mischief comes alone, rapine and many diseases follow famine.

Found no sustenance; any coarse diet, grass or herbs.

Acts 7:12

Ver. 12. The history is known, Ge 42:1-38. *Our fathers*; our progenitors, Jacob's sons, from whom we are descended.

Acts 7:13

Ver. 13. Upon their second coming into Egypt, Ge 45:3,4,16, Joseph made himself known unto them.

Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh; for the continuance of their sustenance, and fulfilling of what was foretold.

Acts 7:14

Ver. 14. *All his kindred*; his affinity, and not consanguinity only, which may be the reason why, though in Ge 46:26 it is said, that all *the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt were threescore and six*, (it being then added, they were all such as *came out of his loins*), yet it is said they were seventy persons, Ge 46:27, Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons (who were also of the promised seed) being added unto the number. In this account of St. Stephen, his sons' wives might be added, which make up seventy-five. There are other accounts of this difference; but it is not of any consequence as to faith and holy living, which are only necessary unto salvation: the wonderful increase to so many hundred thousands of men, besides children, spoken of, Ex 12:37, notwithstanding the barbarous cruelty of the Egyptians, is to be admired.

Souls; the nobler and better part, by which they are numbered, and according unto which they are esteemed by God.

Acts 7:15

Ver. 15. Which St. Stephen puts them in mind of the rather, that he might insinuate, no country, nor place, nor temple, were so necessary, but that (notwithstanding they had none of them) their forefathers did live and die in the fear and favour of God, although in Egypt, out of the Promised Land, &c.

Acts 7:16

Ver. 16. That they carried Joseph to bury him in Canaan, according to the oath he made them take, Ge 1:25, is certain; and that this was desired to be done for him out of faith, Heb 11:22; but is not so certain (unless this place be so understood) that the rest of the patriarchs were so translated after their death: yet it is very likely; for, first: They had as much reason to desire it as Joseph had; they believed the same promises, and had an interest in that land as well as he. Secondly: Their posterity bore the same respect unto them that Joseph's family did to him. Thirdly: It seems alike reasonable, that none of those twelve heirs to the land of Canaan should be left in the land of bondage. This place is acknowledged to be most difficult, and the difficulties are better not to be mentioned than ill solved, which the nature of these notes (not to mention other reasons) might occasion: whosoever will consider the intended shortness of the story, with the usual idioms of the Hebrew language, from which it was deduced, may take this as a paraphrase upon the whole verse: And Jacob and our fathers died, and were removed to Sychem, and were laid in sepulchres, in that which Abraham bought for money, and in that which was bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem. *Dr. Lightfoot, in locum.*

Acts 7:17

Ver. 17. *Of the promise*; of the fulfilling of the promise, either of the

increase of his seed, or of their deliverance out of bondage, for both were promised, Ge 22:17; though at that very time there were the greatest endeavours to hinder either when God accomplished both.

Acts 7:18

Ver. 18. These words are taken from the Septuagint, Ex 1:8.

Acts 7:19

Ver. 19. Pharaoh resolves to *deal* (as he thought) *wisely*, Ex 1:10, and it is acknowledged that the Egyptians dealt subtilly with them, Ps 105:25. For they do not at once destroy them, which might have been hazardous, the Israelites being so numerous; neither could Egypt well spare at once so many inhabitants; (too great and sudden evacuations cause swoonings); but they endeavour their ruin by degrees:

1. Wasting them by hard labours.
2. Commanding the midwives privately to kill their males.
3. Casting out, or exposing, any whom they found spared.

Yet this people, attempted upon by so many secret and open means to bring them to destruction, God did preserve; and so he will his church, (which they did typify), maugre all the endeavours the most potent malice can use against it.

Acts 7:20

Ver. 20. *Exceeding fair*, or, *fiar* to God; which though some understand of the inward beauty of the mind, (which is indeed the most admirable), yet in this place there is no more to be understood by it, than the wonderful beauty of his body, which God bestowed in an extraordinary measure upon him, that it might be a means to attract the care and pity of Pharaoh's daughter, as it afterwards came to pass: besides, that which is eminent in

any kind, is, by a Hebraism, said to be of God: upon this account Nineveh is called a city of God, Jon 3:3; and we read of Rachel's great wrestlings, or wrestlings of God, Ge 30:8. Josephus says, that Moses was so beautiful, that all who passed by left the business they were about to gaze at him, Antiq. ii. 5.

Acts 7:21

Ver. 21. *Was cast out;* exposed and left, Ex 2:2, &c.; now was the time for God to take him up, as in Ps 27:10.

Pharaoh's daughter, an enemy to God's Israel; yet God did make use of her to bring tip and educate Moses, who was their deliverer, adopting him for her son, Ex 2:10, and giving him education accordingly.

Acts 7:22

Ver. 22. *Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;* the Egyptians were anciently famous for learning, especially in astronomy, and some other parts of philosophy.

Mighty in words; he was eloquent.

And in deeds; his deeds were equal to his words; he could do, as well as say, what became him.

Acts 7:23

Ver. 23. *Forty years old;* this age of Moses is not set down in his history, but they might have it by tradition, which is here confirmed unto us by the holy penman: these forty years Moses spent in Pharaoh's court.

It came into his heart; it speaks these thoughts and resolutions to have been from God, that such a great courtier should so far debase himself; therefore this is deservedly attributed unto his faith, Heb 11:24, which is *the gift of God*, Eph 2:8.

Acts 7:24

Ver. 24. This fact of Moses some defend by the law of nature, which allows us to protect the innocent; but many things we know were done by an extraordinary warrant, which we are not to imitate; nor by our own authority to avenge ourselves or others.

Acts 7:25

Ver. 25. This they might have inferred,

1. From his extraordinary deliverance out of the Egyptians' hands, and out of the river, when young.
2. From his readiness to defend them: it was wonderful, that such a one as he was, and might have been, should mind them.
3. From the drawing near of the time of their deliverance, which they could not, without negligence, be wholly ignorant of.

By his hand; by his means and ministry.

But they understood not: stupidity is frequently charged upon this people: they then did not receive Moses, as these now would not receive Christ.

Acts 7:26

Ver. 26. *He showed himself;* as one appointed by God to deliver them, which he had evidenced before.

Would have set them at one again; with great earnestness, and as far as words could do, he compelled them.

Saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; these words are not mentioned, Ex 2:13, but something otherwise than here; but the sense is here and there the same.

Brethren, not so much being all descended from Abraham and the patriarchs; but in that they all worshipped one and the same God, which is the greatest obligation to concord and agreement that can be; and if any offence to be given, or trespass committed, it obliges us as much to pass it by and pardon it: *Forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father, Ge 1:17*.

Acts 7:27

Ver. 27. The injurious are most averse from peace, and one sin makes way for another. This was a causeless cavil, especially from such a one as had known what Moses had done, as an essay of his being the deliverer of God's Israel.

Acts 7:28

Ver. 28. He charges this great crime upon Moses, to hinder him from further reprovng of him: though recrimination do not make him, or any other, more innocent; yet men ordinarily use it, as if it were some satisfaction to them that they are not wicked alone, but that others are as bad or worse: this better befits an Egyptian than an Israelite.

Acts 7:29

Ver. 29. *Then fled Moses;* knowing that what he had done to the Egyptian would be discovered to Pharaoh, and his life in danger.

The land of Madian; inhabitant by the posterity of Midian, Abraham's son by Keturah, Ge 25:1,2. Moses was forty years in Egypt, forty years in Midian, with Jethro or Jether, who was called also Reuel, Ex 2:18, and Hobab, Nu 10:29, and the other forty years in the wilderness, which make up the hundred and twenty years of his life, De 34:7. This makes to St. Stephen's purpose, to prove that God is always with them that fear him, in what country or place soever; as he was with Abraham in Mesopotamia, and with his people in Egypt, so with Moses in Midian.

Acts 7:30

Ver. 30. *Forty years;* so long it pleased God to try Moses's faith, and his people's patience.

Mount Sinai, in the desert of Arabia, where the law was afterwards delivered, Ex 18:5 19:3.

An angel; not a created, but the uncreated Angel; the Angel of the new covenant, as may be seen Ac 7:32, and by Moses putting off his shoes because the place was holy, Ex 3:2,5; he is also in Ex 3:4 called the Lord. God still appeared in such a manner as was most instructive to them he appeared to, and to us; as here in *a flame of fire in a bush* to show that he was with his people in all their sufferings, and would so provide, that they should not be consumed by them; they might be purified, but should not be destroyed.

Acts 7:31

Ver. 31. *He wondered at the sight;* seeing the bush on a flame, and not consumed, contrary to the nature of devouring flames; that he might be convinced of God's presence, and made the more attentive to what God should say, and prepared to yield obedience unto it.

Acts 7:32

Ver. 32. *I am the God of thy fathers;* that he might know from whom he had his commission, and by whom he was to be sent.

The God of Abraham, &c.; mention is made of these, because God had made unto them the promise of delivering their posterity, which he was now about to do, the time being fully come.

Moses trembled: all great admiration hath some fear joined with it: God's appearing, though in mercy, was ever full of terror and amazement; what

will his appearing be, when he shall come in judgment to render vengeance! Who then shall be able to abide?

Acts 7:33

Ver. 33. *Put off thy shoes;* either out of reverence to the Divine presence, as Jos 5:15, or that thereby he might show that he resigned himself wholly to God's will and disposal; as in Ru 4:7, the kinsman, by pulling off his shoe and giving it to Boaz, did resign all his right he might have had to Ruth and the inheritance.

Holy ground, whilst God manifested his presence there.

Acts 7:34

Ver. 34. *I have seen, I have seen;* seeing I have seen, I have attentively seen and considered; it is doubled to show the certainty of it: if earthly parents, especially, look after their children when weak, much more our heavenly Father.

I have heard their groaning; though but sighs, and scarce framed into words.

Am come down; spoken after the manner of *inch*, according unto which God is said to come down unto any when he delivers them from their troubles, and to go from them when he leaves them in them: see Ex 3:7,8, from which place, according to the reading of the Septuagint, these words are taken.

Acts 7:35

Ver. 35. *A deliverer;* or, a redeemer; but only as a type of Christ, *in whom alone we have redemption through his blood,* Eph 1:7; as Moses by the blood of the paschal lamb brought forth and saved the people of Israel.

The hands of the angel; the power of the angel; it was not Moses, but

God, that wrought so great salvation.

Acts 7:36

Ver. 36. *After that he had showed wonders and signs:* God could with the least word or motion of his will save his people; but he chooseth so to do his wonderful works, that they may be had in remembrance.

In the Red sea; it is not agreed why it is so called; but this name of that sea is mentioned in profane authors. This whole verse, as divers others, refer to the history of it in Exodus, from Ex 1:1-14:31.

Acts 7:37

Ver. 37. St. Stephen would show, that he was so far from speaking against Moses, as they falsely imagined, that he recommended none but him, whom Moses had so long before spoken of.

A prophet; Christ the Messiah, and Head of the prophets: see Ac 3:22.

Him shall ye hear; or obey.

Acts 7:38

Ver. 38. *In the church in the wilderness;* or congregation; with the rest of the people in all their difficult journey.

The angel; see Ac 7:30.

The lively oracles; God's law and word is so called, as the only rule to walk by unto life, De 32:47: it is there said to be our life; and it is the only ordinary means of a spiritual and holy life, which it begets and preserves.

Acts 7:39

Ver. 39. Their glory being in their fathers, St. Stephen reminds them that many of them rebelled against God and his servant Moses; as they (their posterity) now were rebellions against Christ, who came to save them, as Moses before had done; but from a greater bondage, and by more valuable means.

In their hearts turned back again into Egypt; not so much towards that country, or food they had there, (garlick and onions), as towards their idolatry and superstition; as in the following verse appears.

Acts 7:40

Ver. 40. *Make us gods;* according to the Egyptians, who held that there were many gods, and divers degrees of gods; they therefore speak in the plural number.

This Moses: though they confess the great deliverance wrought by Moses's means, yet how contemptibly do they speak of him!

We wot not what is become of him: they could not but know that Moses was gone up into the mount unto God, at his command, and had not forgotten them, but had left Aaron and Hur to govern them; yet they soon forgot both God and Moses, notwithstanding the large and late experience they had of his wonders: this is left upon record against them, Ps 106:13,21.

Acts 7:41

Ver. 41. *They made a calf;* in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped their god Apis in that, or the like form of an ox.

The idol; the calf which they had made, which they could not be so sottish as to terminate their worship in, knowing that they themselves had made it, and it had not made them; yet they are for this charged to have committed idolatry, 1Co 10:6,7.

Rejoiced; which joy they express by feasting, singing, and dancing, Ex

32:6.

The works of their own hands; so this idol, and idols generally, are called, Ps 115:4 135:15 which is enough to speak their emptiness and vanity; vain man can make but vain gods.

Acts 7:42

Ver. 42. *Then God turned,* from being as a Father to them, to be a Judge over them, to punish them; whereas formerly he had blessed them.

And gave them up; this was indeed to deliver them to Satan; God withholding his grace which they had abused, Ro 1:21,25, and giving them up, (to fall from one sin unto another), though not positively, yet permissively.

The host of heaven; the angels are so called, Lu 2:13; but it is rather here to be understood of the sun, moon, and stars, which are called so, De 17:3 Isa 40:26.

In the book of the prophets: the words here referred to are in Am 5:25. It is said to be *in the book*, in the singular number, because the twelve small prophets are by the Jews mentioned but as one book.

Have ye offered to me slain beasts, &c.: this positive question does vehemently deny that they had offered any sacrifices unto God whilst they were in the wilderness; but at the same time they had offered sacrifices unto idols; for when they had corrupted God's worship, their sacrifices were as no sacrifices unto him, Isa 1:11 Isa 43:23.

Acts 7:43

Ver. 43. *Took up the tabernacle,* on their shoulders, as they did the ark.

Of Moloch; the idol of the children of Ammon, which the Israelites were especially forbidden to worship, Le 18:21 20:2 yet they did ordinarily worship him, 2Ch 28:3 Jer 7:31 and there was a high place built by

Solomon for him, 1Ki 11:7.

The tabernacle of Moloch was either a chest or press in which that idol was put, or the chapels into which the worshippers of Moloch were admitted, according to the quality of the offering which they brought. Which of the planets they intended to honour hereby, whether the sun, or Mars, or Saturn, it matters not so much; any of these, or any other of their gods, might be called Moloch, taking the word appellatively.

Remphan, in the place here cited, is called by the prophet, *Chiun*; which is one and the same idol in both places, the prophet calling it by its name then in use; and St. Stephen, like unto the name the Septuagint had called it by: whether Saturn was intended by this, as some think, or Hercules, as others, it is not our present business to inquire.

Figures; images and representatives of the hosts of heaven, or of the planets.

Beyond Babylon; the prophet Amos saith, *beyond Damascus*, Am 5:27: here St. Stephen does not contradict the prophet, for they who were carried away beyond Babylon must needs be carried away beyond Damascus, as the ten captive tribes were, unto whom this was threatened.

Acts 7:44

Ver. 44. *The tabernacle of witness*; called also *the tabernacle of the congregation*, Ex 33:7, because about it on all solemn occasions the people assembled. Here it is called *the tabernacle of witness*, because God here testified or witnessed his glorious presence; and especially because in it the ark of the covenant, the law, and the testimony were kept.

According to the fashion that he had seen, Ex 25:40 Heb 8:5. Moses was charged not to vary from the prescript; God being jealous of his own appointments. Now this is the rather spoken of by St. Stephen, that he might prove that the place where God was worshipped in had varied, and therefore might also now be changed.

Acts 7:45

Ver. 45. *Jesus*, or Joshua, it being the same name, as appears also, Heb 4:8, only Jesus is more according to the Greek use: Joshua was a type of Jesus, and agreed with him in his name, and in the reason of his name; he having also saved the people, and brought them into the promised rest; yet the difference is as great between them as betwixt the heavenly Canaan and the earthly.

Before the face of our fathers; they were not able to look upon an Israelite, whilst God was for them.

Acts 7:46

Ver. 46. *Found favour before God;* as Lu 1:30.

Desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; it was David's earnest request, that he might any ways glorify God, especially in his worship, and that he might know where the ark should rest, and where the temple was to be built, its Ps 132:1-18 declares throughout.

Acts 7:47

Ver. 47. 1Ki 6:9 2Ch 3:1,2. *An house;* a fixed and stable structure, not movable, as the tabernacle was.

Acts 7:48

Ver. 48. This is also St. Paul's doctrine, Ac 17:21, which divers amongst the wiser heathens were persuaded of; for God cannot be comprehended in any place, no, not where he is worshipped; and therefore they did foolishly conceive that the worship of God was so tied to the temple, as if he himself had been included in it.

In temples; the primitive Christians abstained from calling the places of their assembling by the name of temples; and were charged by their pagan

enemies for having no altars, or temples, or images.

Acts 7:49

Ver. 49. The place referred unto, is Isa 66:1. *What house will ye build me, that shall be big enough for one so great as God is?* 1Ki 8:27.

Acts 7:50

Ver. 50. As appears in the history of the creation, Ge 1:1. It is spoken unto our capacity after the manner of men, and implies that God is too great to stand in need of temples or offerings; and that what worship he requires, is not for his own sake, for our righteousness cannot profit him; but for man's sake, that he might be exercised in the duties of religion and devotion.

Acts 7:51

Ver. 51. *Stiff necked;* a metaphor taken from heifers that are unaccustomed to the yoke.

Uncircumcised in heart; such as had still depraved affections, which they ought to have put away rather than the foreskin of their flesh; for they were commanded to circumcise their hearts, De 10:16, which also God promised to do for his people, De 30:6. And St. Paul was not the first who spake of a twofold circumcision, Ro 2:28,29 but God looked always to the inward and spiritual part of his own ordinances, and men's observance of them.

And ears; such as were not so much as willing to hear and know their duty.

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, speaking by his prophets and ministers, and exhorting to true and serious piety: by this St. Stephen would abate their glorying in circumcision, which they so much boasted of, *As your fathers did, so do ye:* thus the prophet Ezekiel, Eze 16:44, unto

which may be here alluded, *As is the mother, so is her daughter.*

Acts 7:52

Ver. 52. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* This is the rather said to stain all their glory from succession, and their ancestors, Mt 5:12 23:31,37.

The Just One; our Saviour deservedly, and by way of eminence, is so called; as not only being himself just, and fulfilling all righteousness, but being *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer 23:6, and is *of God made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1Co 1:30. This word is used in a forensic sense, and is the same with innocent, and opposite to guilty; whereby St. Stephen vindicates our Saviour, notwithstanding the unjust sentence passed here upon him.

The betrayers, in hiring Judas, *and murderers,* in that they excited Pilate to condemn him, and abetted the soldiers and others in executing of him.

Acts 7:53

Ver. 53. *The disposition of angels:* or ministry of angels; the commandments were published from them ministerially; or the Son of God, (called an Angel, Ac 7:35), accompanied with the militia of heaven, (for it is a military metaphor), did in the midst of that glorious retinue give the law, De 33:2 Ps 68:8 Ga 3:13,19.

And have not kept it; they transgressed the law, though so gloriously delivered by angels; and therefore it was no wonder if they despised the gospel, that was published by so mean and contemptible ministers.

Acts 7:54

Ver. 54. See Ac 5:33.

They were cut to the heart; they were angry to madness.

They gnashed on him with their teeth: gnashing of teeth is the curse of the damned, Mt 8:12, which men by their sins do prepare for. This corrosive was applied by a skilful hand, would they have endured the cure.

Acts 7:55

Ver. 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost;* filled with grace suitable to his present trial and suffering.

The glory of God; the glorious God, or so much of the throne and glory of God as mortal eyes are capable for to see.

Jesus standing on the right hand of God; being justified by God, though condemned by Pilate; and *standing* ready to assist and comfort all that should suffer for his sake.

Acts 7:56

Ver. 56. *I see the heavens opened;* God not suffering any distance to hinder this refreshing sight.

The Son of man; so Christ is frequently called; and St. Stephen would by this inform them, how vain they were in striving against Christ or his truth.

Standing on the right hand of God, as an Advocate, Soldier, or Captain for Stephen; or as one showing the prize unto him, which he was now running for, and had need to be encouraged with the sight of. But it seems strange that St. Stephen should tell the Jews of this heavenly vision, being they did not see it, although in the same place with him; but this he might do.

1. Out of his ardent love to Christ, desiring to magnify him.
2. To invite his enemies to repentance, now heaven was opened, and Christ's arms were stretched out to receive them.
3. To hinder any from being afraid to own Christ and his truths.

4. To terrify the most obdurate amongst them, by showing them their Judge, and minding them of his avenger.
5. That he might assert himself to be an eye witness of Christ's being risen again from the dead, which they made such difficulty to believe.

Acts 7:57

Ver. 57. *They cried out;* the rabble, or multitude.

Stopped their ears; that they might show their great detestation of what was said, and might not contract any guilt from it.

And ran upon him with one accord: this violence and fury was both against the law of God and the law of the land; and the number of zealots (there were some amongst that people eminently so called) provoked the Romans to destroy both city and temple.

Acts 7:58

Ver. 58. *Cast him out of the city;* that the city might not be polluted with his blasphemy.

Stoned him; this punishment was appointed for such as seduced them to the worship of false gods, De 13:6,10; and though all power of capital punishment was taken from them, as they themselves confess, Joh 18:31, yet what will not popular rage attempt?

The witnesses; who were by the law to cast the first stones, De 17:7, whereby the witnesses, if they had not testified true, did take upon themselves the guilt of the blood that was spilt, and freed the people, who only followed them in the execution.

Laid down their clothes; their upper garments, that they might carry and cast down the heavier stones.

Acts 7:59

Ver. 59. Stephen called upon him whom he saw standing, and that was our Saviour.

My spirit; or, my soul: thus our Saviour commended his spirit into his Father's hands, Lu 23:46 and this disciple imitates his Master, and comforts himself with this, that to be sure his soul should be safe, whatever became of his body.

Acts 7:60

Ver. 60. *He kneeled down;* a posture used in most earnest prayers; and if so, he prayed at least as earnestly for his enemies as for himself, he praying for them kneeling, and for himself standing.

Lay not this sin to their charge; do not weigh it, reckon or impute it, that it may not remain against them, to hinder their conversion. This our Saviour commanded, Mt 5:44, this he practised, Lu 23:34 and whosoever can thus pray for his enemies, and do good for evil, hath a great evidence that the Spirit of Christ is in him.

He fell asleep; he died; his death being thus expressed, in that,

1. He died quietly, as one fallen into a sleep.
2. Because of his certain hope of the resurrection.
3. As easily to be raised again by Christ, as one that sleeps is to be awaked by us.
4. It is an ordinary Hebraism to express death by sleep; which made St. Luke use it amongst them, with whom it was frequently thus expressed.

Acts 8:1

Chapter Summary

- Ac 8:1-8 The disciples being dispersed by reason of a great persecution at Jerusalem, a church is planted by Philip in Samaria.
- Ac 8:9-13 Simon the sorcerer is baptized, with many others.
- Ac 8:14-17 Peter and John are sent thither, who by prayer and imposition of hands give the Holy Ghost.
- Ac 8:18-25 Simon offereth money for the like power, is sharply reprov'd by Peter for his wickedness and hypocrisy, and admonish'd to repent: the apostles return to Jerusalem, having preach'd the word.
- Ac 8:26-40 Philip is sent by an angel to convert and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch.

Ver. 1. *Consenting unto his death;* well pleas'd with it, (as the word implies), and did approve it in thought, word, and deed, Ac 22:4,20; which is here not'd in the beginning of the narrative concerning this great apostle, that we might consider οἷος ἐξ οἴου, what a great change the grace of God did make; which was by him, and is by us the more to be acknowledg'd and magnify'd.

A great persecution against the church; not, as heretofore, against the apostles only; but now it was against the whole church.

All scatter'd abroad; the multitude of believers, at least as many as could flee; which was allow'd, or rather command'd, Mt 10:23, when they were persecut'd in one city, to flee unto another; especially such as were teachers amongst them (besides the apostles) were forc'd to remove from Jerusalem, and by this means did publish the gospel in all places whither they came; so that what was intend'd for the hinderance, God did overrule towards the furtherance, of the gospel; as he did afterwards, Php 1:12, and

still does, and ever will do.

Except the apostles; who were commanded to stay at Jerusalem, Ac 1:4; there they were to make their beginning, Lu 24:47, and from thence to proceed unto other parts, Isa 2:3; and whilst God had any work for them to do at Jerusalem, they knew that God could and would defend and maintain them in the midst of their enemies, as he had done the bush in the fire, Ex 3:3.

Acts 8:2

Ver. 2. It was an argument that they were *devout* (religious) indeed, that they durst, amongst such a multitude of persecutors and furious zealots, own their esteem for St. Stephen. It was piacular amongst the Jews, to touch the dead corpse of such a one as was put to death for blasphemy; and these perform such funeral rites for him, as were used for such only as were of note and eminency.

Made great lamentation over him; as the Jews were wont to do at the funeral especially of eminent persons: thus it was done at Jacob's interment, Ge 50:10; and thus had been done more lately at Lazarus's funeral, Joh 11:1-44, even by our Saviour himself, Ac 8:35: which lamentation was the greater, because of the church's loss at such a time.

Acts 8:3

Ver. 3. *He made havoc of the church;* Saul was a degree beyond the ordinary sort of persecutors, and was, as he does acknowledge himself, eminently *injurious*, 1Ti 1:13.

Entering into every house; house after house, sparing none.

Haling men and women; as by the hair of their heads.

Committed them to prison; this to be sure the Jews had yet retained power from the Romans to do. All this is but as a foil, to illustrate more the riches of God's mercy towards Saul.

Acts 8:4

Ver. 4. Now the partition wall was about to be broken down, and the Gentiles to be taken into the pale of the church, God provides this strange means towards it. The disciples are forced to flee for their lives out of Jerusalem, and have an opportunity to preach Christ and the gospel wheresoever they came: thus God can make light to come out of darkness, and makes Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, Ge 9:27.

Acts 8:5

Ver. 5. *Philip*; not the apostle, but the deacon of that name; for the apostles remained at Jerusalem, as Ac 8:1.

Samaria is a name both of a city and a country, so called from the chief city, 1Ki 16:24: here it is taken for that city, or at least a city in that country.

Preached Christ; the doctrine of Christ, his miraculous birth, holy life and death, and glorious resurrection and ascension, together with remission of sins only by faith in his name, &c.

Acts 8:6

Ver. 6. *Gave heed*; a good preparation towards their conversion, seeing *faith cometh by hearing*, Ro 10:17.

Hearing and seeing the miracles which he did; these miracles were as so many evidences of the truth he spake, by which he showed God's authority for what he said.

Acts 8:7

Ver. 7. *Unclean spirits, crying with loud voice*; this is frequently

mentioned, as Mt 8:29 Mr 1:26 3:11 5:8 Lu 4:41, to show how doth these evil spirits are to be forbid and kept from tormenting and destroying of us; and they are called *unclean spirits*, because they delight in sin, and instigate men unto it, which is spiritual uncleanness, and defile the soul.

Taken with palsies, and other diseases and infirmities: this was promised, Mr 16:17,18, that they which believe should cure in Christ's name, or by his power.

Acts 8:8

Ver. 8. *Great joy*; not only for the cures wrought upon their bodies, but much more for the word of reconciliation and salvation preached unto their souls: *joy in the Holy Ghost*, is one of the effects of the kingdom of God, Ro 14:17.

In that city; the despised Samaria rejoices, and the formerly beloved city of Jerusalem repines, at the gospel; such strange alterations does the free grace of God make.

Acts 8:9

Ver. 9. *Used sorcery*; magical enchantments, as a wizard.

Bewitched the people; caused them, as men in an ecstasy, to be amazed at and afraid of him.

Some great one; as if he had been God, or at least had some great favour with him, and had received some extraordinary power from him. Ecclesiastical histories speak much of him, and tell us that he had a statue set up in Rome for him, inscribed, To Simon the holy God.

Acts 8:10

Ver. 10. *From the least to the greatest*; showing how general their mispersuasion was; and no condition is exempt from the grossest mistakes,

if not prevented by the grace of God.

This man is the great power of God; it is said of this Simon, that he gave out himself to be that god, which any nation held to be the chiefest; and that he was the Messiah of the Jews, and the God of the Gentiles.

Acts 8:11

Ver. 11. *They had regard;* they acquiesced in what he said, and yielded obedience unto it; not only attending to his words with their ears, but with their hearts: so true is that which our Saviour says, Joh 5:43, *If any man come in his own name, him will ye receive.* These Samaritans shall rise up in judgment against most men, who do not thus regard what was said by Christ, and such as he hath sent.

Bewitched them; made them as out of their wits; they were not themselves, and could not act their reason.

With sorceries; such wonders as by the permission of God, and Satan's power, he did.

Acts 8:12

Ver. 12. *When they believed;* before they were baptized, being adult and strangers from the covenant, they must first evidence their right unto it, and profess their faith in Christ, and testify their conversation.

Concerning the kingdom of God; the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of his glory, which is one and the same, being begun here, but consummated in heaven hereafter.

Both men and women; women under the gospel are as capable of this seal of the covenant as men.

Acts 8:13

Ver. 13. *Simon himself believed;* Simon believed with an historical faith, that it was indeed true, that our Saviour had done miracles, and did rise from the dead, but his faith, to be sure, was dead all the while; neither did he believe with his heart, or purpose to live according to the law of Christ, which is the life of faith.

He continued with Philip; kept him constantly company, and was amongst the forwardest of the professors of Christ's faith.

And wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done; thus the magicians of Egypt were brought to acknowledge the finger of God, Ex 8:19, although their hearts were hardened.

Acts 8:14

Ver. 14. These were sent that they might further confirm the doctrine which Philip had preached amongst the Samaritans, and by apostolical authority constitute a church in Samaria.

Acts 8:15

Ver. 15. *They;* Peter and John.

Prayed for them; in this particular they did not pray for all that believed, amongst whom there were several women, Ac 8:12.

That they might receive the Holy Ghost; those extraordinary gifts of tongues, of prophesying of working miracles, &c. See Ac 10:45.

Acts 8:16

Ver. 16. *For as yet he was fallen upon none of them;* by which it is plain that the Holy Ghost as the author of saving grace, is not here meant, for so he was fallen upon all them that did believe, for faith is the gift of God; but he was not yet bestowed upon them as the author of those extraordinary gifts mentioned Ac 2:4.

They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:

1. They were baptized by his authority and commission, Mt 28:19.
2. By baptism they now belong unto and are united with him; they are *baptized into Jesus Christ*, Ro 6:3.

Acts 8:17

Ver. 17. That this laying on of the hands of the apostles was not intended here as any rite whereby the apostles did confirm some, or ordain others, seems evident from the context.

They received the Holy Ghost; the power of speaking with tongues, and working of miracles; which throughout this book is so often spoken of in this acceptance.

Acts 8:18

Ver. 18. *The Holy Ghost;* those extraordinary gifts before mentioned; for this appeared visibly and audibly, and by this indeed was signified the great change God's Spirit makes where he comes.

He offered them money; this notorious hypocrite values these outward gifts; how much more valuable are the inward and spiritual gifts of God!

Acts 8:19

Ver. 19. Such an extraordinary power of working miracles he did not desire that he might glorify God, or confirm the truths of the gospel (now professed by him); but out of an insatiable desire of gain, and ambition to keep up his reputation, seeing how the apostles had done beyond what he was able to do.

Acts 8:20

Ver. 20. *Thy money perish with thee;* a formal execration or curse, not only on his money, but also upon Simon himself; but always to be conditional, viz. unless he repented.

Thou hast thought: our hearts are to be watched over; our thoughts may be exceeding sinful, as here, which made his words or desires to be so ill taken.

Acts 8:21

Ver. 21. *Neither part nor lot in this matter;* no inheritance or share in such a thing as this, to wit, either in the receiving or conferring the Holy Ghost; or in that eternal life which we preach; thou hast no part in it, neither art thou fit to be a minister of it.

Thy heart is not right in the sight of God: the apostle had the gift of *discerning of spirits*, which is mentioned 1Co 12:10; which might cause the execration in the foregoing verse, and in divers other places of Scripture, 2Ti 4:14.

Acts 8:22

Ver. 22. The only remedy and help in his (otherwise) desperate case. This is not spoken as if it were doubtful whether true repentance should obtain pardon, but whether Simon Magus's repentance were true. Repentance is a condition under which God proposeth our pardon and forgiveness, but it is far from being the cause of it.

Acts 8:23

Ver. 23. *The gall of bitterness;* the same with *gall and wormwood*, De 29:18: or gall and bitterness; signifying a very bad constitution and disposition of soul or mind, such as may be compared unto that meat which the gall of any creature hath corrupted. And for Simon Magus to be

in the gall of bitterness, is yet worse than to have the gall of bitterness in him; as to *be born in sin*, which the Pharisees upbraided the blind man with, Joh 11:34, denotes more intended thereby than that he had sin from his birth in him: thus David bewails that he was *shapen in iniquity*, Ps 51:5 and thus may those expressions of St. Paul be understood, of being *in the flesh*, and being *in the Spirit*, Ro 8:9. This also shows (if any sensible or outward thing could show it) what a bitter and poison my thing sin is, no gall so bitter, no poison so deadly.

The bond of iniquity; either the judgment St. Peter had threatened to deter him from sin was this bond, or his sin itself might be rather so called: the we read of *the bands of wickedness*, Isa 58:6. One sin is twisted with another, hard to be severed or broken, and draws on judgment powerfully.

Acts 8:24

Ver. 24. Simon Magus was convinced that he was indeed such as the apostles had spoken him to be; and knowing them to be powerful with God, he desires this of them. He feigns himself to be a true penitent, being terrified with the threatening of St. Peter, Ac 8:20, and probably fearing the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira might befall him, which it is likely he had heard of.

Acts 8:25

Ver. 25. Not only in the chief city, but in the smallest villages, these great apostles spend their pains; for so it was promised unto them that they should receive power to do, Ac 1:8.

Acts 8:26

Ver. 26. Some speak of two Gazas, one distinguished from the other by this epithet of *desert*; but rather there were two ways unto one and the same Gaza, and that it was not the city but the way unto it, which is called desert; by which difference, here mentioned, the angel admonishes Philip not to go the ordinary road, but the more unusual road over the mountians,

which was rarely travelled over, but was now necessary to be gone in to meet with the eunuch. God telleth our wanderings, and ordereth our steps.

Acts 8:27

Ver. 27. *A man of Ethiopia:* the Ethiopians were the most despicable unto the Jews; and Homer calls them, εσχατοι ανωρων; but God would now show that there is no difference of nations with him; but in every nation, he that worketh righteousness shall be accepted, Ac 10:35.

An eunuch; in great esteem in courts, especially to attend on queens, to avoid all suspicion: here that prophecy was fulfilled, Isa 56:4,5: though both in the Hebrew and (anciently) in the Greek tongue a eunuch signified more largely, viz. any attendant in the chamber.

Candace; a name common to the queens of that country; as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaohs, and the emperors of Germany are called Caesars.

Come to Jerusalem for to worship; being a proselyte, he had been to worship God in that solemn festival of the passover.

Acts 8:28

Ver. 28. He had some knowledge of the true God, whom he came to worship, and he endeavours after more: and to him that thus hath, shall be given; and they that thus seek, shall find. God will rather work a miracle, than that any that sincerely desire and faithfully endeavour to know him, or his will, should be disappointed.

Acts 8:29

Ver. 29. *The Spirit said,* either by the ministry of an angel, as Ac 8:26, or by inspiration immediately by himself.

Go near; so near that you may speak with him that sits in it.

Join thyself to this chariot; stick close unto it, and leave it not.

Acts 8:30

Ver. 30. *Philip ran thither to him;* hastening to obey the Divine command, and coveting to gain a soul.

Heard him read the prophet Esaias, with a loud voice, it is like, to instruct some of his attendants.

Understandest thou what thou readest? Without understanding our reading is but as the tinkling of a cymbal.

Acts 8:31

Ver. 31. A wonderful modesty and humility in so great a man: he takes well Philip's interposing, and questioning with him; he acknowledges his ignorance, and desires further instruction, and condescends to be taught by one so much his inferior.

Acts 8:32

Ver. 32. God's providence is remarkable, that the eunuch should be reading this very scripture, which contains such fundamental truths, and which he had most need for to be informed of. The words referred unto are in Isa 53:7. Whether read in the Hebrew tongue, which the eunuch might have learned of many Jews living in Ethiopia; or whether they were read out of the translation of the Seventy, which was then in common use, is not so necessary an inquiry; both being to the same intent and purpose. Christ was indeed *as a sheep* for his patience, not opening his mouth to defend his own case; but especially he was as a sheep in being a sacrifice for us, the true paschal Lamb that causeth the destroyer to pass from us; and yet he is our Shepherd too, to supply and preserve us, Ps 23:1.

Acts 8:33

Ver. 33. *In his humiliation;* when our blessed Saviour was in his lowest condition, and the utmost degree of his exinanition; his soul being made a sacrifice for us, and suffering that desertion for a time we had merited for ever, and his body laid in the grave as in a prison; then *his judgment,* the punishment which was inflicted upon him in our stead, *was taken away;* for he brake the bonds of death, and opened the prison door: this was foretold, although in somewhat differing expressions, by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 53:7,8.

Who shall declare his generation? Those that shall be brought forth by this travail of his soul are innumerable, or his own eternal generation (who could do such great things as overcame death itself for us) is inexpressible: but by *generation* others (more to the scope of this place) understand Christ's duration, or abiding, notwithstanding that he died; γενεα, does often signify duration; and thus it is an ordinary expression with the prophet, Isa 34:10,17, *from generation to generation:* now none can comprehend that eternal duration of Christ, who dies no more, Ro 6:9, and of whose kingdom there is no end, Lu 1:33.

For his life is taken from the earth; Christ acquired his glory by his suffering; his very exceeding great weight of glory was indeed wrought for him by his afflictions, (as for us, 2Co 4:17), his becoming obedient unto the death was the cause why he was so highly exalted, Php 2:8,9.

Acts 8:34

Ver. 34. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this?* The modestly inquisitive man does get understanding; this question (God so ordering it) brings in the discourse concerning our Saviour.

Of himself, or of some other man? This the eunuch might well make a question, because Isaiah himself suffered much under Manasseh.

Acts 8:35

Ver. 35. *Opened his mouth;* so they were said to do when they began to speak of some weighty matter.

Began at the same Scripture; showing that the prophet, in that most signal prophecy, Isa 53:7,8 could not mean such things of himself, nor of Jeremiah, or of any other.

Preached unto him Jesus; things in that prophecy are applicable unto our blessed Saviour, but to none else.

Acts 8:36

Ver. 36. *A certain water;* this water is supposed to be a fountain in a town called Bethsora, or a river called Eleutherus, which in that road must needs be passed over; it being otherwise very dry, and water very scarce there.

What doth hinder me to be baptized? Although it was not expressly mentioned, Philip had informed this eunuch concerning baptism, its nature and use, which made him express such desire after it; which else he had not done.

Acts 8:37

Ver. 37. *With all thine heart:* a verbal profession is not a sufficient believing, Ro 10:10 though we can discern no other, yet God can, and will not be mocked: Philip, in God's name, requires a faith with all the heart, and not such as Simon Magus had, who is said to believe, and be baptized, Ac 8:13.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; this was the only thing necessary, either then or now, if rightly understood. The eunuch was instructed concerning God out of the law, and was one of them that waited for his salvation; which here he acknowledgeth to be only found in Christ, whom he owns to be the Messiah, who made *his soul an offering for sin*, Isa 53:10, and did bear our griefs, and carried our sorrows, Isa 53:4, and was wounded for our transgressions, Isa 53:5; for all these things Philip had told him were meant of our Saviour, which he did believe were so to

be understood.

Acts 8:38

Ver. 38. In hot countries this was usual, to baptize by dipping the body in the water; and to this the apostle alludes, when he tells the Corinthians, 1Co 6:1), that they are washed: but God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; sprinkling being as effectual as washing, and as significative also, representing the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, of which we read, Ex 12:3, which presignified the sprinkling the blood of Jesus, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world; and our hearts must by it be *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb 10:22. It is not the more or the less of the outward element which makes the sacraments effectual; but they are effectual only as they are God's appointments, and attended upon according to his will.

Acts 8:39

Ver. 39. Philip was suddenly and extraordinarily taken away from the eunuch's sight and company, that thereby the eunuch might be the more assured of the truth of those things which had been taught by him. The *rejoicing* was the effect of his faith; being now justified, he had *peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ro 5:1.

Acts 8:40

Ver. 40. Philip was set down by the Spirit at Ashdod of the Philistines, which is called by the Septuagint *Azotus*: names of persons and places do in tract of time vary. This place had been famous for the idol Dagon, 1Sa 5:3, and for being a chief place of the Philistines, those enemies to God's church; but Christ, when he comes, can cast Satan out of his strongest holds. This Azotus is accounted thirty-four miles from Gaza.

Acts 9:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 9:1-9 Saul, going towards Damascus, is encompassed with a

light from heaven, falleth to the earth, is called by

Christ, and led blind to Damascus.

Ac 9:10-22 Ananias is sent to him, by whom he is restored to sight,

and baptized: he straightway preacheth Christ boldly.

Ac 9:23-25 The Jews of Damascus seek to kill him.

Ac 9:26-30 He goeth to Jerusalem, and is brought to the apostles

by Barnabas: preaching boldly against the Grecians, he

is again in danger of his life, and is sent to Tarsus.

Ac 9:31 The church hath rest, and is multiplied,

Ac 9:32-35 Peter cureth Eueas of the palsy at Lydda,

Ac 9:36-43 and raiseth Tabitha to life at Joppa.

Ver. 1. St. Luke intending a narrative of the wonderful conversion of St. Paul, lets us know what manner of person he was before his conversion, that none might despond of the grace of God, who earnestly and heartily seek it.

Breathing out threatenings and slaughter; so full of rage within, that the stream was outwardly apparent, which that inward fire had sent forth: nothing less than destruction of the church is aimed at by its enemies; whilst Saul was one of them he hunted after their precious life too.

The high priest; who did usually preside in their great council, in which they took cognizance of such matters; The blood of Stephen did not quench their thirst, but increased it; they would spill more still.

Acts 9:2

Ver. 2. *To the synagogues;* this council, though it sat at Jerusalem, had a

power (whether commanding or recommending) over all the synagogues within or without Judea.

Of this way; this was eminently so called, being the way of God, and the way of life, and the only right and true way: any profession, persuasion, or manner of life, is called a way frequently in Scripture, 1Ki 15:26 Ps 91:2.

Men or women; it speaks their extraordinary rage, that would not spare the weaker sex, who are generally spared on that account.

Bring them bound; which shows that he carried many with him, to the further aggravation of his sin.

Unto Jerusalem; where they had power to judge of such things, and out of which it was impossible that a prophet should perish, Lu 13:33.

Acts 9:3

Ver. 3. He was near to Damascus before this wonderful vision, that, being struck blind, he might be the sooner led thither; as also, that the miracle might be more easily and publicly known, Damascus being the chief city of Syria; and, though about six days' journey from Jerusalem, inhabited by many Jews. This was done at noon day, the rather, that the light which Paul saw might appear to be beyond that which the sun gives; and this light was a symbol of that inward light, wherewith his mind was now to be enlightened; as also of the purity of the doctrine he was to preach, and holiness of his life which he was to lead; and most probably it was caused by the glorified body of Christ, which appeared unto him.

Acts 9:4

Ver. 4. *Saul fell to the earth,* struck with the amazing light and terrible voice of Christ; as also with the sense of the presence of God, which he knew was thus revered by Daniel, Da 8:17 10:9.

Saul, Saul; the name Saul is the rather mentioned, to mind him and us of his persecuting of Christ in his members, as his name sake had persecuted

David, who was a type of Christ; and it is ingeminated, or doubled, not only to rouse and awaken Saul, but to testify his love to him, and commiseration of him.

Why persecutest thou me? Christ was in heaven, beyond Saul's rage; but Christ and his church make but one body. Thus Christ says, I was hungry and thirsty, Mt 25:35. And in all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa 63:9. But *me* is here emphatically spoken, as if our Saviour had minded him of his great love and mercy to him, in dying and suffering for him; and why then should he persecute him?

Acts 9:5

Ver. 5. *Who art thou, Lord?* Saul was in a great consternation and doubling, whether it was God, or an angel.

Jesus whom thou persecutest: though he did not intend this persecution against Christ, yet our Saviour looks upon the good or evil done unto his members as done unto himself.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: this kicking against the pricks is a proverbial speech, taken either from oxen or slaves, whom they used with goads to prick on to their work, which when they kicked against, or opposed themselves to, they did not hurt the goads or pricks, but themselves; so shall all persecutors find that their mischiefs recoil upon themselves; Christ and his members shall be made here glorious by it: this metaphor is common in Scripture, De 32:15 1Sa 2:29. The pricks Saul had kicked against, were the sermons and miracles of St. Stephen and others.

Acts 9:6

Ver. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Saul, being thoroughly humbled, and brought to resign himself wholly to God, makes this question, giving up himself as a white paper, for Christ to write what he would upon: he had thought he had done God good service, (as it is said many persecutors should think so too, Joh 16:2), but he is now powerfully brought off from his obstinacy in that persuasion.

Go into the city; Damascus, which was near at hand. Whether Christ revealed his gospel now unto him, or in the three days in which he remained blind in Damascus, Ac 9:9, is not so certain; but it is certain that he was Ἐριστο διδασκτος, taught immediately by Christ himself, as he testifies. Ga 1:12, and in that, without any further instruction, he was baptized, Ac 9:17,18: yet many things might be left for Ananias to confirm him in; and God, by this sending of him to Ananias, would honour his own ordinance, and recommend the ministry and use of means, which are *the power of God unto salvation*, Ro 1:16: and thus, though God could have instructed Cornelius by the angel which appeared unto him, Ac 10:3, yet he is commanded to send for Peter, and to hear from him what he ought to do, Ac 9:5,6.

Acts 9:7

Ver. 7. Stood speechless: in Ac 26:14, these men are said to be fallen to the earth as well as Saul, which they might at first be, and now rose up; or rather, by standing still here is only meant, they, being sorely amazed, remained in the place in which they were, without going forward: thus the angel forbade Lot and his family to stay or stand in the plain, Ge 19:17, meaning that they should hasten forward.

Hearing a voice; the greater difficulty is, to reconcile these words with Ac 22:9, where it is expressly said, that these men did not hear the voice; but it is there added, *of him that spake* unto Saul; so that they might hear the voice of Saul, as it is said in this place, and wonder whom he spake unto, or what he spake about, they not hearing the voice or him that spake unto him, as in Ac 22:9 it is said: and it seems very likely that they should not hear the voice of Christ, for we read not that any of them were converted; and being left in their infidelity, they were in some respects the more undeniable witnesses of a great part of that miracle. But if it be understood of the voice of Christ in both places, then they might hear it, as it is said here, inarticulately, or the noise which that voice made; but not hear it articulately, or so as to understand it, as in a parallel case, Joh 12:29, the people are said to hear the voice that spake unto Christ from heaven, yet they heard so confusedly, as that they thought it had only, been thunder. To be sure, they who are converted, and they who are not converted, by

the word of God, may hear the word; but after a very different manner; they that are converted by it only hearing it inwardly, spiritually, effectually.

But seeing no man; these fellow travellers with St. Paul are said to see no man, but the expression here imports their doing their utmost for to see him that spake: thus God made a difference, Da 10:7, in the vision we read of there.

Acts 9:8

Ver. 8. *When his eyes were opened;* when he opened his eyes as at other times, when he did rise to see, the glorious light had so dazzled him, that he could see nothing: thus Saul as, and all men are, before their conversion; he had the shape of a man, and of one learned in the law, when notwithstanding he is blind, and sees or knows nothing as he ought to know.

Acts 9:9

Ver. 9. Some have thought that in these three days Paul had that rapture into the third heavens, which he speaks of, 2Co 12:2; but that seems rather to have been afterwards; God would, however, by this humble and try him, and excite his dependence wholly upon him, and that he might value his restored sight the more.

Neither did eat nor drink; that by fasting he might be more intent in prayer; for fasting does prepare for prayer, and therefore fasting and prayer are so often put together, Mt 17:21 Ac 13:3. In those places they could fast longer without prejudice to their health, than amongst us, and, as I might add, were more willing to fast for any spiritual advantage than we are.

Acts 9:10

Ver. 10. *Ananias;* he was of good repute for zeal and holiness. as appears, Ac 22:12, but whether he was one of the seventy disciples which our

Saviour sent out, Lu 10:1, as some will have, is not certain.

He said, Behold, I am here, Lord; thereby showing his willingness to be sent on God's message, and to do as God should bid him, as Samuel to Eli, 1Sa 3:5.

Acts 9:11

Ver. 11. *Inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul:* God telleth our wanderings, and knoweth our abode, and mindeth his, especially in their sorrows, which was Saul's case.

For, behold, he prayeth; he spent those three days, spoken of Ac 9:9, in acts of great humiliation, in which he would also not taste any food; this is revealed to Ananias, that he might not fear to go unto him. A great change! Is Saul also amongst them that pray? A greater wonder than that the other Saul was formerly amongst the prophets.

Acts 9:12

Ver. 12. If this verse be the words of St. Luke, continuing the history, then they must be included in a parenthesis, the sense being entire without them; but they seem to be the words of the Lord continued to Ananias, telling him how he had provided for his welcome to Saul, contrary to his expectation.

Acts 9:13

Ver. 13. *I have heard by many of this man;* his design and commission could not but be noised abroad.

Thy saints: the disciples of Christ are called saints, because:

1. They are dedicated unto the Lord in their baptism.
2. They are called unto holiness.

3. They did then live holily and exemplarily.
4. And so must all that hope for any benefit by their being disciples of Christ, &c.

Acts 9:14

Ver. 14. Here Ananias shows the strength of his excuse; for flesh and blood cried in him, as in Moses, Ex 4:13, *Send by him whom thou wilt send.*

Acts 9:15

Ver. 15. *He is a chosen vessel:* the whole world is God's fabric, and the church especially is his house: not only in the whole world, but in the visible church, there are all sorts of utensils, some for higher, others for meaner uses; Saul was to be a vessel unto honour, Ro 9:21, into which the treasures of God's word were to be put, 2Co 4:7, though he was but an earthen vessel: Such was indeed chosen by God to preach the gospel, Ga 1:15,16, to suffer for Christ's name's sake, 1Th 3:3.

To bear my name before the Gentiles: this mystery of the calling of the Gentiles began now to spread abroad, and to be made more known, which was hid in those promises, Isa 49:6 Jer 1:10.

Acts 9:16

Ver. 16. He shall suffer as great things as he ever did cause or inflict; the hatred of his own countrymen the Jews, and the fury of the Gentiles: see the catalogue of them, 2Co 11:23-27. And were there ever so many sufferings heaped upon one man? And yet, though all these were foretold unto him, and certainly foreknown by him, he would preach the gospel for all that: much was forgiven him, and he loved much.

Acts 9:17

Ver. 17. *Entered into the house;* the house of Judas, with whom Saul lodged, as Ac 9:11.

Putting his hands on him; concerning this, see Ac 6:6, besides on what may be said of this imposition of hands elsewhere: the curing of St. Paul's blindness was one reason of putting his hands on him here, for so it was ordinarily done towards the sick or infirm; they laid their hands upon them to heal them, as it was promised that they should do, Mr 16:18.

Brother Saul; Saul was become Ananias's brother, as professing the same faith, and heir of the same promise with him.

Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way; Ananias mentions what had happened to Paul in the way, that Saul might be assured that he was sent from God, for none else could have told him what had happened.

Acts 9:18

Ver. 18. *Scales,* as scales of fish: it was no ordinary blindness, nor from any ordinary cause, and could not have been cured by common means.

Acts 9:19

Ver. 19. St. Paul could not but be much weakened with his journey, fear, grief, fasting, and constant praying; and now he takes a prudent care of his health, that he might be further enabled for the service of God, to what place soever he should be appointed.

With the disciples: Saul is no sooner changed, but he changeth his company and acquaintance; he resorts to none of the rabbies of the Jews, but to the disciples of Christ; he would love any, learn of any, that had Christ for their Master.

Acts 9:20

Ver. 20. *He preached Christ in the synagogues;* the apostles spake unto the Jews first, either that they might convert them, or at least take away all excuse from them.

That he is the Son of God; which doubtless he spake largely unto, though it be not here expressed; but he had an abundance in his heart, having tasted the power of the grace of God in Christ, and out of his heart his mouth spake.

Acts 9:21

Ver. 21. This great change is a most unaccountable thing, and might truly cause amazement; but *ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius, cum digitus Dei sit statuarius.* Nothing is too hard for that God in whose hand Saul's heart was.

Acts 9:22

Ver. 22. *Increased the more in strength;* true grace thrives by exercise and opposition: the word here used many take to be a metaphor from builders, who, in erecting their fabrics, fit one piece or part to another, and then bring them and join them together; thus St. Paul did, in bringing forth or quoting the promises in the Old Testament, and showing their exactly being fulfilled in the New Testament, or in the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ; and he spake with such an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, that he did, as it were, constrain men to be of his opinion.

Proving that this is very Christ; which was the sum of the gospel.

Acts 9:23

Ver. 23. *Many days;* God would not presently expose him to conflicts, but inure him to suffer by degrees; as also it pleased God to spare him so long nigh unto that place where he had wrought so great a miracle for him, the

sense of which might the more be upon himself and others also; for he continued here three years, excepting only a journey into Arabia, as may be seen, Ga 1:17,18.

Acts 9:24

Ver. 24. *Their laying await;* the Jews, who stirred up Aretas the king of Damascus against Paul, 2Co 11:32,33: now began those things to be fulfilled, foretold Ac 9:16.

Acts 9:25

Ver. 25. As Rahab did the spies, Jos 2:15, and Michal did David, 1Sa 19:12.

Acts 9:26

Ver. 26. *To join himself to,* to be admitted to intimate fellowship and communion with, *the disciples. They were all afraid of him;* Paul was sufficiently known by name and face at Jerusalem, and many had felt his rage.

And believed not that he was a disciple; but how could the disciples be ignorant of his conversion so long, if it was three years after, as it seems by Ga 1:18? To answer which may be considered:

1. The great distance between Jerusalem and Damascus, six days' journey.
2. The little correspondence between the kings of those places, Herod and Aretas.
3. The persecution which was at Jerusalem might hinder the converts of Damascus them going thither.
4. Paul might have spent a great part of the three years in his journey amongst the Arabians, of which before.

Acts 9:27

Ver. 27. Of *Barnabas* mention is made, Ac 4:36, who is thought to have been Paul's fellow disciple under Gamaliel.

Brought him to the apostles; these apostles, to whom Barnabas brought Paul, were Peter and James, as Ga 1:18,19, who being the apostles of the circumcision, or having Judea under their charge, were abiding at Jerusalem, whilst the other apostles probably were absent, being founding of churches elsewhere.

He had seen the Lord, &c. : some take these things to have been related by Paul, others by Barnabas, who testified these things concerning Paul.

Acts 9:28

Ver. 28. Living amongst them, and freely conversing with them; that is, with Peter, and James, and the rest of the believers, who had now no suspicion of him.

Acts 9:29

Ver. 29. *Disputed against the Grecians;* Hellenists, of which Ac 6:1, such as were born in foreign parts, but of Jewish parents; these Paul chose rather to dispute with, because these had raised the persecution against Stephen, and Paul had furthered them in it; and he was very desirous to unweave that web, and give them an antidote unto whom he had formerly given poison; being especially concerned for their souls, whom he had helped to destroy.

Acts 9:30

Ver. 30. *Caesarea;* there were two towns of this name, one a coast town, spoken of, Ac 8:40; the other was called Caesarea Philippi, nigh Mount

Lebanon.

Tarsus, St. Paul's birth place, where amongst his relations and acquaintance they might hope he would be safe.

Acts 9:31

Ver. 31. *Then had the churches rest;* when Paul was sent away, against whom they had the greater spite, as having been as zealous a persecutor as any amongst them.

And were edified: the church is frequently compared to a building, and every believer to the temple of God, 1Co 3:16, and 1Co 6:19, which God dwells in; from whence this metaphor is taken.

Walking in the fear of the Lord: walking is a progressive notion, and so is building and adding to a structure till it come to perfection; which signifies that these believers increased daily in the knowledge of God, in true piety and charity, &c.

In the comfort of the Holy Ghost; the word also signifies the exhortation of the Holy Ghost; such exhortations as were given from God by the apostles: to be sure, the comforts of the Spirit are not without our obedience to the commandments of God; and it seems to be given here as the reason why the churches were edified, and did thus increase, because believers walked in the fear of the Lord; and nothing persuades more effectually to the embracing of religion, than the holy living of such as make profession of it.

Acts 9:32

Ver. 32. *Throughout all quarters,* where the disciples that were dispersed had planted churches.

Saints: see Ac 9:13.

Lydda; a little town about the west bank of the Jordan, not far from the

Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 9:33

Ver. 33. It is supposed this *Aeneas* was a Jew, though now living at Lydda; and that St. Luke here names him by the name the Grecians called him by, he being amongst his own countrymen called Hillel.

Kept his bed eight years; to show the difficulty of the cure, and greatness of the miracle.

Acts 9:34

Ver. 34. *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole:* these words are not a prayer, (though they were not spoken without Peter's lifting up his heart to Christ in prayer), but a promise to this sick man of health and recovery, declaring from whom he should receive it, that he might know whom to acknowledge and thank for it.

Arise, and make thy bed: our Saviour bids the sick of the palsy to arise, and take up his bed, Mr 2:11; and so he commands the impotent man, Joh 5:8. Here St. Peter bids this paralytic to make his bed; which seems more strange, being he was commanded to arise, so that now he should have no need of having his bed made; but it is easily answered, that being it was only intended to show how fully he was cured, the making of his bed did as much prove, both to himself and others, that he was recovered, as any thing else could do.

Acts 9:35

Ver. 35. *Lydda:* see Ac 9:32. *Saron* is the name of a city, 1Ch 5:16, but here it is rather the name of a country, (which the masculine article usually shows), lying between Mount Tabor and the lake of Tiberias, a very fruitful plain, 1Ch 27:29 So 2:1.

Turned to the Lord; to the owning of his truth. Error (if in fundamentals)

keeps us from God.

Acts 9:36

Ver. 36. *Joppa*, a post town: see Ac 10:5. These circumstances of places and persons are set down to evidence the certainty of the history.

Tabitha, according to the Syriac dialect, then in use amongst the Jews, and *Dorcas*, as she was called amongst the Greeks; it being common for the same person to have two names, one Hebrew and the other Greek, as Thomas, who was called Didymus, and Cephas, who was called Peter.

Full of good works; she was rich in good works, which are the best riches, last longest, and go farthest.

Acts 9:37

Ver. 37. They washed the dead, and anointed them, to fit them for their burying, and especially to show their hope of the resurrection; which some think St. Paul alludes unto, 1Co 15:29.

Acts 9:38

Ver. 38. They sent for Peter, that he might come to comfort those that were concerned in the great loss of so good a woman, and, it may be, not without some hopes of her recovery by a miracle from St. Peter; which is the likelier, because they so much hasten his coming to them, she being already dead, and they preparing for her burial.

Acts 9:39

Ver. 39. It was strange that Peter should be sent for, or that he should go on such an account, viz. to raise one that was dead; but God, who had ordered this miracle for the manifestation of his truth and glory, so wrought in their hearts, that they did this out of faith; though if others

should think to imitate it, it would be but presumption.

Weeping; here needed no mourning women to be hired; the death of this good woman was a common loss: these coats were made by Dorcas in her lifetime, to clothe the poor and naked with.

Acts 9:40

Ver. 40. *Peter put them all forth;* Peter put them out, that he might pray the more earnestly, without distraction or interruption; thus Elisha shut the door to him when he prayed for the Shunammite's son, 2Ki 4:33.

Kneeled down; this his kneeling is mentioned, to recommend reverence in our praying unto God.

And prayed: Peter, by his betaking himself unto prayer, would show, that he could do nothing by his own power, but it must come from above; and he had every mercy as much precariously, and by prayer, as any others.

Acts 9:41

Ver. 41. *The saints and widows;* such who had sent for him, and now were gathered together to see what effects his prayers might have.

Presented her alive, and in perfect health, as all were that were miraculously cured; for the Lord's works are perfect, De 32:4.

Acts 9:42

Ver. 42. This cure was wrought, and all the other miracles were done, to be a means to make the gospel to be believed, which he published, and was an undeniable proof that this doctrine was from heaven; for none could do such things unless God were with him, or rather, unless God did them by him; so that this miracle wrought by St. Peter did more good to the souls of many, than to the body of this relieved woman.

Acts 9:43

Ver. 43. The miracle had only prepared them to receive his doctrine, which Peter tarried some time with them to instruct them in: the miracle had prepared the ground, and now he takes this season to sow the seed of the word into it.

Acts 10:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 10:1-8 Cornelius, a devout centurion, being commanded by an angel, sendeth for Peter,

Ac 10:9-16 who in the mean time is prepared by a heavenly vision,

Ac 10:17-24 and, receiving a command from the Spirit, goeth with the messengers to Caesarea.

Ac 10:25-33 Cornelius receiveth him with great respect, and showeth the occasion of his sending for him.

Ac 10:34-43 Peter preacheth Christ to him and his company.

Ac 10:44-48 The Holy Ghost falleth on them, whereupon they are baptized.

Ver. 1. *In Caesarea;* in Caesarea Palestine, as it was called in contra distinction to Caesarea Philippi.

Cornelius; a Roman by his name; which name was ordinarily to be found amongst the families of the Scipios and Syllas.

A *band* answers either to a regiment amongst us, or to a legion amongst the Romans (this latter was far greater than the former).

It was *called the Italian band,* as being composed of Italian soldiers, and might be used as a guard of the proconsul, who dwelt at Caesarea, who was that Felix we read of, Ac 23:24.

Acts 10:2

Ver. 2. *A devout man;* this Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate, or such as observed the seven precepts of Noah, and lived without giving any offence to the Jews.

With all his house; it was a very good sign that he feared God, in that he engaged all his house to do the like, at least outwardly, which was as much as he could do: this was spoken by God in Abraham's commendation, Ge 18:19.

Prayed to God always; he did not neglect the seasons of prayer, especially the time of offering the morning and evening sacrifice, which by prayer they desired to partake the benefit of by which Christ our sacrifice, and his merits, were figured unto them. Cornelius indeed prayed always, or at all times, taking time in a moral sense, for the seasons and opportunities for such a duty; (as we are commanded to give thanks always, Eph 5:20); but he could not pray always, or at all times, taking time in a natural sense, for then he must have neglected all other duties; however, his endeavour was to keep his heart always in a praying disposition.

Acts 10:3

Ver. 3. *In a vision;* not in a dream or rapture, but sensibly and plainly.

About the ninth hour; their ninth hour was with us about three o'clock in the afternoon; being the ordinary time for the evening sacrifice; and, by consequence, their time of prayer, Ac 3:1. And this devout man doth not seek God's face in vain; Cornelius had been faithful in a little, and God would give him much; rather than he should want further instruction, who had improved what he had already, God here sends an angel, and soon after an apostle unto him.

Acts 10:4

Ver. 4. *He was afraid;* the angel appeared in so great splendour: all admiration hath some fear with it.

And said, "What is it, Lord?" This is equivalent to, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and shows that Cornelius was prepared to hear the message.

Thy prayers and thine alms; prayer and alms are joined together in our Saviour's discourse concerning them, Mt 6:1-7 and in the apostle's order about them, 1Co 16:1: alms are our sacrifices now under the gospel, Php 4:18 Heb 13:16.

Are come up for a memorial before God; an allusion to the offering up of incense under the law; the smoke of the incense did ascend, and so David desires that his prayers might ascend toward God, Ps 141:2: thus, under the gospel, prayers are resembled to incense, Re 8:3. That prayers are said to come up for a memorial, is but the pursuance of the same metaphor; for, Le 2:2, the frankincense, &c. was the memorial there commanded to be burned; and all this only to represent unto us how well pleasing the prayers of his people are unto God through Christ, and that God keeps in remembrance all those things they thus desire of him, and in his time and measure (which are the best circumstances) bestows all upon them: but let not prayers and alms, which God here hath put together, be put asunder, and in due time we shall reap.

Acts 10:5

Ver. 5. *Joppa*, a town that was memorable for Jonah's taking ship there, when he would flee from God, and decline his message, Jo 1:3. The angel could have declared the gospel, and instructed Cornelius; but he sends him to Peter, God being willing to honour the means of his own institution.

Acts 10:6

Ver. 6. These particulars, when found true by Cornelius, did very much advantage him towards his believing what Peter in the name of the Lord did tell him.

Acts 10:7

Ver. 7. *Two of his household servants;* these servants doubtless Cornelius had instructed, as appears Ac 10:2, and God blesses him with faithful and successful service from them.

A devout soldier; no condition, or temptation, too hard for the grace of God to overcome; both centurion and soldier are willing to hazard all they had, rather than not to obey God, and come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Waited on him continually; this soldier, for his religion's sake, and his holy life, was taken into nearer attendance on Cornelius; it is no small matter to have one near us that hath power with God.

Acts 10:8

Ver. 8. Thus on Cornelius's side all things are disposed towards his receiving of the gospel; and the same providence, at the same time, disposes all things on Peter's part towards his coming to publish it: for, (see Ac 10:9).

Acts 10:9

Ver. 9. These houses were flat on the tops, and therefore they were commanded to make battlements for them, De 22:8.

Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, that he might from thence view the temple, which was a type of Christ, through whom only we and our prayers can be acceptable unto God; hence, 1Ki 8:30, &c., there is so often mention made of praying towards the city, and towards the place which God should choose; this Daniel practised, though upon the hazard of his life, when both city and temple were ruined, Da 6:10.

The sixth hour with them is high noon, or midday, and is accounted one of the three times of prayer, (see Ac 3:1), and was, as the Jews say, recommended to them by Isaac; howsoever, it was the time when they

might begin to prepare the evening sacrifice: none of these causes need to be assigned, for doubtless this blessed apostle did *watch unto prayer*, 1Pe 4:7, and desirously laid hold upon all opportunities to pour out his soul unto God.

Acts 10:10

Ver. 10. *He became very hungry;* he might be more than ordinarily hungry, to fit or suit the vision, which is hereafter mentioned.

He fell into a trance: the most excellent way of God's manifesting himself unto man, is by a trance; (and they reckon seven ways, in which God makes himself known unto man); but what this trance was is diversly expressed: it is certain. that in it the soul was, as it were. absent from the body, drawn off from the perception of earthly and sensible things, and enabled unto the perception of heavenly mysteries: in such an ecstasy was St. Paul, 2Co 12:2, and St. John, Re 1:10, who is therefore said to be *in the Spirit*.

Acts 10:11

Ver. 11. *And saw heaven;* either visibly to his corporal eyes, as to St. Stephen's; or rather mentally, more suitably to the rapture mentioned in the former verse.

Opened; which might signify, that heaven, that was shut to the children of men by the first Adam, was now by Christ, the Second Adam, opened to all believers.

Vessel; this word is taken for any utensil commonly used about the house; and, with the *sheet* here spoken of, bears an analogy to a table and table cloth amongst us.

Knit at the four corners; so gathered up or knit, that the viands, Ac 10:12, might not fall down. And this Peter saw to come from heaven, to show that the liberty of taking Cornelius and other Gentiles into the church, did come from thence only.

Acts 10:12

Ver. 12. As well unclean beasts, such as were forbidden by the law, as clean, such as by the law might be eaten.

Acts 10:13

Ver. 13. Of that thou seest, without any exception, whether they be clean, or (formerly) unclean creatures. The moral of which command is, that he might now converse with Jews and Gentiles indifferently, and preach unto these also the word of life.

Acts 10:14

Ver. 14. These words may signify one and the same thing, and the latter explain the former; showing that those things are said to be common, which the law, by forbidding them, had made unclean. Others make some difference; and by things common, understand all sorts of creatures, which were forbidden to the Jews, but were commonly fed upon by all nations round about them; and by things unclean, they understand such as by accident became so, as when any of the creatures permitted for use was strangled.

Acts 10:15

Ver. 15. Do not make in thy esteem, or practice, as *common*, that is, polluted. The Jews did imagine, that by unclean creatures were meant the Gentiles, as by clean creatures they would have themselves to be understood; howsoever, they opposed common unto holy; indeed a holy man is (as they called him) a singular man: it was God that cleansed Cornelius, turning him from idolatry to the worship of the true God, from darkness unto light.

Acts 10:16

Ver. 16. Whereby this great mystery of the conversion of the Gentiles, and taking them into the church, might be the more confirmed, and fixed in St. Peter's mind.

Acts 10:17

Ver. 17. *Doubted in himself;* recollecting himself; for the vision had so affected him, that it had put him into a kind of ecstasy, out of which when he came to himself, *behold, the men;* the two servants and the soldier which Cornelius had sent.

Acts 10:18

Ver. 18. Being strangers, they address themselves to such of the house as came to the door.

Acts 10:19

Ver. 19. *Thought on the vision;* set himself to meditate upon that he had seen and heard.

The Spirit said unto him; the Holy Spirit informs him further. Thus whosoever meditates carefully upon what he hears from God's word, God will never leave him without sufficient instruction.

Acts 10:20

Ver. 20. *Arise therefore;* immediately put thyself upon the journey.

Doubting nothing; spend no time in disputing within thyself, because that they, unto whom thou art sent, are not Jews.

Acts 10:21

Ver. 21. Peter being in no small consternation, and not perfectly knowing whither all this tended, makes the more exact inquiry.

Acts 10:22

Ver. 22. That they might speed in their message, they labour to prevent all prejudice Peter might have against Cornelius, who was a Gentile by title; telling him:

1. That he was *a just man*, as is said of Joseph, Mt 1:19.
2. That he worshipped the true God the same with the Jews, and not the false gods of the Gentiles.
3. That he was reputed a pious and good man, and so it would be no disparagement to the apostles to go unto him.

Was warned from God: this argument St. Peter could not deny. When God's command is evident, his people are determined and resolved.

Acts 10:23

Ver. 23. *And on the morrow Peter went away with them;* he delays not to obey the heavenly vision; but as Abraham took his journey the very next morning after that he had received the command, Ge 22:3, so did Peter here, and *bis dat qui cito dat*, he doubles his obedience that obeys speedily and cheerfully.

And certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him; these brethren were six in number, as Ac 11:12; who might undertake this journey,

1. Out of respect to Peter, to accompany him.
2. Being moved at the extraordinary visions that were spoken of. But especially:

3. Disposed by the providence of God to accompany St. Peter, that they might testify the grace of God that was come unto the Gentiles, when it might be afterwards questioned.

Acts 10:24

Ver. 24. Joppa was about fifteen leagues from Caesarea, so that the next day after they set out they might easily come from Joppa thither.

His kinsmen; his relations.

And near friends; and such as he had the greatest love and kindness for; he thought that he could not express it better, than by giving them an opportunity to hear the word of life, and to gain instruction for their souls: and probably those here spoken of were reckoned as friends, and near friends, by Cornelius, because they were such as with him had forsaken all pagan idolatry, and were worshippers of the true and living God.

Acts 10:25

Ver. 25. *As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him;* into Cornelius's house, for he hastened to meet with him.

Worshipped him; Cornelius worshipped with the most humble civil worship; but he could not think him to be God, and therefore he did give him no Divine worship, he having forsaken the idolatry of the Gentiles; but might perhaps think him to have been an angel, and intended to worship him accordingly, for which he is blamed in the following verse.

Acts 10:26

Ver. 26. It is certain that Peter did think this worship Cornelius gave him to have exceeded; and here he blames him for it, telling him, he was but a man like unto him; and he needed not give any further reason of his reproof, for man must adore, but by no means may be adored; no, nor take

too much honour unto himself.

Acts 10:27

Ver. 27. *As he talked with him;* they went talking together into the house, probably of the goodness of God, that they should be directed so happily unto one another; for they could not but see and acknowledge God in it.

Acts 10:28

Ver. 28. God himself did erect a partition wall betwixt his people and other nations, Jews and Gentiles; hence by God's own command the Jews might not have any familiar converse with the Gentiles, especially they might not marry with them. The Jews themselves had made this partition wall much larger, and they held it unlawful to eat with any of the Gentiles, or to go so much as into their houses; hence that objection made upon this occasion against St. Peter, Ac 11:3.

Unclean; no man is now unclean by any ceremonial uncleanness, because he is not circumcised, or because he is not sprinkled with the blood of bulls, Heb 9:13; yet sin hath defiled the whole mass of mankind, and they are equally by nature morally unclean.

Acts 10:29

Ver. 29. *Gainsaying,* or delay.

I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? Peter did in a great measure know the business he came about, partly by the vision and its interpretation, partly by what he might have heard from them that Cornelius sent for him, unto whom Cornelius had declared the whole matter, as we find, Ac 10:8; yet Peter's question is but necessary, for to give Cornelius an opportunity to acquaint his friends, who were met there, with all that had passed.

Acts 10:30

Ver. 30. *Four days ago I was fasting until this hour;* Cornelius does not intend to declare by this how long he had fasted; but he tells him when he, being fasting, saw the vision, which was four days before, at the same time of the day.

The ninth hour, which was a time of prayer, it being the time of offering the evening sacrifice: see Ac 3:1.

A man, in appearance, but an angel indeed, as in Ac 10:3.

In bright clothing; why angels appeared in bright or white raiment, see Ac 1:10.

Acts 10:31

Ver. 31. *Alms;* of which see in Ac 10:4.

In the sight of God; unto which, not only the outward gift, but the inward affection, is visible; and this is peculiarly in the sight of God, the other may be seen also by men.

Acts 10:32

Ver. 32. The substance of this verse is in Ac 10:5,6 which we read before. Cornelius might say this to excuse his sending for Peter, being a stranger to him; as also to encourage Peter to speak in such a matter as God had appeared in.

Acts 10:33

Ver. 33. *Immediately therefore I sent to thee;* as a hungry soul delays not to send for food, as soon as he knows where to have it.

Thou hast well done that thou art come; which does not only approve of

St. Peter's coming, but thank him for it.

Present before God; we will set ourselves to attend to thy words, as if we saw God looking upon us, whom we call to witness that we are ready to do whatsoever he shall require of us. Thus it becomes every one that would profit by the word of God, to attend upon it. Men do not behave themselves as before God, and therefore they enjoy nothing less than God in an ordinance, and are as if God had taken no notice of them.

Acts 10:34

Ver. 34. *Opened his mouth;* an expression used (as formerly) in matters of great moment, as Mt 5:2.

God is no respecter of persons; God does not accept of one because he is a Jew, and respect another because he is a Gentile; though St. Paul, being prejudiced by his education, had been carried along with that error of the Jews; against which, notwithstanding, God had declared himself even unto them, De 10:17, which is also confirmed unto us in the New Testament, Ro 2:11 1Pe 1:17: so that our being of any nation or any condition, rich or poor, honoured or despised, on the one side recommends us not unto God, and on the other side it will not hinder us from being accepted with the Lord.

Acts 10:35

Ver. 35. *In every nation;* even though Romans or Italians, of which nation Cornelius was, and might probably be worse thought of by the Jews, because they supposed themselves to have been hardly used by them.

Feareth him, and worketh righteousness; these two particulars include the observation of both tables of the law: the fearing of God comprehends piety, that is, the true worship of the true God; and working righteousness, includes all the duties to our neighbour; and both describe a truly good and holy man, such as Cornelius was; unto whose case this is to be applied.

Acts 10:36

Ver. 36. *The word*; the word of reconciliation between God and man, not only between God and the Jews, but between him and the Gentiles also, he had *sent unto Israel* by his prophets formerly. God is said to create *peace to him that is afar off*, the Gentile, as well as *to him that is near*, the Jew, Isa 57:19; and that salvation was not limited to the Jews only, Ps 72:7,8 Isa 49:6, might be known unto them by the examples of Melchizedck, Job, and Naaman, who did no ways belong unto them; but this was now more manifest: God preaching this peace between himself and all nations indifferently:

1. By Christ in his own person preaching this, Mt 8:11, and telling them that by his death he would draw all men unto him, Joh 12:32.
2. This peace is preached to be had by Christ, or only through Christ, by the angels themselves, Lu 2:14. And:
3. By all the apostles and ministers of the gospel. Speaking to the Gentiles, St. Paul says, *Ye who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*, Eph 2:13; and it was their constant doctrine, that there was no name under heaven by which men could be saved, but the name of Christ, Ac 4:12; and that it was all one whether they were Greeks or Jews, &c., *but Christ is all, and in all*, Col 3:11: so that in this doctrine there is an exact harmony between the Old and New Testaments, the prophets and the apostles.

He is Lord of all; Christ is Lord, not of the Jews, or one people, only; but of the Gentiles, all nations, also, as Mt 28:19,20 Ro 3:29.

Acts 10:37

Ver. 37. They had heard of the doctrine of the gospel by common fame and report, which could not but spread abroad; all might know that Christ and his apostles did preach, though these might be ignorant of the particular doctrines which they taught, and which Peter was now sent to instruct them in: or by *the word* (in a usual Hebraism) the matter of the gospel may be meant, as the life, death, and resurrection of our blessed

Saviour, which they could not but have heard several reports of.

After the baptism which John preached; who, as the Elijah who was promised, Mal 4:5, was the forerunner of the Lord.

Acts 10:38

Ver. 38. *God anointed Jesus:* it was usual to anoint their kings, priests, and prophets, unto all which offices Christ was anointed by his Father; hence called Christ, as in the Old Testament the Messiah.

Of Nazareth: the apostle is not ashamed of this name, though given to our Saviour by way of contempt; he gloried in the cross of Christ.

With the Holy Ghost and with power; Christ was endued with the Almighty Spirit of God, and with the power of it.

Who went about doing good: all the miracles our blessed Saviour wrought, were works of mercy, for the benefit and relief of those upon whom he wrought them: he could have wrought miracles to destroy and ruin such as would not believe in him, which he was often provoked unto; nay, his apostles would have had him but to permit them by fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans, Lu 9:54, and he would not.

Healing all that were oppressed of the devil: the deliverances our Saviour so often wrought upon such as were possessed of devils, was to show unto them that he was come to destroy the works of the devil, aim to cast him out of the souls of men who were spiritually possessed by him; which also our Saviour did, so that it was a happy calamity for them, which brought them to Christ.

For God was with him; God was with our Saviour,

1. By his might and power doing such miracles.
2. In his extraordinary love to him, Mt 3:17, and always hearing of him, Joh 11:42. And also,

3. God was with Christ ουσιωδως , in the fulness of the Godhead, Col 2:9.

Acts 10:39

Ver. 39. *We are witnesses;* the apostles, whom Christ had chosen to go in and out with him, and to be eye and ear witnesses of all that was done by him, or against him.

Whom they slew: their killing of our Saviour is the rather here spoken of, to show how rightfully the Jews were now to be forsaken, and that they had no cause to complain of the calling in of the Gentiles, being themselves had in such a manner rejected Christ; but especially, that they who were here met, and we, all might consider, how much it cost our blessed Saviour to deliver us from sin and hell. He was *made a curse for us*, Gal 3:13, as De 21:23 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us, Ga 3:14.

Acts 10:40

Ver. 40. Lest these Gentiles be deterred from believing in Christ, and take offence at his cross, St. Peter preached unto them the resurrection, which suddenly and powerfully followed. And this he tells them was unquestionable, as appeared by all the ways that any thing can be proved by; Christ was seen, and heard, and felt after his resurrection, as the beloved disciple tells us, 1Jo 1:1, and manifested his victory over death for us.

Acts 10:41

Ver. 41. *Not to all the people:* Christ after his resurrection appeared not to the wicked Jews, for being to suffer no more, his enemies were not vouchsafed a sight of him; and thus he did not manifest himself unto the world, Jo 14:22.

But unto witnesses; these witnesses were the apostles, who were chosen by God himself immediately; and the vacancy supplied by lot, which was

at God's direction, Ac 1:24,26. The metaphor here used is taken from the ordinary way then in use of choosing men into offices, which is here alluded to.

Eat and drink with him: though in the gospel history we do not read that our Saviour drank after he rose again; yet it is sufficiently implied, being he did eat, and make a meal with his disciples, Lu 24:30,42,43 Joh 21:12; and eating is put in Scripture for the whole refection, Mt 15:2, compared with Lu 7:36.

Acts 10:42

Ver. 42. Our Saviour gave this charge to his apostles before his ascension, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15 Lu 24:47; and foretold that they should execute this his charge, Ac 1:8.

Ordained of God to be the Judge: that God hath ordained to judge the world by Jesus Christ, Scripture abundantly testifies, Joh 5:26,27 2Ti 4:1 1Pe 4:5. And this is here spoken of the apostle, and was given in charge by our Saviour to be principally preached of by them all, because the resurrection of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom in this world, is clouded by the blindness and hardness of men; as also, because it is of the greatest concernment unto all, that at any time hear the word of God, to be persuaded of this, that Christ, whose gospel and word they hear, will judge them according unto it.

Quick; such as shall be alive at the coming of our Lord to judgment, 1Th 4:15.

Acts 10:43

Ver. 43. This our Saviour had told his apostles, which St. Peter here preaches to his auditors. It was included in the very first promise recorded by Moses, Ge 3:15, The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head; and so continued through all ages of the church, to be manifest in such degrees as it pleased the wisdom of God to make it known: it is certain that all the ceremonial law concerning sacrifices did testify this very thing; for

by it, it did appear, that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin, as Heb 9:22; and it is manifest by the light of nature, that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins, as Heb 10:4.

But *through Christ's name*, for his sake, and by virtue of his merit, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, Ro 4:25, we *shall receive remission of sins*, Heb 9:13,14.

Acts 10:44

Ver. 44. *While Peter yet spake these words*, that God might miraculously show his approbation of what Peter had said, and to assure Peter of the real conversion of these Gentiles, which all the Jews did make such a difficulty to believe, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*; such fiery tongues in a visible shape as had appeared unto the apostles, Ac 2:3, whereby the inward powerful effects of the Spirit upon their hearts was signified. What wonderful effects had this short sermon! And doubtless, were practisers but as sincere, and hearers as intent, these days, as then, we should find that the hand of the Lord is not shortened.

Acts 10:45

Ver. 45. *They of the circumcision*; such as were not only themselves circumcised, but born of circumcised parents, who are thus called, Ga 2:12. These, not minding, or understanding, the many predictions of the calling of the Gentiles, thought that Christ was only promised unto the Jews; and were amazed to see now such an argument as might convince them to the contrary.

Poured out, speaks the abundant measure in which the Holy Ghost was given unto them.

Acts 10:46

Ver. 46. *With tongues*; with variety of languages, or strange tongues, as in the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:6.

Answered; an ordinary Hebraism for speaking, though the first part of any discourse. And Peter, knowing that these miraculous fiery tongues did show that these men did partake of the same Spirit from whom the apostles had received them, he makes an inference from thence.

Acts 10:47

Ver. 47. This question, as Ac 8:36, is without question, and denies that any can forbid water, that is, in order to baptize such as these. As if the apostle had argued thus: They that have the grace signified or promised, have a right unto the seal of the promise: but these Gentiles have the grace signified or promised in baptism; they had the inward part, and therefore the outward part could not be denied unto them. He that hath the inheritance, may claim the writings, wax, and parchment that belong unto it.

Acts 10:48

Ver. 48. *In the name of the Lord;* that is, in the name of our Saviour. But this does not imply, but that they were baptized according to our Saviour's prescription, Mt 28:19: but the Jews by their baptism were become the Lord's, and had given up their names to Jesus Christ; under which title, *the Lord*, not only our Saviour, but the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit by whom he was anointed, is to be understood.

Then prayed they; Cornelius and the rest of his friends, which he caused to be present. At their entreaty, Peter, and others that came with him, (as Ac 11:12), tarried there, that they might further instruct, confirm, and comfort them; (as the best have ever need to learn, and to grow in grace and knowledge); and by this Peter showed that he looked upon himself and others as not bound to observe those precepts, (of the wise men, as they called them), forbidding them all familiarity with the uncircumcised.

Acts 11:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 11:1-18 Peter, being accused for conversing with the Gentiles, maketh his defence; the church issatisfied, and glorifieth God.

Ac 11:19-21 The gospel having spread as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch.

Ac 11:22-26 Barnabas is sent thither, who fetcheth Saul from Tarsus: many people are taught at Antioch, where the disciples are first called Christians.

Ac 11:27-30 Agabus prophesieth a dearth: the disciples send relief from Antioch to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Saul.

Ver. 1. *And brethren;* the rest of the believers, who had not only one God to their Father, but one church to their mother, and were born of the same Spirit, and were fed by the same milk of the word of God.

The Gentiles had also received the word of God; this was a most incredible thing unto them who were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and were not acquainted with that mystery that Abraham should have a seed of his faith, upon whom all the promises were entailed. These looked upon the Gentiles as most execrable persons, such as the apostle describes, Eph 2:12, that had no hope, and were without God; and therefore no less than a miracle, and that well attested, as this was, could make them change their opinion.

Acts 11:2

Ver. 2. *They that were of the circumcision;* they were such Jews as conversed with them of the church, and argued against them for taking in the Gentiles into any fellowship with them. But it may be that the believing Jews might for a time be very weak, and offended at it, until they were further satisfied by the following relation of St. Peter: till then they disputed, and brought what arguments they could against it.

Acts 11:3

Ver. 3. This is the objection they make against Peter, that, contrary to the tradition of their elders, and precept of their wise men, its had familiarly conversed with the Gentiles: see Ac 10:28. This they look upon as piacular, although no conversation in order to the gaining of the Gentiles unto God was ever forbidden, but only such as might withdraw the Jews from God.

Acts 11:4

Ver. 4. This great apostle condescends to the least and weakest amongst them, and gives an account of what he had done and the reasons that moved him unto it, if by any means he might gain some, and confirm others.

Acts 11:5

Ver. 5. See this whole narration spoken to in the foregoing chapter.

It came even to me; to show that he was especially concerned in this vision, it being for his instruction and regulation.

Acts 11:6

Ver. 6. *Fastened mine eyes;* it speaketh his great intention of mind upon it; God so ordering of it, that it might leave the greater impression upon him.

Acts 11:7

Ver. 7. He might now use them without any distinction indifferently.

Acts 11:8

Ver. 8. St. Peter here avoucheth that he had lived in this ceremonial righteousness, though he thought himself far from being instilled thereby.

Hath at any time entered into mouth; he abstained from all the appearances of that evil.

Acts 11:9

Ver. 9. This is twice spoken to St. Peter, that it might be the more unquestionable with him and others, it seeming otherwise very strange; and, it may be, therefore twice by St. Luke recorded.

Acts 11:10

Ver. 10. *This was done three times;* for the same reason but now mentioned, that God might more abundantly manifest this mystery of the calling in of the Gentiles, which had been so long hid.

All were drawn up again into heaven; all this was from heaven; unto which also it tended, namely, to bring the Gentiles thither.

Acts 11:11

Ver. 11. So many sent, and such a journey willingly undertaken, for to gain instruction in the way of life.

Acts 11:12

Ver. 12. *These six brethren accompanied me;* whom they might hear testify the same thing, that in the mouths of so many it might be established.

We entered into the man's house: the man meant is Cornelius, concerning

the entry into whose house, and converse with him, the doubt or controversy was that he was now speaking to.

Acts 11:13

Ver. 13. *An angel*, who, by reason of his appearing a man, is, in Ac 10:30, called *a man*.

Acts 11:14

Ver. 14. God promises that upon his obedience to this oracle, in sending for Peter, he should tell him those things that were necessary to be known by him and his whole family unto their salvation. Whatsoever was formerly the case of such as obeyed the precepts of Noah, (as they were called), after Christ is come, and preached unto the world, there is no other way unto salvation but through him.

Acts 11:15

Ver. 15. *As I began to speak;* whilst Peter was speaketh, as Ac 1:1.

The Holy Ghost fell on them, as in the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:4, he had fallen on the apostles; either visibly, by fiery cloven tongues; or rather by extraordinarily enduing them with the gift of tongues; enabling the most illiterate amongst them to speak in any language needful for any to understand towards their salvation.

Acts 11:16

Ver. 16. *Of the Lord;* of Christ, who is every where so called.

He said; but these words seem rather spoken by St. John himself. Mt 3:11 Mr 1:8; which makes no difference; for, first, Whatsoever a disciple of Christ says in his name, it is as if it were spoken by himself:

He that heareth not, heareth me. But, secondly, Though this was spoken by the Baptist, it was spoken by our Saviour also, Ac 1:5.

John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; by which the great difference is implied between outward baptism (administered by whomsoever, though the Baptist himself) and the inward baptism of the Holy Ghost, which, as fire, separates powerfully the scum and dross of sin from us.

With the Holy Ghost; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

Acts 11:17

Ver. 17. The apostle's argument is cogent: They who have the grace signified by baptism, ought to have the seal of that grace; but the Gentiles had the grace signified by baptism. Or, they who have the inward baptism, may not be denied the outward. As he that hath a right to an inheritance, cannot without injustice be denied the writings and seals thereunto belonging. To deny baptism unto any unto whom it doth belong, is to *withstand God*, and to keep back the token of God's love from such unto whom it is sent.

Acts 11:18

Ver. 18. *They held their peace;* they were fully satisfied with the reason St. Peter had given them of his admitting the Gentiles unto baptism, and fellowship with him; wisely inferring from what Peter had said, that what he had done was of God, who was to be acknowledged in it.

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance: repentance is the gift of God, as well as faith, or any other grace, 2Ti 2:25; nor can the greatest guilt affect the heart with true godly sorrow, until God hath quickened it. It is called *repentance unto life*, because God hath appointed that it should precede our entrance into life.

Acts 11:19

Ver. 19. So true hath it been from the beginning of the gospel, that *sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesiae*. St. Stephen's death, and the persecution upon it, was a great means of disseminating the gospel. Thus all things work for good.

Phenice; the country about Tyre.

Cyprus; an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Antioch; the metropolis of Syria. This explains what was briefly said, Ac 8:4, and showed what places the disciples were scattered into, and preached in.

They preached to *the Jews only*, because they were not yet persuaded of the calling of the Gentiles; God suffering them to be enlightened by degrees.

Acts 11:20

Ver. 20. *Men of Cyprus and Cyrene*; they were such as were born in Cyprus and Cyrene, but had their habitation in Jerusalem, and now upon the persecution there fled unto Antioch; which by this means in time became the Jerusalem of the Gentile Christians, whither their greatest resort was.

Spake unto the Grecians: here they of the dispersion taught not only such Hellenists as are spoken of, Ac 6:1, who were born of Hebrew parents, though living out of the country of Judea; but such also amongst the Gentiles, (who are generally called Greeks since Alexander's time, who conquered all those nations round about, and brought in his own language amongst them), who, forsaking idolatry, and worshipping the true God, were called *σεβομενοι*, devout or religious persons, such as Cornelius is said to be, Ac 10:2. And thus God by degrees brought in the knowledge of himself, and his Son Jesus Christ.

Preaching the Lord Jesus; which knowledge only is that which is

necessary unto salvation, and that only which Saul determined to know, 1Co 2:2.

Acts 11:21

Ver. 21. *The hand of the Lord;* the power, assistance, and working of God, expressed by the hand, which is the organ or instrument men use in working. This hand or work of God was manifest, first, In the miracles which they wrought. Secondly, In the conversion of any by these miracles. For these alone cannot soften a heart; as appeared in Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened by them.

A great number believed, and turned unto the Lord; faith and conversion are wrought by the hand of the Lord, and are his work. But in vain is faith pretended unto, when there is no change in heart and life. What God hath put together, none may put asunder.

Acts 11:22

Ver. 22. *Came unto the ears of the church;* this pleonasm seems emphatical, to show with what readiness and delight the church heard the news of the conversion of so many to Christ.

Of *Barnabas* we read, Ac 4:36, who had given such an earnest of love to God, and true faith in Christ, for whose sake he sold what he had.

Acts 11:23

Ver. 23. *The grace of God;* which appeared in their conversion, being made manifest by their professions, and answered by their pious lives and conversations; for all which they might cry, Grace, grace.

By the grace of God, is also to be understood the increasing of the church, and adding to it such as should be saved.

Was glad; this is matter of joy in heaven, Lu 15:7, and of all such as are

learning their lesson, and preparing for that blissful place.

With purpose of heart; firm and fixed resolution, that come what can come, tribulation or distress, life or death, they would keep close to the profession of the truth of Christ. This *purpose of heart* is the same with the whole heart elsewhere; which must *cleave unto the Lord;* be joined, or stick close, to God's truth and ways.

Acts 11:24

Ver. 24. Barnabas is here described to be beyond what the Jews called a righteous man, who would say to his neighbour, That which is yours is yours, and that which is mine is mine; meaning such as would do no wrong. But Barnabas, as the good man in their esteem, (such a one as the apostle speaks of, Ro 5:7, for whom one would dare to die), had actually made, and not called only, that which was his his poor neighbours', selling what he had to bestow upon them, as Ac 4:37.

Much people was added unto the Lord; his good works, accompanying his good preaching, might be a great means of the conversion of so many.

Acts 11:25

Ver. 25. *Saul*, or Paul, being Barnabas's friend and acquaintance, whom Barnabas had brought to the knowledge of the apostles, Ac 9:27; he goes now to seek him, that they might advise and strengthen one another in the work of the Lord.

Acts 11:26

Ver. 26. *A whole year they assembled themselves:* frequency of meeting to partake of the ordinances of God, is the great reason why the gospel was so prevalent in this place.

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch; which will be renowned so long as the world lasts, because here the banner of Christ was

first publicly set up, and men listed under him: and this by Divine authority, for the word imports no less. And that it was not a name they gave themselves, much less was it a name the enemies of Christianity gave unto the professors of it, for they called them Nazarenes, or Galileans, out of contempt. But God would have Christ's disciples to be called Christians: not only as scholars were amongst the Greeks called from their masters, (viz. Platonists, Pythagoreans, &c.), to teach us whom we profess to learn of, and to be instructed by; but to mind us of our unction; for Christians are anointed ones, 1Jo 2:27, and are made by Christ (in a spiritual sense) *kings and priests unto God and his Father*, Re 1:6.

Acts 11:27

Ver. 27. These here meant were enabled to foretell things to come; a gift which God (did furnish some of his church with on such an extraordinary occasion, Eph 4:11, whereby they did beforehand signify future things for the good for the church, as here.

Acts 11:28

Ver. 28. *By the Spirit;* by a resolution from the Spirit, as one of his gifts, and not by judicial astrology, or any other means real or pretended; for it is a prerogative of God only to foretell things to come, as Isa 41:22,23.

Which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar: this famine Suetonius and other heathen writers make mention of, though some place it in one year, and some in another year, of Claudius's reign. It may be there were divers famines, or one might continue divers years; but thus God, who provided for the patriarchs by means of Joseph's foreseeing of the scarcity in Egypt and elsewhere, provides for his church now also by a like prediction. God's omniscience is exerted for his church's preservation.

Acts 11:29

Ver. 29. *Every man according to his ability;* which is the measure whereby we must mete out unto others: we are to give alms of such things

as we have, or according as we are able, Lu 11:41.

These *brethren*, or believers, *in Judea*, were very poor, by reason of the extraordinary malice and persecution of the Jews against them, and therefore recommended by St. Paul unto them of Achaia, (especially to the Corinthians), and to the believers in Macedonia.

Acts 11:30

Ver. 30. *To the elders*; to the apostles; or if they (as it is probable) were gone out of Jerusalem, to the governors or chief of the churches; for the famine being to come over all Judea, it is most probable that the other churches, besides that in Jerusalem, did partake of this bounty.

Acts 12:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 12:1-19 King Herod persecutes the Christians, kills James, and imprisons Peter, who, upon the prayers of the church, is delivered by an angel.

Ac 12:20-23 Herod, in his pride assuming the glory due to God, is smitten by an angel, and dieth miserably.

Ac 12:24 After his death the word of God prospers.

Ac 12:25 Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

Ver. 1. There were several Herods mentioned in Scripture, being all of the family of Herod the Great, (by whose name they were called), as Herod that killed the children in Bethlehem, called Hecolonita; another that beheaded St. John, and derided our Saviour, this Herod was surnamed Antipas: the Herod here spoken of was called Agrippa; the son, or, as others think, the nephew, of Aristobulus, and was the father of that Agrippa we read of, Ac 25:26, being viceroy, or king, under the Roman emperor. This Herod did not only kill some, but punished others with banishment and blows; and especially the governors of the church, knowing how much all suffer in them.

Acts 12:2

Ver. 2. Who had especially the care of the church at Jerusalem: one eminent amongst the apostles, and one of the sons of thunder, (or Boanerges), for his zealous and earnest preaching, and therefore the more hated by Herod: so that which our Saviour had foretold him came now to pass, Mt 20:23, that he drank of the cup our Saviour did drink of. There was another James, who wrote the Epistle known by his name, and was called James the Less; because, as some think, he was brought to the knowledge of Christ after the other, of whom we read, Mr 15:40.

Acts 12:3

Ver. 3. All the posterity of Herod the Great, by his example, studied chiefly to please the Roman emperors, and to gratify the Jews, whether by right or wrong.

The days of unleavened bread; or the passover, which festival solemnity lasted eight days; and God overruled the hypocrisy of Herod (for he did not out of piety observe this time) for the preservation of Peter; and Herod might fear some tumult of the people, in so great a concourse, upon Peter's death, for which he did defer it: however, the perverseness of the Jews is very remarkable, who were mad with rage against Christ and his apostles, at such times in which they pretended to serve the God of love and peace.

Acts 12:4

Ver. 4. *Four quaternions of soldiers:* there were sixteen soldiers appointed to keep Peter; the Romans using four soldiers at a time to keep sentry, and the Jews dividing their nights into four watches, there were enough to relieve the other, and to set a new watch as often as was required for every night; of which four at a time, two were with the prisoner, and perhaps, for the greater security, bound with the same chain, and two did always stand at the door or gate; and this they might the rather do, out of great caution, having heard what miracles Peter did, and that he had been delivered by an angel out of prison, Ac 5:19.

After Easter; that day in which the paschal lamb was ate, on which the Jews would put none to death, that they might not eclipse the joy of that day.

Bring him forth to the people; to do with him what they would, leaving him to their mercy, or rather cruelty.

Acts 12:5

Ver. 5. *Peter therefore was kept in prison,* till a fit time to offer him up as a sacrifice unto the people: so basely do wicked men stoop for their ends.

But prayer was made: the only help or hope poor Christians had, was from prayer (*preces et lachrymae*); there are no quaternions of soldiers can keep the passage shut that is towards heaven.

Without ceasing; continued, long prayers, without intermission; but also fervent and earnest prayers, *ολοψυχως*, with all the might of their souls; remembering the apostle now in bonds, as bound with him, Heb 13:3.

Acts 12:6

Ver. 6. *Brought him forth,* to be put to death.

The same night: this is a night to be remembered, as that in which God delivered his Israel out of Egypt: when both were come to the utmost extremity, and at the pit's brink, then so God does his marvellous work of deliverance, that it ought to be had in remembrance, Ps 105:5.

Peter was sleeping: innocency hath this advantage, and a good conscience acquiesces in the providence of God; it hath God to its friend; and if he be for us, who can be against us?

Bound with two chains: see Ac 12:4: to which may be added, that with one chain St. Peter's right hand was bound to the soldier's left; with the other chain his left hand to the other soldier's right; for so was their manner for

their greater security, that they might not let the prisoner escape: thus persecutors are skilful to destroy; but no device can avail against any whom God will save.

Acts 12:7

Ver. 7. *The angel of the Lord*, whose office it is to minister for the heirs of salvation, Heb 1:14, and who willingly fulfil this will of the Lord.

Came upon him, as Lu 2:9, suddenly and unexpectedly.

A light shined in the prison; whether this light was from the bright body the angel assumed, or from some other cause, we are not told, and therefore it is not necessary for us to know; but it was a light only to Peter, but darkness to his keepers; as the pillar of fire enlightened only the Israelites; which made them both the more strange and miraculous.

The angel *smote Peter* (as one jogs, or gently strikes another) to awaken him; thus God was waking, though Peter slept; and by his providence watches over all his people for their preservation.

His chains fell off from his hands; chains could not hold any whom God will have free; every thing loses its force when God suspends or withdraws his concurrence.

Acts 12:8

Ver. 8. *Gird thyself*; the custom being to wear long garments, they were not so fit to go about any business until they had girt their garments to them; hence Jeremiah is commanded to get a girdle about him, Jer 13:1, when he was to be sent on God's errand. The *sandals* were little other than sole leathers, bound or fastened with thongs.

Thy garment; the uppermost vest, answerable to a cloak amongst us. God furnishes his people thus with necessaries, and he will have them use them, so far as they are able to serve them, even then when he is working of miracles for their deliverances.

Acts 12:9

Ver. 9. The greatness and suddenness of the deliverance was such, as it amazed him, it seemed incredible unto him: not that he questioned God's power or godliness; but knowing that he was to suffer for Christ's name's sake, he might the rather not look for such a deliverance, and when it came, be as one that dreams, as Ps 126:1: God therefore bringing his people to such extremities, that his salvation might be the more astonishing.

Acts 12:10

Ver. 10. *The first and the second ward;* guard or sentinels.

The iron gate that leadeth unto the city; the outermost gate that led out of the prison into the city, not that the prison itself was out of the city.

Which opened to them of his own accord: God worketh a series of miracles in their fit place and time; he could have done them all together, and have opened his iron gate beforehand, when he conducted Peter through the first, then through the second watch; but it is good for Peter, and us, to be convinced that we stand every moment in need of God's conduct and deliverance.

Acts 12:11

Ver. 11. *When Peter was come to himself,* out of that amazement which so many wonderful things had wrought in him, that he could compose himself to effect upon what he had heard and seen, he knew his deliverance was real and effectual.

Delivered me; from Herod, who had resolved to have killed him, as he had done James, Ac 12:2; and from the people's expectation, who had heard the report of Herod's resolution, and longed for the fulfilling of it.

Acts 12:12

Ver. 12. Peter, being delivered, meditates upon the greatness of the danger that he had been in, and the goodness of God that had delivered him, and this whilst walking in the street, and going along: no place can exclude good thoughts and holy meditations.

The mother of John; the mother is here described by the son, as the more known person; here the parent gains reputation, and to be remembered in this Scripture, for her son's sake. Thus a wise son made a glad mother, as Pr 10:1.

Mark; some think this was he that wrote the Gospel called by his name.

Many were gathered together: in this time of persecution the Christians met secretly, and in small numbers, as they could; these here mentioned are thought to be private Christians, because it appears by the Ac 12:17, that James, &c. were not there.

Acts 12:13

Ver. 13. *The door of the gate;* this was the outermost door to the porch, or court before the house.

A damsel came to hearken; being in great fear of a surprisal, they ordered one to observe, and give an answer unto any that should come to the house; which was the more heedfully done, because it was at an unseasonable time of the night; yet these holy men broke their rest, and exposed themselves to many fears and dangers, rather than not to assemble to serve God, when they could not serve him otherwise.

Acts 12:14

Ver. 14. *She opened not the gate for gladness;* as one from herself, not knowing what to do for gladness. Great and sudden passions have caused strange ecstasies, and death itself sometimes; the spirits in grief flowing

too fast unto the heart to fortify it, and in joy leaving the heart as fast, to meet the object that causeth it.

Acts 12:15

Ver. 15. *Thou art mad;* thou speakest thou knowest not what; thinking her, out of fear, to have been discomposed in her mind.

It is his angel: some have thought, that by Peter's angel no other was meant than some messenger from Peter, which they might expect from him in such a case as he was in; now though *αγγελος* (the word here) signifies a messenger or an angel, indifferently, yet how could Rhoda then know it to have been Peter's voice? A messenger's voice being no more like his that sent him than another man's. They did, probably mean some angel that had assumed Peter's shape, and imitated his voice: and the Jews having had a constant opinion, that at least every good man hath a guardian angel which God appoints to him for a means of his preservation, might be apt to imagine that this was that angel whose charge St. Peter was, Mt 18:10. Though that angel spoken of, Ge 48:16, most probably was the angel of the new covenant, and not a created angel, being Jacob blesseth in his name; yet the opinion of tutelar angels, though not certain or needful, is to this day thought probable.

Acts 12:16

Ver. 16. *Peter continued knocking;* Peter might be unwilling to have his entrance into the house deferred,

1. Out of fear of being taken again, and his life concerned upon it.
2. Out of an earnest desire to see the brethren, whom he might hope to meet with there.
3. Out of zeal to declare the mercy of God towards him; this fire was kindled in him, and he sought vent for it.

Acts 12:17

Ver. 17. Beckoning; it was usual by the motion of the hand both to desire silence and to crave audience.

How the Lord had brought him out; Peter gives God the glory, though an angel had been the means of his delivery.

James; this James was the son of Alphaeus, Mt 10:3 Mr 3:18, and succeeded the other James, (the brother of John, of whom, Ac 12:2), in governing the church at Jerusalem.

Went into another place; Peter could not but know he should be sought after, and therefore durst not abide in one place, lest he should ruin himself, and endanger his friends that should harbour him. Thus the great apostle, as David formerly, was hunted, *as one hunteth a partridge in the mountains*, 1Sa 26:20.

Acts 12:18

Ver. 18. The soldiers, who were bound with Peter in the same chains, could not but miss him as soon as they did awake, and with admiration find the chains still holding them, thought loosened from Peter. What strange imaginations they might have, is not to be expressed, though some guess at it.

Acts 12:19

Ver. 19. He examined the keepers; that is, judicially; proceeding against them for the escape of St. Peter.

Commanded that they should be put to death; they were sentenced to be led away, and it is most probably thought, unto the place of execution. The instruments in persecution God many times meets with in this world, and sometimes by the persecutors themselves.

Acts 12:20

Ver. 20. *Tyre and Sidon*; these were two coast towns in Phoenicia, famous, especially the former, for their great trading; and being rich, might be insolent, or possibly might tempt Herod to a war against them, whose conquest would pay the charge of it.

The king's chamberlain, or chief of his bed chamber.

Desired peace, or begged pardon; there being no war yet begun.

Their country was nourished by the king's country; these cities lying upon the sea, had little land belonging to them, and of old were forced to have their provision from other places, especially from Judea; thus Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty thousand measures of wheat for his household, and twenty measures of pure oil yearly, 1Ki 5:9,11; and long after that, they of Judah and Israel are said to have traded with their wheat in Tyre, Eze 27:17.

Acts 12:21

Ver. 21. *Upon a set day*; this was (says Josephus, cap. 19. lib. 7) the second day of the sports or games, which Herod had instituted in honour of the emperor Claudius; or, it may be, such a day as Herod had appointed to determine the difference between him and the Tyrians.

Royal apparel; such, saith Josephus, as were made of silver, woven with extraordinary art, and did reflect strangely the beams of the sun shining upon it.

Sat upon his throne; an elevated place, from whence he might the better be seen and heard.

Acts 12:22

Ver. 22. These impious flatterers destroy whom they exalt; for God will pull down his rivals.

Acts 12:23

Ver. 23. An angel had delivered Peter, and here an angel destroys Herod: all that heavenly host fulfil God's will for the deliverance of his church, and the destruction of his enemies.

He gave not God the glory; priding himself in the acclamation the people had made, and not attributing his eloquence and glory to God, as the giver of them; or rather, not repressing or punishing their blasphemy; whereas Peter durst not accept of undue honour from Cornelius, Ac 10:26, nor the angel from St. John, Re 19:10 22:9.

He was eaten of worms; either breeding in his bowels, or in his flesh, after a more unusual manner; as it is recorded of Herod the Great, that he was eaten up of lice. No creature so little or contemptible, but it can execute God's judgments on whom he please.

Acts 12:24

Ver. 24. *Grew;* the word of God is compared here to seed, as in our Saviour's parable, Mt 13:19.

Multiplied; the number of believers multiplied through the word, which was sown, as seed is scattered abroad. So true it is, that persecutors, by their pulling down of the church, do but build it up.

Acts 12:25

Ver. 25. *From Jerusalem;* they returned unto Antioch, from whence they were sent, Ac 11:26,30, to carry the benevolence of the church of Antioch to that of Judea.

Their ministry; this was the ministry or service they were appointed to do.

John; of whom before, Ac 12:12.

Acts 13:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 13:1-5 Barnabas and Saul, being set apart with fasting and prayer, are sent forth by the Holy Ghost to the work of their calling.

Ac 13:6-12 At Paphos, Elymas the sorcerer, opposing the Gospel, is smitten with blindness, and the deputy Sergius Paulus converted to the faith.

Ac 13:13-41 Paul and his company come to Antioch in Pisidia: Paul preacheth Christ, and the necessity of faith in him unto justification.

Ac 13:42,43 The Gentiles desire to hear the word again: many are converted.

Ac 13:44-49 The envious Jews gainsay and blaspheme: the apostles profess to turn to the Gentiles, of whom many believe.

Ac 13:50-52 The Jews raise a persecution, and expel Paul and Barnabas, who go to Iconium.

Ver. 1. *The church that was at Antioch;* the true church, which hath a being, and whose Builder and Maker is God. Other churches (as that of the circumcision) are no churches or congregations of the faithful.

Prophets and teachers; these two offices might be in the same person, as he that had the gift of prophecy, and could foretell things to come, might be a teacher to instruct the people; but yet they were frequently appertaining to several persons, one excelling in one gift, another in another.

Simeon that was called Niger; this Simeon is thus distinguished from Simon Peter, and from Simon the Canaanite, this name of *Niger* being given him by the Romans.

Lucius; this hath been thought the name of Luke, it being more after the Latin termination; and that it might be he that wrote the Gospel called by his name, and this book of the Acts. However, we meet with this name, Ro

16:21; and St. Paul sends salutation unto him that was so called.

Of Cyrene; born at a place so called, or brought up in the synagogue of the Cyrenians; of which, Ac 6:9.

Either this *Manaen* was Herod's foster brother, or had the same tutors and instructors with him, their education being together.

This *Herod* was Herod Antipas, who set at nought our Saviour, and killed the Baptist.

And yet *Manaen*, as another Moses, kept his integrity in that Pharaoh's court; and, as Moses, he choose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, Heb 11:25. Thus there was an Obadiah in Ahab's house, 1Ki 18:3, and divers believe in Nero's family, Php 4:22.

Acts 13:2

Ver. 2. Ministered; the word importeth the exercise of any public office, sacred or civil. But in the former verse mentions being made of prophets and teachers, these words are in sense too conjoined with them; and inform us, that they were preaching to and instructing of the people, (for there is no ministry or service which God likes better than to convert and save souls), and, that all might be more effectual, as being done with greater earnestness and intention of mind, whilst they fasted.

The Holy Ghost said; by some inward instinct in those prophets before spoken of, who had warrant to declare it as from him.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul; these two were to be separated: as the first born under the law, Ex 13:12, and after them, or in their stead, the Levites, Nu 3:12; so were Paul and Barnabas in especial manner separated for the calling in of the Gentiles, that great ministry or service which God had for them to do.

Acts 13:3

Ver. 3. *When they had fasted and prayed;* a good preparation to enter into any business with, whereby they acknowledged that all success must come from God. Our blessed Saviour himself would not enter upon his ministry till he had fasted forty days, Mt 4:2, compared with Mt 4:17.

Laid their hands on them; Barnabas and Saul being called to be apostles already, this laying on of their hands upon them signifies,

1. Their being set apart to this particular employment they were now to be sent about.
2. The approbation of the church to that heavenly call they had.
3. Their praying for God's blessing upon them, and success upon the work they went for.

Acts 13:4

Ver. 4. *Seleucia;* a sea town of Cilicia, nigh unto Antioch, and over against Cyprus, built by Seleucus, and was a town of some note, but mentioned here only as in their passage to Cyprus.

Acts 13:5

Ver. 5. *Salamis;* the chief city of Cyprus, now called Famagusta, situate on the east side of the island, over against Syria.

They preached, here and elsewhere, *in the synagogues,* either because they found no other such convenient places to preach in; (these being large structures, and many resorting to them); or rather, because though they were sent unto the Gentiles, yet it was not till afar the Jews should have refused the gospel, as may be seen throughout all this book, and in the conclusion of it, Ac 28:28.

They had also John to their minister: as Ac 12:25.

Acts 13:6

Ver. 6. *Unto Paphos*; this city was on the west end of Cyprus, so that going from Salamis they went through the island: this place was famous for the worshipping of Venus.

A certain sorcerer; there were many magicians about this time amongst the Jews, who by their false miracles endeavoured to bring the real miracles of our Saviour into contempt. As the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt, by their enchantments, for a while did seem to do such wonders as Moses had wrought by the finger of God, Ex 7:11.

Acts 13:7

Ver. 7. *The deputy of the country*; whether he was pro-consul or proprietor, it is in effect the same; for he it was that governed the island.

Desired to hear the word of God; this desire was extraordinary, and wrought by God, in order to the fitting him for the further mercy of his conversion and salvation. Where such a desire is, it shall be granted: *Ask, and it shall be given you*, Lu 11:9.

Acts 13:8

Ver. 8. *Elymas*; this is another name of him that was called Bar-jesus, which was not unusual, as *Simon Bar-jona*, Mt 16:17. This *Elymas* may be taken appellatively, and signifies the magician or *sorcerer*; but being it was a proper name unto others we read of, it may be so here.

Acts 13:9

Ver. 9. It is observable, that St. Luke never before called this great apostle by the name of Paul, and henceforth never calls him by the name of Saul. Though there be no great difference in these names, *Saul* might be more

acceptable to the Jews, amongst whom hitherto he had conversed; and *Paul* a more pleasing name unto the Gentiles, unto whom he was now sent, and with whom for the future he should most converse. He was called *Saul* as he was a Jew born, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and *Paul*, as he was a denizen of Rome; the Romans having that name in good account in several of their chief families.

Filled with the Holy Ghost; zeal for God's glory, and faith and power to work the ensuing miracle.

Acts 13:10

Ver. 10. *Mischief;* *ραδιουργια* signifies a facility or readiness in doing mischief, and that such who are given to sorcery are easily drawn to commit any kind of sin whatsoever.

Thou child of the devil; because he did his work who is the destroyer, in hindering what he could the salvation of Sergius Paulus and his family.

To pervert the right ways of the Lord; to make the way of God crooked, which is straight; and rugged, when indeed it is smooth: that is, to lay what rubs he could to keep any from coming unto, or continuing in, the ways of God.

Acts 13:11

Ver. 11. *The hand of the Lord* is put for any powerful action of God, whether in mercy or judgment: here it is put for the Divine power wherewith God strikes his enemies. God did in judgment remember mercy, inflicting this blindness only *for a season*, that it might be rather a medicine than a punishment.

Acts 13:12

Ver. 12. The gospel which Paul preached; finding in it (though a wise man) depths beyond his fathoming; and all accompanied with such a

power in doing of miracles, and changing of hearts and lives, as might well amaze so prudent and considering a man.

Acts 13:13

Ver. 13. *Perga*, a city in *Pamphylia*: not that there were any other cities of that name; but because this region was more commonly known, it being a country in the Lesser Asia, bordering on Cilicia. The departure of John (of whom before, Ac 13:5, and Ac 12:25) was blameworthy, as Ac 15:38. Some think he shunned that labour and suffering which he saw attended the gospel; others suppose that he returned to Jerusalem out of too fond an affection for his mother, who lived there; and it may be that he, retaining a great aversion from the Gentiles, might abhor to go amongst them: however, *let him that standeth take heed lest he fall*.

Acts 13:14

Ver. 14. *Antioch in Pisidia*; so called to distinguish it from the other Antioch, mentioned in Ac 13:1, which was a city in Syria, as this in Pisidia, next to, or part of, Pamphylia.

Went into the synagogue on the sabbath day; either to join with the Jews in their worship, which was not then unlawful; or to get an opportunity more publicly to preach the gospel unto them: they were no sooner come thither, but they mind that great business they went about.

Acts 13:15

Ver. 15. *The reading of the law* was commanded by Moses; and they say that Ezra commanded the reading of *the prophets* also in their synagogues, which was used, as we may see in Ac 13:27; and so divided into several sections, that once a year they might be all read over.

The rulers of the synagogue; they were such as had the oversight of this service of God in their synagogues, that it might be performed according to the prescription.

Men and brethren; a usual compellation which the Jews gave one another, owning them to serve the same God, and professing a suitable respect for them.

If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on; after the reading before spoken of, there followed a sermon, or exhortation; which the apostles are desired to make, the rulers of the synagogue, as it is supposed, having had some previous knowledge of them.

Acts 13:16

Ver. 16. *Beckoning with his hand,* to procure silence and attention, as Ac 12:17.

And ye that fear God; besides the native Jews, the proselytes, and such out of all nations who left the idolatry of the Gentiles, and served the only true God, met together in the worship of God; these were the *σεβομενοι*, spoken of Ac 17:4. It shows also what they are to do that would hear the word of the Lord with profit; viz. to attend unto it in the fear of his name.

Acts 13:17

Ver. 17. *The God of this people of Israel;* God was the God of Israel after a peculiar manner.

Chose our fathers; having chosen them before all nations, to make him known unto them, to be served and worshipped by them.

And exalted the people; and God exalted them in the time of Joseph, and whilst the memory of that great preservation wrought by his means did continue, till another king arose that knew not Joseph.

An high arm; the many miracles done by the power of God towards the Israelites' deliverance out of Egypt. By which the apostle would have them remember, that they owed all which they challenged from their progenitors to the grace and blessing of God only, and that God may do with his own

as he please.

Acts 13:18

Ver. 18. This is recorded, Ps 95:10, and remembered by the apostle, Heb 3:8,9, and to be admired through all ages, that God should be so patient, or a people could be so perverse. Some instead of *ετροποφορησεν*, read *ετροφοφορησεν*, there being but one letter difference, (and such as are usually changed into one another), and then it speaks God's providing for this people all that while, and carrying them as in his bosom, as a nurse bears the sucking child, Nu 11:12 De 1:31; or as an eagle beareth her young ones on her wings, De 32:11,12. But it seems God did not bear with their fathers, but destroyed them in the wilderness, 1Co 10:5. First, God bare long with those that perished. Secondly, The succeeding generation took not that warning which did become them, but followed their fathers' steps; and whilst one generation was wearing away, and another coming, this space of forty years was spent, through the abundant compassion of God towards them, who did not consume them, as they tempted him to do, in a moment.

Acts 13:19

Ver. 19. These *seven nations* are mentioned, Jos 3:10.

He divided their land to them by lot; the lot being disposed only as God would, Pr 16:33. And it was but reasonable that God, having miraculously got this land, (for the Israelites did rather go to take possession of it than to fight for it), and assumed a special right unto it, that he should divide it to whom he pleased, and in what proportions he thought good.

Acts 13:20

Ver. 20. These *judges* were persons deputed by God to govern and deliver that people; their commission was attested usually by some extraordinary thing done by them, and their power (as being mediately from God) was absolute. The computation of years here mentioned hath been very much

controverted. That which hath the greatest probability with it, is, either, first, to have recourse to Ac 13:17, and begin this era there, with God's choosing of their fathers; and ending it at the time of the decision of the land by lot, as Ac 13:19; for from the birth of Isaac, to this distribution of the land, are reckoned four hundred and forty-seven years; which may well be said here, *about four hundred and fifty years*: but then the sense is, *after that* such things mentioned in Ac 13:17-19 were done; which were in the compass of four hundred and fifty years, God then gave them judges. Or, as others do refer these words to what follows, and begin the era or computation from the going of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and ending it at the expulsion of the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, which may make up this account. But then this passage of St. Paul is not intended to show how long the judges ruled, but when it was, or about what time that they ruled; as also to show what a long time it took up to gain that people a quiet possession of that promised inheritance, their sins still keeping good things from them.

Acts 13:21

Ver. 21. Their great sin in desiring a king was, because by that desire they rejected God, who had at that very time a prophet (Samuel) by whom he governed them, 1Sa 8:7 10:19. They had been under a theocracy ever since they came out of Egypt, their laws and their governors being appointed by God; had their condition been as that of other nations, their desire had not been a provocation. These words, *by the space of forty years*, are to be joined with the foregoing verse, and the other foregoing words in the verse read with a parenthesis: and thus they show how long Samuel the prophet (as he is here called) exercised his prophetic office, which was the space here mentioned, partly before Saul was anointed king, and in part afterward; in which, as another Moses, he cared for, and went in and out before, the people of God, the like space of forty years. This computation of St. Paul might also agree more with the Septuagint, and be according to the then current account, which (not being of more consequence) St. Paul would not controvert at this time, having greater matters to speak of unto them.

Acts 13:22

Ver. 22. *He had removed him;* God had taken Saul away by death; for he would not suffer David to hasten it.

After mine own heart; favoured or beloved by me, and obedient to me; *my servant,* as God speaks of him, Ps 89:20.

Which shall fulfil all my will; and here, that he should fulfil all God's will, to wit, in governing his people; for he hath a testimonial upon record in God's word, Ps 78:72. He that is according to God's heart, fulfils all the will of God, and does nothing by partiality; but if it be God's will either for him to do or to suffer any thing, he is ready to set his fiat to it; as he daily prays (understandingly) that the will of the Lord may be done.

Acts 13:23

Ver. 23. Christ was the Son of David, and so frequently called, Mt 1:1 Lu 18:38,39, with reference unto the promise made, Isa 11:1, spoken of, Ac 2:30 Ro 1:3.

Raised unto Israel a Saviour; because he lived amongst the Jews, and salvation was first offered unto them by him, as Ac 13:46.

Jesus; our Saviour's name is added to show that he truly was according to his name, and what he was said to be, as Mt 1:21.

Acts 13:24

Ver. 24. John the Baptist did not speak of Christ's coming, as the other apostles had done, as of a thing a great way off, or at a distance of time; but he spake of it as of a present matter, before his and their faces, and in their view;

Behold the Lamb of God! Joh 1:29,36.

The baptism of repentance; so it is called, Mt 3:2,8 Mr 1:4 Lu 3:3;

repentance being a due qualification for such as hope to receive the mercies of God in Christ unto life eternal.

Acts 13:25

Ver. 25. *Fulfilled his course;* the course of his ministry, or of his life: in respect of either, he ran as one in a race.

I am not he; that is, the Messiah, which they were in such expectation of, and so inquisitive about.

There cometh one after me; Christ began his life (as to the flesh) after John and he began his ministry after him, and in that respect may be said to come after him.

Whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose; a proverbial expression, whereby the meanest office is implied, which the disciples or servants could do for their masters, Mt 3:11. The sense of these words we have, Joh 1:20,27.

Acts 13:26

Ver. 26. *Men and brethren;* he speaks to the Jews according as the manner was amongst them; to the Jews he became as a Jew.

Whosoever among you feareth God; some think the devout Pisidians, or men of that country, are here meant; but rather it may insinuate the apostle's hope concerning these Jews, that they were such as feared God, which hope they ought the rather to have carefully answered.

The word of this salvation:

1. Christ, who is the incarnate Word, or the Word made flesh, Joh 1:14; or the Gospel, which is glad tidings of salvation; as if the apostle had minded them, that it was not any business which belonged unto others alone, which he was speaking about: but of such things as pertained unto their salvation; and such a salvation (*this salvation*) as never

greater was or ever will be published, this is certain, that we are concerned in it for ourselves, if we accept or neglect this salvation, it is for ourselves. Oh that in this respect self-interest were more prevalent with us!

Acts 13:27

Ver. 27. *They;* the common people, and *their rulers;* great council, both had a hand in our Saviour's death. But if so great a fault was capable of any alleviation, the apostle gladly mentions it. that it was done out of ignorance; they knew neither Christ the Word, nor the word (of the Gospel) concerning Christ, though, that they may be made sensible that this their ignorance was not invincible, he minds them that it was their sin, having had means whereby they might have come unto the knowledge of Christ.

Fulfilled them: see Ac 4:28 Lu 24:25,26.

Acts 13:28

Ver. 28. *Though they found no cause of death in him;* he was a Lamb without blemish; neither had he offended the rabble that was so slanderous against him, unless by such vast goodness and kindness towards them he branded them for ingratitude.

Yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain, Mt 27:22. The Jews did condemn him, but they could not put him to death, the Romans, under whom they were subject, having reserved the power of life and death wholly unto themselves; and therefore they desired Pilate to confirm their sentence, and to cause it to be executed.

Acts 13:29

Ver. 29. *All that was written of him;* as the giving him vinegar to drink, piercing his side, &c, Ps 69:21 Joh 19:28-30.

From the tree: see Ac 5:30.

They laid him in a sepulchre; Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, Mt 27:60 Joh 19:39.

Acts 13:30

Ver. 30. Lest they should be offended at our Saviour's dying so shameful and cursed a death, and to take away the scandal of the cross, he shows, that his resurrection was as glorious as his death could be ignominious, being by it *declared to be the Son of God with power*, Ro 1:4.

Acts 13:31

Ver. 31. *Seen many days;* forty days between his resurrection and ascension, Ac 1:3. Christ was seen, not only by the apostles, but of the Galilean women which came up with him unto Jerusalem, Mt 28:1, and by above five hundred at once, 1Co 15:6; so plentifully would God have this great article of our faith and object of our hope to be confirmed unto us.

Acts 13:32

Ver. 32. *Glad tidings;* or the gospel, which is nothing else but the glad tidings of our salvation from sin and hell.

The promise which was made unto the fathers; this promise was frequently made and renewed to their ancestors, and typified by many deliverances, especially from Egypt and Babylon.

Acts 13:33

Ver. 33. *Raised up Jesus again;* some refer these words to the incarnation, others to the resurrection, of our Saviour: our translators lay the stress upon the preposition, with which the verb is compounded, and by adding *again*, intend it to be understood of the resurrection; and there is ground

for it in the context; for the resurrection of Christ is that which in Ac 13:30 is propounded by St. Paul as his theme or argument to preach upon.

Thou art my Son; these words quoted, though they do not seem to be a proof of Christ's resurrection at the first view, yet if we weigh them well, they answer St. Paul's purpose:

Thou art my Son, Ps 2:7, is ushered in with, I have made thee king, Ac 13:6, and followed with, *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance;* which was in an especial manner to be fulfilled after the resurrection, as our Saviour manifests, Mt 28:18,19.

This day have I begotten thee; not as if Christ at his resurrection began to be the Son of God; but then he was manifested to be so, Ro 1:4; which before, whilst he was in a suffering condition was not so apparent. Some of the ancients have understood these words, of the eternal generation of the Son of God; eternity being an everlasting point, and one and the same day for ever.

Acts 13:34

Ver. 34. The former verse was not intended so much by St. Paul for a proof of the resurrection, as it was to show how faithful God was in fulfilling that promise there spoken of; here the apostle's design is, to evince Christ's resurrection, and that it was agreeable to the prophesies which were concerning him.

I will give you the sure mercies of David; these words are found, Isa 60:3, and *the sure mercies of David* there and here spoken of, are such mercies as were promised to David (David being to be taken positively). Now the mercies which were promised to David are all included or surmounted in this, that by this Son of David (our Lord and Saviour, frequently and truly so called) God would erect and establish an everlasting kingdom; which could not be done, unless Christ rose again, and obtained the victory over death and the grave. All the promises God hath made unto his church in any age concerning Christ, are sure and faithful, holy and just; the words have been variously rendered and changed; but no words can sufficiently express their stability and excellency.

Acts 13:35

Ver. 35. These words are quoted out of Ps 16:10,11: see Ac 2:27.

Acts 13:36

Ver. 36. Some point these words otherwise, reading them thus; *David, after he had served his generation, by the will of God fell asleep*: which contains indeed a truth, viz. that God hath appointed every one's time in the world, and that the issue of life and death are his; but thus they would prove little to David's praise, for who dies otherwise but according to the determinate counsel of God? But this is remembered to David's glory, that, according to the will of God, he was a public good, and he lived and governed by the rule and square of God's word; notwithstanding which he fell asleep, and saw death, but such as did not deserve so terrible a name.

Laid unto his fathers; buried amongst his ancestors; *and saw corruption*; and his body corrupted as theirs. Now this verse explains the former, and draws the argument home, in that it proves, that the words before mentioned could not be meant of David, but of one that he typified and represented.

Acts 13:37

Ver. 37. *God raised again*; that is, on the third day, according to the gospel.

Saw no corruption; was not under the power of death so long as to be preyed upon so far by it.

Acts 13:38

Men and brethren; the usual compellation given in these cases.

This man; having spoken concerning Christ's resurrection, which only can be meant of him in his human nature, here, according unto that nature, the apostle calls him *man*.

The forgiveness of sins; as in Ac 10:43. This *forgiveness of sins* is that which the apostle so much would recommend to all to seek after, and magnify Christ for, it being only through him; and he could not be overcome by death, who could deliver us from sin.

Acts 13:39

Ver. 39. *Are justified*; it is a forensic word, opposed to condemned; all that believe in Christ with the heart, by his merit and mediation shall be absolved, and shall not come into condemnation: and thus this agrees with the former words, and shows us whence remission of sins is to be had. If any will take this word as signifying also to be purged from sin; yet it is evident, that the law can bring neither of these benefits unto us. The law declares what is sin, and what the curse is that is due unto sin, but not how to be delivered from them; it shows the spot, but not how to wash it off; and the sore, but not how to heal it; but, on the other side, we are bidden to *glory in the Lord, (Jesus), who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1Co 1:30,31.*

From all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses; to which may be added, that there were some sins which by the ceremonial law there was no sacrifice appointed for; and for such sins which a sacrifice was appointed for, it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take them away, Heb 10:4; which may make us more to admire the grace of the gospel, by which *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb 10:10.*

Acts 13:40

Ver. 40. Hab 1:5. He cautions these Jews, lest the same thing threatened by the prophet to their fathers come also upon them; for sin is as odious unto God as ever, and God is as jealous of his honour, which sin robs him of, as ever he was.

Acts 13:41

Ver. 41. These words are cited from that place in Habakkuk, according to the reading of the Septuagint, St. Paul not being willing to alter the words, the Jews that were dispersed being so, used to that translation, especially the sense being the same with the original Hebrew. This quotation of the apostle might also be taken from Isa 28:14,16.

Ye despisers; for which cause, in that place of Habakkuk they are commanded to consider the heathen, and are sent to school unto them they contemned so much, who had had God for their teacher, had they not despised his word.

And wonder; grow pale for shame and fear.

And perish; ye shall be destroyed by the Romans your enemies, as your ancestors were by their enemies.

A work in your days; this work was a work of God's just revenge on them then, by the Chaldeans; but threatened to come on these (without repentance) by the Romans.

Which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you; which destruction should be so great, that it was incredible to them now, though it should have been told them.

Acts 13:42

Ver. 42. *When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue;* or, as some read, the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, were gone out of the synagogue of the Jews.

The Gentiles; proselytes, or such devout persons formerly spoken of, who had relinquished paganism, and came to be instructed in the knowledge of the true God by the Jews.

The next sabbath; or in some day betwixt the sabbaths: the apostles took all advantages, if there were a festival, which was also called a sabbath, Le 16:31, and in Le 23:1-44, frequently; they would preach in season and out of season: howsoever, because we find the apostles did meet again with them on that day seven-night after, it is most probable that their desire was so to be understood. See Ac 13:44.

Acts 13:43

Ver. 43. *The congregation was broken up;* the congregation was dissolved, by the offence the Jews generally had taken at the doctrine of the apostles.

Religious proselytes; these proselytes were so called, from their coming over from paganism to own the true God: see Ac 2:10.

In the grace of God; this grace of God the apostles so earnestly exhorted them to continue in, was,

1. Their present state of being firmly resolved to serve God, whatsoever opposition or temptation they should meet with to the contrary, which was wrought in them by the grace of God.
2. The doctrine of justification by the grace of God, which St. Paul had preached unto them, Ac 13:39. Or:
3. The whole gospel, and doctrine therein contained, which is called *the grace of God*, Heb 12:15, and *the true grace wherein we stand*, 1Pe 5:12.

Acts 13:44

Ver. 44. The citizens generally resorted thither.

To hear the word of God; some out of curiosity, some to cavil at it, though some also out of love to it; here was doubtless a mixed congregation.

Acts 13:45

Ver. 45. The Jews could not endure that the Gentiles should be equalled to them, being as much concerned against the Gentiles being exalted, as against their own being depressed.

Envy, as a vicious humour, made them disrelish the wholesomest and most saving truths.

Contradicting and blaspheming; contradicting the doctrine of the gospel, and blaspheming the preaching of it; or going from one degree of opposition unto another, until they came to the highest enmity against both.

Acts 13:46

Ver. 46. *Waxed bold*; being nothing afrighted with the reproaches and blasphemies they met with, which but increased their zeal, as a little water does the fire in the smith's forge.

It was necessary; there was a necessity that the Word of God should be first preached to the Jews:

1. Because Christ was promised to the children and heirs of their ancestors.
2. Because Christ did command it to be thus preached, Mt 10:5,6 Lu 24:47 Ac 1:8.
3. Christ himself thus preached it, declaring that he was *not sent* (comparatively) *but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, Mt 15:24.

And judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life; by this their contradicting and blaspheming, they show as evidently that they are thus unworthy of everlasting life, as if a judge had determined so, or passed such a sentence upon his tribunal, or judgment seat.

Acts 13:47

Ver. 47. Because that prophecy must be fulfilled which we find, Isa 49:6, the apostle infers aright, that they were *commanded* to publish Christ unto the Gentiles; for *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* Ro 10:14.

I have set thee to be a light; all knowledge is ignorance, and all light is darkness, without Christ.

Acts 13:48

Ver. 48. *When the Gentiles heard this they were glad;* there can be no true rest or peace in any to whom Christ is not manifested; the apostle telling us, that *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ro 5:1; and the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Glorified the word of the Lord; they magnified the goodness of God, which appeared in the gospel unto them.

As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed; God, who ordered the end, ordereth the means, and gives them opportunities to hear the word, and by it graciously worketh faith in them whom he hath appointed to eternal life; without which faith, purging the heart, there is no hope of life eternal.

Acts 13:49

Ver. 49. *The word of the Lord,* concerning salvation to be found only by Christ, and the Gentiles to be admitted to partake of that salvation.

Was published throughout all the region; like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, Mt 13:33.

Acts 13:50

Ver. 50. *The devout;* σεβομενοι, as was said of the men, such as had relinquished the idolatry of their country and ancestors, and acknowledged the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Honourable women; of great repute and esteem; women being accounted more earnest in what way soever they take; and to be sure Eve was first seduced, and in the transgression.

The chief men of the city; in some cities there were but five, in some ten, in others twenty, in whose hands the government of the city was ordinarily put; and these the persecutors (knowing what an influence their authority must needs have) by all means labour to seduce.

Acts 13:51

Ver. 51. This was according to our Saviour's command, Mt 10:14 Mr 6:11 Lu 9:5, so often is it mentioned, and so considerable a matter it is for us to know, and dread the punishment appointed for such as refuse the gospel, and condemn the salvation offered by it. What this was symbolical of is not expressed. The Hebrew proverb says, The dust of an ethnic city or country doth pollute a man; and they might by this represent, that the inhabitants of such a city or place, who did not entertain the gospel, and the ministers thereof, they would repute as the vilest sinners, and they should by God be dealt with accordingly.

Iconium: see Ac 14:1.

Acts 13:52

Ver. 52. *The disciples;* either Paul and Barnabas in a more especial manner, or, also such as at Perga had believed the gospel, and came with them to Antioch, *were filled with joy,* so as no place was left for meaner contentments:

1. By reason of the pardon of their sins.

2. The promise made to them of everlasting life.
3. The gifts of the Holy Ghost which they had, at that time, as an earnest and pledge to assure the other unto them.

Acts 14:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 14:1-7 Paul and Barnabas are persecuted from Iconium by the malice of the unbelieving Jews.

Ac 14:8-18 At Lystra they heal an impotent man, and refused divine honours with abhorrence.

Ac 14:19,20 Paul is stoned at the instigation of the Jews, but escapeth alive with Barnabas to Derbe.

Ac 14:21-28 Having passed through divers places, and confirmed the churches in faith and patience, they return to Antioch, and give an account of their ministry.

Ver. 1. *Iconium*, a city in Lycaonia.

They went both together; Paul and Barnabas, as they were wont to do, showing as great constancy in performing of their duty, as their enemies did obstinacy in persecuting them for it.

So spake; with such evidence and *demonstration of the Spirit and of power.* *The Greeks:* See Ac 13:43.

Acts 14:2

Ver. 2. *The unbelieving,* or disobedient, *Jews,* who did not believe the truths or obey the precepts of the gospel, *stirred up the Gentiles;* urging, persuading, and pressing of them, who of themselves (though as yet ignorant of Christ, and his word) would not have been so cruel.

The brethren; the apostles themselves, and others that were converted by them, whose common father God through Christ was, and were accordingly endeared one to another.

Acts 14:3

Ver. 3. *Long time therefore abode they,* to strengthen the new converts against the opposition they met with in the way of Christ, willingly partaking with them in their afflictions for Christ's sake.

Speaking boldly; with great courage, and humble confidence, as knowing in whom they had believed.

In the Lord;

1. In the Lord's cause, a business which he had sent them about. Secondly, And in the Lord's strength, who enabled them in it. *The word of his grace;* the gospel: first, Wherein the grace of God is manifested.
2. Whereby it is offered.
3. Wherewith, to such as receive, it is conveyed.
4. And out of grace disputed and allowed to some, hidden and withdrawn from others.

Granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands; God, by his miraculous confirming the doctrine of the apostles, showed that it was from him.

Acts 14:4

Ver. 4. *Was divided;* as it was about our Saviour and his doctrine, Joh 7:43.

The apostles; Paul and Barnabas, who were called to be apostles, 1Co 9:5,6.

Acts 14:5

Ver. 5. *Rulers*, such as were called *the chief men of the city*, Ac 13:50.

To use them despitefully; thus they that were called to the marriage of the king's son, Mt 22:6, entreated the servants despitefully.

And to stone them; they would have used them as such who were not worthy to live, and then have taken away their lives from them, as they did by our Saviour; first they spat upon him, and then crucified him.

Acts 14:6

Ver. 6. *And fled*; the apostles did not flee so much to save their lives, as to husband their time best for the glory of God in other places; and this they were commanded to do, Mt 10:23,

When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. Lystra and Derbe; these were cities further in the country of Lycaonia than Iconium was.

Lycaonia; a part of the Lesser Asia, nigh unto the mountain Taurus.

Acts 14:7

Ver. 7. Thus was verified what St. Paul observed, Php 1:12, that all those things fell out *unto the furtherance of the gospel*, which spread the further for the scattering of the apostles and preachers of it; and thousands had not heard of Christ, if persecution had not driven the ministers of the gospel unto them: God working good out of evil, and causing the sun, when it leaves one part, to shine upon another.

Acts 14:8

Ver. 8. Such defects as are from nature, are incurable by art, and only to be helped immediately by the God of nature.

Who never had walked; this is observed and enlarged upon, to make the miracle the more appear to be the only work of God: Ac 3:2.

Acts 14:9

Ver. 9. This Paul might know by a prophetic Spirit; and that extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits might be in this case bestowed upon him. But withal, it is not unlikely but this lame man's attention to the word, eyes, gesture, and countenance, might speak as much.

Acts 14:10

Ver. 10. As Ac 3:6,8, to shew that he was perfectly recovered of this lameness; as all miraculous cures (being the work of God) were perfect.

Acts 14:11

Ver. 11. *In the speech of Lycaonia;* which was a dialect of the Greek tongue, that language being in the Lesser Asia ordinarily spoken.

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men; the heathens (especially their poets) did frequently believe such kind of apparitions; probably at first from the appearing of angels unto the patriarchs and others, which by tradition they might have heard of.

Acts 14:12

Ver. 12. *Jupiter;* whom the heathens took for their chief God. *Mercury* was feigned to be the messenger of their gods, and therefore represented with wings; as also the interpreter of the gods, which caused their applying of his name to Paul.

Acts 14:13

Ver. 13. *Before their city;* the temple of Jupiter, whom they took for the patron of their city, was in the suburbs.

Garlands; these were usually in the form of crowns put upon the oxen which they intended to sacrifice; and, by this sign, showed that they were dedicated to Jupiter, whom the heathen blasphemously called, The king of kings, and placed him sitting in his chair, or throne, with a crown on his head.

Unto the gates; the gates or doors of the house where the apostles lodged.

Acts 14:14

Ver. 14. *They rent their clothes;* which was a sign of their greatest detestation of, and sorrow for, such abominations.

And ran in among the people, crying out; expressing their greatest zeal for the glory of God, and earnestness to hinder the idolatry of this people.

Acts 14:15

Ver. 15. *We also are men of like passions with you;* we stand in need of food and raiment, are liable to diseases and death, as well as you.

Vanities; so idols are frequently called, 1Ki 16:13,26 Jer 14:22, because they disappoint the hopes that are placed in them, and are empty of any good which is expected from them, and have nothing but what vain men (their makers) bestow upon them.

The living God; the true God is called *the living God*, De 5:26 Jos 3:10, in opposition to those false gods, who usually were only dead men, which out of love or fear were deified; as also in that he lives from himself, and gives life to every living creature.

Which made heaven, &c.: by this also the true God is distinguished from false gods, as Jer 10:11,12; and is a good argument against all idol worship; for Divine worship is a tribute we owe and pay to him that made us, Ps 100:3,4. It should be considered with what a respective compellation the apostles speak unto this heathen rabble, calling them, *Sirs*, or masters; a term surely then not unlawful to be given to our equals or betters.

Acts 14:16

Ver. 16. There were two main objections which these heathen idolaters might make against the gospel, and the worship of the true God: and they are, first, from the antiquity, secondly, from the universality, of that false worship; both which the apostle here gives a critical answer unto, telling them, that the reason why so many, and for so long a time had followed idols, was from the just judgment of God upon them, as Ps 81:12 Ro 1:24,28.

Their own ways; ways of our choosing, and not of God's commanding, are false ways.

Acts 14:17

Ver. 17. These words are to prevent that cavil, Why does God yet complain? and inform them, that though God had not given them, nor their ancestors, his laws written in tables of stone, as he had given to the Jews; yet they had the law written in their hearts, which they had not obeyed, though God's manifold mercies, his works of creation and providence, had testified unto them, that he only was to be feared and worshipped. How many witnesses hath God against sinful man, when every creature and providence speaks his power, wisdom, goodness, &c., and call upon us to love and obey him? Every creature tells us that God made it, &c.

Acts 14:18

Ver. 18. So hard a matter it is to persuade any to leave off these sins they are accustomed unto, or to rectify such errors in religion which men are

brought up in.

Acts 14:19

Ver. 19. *Certain Jews;* such as mention was made of, Ac 13:50.

Persuaded the people; a strange and incredible fickleness; but that we know how the same multitude who cried *Hosanna*, did more suddenly alter their note, and cry against our Saviour, *Crucify him, crucify him;* so uncertain a thing is worldly honour.

Stoned Paul; the malice of Satan is every way great; if he cannot destroy the souls of these blessed apostles, by making of them to accept of Divine worship, he will do his utmost to kill their bodies.

Acts 14:20

Ver. 20. *Stood round about him;* either in order to bury him, thinking him to be dead, as well as his persecutors did; or else to defend him, as much as possibly they could, from the rage of his enemies in that popular fury. Their spite was most against Paul, because he spake most, and preached unto them the way of life.

He rose up; being by the power of God suddenly restored to his strength again.

Derbe; a city near to Lycaonia, some say in it.

Acts 14:21

Ver. 21. *Had taught many;* had made many disciples by teaching, and also by baptizing of them, Mt 28:19. For as by circumcision they were made Moses's disciples, so by baptism they are made Christ's disciples.

Acts 14:22

Ver. 22. It is not enough to sow the seed of the word, but it must be watered also, frequent endeavours must be used that it may be fruitful. Thus the apostles return to visit such as they had preached unto; the persecution they had endured, increasing their resolution for God, and their strength from him. Lest they should be offended at what they saw St. Paul had endured, or themselves might be called to endure, they preach unto them the doctrine of the cross, not hiding from them the miseries which in this world the profession of Christ and his truths might bring upon them. God hath indeed dealt all along thus with his people. The troubles which the Israelites met with in the wilderness, in their journey towards an earthly Canaan, did typify the calamities which God's people will meet with in this world, as they journey towards the heavenly Canaan, or Jerusalem which is above.

Acts 14:23

Ver. 23. *Ordained;* the word properly signifies a stretching out of the hand, such as was used when they gave their suffrages in the election of their magistrates, whereby was showed for whom they gave their voice; and afterwards it was commonly used for to constitute or appoint, or, as here, to ordain to any office or place; which might the rather be done by stretching out or laying on of the hands of the apostles, because by that means the Holy Ghost (or a power of working miracles) was frequently bestowed, Ac 8:17,18, which in those times was necessary to authorize their doctrine to the infidel world.

Elders; such as might instruct and govern the church.

They commended them; they commended the disciples as their jewels and chiefest treasure; as all sufferers are to commit their very souls to God, 1Pe 4:19.

To the Lord; to Christ, the best and faithful Keeper, that he should keep and further them in grace and goodness; to whose providence they wholly had committed themselves.

Acts 14:24

Ver. 24. Going the same way back which they had come, as appear by Ac 13:13,14.

Acts 14:25

Ver. 25. *The word;* the gospel, the word of the Lord; or Christ, who is the word, and who is the sum of what the ministers of the gospel preach about.

Perga: mentioned Ac 8:13; a city, or as some, a country, in Pamphylia, by the sea side. But the bounds of provinces were often altered by the Romans, and some made larger, and others lesser.

Acts 14:26

Ver. 26. *Antioch;* that Antioch which was in Syria, as appears Ac 13:1-3, to which this relates; and is a sufficient proof that they had not sought God in vain, and that there is no better preparation or provision towards any business, than faithful prayer unto God concerning it; doing our duty, and leaving the event unto his disposing.

Acts 14:27

Ver. 27. *All that God had done with them;* God being with them, and they being labourers with God, 1Co 3:9 2Co 6:1. They showed how much God had honoured them in making them his instruments in the conversion of so many souls.

He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles; he had given the Gentiles an opportunity of knowing and believing the gospel. The fleece alone had been wet before, and all the ground round about it dry; and now all the ground is wet, and that fleece was dry; to allude to Jud 6:37-40, by which this mystery was presignified, and can only be resolved by that of our Saviour, Mt 11:25,26: *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy*

sight.

Acts 14:28

Ver. 28. To confirm them, as Ac 14:22; and also, as our Saviour withdrew himself from the multitudes, they chose there to refresh themselves a while, out of the heat of contention and persecution.

Acts 15:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 15:1-4 Great dissensions arise about circumcising the Gentiles: Paul and Barnabas are sent to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Ac 15:5,6 The matter is debated in a council there,

Ac 15:7-11 Peter declareth his opinion.

Ac 15:12 Paul and Barnabas report the miracles they had wrought among the Gentiles.

Ac 15:13-21 James pronounceth sentence in favour of the Gentiles, requiring of them abstinence only in a few particulars.

Ac 15:22-35 Letters are sent with the determination by messengers to the churches, which are received with joy.

Ac 15:36-41 Paul and Barnabas propose to visit together the churches they had planted, but disagree, and travel different ways.

Ver. 1. *Certain men*; these were such as did pretend to believe, but were false brethren; some think Cerinthus to have been of them.

The brethren; the Gentiles who were converted unto the faith of Christ, or Proselytes of the gate (as they were called) who were not circumcised, and now professing the true faith. These the pharisaical professors would have excluded from any hopes of salvation, although circumcision was not commanded but unto the posterity of Abraham, Ge 17:10-13, and Abraham himself was justified before he was circumcised, Ro 4:10.

After the manner of Moses; according unto the law of Moses: for God by him did renew and establish that ordinance unto that people, although it was long before his time both commanded and practised, Joh 7:22.

Acts 15:2

Ver. 2. *Paul*, that meek apostle, who was willing to become all things unto all men, yet he enters into a holy war with them that would introduce circumcision into the Christian church; because,

1. He would have no works of the law to be an ingredient into our salvation; but the free grace of God in Christ to be all in all.
2. That our freedom from all the ceremonial law, acquired by the death of Christ, might not be diminished.
3. That the spreading of the gospel might not be hindered, but that Christ might be accepted and honoured amongst all. Now if circumcision had been retained, it would have kept possession for all the other ceremonies to have continued, or re-entered, there being the same reason for the one as for the other, and the circumcised person was obliged by his circumcision to observe them all, Ga 5:3,4.

They determined; the church at Antioch, where this controversy was moved.

Unto the apostles; James, Peter, and John who are thought to have been then at Jerusalem, the rest being probably gone to preach Christ in other parts.

Acts 15:3

Ver. 3. *Brought on their way by the church;* the brethren or believers of Antioch, out of respect, went part of the way with them; as also thereby showing, that Paul and Barnabas did not go upon their own business or mind only, and that there was no dissension betwixt them and the church there.

The conversion of the Gentiles; it is a conversion or turning indeed from error to truth, from impurity to holiness; that is, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto the ever living God, Ac 26:18.

They caused great joy unto all the brethren; nothing more rejoices a good man, than the bringing of souls unto God, and the enlarging of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:4

Ver. 4. *They were received of the church; they were owned with respect and thankfulness, for their great work and labour in the Lord's vineyard.*

All things that God had done with them: see Ac 14:27.

Acts 15:5

Ver. 5. If these words be taken for St. Luke's, the penman of this book, then they declare, that in the church of Jerusalem there were some that did abet the opinion of the necessity of circumcision; but if, (as most probably we may), we take them for the words of St. Paul, they then are part of his narrative to the church there, of what had happened at Antioch.

The sect of the Pharisees; these Pharisees were a sect amongst the Jews, (so called from פָּרָשִׁי separavit, and may be Englished, separatists), separating from converse with others, by reason of an opinion they had of their own holiness, Lu 18:11.

Acts 15:6

Ver. 6. *The apostles and elders, unto whom Paul and Barnabas were sent about the decision of this question, Ac 15:2, came together for to consider of this matter; they had been informed of it, and now they met to deliberate about it.*

Acts 15:7

Ver. 7. *Much disputing*; they argued on both sides, and considered what might be said for either opinion: some of them that met here seem at first to have been for the retaining of circumcision; for we *know but in part*, and from the collision of adverse parties such sparks fly out, that many a man hath lighted his candle at them.

A good while ago; from the beginning of our having received our commission to preach, as Mt 28:19; or more particularly, from the time of Cornelius's conversion, Ac 10:22 11:12, which is thought to have been about fourteen or fifteen years before, that Peter preached Christ, by the command of God, unto the Gentiles.

Acts 15:8

Ver. 8. *Which knoweth the hearts*; God knew the desires of the Gentiles, that they did sincerely desire to please God, and to see this salvation. This great attribute David improved, 1Ch 29:17, and highly recommended his son Solomon to consider of, 1Ch 28:9; which, if believed, would make us also to serve God *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*. *Giving them the Holy Ghost*; God himself was a witness for these Gentiles beyond all exception, when he gave them the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; by which he testified, that they belonged to Christ, whose Spirit this was. Thus *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, Re 19:10; and the Spirit, according to our Saviour's promise, Joh 15:26, doth testify of him.

Acts 15:9

Ver. 9. God had now broken down the middle wall of partition betwixt Jew and Gentile, Eph 2:14, and distributed his graces to these also, which was signified by the rending of the veil from the top to the bottom, Mt 27:51, whereby such as were formerly without, might see and enjoy the benefit of those great things which had been hidden under those shadows and types.

Purifying their hearts, from idolatry, and other impieties in which they had lived; which is the inward circumcision of the heart; and, whosoever is thus cleansed, ought not to be reputed amongst the unclean.

By faith; faith is the instrument, God is the efficient cause, of our justification and renovation.

Acts 15:10

Ver. 10. *Why tempt ye God?* Why would you make a doubt of, and put it to a trial, whether God did in good earnest admit the Gentiles to his favour, and whether he remains firm and constant in such his kindness towards them? They did tempt God also, by disliking the calling of the Gentiles, and would have brought God's will, were it possible, unto theirs; not submitting their wills, as they ought, unto God's: for he that sins in any kind, does tempt God; that is, he tries God's patience, power, and righteousness.

A yoke; so the law of ceremonies is called. Ga 5:1, and was a yoke indeed, if we consider:

1. Their variety;
2. Their difficulty;
3. Their chargeableness;
4. Their inefficacy, being only shadows of good things to come, Col 2:17.

Acts 15:11

Ver. 11. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;* all saving grace may be well so called, it being purchased only by Christ, and bestowed upon us from the Father through Christ.

Even as they; the Jews their fathers; these were saved through the grace of the Messiah which was to come; and the apostle urges this (against the imposing of the law) to the Jews, because neither their ancestors nor

themselves could be justified by the law, but only by grace.

Acts 15:12

Ver. 12. *All the multitude;* the apostles and elders themselves gave attention to what Barnabas and Paul declared, and by their silence did tacitly approve of what they had said.

Miracles and wonders; the conversion of the Gentiles in itself, and not only the signs which did attend it, is truly wonderful: the saving of any one soul is a miraculous work.

Acts 15:13

Ver. 13. *After they had held their peace;* Barnabas and Paul had finished their narrative.

James, who was surnamed the Just, and was the son of Alpheus, and a kinsman to our Saviour, now being president of this council.

Answered; that is, began to speak.

Acts 15:14

Ver. 14. *Simeon,* or Simon, the name of Peter; but St. Luke, being himself a Hebrew, writes it according as they pronounced it, and not so contracted as the Greeks wrote it.

A people; there were some at all times probably amongst the Gentiles who did fear God, as Job and his three friends; but they did not make a people, or such a number as is here spoken of.

For his name: God takes out of the world *a people for his name,* that is,

1. For himself; as, Pr 18:10, *the name of the Lord is put for the Lord himself.*

2. For to call upon his name, as also for to be called by his name.

3. For his glory and honour, and to magnify his name.

Acts 15:15

Ver. 15. *The prophets;* in the plural number, though only one cited: it is an ordinary enallage; but it also shows the harmony amongst the prophets, they all speaking by one Spirit; what one said is as if all had said it.

Acts 15:16

Ver. 16. *After this;* in the days of the Messiah.

I will return: the word may be taken in both voices. If actively, it signifies God's returning unto the Gentiles, from whom he had departed. If passively, it foreshows their returning unto God, whom they had forsaken.

The tabernacle; the house, expressed by a tabernacle, (as frequently in Scripture), because that anciently they dwelt only in tabernacles; and here for the throne of David, who was a type of Christ, whose kingdom is over all. God does promise less than he does perform, for he did not only restore the tabernacle of David, in Christ, but raised it to a far greater splendour and glory in its spiritual state. And though St. James here does not exactly keep unto the words of the prophet, he speaks their sense and meaning.

Acts 15:17

Ver. 17. In the prophet it is *the remnant of Edom*, Am 9:12, which is here called *the residue of men;* for as Jacob, or Israel, shadowed out the church, so Edom, or Esau, (the other son of Isaac), represented those who were rejected, Ro 9:13. The prophet also adds, by way of explication, *all the heathen;* as the apostle does here, *all the Gentiles. Upon whom my name is called;* who shall be mine, or appropriated unto me; also called by

his name, they being called Christians from Christ, whom they believed in.

Saith the Lord, who doeth all these things; the calling of the Gentiles was God's work, and therefore so far from being excepted against, that it ought to be marvellous in our eyes.

Acts 15:18

Ver. 18. This the apostle adds, that they might not be offended with the seeming novelty and surprise of the calling of the Gentiles, and abrogation of the ceremonies; for it was no other than what God had before determined to do, and therefore they ought to rest satisfied in the wise and holy appointments of God.

Acts 15:19

Ver. 19. St. James here gives his opinion, confirming and approving what Peter had done in conversing with and baptizing of the Gentiles; whom he would not have afflicted or disturbed with such things as were not necessary, lest that it should hinder the conversion of the Gentiles, and the church should lose the substance for a shadow.

Acts 15:20

Ver. 20. *That they abstain from pollutions of idols; eating of meat that was offered to idols,* (as Ac 15:29), in a case of scandal, and for the present state of the church, was forbid, though afterwards in other cases indulged, 1Co 10:27.

Fornication is here mentioned amongst indiferent things; not that it ever was so, but because it was amongst the Gentiles reputed to be so, even by them who punished adultery severely. By these two, some think all sins against both the tables of the law to be forbidden, because by one sin against each table all the sins against any command may synecdochically be understood.

From things strangled; such creatures as had not their blood let out, and therefore were not to be fed upon, by the law of God, Ge 9:4, given as soon as the use of flesh was allowed for food.

And from blood; they were also much more to abstain from blood, when shed out of the body of any slain creature, Le 3:17 De 12:23. That blood was forbidden might be to teach them meekness, and to abstain from revenge. It is certain, that such nations as feed on blood are most barbarous and cruel. It is also probable, that these being included in the precepts which they called, The precepts of Adam, or Noah, and to which all the proselytes of the gate were obliged to yield obedience, the apostle would have the observance of them to be continued upon them that came from amongst them over unto Christianity. For though all these ceremonies were dead, (with Christ), yet they were not then deadly, and did wait a time for their more decent burial. If any wonder that the council did not treat of and write about greater matters; as of worshipping God the Father, through the Son; of denying of ourselves, and taking up the cross; he ought to consider, that the question they met upon was about other matters, and that those great things were never in question amongst such as feared God.

Acts 15:21

Ver. 21. The reason why St. James would not have the ceremonies buried as soon as they were dead, was because the Jews had been so long confirmed in them, and bare such a love unto them; and he would purchase concord between them and the Gentile converts; though the Gentiles should bear with some inconvenience into the bargain, as not presently using all the liberty which through Christ they had a right unto.

Acts 15:22

Ver. 22. *The apostles and elders, with the whole church;* a happy concord, all agreeing as one man, by one Spirit.

To send chosen men of their own company; that Paul and Barnabas might be the better credited, and that by such as had been of a contrary judgment: so hard it is to remove suspicions, and to root out preconceived opinions.

Judas surnamed Barsabas; the brother of that Joseph mentioned Ac 1:23.

Silas, called Silvanus also.

Chief men among the brethren; noted for their holy living, or great knowledge, or office in the church.

Acts 15:23

Ver. 23. *The apostles and elders and brethren*; the letter was wrote in the name of them all, that it might have the greater force, and better acceptance; that so strong a cord might not be broken by the false apostles.

Of the Gentiles; such as out of Gentilism, or paganism, were converted unto Christ; to whom the determination of this case was of the greatest concern; their right of belonging unto Christ, and having any hopes of salvation, being questioned, unless they would be circumcised.

Acts 15:24

Ver. 24. *Certain which went out from us*; for these false apostles were such as came from Judea, Ac 15:1, that is, from the church there. It is Satan's great policy to divide, that he may rule; he will have at least one share where there is more than one. No such sad divisions as church divisions, when that some of ourselves preach perverse things, as Ac 20:30. *Have troubled you with words*; as if in the professing of Christianity there would be no salvation unless Judaism be embraced, and circumcision admitted. No greater trouble to a considerate mind, than about the concern of salvation, when they say, Where is thy God? *Saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law*; these they did well put together; for by circumcision they engaged to the observance of the whole law of Moses; and by the decreeing the omission, that whole law of ceremonies is declared void, and of no effect. What truth and unity build up, discord and error pull down.

Acts 15:25

Ver. 25. *With one accord;* with one mind, as if they had all but one soul, (they had but one Spirit, the Spirit of truth), as Ac 2:1 Ac 5:12; their unanimity adding great strength to the decree they sent.

Acts 15:26

Ver. 26. Because that the false apostles at Antioch had vilified Paul and Barnabas, and opposed their doctrine and practice in admitting of the Gentiles by baptism into the church, the council here at Jerusalem take occasion to vindicate and to commend them, especially for their suffering so much for Christ, of which we read, Ac 13:50 14:19: it being most reasonable to believe, that they had not done or said any thing for their own sakes, who had done and suffered so much for Christ and his truth's sake.

For the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for Christ's honour, and the truth of his gospel.

Acts 15:27

Ver. 27. They shall inform you of the truth of what is contained in this epistle, that you may be more assured it is not forged or counterfeited. Of these men, see Ac 15:22.

Acts 15:28

Ver. 28. *To the Holy Ghost, and to us;* that is, unto us, assisted by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is deservedly first mentioned, that the apostles might testify that they desired to say, write, or do nothing in which they had not the Spirit of God directing of them: and they mention the Spirit, that the Antiochians, unto whom they wrote, might be assured they were not human inventions which they recommended, but that they had the authority of God for them. Unto us; as ministers, or God's stewards, who acquainted them with these things, in discharge of their

duty, and that they might appear themselves to be faithful.

Burden; the yoke spoken of, [Ac 15:10](#).

Necessary things: to be sure, several of the things here spoken of are not absolutely necessary unto salvation, or simply, and in their own nature, necessary, as to abstain from blood, &c.; but though they are not necessary always and at all times, yet in this place, and at this time, they were necessary for the peace of the church, and to avoid giving of offence to the converted Jews, and to nourish brotherly love between them and the Gentiles.

Acts 15:29

Ver. 29. Of these see more largely, [Ac 15:20](#).

From meats offered to idols; they were wont to carry home and feast upon part of the sacrifices they had offered unto their false gods; nay, they did not, without reproach, eat of any greater beasts, (as oxen and sheep), but they always first offered some of them unto their idols. And it was accounted no small impiety to eat *αθυτα ιερα*, part of any beasts which they had not first offered up to some or other of their gods.

From blood; for this reason they might not eat of any thing that died of itself, as [De 14:21](#), because the blood was not gone out of it.

From fornication; mentioned here, because so commonly practised amongst the Gentiles, and yet not esteemed a sin. Hence also, [1Th 4:3](#), the apostle lays a very great charge against it.

Fare ye well; the ordinary appreciation wherewith their letters were concluded, in which they wished health and strength to the party they wrote unto: instead of which word, some ancient copies read, *φερομενοι εν πνευματι Αγιω*; which is rendered, Walk in the Holy Ghost; or, the Holy Ghost carrying, or enabling of you: a wish or prayer becoming these holy men that made it. They who have found the necessity of the Spirit's assistance, desire it above all things for such as they wish well unto.

Acts 15:30

Ver. 30. *When they were dismissed;* Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas; which two last, were sent with the former.

Gathered the multitude together; from whom they were sent, Ac 15:1,2, and that this determination of the council might be more publicly known, as all things concerning our common salvation ought to be.

Acts 15:31

Ver. 31. It could not but much rejoice the Gentile believers, that they were exempted from circumcision, and the ceremonial law. And it gladdened the believing Jews also, that the controversy was determined, and concord established amongst them. But much more might they all rejoice to understand the grace of the gospel; and that we are not justified by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Christ, Ro 5:1.

Consolation; this word also signifies exhortation, and it was matter of joy to be put upon such excellent duties as our most holy religion recommends, and to be deterred from such erroneous evils as it forbids. All that God requires of us being only to *eschew evil, and do good*, Isa 1:16,17 1Pe 3:11.

Acts 15:32

Ver. 32. *Prophets;* not properly so called, from any gift of foretelling things to come, but as doctors and teachers in the church, Eph 4:11, expounding Moses and the prophets, and showing how and what they speak concerning Christ; proving out of them, that he was the Messiah, as Philip had done, Ac 8:35.

Confirmed them: see Ac 14:22 18:23.

Acts 15:33

Ver. 33. *A space*; a competent time; some make this space to be a year.

They were let go in peace; they were dismissed with earnest prayers for them; for by *peace* is meant all kind of good, which they desired for them, as Mt 10:13.

Unto the apostles; such of them as were at Jerusalem, who also had sent them.

Acts 15:34

Ver. 34. Though, having performed his message, he was discharged, and might have returned; yet, for the further benefit of that church, he continued at Antioch.

Acts 15:35

Ver. 35. Judas only returned to Jerusalem, to acquaint the apostles with the reception their letter had met with, and what obedience was readily given to their decrees; so that when these went away the church at Antioch was not left destitute of faithful pastors. When God gives the word, great is the multitude of preachers, Ps 68:11.

Acts 15:36

Ver. 36. It is not enough that they had sown good seed, but they must take care lest it be plucked up, and tares sown in the stead of it, by the wicked one, Mt 13:19. A husbandman's work is never at an end, neither is the labourer's in God's vineyard.

See how they do; not so much looking after their bodily welfare, as how their souls fared, whether they continued in the faith, and integrity of life.

Acts 15:37

Ver. 37. This John, or *Mark*, was *sister's son to Barnabas*, as Col 4:10.

Acts 15:38

Ver. 38. This deserting of Paul and Barnabas by John, is mentioned Ac 13:13.

To the work; the work unto which the Spirit had called them, Ac 13:2, which was to offer life and salvation unto the Gentiles, and to gather them into the fold of Jesus Christ. This objection was very considerable, and ought to have weighed more than this John's propinquity, or nearness in blood, unto Barnabas.

Acts 15:39

Ver. 39. *They departed asunder;* as Abraham and Lot parted, Ge 13:9, yet keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; loving of and praying for one another, as we may judge, being both good men. But they verified here what they had said at Lystra, Ac 14:15, *We are men of like passions with you;* yet God overruled these very divisions between Paul and Barnabas for his own glory, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, several places being by this means blessed with the gospel. And this reflection upon this John Mark, is thought, to have made him for the future more diligent and valiant in the cause of the gospel, which occasioned that kind salutation from St. Paul unto him, Col 4:10.

Cyprus; an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 15:40

Ver. 40. The favour of God, as Ac 14:26, which the wisest and holiest men stand in need of in all their undertakings; as also his gracious conduct and assistance.

Acts 15:41

Ver. 41. Syria and Cilicia; where there were several brethren by reason of the dispersion that was upon Stephen's death, Ac 11:19; and unto whom also the before recited letter was written, Ac 15:23.

Confirming the churches; putting them in mind of the gospel of Christ, which they had heard and believed; and encouraging of them to persevere in the profession of it, and being ready to answer any objection that could be brought against it.

Acts 16:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 16:1-8 Paul having circumcised Timothy, and taken him for his companion, passeth through divers countries, Ac 16:9-13 and is directed by a vision to go into Macedonia.

Ac 16:14,15 He converteth Lydia,

Ac 16:16-18 and casteth out a spirit of divination.

Ac 16:19-24 He and Silas are whipped and imprisoned.

Ac 16:25-34 The prison doors are thrown open by an earthquake at midnight: the jailer, prevented by Paul from killing himself, is converted.

Ac 16:35-40 They are released by the magistrates.

Ver. 1. Derbe and Lystra; of these cities see Ac 14:6. *Timotheus;* who was known unto Paul from his childhood, 2Ti 1:5, and accompanied him in many journeys, 2Ti 3:10,11, and is called by him, his *work-fellow*, Ro 16:21.

A certain woman, called Eunice; being one of them that had believed in Christ in Judea, and had a holy woman to her mother, named Lois.

His father was a Greek: although it was not lawful for a Jew to marry a woman of another nation, yet some think that a Jewess might marry to a stranger, as Esther married to Ahasuerus.

A Greek; of Gentile extraction, and therefore not circumcised; yet he is accounted to have been a proselyte.

Acts 16:2

Ver. 2. Though Timothy was well known unto Paul, yet he would not ordain him without the testimony of others concerning him, of his holy life, and knowledge in the Scripture, 2Ti 3:15, which he did excel in.

Acts 16:3

Ver. 3. *Circumcised him because of the Jews,* who could not yet be persuaded that the law of circumcision was abrogated. Paul, who became all things to all men, that he might save some, circumcised Timothy that he might not offend the Jewish converts, 1Co 9:22, but would not circumcise Titus, Ga 2:3, lest that he should harden them, and offend the Gentiles. These indifferent things require a single eye, to the edifying of the church, and the salvation of souls. Timothy was uncircumcised, although his mother was a Jewess; for according to their Talmudists, the mother could not cause her child to be circumcised against the mind of the father.

Acts 16:4

Ver. 4. *The decrees;* the determination of the council, mentioned Ac 15:20,29. *Ordained of the apostles and elders;* by common consent, and not of one only, whosoever he were.

Acts 16:5

Ver. 5. *Established in the faith;* being rightly persuaded in the nature and use of things indifferent; and, in general, of things necessary to be believed.

And increased in number daily; so that this visitation of the churches had

a double benefit. First, it strengthened them that were already converted. Secondly, it added more unto their number.

Acts 16:6

Ver. 6. *Phrygia* and *Galatia* were parts of Asia Minor. They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost by some revelation, though the manner is not known, to preach the word in Asia, for that time; though afterwards Paul preached there about two years together, Ac 19:10. Thus God (the great Householder) orders the candle to be removed from one room unto another; sends, or takes away, the light of the gospel, to whom, and as often, as he pleaseth. Our calling, as well as our election, is free; and we may say with our Saviour, Mt 11:26, *Even so, Father*; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Acts 16:7

Ver. 7. *Mysia*; a little country near Troas.

Bithynia; another province nigh unto the same place, over against Thracia, bordering upon the Black Sea.

The Spirit; the Spirit of Jesus, or of God, as some copies read.

Suffered them not; the journeyings of them that preached the gospel, as well as their words, were directed by God; they might not say, Do, or Go, but according to the will of God.

Acts 16:8

Ver. 8. Either the relics of the famous city of Troy, or the country thereabouts, in which the city of Antigonía was built.

Acts 16:9

Ver. 9. *A man;* an angel in the appearance and likeness (in habit and demeanour) of one of that country.

Macedonia; a Grecian province in Europe, extending to the Archipelago.

Help us; as to our souls, with the saving light of the gospel: God sends the ministers of the gospel to help such as would otherwise perish: with the gospel, salvation comes.

Acts 16:10

Ver. 10. *Immediately;* as soon as God's will was manifested, they make no delay, not objecting against the journey.

We endeavoured to go; St. Luke, the penman of this book was one of them that went, (the others were Paul, Silas, and Timotheus), and therefore speaks in the plural number.

Acts 16:11

Ver. 11. *Samothracia;* an island so called, because the inhabitants came partly out of Thrace, and partly from Samos. This *Neapolis* was a city in the confines of Thrace and Macedonia.

Acts 16:12

Ver. 12. *Philippi;* a city so called from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who repaired a ruined town, and caused it to be called by his name. The chief city of that part of Macedonia; or the first city in the passage from Samothracia unto Macedonia.

A colony; where many Roman citizens went to inhabit, and whose inhabitants had the freedom of the city of Rome. To the church in this city Paul wrote an Epistle.

Acts 16:13

Ver. 13. In those places where there were not enough to build a synagogue, or could not obtain leave to do it, the Jews in those countries chose more private places to meet in, which usually were near rivers, or by the seaside, removed from the noise and observance of the multitude; and these places were called προσευχαι, from the prayers which were usually made there; and to one of these Paul and the rest went, taking that occasion to meet with them whom they might preach the word of life unto. The *women* are here named, as being more numerous in those oratories, or such as most willingly heard and attended unto what was spoken.

Acts 16:14

Ver. 14. *Lydia*; so called from the country of that name, she being born at *Thyatira*, a city therein, and now lived with her family at Philippi.

Worshipped God; being a proselyte, and one of them who had left the heathenish idolatry, and owned the one only and true God; but as yet unacquainted with the gospel of his Son our Saviour.

Heart, in Scripture sense, signifies both the understanding and the will: thus, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Ro 10:10. Her understanding was enlightened, her heart changed; she now loved what she before hated, and hated what before she loved.

The Lord opened; this was the Lord's work; according unto what our Saviour himself had said, Joh 6:44, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*. And yet we may in a sense open our hearts, by using such means as God hath promised to succeed for that purpose, Re 3:20; and especially when, in a sense of our inability and necessity, we implore the free grace of God, and engage him to work in us according unto all his good pleasure. Otherwise creating a clean heart within us, as it is called, Ps 51:10, is beyond the power of nature.

She attended: hearing is an instructive sense, and faith cometh by it, Ro 10:17, but it must then be accompanied with attention.

Acts 16:15

Ver. 15. *And her household;* when Lydia had right to baptism, by reason of her faith in Jesus Christ, all her family, whom she could undertake to bring up in the knowledge of Christ, were admitted to that ordinance also; as all the servants, and such others as were born in his house, or bought with his money, were circumcised with Abraham, Ge 17:12,13. Now the gospel does not contract in any respect, but enlarges, the privileges of believers in all things. And if they might under the law have their children and servants admitted into a covenant with God, (which could not but rejoice religious parents and masters, who value the relation they and theirs have to God, above all earthly things), surely under the gospel none of our families are excluded, unless they wilfully exclude themselves.

She constrained us; as the two disciples that were going to Emmaus constrained our Saviour, Lu 24:29, with all earnest entreaties and loving violence.

Acts 16:16

Ver. 16. *Went to prayer;* went towards the place where their public prayers were usually made. *Of divination;* or, of Python, the name of Apollo, from the place where he was worshipped, (which was afterwards called Delphi), and from whom all evil spirits, that pretended to divination, were called Pythons; as that the woman made use of to delude Saul by, 1Sa 28:7.

Acts 16:17

Ver. 17. The devil might be forced by God to confess this; or, he might do it voluntarily by God's permission: First, To draw men on to believe him in other things, being he commended the servants of God, and spake the truth in this. Secondly, That, by flattering St. Paul, he might puff him up, and occasion him to sin. But an evil spirit, (or an evil man), when he dissembles as it he were good, is then worst of all.

Acts 16:18

Ver. 18. St. Paul was *grieved*, either for the maid's sake, who suffered so much by her being possessed with this spirit, or, for their sakes who were seduced by him. St. Paul (as our Saviour had done, Mr 1:25) refuseth the testimony of the devil; for he being the father of lies, Joh 8:44, makes every thing he says to be suspected; as it is a usual punishment of liars, that they are not believed when they speak the truth; and the devil never speaks any truth but with an intention to deceive.

In the name of Jesus Christ; by the authority and power of Christ.

Acts 16:19

Ver. 19. *Her masters;* for she was a servant, or slave; and being very advantageous, might have many that had a share in her.

Their gains; the profit could not but be considerable, for they were to come with *the rewards of divination in their hands*, as they did to Balaam, Nu 22:7.

Rulers: See Poole on "Mt 16:20".

Acts 16:20

Ver. 20. *Magistrates*, the same who are called *rulers*; and the word here shows, that they were under the power of the sword, and ruled by the Romans; though the rulers spoken of in the former verse might be the civil magistrates of the city, and the magistrates here mentioned might be the commanders of the forces therein. They carried them, as they did our Saviour, from one to the other, the more to disgrace them, and to obtain the greater punishment for them. They mention their *being Jews*, because it was a most odious name unto all men, by reason of their different opinions in religion, and diversity of manners in conversation from all.

Acts 16:21

Ver. 21. There was at Philippi, as appears Ac 16:12, a colony of the Romans, and they were governed by their laws, by which they might make no innovation in religion without the consent of the senate, and afterwards of their emperors; which here these persecutors allege.

Acts 16:22

Ver. 22. *The multitude;* generality and unanimity alone cannot authorize opinions or practices.

Rent off their clothes; Paul's and Silas's clothes, to disgrace them the more, or in order unto their being scourged; though some think that the magistrates rent their own clothes, in detestation of the pretended blasphemy which was laid to Paul's charge, as the high priest did, Mr 14:63.

Acts 16:23

Ver. 23. *Laid many stripes upon them;* partly by the lictors or executioners, and partly by the furious rabble.

The jailer; this jailer's name (of whose conversion we read hereafter) was Stephanas, as may appear if you compare 1Co 1:16 with what follows by St. Luke in this story. Of him also we read, 1Co 16:15,17.

Acts 16:24

Ver. 24. Thus they dealt with Joseph, Ge 39:20, compared with Ps 105:18, and with Jeremiah, and with John Baptist.

Sanctorum sors est, et non moleste ferenda.

Acts 16:25

Ver. 25. No time or place where prayer is not acceptable unto God, and prevalent with him; nay, it sounds the sweeter when on the waters of affliction a good man pours it forth unto God.

Sang praises unto God, that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ: and being all things are overruled for the good, and conduce to the advantage, of them that love God, Ro 8:28, they owe unto God thanks for all things through Jesus Christ, which is also required of them, Eph 5:20.

Acts 16:26

Ver. 26. *Suddenly;* how soon is prayer answered, when the fulness of time is come! So nigh is God unto all that call upon him, Ps 34:17 145:18.

There was a great earthquake; an earthquake did usually precede some wonderful matter, as Mt 28:2. And although God could have delivered these his servants without an earthquake, yet, to show the more that their deliverance was his work, and it was no artifice or force of their own, he manifested his power after this manner.

Every one's bands were loosed; either by the earthquake, or some secret power of an angel, or by God himself immediately, that the apostles and others might know that the souls of men should be loosed and set free by them, whose bodies for that purpose were now freed by God.

Acts 16:27

Ver. 27. *Awaking out of his sleep,* by the earthquake, which being upon an extraordinary occasion, could not fail to do all that God intended by it.

Would have killed himself, for fear of suffering a more cruel death; for all jailers, who let any prisoner escape, were to suffer the same punishment that the prisoners were thought to have deserved; and self-murder was very ordinary amongst both the Romans and Grecians. But whatsoever their philosophers have said of it, it must needs have been a very great

provocation against God, to show so great an aversion from God's will, disposing of them and their concerns in this world, and challenging or daring of him to do worse by them in the world to come. Men must have sad comforts, and take desperate resolutions, that come to this at once.

Acts 16:28

Ver. 28. The other prisoners were smitten with amazement; neither did they mind (or it might have been kept from them) that the doors were opened, and their chains loosed: but as for the apostles, the same God who wrought this deliverance for them, might inform them of the intent of it; that by this means the conversion of the jailer and his family was intended; and that their doctrine might be magnified, which had been so much vilified.

Acts 16:29

Ver. 29. *He called for a light,* or lights, which prisons are not usually without.

Came trembling: what a sudden and great change can God make! he comes trembling to those feet which he had put into the stocks so lately.

Fell down before Paul and Silas; by which he would give a civil respect unto them, it being an ordinary rite amongst the Eastern nations (as endless examples in Scripture witness) to pay their respects; and from them it spread itself into Greece: which respect Paul and Silas do not refuse, because it was barely civil, and did show the humility and brokenness of the jailer's heart. Yet Peter would not accept of the like from Cornelius, Ac 10:25,26, because it was more than a bare civil respect which Cornelius would have given him.

Acts 16:30

Ver. 30. *Brought them out,* into his own apartment in the prison, or to some more open and free place.

Sirs; a term of respect given by the Romans and Grecians to such whom they honoured, as now the jailer did these seemingly most contemptible men.

What must I do to be saved? He might have some knowledge of a future state, which he here inquires after:

1. By the very light of nature.
2. By tradition.
3. By the doctrine of the philosophers.
4. By his frequenting with Jews and proselytes.

Men under fears, and in dangers, as to the things of this world, are brought to look after another world (as every one prays in a storm): but this is only when God is pleased to sanctify such fears and disasters; otherwise all the plagues of Egypt do but harden them the more, Ex 7:3.

Acts 16:31

Ver. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*; this is the sum of the gospel. Christ, apprehended by faith, serves for wisdom, *righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, as 1Co 1:30. But then this precious faith must be such as works by love, as purifies the heart, Ac 15:9, as *overcometh the world*, 1Jo 5:4, as *quenches the fiery darts of the devil*, Eph 6:16, and is deservedly called, a *most holy faith*, Jude 1:20.

Thou shalt be saved, and thy house; thou shalt by this means come to obtain that life thou dost so much desire after; and not only thyself, but (God gives more than we ask) thy children and family shall be saved; inasmuch as the covenant, where it is entered into, is not only with them, but with their children.

Acts 16:32

Ver. 32. Expounding more at large that which they had briefly propounded in the foregoing verse, as concerning the natures and offices of Christ;

especially his suffering for our sins, and rising again for our justification.

To all that were in his house; their fellow prisoners not exempted, unto whom it was a joyful confinement, being by this means made God's freemen.

Acts 16:33

Ver. 33 *The same hour of the night;* he did not delay to show forth the fruits of his faith, and real conversion.

And washed their stripes; which his stripes had made, using such means as might assuage their pain, and heal their wounds.

He and all his: See Poole on "Ac 16:15", See Poole on "Ac 16:32". Of baptism administered without any delay, upon their profession of faith in Christ, we have had examples, Ac 8:38, 10:47, and in Ac 16:15.

Acts 16:34

Ver. 34. *Into his house;* which was close unto, or a separate part of, the prison, into which they did ascend, being before in a low dungeon.

He set meat before them; Paul and Silas had been long fasting, and in any season of the night it was a mercy to them to have a table spread for them.

Rejoiced; finding the effects of his faith, peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost; which was not a little augmented, in that he had his family admitted into the covenant of God's grace, they also believing, and being baptized.

Acts 16:35

Ver. 35. *The serjeants;* their messengers, or officers, which did carry a mace, or a rod, from whence they had their name.

Saying, Let those men go; probably being terrified with the earthquake, which if it had not been general, they could not yet have heard of. Their consciences might also accuse them for having unjustly punished them for a good deed which they had done, only to gratify the rage of the multitude; as also because they had acted against the custom of the Romans, (though they did not yet know that they had the privilege of Roman citizens), and had beaten strangers without any legal trial, or form of law.

Acts 16:36

Ver. 36. *Told this saying to Paul;* being glad that he might release them. Neither does he bid them go, as desirous to be rid of them; but, not requiring any fees, he lets them go to preach the gospel, and fulfill their ministry, with his prayers and good wishes.

Acts 16:37

Ver. 37. *Paul said unto them,* the officers who were sent to the prison with the message about their liberty.

They have beaten us; the magistrates, who commanded them to be beaten, are justly charged with the beating of them, as if they had themselves done it.

Openly; it was no small aggravation of their injustice, and these holy men's sufferings, that they had, for the greater spite unto them, openly scourged them.

Uncondemned; for they were not tried, or permitted to speak for themselves.

Being Romans; having the privilege of Roman citizens, which was sometimes given to whole communities. Now such by their laws might not be bound, much less beaten, (and least of all uncondemned), without the consent of the Romans.

Let them come themselves and fetch us out; this the apostle stands upon,

not so much for his own, as for the gospel's sake, that it might not be noised abroad, that the preachers of it were wicked and vile men, and did deserve such ignominious punishment. Though they were as innocent as doves, it became them also to be as wise as serpents.

Acts 16:38

Ver. 38. For the Romans (under whom these magistrates were) made it by their laws to be treason thus to abuse any of their citizens. God overruled their fear of man for the deliverance of his servants.

Acts 16:39

Ver. 39. Two things the magistrates had to desire of them:

1. That they would excuse the wrong done unto them, which they feared lest the Romans might revenge.
2. That, to avoid further mischiefs, (as they thought), they would leave the city. But the words here used do signify, also, that they comforted them, as well as besought, or exhorted them: both by word and deed they sought to make amends for the injury they had offered unto them; and desired them to depart for their own safety, lest the people should express their rage and madness against them.

Acts 16:40

Ver. 40. *Entered into the house of Lydia;* of whom, Ac 16:14. They do not shun dangers, so as to neglect their duty. They comforted them, in respect of the tribulation they had endured, and were still to endure; or exhorted them to prepare for suffering, and to submit unto God in it, and to make a holy use of it.

Acts 17:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 17:1-4 Paul preaching in the synagogue at Thessalonica, some believe, both Jews and Greeks.

Ac 17:5-11 The unbelieving Jews raise an uproar.

Ac 17:10-12 Paul and Silas are sent to Berea: the Berean Jews are commended for searching the Scriptures.

Ac 17:13-15 The Jews of Thessalonica follow and drive Paul from Berea.

Ac 17:16-21 At Athens Paul disputing is carried before the court of Areopagus.

Ac 17:22-31 He preacheth the living God, to the Athenians unknown: his general call to repentance; the resurrection of Christ; and his coming to judgment.

Ac 17:32-34 Some mock, others believe.

Ver. 1. *Araphipolis*, a city near to Philippi; so called, because the sea came up to it on both sides.

Apollonia, a city near to Thessalonica.

This *Thessalonica* was one of the chiefest cities of Macedonia: unto the church in this place St. Paul wrote two of his Epistles. This city was built by Philip, in memory of a victory he obtained over the Thessali.

Where was a synagogue of the Jews: it seems that there was no synagogue in either of the other places, but that the Jews of the other cities resorted unto the synagogue in this, all these three cities being in Macedonia. The sending away of Paul and Silas, Ac 16:39, to gratify the mad multitude, was a means to bring the word of salvation to those places.

Acts 17:2

Ver. 2. *As his manner was;* who was faithful unto him that had called him, and took all occasions to do his Master's work.

Out of the Scriptures; the law and the prophets, which they owned to be of Divine authority; and from the Holy Scriptures alone, all knowledge in the things of God and of our salvation must be fetched. If any speak of these

matters not according to them, *it is because they have no light in them*, Isa 8:20. What scriptures St. Paul alleged are not set down; but they were such as our Saviour had made use of, Lu 24:27, for the same purpose. This was customary with Paul, to preach these things unto the Jews first, as Ac 13:46, till they had put the word of God from them by their incredulity.

Acts 17:3

Ver. 3. *Opening* the scriptures which he had quoted. The very entrance into God's word giveth light, Ps 119:130.

And alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered; making the truth concerning our Saviour, which he preached, so plain to the eye of their understanding, as any thing which is exposed to the view of our bodily eyes. Comparing the words of the prophets concerning Christ, with those things which were done and suffered by him, Ps 22:6 Isa 53:1-12 Mt 16:21 Lu 24:26,46.

That this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ; that Jesus whom Paul preached was the true and only Messiah, and that what was written of the Messiah was fulfilled in him.

Acts 17:4

Ver. 4. *Consorted with Paul and Silas;* were so affected towards them, as that they were willing to take the same part or lot with them. The word imports the nearest and most intimate friendship and union; even such as is conjugal.

Devout Greeks; such of that nation as were become proselytes, who had renounced the idolatry and wicked conversation of the heathen, amongst whom they lived; and had joined themselves to the Jews; at least so far as to hear the law and the prophets read and expounded in their synagogues; and did worship but one God, and did injury unto none. Of these we frequently read in this book; as Ac 17:17 13:42,43.

Of the chief women not a few; a considerable number of these believed;

yet, Ac 13:50, such had stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 17:5

Ver. 5. *Believed not;* or were not convinced, or persuaded by St. Paul's sermons and arguments.

Moved with envy, or zeal; which, as fire in the chimney, its due place, is useful and necessary; but when scattered abroad, and out of its place, is most dangerous and destructive.

Lewd fellows; such as stand in markets and public places, gazing, and having nothing to do.

Of the baser sort: to what meat and base acts do not blind zeal and the rage of persecutors descend!

Jason; some think this to be the Greek name which the Hellenists did use for Joshua, or Jesus. This man was one of the dispersion, who came from Judea into Syria, and from thence into Macedonia; and is famous, so far as the word of God is preached, for being the host to Paul and Silas; and is mentioned, Ro 16:21.

To bring them out to the people, for to slay them. Nothing but their blood could quench the thirst of their persecutors; but having no just cause for the spilling of it, they are willing to have others to bear the odium of it.

Acts 17:6

Ver. 6. Being withdrawn, to avoid the popular rage against them, they charge innovation upon them, as knowing how jealous rulers are of any alteration. Thus whatsoever mischief befell the state, or whatsoever was odious and abominable, was in the primitive times still charged upon the Christians. The enemies of God's church clothe his servants in beasts' skins, (painting and representing them in what forms they please), that every one may hunt and worry them.

Acts 17:7

Ver. 7. *Hath received;* privily, and with design.

Contrary to the decrees of Caesar: the Romans, before they were brought under their emperors, (and after that), did not suffer any to be called king without their allowance and approbation; which was also much valued by such unto whom that honour was bestowed by them.

Another king, besides Caesar, who was called the lord of the world. This is like to the charge laid against our Saviour; but most maliciously both then and now, and wholly against their own consciences; for they themselves expected the Messiah to be a king, and refused and rejected him because his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, Joh 18:36,37.

Acts 17:8

Ver. 8. *They troubled the people;* hearing something to have been done against the Roman state, under whom they were, and not knowing what it might come to, or how it might be construed.

And the rulers; for fear of an insurrection and tumult.

Acts 17:9

Ver. 9. *Had taken security;* either being satisfied with their answer, or having bail for their appearance, if need were; the word only hinting their being satisfied, or contented, as Mr 15:15.

Acts 17:10

Ver. 10. *Berea;* a city of Macedonia, not far from Pella and Thessalonica.

Went into the synagogue of the Jews; they went still first unto the lost

sheep of the house of Israel; in which Paul's invincible love, which he speaks of, Ro 9:2,3, does manifestly appear. The Jews had every where endeavoured his destruction; he still requites them (what he may) in promoting their salvation.

Acts 17:11

Ver. 11. The Jews of Berea did excel those of Thessalonica, not so much in birth as in disposition: they were not so prejudiced and obstinate; they patiently heard Paul; they seriously thought upon what he had said, and compared it with the Scriptures. And thus God gave them the preparation of the heart; and they brought their empty vessels. No wonder then that the oil of grace ran into them, and filled them. The Jews call their learned men, the sons of nobles; and according to that expression, these Bereans, that had acted so ingenuously and wisely, were said to be *more noble*.

Searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so: truth dares abide the test; only false wares need a dark shop to put them off in. The Scriptures only are our infallible rule; for they come from God, 2Ti 3:16, who cannot lie, Tit 1:2.

Acts 17:12

Ver. 12. God blessing his own gifts, and giving still unto them that had, and made use of them. And would we also *lay aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls, Jas 1:21*, we should find the hand of the Lord not to be shortened, but his word as powerful, as piercing, as converting as ever.

Acts 17:13

Ver. 13. As the waves are stirred with the wind; a fit metaphor to represent the fickle multitude by, that, as the sea, now rolls one way, then another; or as tottering buildings, that shake with every wind.

Acts 17:14

Ver. 14. *To go as it were to the sea;* that they might give over the pursuit of him; or, at least, be disappointed if they did pursue him, being he went on foot to Athens.

But Silas and Timotheus abode there still; the fury of the persecutors not being so hot against them as against Paul, who was more known or maligned than Silas or Timotheus: or these might abide there longer, having their relations in Macedonia.

Acts 17:15

Ver. 15. *They that conducted Paul;* who accompanied, and had undertaken to secure him.

Athens; the Greece of Greece, or the eye of Greece; as Greece was accounted the eye of the world; and yet, with all its learning, did not attain to saving knowledge, until Paul came and preached it. Satan's malice still causes the gospel to spread.

Acts 17:16

Ver. 16. *His spirit was stirred in him;* moved, and sharpened, being highly affected with divers passions:

1. With grief, for so learned, and yet blind and miserable a place.
2. With zeal, and a holy desire to instruct and inform it.
3. With anger and indignation against the idolatry and sin that abounded in it.

Wholly given to idolatry; or, as the marginal reading hath, full of idols. For we read, that there were more idols in Athens than in all Greece besides; and that it was easier to find a god there (that is, an idol) than a

man; their images being as numerous as their inhabitants.

Acts 17:17

Ver. 17. *Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews;* as Ac 17:2, still giving the Jews, if there were any, the priority; or, having by that means an opportunity to speak unto the proselytes of the Gentiles, who are the *devout persons* here meant: see Ac 13:43.

In the market, because of the concourse thither; throwing the net of the Gospel where there were most fish; and he himself preaching, as he exhorted others to do, in season and out of season, 2Ti 4:2.

Acts 17:18

Ver. 18. Both these sects of philosophers were the most opposite to Christianity of all others:

1. The *Epicureans* (so called from one Epicurus) did generally deny, that the world was made, or that it is governed, by God; as also, that there were any rewards or punishments for men after death, holding nothing to be good but what was so to their senses: and if so, were indeed swine rather than men.
2. The *Stoics* were so called from the place where they met at first; and held as bad opinions as the other did; and denied that their wise men were inferior to their gods, and in some respect preferred them before their gods; which their Seneca was not free from, Epist. 73. And no wonder if such men oppose the gospel what they may.

What will this babbler say? They make Paul so contemptible, comparing him to such as live by the off falls of corn, which was used to be gathered up as they fell down in measuring, and left to be fed upon by the meanest and poorest of the people.

A setter forth of strange gods; they might amongst the Athenians bring in by public authority as many gods as they would, but none out of their

private opinions; which was the fault charged upon Socrates.

And the resurrection; so ignorantly, or maliciously, did they pervert St. Paul's words, that they accuse him for making the resurrection a god too. Probably they heard him often naming the word, and magnifying of the resurrection, as without which we were without hope.

Acts 17:19

Ver. 19. The city of Athens was divided into five wards, or parts; one of which was called *Areopagus*, from the temple of Mars, which stood upon a hill in it: nigh unto which temple, or in some part of it, was their chiefest court kept; and here they judged of all religious affairs: here they condemned Diogenes, Protagoras, and Socrates; and hither they bring Paul, though rather to inquire of him (there being the resort of learned men) concerning his doctrine, than to condemn him for it.

Acts 17:20

Ver. 20. The greatest objection which these men had against the gospel was, that it was strange and new. That it is not new was apparent, it having been in the Old Testament (as the ripe fruit is in the blossom) so long ago; and their own superstitions were but so many apish imitations of God's worship. And if these things were strange unto them, they might thank themselves, who had not made due inquiring after them; and had, by their not improving the light of nature, provoked God to withhold further manifestations unto them, Ro 1:24,28.

Acts 17:21

Ver. 21. *Strangers which were there;* which must needs have be a considerable number, Athens being then a famous haven town and university; and these strangers might easily take this itch after news from the natives, who are noted for it by Theophrastus, Demosthenes, &c.

Acts 17:22

Ver. 22. Mars' hill: See Poole on "Ac 17:19".

Too superstitious; sometimes this word is taken in a good sense; many then, as now, taking superstition to be religion. But it is often taken in a bad sense: thus Theophrastus says, that a truly pious man is a friend of God; οδε δεισιδαιμων κολαξ θεου, but the superstitious man is a flatterer of God. Now this word being then of a kind of middle signification, the apostle would seem not to bear too hard upon the Athenians, who were devout and religious, according to the measure of their knowledge, and whom he desired to win by love and gentleness.

Acts 17:23

Ver. 23. Devotions; any thing unto which Divine worship and honour is given.

To the unknown God: it is storied, that in a plague time, when the Athenians had wearied themselves with their supplications unto all the gods of their country, they were advised by Epaminondas (a devout man amongst them) to erect an altar unto that god who had the power over that disease, whosoever he was; which because they did not know, and would be sure not to omit in their devotions, they erected an altar unto him under the name of *The unknown God*. Some say, there was a more general inscription, To the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, to the unknown and strange gods; though the inscription the apostle mentions in the singular number, might be usual too: for the Athenians, who entertained all manner of gods, fearing lest there should be any which they had not heard of, for their greater security, as they imagined, would have an altar for such also. Now this *unknown God*, St. Paul says, which was worshipped by them, was the true God: for,

1. They had an apprehension that Christ was the true God, whilst that wonderful eclipse at his death was effectually considered amongst them. Hence it is said, that Dionysius cried out, *Deus ignotus in carne patitur*. Now the unknown God suffers in the flesh.

2. The God of the Jews, whose name the Jews took to be so ineffable that they would not undertake to speak it, and who was not wholly unknown to Plato and Pythagoras, and who is truly invisible and incomprehensible, might upon that account be thus styled amongst them.

Acts 17:24

Ver. 24. *God that made the world;* this seems to be directed against the Epicureans, who held, that the world was without beginning. *Dwelleth not in temples made with hands;* as if he could be tied to them, or circumcised by them: yet God did in some respect dwell in his temple, where he did manifest himself more clearly than in other places; but that was a type of heaven, the throne of God.

Acts 17:25

Ver. 25. *As though he needed any thing;* God is not worshipped or served by holy men, because he wants their service, or any thing that can be offered unto him by them; but because it is their duty and advantage to be employed in his service and worship, Ps 50:10,11. *Life, and breath; the breath of life, Ge 2:7. And in this respect God is called *the God of the spirits of all flesh,* Nu 16:22; as the cause of life and breath in all creatures, but especially in man; which made that charge so great against Belshazzar, Da 5:23, that his breath was in God's hand, and yet he had not glorified him.*

Acts 17:26

Ver. 26. *Hath made of one blood:*

1. To teach all charity and compassion towards one another, being so nearly allied to one another.
2. As also to admire God more in that variety that appears in men's shapes

and voices, but especially in the dispositions of their minds; whenas they all come from one stock and stem.

Hath determined the times. &c.: the apostle asserts the providence of God against these Athenian philosophers, that nothing comes by chance, or a fatuitous concourse of atoms; but that God is in every thing, though men know it not, or rather will not consider it, Job 7:1 14:5,14. This doctrine was preached by Moses, who tells the people, that God is their life, and the length of their days, that they might love him, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him, De 30:20.

Acts 17:27

Ver. 27. *That they should seek the Lord:* the apostle tells these philosophers, to whom he spake, the true use of their philosophy, to improve their knowledge of natural things, to beget in them by it an admiration of the God of nature; for as from him, so for him are all things, Ro 11:36.

If haply they might feel after him, and find him; and although God himself is incorporeal, yet the things which he made are palpable; and did they seek as they ought, they might find out a great deal of God by the creatures, in which his wisdom, power, and goodness are manifested, Ro 1:20.

Though he be not far from every one of us; God filleth all things, especially he is near in the effects of his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, by which he orders and disposes of all things, to the falling out of a hair from our heads.

Acts 17:28

Ver. 28. *In him we live, &c.;* he is the God that made us, that preserves us, and not we ourselves; he keeps us as in the hollow of his hand, and compasseth our paths. Our breath is in our nostrils, and when we send it forth we have none to take in again, unless God furnish us with it, as out of his own hand.

As certain also of your own poets; Aratus, a Greek poet: not that St. Paul thought to derive any authority from these poets unto what he had said, but that he might shame them the more by the testimony of their allowed authors. Such quotations as these are (as the bringing in of a Greek into the temple) very rare; yet, besides this, we meet with the like, 1Co 15:33 Tit 1:12.

Acts 17:29

Ver. 29. *We are the offspring of God;* this is spoken by the apostle in a poetical expression, according unto what he had cited. We are indeed the children, and in our souls bear the image of God. But as many as have the Spirit of adoption, they partake of God's holiness, and imitate his goodness, and are more like unto him, by whom they are *begotten again unto a lively hope*, 1Pe 1:3; and at the resurrection they will appear unto all to be his children, when they shall be acknowledged his heirs, and coheirs with Jesus Christ, Ro 8:17.

We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver: taking man in his natural principles, consisting of soul and body, he is not made of gold and silver; much less can God be made of them. Our soul in which we bear the image of God, cannot be expressed by any graving or painting; much less God, whose image it is. There are two things to be considered in every image: its matter, and its form or shape. The matter of an image, let it be never so precious, is much inferior to man; for it lies in the earth, (be it gold or silver), for man to trample upon, until he dig it up, and take it out. As for the form of the image, it is that which men please to give it, and man is a kind of creator of it; howsoever, it is his workmanship, and the work is more ignoble than the workman, at least not to be adored by him.

By art and man's device; according to man's will and pleasure, for the image cannot determine itself to be made as it would.

Acts 17:30

Ver. 30. *The times of this ignorance God winked at;* to prevent an

objection, lest any should think that they might continue in their unbelief, and fare as well as their progenitors, God is said to have overlooked them; as if he had counted them unworthy of his care and providence, and therefore he did not correct or instruct them. When any are left to go on in their sin, without God's instruction or correction, it is a sad sign that God scorns to look upon them, or to use any means to recover them.

But now commandeth all men every where to repent: under the gospel we are so far from having liberty to do what we list, that we are more nearly concerned to repent and become holy, Ro 13:11 Tit 2:11,12 1Pe 1:14,15; and all men, every where, without exception of time or place, are under this command of repentance; and cursed indeed will he be that does not observe it.

Acts 17:31

Ver. 31. *He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world:* that God will judge the world his enemies have with trembling acknowledged, but when God will judge the world he hath concealed from his friends; yet the time is already set, Ps 96:13 2Co 5:10, and we ought to be daily prepared for it.

In righteousness: shall not the Judge of all the world do right?

By that man whom he hath ordained; our blessed Saviour, called here *man*, suitably to his death and resurrection, which St. Paul preached of; as also as man he is thus highly exalted for his debasing of himself for our sakes, Php 2:9-11.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead; an undeniable proof or argument, it being so difficult a matter to believe a world to come, when we see all things remain as they did in this world; and especially to believe, that in the general judgment Christ, whom they had judged, condemned, and executed, should be Judge: God therefore did glorify him, by raising him from the dead, that they and we might not be faithless, but believe, Ro 1:4.

Acts 17:32

Ver. 32. *Some mocked;* the Epicureans, whom Paul had spoken against in his doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and judgment to come.

Others said, We will hear thee again of this matter; it is thought the Stoics, who did not think the resurrection to be impossible, but did acknowledge rewards and punishments in the world to come; yet, though this seem most likely, the grace of God is free and powerful, and can subdue any unto itself. We are sure that there are different soils into which the seed of the word is cast, Mt 13:1.

Acts 17:33

Ver. 33. Leaving what he had said to God's blessing and their consideration.

Acts 17:34

Ver. 34. *Clave unto him,* in more than ordinary friendship; they were as glued to him; great was their love to the apostle, by whom their eyes were opened, nay, by whose ministry they were raised from the dead.

Dionysius the Areopagite; one of that great council mentioned Ac 17:19, whose conversion might have a great influence on many.

Damaris; who is thought to have been an honourable woman; such are mentioned Ac 17:12; or she might have been specially eminent for some grace or goodness she excelled in, and therefore hath a name upon record in the word of God.

Acts 18:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 18:1-8 Paul worketh for his subsistence, and preacheth Christat Corinth, first to the Jews, and,

upon their opposing and blaspheming, to the Gentiles with more success.

Ac 18:9-11 He is encouraged by the Lord in a vision, and abideth there a long time.

Ac 18:12-17 The Jews accuse him before Gallio the deputy, who will have nothing to do with them.

Ac 18:18-23 Paul passeth from city to city, confirming the disciples.

Ac 18:24-28 Apollos, instructed more perfectly in the Christian doctrine by Aquila and Priscilla, preacheth it at Ephesus, and afterward in Achaia, with great efficacy.

Ver. 1. The metropolis of Achaia, being a rich sea town, and situate in the very isthmus which joins Peloponnesus unto Achaia; made a Roman colony, and now flourishing with learned men. Here St. Paul gathered a famous church, unto which he wrote two of his Epistles.

Acts 18:2

Ver. 2. *Pontus*; a country between Cappadocia and the Black Sea, Ac 2:9, whither the progenitors of Aquila, in one of the dispersions, might flee from Judea to inhabit there.

Claudius; the Roman emperor, who, at the beginning of his reign, gave liberty to the Jews freely to exercise their religion, but about eight years after took away that privilege from them; which Suetonius makes mention of, though very much mistaking the reason. With the Jews, it is thought that the Christians were banished too; for the pagan Romans did not care to distinguish between them, they both worshipping but one God, and agreeing in opposing their idolatry.

Acts 18:3

Ver. 3. *Of the same craft*; the most learned amongst the Jews did always learn some handicraft, and it was one of those things which they held a father was bound to do for his child, viz. to teach him some trade. And one of their rabbi's sayings is, That whosoever does not teach his child a trade,

does as bad as if he did teach him to play the thief.

And wrought; St. Paul wrought with his hands, not so much because as yet there was no church there that could maintain him, but:

1. Because he would not be burdensome unto them, they being probably most mean persons that believed there, as appears, 1Co 1:26. Or:
2. That he might show how that he did not covet theirs, but them, and to gain nothing but souls amongst them. Yet he asserted his right, and the right of ministers, by Divine appointment, to live of the gospel, 1Co 9:6,11,12.

Tent-makers; tents were used by soldiers, and in those hot countries by others also, being usually made of skins sewn together to keep off the violence of the weather.

Acts 18:4

Ver. 4. He reasoned in the synagogue; or argued and disputed, giving his reasons out of Scripture, and answering their objections.

And persuaded the Jews; not only using cogent arguments, but, as some understand the verb, such as did prevail upon them.

And the Greeks; not such as were of the Jewish race, and after the dispersion used the Scripture in the Greek tongue; but such as were Gentile Greeks, Greeks by descent.

Acts 18:5

Ver. 5. Were come from Macedonia; according as was ordered by him, Ac 17:14,15.

Pressed in the spirit; more than ordinarily affected, the Spirit of God influencing his spirit, so that he felt an anguish or pain at the heart, as 2Co 2:4; such was his grief for the contumacy of the Jews, so great was his

desire that they might be saved.

Jesus was Christ:

1. The Christ, or anointed, that excelled all other Christs or anointed ones, being anointed with oil above measure.
2. The Christ that was promised by the prophets.

Acts 18:6

Ver. 6. *Blasphemed;* they blasphemed Paul, miscalling of him, but especially Christ, whose dishonour grieved Paul most.

He shook his raiment; his upper garment, as the manner was, Mt 26:65, that none of the dust of that place where such blasphemy was spoken might stick unto him. See Ac 13:51.

Your blood be upon your own heads; or, You are guilty of your own deaths and damnation, 2Sa 1:16 Mt 27:25;

Felo de se. This expression is borrowed from the witnesses laying their hands on the head of the guilty person; or the sacrificer's laying his hand on the head of the beast which was to be slain; Ex 29:10 Le 1:4.

I am clean; free from their blood, or the loss of their souls, having warned them, and shown the way of life unto them. Eze 33:4; he had blown the trumpet, and warned the people.

Acts 18:7

Ver. 7. *Justus;* some read Titus, some both Titus and Justus, making Justus a surname, as Ac 1:23 Col 4:11; after the manner of the Romans.

One that worshipped God; had forsaken the polytheism of the heathen.

Acts 18:8

Ver. 8. *The chief ruler:* there were several rulers in a synagogue, which we find frequent mention of, as Mt 9:18 Mr 5:22. Their office and place was, to advise and give order about the affairs of the synagogue, that all things might be performed according to their prescribed rules.

Many of the Corinthians believed; amongst whom are reckoned Gaius, Sosthenes, 1Co 1:1, and Epenetus, Ro 16:5.

Acts 18:9

Ver. 9. *In the night by a vision;* as Ac 16:9; it may be, by an angel.

Speak, and hold not thy peace; it is doubled again and again, as of greatest consequence:

1. To the Corinthians, whose salvation by this means might be procured.
2. To Paul himself, whose soul, howsoever, should be delivered, he having discharged his duty, Ac 20:26,27.

The fierceness of the enemies of God and his truth, should kindle a greater fervour in his servants for his glory. Should Satan have better servants than God? Should they dare for their master beyond what the servants of God are willing to do or suffer for him? Isa 62:1 Jer 1:17,18.

Acts 18:10

Ver. 10. Christ, in this vision, useth two arguments to persuade Paul to continue preaching the gospel at Corinth:

1. Because he would be with him, to supply, support, and deliver him; as it is promised to Jeremiah, Jer 1:19, and to all the faithful ministers of Christ, Mt 28:20. This promise was fulfilled to Paul, and to other of God's servants; whatsoever troubles they met with, even when they were killed, they were not hurt, Ro 8:36-39.

2. The other reason why Paul was commanded to tarry was, because there were many that God would have called by his ministry; and thus those who were not his people God calleth his people, as Ho 1:10 2:23.

Acts 18:11

Ver. 11. He sat there as his fixed place; which implies his continuance and constancy in the work of the ministry.

Acts 18:12

Ver. 12. This *Gallio* was brother to that deservedly famous Seneca, (who was tutor to Nero), and hath great commendations given him, as being a man of excellent disposition, beloved by all men, an enemy to all vice, and especially a hater of flattery.

Deputy of Achaia; this man was proconsul, governing Achaia and all Greece absolutely, or with the power of a consul.

With one accord; wicked men in their evil deeds are unanimous, for Satan knows that his kingdom would not stand if it were once divided.

Acts 18:13

Ver. 13. *Contrary to the law,* of the Romans, who, to avoid tumults and confusions, did forbid any to set up any new worship without leave; and the Jews in these parts having here no power to punish St. Paul as they had at Jerusalem, maliciously incite the governor against him. Or by the law here may be meant the law of Moses, which they accuse Paul to have broken, and so not to be comprehended in that licence which they had to exercise their religion.

Acts 18:14

Ver. 14. *To open his mouth;* to make his apology, and to speak in his own defence.

A matter of wrong; as murder, theft, or any such injury, which judges do usually determine of.

Reason would that I should bear with you; I would endure any trouble to hear and understand it, I should think it my duty to suffer you to say as much as you would in your case.

Acts 18:15

Ver. 15. *A question of words;* which have been spoken about the controversies of religion.

And names; as, whether Jesus was to be called Christ or the Messiah; and whether his disciples might be called Christians.

And of your law; concerning circumcision, as whether none may be saved without it.

I will be no judge of such matters; he acknowledges his unfitness and unwillingness to determine such things as did not belong unto him, or he did not understand.

Acts 18:16

Ver. 16. He commanded them to be gone, having dismissed their case; and, if need were, added threatening and force.

Acts 18:17

Ver. 17. *All the Greeks;* not the converted Greeks, though St. Austin thought they beat Sosthenes, as an enemy to Paul, (yet surely they had not so learned Christ), but the unbelieving or Gentile Greeks, who cared for neither Paul nor Jews, but favoured Gallio, who would have them driven

away.

Sosthenes; some think him to have been the same with Crispus, Ac 18:8; others, to have succeeded him in that office; and some think that he was chief ruler of another synagogue (for in great cities there might be more than one); and others, that there might be several called chief rulers over one and the same synagogue.

Gallio cared for none of those things; either slighting the Jews and all their controversies, or prudently declined intermeddling with them.

Acts 18:18

Ver. 18. *A good while*; a year and a half in all, as some think, which is mentioned Ac 18:11, by a prolepsis; or, besides that year and a half there spoken of.

Took his leave of the brethren; ordering every thing as if he were to have taken his last farewell of them, as it fell out accordingly: howsoever, holy men live in a constant expectation of their dissolution.

Priscilla and Aquila: that the wife's name is here put before the husband's, have caused various conjectures; and it is observed, that in St. Paul's Epistles, whereas there are three times only mention of them both together, viz. Ro 16:3 1Co 16:19 2Ti 4:19, the wife's name is twice placed first, to show, that in Christ Jesus *there is neither male nor female*, Ga 3:28.

Cenchrea; which was a town at the entering into the haven belonging to Corinth, Ro 16:1.

For he had a vow; to wit, St. Paul had; and therefore had shaven his head, according unto the law, Nu 6:18. To the Jews he became as a Jew.

Acts 18:19

Ver. 19. *Ephesus*; the metropolis of the Lesser Asia, where afterwards that famous church was, unto which St. Paul wrote an Epistle, as also St. John

wrote another, Re 2:1.

Left them there; that is, Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, to confirm the believing Ephesians; whilst Paul *entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews;* out of an extraordinary love for his nation, although he had suffered all those indignities from them, yet he would give them precept upon precept, and line upon line.

Acts 18:20

Ver. 20. *They desired;* that is, Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul would not yield unto.

He consented not; by God's wonderful providence, which overrules all our inclinations; Paul having greater things to do and suffer for the glory of God elsewhere.

Acts 18:21

Ver. 21. *This feast;* the feast of the passover; which is meant where feast is put absolutely, unless some after expression qualifies it: not that this holy man did out of conscience to the feast intend to observe it, for *Christ is the end of the law* to them that believe, Ro 10:4; but because of the vast concourse from all places to Jerusalem at that time, which would give him an opportunity of making Christ known to such multitudes, and to gain their souls unto him.

If God will; though he was an apostle, and had the Spirit of prophecy, and might know whether he should return or no, yet he does not absolutely promise them to return to them, but conditionally, if the Lord will; to teach us what caution we should use in all our promises and resolutions, as Jas 4:15, being we know not what a day may bring forth. Besides, in our owning of God's will and pleasure, we acknowledge a providence of God in all things, especially in our concerns, which we desire to refer all unto.

Acts 18:22

Ver. 22. *Caesarea*; not that Caesarea that was in Syria, but that which was in Palestine, called Caesarea Stratonis; and which was the safest way to Jerusalem; for the way by Joppa, though shorter, was accounted more dangerous. The church; either the church of Caesarea in his journey, or that at Jerusalem at his journey's end, which for its populousness might be called eminently, *the church*.

Antioch; that Antioch that was in Syria.

Acts 18:23

Ver. 23. *Had spent some time there*; this work might take up the constant care and indefatigable pains of the apostle.

Galatia; where he had converted many.

Phrygia; see Ac 16:6.

Strengthening all the disciples; though the seed be duly sown, yet it must be seasonably watered; and *redit labor actus in orbem*.

Acts 18:24

Ver. 24. *Apollos*; who is thought also to be called Apelles, Ro 16:10.

Born at Alexandria; his parents having lived there.

An eloquent man; a rational, prudent, and learned man. Though the kingdom of God is not in any *excellency of speech*, 1Co 2:1,4, yet this Egyptian jewel may be used to adorn the tabernacle.

Mighty in the Scriptures; in quoting, explaining, and urging of them.

Acts 18:25

Ver. 25. *Instructed;* catechised, or taught, *viva voce.* *In the way of the Lord;* Christ, who hath by his precepts and example taught us the way to happiness.

Fervent in the spirit; very zealous to promote God's glory, and men's salvation, as Ro 12:11.

Knowing only the baptism of John; who baptized with water, but could not baptize with the Holy Ghost, Mt 3:11; that is, they had not those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost which followed upon baptism after that Christ was ascended, and the Spirit poured out, Ac 2:4. But John was a preacher of repentance, and of faith in Christ, pointing at the Lamb of God; and he baptized his disciples into this doctrine; which is the same with the baptism and belief of the apostles afterwards; only now they knew many things more fully than were revealed in the Baptist's time.

Acts 18:26

Ver. 26. If we allow Priscilla to have contributed towards the instruction of Apollos, as doubtless we may, it is certain it was only in private discourse; which being joined with a meek and humble behaviour, might be very effectual for the conversion of souls, 1Pe 3:1,2. Thus Timothy was indebted for his knowledge in the things of God to his mother and grandmother, 2Ti 1:5. But otherwise it is not lawful for a woman to teach, 1Ti 2:11,12.

Acts 18:27

Ver. 27. *To pass into Achaia;* to Corinth, which was in Achaia.

The brethren wrote; who were at Ephesus.

Helped them much which had believed through grace; Apollos helped them much by his eloquence, zeal, and constancy, which all are the gifts of God; but, especially, that they believed was through grace; for *faith is the*

gift of God, Eph 2:8, and it was given unto them to believe, Php 1:29.

Acts 18:28

Ver. 28. *Mightily;* with great constancy, perseverance, and enduring of opposition.

Showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ; as Ac 17:3. Some think that Christ ought to be the subject, and Jesus the predicate; and then the sense is, that Christ is our Jesus, or Saviour. The Messiah, that was sent from God, is the Saviour of the world.

Acts 19:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 19:1-7 The Holy Ghost is conferred by Paul on twelve of John's disciples.

Ac 19:8-12 He preacheth at Ephesus, first in the synagogue, and afterwards in a private school for two years; God confirming the word by special miracles.

Ac 19:13-20 Certain Jewish exorcists, attempting to cast out a devil in the name of Jesus, are sent off naked and wounded: the gospel gains credit, and magical books are burned.

Ac 19:21-41 Paul proposing to depart soon, Demetrius and the silversmiths raise an uproar against him, which is with some difficulty appeased.

Ver. 1. *The upper coasts;* the north parts, in which were Pontus, Bithynia, Phrygia, and Galatia, Ac 18:23.

Acts 19:2

Ver. 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost?* The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as prophesying, speaking with tongues, healing of the sick, &c., as appears by Ac 18:6, and Joh 7:39; for it could not be, that they,

who were instructed and baptized by John, should be ignorant of the essence or person of the Holy Ghost; for the Baptist had seen him descending upon our Saviour; as is remembered by all the evangelists which speak of his baptism, Mt 3:16 Mr 1:10 Lu 3:22; besides other scriptures which testified of him; and St. John had spoken of him unto all he baptized, that our Saviour would baptize them *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Joh 1:32,33. *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*: this answer must be understood, according to the question, of those gifts now mentioned; and which by the imposition of the hands of the apostles were given, especially at the ordination of such as were sent to preach the gospel, it being necessary for the planting of the church, those miraculous gifts assuring those unto whom they preached, that their doctrine was from heaven; as also to assure the apostles themselves of the success of their ministry, and the conversion of such they preached unto, as Ac 10:44,47. And this acceptance of these words is paralleled, 1Sa 3:7, where it is said, that

Samuel did not yet know the Lord; the meaning is, that he knew not that God was wont so to speak unto any; otherwise, that holy man, as young as he was, both knew God, and served him.

Acts 19:3

Ver. 3. *Unto what then were ye baptized?* What doctrine did you make profession of? And what religion did you seal unto at your baptism?

Unto John's baptism; the doctrine that John taught, and the religion that he professed and preached. Thus the Jews are said to be *baptized unto Moses*, 1Co 10:2, being engaged to believe the doctrine and observe the law delivered by Moses. Now the Baptist, as Ac 18:25, preached indeed Christ; but many things concerning him he could not preach, unless as of things to come; as his death, and resurrection: the Baptist being beheaded before our Saviour's death, and the Holy Ghost was not poured out in that extraordinary manner until after our Saviour's resurrection and ascension; which pouring out of the Spirit, these disciples at Ephesus, having been baptized by John in Judea, and afterwards returning home, might not have heard of.

Acts 19:4

Ver. 4. *The baptism of repentance;* at which the Baptist did exhort them to repentance, and they by it were obliged to repent; by which is manifest, that the baptism of John and of Christ (which he commanded) are one and the same. John's baptism did respect Christ, and oblige the baptized to believe in him, as also to repent; and more, it was a seal unto them of the remission of their sins, as is expressly observed, Mr 1:4: so that the baptism of John, and the baptism of the apostles afterward, had the same sign and the same thing signified in them both (the inward and outward part, the heavenly and earthly part, were the same in both); as also they had both the same end; and therefore they were both the same. Add to this, that unless the Baptist's and the apostles' baptism were the same, Christ and his members (the church) are not baptized with the same baptism. It must be acknowledged that there are some circumstances in which they differ; John's baptism respected Christ to come; that is, in the exercise of his ministry (which was not so fully exercised till after John's death); but especially, those great things (his death, resurrection, and ascension, &c.) were to come after John's time, which now are accomplished.

On Christ Jesus; including the Father and the Holy Ghost, and mentioning Christ, to difference his baptisms from the several baptizings and washings then in use.

Acts 19:5

Ver. 5. The disciples, or those that John preached to, (for these Ephesians were not amongst those few that Paul baptized, 1Co 1:14), who when they heard what the Baptist said in the foregoing verse, they were baptized; as in the same terms it is said, Ac 2:37, *when they heard* what St. Peter had said, *they were pricked in their heart*, &c., and were baptized. As for Paul's imposing his hands upon them that are said here to be baptized, it might very well be, that the twelve disciples, Ac 19:7, might have been baptized by John, and now receive the Holy Ghost in those extraordinary gifts by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul: for to what end should these disciples, who were baptized with St. John's baptism, be again baptized by Paul? It is true, they had further manifestations of the mystery of the

gospel brought unto them; but if men should be baptized for every degree of knowledge or grace which they do acquire, how many baptisms had they need to have, who ought daily to grow in grace and in knowledge! It is evident, that the apostles themselves were only baptized with the baptism of John, for there were none else to baptize them. And baptism being an ordinance for our regeneration and new birth, as we can be born but once in the flesh, we can be but once also born in the Spirit; and no more may Christians be baptized twice, than the Jews could be twice circumcised.

Acts 19:6

Ver. 6. *Laid his hands upon them;* thereby ordaining and authorizing of them to preach the gospel.

The Holy Ghost came on them; in those extraordinary gifts of tongues, &c., whereby they were fitted to preach the gospel unto any nation or people unto whom they should be sent.

Prophesied; they prophesied, either in its proper sense, being enabled to foretell things that were to come; or in a larger and more improper sense, praising and magnifying of God, and declaring the hidden mysteries of the gospel; expounding the Scriptures, especially the prophecies concerning Christ, as 1Co 14:1.

Acts 19:7

Ver. 7. Or exactly twelve; answering to the apostles, and that blessed number so often mentioned in Scripture.

Acts 19:8

Ver. 8. *The synagogue* of the Jews at Ephesus. For in the greater cities the Jews had their synagogues, in which they had their prayers, read, and expounded the law; as also a school for teaching of their theology, in which they treated of hard questions, and more difficult matters; which

might occasion the apostle's frequenting that place.

The kingdom of God; the gospel; which is so called, Ro 14:17, because the kingdom of grace is by it set up in us here, and we are fitted by it for the kingdom of glory hereafter. But it might be also so called, because the Jews had dreamed of a political kingdom of the Messiah, and the Christians would own that Christ was indeed a King, but that his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom.

Acts 19:9

Ver. 9. *Divers were hardened;* the sun hardeneth what it doth not soften, and causeth a stench from dunghills, as well as a sweet smell from the mountains of spices; and Christ is for the falling, as well as for the rising of many.

That way; so the doctrine of the gospel is called, by reason of its excellency above other ways. By *way* the Hebrews understand any course or means to an end. Hence we read of *the way of peace, the way of salvation, the way of the Lord.*

He departed from them; not frequenting any more the synagogue of the Jews, where they met only with contradiction of their doctrine, and blasphemy against their Saviour.

Tyrannus; some have taken this word appellatively, as denoting some great man, or ruler, who maintained a school, or place for instruction; but it is rather a proper name of some private teacher amongst them: for the Jews had not only public schools, where their consisteries did meet, but private schools, where their law was taught.

Acts 19:10

Ver. 10. *All they;* many of all sorts.

Asia; Asia the Lesser, or Asia strictly so called, lying about Ephesus: the heathens came thither to worship their Diana; the Jews came thither about

their affairs, either in their trades, or law suits.

The word of the Lord Jesus; the gospel, which is the word concerning the Lord Jesus; or, the word which he appointed to be preached and published.

Acts 19:11

Ver. 11. *Special miracles;* not common or ordinary things, or such as might happen by chance.

By the hands of Paul; as Ac 5:12; by his means and ministry.

Acts 19:12

Ver. 12. *Handkerchiefs or aprons;* our habit and attire being so different from what was used so long since, it cannot but occasion some variety in rendering these words; which some think to signify two things; and some, but one and the same part of their clothes or dress: the words are both originally, Latin; the former so called from its use to wipe away sweat; the other, from its being usually tied about such as wore it.

The diseases departed from them; God by such small and unlikely means wrought these miracles:

1. That the power of Christ (whom Paul preached) might the more clearly appear. And:
2. That such as were absent might have a high value for Christ and the gospel, though they had never seen Paul, or heard him preach. Such extraordinary works were also wrought by God to magnify the words preached by Peter, Ac 5:15, as our Saviour had foretold and promised, Joh 14:12.

Acts 19:13

Ver. 13. *Vagabond Jews;* who wandered up and down, making it their

trade and livelihood; as jugglers amongst us.

Exorcists; so called from their obtesting the evil spirits in the name of God. Of these Josephus tells strange stories, Antiq. lib. 8, and thinks that the way of their exorcising was derived unto them from Solomon, and that they used the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as also of Zebaoth, and Adonai, as Origen tells us. Some think, that though there is certainly no power in the words and syllables which they pronounced, yet that the true God, being rather willing to be known and owned by those names, than that any should call on the names of the false gods, did sometimes put forth his power in casting out of devils at such times, as Mt 12:27. Howsoever, there being no warrant in the word of God for any such practice, and no promise to act faith in prayer upon, were the words never so serious, and the name of God and his attributes never so much (seemingly) manifested, it is a most abominable impiety.

The name of the Lord Jesus; instead of, or together with, those other names formerly mentioned.

Acts 19:14

Ver. 14. One of the chief of the twenty-four courses into which the priests were divided, 1Ch 24:4, or such as (according to the corruption of those times) had been high priests, and were laid aside, or were of the high priest's family, and hoped to succeed him.

Acts 19:15

Ver. 15. I acknowledge that Jesus hath power to command me to go hence; and I know that Paul, as his minister, hath authority over me; but what pretensions have ye to command me now? Though the devil is a liar, and the father of lies, yet none lie to their own disadvantage, but rather to their advantage, as they take it; and Satan may therefore be believed in what he here says, because it is to his disgrace, that, will he, nill he, he is under the command of God, though but signified to him by the least of his ministers or servants.

Acts 19:16

Ver. 16. *Leaped on them, &c.;* by the power of the evil spirit, which by the permission of God did act in him, Mt 8:28 Mr 5:4 Lu 8:29. Satan retains still his natural power, though he hath wholly lost his moral or spiritual power unto any good: and that his violence proceeded no further, is to be ascribed only to the bounds which God had set him, which he, being in chains, could not exceed or go beyond; not for his want of malice, but power.

Acts 19:17

Ver. 17. *Fear fell on them all;* they feared (after this example of God's not holding them guiltless that had taken his name in vain) to profane the name of Christ, and much more to blaspheme or speak against it.

The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; his authority, which the unclean spirit could not resist; and his doctrine and ministers, whose defence God had undertaken.

Acts 19:18

Ver. 18. *Many that believed came;* that believed the power which God alone had over Satan, and were convinced of their sin and danger in being led captive by him.

And confessed, and showed their deeds; openly declared their evil deeds. They durst keep the devil's counsel no longer, but expose and manifest it, that their sores being laid open, the balm of the gospel might more effectually be put into them. Thus *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,* Ro 10:10.

Acts 19:19

Ver. 19. Thus their good works justified their faith, without which it had

been dead, Jas 2:24,26.

Curious arts; or rather idle and vain arts, as judicial astrology, calculating nativities, and all magical arts, which the Ephesians, of all others, were most addicted to and famous for; and may be here called *curious arts*, because they were so called by the Ephesians, who practised them; as also because these arts are about curiosities, not necessary for us to know. Otherwise they are diabolical arts, or rather devilish cheats.

Brought their books together, and burned them: these books were not sold, and the price of them brought unto the apostles, because it was looked upon as the price of a whore, which was an abomination, and might not be offered unto God, De 23:18.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver: what this sum amounts to is not so certain, because it is not agreed what these pieces were. Some make them Roman or Grecian coin; and others understand by them shekels, which are the Jewish money, and would make this sum so much the greater. Take them for so many pence, a piece of money commonly so called, which weighed the eighth part of an ounce of silver, as Mt 18:28, they make six thousand two hundred and fifty ounces of silver, or so many crowns, and so much more as silver is worth more per ounce. Such indignation have rue converts against the sins they have been guilty of, that they will not retain any thing that might occasion their return unto them; were it a right eye, they would pull it out.

Acts 19:20

Ver. 20. The increase which the seed of the word had made was very remarkable; or it is a great instance of the power of God's word, when it makes men willing to part with their beloved and accustomed sins, and not to stand upon saving or gaining; as Isa 55:11.

Acts 19:21

Ver. 21. *Paul purposed in the spirit;* resolved with himself, or purposed in his heart, as Da 1:8. Yet in this his determination he had the influence and

guidance of the Holy Ghost, and that in a more than ordinary manner; as we may see by the continued series of this history, how he came to all these places here mentioned. Paul travelled through these countries, and went to these cities, because he hoped for a greater harvest, where he might scatter the seed so far abroad.

Acts 19:22

Ver. 22. *Ministered unto him;* this great apostle had not any to minister unto him out of state, but out of necessity, being he could not himself attend to all the offices of the church. These were employed by Paul, not so much to procure any accommodation for himself by the way, as to further a collection for the poor brethren at Jerusalem, 2Co 9:3,4.

Erastus: there seems to have been two of this name mentioned in Scripture: the one, Ro 16:23, and the other, 2Ti 4:20: the latter is here spoken of.

In Asia; in Ephesus, which was in Asia, where Paul now was.

Acts 19:23

Ver. 23. *And the same time;* when all things seemed to have been quiet: so uncertain are the servants of Christ to have any quiet here.

That way; the doctrine of the gospel, as Ac 18:25.

Acts 19:24

Ver. 24. These shrines were only, either;

1. Portraits of the temple of Diana, in which was graven, or by any other art represented, that famous structure, which was afterwards burnt by Erostratus: or:
2. they were medals in which their idol Diana was expressed according to

her image, spoken of, Ac 19:35. And they are called here, temples, or *shrines*, because they did resemble and represent that shrine or temple.

And these the superstitious people carried home to their houses and friends; not only to evidence what a pilgrimage they had performed, but to incite the more their devotions towards this idol.

Acts 19:25

Ver. 25. Gain, getting or keeping a livelihood, are great temptations, and, a little pretext of piety with them, keep up the superstition and false worship that abound in the world.

Acts 19:26

Ver. 26. He tells them indeed what was St. Paul's doctrine; but he conceals the reasons of his doctrine; for there can be nothing more evident to any considering man, than that there is but one God who made all things; as Ps 115:3,4 Jer 10:10.

Acts 19:27

Ver. 27. *Not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought;* not only that we shall have no more to do, and be without work; but that it will be a reproach unto us to have had such an employment.

But also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised; this is made an aggravation to the loss of their all, that religion should suffer too. How much more ought it to concern those who have a sure foundation for what they do profess!

All Asia; this temple is said to have been burnt down the same day that Alexander was born, and that it was two hundred and twenty years in rebuilding, at the charge of all Asia.

The world worshippeth; though the Romans might worship any god (of

those multitudes) which they allowed, yet they might leave their estates only to a very few amongst them; but Diana of the Ephesians was one of those few; as also one of those twelve whom they accounted *dii* or *deae majorum gentium*, gods and goddesses of the highest quality, or first rank.

Acts 19:28

Ver. 28. The argument from their profit wrought very much upon them, especially meeting with their prejudicate opinions, having pretended antiquity and universality to confirm them.

Saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians; to show their abhorrence of what Paul had taught; and desiring her glory might be perpetual, whom Paul thought not worthy to be honoured at all.

Acts 19:29

Ver. 29. *Filled with confusion;* tumults and noise; all conditions of men, high and low, promiscuously being met in such uproars.

Gaius; one born at Derbe, but living at Thessalonica, as Ac 20:4.

Aristarchus; of whom we read, Ac 27:2 Col 4:10.

The theatre; a place or structure built for public uses; whence;

1. Their sports or plays in any public solemnity were beheld.
2. Their speeches or orations in their common assemblies were heard.
3. Where they punished also their malefactors; it being accommodated with several steps or seats higher than one another, and of vast extent for these purposes.

Hither, according to their custom, they resort, to hear if any one would speak upon this occasion to them; or rather, to get these Christians condemned and executed for their supposed sacrilege and blasphemy.

Acts 19:30

Ver. 30. *Paul would have entered in unto the people;* being desirous either to appease the tumult; or, if the worst came of it, to die for Christ's sake.

The disciples suffered him not, by their entreaties; to whom this good apostle's life, from whom they had received the faith, was more dear than their own.

Acts 19:31

Ver. 31. *Certain of the chief of Asia;* such as had the oversight of the plays and shows in honour of their idol gods, and were usually their priests; and were of four countries; from whence they had their names of Asiarchs, Bithynarchs, Syriarchs, and Cappadociarchs. Whosoever these were, the providence of God is to be adored, who could out of his greatest enemies raise up deliverers for his servants.

Acts 19:32

Ver. 32. An excellent description of a popular tumult. Whether this *assembly* was afterwards made legal by the magistrates resorting thither, (though it was not called by their authority), and is therefore called here, *ἐκκλησία*, is not so useful to inquire.

Acts 19:33

Ver. 33. *They drew Alexander out of the multitude,* where he could not be seen and heard, unto some more convenient place, from whence he might make a vindication or defence for them; and that most likely in behalf of the Jews, who were equally obnoxious to the rage of the people for being against their idolatry, as the Christians were. This *Alexander* is thought to have been that Alexander of whom we read, 1Ti 1:20 2Ti 4:14: though some think that this was another of that name.

Beckoned with the hand, to procure silence; as Ac 12:17.

Acts 19:34

Ver. 34. *A Jew*, and by consequence an enemy to their idolatry; and, as they might imagine at least, a friend to St. Paul.

All with one voice; unanimity makes not the cause to be good, if it were bad at first.

Acts 19:35

Ver. 35. *Town clerk*, or secretary, who registered their acts, and intervened in all their meetings.

Is a worshipper; each country and city had their peculiar gods, which they worshipped, and took for their patrons, as Ephesus did this goddess Diana. But the word here signifies a sacrist, or one that looks to the temple to keep it clean; especially that hath the charge of more solemn shows or sports in honour of any supposed deity: and these Ephesians took it to be their no small glory, that they were employed in such as belonged to Diana.

The image which fell down from Jupiter; though the maker's name (Canetias) is upon record, yet it having lasted whilst the temple was six or seven times repaired, at least, if not renewed, and none ever remembering when it first was brought in amongst them, the crafty priests persuaded the credulous people that it was fallen from heaven, thereby getting more honour unto it, and profit to themselves.

Acts 19:36

Ver. 36. He did there cunningly than honestly endeavour to evade their clamour, and still their rage, by telling them (how fallaciously soever), that neither Paul, nor any other Christian or Jew, had any quarrel with their

goddess or worship. For they indeed were against all images that were made with hands; but theirs was not such a one, it being fallen down from heaven. We must consider he was but a pagan; and his design was only to still the people; and *populus vult decipi*.

Acts 19:37

Ver. 37. *Neither robbers of churches;* for they had not entered into their temple.

Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess; Paul had barely preached this truth amongst them, not upbraiding them for their idolatry; as Michael, the archangel, brought no railing accusation against the devil, when he contended with him, Jude 1:9.

Acts 19:38

Ver. 38. *The law is open;* which is fittest to determine all questions and controversies; for men would be partial to their own cause, and every one challenge to be in the right.

Deputies; who, under the Roman emperors or consuls, had power to hear and determine of all matters.

Let them implead one another; that so both parties may be heard.

Acts 19:39

Ver. 39. *Other matters;* relating to the good government of the city, or maintaining the established religion, which ought not in such a confused manner to be treated of, but in an assembly called by lawful authority, which the Romans did usually call, at least, three times every month.

Acts 19:40

Ver. 40. He wisely minds them of their danger; for being under the power of the Romans, it was no less than the loss of their liberties to abet any faction or sedition; and to make a concourse or meeting tumultuously together, was capital, unless it were upon the sudden invasion of an enemy, or to but out some raging fire.

Acts 19:41

Ver. 41. The people were persuaded quietly to depart to their homes. Thus God one way or other, sometimes by friends, and sometimes by foes, kept his church and people from being ruined; and his hand is not shortened.

Acts 20:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 20:1-6 Paul goeth to Macedonia, and having passed over divers countries cometh to Troas.

Ac 20:7-12 Where, as he preached long, Eutychus falleth out of a window, and is taken up dead: Paul restoreth him to life.

Ac 20:13-16 He continueth his travels.

Ac 20:17-35 At Miletus he calleth to him the elders of the church of Ephesus, and taketh a solemn and affectionate leave of them, exhorting them to look well to their charge, and commending them to God's grace.

Ac 20:36-38 He prayeth with them and departeth.

Ver. 1. *Embraced them;* took his farewell of them, and, as the manner of those countries was in meeting and parting with friends, he kissed them: as Lu 7:45, and far more anciently, Ge 31:55. And this was the true ground of that kiss of peace, or the holy kiss, recommended Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12, and elsewhere, which was only a civility then in use.

Departed for to go into Macedonia; yielding to the present fury of Demetrius; not so much for his own safety, as for the good of the church, that it might not be further persecuted for his sake; and that elsewhere it might by his ministry be enlarged and built up.

Acts 20:2

Ver. 2. *Much exhortation;* which after so great a stir and opposition against them, the disciples could not but stand in great need of, that they might not be offended at the cross of Christ: and also mingling consolations with his exhortations, as the word indifferently signifies, as the case would well bear, there being a special blessing promised unto such as are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, Mt 5:10 1Pe 3:14.

Came into Greece; Attica, in which province Athens was: otherwise Macedonia was in Greece largely taken.

Acts 20:3

Ver. 3. *The Jews laid wait for him;* some have thought that their laying in wait might be to rob him of the collections which he carried with him for the saints at Jerusalem; but most likely it was rather to take away his life, whom they hated for his zeal and diligence in the gospel.

He purposed to return; slunning their treachery and plotting against him. He would not tempt God by running into dangers, though his cause were never so good.

Through Macedonia; being the same way that he had come to Corinth.

Acts 20:4

Ver. 4. *There accompanied him into Asia;* their names are set down, as being men called and known at that time in the churches, and that what they did for this holy apostle might be remembered in all ages.

Sopater; who is called also *Sosipater*, Ro 16:21. It is added in some copies, that he was the son of Pyrrhus; which in Greek is the same with Rufus in Latin.

Berea; a city of Macedonia, Ac 17:10.

Aristarchus; of whom, Ac 19:29, as also of the others, mention hath been formerly made.

Of Asia; of Ephesus, a city in Asia.

Tychicus; of whom, Eph 6:21 Col 4:7 2Ti 4:12; and of *Trophimus* we read, Ac 21:29 2Ti 4:20. These seem to have been the apostles or messengers of the churches, spoken of 2Co 8:23; in the number of whom St. Luke is to be reckoned, but being the penman of this book, he declines mentioning of himself by name; but his praise will be for ever in the gospel, 2Co 8:18,19.

Acts 20:5

Ver. 5. *Us*; whereby it appears, that St. Luke was one of them that accompanied St. Paul, though neither here nor elsewhere doth he express his own name.

Troas; either the city of Troy, or the country thereabout so called.

Acts 20:6

Ver. 6. *From Philippi*; where they embarked, and sailed on the river first, then on the sea.

After the days of unleavened bread; though St. Paul would not have the Gentile converts to be burdened with the ceremonial law, yet, that he might not offend the Jews, for a while he complied with their rites, Ac 18:21, they being indeed dead, but not yet deadly; and therefore he stays his journey all the time of the passover solemnity, instructing them in the mean while of the nature and use of such things.

Acts 20:7

Ver. 7. *The first day of the week;* this was the day which the Lord had made, it being called from his resurrection, which was on this day, *the Lord's day*, Re 1:10. On this day the disciples met, and Christ honoured them with his presence, Joh 20:19,26. And when he was ascended, this day was appointed for the Christians to meet in, 1Co 16:2; which must necessarily infer the abrogation of the Saturday, or Jewish sabbath: for it being part of the command, *Six days shalt thou labour*, they could not in ordinary have rested the last day of the week and the first day too, without sinning against the law of God.

To break bread; to take a meal in common together, which they called *agapae*, or the love feast, so great a harmony and natural love was manifested in it; which was concluded with celebrating the Lord's supper; and this is chiefly, if not only, intended in this place. The love feasts being abused, were soon laid aside; but the other must continue until the Lord come, 1Co 11:26.

Continued his speech until midnight; a long sermon indeed, at least it would be now thought so; and yet we must have the same spirit, or we are not members of that catholic church.

Acts 20:8

Ver. 8. *There were many lights;* there being many present; and it being in the night, because of the persecution that the Christians met with. Lest they should be reproached for doing any thing indecently, they by this means exposed themselves, and all that was done amongst them, to the common view and notice of all.

In the upper chamber; where it is supposed they did ordinarily meet; as Ac 1:13.

Acts 20:9

Ver. 9. *Preaching;* discoursing and arguing; for it does not seem to have been a continued speech, by the word here used.

Fell down from the third loft; this fall is thought by some to have been caused by Satan, (through God's permission), that he might the more disturb Paul, and hinder, or put an end to, his sermon; which by the ensuing miracle God turned to a quite contrary effect.

Acts 20:10

Ver. 10. *Fell on him;* as Elijah on the widow of Zarephath's dead son, 1Ki 17:21, and Elisha on the Shunammite's son, 2Ki 4:34.

His life is in him; not but that he had been really dead, as Ac 19:9, but that upon the apostle's prayer (which is to be understood, though it is not here expressed) God had restored the young man to life; or howsoever, because St. Paul knew infallibly he should presently be restored to life, even whilst he spake.

Acts 20:11

Ver. 11. *Had broken bread;* either in the eucharist, as in Ac 20:7, or in taking his ordinary refecton and breakfast.

Talked a long while, even till break of day; this was of long continuance, and speaks the patience and zeal of Christians in those times, and will rise up in judgment against a careless and negligent generation.

He departed; going that part of his journey on foot, as the rest of his company did go by sea, as Ac 20:13.

Acts 20:12

Ver. 12. They rejoiced not only that the young man was restored to life, but that by this means the gospel was attested to, and many confirmed in the belief of it.

Acts 20:13

Ver. 13. *Assos*; a city in Mysia, called also Apollonia, not far from Troas either by water or land.

Minding himself to go afoot; Paul's going on foot might be the rather, that so he might have the better opportunity to scatter the seed of the gospel as he went, going through towns and villages, and conversing still with some or other, more than in sea journeys can be expected. So greedy of winning souls to Christ was this holy man, that he ordered every step, as near as he could, towards it. But St. Paul might desire to go alone thus on foot, that he might enjoy more free and full communion with God, having only God and his own soul to converse with.

Acts 20:14

Ver. 14. An island, as also a city in it so called, in the Aegean Sea. Some think the island is called Lesbos, in which this Mitylene is.

Acts 20:15

Ver. 15. *Chios*; a noted island betwixt Lesbos and Samos in the Aegean Sea.

Samos; in Ionia; for there are several other islands of this name.

Trogyllium; a promontory not far from Samos.

Miletus; a sea town upon the continent or firm land of Ionia.

Acts 20:16

Ver. 16. *Ephesus* was not so far from Miletus; but lest he should hinder his journey, he would not go thither.

If it were possible for him; or, as Ac 18:21, if the Lord would; for his

endeavour should not be wanting.

To be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost; not that he placed any religion in the observing this feast, which was abrogated and done away by being fulfilled, Ac 2:1-47; but because of the vast concourse of people at all those solemn feasts, when his opportunities to magnify Christ and his truths might be the greater.

Acts 20:17

Ver. 17. The governors and pastors of it; *elders* being here a title not respecting their age, but their place; and they might be the twelve spoken of in Ac 19:7.

Acts 20:18

Ver. 18. *Asia;* strictly and properly so called; or that part of the Lesser Asia whose metropolis was Ephesus.

After what manner I have been with you at all seasons; a singular form for a good man to use, if he must of necessity leave his charge or flock, when his conscience does not accuse him. St. Paul spake not this as boasting of what he had done, or how he had been amongst them; but setting his example before them and others, to be imitated, and calling them for to witness the truth of it.

Acts 20:19

Ver. 19. *Serving the Lord;* in his apostleship or public ministry; of which, if any ever could, he might have gloried; yet in this office he clothes himself *with humility*, as the most becoming garment for a minister of Jesus Christ: though so high, yet so low. We need not cry, (as one did, though ironically), Fie, St. Paul! but fie upon all such as pretend to succeed in his dignity, and do not at all imitate him in his humility.

With many tears; he shed tears of compassion over the ignorant and blind,

hard and perverse. It grieved him to see how large a dominion the god of this world had, and what a little part was left for his dear Lord and Master, Christ Jesus.

Temptations; afflictions and troubles, which befell him for Christ and the gospel's sake; which are so called, Jas 1:2 1Pe 1:6.

Acts 20:20

Ver. 20. *I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you;* useful in order to eternal life to be known or hoped for, or to be done; shunning no labour or danger; concealing nothing out of fear or hope of advantage.

Taught you publicly; in the public synagogues and schools.

And from house to house; privately, as Ac 2:46; not only speaking publicly and in general, but secretly and particularly, as everyone's condition did require, exhorting some, reproving others. And indeed a good shepherd will labour to understand the state of his flock, and to supply them with what is necessary and suitable for them. Jacob says, Ge 31:39, that he bare the loss, and was fain to answer for all the sheep unto Laban. And of how much more value are the souls of men, to be sure, in God's sight, who will require an account of them!

Acts 20:21

Ver. 21. *Testifying to all sorts and conditions of men,* for there is no difference with God, that repentance would be accepted from them by God, and that he was ready to give repentance unto them, as Ac 11:18; and that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was the true saving faith, there being no other name given whereby we may be saved. Upon these two depends the whole gospel, and our salvation by it.

Acts 20:22

Ver. 22. *Bound in the spirit;* as powerfully persuaded by a Divine instinct,

to undertake this journey, as if I were led or drawn to it by forcible means; being bound to obey God in all things, whom I take to be my God and Guide, my Sun and Shield: and I do not desire so much to act, as to be acted by him. This St. Paul says, not as if he was drawn unto this journey against his will, but lest any should attempt to dissuade him from it, or that he should seem to have slighted the predictions of the prophets, mentioned in Ac 21:11,12. Nay, he might say this, as being as certain of his bonds as if he felt them already. Such things as are foretold to such as know the veracity of God, they are as present. Howsoever, he was content to be bound, to suffer, nay, to die for Christ. And as he is poor in spirit who crucifies the world, and is willing to want, if God sees good; so he is bound in spirit, who is thus willing to be bound for the name of Christ. Howsoever, these words speak his firm resolution to take this journey upon him.

Not knowing the things that shall befall me there; what the event shall be, in what measure he should be bound, and how long; he left it unto God's good will and pleasure.

Acts 20:23

Ver. 23.

1. Those that were endued with the Spirit of prophecy, in every city, foretold his sufferings; as Ac 21:4,11.
2. He did suffer more or less in every city or place he came to; so great was the malice of the Jews against him.

Acts 20:24

Ver. 24. *None of these things move me;* they cannot deter me from my duty.

Neither count I my life before dear unto myself; I am so far from fearing bonds, that I would not fear death itself. He is said to account his life precious, or dear, that spares it; as 2Ki 1:13,14.

My course; his general course of Christianity, or the special course of his ministry; in either of which there is a race to be run, and a prize to be got, 2Ti 4:7. It implies the great and constant labour that all Christians must take in their general calling, and especially ministers in their particular calling, 1Co 9:24.

With joy; which ariseth from the testimony of a good conscience, which only is true joy; the other is madness, Ec 2:2.

The ministry; his apostleship, so called, Ac 1:25 6:4.

The gospel of the grace of God; so the gospel is called, because bestowed upon any nation or people by God's mere grace only. And also it declares the grace of God in Christ Jesus to repenting and believing sinners.

Acts 20:25

Ver. 25. This is thought to have been spoken by St. Paul, as his present purpose and resolution only, as Ro 15:24.

The kingdom of God; the gospel, by which his kingdom is set up in the minds and hearts of men.

Acts 20:26

Ver. 26. *I take you to record;* I testify and affirm unto you; and I dare appeal unto yourselves concerning it.

I am pure from the blood of all men; from the guilt of destroying their souls; none of them have perished through my fault, having faithfully showed unto them the way of life, and earnestly persuaded them to walk in it. Thus, according as the Lord told Ezekiel, Eze 3:19, the prophet that hath warned the wicked man, hath delivered his own soul.

Acts 20:27

Ver. 27. God's decree, to save all that believe in Christ; or the whole doctrine of Christianity, as it directs to a holy life; whatsoever God requires of any one in order to a blessed eternity. This is that which the Pharisees rejected, Lu 7:30; and so do all wicked and ungodly men, who refuse to take God's counsel, or to obey his command.

Acts 20:28

Ver. 28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves;* be mindful of your own salvation: for he that neglects his own, will not be careful of the salvation of another.

The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers;

1. By his choosing and nominating of them, which was then by a special instinct, or immediate warrant from the Spirit, Ac 1:24 13:2. Or:
2. Because they were constituted by the apostles, who were filled with the Spirit, enabling them to the choice of such persons, Ac 14:23. But also:
3. Whosoever is set apart to this office, according to the will of God, is made an overseer by the Holy Ghost; God owning his institutions, and concurring with them.

Overseers; the same who (Ac 20:17) are called *elders*; they were certainly such as had the government and care of the church committed unto them.

To feed; as a shepherd does, (for the apostle continues here the metaphor), Jer 23:4 Joh 21:16,17.

The church of God; our Saviour is so called; for *the Word was God*, Joh 1:1.

Which he hath purchased; Christ by his bloody death hath redeemed his church, and obtained power to gather it, to rule over it, to protect and

preserve it, Isa 53:10 Php 2:8-10.

With his own blood; the blood of Christ, called truly the blood of God, there being in Christ two natures in one person, and a communion of the properties of each nature. If Christ had not been man, he could have had no blood to shed: had he not been God, the blood which he shed could not have been a sufficient price of redemption. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, who found out such a ransom; and the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, who paid this ransom for us! Ro 11:33 Eph 3:18,19.

Acts 20:29

Ver. 29. *My departing;* either out of this country, or out of this life.

Grievous wolves; so false teachers and persecutors are called, the one destroying the body, the other the soul. In this the metaphor is persisted in; the disciples of Christ being as sheep or lambs, their enemies are by our Saviour himself called wolves. Mt 7:15.

Acts 20:30

Ver. 30. *Of your own selves shall men arise;* whilst Paul yet lived, and was only departed from that place. Several seducers may be reckoned up, as Nicolas the deacon, (from whom it is thought the sect of the Nicolaitanes came, Re 2:6), Hymenaeus, Alexander, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, 1Ti 1:20 2Ti 1:15.

Speaking perverse things; perverting Scripture; establishing their false doctrines by Scripture, which they wrest to their purpose.

To draw away disciples; as members are forcibly plucked from their body; which speak the cruelty and violence of these heretics, and the tenderness of the church towards her members, being loth to part from them.

After them; thus false teachers gain indeed disciples to themselves, but not

unto the Lord.

Acts 20:31

Ver. 31. *Watch;* take heed yourselves, and warn others to take heed.

By the space of three years; from St. Paul's first coming to Ephesus it was three years current, and now almost complete, Ac 19:8,10 20:3.

With tears; a great, and no feigned παθος; as Christ wept over Jerusalem, Lu 19:41, so St. Paul over the unbelieving Jews; it went to his heart to think that they could not be saved. See how St. Paul loved souls, and pitied souls.

Acts 20:32

Ver. 32. *I commend you to God;* it being so hard a matter to escape so many snares and dangers, the apostle prays to God for them, who is able to keep them by his power, *through faith, unto salvation,* 1Pe 1:5; and it is in vain to look after any meaner defence.

The word of his grace; the gospel, which leads us to the rock upon which we must build, if we would not be moved when the storm comes.

Build you up; increasing the number of believers, and augmenting their graces. God is said to build, and so is his word, both concurring: the gospel builds, as a means appointed by God; and God builds, who blesses that means. Hence he is called *the God of all grace,* 1Pe 5:10.

An inheritance; heaven is called an inheritance, because we have it only by adoption, and it is given only unto children, Ro 8:17; as also, because it is a firm and lasting possession, not for a term of years, or a certain time, but for ever and ever.

Which are sanctified; for without holiness none shall see God, Heb 12:14.

Acts 20:33

Ver. 33. Having spoken of the heavenly inheritance, he tells them how willing he was to have his reward hereafter, and to waive receiving his wages here. In this, St. Paul imitates Moses, Nu 16:15, and Samuel, 1Sa 12:3,5.

Acts 20:34

Ver. 34. St. Paul working hard (as they all knew) for a livelihood, Ac 18:3 1Co 4:12 1Th 2:9; which he gives an account of, 2Th 3:8, to have been done only that in such a juncture, they being poor, and the false teachers watching all advantages against him, he might not then be chargeable to them.

Acts 20:35

Ver. 35. *I have showed you all things;* as in Ac 20:27.

So labouring; with more than ordinary pains and constancy.

To support; that they do not fall; or, being fallen, that they may rise again. The word imports the stretching out of the hand to retain any that are going away, or to hold up any that are falling.

The weak; in knowledge, faith, or any other grace.

The words of the Lord Jesus; Paul might have these words by the relation of others who heard them spoken by our Saviour; for all things that he said or did could not be written, Joh 20:30.

It is more blessed to give than to receive; not so much in that giving speaks abundance and affluence, but as it shows our charity and goodness, in which we resemble and imitate God. The substance of these words which are attributed to our Saviour, though not the terms, may be found in divers places, as Lu 6:38 16:9.

Acts 20:36

Ver. 36. *He kneeled down;* a posture of great humility, becoming prayer, and frequently used on such occasions, especially in a time of great trouble and distress. Although bodily exercise alone do not profit, 1Ti 4:8, yet we may, and must on occasion, in prayer bow the knee, lift up the hand and eye;

1. Because it is a reasonable thing to give our bodies in his service to God that made them.
2. By this we may show that we are not ashamed to serve and own God before men. And:
3. These outward signs do sometimes stir up our own and others' devotion.

Acts 20:37

Ver. 37. As they used to do their friends when they took their leave of them: see Ge 45:14,15.

Acts 20:38

Ver. 38. The loss of a faithful and painful minister is a public loss, and many are concerned in it; besides, they had found great benefit by his ministry, and could not but be sensible of their missing of it. Add to this, Paul's gracious and humble conversation, and the sense of many good offices done by him, could not but have endeared him unto them.

They accompanied him unto the ship; enjoying him as long and as far as they could, and expressing their last and utmost kindness unto him.

Acts 21:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 21:1-9 Paul, journeying to Jerusalem, calleth at the house of Philip the evangelist, whose four daughters prophesied.

Ac 21:10-16 Agabus foretelling what should befall him at Jerusalem, he will not be dissuaded from going thither.

Ac 21:17-26 Arriving at Jerusalem, he is persuaded to purify himself in the temple

Ac 21:27-36 where he is set upon by the Jews of Asia, and in danger of losing his life in an uproar, but is rescued by the chief captain, and carried to the castle in chains.

Ac 21:37-40 He requesteth, and is permitted, to speak to the people.

Ver. 1. *Were gotten from them;* had parted with them, as dearest friends and relations do one from the other, with much difficulty and reluctance.

Coos; an island in the Mediterranean Sea, nigh unto Crete, where Hippocrates and Apelles are said to have been born.

Rhodes; another island in the same sea, of great fame for the Colossus, or vast image of brass, which was there, accounted one of the wonders of the world.

Patara; a haven town of Lycia, and its metropolis.

Acts 21:2

Ver. 2. *Sailing over unto Phenicia;* whose master and mariners intended such a voyage.

Phenicia; a country in Syria, situate nigh the sea, and bordering upon Palestine, whose chief city was Tyre.

Acts 21:3

Ver. 3. *Cyprus*; another island in the Mediterranean.

Unlade her burden; of goods and merchandise which she had taken in at Ephesus.

Acts 21:4

Ver. 4. *Seven days*; they tarried the rather so long, that they might worship and serve the Lord on his day together.

Through the Spirit; by the Spirit of prophecy they foretold his sufferings at Jerusalem, which afterward accordingly befell unto him; and they, being ignorant of his undertaking that journey at God's command, out of commiseration and pity dissuade St. Paul from going to such a place, where they foresaw that he should suffer so much: and this, it is said, they did *through the Spirit*, because they had that foreknowledge of all his sufferings from the Spirit; and knowing but in part, being ignorant of that special command Paul had had to go to Jerusalem, they did, according to what they knew, dissuade Paul from that journey. But, they knowing that their prophecy about St. Paul's sufferings must be fulfilled, and the Spirit by which they spake could not err or be mistaken, how came they to dissuade St. Paul from going to Jerusalem? It may be answered, that they might think this prediction of his sufferings to be only conditional, in case he went to Jerusalem; as David was told, that the men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul, 1Sa 23:11,12; that is, in case he had trusted himself amongst them.

Acts 21:5

Ver. 5. *They all brought us on our way*; to show their greater respect unto him, being loth to part with him so long as it was possible for them to enjoy him; so that they did not despise his temptation that was in the flesh, Ga 4:14 but it is truly strange what follows, that he was received by them *as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*. *Kneeled down on the shore*; this the Jews on extraordinary occasions were wont to do, whilst the

temple itself were standing, viz. make every place a place of prayer in such a case, Ac 20:36.

Acts 21:6

Ver. 6. *Had taken our leave one of another;* as Ac 20:1, embracing one another at their parting.

Acts 21:7

Ver. 7. *We came to Ptolemais;* so far forth as to Ptolemais, a city in Phenicia, so called from one of the Ptolemies, king of Egypt; and is thought to be the same with Accho, mentioned Jud 1:31, which ancient name is yet retained in the Syriac translation.

Acts 21:8

Ver. 8. *Caesarea;* that which was called Caesarea Stratonis, to distinguish it from Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mount Libanus, as also from another city of that name in Cappadocia; they having been all so called in honour of Caesar, to flatter and perpetuate that family. The Caesarea here spoken of was in Palestine, and is mentioned Ac 10:1 18:22.

The evangelist; whose office and charge it was to publish the gospel, which Timothy is exhorted to do, 2Ti 4:5. This office is placed between that of an apostle and of a pastor and teacher, Eph 4:11, and was not so confined to a certain place or people as the latter of these were.

One of the seven; of the seven deacons; of which see Ac 6:5. Which office of a deacon Philip having well discharged, did purchase to himself this good degree, as 1Ti 3:13.

Acts 21:9

Ver. 9. *Virgins;* by their father's and their own voluntary determination,

as 1Co 7:37; neither is it said whether they continued in that state, but they were so.

Which did prophesy; not by expounding the prophecies or word of God, for no woman is suffered to teach publicly, 1Co 14:34 1Ti 2:12; but rather foretelling things to come, which gift God did not debar that sex from; especially it having been promised, Joe 2:28, and in part fulfilled before, in Ac 2:17; by which God would show the enlargement of his mercies, and plenty of his Spirit, reserved for the times of the gospel.

Acts 21:10

Ver. 10. Of whom mention is made, Ac 11:28; of whose prophecy they could not be ignorant, by reason of the great collection which, on that account, was made for the poor at Jerusalem.

Acts 21:11

Ver. 11. *Took Paul's girdle;* it was ordinary amongst the prophets to confirm, or at least to exemplify, their prophecies by outward signs and symbols, as Isa 20:2 Jer 13:1 Eze 12:5. But that of Jer 27:2, is a parallel unto this; where the prophet is commanded to make bonds and yokes, and to put them upon his neck, to foreshow the subjection of all those nations unto Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus saith the Holy Ghost; none of all the sufferings foreshown concerning St. Paul, or others of God's children and servants, but are ordered by God, who knows them altogether; and they came not out of the dust, or by casualty, or chance, so as not to have been the matter of God's foreknowledge and counsel, Eph 1:11.

The Gentiles; the Roman powers at Jerusalem, and afterwards at Rome.

Acts 21:12

Ver. 12. *They of that place;* the converts or believers that were in

Caesarea, pitying him, and having a tender affection for him: See Poole on "Ac 21:4".

Besought him with tears, so earnest were they, as in the following verse (see Ac 21:13).

Acts 21:13

Ver. 13. *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart?* a strange strife, who should overcome by loving most, as in that betwixt David and Jonathan, 1Sa 20:41,42. This undaunted champion, who did not seem to feel any of his own afflictions and miseries, yet grieves for the grief and sympathy of others, and bears a double weight in his burdens; one directly and immediately from them, as lying upon himself; the other mediately, as recoiling from others (who suffered with him) unto him again.

But also to die; as Christ's love for us was stronger than death, So 8:6, so must our love be to him again, or it is not of the same nature with his, nor begotten by it.

For the name of the Lord Jesus; his truth, and glory.

Acts 21:14

Ver. 14. *We ceased;* as having done their utmost, and what became them.

Saying, The will of the Lord be done; they commit the event unto God: thus we pray daily, that God's will may be done, Mt 6:10 Lu 11:2; and thus our Saviour, not only by his precept, but by his example, hath taught us, Mt 26:42 Lu 22:42; and when God's will is done, our will is done also, if the mind and spirit be in us that was in Christ, Php 2:5, and otherwise we are none of his, Re 8:9.

Acts 21:15

Ver. 15. As they do pack up that are to remove to another house or place,

not intending to come thither any more again; this also did show their readiness of mind to endure and suffer all things, as loss of relations and friends, and all accommodations, for Christ.

Acts 21:16

Ver. 16. Either this Mnason was in their company, or rather they were brought by the disciples of Caesarea to the house of this Mnason, who was one of them that was converted when Paul and Barnabas were at Cyprus, Ac 13:4; and lodgings being scarce at Jerusalem, (when all the males were to appear there in those three annual solemnities), it was no small kindness to be provided for by him.

Acts 21:17

Ver. 17. It is thought, that by *brethren* in this place, and Ac 21:7, they are meant, who, being believers, were formed into a church with its several officers, and that they are called *disciples* only, Ac 21:4, who, living dispersed, and in smaller numbers, could not constitute such a church; but surely whatsoever there is of privilege and happiness in this spiritual fraternity, that truly catholic charity that was in the apostles and other holy men, would not so confine it, as to exclude any from enjoying of it, who did not exclude themselves by greater crimes than their paucity in number, or the consequences of that, could amount unto.

Acts 21:18

Ver. 18. *James*, one of the apostles, though some think that he was a kinsman of our Saviour's, and at this time bishop of Jerusalem.

Elders; as in Ac 15:6,23, not so called for their age, but dignity or place in the church.

Acts 21:19

Ver. 19. God had so done those marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance; and this was said by the apostle, that God might not lose the glory, nor the church the benefit, of any of those great things which God had wrought: otherwise, St. Paul acknowledges that he was *the least of the apostles*, and *not meet to be called an apostle*, 1Co 15:9; and all his power was ministerial, he was only an instrument in God's hand, to be acted by him, as Ac 20:24.

Acts 21:20

Ver. 20. *Glorified the Lord*; acknowledging all in that great work of the conversion of the Gentiles to have been from God; and that Paul that had planted, and Apollos that had watered, were nothing, 1Co 3:6,7.

Thousands of Jews; tens of thousands, as the word does usually signify; a definite for an indefinite number, signifying very many: and considering out of what small beginnings, and by what despicable means, and all within the space of about five and twenty years, this grain of mustard seed had spread itself; and add to this, that they were Jews, that obstinate and prejudiced generation, who are here spoken of, and they were then so many, so wonderfully many, who believed.

All zealous of the law, of ceremonies, and concerning forbidden meats, &c. For the decree of the apostles, Ac 15:29, concerning these things, did only respect such as were converted from paganism to the faith of Christ; and the Jews that were converted before the dispersion by Adrian, the Roman emperor, many years after this time, did not thoroughly understand their freedom from that law, but were under the burden of it, as appears by several ecclesiastical writers.

Acts 21:21

Ver. 21. *Informed of thee*; instructed or catechised concerning thee; the zealots had made it their business to instil such aspersions and odious reflections against Paul, as if their accusations had been the fundamental truths of their religion.

Moses; the ceremonial law, given by his ministry.

To walk, to live, to act in their course of life, *after the customs* of their fathers, or the rituals of Moses.

Acts 21:22

Ver. 22. *What is it therefore?* It cannot be otherwise; or, what else remains to be done?

The multitude must needs come together; all the faithful must meet; for the magistrates then being pagan, and enemies both to the church and the gospel; in matters of great moment, especially when there was any fear of a schism, the whole multitude of believers were gathered together to consult about it.

Acts 21:23

Ver. 23. Vows were either, first, such as men did make in gratitude for any deliverance they had received, as from sickness, storms, or any imminent dangers: or, secondly, to enable them the better to serve God on any occasion; and then they were bound to keep themselves from all those things which were forbidden to the Nazarite, as wine and strong drink, and to nourish their hair, as the Nazarites were bound to do. This vow they made for a certain time, and not perpetual: the law concerning it you may see, in Nu 6:2-5.

Acts 21:24

Ver. 24. *Purify thyself*; they advise Paul to perform all those rites required of a Nazarite, the observation of which did legally purify him.

Be at charges with them; these charges were about the threefold sacrifice which were to be offered, two turtles or young pigeons, a lamb, unleavened bread, and cakes of fine flour, as Nu 6:10-12,15; and the other four, spoken of Ac 21:23, being poor, they require Paul here to bear their

charges also, that so he might appear to be the chief amongst them, and the more zealous in their law, to take away the scandal that was taken up by the Jews against him; these ceremonies being as yet not deadly, or evil, though they were dead and indifferent.

Shave their heads; which was done at the end of their separation, and was the accomplishment of all; and they burned the hair which they shaved off under their sacrifices, to show, that all their legal performances were only acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed for us, 1Co 5:7 Heb 10:12.

Walkest orderly, and keepest the law; livest according to the law of Moses, contrary unto what they reported of thee.

Acts 21:25

Ver. 25. These ceremonies (after their accomplishment in Christ) not being at all necessary, they were not imposed upon any that received the faith of Christ from amongst the Gentiles, or other nations; only suffered for a while unto the Jews that turned to Christ, for the hardness of their hearts, and inveterate zeal for them.

Things offered to idols, &c.: of these things, See Poole on "Mt 15:29".

Acts 21:26

Ver. 26. Paul agrees to their advice, and follows it; and having set such a time for his vow as might end with the other four men's, he, with the four mentioned, signify to the priest (who was concerned to know it, because of the sacrifices that were to be offered for them), that the time of their separation was fulfilled, which is here called *the days of purification*, for the reason intimated, in Ac 21:24.

Until that an offering should be offered for every one of them: intending to abide in the temple until all those rites were performed which were required of them.

Acts 21:27

Ver. 27. *The seven days;* either,

1. After his coming to Jerusalem; or rather,
2. Of his vow; for it is thought that his vow of separation was but for seven days; or:
3. The seven days of that feast of Pentecost which he came unto.

The Jews which were of Asia; who were implacably set against him wheresoever he went, as Ac 14:19 17:5. These Jews dwelt at Ephesus and elsewhere, but were come to observe the feast at Jerusalem.

Laid hands on him; by violence, and against law.

Acts 21:28

Ver. 28. *Men of Israel;* minding them by this compellation, of their being a peculiar people unto God, and that none might be admitted with them in his worship. A charge is laid against St. Paul consisting of divers articles, but all false; for he was a most zealous lover of that people, and taught them nothing but the true use and meaning of the law: but thus they had done to our Saviour, Mt 26:61, and to St. Stephen, Ac 6:13.

Into the temple; that is, into the court of the Jews, which is so far unlawful, that they might have killed a Roman if he had come in there; and everyone was warned by an inscription upon the pillars, Μη δειν αλλοφυλον εντος του αγιου παριεναι, That no stranger or foreigner might come into that holy place.

Acts 21:29

Ver. 29. *For they had seen;* the Jews of Asia, who could not but know Trophimus; and he following of Paul in this journey, either ignorantly or

maliciously they accuse the apostle for taking him into the temple with him; which was only their surmise, and the issue of their enraged jealousy.

Acts 21:30

Ver. 30. *And all the city was moved;* there was a general concourse from all parts.

Tantum religio poterat, no such heats as such are which are moved about religion; whilst *the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable,* Jas 3:17.

Drew him out of the temple; lest by their uproar they should occasion any of the Gentiles to come in there to quell them; or, intending to kill Paul, they drew him thence, that he might not pollute that holy place with his blood: thus they strain at a gnat, being unwilling to pollute the temple; but they would swallow a camel, not sticking to shed the blood of the innocent.

The doors were shut; either by the keeper of the doors, or by the soldiers of the temple.

Acts 21:31

Ver. 31. *The chief captain;* the commander-in-chief over all the soldiers there; or one that had the command over a thousand. At the three great feasts there was usually a considerable number of soldiers at Jerusalem; the confluence from all parts being then so great, and the Jews so impatient of any yoke or government, the Romans durst not trust such multitudes without some check upon them. Thus at the passover, when they took and crucified our Saviour, these soldiers were made use of, Joh 18:12.

Acts 21:32

Ver. 32. A wonderful providence of God for Paul's preservation, that the chief captain should be so near, as to be able to hinder the massacring of

Paul; and especially that he should be defended and preserved by one that was a stranger to him, and an enemy to his religion!

They left beating of Paul, lest they should have been set upon by the soldiers, for breaking the peace, &c. The fear of man caused them to forbear what the fear of God could not.

Acts 21:33

Ver. 33. *Bound with two chains;* whether as Peter was, See Poole on "Ac 12:6", or that he was bound with one upon his feet, and with the other upon his hands, it was exactly fulfilled what Agabus had prophesied concerning him, Ac 21:11. So does God provide, that not one word of his servants, which they speak from him, shall fail; and that St. Paul should be heard before he was condemned.

Acts 21:34

Ver. 34. *Some cried one thing, some another;* as is usual in popular commotions, they agreed in doing mischief, but not in the reason of it.

Into the castle called Antonia, because it was built in honour of Mark Antony, on the north side of the temple.

Acts 21:35

Ver. 35. *When he came upon the stairs,* in the ascent to the castle, *he was borne of the soldiers;* either because the press was so great, he being in the midst of them; or being taken up by them, to secure him from the fury of the enraged multitude.

Acts 21:36

Ver. 36. That is, Kill him; for that was indeed to take him out of their way. The same speech they used against our Saviour, Lu 23:18 Joh 19:15, when

they desired his death.

Acts 21:37

Ver. 37. *May I speak unto thee?* A common expression in that language, whereby he craves leave, and bespeaks attention.

Canst thou speak Greek? After the Grecian empire, their language became and continued to be very common in Asia and Egypt, and very well known amongst all the Romans of any education or quality.

Acts 21:38

Ver. 38. *That Egyptian;* a famous ringleader of a rebellious crew, as some think, in the reign of Tiberius; but as others, in the thirteenth year of the emperor Claudius, and continued till under Nero's reign, and came, from these four thousand mentioned here at his first setting up, to have thirty thousand followers; pretending himself to be a prophet; of whom Josephus, Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 11.

Murderers, or assassins, that did wear daggers or stilettos.

Acts 21:39

Ver. 39. *No mean city;* it being the metropolis, or chief city, in Cilicia, built by Perseus, as some think; howsoever, having the privilege of the Roman freedom; as Ac 22:28.

I beseech thee: St. Paul begs leave to speak unto the people, that he might not seem to affect popularity, or to be guilty of any insurrection or tumult. Thus he had leave also of Agrippa, before that he made that famous apology, Ac 26:1.

Acts 21:40

Ver. 40. *Paul stood on the stairs;* as he was now about to be carried into the castle Antonia, before mentioned.

And beckoned with the hand; signifying that he craved their audience; as Ac 12:17 13:16.

He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue; the Hebrew tongue being understood by all of them, and most grateful unto them. Yet this was not the pure and ancient Hebrew, which had been corrupted ever since their captivity; but the Syriac tongue, which they there learned, was called Hebrew, it having at first been derived from the Hebrew, and being then in use by those who were, Hebrews.

Acts 22:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 22:1-21 Paul declareth at large the manner of his conversion and call to the apostleship.

Ac 22:22-24 At the very mentioning of the Gentiles the people exclaim furiously against him: whereupon the chief captain ordereth to examine him by scourging, Ac 22:25-29 which he avoideth by pleading the privilege of a Roman citizen.

Ac 22:30 He is brought before the Jewish council.

Ver. 1. Although they were wicked men, and cruel persecutors, St. Paul giveth them their titles of respect, which by the places God had put them in, are due unto them: See Poole on "Ac 7:2".

Acts 22:2

Ver. 2. *The Hebrew tongue;* the ordinary Hebrew; that which was taken for Hebrew, and spoken by the Hebrews after their return from the captivity, though mixed with the Syriac; as Ac 21:40.

They kept the more silence; it being more grateful unto them to hear Paul

speak in their mother tongue, especially they having so great a prejudice against all other nations and languages.

Acts 22:3

Ver. 3. *At the feet;* the apostle alludes unto the posture that the disciples of any rabbi, or teacher, in those times did use; the master sitting in some high or elevated place, did teach his scholars, who sat at his feet on the ground; and as they grew in knowledge, were advanced to sit nearer to their master: De 33:3. Abraham is thus said to be called to God's foot, Isa 41:2; and Mary sat at our Saviour's feet, Lu 10:39.

Of Gamaliel; the same Gamaliel who made that moderating speech in the apostle's behalf, Ac 5:34.

The perfect manner of the law; this perfect manner of the law is Pharisaism, in which the apostle was brought up, and before his conversion made a profession of, Php 3:5. Not that the apostle reckoned upon any perfection in this profession; but because, as Ac 26:5, it was the most strait sect of their religion, observing a great deal of punctuality and accurateness, making what they called a hedge about the law.

Of the fathers; not observing only the law, which was given by God to their fathers by the hand of Moses; but the traditions of their fathers he was exceeding zealous in; as Ga 1:14.

Zealous toward God; or, as some copies read, zealous toward the law; both in the same sense. His zeal for the law was sincere, not out of by-ends, but out of his love to God, though it was not according to knowledge, Ro 10:2. It was truly according unto what he knew or believed, but it was *not according to true knowledge*.

Acts 22:4

Ver. 4. *This way;* the doctrine and practice of Christianity.

Unto the death; as much as in him lies, being one of the most furious

persecutors, that hunted for the precious life, *breathing out threatenings and slaughters* with every breath, Ac 9:1.

Acts 22:5

Ver. 5. *The estate of the elders;* their sanhedrim or great council.

Letters; commission or orders.

The brethren; the Jews of Damascus are called brethren, because they descended from the patriarchs as well as he. And still, as Ac 22:1, he would overcome that stubborn people with civility, heaping up coals of fire on their heads, Ro 12:20, that they might be melted, and then formed after a more excellent manner.

Acts 22:6

Ver. 6. As lightning it suddenly encompassed him. But see Ac 9:3, and read on; where this history is set down by St. Luke. And here little more can be taken notice of, than some small variety in the expressions.

Acts 22:7

Ver. 7. *Saul, Saul;* as men that call another earnestly repeat his name; as when the angel of the Lord called *Abraham, Abraham*, Ge 22:11.

Acts 22:8

Ver. 8. *I am Jesus of Nazareth;* that contemned (though not contemptible) name is owned by Christ from heaven, that they might not be ashamed when they were reproached by it on earth. Of the rest, See Poole on "Ac 9:5".

Acts 22:9

Ver. 9. Of this; See Poole on "Ac 9:7". This may be added to what was formerly said, that the men who travelled with Paul may be said not to have heard the voice of him that spake, because they did not understand it, or obey it; they were not converted, as Paul was, by it; the Hebrew language putting hearing for obeying, as in many scriptures; and both St. Paul, who here spake, and Luke, who penned this history, understood exactly the proprieties of that tongue.

Acts 22:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Ac 9:6". Such things as Ananias told him from Christ, were as if Christ himself had told him them; and by Ananias our Saviour satisfied St. Paul's question, *What shall I do, Lord?*

Acts 22:11

Ver. 11. *I could not see for the glory of that light;* the excellency of the object overpowering his sight. It was a strange work of God that enabled St. Stephen to see Christ, who is now so glorious, Ac 7:55. And it will be according to God's wonderful power, when at the resurrection we shall be enabled to look upon Christ in his greatest glory. Behold the goodness and severity of God upon Paul: severity upon him in striking of him with blindness in his body; but goodness indeed to him, in enlightening, converting, and saving of his soul.

Acts 22:12

Ver. 12. *According to the law;* this is added to distinguish him from a proselyte, and to let them know that he had received the gospel, not from a convert out of Gentilism, (who though they admitted, yet they had a greater jealousy over, and less kindness for), but from one like unto themselves in all things.

Acts 22:13

Ver. 13. *Stood;* that in this posture he might more conveniently put his hands upon Paul; which we read that he now did, Ac 9:17, and was ordinarily done upon the miraculous curing of any.

The same hour; or, as Ac 9:18, *immediately.* The suddenness of the cures spake the power from whence they came: none but God saves and delivers after this manner.

Acts 22:14

Ver. 14. *The God of our fathers;* nothing could please the people better than to hear God so styled; for this they gloried in, above all things, that they and theirs had God to their Father, Joh 8:41. And nothing could better suit St. Paul's purpose, who would not lie under that scandal of endeavouring an apostacy from the Jewish religion, (for the gospel which he preached was but the substance and perfection of the law), or that he served or worshipped any other God than the God of Abraham.

Hath chosen thee; he hath taken thee, as by the hand, and by his wonderful providence brought thee into that condition in which thou art.

See that Just One; Christ is the Holy One, spotless and without blemish; God's *righteous servant*, Isa 53:11. But this is here the rather spoken, that he might convince them of their sin in putting our Lord to death: for though he sweetened his speech to them in what he might, he would not flatter them to their destruction; like a skilful surgeon, he would not heal too fast. Now Paul saw Christ with the eye of his mind, it being enlightened to believe in him; and he saw him in his journey also with the eyes of his body. Some read, $\tau\omicron$, not $\tau\omicron\nu$ $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$. And then Ananias tells St. Paul, that he was sent to show him that which was just and right in God's sight; which he, being blinded by his zeal for the law, could not perceive.

Acts 22:15

Ver. 15. *His witness;* the apostles were in a more special manner Christ's witnesses; as Lu 24:48 Joh 1:7 Ac 1:8; God giving them extraordinary gifts, not for their own sakes chiefly, but to profit others withal; as the tree bears not fruit, nor the field yields its increase, for itself.

Of what thou hast seen and heard; not that St. Paul's commission extended only to the publishing this wonder at his conversion: for he was intrusted with the gospel, and had that treasure in his earthen vessel: but this miracle is expressly mentioned, because it was unto him and others a great confirmation of the truths which he believed himself, and recommended to the faith of others. And therefore in the course of his ministry he mentions this frequently; as here in this place, and before king Agrippa, Ac 26:16 1Co 9:1; as also 1Co 15:8.

Acts 22:16

Ver. 16. *Wash away thy sins;* as washing causeth the spots to disappear, and to be as if they had not been, Isa 1:18; so does pardoning mercy, or remission of sins, which accompanieth baptism, as in the due receiver, Mt 3:11 1Pe 3:21,22. Where true faith is, together with the profession of it by baptism, there is salvation promised, Mr 16:16. In the mean while it is not the water, (for that only signifies), but it is the blood of Christ, which is thereby signified, that cleanseth us from our sins, as 1Jo 1:7. Yet sacraments are not empty and deceitful signs; but God accompanieth his own ordinances with his power from on high, and makes them effectual for those great things for which he instituted and appointed them.

Calling on the name of the Lord; Christ, to whom by baptism he was to be dedicated.

Acts 22:17

Ver. 17. This was probably about three years after his conversion, as Ga 1:18, and was one of the *visions and revelations* he makes mention of, 2Co 12:1.

A trance; a rapture and ecstasy, as Ac 10:10.

Acts 22:18

Ver. 18. *Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem;* this St. Paul takes notice of, that it might appear unto the Jews that he did not out of choice, or because he bare a grudge against them, decline them, and preach to the Gentiles.

For they will not receive thy testimony concerning me; as if Christ had said, They who were appointed unto life, and were curable, are already cured; but the rest who are hardened, nothing remains for them but utter destruction.

Acts 22:19

Ver. 19. This was Paul's objection which he made against the will of God concerning his leaving Jerusalem, and the Jews in it; and shows how apt carnal reason is in the very best men to set up itself against the wisdom of God, and to argue for what we fancy best to be done, or left undone. The sum of his reasoning is this, That he was most likely to do more good amongst the Jews than amongst the Gentiles, whither God was sending of him, because the Jews knew how zealous he had been not only to observe the law himself, but to procure its observation by all others; and that it was no less than a miracle which changed his mind about it. He shows also by this his great love unto the Jews, whom he would have staid with, had it been at his choice, and did only remove from by God's command.

Acts 22:20

Ver. 20. *Martyr* is a Greek word, that signifies a witness; and is here, and since by the ecclesiastical writers, appropriated unto such as suffer death for the testimony they give to the truths of God, or doctrine of the gospel.

Consenting unto his death; as Ac 8:1.

Of them that slew him; that is, of the witnesses against Stephen, as Ac 7:58. For the witnesses did slay him not only by the testimony which they

gave against him, but they were to be the first who stoned him.

Slew him; or murdered him.

Acts 22:21

Ver. 21. God repeats his command, and by that answers all Paul's reasonings; whatsoever the event be, whether the Gentiles will hear, or whether they will forbear, he must go unto them. When the will of God is manifest we must do it, whatsoever success we are like to have.

I will send thee far hence; this was verified; God sent Paul, and he went very far, as appears, Ac 9:15 Ro 15:19 Ga 1:17 2:8.

Acts 22:22

Ver. 22. *They gave him audience unto this word;* they had heard all the rest of St. Paul's discourse without any gainsaying, either thinking it did not much concern them whether it were true or false, or else, being convinced of the truth of it, they were silent; but when the mercy of God unto any but themselves is mentioned, they are not able to bear with it. Though they themselves refused the offers of God's mercy, yet they could not endure that it should be tendered unto others; especially that others should be preferred before them in the tendering of it.

Away with such a fellow from the earth; that is: Kill him; encouraging one another to so barbarous a murder, or exciting their rulers unto it.

Acts 22:23

Ver. 23. *Cast off their clothes;* they that stoned the blasphemers cast off their upper garments, that they might be the readier to do that execution, and carry the heavier stones; as Ac 7:58. They might also cast or rend them off, in sign of grief and detestation of Paul's (supposed) blasphemy.

Threw dust into the air; out of raging madness, having no stones at

present in that place to throw at him; or stamping on the ground first with their feet, and taking thence the loosened earth, threw it up, to show that Paul had sinned against heaven, and provoked the God who dwells there; and that he was not worthy to tread on the earth, which, as well as they could, they took from him.

Acts 22:24

Ver. 24. *The chief captain;* of whom, Ac 21:31.

The castle, or fort, called Antonia, as in Ac 21:34.

By scourging; or torturing, (being put to the question, as the French expression is, agreeable to the Greek word here used), which went no further than by scourging; which was for this purpose used upon the blessed body of our Saviour, Mt 27:26. The chief captain took it for granted that he was some notorious malefactor whom all cried out against injuriously, accounting *vox populi* to be *vox Dei*; and because in that confusion he could not know the certainty from his accusers, he would wrest a confession out of St. Paul, whom they accused.

Acts 22:25

Ver. 25. *They bound him with thongs;* they who were to be scourged were bound to a post or column (amongst the Jews) of a cubit and a half high, inclining downwards upon it; and these thongs were such wherewith they bound Paul to this column or pillar; and with such also they intended to scourge him.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? that is, it is not lawful to scourge a Roman; much less, uncondemned: See Poole on "Ac 16:37". This latter, the laws of no nation that was civilized did ever allow.

Acts 22:26

Ver. 26. There were several centurions under one chief captain, or chiliarch, as there are several captains under one colonel; and this centurion might be deputed to examine Paul. The reason why they presently desisted from binding Paul, and informed the commander-in-chief of what he had alleged, might be, because as it was very penal to challenge this privilege falsely, so it was treason for any to deny it to such to whom it was due.

Acts 22:27

Ver. 27. It is very reasonable that a good man should make use of such lawful privileges as the place in which he lives doth afford, and in his condition may be allowed. And it is part of that wisdom our Saviour does recommend, if it does not destroy the innocence of the dove, Mt 10:16.

Acts 22:28

Ver. 28. The historian relates, that the emperor Claudius sold this privilege to such foreigners as had not by any notable service merited to have it conferred upon them. At first it cost them very much to obtain it, as it did this chief captain; but afterwards it was more cheap and contemptible.

I was free born; though Paul was born of Hebrew parents, yet he was born at Tarsus, to the natives of which town Augustus had given this privilege, for the assistance that the citizens afforded him in his wars with Brutus and Cassius; or, as some will have it, for favouring of Julius Caesar, this privilege was granted unto that place by him: and they, on the other side, to continue the sense of his favour, caused their town to be called Juliopolis, or the city of Julius.

Acts 22:29

Ver. 29. *They departed from him,* who had bound him, and would have scourged him.

The chief captain also was afraid; the crime of breaking the privileges of

the Roman citizens being accounted no less than treason, and a sin, as they called it, against the majesty of that people; as afterwards it was as great an offence against their emperors.

Acts 22:30

Ver. 30. *He loosed him from his bands;* that he might not continue, after knowledge, in that (accounted) crime of binding a Roman citizen; as also that Paul might speak with the greater liberty and freedom in his own defence.

The chief priests; the chief of the four and twenty courses amongst the priests, according to their families, or such as in place and dignity did excel in the sanhedrim.

Acts 23:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 23:1-5 Paul, pleading his integrity, is smitten at the command of the high priest, whom he reproveth of injustice.

Ac 23:6-9 By declaring himself a Pharisee, and questioned for the hope of the resurrection, he causeth a division in the council.

Ac 23:10,11 He is carried back to the castle, and encouraged by the Lord in a vision.

Ac 23:12-22 A conspiracy against him is discovered to the chief captain,

Ac 23:23-35 who sendeth him under a guard with a letter to Felix the governor at Caesarea.

Ver. 1. *Said, Men and brethren;* acknowledging himself to have descended from the patriarchs as well as they; and bespeaks, as much as he could, their favour and attention.

I have lived in all good conscience; not that he thought himself to have been without sin or fault, for he acknowledges and bewails his captivity to

the law of sin, Ro 7:23,24; but that he was not conscious to himself of any notorious impiety (as sacrilege, which they accused him of); nay, he had not suffered willingly any sin to be, much less to reign, in him. And as for his persecuting of the Christians, he did it not to flatter any with it, or upon any sinister design whatsoever, but thinking to serve God by it, 1Ti 1:13.

Before God; in the sense of God's seeing of him, and whom St. Paul acknowledges to be the searcher and knower of the heart and conscience.

Acts 23:2

Ver. 2. *Them that stood by him;* the officers, probably.

To smite him on the mouth; thus Micaiah was smote by Zedekiah the false prophet, 1Ki 22:24, and Jeremiah by Pashur, Jer 20:2; and our blessed Lord escaped not this suffering and indignity, Joh 18:22. Now this was the rather inflicted on Paul, because of his protesting of his innocency, which did reflect upon the council, as being injurious; but it was indeed no more than what was necessary in his own just defence, and for the glory of the gospel.

Acts 23:3

Ver. 3. *Thou whited wall;* an excellent similitude to represent wicked men, especially hypocrites, by, who counterfeit Gdd's glory and worship, whilst they intend only their own profit or grandeur. Thus our Saviour compared the scribes and Pharisees unto whited sepulchres, Mt 23:27. Whited sepulchres and walls, though they seem fair and comely, have within nothing but rottenness and useless rubbish. Now these words are not to be looked upon as a curse or imprecation upon the high priest, which does not consist with the temper of the gospel; but they are rather to be taken as a prophecy or prediction, St. Paul having on occasion had the gift of prophecy amongst the other gifts of the Holy Ghost. And accordingly it is observed, that this high priest either died, or was put out of his place, soon after. And thus Paul's imprecation upon Alexander the coppersmith, mentioned 2Ti 4:14, is to be understood; as also several other curses (seemingly wished) by holy men, especially in the Psalms, as Ps

109:6,7, &c., and many other places, which are by no means for our imitation; neither were they spoken so much as the wishes or prayers of such as uttered them, as their prophecies or prections; which we know came to pass; as that now mentioned was fulfilled in the person of Judas.

Contrary to the law; it was contrary to all law, Divine and human, that any should be punished before that he was heard; and especially to their own judicial law, which in matters of this nature they were yet governed by under the Romans. Now the Jews were first to hear and inquire diligently, whether the matter any were accused of were true, before they might give sentence, or inflict any punishment upon them, De 17:4.

Acts 23:4

Ver. 4. These partial parasites take no notice of the real injury done unto Paul by the high priest, and readily catch at the seeming calumny spoke by Paul against him.

Acts 23:5

Ver. 5. *I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest;* Paul does not here ironically say this, because the high priest had, contrary to his place and office, caused him to be smitten; but either:

1. Because he knew now no high priest on earth, but only Christ in heaven to be our High Priest, Heb 8:1. Or rather:
2. Because the high priests being so often changed, (insomuch as in one year sometimes they have had three), and they being in a confusion at this time, and not meeting or sitting in their due place and order, Paul might very well be ignorant who that was, who in such a multitude had commanded that they should smite him.

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people; the scripture here cited by St. Paul, is Ex 22:28.

Acts 23:6

Ver. 6. *I am a Pharisee;* in his former profession, opinion, and conversation; and now also in the points that were controverted betwixt them: and St. Paul, with his dove like innocency, does in this but make use of the serpentine subtlety, to preserve himself, and to gain credit unto the truths of the gospel.

The son of a Pharisee; the son of Pharisees, in the plural; either for several descents his ancestors had been of that sect; or that both his father and his mother were of it.

Of the hope and resurrection; or, for the hope of the resurrection; an hendyadis: although he did not agree with the Pharisees in all their opinions, yet in this he did; and the resurrection was the common subject he preached upon: and the gospel does give us the best proof and evidence of it; insomuch that Paul was taxed for preaching *Jesus and the resurrection*, Ac 17:18; and unless there be a resurrection, his preaching was vain, and his faith vain, 1Co 15:13,14.

Acts 23:7

Ver. 7. Not only of the common people, or standers-by, but of the senators and judges; God by this means dividing and infatuating of them, that they could not bring about Paul's intended destruction.

Acts 23:8

Ver. 8. *The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection;* against this our Saviour argued, Mt 22:23, &c.

Neither angel; it seems strange that they should deny that there were angels, whereas they owned the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, in which mention is made frequently of angels: but it seems that they understood those places allegorically, either for good instincts, or apparitions caused by God to manifest his mind by them unto men, wresting those places to their own destruction.

Nor spirit; they denied the existence of the soul of man, as different from the crasis and temperament of his body; and therefore believed that the soul perished with the body. Nay, they were so far from believing there was any spirit, that they held, blasphemously, that God himself was corporeal.

But the Pharisees confess both; the three things here mentioned, which the Sadducees denied, may be well spoken of as but two, viz. the resurrection and the existence of spirits. When men sin with much obstinacy against supernatural light, God justly withdraws from them even natural light, and they are, punished (as the Egyptians were) with such *darkness which may be felt*, Ex 10:21.

Acts 23:9

Ver. 9. Scribe is a name denoting an office or place; and *the scribes* were men skilled in the law.

A spirit or an angel; some take the latter to be exegetical of the former, and that by a spirit is only meant an angel; by such messengers God many times sending his messages to the children of men. Yet others by *spirit* understand prophetic revelation, and the Spirit of prophecy, which was expected to be shed abroad in large measures about that time; as appears, Joh 7:39.

Let us not fight against God: See Poole on "Ac 5:39".

Acts 23:10

Ver. 10. *A great dissension:* feuds about pretended religion are usually among all men very sharp, because their opinions, being the issues of their own brains, are more beloved than their children, the fruit of their bodies.

Commanded the soldiers to go down; from the fort or castle, unto which there was an ascent or stair, to go up and down by.

Acts 23:11

Ver. 11. *The Lord stood by him;* in a revelation appearing inwardly to his mind; which is the rather thought to have been so, because it is here said to have been in the night; but whether by vision or revelation, it is all one as to this purpose, and neither were unfrequent unto Paul, 2Co 12:1.

Be of good cheer: so true it is what our Saviour had promised and foretold, Joh 16:33, *In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.*

Acts 23:12

Ver. 12. If they did not kill Paul before they did eat or drink any more, they wished that they might become a *cherem*, or anathema; as Jericho and the inhabitants thereof were, being devoted to utter ruin and destruction. Or, if they did not execute this their wicked design, they would yield themselves to be anathematized, or excommunicated, as those that had broken their pact or agreement.

Acts 23:13

Ver. 13. They made themselves sure (they thought) of killing Paul; there were above forty to one. The church's enemies are unanimous and resolute. As David formerly, so might now Paul say, *They that are mad against me are sworn against me*, Ps 102:8.

Acts 23:14

Ver. 14. *They came to the chief priests and elders,* whose place and office it was to have dissuaded such an abominable murder: *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge*, Mal 2:7. And they could not but have been guilty of the blood of St. Paul, had it been shed, who by encouraging the design became accessory unto it. But they had drank blood very largely before now; viz. the blood of St. Stephen, and the blood of our Saviour; and it is

no wonder that they thirst for more: such wild beasts, (rather than men), when they have once tasted of blood, are never satisfied with it. But at what a low ebb was religion, when the chief priests themselves combine with assassins!

Acts 23:15

Ver. 15. *Ye with the council;* the chief priests are to join with the council in this desire to the chief captain; for they had no authority to command him.

As though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: the plot against Paul's life was laid very deep, and not easily to be discovered; it being usual to send for prisoners to re-examine them, especially when religion and the public peace are concerned, as they pretended that here they were.

Or ever he come near: the space between the castle and the place where the council met, being considerable, it gave the greater advantage to the conspirators.

Acts 23:16

Ver. 16. *Paul's sister's son,* who is thought to have been one of Paul's company: but the hatred against Paul by the Jews being so general, because of his (supposed) profaning of the temple, they were not so curious who they spake to of this confederacy and design. Or rather, there is no counsel against God: the very *birds of the air,* if need were, *shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter,* Ec 10:20. *For he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision,* Ps 2:4.

Acts 23:17

Ver. 17. The chief captain having the command of a thousand soldiers, there were ten captains under him: one of these Paul intrusts with his

message to the chief captain, not making any particular request unto the chief captain, supposing him to have so much of the Roman justice in him, that when he understood his case, he would provide for his safety; which he was not mistaken in.

Acts 23:18

Ver. 18. The centurion took Paul's kinsman, and went with him, as he was desired, unto the chief captain, that there might be no mistake, but that he might hear all out of the young man's own mouth, and be the more affected with it.

The prisoner, or, the chained; for it was customary to chain their prisoners for their greater security. And God is now remembering of Paul in his bonds.

Acts 23:19

Ver. 19. He *took him by the hand,* as a token of courtesy; these commanders showing an excellent example of humanity and pity towards their inferiors and supposed criminals. There are several reasons given of this great civility here used, as the chief captain's naturally meek temper; or his policy to satisfy for the injury he had done to Paul, in binding him, being a Roman; nay, some think that he, as well as Felix the governor, hoped for money to be given unto him, Ac 24:26: but all these are but guesses. It is sure, whatever any of these causes were or were not, God is to be seen and acknowledged in it, who hath the hearts of all men in his bands, and turneth them as it pleaseth him, Pr 21:1.

Acts 23:20

Ver. 20. *The Jews;* both the council, and those forty and upwards spoken of, in Ac 23:12,13.

Acts 23:21

Ver. 21. *Do not thou yield unto them;* this the young man desires out of his care for his uncle's (Paul's) preservation, as also touched with the horror of the fact if it should have been executed; and howsoever, by this means he delivers his own soul, having done his utmost to hinder it.

Now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee; the match is laid, the hand is as it were lifted up, nothing is wanting to Paul's destruction but the chief captain's consent, which the Jews assuredly expected, it being but a small courtesy to grant them, to examine a prisoner, especially such a one as upon their complaint was committed in a case cognizable by them: but, *Deus e machina, Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us,* Isa 8:10.

Acts 23:22

Ver. 22. The chief captain shows by this his care, both for St. Paul, and for the young man too; for had it been known that he had discovered their conspiracy, they would have sought his life, and might divers ways have taken it away; and as for Paul, being disappointed in this, they would have made other attempts against him.

Acts 23:23

Ver. 23. *Make ready two hundred soldiers;* two hundred were the usual proportion or number of men which were under the two centurions; so that they were commanded to have their companies in readiness.

And horsemen threescore and ten; horsemen being usually added for defence of their foot soldiers.

Spearmen, as they are called here, were such as handled, or threw, their javelins or darts with their right hand. Some think them to have been such as our serjeants, who take men into custody; others, that they were soldiers raised out of foreign nations, and lightly armed.

At the third hour of the night; partly because in those hot countries it is very troublesome to travel by day, and partly for the greater security of Paul and such as went with him.

Acts 23:24

Ver. 24. What a strong guard and retinue does God by his providence get together for the safe guarding of Paul! None of all these intended the least good unto him; but God can make use of them as effectually as if they had had the greatest good will for him.

Acts 23:25

Ver. 25. It is not certain whether the following words were the letter itself, or only the sum or contents of the letter.

Acts 23:26

Ver. 26. *Most excellent;* a title given to persons of great eminency, as, Lu 1:3, it is given to Theophilus, unto whom also this book of the Acts is inscribed, Ac 1:1.

This *Felix* was brother to one Pallas, who together with Narcissus (the other of the emperor Claudius's favourites) managed all public affairs, and are by the historians branded for all the mischiefs of that calamitous time. This Felix and his brother Pallas were born slaves, and manumitted by Claudius, and were such as are exalted; as often Providence will show the power it hath in pulling down and setting up whom it pleaseth.

Acts 23:27

Ver. 27. He represents Paul's case fairly and indifferently, God overruling his heart and pen; but withal, he conceals his binding of him, and instead thereof magnifies his care of him, being a Roman; and probably being touched with a sense of his fault, he represents Paul's case the better.

Acts 23:28

Ver. 28. The council understanding those questions (as he thought) best, and having yet retained some power from the Romans concerning them.

Acts 23:29

Ver. 29. According to the Roman laws, or imperial constitutions. That he undervalued the great things in question concerning our blessed Saviour's death and resurrection, and the whole gospel, it is not to be wondered at; he spake and wrote as a pagan; and God overruled his very slighting of these controversies for Paul's advantage, he being by that means preserved from the rage of his enemies.

Acts 23:30

Ver. 30. *The Jews laid wait for the man;* this reflects upon the Jews, as being seditious, and ready to attempt against the government; as also gives the governor an account why he troubled him with this prisoner, and why he sent so great a guard with him.

Farewell; the usual prayer wherewith they ended their letters, as in Ac 15:29.

Acts 23:31

Ver. 31. Not that they came to Antipatris by night; but they began that journey by night, as Ac 23:23, and went as much of it as they could by night, for fear of being discovered, and attempted upon by the Jews.

This *Antipatris* was built by Herod the Great, and so called in memory of his father Antipater; it was about seventeen leagues from Jerusalem, pleasantly situated upon the Mediterranean Sea, between Joppa and Caesarea.

Acts 23:32

Ver. 32. The footmen returned to the castle or fort of Antonia in Jerusalem, from whence they did set out, there being no fear of any such design upon Paul at that distance from Jerusalem, which the horsemen might not easily avoid.

Acts 23:33

Ver. 33. *Caesarea;* Caesarea Stratonis, as it was called, to difference it from the other.

They *presented Paul*, as being their charge, whom they had safely kept, and now delivered according to appointment.

Acts 23:34

Ver. 34. *He asked of what province he was;* Palestine and the countries thereabouts being divided into several heptarchies or jurisdictions, the governors were very loth to infringe the limits of one another.

Of Cilicia; a country in Asia Minor, in which was Tarsus where Paul was born, and from his birth place he is reckoned to belong to that province.

Acts 23:35

Ver. 35. *I will hear thee* thoroughly, the whole matter, as the preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$, here used, does import; and as it is commanded unto all judges, De 1:16.

When thine accusers are also come; for this the dictate of nature did teach the very heathen, that both parties ought to be heard before anything were determined: *Qui aliquid statuerit parte inaudita altera:* That whosoever pronounced any sentence before both sides were fully heard, were the

sentence never so just, yet the judge was unjust.

Herod's judgment-hall; a palace where the governors were lodged, built by Herod the Great, when, in honour, or flattery, of Augustus, after he had fortified the city, he caused it to be called Cesarea.

Acts 24:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 24:1-9 Paul is accused before Felix by Tertullus in the name of the Jews.

Ac 24:10-21 He answereth in defence of his life and doctrine.

Ac 24:22,23 The hearing is deferred.

Ac 24:24,25 Paul preaching freely before the governor and his wife; Felix trembleth.

Ac 24:26,27 Felix hopeth for a bribe to release Paul, but in vain; and going out of his office leaveth him bound.

Ver. 1. *After five days,* from the time that Paul was come to Caesarea: the malice and fury of the persecutors was very great, they stick not at any travail and pains to do mischief; and surely we ought to be as earnest in doing good, or their zeal will condemn us.

A certain orator; a lawyer to form the indictment against Paul, or to aggravate his fault, and to desire judgment upon him. Such advocates usually were the chiefest orators, as Demosthenes in Greece, and Cicero at Rome; and Tertullus seems to have been a crafts master, whom the Jews hired to draw up an accusation against Paul.

Acts 24:2

Ver. 2. *When he was called forth;* when Paul was sent for to appear, being under the custody of the soldiers who brought him to Caesarea.

Seeing that by thee, &c.: it being one of the rules of art, which an orator seldom forgets, to endeavour to obtain the judge's favour, Tertullus commends Felix, who indeed had delivered that country from some robbers (like banditti, or moss troopers) that did infest it; but is commended for little else amongst the historians, who brand him for extraordinary covetousness and cruelty.

Acts 24:3

Ver. 3. *We accept it;* we commend and admire it. It is most certain, that inferiors enjoy many benefits by the means of their governors, who bear the burden for the people, watching and caring for them; and that a bad government is better than none; and therefore not only Tertullus, (who may well be thought to speak out of flattery), but St. Paul himself, Ac 24:10, speaks with great respect unto Felix.

Acts 24:4

Ver. 4. *Be not further tedious unto thee;* hinder thee, or take thee away from other occasions: this is another artifice of an orator, to promise brevity, especially when he speaks to men of employment or business.

Acts 24:5

Ver. 5. *A pestilent fellow;* a pest, or plague, the abstract being put for the concrete, as implying, that no word he could use could properly signify the mischievousness of that man, whom he falsely charges with *sedition* (not that the Jews would have disliked him for that, had it been true, but) to make St. Paul the more odious, and in danger of his life.

The sect, or heresy, which in common use was then taken more favourably, for any doctrine.

Of the Nazarenes; of the Christians; for they who out of Judea were called Christians, in Judea were called Nazarenes. The Jews did call our Saviour and his followers thus, it being accounted an ignominious term; and they

who were born at Nazareth disgraced by it, as appears by Nathanael's question, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Joh 1:46. Yet this name is most glorious, as imposed upon our Saviour by God himself, Mt 2:23.

Acts 24:6

Ver. 6. *Hath gone about to profane the temple;* by bringing into the temple (as they falsely suggested) uncircumcised persons: but Tertullus does not mention this, or show in what Paul had profaned the temple; for Felix himself being uncircumcised, it would have reflected upon him too much, to be accounted, by the Jews, amongst such profane ones, as were enough to defile their temple and worship.

Would have judged according to our law; they had a law, it seems, whereby it was death to bring strangers into the temple; and some think, that by the Romans they had yet power allowed them to put it in execution: See Poole on "Ac 21:28". And this was their aim all along, viz. to take away his life.

Acts 24:7

Ver. 7. So they call the bringing of soldiers, to hinder them from acting violently; and as far as they dare, they accuse Lysias, whom they thought not to favour them.

Acts 24:8

Ver. 8. *By examining of whom;* not that the Jews would have any witnesses produced, and fairly examined; but the pronoun being singular, it refers to Paul, whom Tertullus would have examined, and put to the question, or racked, that he might confess what they would have had him guilty of: or it is as if he had said, (so impudent is impiety), that Paul himself could not deny (if he were asked) the accusation which was brought against him.

Acts 24:9

Ver. 9. The high priest, and the rest of the senate that came with him, acknowledged (as the manner was) that Tertullus had spoken their sense, and what they had to say; and some think that this their assent went further, and that they offered themselves as witnesses to the truth of what he had said.

Acts 24:10

Ver. 10. *Beckoned unto him,* by some sign with his hand. Though St. Paul would not flatter Felix with notorious untruths, as Tertullus had done, yet he speaks very respectfully, and mentions his continuance in the government; the rather, because, if he had been so seditious a person as Tertullus would have represented him to have been, Felix could not but have heard of him, and of any mischief that had been done by him.

Acts 24:11

Ver. 11. *That thou mayest understand,* either by what thou hast heard already, or by what the witnesses, when examined, will declare.

There are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem; there were but twelve days since Paul's coming to Jerusalem; seven of them he had spent there, until the time of his purification was accomplished; and the other five days he had been in custody, and at Caesarea: by which St. Paul proves how unlikely it was, that in so short a time he, being a stranger in those parts, should raise any tumults.

For to worship; he being so far from designing any mischief, that he only intended to worship God.

Acts 24:12

Ver. 12. *Disputing,* or discoursing. Although it seems not to have been

unlawful, after the sacrifices were offered, to discourse about the meaning of any place in the law or the prophets; for thus our Saviour is said to have heard and asked questions of the doctors in the temple, Lu 2:46; yet St. Paul would hereby show how far he was from doing aught that was unlawful, in that he had forborne to go to the utmost of what might have been lawful.

Acts 24:13

Ver. 13. They could not prove either of those crimes they charged him with, viz.

1. Raising of sedition; or,
2. Profaning of the temple, which they had accused him of.

Acts 24:14

Ver. 14. *But this I confess;* he makes here a good confession, and is indeed a follower of Christ, who *before Pontius Pilate* is said to have *witnessed a good confession*, 1Ti 6:13.

Heresy: this word is of a middle signification, being sometimes taken in a good sense, as Ac 26:5, and thus the Greeks did use it sometimes when they spake of their philosophers; though the Jews called the doctrine of Christ so in the worst acceptation of the word; which doctrine this blessed apostle is not ashamed to own. Yet he does withal truly assert, that he worshipped no other God than the God of his fathers, but worshipped him whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (whom they so much gloried in) had worshipped; and that he had no other religion than what was taught in the law and the prophets, from whom they themselves had received theirs.

Acts 24:15

Ver. 15. *Which they themselves also allow;* the wiser sort amongst them, the Pharisees, (though bad was the best), and yet they were not for this

opinion persecuted by the Sadducees.

A resurrection of the dead; the resurrection of the dead is again owned as the chief matter Paul preached upon, and in which all his other doctrines and opinions did centre, it being indeed the foundation of that faith and manners, 1Co 15:13, of that belief and holy life, which St. Paul preached upon.

Both of the first and unjust; that both sorts, even that all such, rise again at the last day, we have assurance given, Mt 25:32,33 Joh 5:28,29; which was also foretold expressly unto the Jews, Da 12:2, though it hath found so many since amongst them that have denied it.

Acts 24:16

Ver. 16. *And herein;* or at this time, and in this business; or for this reason, to wit, because I believe the resurrection.

I exercise myself; I am altogether taken up with it; this is my one thing necessary, Lu 10:42.

To have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men; that I may not offend God or man in any thing; but that I may be without blame at the judgment seat of God or man. They only are blessed and happy, whose belief concerning another world makes them endeavour after holiness in this world.

Acts 24:17

Ver. 17. *After many years;* it is thought fourteen years, which we find mentioned, Ga 2:1; and therefore the more unlike to have any seditious practices there, where he had so little acquaintance.

I came to bring alms to my nation; and he was so far from designing mischief to his nation, that his charity to them put him upon this journey.

And offerings; which in his condescension to the Jews, and hoping to gain

their good will, he brought according to the law; as [Ac 21:26](#). For whilst Jerusalem and the temple stood, those offerings were in a sort permitted; but God, in that general destruction of both city and temple, put an end to them all.

Acts 24:18

Ver. 18. *Whereupon;* upon my bringing up those alms now mentioned; whilst I was employed for the good of my countrymen who now accuse me.

Purified in the temple; performing all things which the law did require of Nazarites, or those who had made a vow, and in which their legal purification did consist.

Neither with multitude, nor with tumult; the multitude was of their own gathering together; and the tumult, if any, was made by themselves. It is no new thing that Christians should be charged with those mischiefs which their enemies themselves did to make them odious.

Acts 24:19

Ver. 19. *Who ought to have been here;* the Jews of Asia, who had caused all this stir, having seen Trophimus with Paul in the streets of Jerusalem, and maliciously presuming that he had brought him into the temple with him. Now these were the only proper witnesses, who might therefore be now absent, because they could testify nothing to the purpose, and when they thought seriously upon it, their consciences might accuse them for the clamour they had made against the apostle, [Ac 21:28](#). As for the other Jews, they could only testify, by hearsay, which is not sufficient.

Acts 24:20

Ver. 20. St. Paul is willing to allow the present Jews' testimony about such things as they could know, having themselves heard and seen them; which was what passed in the council when Paul was brought before it, [Ac](#)

23:1,9. The sense of a Deity was more quick upon men; and they might then be trusted under the security of an oath.

Acts 24:21

Ver. 21. As if he had said, Let them object, if they can, any other fault: but if this be a fault, to hold the resurrection of the dead, I do acknowledge it, and there need no other proof concerning it: not that he held any evil to be in this opinion; but he speaks ironically, knowing that they durst not renew their quarrel about it.

Acts 24:22

Ver. 22. Some understand by *that way*:

1. The custom or manner of the priests to calumniate Paul; or:
2. The religion of Moses, and how and in what it differed from the religion of Christ: either of which Felix might know, and by either of them conclude Paul to be innocent. But:
3. By *that way*, as frequently in this book, Ac 9:2, and Ac 22:4, is meant the Christian religion itself, which Felix, not only from Paul's apology, and Lysias's account of the whole matter, but by divers other means, (it having made so great a noise in the world), could not be ignorant of.

Some read, he deferred them till he could have a more perfect knowledge of that way, and till Lysias, the chief captain, should come down. For there being two things laid to Paul's charge;

1. His evil opinions in matters of religion; and:
2. His causing a sedition: as to the first, Felix would not determine it till he had had better information about those things which St. Paul was accused for to hold. As to the latter, it being matter of fact, which Lysias was present at, he would hear his testimony or evidence, looking upon him as one indifferent and unconcerned between them.

Acts 24:23

Ver. 23. *To let him have liberty;* not so confined as to be kept in a dungeon, or more inward prison; but to have the liberty of the prison, yet so as with a chain about him; as appears, Ac 26:29 Ac 28:20.

Acquaintance; relations or disciples; for there was a church at Caesarea, Ac 10:48 21:8. When it is expedient for us, God can add the comforts of these outward enjoyments, relations and friends, unto us; and that his and our enemies shall contribute towards it.

Acts 24:24

Ver. 24. *Felix came with his wife;* having been out of town to meet and conduct his wife.

Drusilla; who was daughter of Herod the Great, and sister of that Agrippa of whom mention is made in the two following chapters; a most libidinous woman, who had left her husband Aziz, and, whilst he yet lived, was married to this Felix, who was taken with her beauty. Yet Paul preached *the faith in Christ*, the gospel, unto such, not knowing what persons, or in what hour, God might call.

Acts 24:25

Ver. 25. These two, *righteousness* and *temperance*, the Christian religion do indispensably require; and all true worship without these, will not make up our most holy religion, or give to any the title of a religious or a holy man. But Paul chose rather to discourse of those than any other virtues, because Felix was most defective in them. He would lay his plaster where there was a sore, though it pained the patient, and he should get little thanks for his labour. Had great men but such faithful preachers, it might contribute very much to hinder them in their career of sin, and by that means help to mend the world.

Temperance; or continence; the want of which is charged upon both these great persons, being taxed by historians for adultery; so that Paul preaches here as John Baptist did once to Herod, very suitably, though not gratefully. Yet in the discharge of his duty he meets with no trouble, not so much as a reproach, which probably the sense of the judgment to come might contribute to.

Judgment to come; whatsoever is present, this is certainly to come: and the secret reflections that wicked men have upon it in the midst of their fullest enjoyments, mingle fears and terrors with them. Hence their *surda vulnera*, misgivings and inward guilt; as its contrary, *the peace of God, passeth all understanding.*

Go thy why for this time; Felix, not liking such discourse, the subject being too quick and searching for him, put it off longer. And so men put off the consideration of their duties, and of the judgment that will pass upon every one according unto what he hath done in the flesh, till the Judge be, as it were, set, and their case called.

Acts 24:26

Ver. 26. This speaks the charge to be true that the historians give of Felix concerning his covetousness; for taking hold of that part of Paul's accusation, Ac 24:5, that he was the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, he supposed that, there being so many thousands of them, they would give large sums for the life and liberty of this their supposed captain. This did speak Felix (according to his birth) to be of a servile and base spirit, that for money could transgress the laws of God, and the Roman laws too.

Acts 24:27

Ver. 27. *After two years,* either from Paul's being in bonds, which history St. Luke is here setting down; or, as others, after Felix had been governor two years over Judea; for that St. Paul speaks, Ac 24:10, is not thought to have been true as to this place, though he had governed the neighbouring parts some years before.

The Jews had accused Felix unto the emperor for his barbarous cruelty and exactions, insomuch that had it not been for his brother Pallas (a great favourite) he had lost his life: yet he did not wholly escape punishment, but was sent bound by Festus, his successor, unto Nero. *Sic transit gloria mundi*; and, *Man being in honour continueth not*.

Acts 25:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 25:1-7 The Jews accuse Paul to Festus, first at Jerusalem, and afterwards at Caesarea.

Ac 25:8-12 He answereth for himself, and appealeth to Caesar; his appeal is admitted.

Ac 25:13-22 Festus being visited by king Agrippa openeth the matter to him, who desireth to hear Paul.

Ac 25:23-27 Paul is brought forth; Festus declareth he found nothing in him worthy of death.

Ver. 1. Province; so the Romans called any country which they had conquered with their arms, and unto which they sent a governor, which at this time was Festus, being now set over Judea in Felix's room.

Caesarea had been the place of residence for the Roman governors, by reason of its strength and situation, in Ac 23:23.

Acts 25:2

Ver. 2. The chief of the Jews; the same who are called the elders, in Ac 24:1.

Informed him against Paul; continued their accusation and prosecution of Paul. So restless is the rage and enmity, the adversaries of truth have against the professors of it.

Acts 25:3

Ver. 3. *Desired favour*; though it seems to have been but justice, that they might be allowed to try Paul for such crimes as were within their cognizance; yet that they might the more easily obtain their desire, they beg it as a favour.

Laying wait in the way to kill him; which did worse become magistrates and priests than any men, to act thus against the law of nature, and to be sure also against the law of the land, to hire ruffians to assassinate Paul.

Acts 25:4

Ver. 4. It is most probable that Festus had been informed by Felix of the Jews' malice against Paul; for Felix having been accused by the Jews unto the emperor, might be supposed to have recriminated wheresoever he had any opportunity; and in all the time of his government they were not guilty of a worse fact than their design against Paul, it being sedition, and intended murder of one who had the privilege of a Roman citizen.

He himself would depart shortly thither; the governors kept their courts wheresoever they came.

Acts 25:5

Ver. 5. *Which among you are able*; fit to prosecute Paul in your behalf; as Tertullus was, whom the Jews had carried with them formerly, Ac 24:1.

Go down with me; because Jerusalem was in a mountainous part of the country, and much of it built upon a hill.

Wickedness; the word properly signifies a foolish thing; but it is also taken for a wicked thing; all sin being folly, and grace wisdom; as they are frequently called in Scripture, though the world hath another opinion of them, many abhorring to be accounted fools, and yet are not though they appear most wicked.

Acts 25:6

Ver. 6. *More than ten days;* the margin gives an account of a diverse reading, unto which might be added another, viz. eight or ten days; which reading many follow, and is according unto the usual expression of such a short space of time, which need not to be exactly set down. Thus though God hath provided so, as there is little or no variety in setting down those truths or doctrines in Scripture which concern faith and manners, or our believing and holy living; yet in circumstances which (though they pertain to complete the history or genealogies in Scripture) are not necessary to be so exactly known, God left them not so, designed to exercise us in this state, wherein *we know* but *in part*, \ 1Co 13:9. Fundamental truths are not of such a depth but a lamb may wade or walk in them; but there are less material things of such a profundity, that an elephant may swim in them, and men of the highest understanding and deepest reach must cry out, ω Βαθος.

Acts 25:7

Ver. 7. *When he was come;* the judge sat, and the prisoner brought.

The Jews which came down from Jerusalem; his accusers, which were many, and came with a full cry against him, *stood round about* him, or about the judgment seat.

Many and grievous complaints; what these accusations were, appears in the next verse by Paul's answer; but they could not demonstrate them, or make them evident; and if it were sufficient to accuse, no man could be innocent.

Acts 25:8

Ver. 8. Paul answers unto the three crimes which he was charged with:

1. He had not offended against the law, having been always a religious observer of it: nor:

2. Against the temple, which he went into devoutly, and upon a religious account: nor:
3. Against Caesar; having never taught any rebellion, nor said or done any thing against his government.

Acts 25:9

Ver. 9. *Willing to do the Jews a pleasure;* as his predecessor, Felix, before him, Ac 24:27, to gain popular applause, and the good will of that nation; especially Felix having been displaced upon the complaint of the Jews against him.

Answered, or spake to *Paul;* as Ac 3:12.

Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, &c.: Festus apparently inclines to favour the Jews, though he does not command, but ask this of Paul; he being privileged as a Roman, could not against his will be forced to acknowledge the Jews for competent judges.

Acts 25:10

Ver. 10. Paul might justly suspect his judges, and the place where they would have him judged, and also his journey thither, knowing with what difficulty, and not without a great guard, he came from thence.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat; he was now before Caesar's tribunal, whose vicegerent Festus was; and he only ought to judge a Roman citizen.

As thou very well knowest; Festus might know that Paul had done the Jews no wrong, from the relation Felix had made unto him, as also from such as were with Felix when Paul's case was heard.

Acts 25:11

Ver. 11. *If I be an offender;* if I have injured the Jews, and my fault be *worthy of death*, such as by law deserves death, I beg no favour.

No man may deliver me unto them; according to law, (which the Romans did punctually observe), before sentence was passed.

I appeal unto Caesar: it was lawful for any that had that privilege of the Roman citizens, to appeal; neither might they be tried against their wills in any province out of Rome. Now Paul might appeal unto Caesar:

1. To make Caesar more favourable unto himself, and to other Christians.
2. Because he thought it more safe for himself and for the church.
3. He was in part admonished to do it by Christ himself, who had told him that he must bear witness of him at Rome, Ac 23:11.

Acts 25:12

Ver. 12. *Conferred with the council;* either of the Jews, and those of the sanhedrim, that he might inform them of the law or custom of the Romans, and how that he could not but admit of St. Paul's appeal; or with his own council; it being usual with the Roman presidents to do nothing of moment without the advice of their council, or assistants.

Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Or without an interrogation: Thou hast appealed unto Caesar; which Festus was glad of, that without danger on the one hand, or ill will on the other, he might get rid of that difficult business.

Acts 25:13

Ver. 13. This *Agrippa* is called by Josephus, the younger, and was the son of Herod Agrippa, or Agrippa the Great, who in this book of the Acts is called Herod, whose death is mentioned, Ac 12:23. But this Agrippa was brother to Drusilla and Bernice, here spoken of, and lived in incest with her, whom Juvenal in his satire speaks of:

Barbarus incestae dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.

Acts 25:14

Ver. 14. *Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king;* either amongst common discourse, or matter of novelty, and for the strangeness of it, or for his advice about it. Howsoever, by this means the wickedness of the Jews was published, and the safety of St. Paul provided for, and God's design of publishing the gospel at Rome itself furthered.

Acts 25:15

Ver. 15. To wit, judgment of death upon Paul, that he might be sentenced according to the crimes they had laid against him; $\delta\iota\kappa\eta$ being put for $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\eta$. Neither do they at all mind that St. Paul's case was not yet heard; they would rather have had him condemned unheard, as they had gotten our Saviour to be condemned, though the judge declared that he found no fault in him, Lu 23:4; which their unjust desire appears by Festus's answer.

Acts 25:16

Ver. 16. To condemn any man *indicta causa*, without sufficient cause alleged and proved, is not only against the laws of the Romans, but of the Jews, De 17:4; nay, against the law of nature and of all nations. Yet malice had so far blinded the enemies of St. Paul, that they go about such things as a heathen reproves, and the very light of nature condemns.

Acts 25:17

Ver. 17. Festus had gratified the Jews in what lawfully he might, not detaining them at charges from their habitations: and that not only commends Festus's own justice, but Paul's innocence; for if Paul had not appeared guiltless, he would have left him to the rage of the Jews, whom he desired to gratify what he could.

Acts 25:18

Ver. 18. For Festus, knowing how Paul had been prosecuted by the Jews before Felix, and what charge they had been at, and what journeys they had made about him, could not think less than that he was a capital offender.

Acts 25:19

Ver. 19. *Superstition;* so this heathen governor profanely calls the religion and worship of God's own institution, and that in the presence of Agrippa and Bernice, who were both Jews, or, at least, brought up amongst them.

To be alive; to have been raised again from the dead; acknowledging, with them, that he had been indeed dead.

Acts 25:20

Ver. 20. Festus pretends, that he knew not by what rule those cases were to be decided, nor before what judges; whether before himself or the Jewish sanhedrim. But this is only his pretension: the true cause why he would not acquit Paul, though he knew him to be innocent, we read, Ac 25:9, viz. that he might *do the Jews a pleasure*. He asked Paul this question, *Whether he would go to Jerusalem?* But with a resolution to have sent him whether he would or not, had he not appealed; but then he durst not: for in certain cases none could hinder appeals, from any judge, to the people in the former times, or to their emperor in the latter times.

Acts 25:21

Ver. 21. *Augustus*: the emperor who now reigned, and to whom Paul appealed, was Nero, who was called Augustus; this title being at first appropriated to Octavius, who succeeded Julius Caesar; but out of honour unto him, or because of its signification, it became an appellative, and was given unto all the emperors successively: nay, the emperor of Germany to this day is called *Semper Augustus*.

Caesar; as from Octavius the emperors of Rome had the name of Augustus, so from the first emperor, Julius, they have the name of Caesars. This word Caesar, which was the proper name of the first emperor, is, in acknowledgment of him, made an appellative to all his successors.

Acts 25:22

Ver. 22. Agrippa being well acquainted with the Jewish religion, if not a Jew, could not but have heard of our Saviour, his doctrine, death, and resurrection; and yet makes this desire but out of curiosity; as Herod desired to hear John Baptist, Mr 6:20, and to see our Saviour, Lu 23:8.

Acts 25:23

Ver. 23. *With great pomp*; the state, attire, and retinue used in this solemnity is much undervalued by the term the Holy Ghost here gives it (*φαντασια*); intimating, that all worldly glory is but in opinion and appearance merely, and that as a show it passeth away.

Paul was brought forth; here is a great difference indeed between these great persons thus adorned and accompanied on the one side, and Paul, the prisoner, (*δεσμιος*, the chained, as he is called, Ac 23:18), on the other side; yet holy Paul, with great reason, prefers his condition before theirs. He does not desire to partake with them in their ease and splendour, but with Christ in his disgrace and sufferings, Php 3:10.

Acts 25:24

Ver. 24. Well might Paul be aghast, to be friendless in so great a multitude, and to be shown and pointed at as a monster, being *made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men*, as 1Co 4:9. But he found surely the benefit and efficacy of that promise, Mt 28:20, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Acts 25:25

Ver. 25. The calumny of the Jews adds to the reputation of St. Paul: so many enemies, and so long in finding or making a fault that might reach his life, and yet to be disappointed! Paul and his religion are vindicated by the testimony of Lysias, the chief captain, Ac 23:29, and of Felix, the governor, Ac 24:25, and here by Festus, as afterwards by Agrippa too, Ac 26:32. So mighty is truth and innocence, that they do prevail sooner or later.

Acts 25:26

Ver. 26. *My lord;* Nero, the present emperor, whose deputy Festus was in this province; though some of the former emperors refused this name, as savouring of too much arbitratiness, the latter did accept of it.

Specially before thee; Agrippa, being brought up in the knowledge of the Jewish law, though it was not his business to judge Paul's case, yet he might instruct and inform the judge about it.

Acts 25:27

Ver. 27. So great a clamour, so hot a pursuit, and yet after all this the judge (who would willingly have condemned Paul, and gratified the Jews) knows not wherefore all this stir had been: but the more must he have been self-condemned, that durst not absolve or free a prisoner who was detained only by the power and multitude of his adversaries.

Acts 26:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 26:1-23 Paul, in the presence of Agrippa, declareth his life from his childhood, his wonderful conversion, and call to the apostleship, and his preaching of Christ according to the scripture doctrine.

Ac 26:24-29 Festus chargeth him with madness: his modest reply, and address to Agrippa, who confesseth himself almost a Christian.

Ac 26:30-32 The whole company pronounce him innocent.

Ver. 1. This stretching forth of his hand was:

1. To obtain silence of others whilst he spake; or:
2. To show his innocence, whilst he uses this modest confidence; or:
3. As other orators, when they begin to speak, move their hands. The providence of God wonderfully procures Paul a liberty to publish the gospel, and to make his case and religion known.

Acts 26:2

Ver. 2. *I think myself happy;* Paul thought it to be his advantage to speak before Agrippa, who could not be unacquainted with the law or the prophets, by which St. Paul would have his case determined.

Before thee; though Agrippa was not as judge in this place, yet his opinion and judgment could not but prevail much with Festus.

Acts 26:3

Ver. 3. This is not flattery, but a plain confession of what was true; for Agrippa, by reason of his birth and breeding, could not be wholly ignorant

of those things in question;

1. About the Messiah;
2. About the resurrection;
3. About the giving of the Holy Ghost.

I beseech thee to hear me patiently; it being a matter that concerned religion, and the life and liberty of a man, nothing but ignorance or impiety could take him off from attending unto it.

Acts 26:4

Ver. 4. Paul appeals to his enemies, the Jews themselves, whether they could tax him with any enormity whilst he was of their persuasion; whereby he vindicates his holy religion from being the sink and offscouring of other religions, as some would make it; as also to intimate, that it was his religion which made him so hateful unto them, and not any ill practices done by him.

Acts 26:5

Ver. 5. This heresy, sect, opinion, or way of the Pharisees, St. Paul rightly commends, if we consider it comparatively with the other sects of the Sadducees and Essenes: he had called this before, Ac 22:3, the most exact *manner of the law of the fathers*; for it is certain it was more learned and strict, and came nigher to the truth in many things, than the other did.

Acts 26:6

Ver. 6. *I stand*; the posture of such as are held for guilty.

The hope of the promise; St. Paul brings in the discourse of the resurrection, which, as hath been observed, is the foundation of all religion, 1Co 15:14 Ac 23:6 24:15; and now it is called *the hope of the*

promise, because God's promise did raise them up to this hope: for God having promised to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, gave them rather less than others in this world; neither had they any propriety in all the Promised Land, but only to a burying place; whence they might certainly infer, that there was another life to be expected, in which God would make this his word good. Paul was also *judged for the hope of the promise*, taking this hope for the salvation which Christ did purchase, and Paul preach, which was also promised unto the fathers, though mostly under types and obscure representations. The sum is, Paul was judged for one of those two articles of our faith, viz. the resurrection of the body, or a life everlasting.

Acts 26:7

Ver. 7. *Twelve tribes*; so St. Paul still reckons them, notwithstanding that ten tribes had been led captive, without returning again to this day. Yet,

1. There were many left by the king of Assyria in their own land; and though for a while they joined themselves unto the Samaritans rather than to the Jews, yet a century or two before our Saviour's time they returned to the Jewish religion and worship, at least very many of them.
2. Though the ten tribes never returned (as tribes) entirely back again, yet many of them doubtless had that love for their religion and country, as they took all opportunities of coming back.
3. At their first defection in Jeroboam's time, God touched the hearts of a great many, who rather changed their habitation than their religion.

So that St. James might well dedicate his Epistle to the twelve tribes, for there were some who at the dispersion were scattered out of every tribe.

Instantly serving God day and night; now these, with great intention and earnestness of desire, (as when any stretcheth himself to his utmost length to take hold of aught), endeavoured to obtain that very salvation which God had promised, and the gospel revealed.

Acts 26:8

Ver. 8. This St. Paul seems to have spoken in regard of Festus, and many others there present, who were heathens; or to any of the Sadducees, if any such were amongst them: as for Agrippa, He believed the prophets, Ac 26:27, and had out of them learned and observed this promise, Ac 26:7. However, God did not leave himself without a witness to testify so much unto all, as should make the doctrine of the resurrection credible, whensoever it should be revealed unto them. The works of creation evidence it; for he that can give life unto that which had it not, can restore it unto that which had it: and the works of providence attest it; in every spring there is a resurrection of such plants or trees as seemed dead; nay, the bread which we daily feed on, was made of that grain, which was not quickened except it died, 1Co 15:36.

Acts 26:9

Ver. 9. *The name of Jesus;* the religion which teacheth Christ is to be worshipped, and his name to be magnified.

Jesus of Nazareth; so they called our Saviour, of which see Ac 22:8.

Acts 26:10

Ver. 10. *The saints;* the professors of the religion of the holy Jesus, who are called to be saints, Ro 1:7, and have him for the great example of holiness, who fulfilled all righteousness; and from him they have the Spirit of holiness; being sanctified in him, 1Co 1:2; and whosoever hath not his Spirit, *he is none of his*, Ro 8:9.

I gave my voice against them: Paul was not one of the council, nor, that we read of, in any office or place to judge any person; besides, the Jews are thought to have had no power of life and death; and that St. Stephen was slain rather in a popular tumult, than legally: but Paul may be said to do this, by carrying the suffrages or sentence to the Roman man president, or any others, to get it executed (for so the words will bear); and howsoever, by his approving, rejoicing at, and delighting in their condemnation,

(which was indeed giving his voice, as much as he could, against them), this was verified.

Acts 26:11

Ver. 11. Paul confesses that he *compelled them to blaspheme*, either:

1. By the torments he made them to be put unto; or:
2. By his own example; for he confessed that he had been a blasphemer himself, 1Ti 1:13.

This blasphemy was either:

1. Denying of Christ to be the Messiah; or:
2. Cursing or execrating of Christ, and acknowledging that he was justly condemned.

I persecuted them even unto strange cities; drove them out of Jerusalem and Judea; and, according to what Paul then believed, he drove them from the worship of the true God, and said in effect, as David's adversaries when they expelled him from Jerusalem, *Go, and serve other gods*, 1Sa 26:19.

Acts 26:12

Ver. 12. With procuratory letters recommending him to the Jews abroad, and deputing him as their agent.

Acts 26:13

Ver. 13. *At mid-day;* this appeared at noon-day, that it might not be suspected to be a dream or fancy.

Above the brightness of the sun; our Saviour's face in the transfiguration

did shine as the sun, Mt 27:2, and he was yet on earth in his mortal body; how much more resplendent must it have been now, when he appeared from heaven with his glorious body! And if the righteous shall shine as the sun, Da 12:3 Mt 13:43; how much more does their Prince and Saviour! See concerning this history, Ac 9:3, &c., and Ac 22:6, &c.

Acts 26:14

Ver. 14. *In the Hebrew tongue;* whereby it appears, that Paul spake not now before Agrippa in the Hebrew tongue, as he did before the Jews at Jerusalem, Ac 21:40.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: this is a proverb borrowed from the Greeks, as some think, but used in many languages, denoting any who endeavour such things as will ruin or detriment themselves: and so do all persecutors; for they cannot harden themselves against God, his truth, or servants, and prosper, Job 9:4. Not to speak of other pricks, there is never an attribute in God, nor ever a faculty in their own souls, but they kick against, and will be themselves at last pricked by.

Acts 26:15

Ver. 15. The foot is trod upon on earth, and the Head cries out out from heaven, as Ac 9:5.

Acts 26:16

Ver. 16. *Stand upon thy feet;* as Daniel was bidden by the angel, Da 10:11, to mitigate his consternation and fear.

Of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: St. Paul accordingly had many visions and revelations, Ac 28:9 23:11 2Co 12:2; as he was more abundant in his sufferings for Christ, so in consolations from Christ, 2Co 1:5.

Acts 26:17

Ver. 17. *From the people;* from this people of the Jews, so in some copies it is expressed; howsoever, by the antithesis, *and from the Gentiles,* it is plainly to be understood: and God undertakes no less hereby, than to deliver Paul, and all his faithful servants, from all evils and enemies. But how is this performed? And where is the promise? St. Paul was sorely persecuted by the Jews, and at last put to death by the Gentiles. But so long as it would be a mercy, and a true deliverance to Paul, God wrought many such for him; and that, rather than fail, miraculously too; no chains, no iron gates could detain him. When he had finished his course, and done the work he was sent for, it would not have been a deliverance, to have been kept longer from his reward, and the prize he had ran for.

Acts 26:18

Ver. 18. *To open their eyes;* the eyes of their minds, that they might know God, and their duty towards him. Our Saviour assures Paul, that he should do that for the souls of men which he should find effected in his own body, being made to see. Now though this be only the work of God, yet, to honour the ministry, he is pleased to attribute it unto his ministers, as being the instruments he ordinarily worketh it by; and who are hence called co-workers with God, 2Co 6:1.

To turn them from darkness to light; this was signified by the glorious light which came from the body of our glorified Redeemer, which appeared unto him.

The power of Satan; so are all sins, for by them Satan rules in the children of disobedience, Eph 2:2.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins; thereby intimating, that their former sins (how grievous soever) should not hinder their salvation, who received the gospel in the love and power of it.

By faith that is in me; by faith which purifieth the heart; but this may be referred, either to our being sanctified, or to our receiving of the inheritance, for both are by faith; and as without faith we are no better, and

do no better, so we shall receive no better, than other men.

Acts 26:19

Ver. 19. I was not incredulous, I believed God, and yielded to his call, as Isa 1:5, which cannot be counted a fault in me; and yet this is all that can be charged upon me.

Acts 26:20

Ver. 20. *Showed first unto them of Damascus;* nigh unto which place he was first converted, taking the first opportunity to preach Christ: out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaking.

And turn to God: as sin is a turning from God, so repentance is a turning (or rather returning) unto God.

Do works meet for repentance; such as became a true penitent; for as we must show our faith by our works, Jas 2:18, so we must show our repentance by our works also: for to say we are grieved for sin, and we hate sin, and yet to live in it, is but to deceive ourselves, and (what in us lay) to mock God.

Acts 26:21

Ver. 21. By violent hands and indirect means, as we see, Ac 21:31, and as they had done unto our Saviour, Ac 5:30, where the same word is used.

Acts 26:22

Ver. 22. *I continue unto this day:* that Paul, continued till then alive, notwithstanding all the fraud and force of his enemies, is acknowledged by him to be from God; from whence he infers towards his justification, that what he had done was but in a becoming gratitude towards that God who had maintained him in life unto that very day.

Witnessing both to small and great; witnessing to all sorts, princes or people; implying, that the truths of the gospel, and the things of God, concerned Agrippa as well as the meanest of his auditors; and indeed with God there is no respect of persons, and that *we are all one in Christ Jesus*, Ga 3:28.

The prophets and Moses; Moses was himself also a prophet, but he is here made especial mention of, because of his excellency above the other prophets, (unto whom God spoke face to face), as also because he was the lawgiver to the Jews, and to whom, upon all occasions, they pretended to yield obedience.

Acts 26:23

Ver. 23. The sufferings of Christ were taught by Moses in all the commands about sacrifices, and more plainly by Isaiah in all the 53rd chapter (Isa 53:1-12); insomuch, that this was acknowledged by Tryphon, disputing with Justin Martyr, although the generality of Jews, both then and now, do stiffly deny it. The carnal Jews do not like to hear of a spiritual kingdom.

The first that should rise from the dead; Christ was the first that did rise to an immortal life; others that were restored to life, died again: besides, Christ is deservedly called the first, by reason of his dignity and eminency, and in that he rose as a head and fountain of life to others, even to all that live and believe in him.

Show light; all the word of God is light; but especially the gospel, which discovers a plain and open way unto salvation.

Unto the people, and to the Gentiles; to both Jews and Gentiles, as Ac 26:17.

Acts 26:24

Ver. 24. *Thou art beside thyself;* this was the opinion of Festus concerning

Paul, and such is the opinion of carnal and worldly men concerning such as are truly godly; as the prophet who came to Jehu was counted a *mad fellow*, 2Ki 9:11, and the friends of our Saviour thought him to be *beside himself*, Mr 3:21. And it cannot be otherwise; for good men and bad men have quite different apprehensions concerning most things; and what one calls good, the other accounts evil; and what is wisdom to the one, is madness to the other.

Much learning doth make thee mad; much study many times increasing melancholy, which a sedentary and thoughtful life is most exposed unto. Paul is reckoned to have been skilful in the Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin tongues; to have been well read in the poets; and certainly he was an excellent orator, as appears all along in his defence he made for his doctrine, and his life: but there was yet somewhat more than all this; Festus might feel a more than ordinary effect from Paul's words, and not knowing of the Spirit by which he spake did attribute it to his learning, or madness, or to any thing but the true cause of it.

Acts 26:25

Ver. 25. St. Paul with all meekness makes his reply to the governer, and not taking notice of his sharp censuring of him, returns an answer in most respectful terms unto him; as his blessed Master, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again*, 1Pe 2:23.

Soberness, in contradiction to madness; modestly waiving the reflection, and denying the charge Festus had laid upon him.

Acts 26:26

Ver. 26. Agrippa, being educated in Judea, could not but hear of the life and doctrine, death and resurrection, of our Saviour; as also of the miracles done by him, and by his disciples; for, as our Saviour says, he ever taught openly, Joh 18:20.

Acts 26:27

Ver. 27. A rhetorical insinuation, that could not but much affect the king, and leave a sensible impression on his heart. St. Paul answers the question which he had propounded, and that in favour of Agrippa; or rather blames himself for making that a question; but his cryptical inference would then be, If you believe the prophets, why do you not believe Christ of whom they prophesied?

Acts 26:28

Ver. 28. Some think that these words were spoken ironically, or scoffingly; as if Agrippa had said: Thou wouldst have me in so short a space (for so ἐν ὀλίγῳ may be translated) to be brought to profess Christ: some think it unlikely that such a one as Agrippa would speak so plainly as we translate it, in such a place, before such an auditory: but the danger seems not to have been so great from these words; and if it had been greater, who knows the power of that conviction under which Agrippa at that time was? And Paul's rejoinder do suppose the words to be spoken in the sense we read them.

Acts 26:29

Ver. 29. Paul, knowing how little it would avail any to be almost a Christian, wisheth their perfection in that profession, that they might not, with the Laodiceans, be neither hot nor cold, Re 3:16; nor, with the Israelites, halt between God and Baal, 1Ki 18:21.

Except these bonds: some think that by *bonds* St. Paul means only his guard wherewith he was surrounded; but it is certain that St. Paul was bound, in the most literal sense, with chains, as Ac 24:27; and he wishes his auditors all the good that was in him, and to be freed from all the evils that were upon him.

Acts 26:30

Ver. 30. Agrippa, Festus, and the queen, together with the governor's council, although they had heard this excellent discourse from, the most learned apostle, like the blackamoor or leopard, they cannot change their spots, or skin, Jer 13:23: having sinned against former manifestations of God's will, this, for aught we read, became ineffectual unto them.

Acts 26:31

Ver. 31. *Gone aside;* either to their houses, or to some apartment nigh to the tribunal. They acquit Paul; for as yet Nero had not made those bloody laws, whereby the profession of Christianity was made capital.

Acts 26:32

Ver. 32. These judges and great men do, by their opinion concerning Paul, condemn the Jews, whom they declare to have no cause for the prosecuting of him; and so those caitiffs returned to Jerusalem, not only with their labour for their pains, but being branded by the sentence of so many eminent personages, not to say tormented with the guilt of so foul a fact in their own conscience. Such honour have all persecutors! But, withal, these great men seem to be self-condemned, in that they own Paul's innocence, and yet dare not set him free for fear of the Jews; for as for this excuse from his appealing to Caesar, it bound up them indeed from condemning Paul till Caesar had heard him; but they could not be bound by it from acquitting or freeing of him; for Paul might have withdrawn his appeal, and enjoyed his liberty, if they had pleased, at any time: but what popularity, or self-ends, put them upon, they are willing to varnish over with pretence of lawfulness and necessity.

Acts 27:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 27:1-8 Paul is conducted in a ship toward Rome.

Ac 27:9-11 He foretells the danger of the voyage, but is not credited.

Ac 27:12-20 The ship setting sail against his advice is

tossed with a tempest.

Ac 27:21-44 Paul comforteth his fellow travellers with assurance of having their lives saved, but foretelleth a shipwreck; all which is verified by the event.

Ver. 1. *It was determined;* upon the solemn hearing of Paul's case, it was resolved by Festus and Agrippa, with the rest that were taken by Festus to advise concerning it.

Julius; thought to have been a freed-man of the family of Julius, who thence took his name.

A centurion of Augustus' band; as Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian band: see Ac 10:1. This band, or regiment, was called Augustus's (or the emperor's) because (as some will) it was part of his guard.

Acts 27:2

Ver. 2. *Adramyttium;* a city in Mysia, a province in the Lesser Asia, almost over against Mitylene, of a pestilent air.

Meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; the ship did belong to Adramyttium, and designed a trading voyage along the coasts of Asia.

Aristarchus; this Aristarchus seems to have been a man of some note, who accompanied St. Paul (together with Luke, the holy penman of this book, and of the Gospel so called) throughout his journey, and none else that we read of. This Aristarchus was one of them that was laid hold on in the uproar at Ephesus, Ac 19:29; and having partook of Paul's afflictions in all his travels, was at last his fellow prisoner at Rome, Col 4:10.

Thessalonica; of this city mention is made, Ac 17:1.

Acts 27:3

Ver. 3. *Sidon;* a city in Phenicia, bordering upon Palestine, mentioned Mt 11:21, and Ac 12:20.

Julius courteously entreated Paul; as Felix had commanded that centurion to whom he committed him, Ac 24:23.

And gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself; though Paul went with a soldier to guard him, as their manner was, yet it was a great favour that he might converse with his friends, and receive from them such refreshments towards his journey as he stood in need of. Now Paul indeed experienced the truth of God's word, Ac 18:10, that he was with him: and it is wonderful to consider the presence of God with Paul all along: which things are our examples, that we also may put our trust in God, who hath said he will not leave us nor forsake us, Heb 13:5,6.

Acts 27:4

Ver. 4. *Launched;* or put to sea.

Cyprus; a noted island in the Mediterranean Sea, of which we read, Ac 11:19 13:4. Their nearest way from Sidon to Myra had been to have left Cyprus on the right hand, but by reason of the winds they were forced to go almost round about the island, leaving it on the left hand.

Acts 27:5

Ver. 5. *The sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia;* that part of the Mediterranean that borders on those provinces.

Cilicia; of which see Ac 6:9 15:23,41.

Pamphylia; mention is made of this province, Ac 2:10 13:13.

Lycia; another province in the lesser Asia, bordering on Pamphylia.

Acts 27:6

Ver. 6. *Alexandria;* a famous port town in Egypt, formerly called No, of

which we read, Jer 46:25: unto this place the ship did belong, which was now in the road or haven of Myra, intending for Italy, whither they carried corn, and Persian and Indian commodities, from thence.

Acts 27:7

Ver. 7. *Had sailed slowly many days*; the wind being contrary, or at least very bare, and, it may be, their ship much laden.

Cnidus; a city or promontory over against *Crete*, which is now called Candia, a known island in the Mediterranean.

Salmones; a sea town in Candia, or the easterly promontory there, so called.

Acts 27:8

Ver. 8. *The fair havens*; or, the fair or good shore, that being accounted the best which is safest for ships to ride in or enter into. A place of this name remains to this day (as some tell us) in the island of Candia.

Lasea; called Lasos, and more inland; yet some think that this town is not certainly known, not having been mentioned by any ancient geographer.

Acts 27:9

Ver. 9. This *fast* was not any necessitated abstinence, but a religious fast, as the word here used does most commonly signify; and the article being put to it, it may well denote some eminent and known fast. We read, that amongst the Jews several fasts were observed; as the fast of the fourth month, of the fifth month, of the seventh, and of the tenth month, Zec 8:19. But that of the seventh month did far exceed them all, it being the day in which the priest was to make an atonement for the people; and they were strictly commanded to afflict their souls in it, Le 16:29 23:27. (Thus when we look up to him whom by our sins we have pierced, we must mourn, Zec 12:10.) Now this fast was to be observed on the tenth day of Tisri, or

their seventh month (which is made up of part of September and part of October); and then this day, which might well be called *the fast*, fell about the beginning of October; after which time, until March, they did not usually venture on the seas, especially their ships not being so able to bear a storm as ours are, and the art of navigation being not yet in any reasonable degree found out amongst them.

Acts 27:10

Ver. 10. Paul did not say this so much by reason of the time of the year, and the tempests which do usually attend it, as by a prophetic spirit: God intending to provide for Paul in this tedious and difficult journey, endues him with the gift of prophecy; which (especially when they saw it verified) could not but beget a great respect toward him, and might be a means of salvation to many that were with him.

But also of our lives; so it had been, their lives had been lost as well as the ship and goods, had not God given the lives of all in the ship unto Paul, and saved them for his sake; as Ac 27:24.

Acts 27:11

Ver. 11. The centurion believed those whom he thought best skilled in those things (as every one in his own art); and if he had not heard of Paul's condition and extraordinary qualification, he was doubtless the more to be excused.

Acts 27:12

Ver. 12. This *Phenice* was a port town in Candia, and not the country in Syria.

Lieth toward the south-west and northwest; being on the south part of that island, having a bay or road like unto a half-moon or crescent, one horn or part of it (admitting entrance into it) toward the south-west, and the other toward the north-west.

Acts 27:13

Ver. 13. The south wind being ordinarily most mild, and at that time not high, they sailed along the shore of Candia, not being afraid to be driven upon it.

Acts 27:14

Ver. 14. *There arose against it;* Crete or Candia; so that they were in the greater danger, having a sea-shore.

Called Euroclydon; this some will have to have been a whirlwind; but the word signifies only, the tempestuous east, or the north-east, which is a contrary wind unto any that would go from Crete to Italy.

Acts 27:15

Ver. 15. *The ship was caught;* being forced from Crete, and no longer at the command of the mariners, but in the sole power of the winds.

And could not bear up into the wind; the ship could not keep her course, the winds being contrary, so that her prow or head (part whereof was called the eye of the ship, and on which its name was formerly, as now at the stern, inscribed) could not bear up according as their course did require; whence that expression, *αντοφθαλμειν τω ανεμω*, which is here used.

Sic quo non voluit, sed quo rapit impetus undae.

Acts 27:16

Ver. 16. *Clauda;* called also Claudos, and by some Gaudos, and now Gozo, an island near unto Crete.

We had much work to come by the boat; in this stress of weather they would take up the boat, lest it should have been staved or beat in pieces against the ship.

Acts 27:17

Ver. 17. *They used helps;* not only using all instruments fit for their purpose, but all hands were employed too.

Undergirding the ship, with cables, to keep the sides of the ship the closer and faster together.

The quicksands: there were two quicksands especially famous in Africa, the one the greater, the other the lesser, called Syrtes, because these mountabes of sand under water did seem, as it were, to draw and suck up ships, they were so soon swallowed up by them.

Strake sail; by the word here used, sails and their tackle, or the top-mast, may be understood decks.

Acts 27:18

Ver. 18. Casting out the merchandise or lading which was in it, that the ship, being so much lighter, might not so readily strike upon a rock, or be swallowed up of the quicksands, it drawing so much the less water.

Acts 27:19

Ver. 19. All the ship's furniture which it had either for ornament or defence, and not their ballast or lumber only: so willingly do men part with all things for their lives; which yet are but short, and, at best, mixed with care and sorrow, Job 14:1,2.

Acts 27:20

Ver. 20. *Neither sun nor stars in many days appeared;* which shows the greatness of their misery, which had not the ordinary refreshments from the sight of the sun to relieve it. For what the sun does cheer, is one reason why our Saviour is called *the Sun of righteousness*, Mal 4:2.

All hope that we should be saved was then taken away; there remained no hope in the eye of reason, or reckoning upon second causes, or natural events.

Acts 27:21

Ver. 21. *After long abstinence:* these did not abstain from their meals for any want; for they had sufficient provision, as appears, Ac 27:38; nor because the storm or tempest tossing the ship, and them in it, took away their stomach, for the sea men, at least, were not so long troubled with that sea sickness: but:

1. Their continually being employed, working for their lives. Or:
2. Their fear of perishing, and sense of a future state, might take up their thoughts so effectually, that they minded nothing else.

Hence it hath been said, that whosoever cannot pray should go to sea, and there he would learn it; for *in their affliction they will seek me early*, saith the Lord, Ho 5:15.

Ye should have hearkened unto me; being Paul had foretold this that now befell them, as Ac 27:10, they were bound to have believed him; which they not doing, are now deservedly punished.

Have gained this harm and loss; harm and loss, misery and calamity, is all that disobedience unto God gets at last, whatsoever it may promise us to tempt us with.

Acts 27:22

Ver. 22. Provided they would do as he required of them: see Ac 27:31. In

God's promises there is a tacit condition, which from the nature of the thing is to be understood; as in that which was made to Eli, mentioned 1Sa 2:30. Paul did foretell this so particularly, that when it was come to pass, he might gain the more reputation to the truth of the gospel which he preached, and more glory to that God whom he worshipped.

Acts 27:23

Ver. 23. A good introduction to recommend the true God, and the gospel of his Son. Paul, who knew the certainty of what he had predicted, owns himself to be now in the service of God, that not unto him, but unto God, may be given the glory.

Acts 27:24

Ver. 24. The message which God's angels bring from God unto his people, is, *Fear not*. Thus unto Daniel, Da 10:12,19; and thus unto the holy women that attended at our Lord's sepulchre, Mt 28:5. There are *all ministering spirits*, Heb 1:14.

Thou must be brought before; it is a forensic word, showing that Paul must be heard and tried by Caesar.

God hath given thee all them that sail with thee; graciously bestowed all thy follow travellers upon thee at thy request: for it is implied, that Paul had prayed for them, and begged their lives of God; as Esther had the lives of her people at the hands of King Ahasuerus, Es 7:3. There is a remarkable difference between Paul and Jonah in a storm, though Jonah professes as much as Paul does in the preceding verse, Jon 1:9; but it was little more than a profession in Jonah, but Paul was actually in the fear and service of God; and doubtless there was as great a difference in their breasts during the storm. The true fear and service of God brings with it great peace and inward satisfaction, which, when any leave, they must, at least so long, be strangers unto, for *there is no peace unto the wicked*, Isa 48:22.

Acts 27:25

Ver. 25. Paul, having had experience of the power and faithfulness of God, and known his name, professeth to trust in him; and recommends God's veracity unto them, as worthy to be relied upon. What a great deal of good does one holy man do in a place. These hundreds of men fare the better both in soul and body for holy Paul.

Acts 27:26

Ver. 26. This was given by Paul as a sign unto them of the truth of what he had said, which, when it came to pass, might induce them to believe the rest; which probably it did, and saved Paul from being killed by the soldiers, Ac 27:42. Thus God preserves his people, and delivers Paul, and brings all his safely off at the last, but it is by tempests and storms. It may be they must suffer shipwreck of all they have in this world first. *Augusta per angusta*. Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, as St. Paul had taught others, Ac 14:22, the experienced to be true himself. There was no truth more experimented than this.

Acts 27:27

Ver. 27. *In Adria;* not in the Adriatic Bay, or Gulf of Venice, which divides Italy and Dalmatia, though that be also so called; but this name is sometimes extended to those parts of the Mediterranean Sea which border on Sicily, and Ionia in Greece, and must be passed over by such as go from Crete, or Candia, to Melita, or Malta.

Acts 27:28

Ver. 28. *Found it twenty fathoms:* a fathom is the distance betwixt the end of the middle finger on the one hand, from the end of the middle finger on the other hand, when the arms are stretched out; which is ordinarily accounted about six feet in measure.

Found it fifteen fathoms; coming into more shallow places they might

reasonably conclude that they were near unto the land.

Acts 27:29

Ver. 29. *Fallen upon rocks;* of which there are very many in these seas, especially about the islands.

Cast four anchors; which show how great the tempest was, that they needed so many anchors.

Wished for the day; that they might the better discover whereabouts they were.

Acts 27:30

Ver. 30. *Had let down the boat;* that they might betake themselves into it, after they had left the ship: for, Ac 27:17, they had taken up the boat, and secured that against this or the like occasion.

As though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship; dissembling the true reason of their going into the boat to make their escape.

Acts 27:31

Ver. 31. Notwithstanding the promise mentioned, Ac 27:24, that they should all be saved, they must use means, so far as means can be used, although the efficaciousness and truth of the promise do no ways depend upon the virtue of the means; but the means are made effectual by virtue of the promise. Yet whosoever neglects means upon any pretext of a promise, he does tempt God, but does not rightly believe in him.

These; as it were pointing unto the mariners, and such as were useful in such a case.

Acts 27:32

Ver. 32. The centurion and soldiers, agreeing to what Paul had said, did this to take away all thoughts of escaping from the mariners, and leaving all upon what Paul had promised to them in the name of his God.

Acts 27:33

Ver. 33. *While the day was coming on;* all the night after the mariners were disappointed in their project to escape. So hard a matter it was to abate their fear of being presently destroyed; and so great influence hath the apprehension of present death, and judgment which follows it, upon the minds of men.

The fourteenth day; not as if they had wholly eaten nothing all that while, (for it is commonly held, that none can fast above half so long without danger of death), but because in all that space they had held no set meal, as they were wont to do; and what they did eat was very little, and only in extreme necessity, without any desire or taste; so great was their anguish.

Acts 27:34

Ver. 34. *This is for your health;* that they might be stronger to endure that pain and perform that labour which was necessary towards their escape; for God would have them to use all means for their deliverance.

For there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you; a proverbial speech used by the Jews, as 1Ki 1:52, signifying that they should not suffer the least detriment in their bodies, much less the loss of their lives. Thus God numbereth our hairs, and his providence extendeth over every one of them, as Mt 10:30 Lu 21:18.

Acts 27:35

Ver. 35. Paul thanks God for their preservation hitherto: and there is no such encouragement to hope for future deliverances, as when God doth

give us hearts to thank him for deliverances already enjoyed. But he thanked God also for giving them in their necessity such food to nourish and strengthen them, Mt 14:19 15:36 Mr 8:6,19, and one season more to enjoy it. The acknowledging of God in all things we enjoy, doth sanctify them to us: otherwise they do defile us; for we usurp them; we holding them by no other tenor but in *franc almoine*, from God: neither can they be serviceable unto us, if God withhold his blessing. Hence the Jews would not eat until Samuel had thus blessed their food, 1Sa 9:13. And our Saviour himself, to give us an example, gives thanks before he would have the miraculous loaves and fishes distributed, Joh 6:11.

Acts 27:36

Ver. 36. Believing Paul's words, promising in the name of that God whom he served, that they should all be preserved; believing, they did rejoice. Now Paul, a prisoner, a neglected and contemned person, comes to be valued and credited. Whilst they sailed with a prosperous gale, neither God, nor his poor prisoner and chained apostle, is thought upon; but in a storm or tempest they are glad to believe and follow his direction. God's stars shine in the night, and are seen in affliction.

Acts 27:37

Ver. 37. That is, so many persons; as Ac 2:41 7:14 Ro 13:1; the soul being the noblest part, and the body following its condition, whatsoever it be: if the soul be holy, the body shall be glorious. But it is not so on the other side: the soul is not hereafter as the body is here; for Dives's body fared well, was fed and arrayed sumptuously, and yet his soul was miserably tormented, Lu 16:19,24.

Acts 27:38

Ver. 38. *Cast out the wheat*, the provision they had for their sustenance. This is the third time that they lightened the ship, being willing that all their goods should perish for them, rather than with them. Or these heathens were so far persuaded by St. Paul, that they ventured their lives

upon the credit of what he had foretold them; and parted with their food, and all they had to live upon, only upon his word, that they should want them in the ship no more.

Acts 27:39

Ver. 39. *They knew not the land;* in so long and violent a tempest, thinking every moment to be swallowed up, they could keep no reckoning of the ship's running or way; neither were charts or maps so usual (if they had any at all) in those times.

A certain creek; a bay, or bosom of the sea, having land on each side, where they judged it most likely for them to get on shore; using still all means for their safety.

Acts 27:40

Ver. 40. *Loosed the rudder bands;* rudders is in the plural number put for the singular: or rather, in those times they having two rudders, (as by several passages amongst the ancients do appear), they were both loosed, that now they might use them to direct the ship to the best advantage in making the shore, they having been tied whilst they were adrift, or at anchor.

Hoised up the mainsail, which they had let down, or struck, Ac 27:17, and now, that they might make some use of the winds, to get nigher to the shore, they hoisted up. As God doth instruct the ploughman, Isa 28:26, so he teacheth the mariner, and every one in their calling.

Acts 27:41

Ver. 41. *A place where two seas met;* a shoal, sand or isthmus, where the sea was on both sides of it. They were now in the greatest extremity; and God suffers them to fall into it before he sends them deliverance, that he might have the more glory by it.

Acts 27:42

Ver. 42. This speaks their great ingratitude, that they would take away Paul's life, who had preserved theirs. But Christ's apostles and ministers must not look for their reward in this life; though men cannot, or do not, recompense them, they shall *be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*, Lu 14:14.

Acts 27:43

Ver. 43. *The centurion, willing to save Paul;* because Paul was a Roman citizen, whose death he durst not be accessory unto. It may be also, that this centurion, (if there were no more), as the Samaritan that was cleansed, did this in thankfulness unto Paul.

Should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; that they might be helpful to others in getting on shore.

Acts 27:44

Ver. 44. *Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship;* still using means, though it was of God only that they had them, and that they were effectual to them. In this history is lively verified that of the psalmist, Ps 107:18-20, *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.* And what follows but, Ac 27:21, *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* God hath a tribute of praise which is due unto him from the readers of this story, that they would acknowledge that there is none else who can deliver after this manner, Da 3:29; and then to be sure they will desire that this God might be their God for ever and ever, Ps 48:14.

Acts 28:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 28:1,2 Paul and his company, after their shipwreck, are kindly entertained by the barbarians of Melita.

Ac 28:3-6 A viper fastening on his hand without hurting him, the people, who at first thought ill of him, believed him a god.

Ac 28:7-10 He healeth the father of Publius, and other sick persons by the island.

Ac 28:11-16 Paul and his company depart, and arrive at Rome; where Paul is left with a guard in a house of his own.

Ac 28:17-22 He calleth the Jews together, and showeth the occasion of his coming.

Ac 28:23-29 He preacheth Christ to them, of whom some believe, others believe not.

Ac 28:30,31 He continueth for two whole years to preach the gospel without interruption.

Ver. 1. *The island;* this was foretold by Paul, Ac 27:26; and therefore though the mariners knew not the land, Ac 27:39, and were not able to direct the ship, as Ac 27:15, yet God so ordered it, that not a word spoken by Paul did fall to the ground, but the wind and sea obey him.

Melita; now called Malta, a little island between Sicily and Africa. There is another obscure island in Illyricum that was called by this name, which some have mistook for this place of Paul's shipwreck, by reason that this tempest was in the Adriatic Sea: but not only the Gulf of Venice, but the sea about Sicily, and this coast, was so called, as Strabo witnesseth. See Ac 27:27.

Acts 28:2

Ver. 2. *The barbarous people;* so the Grecians and Romans called all other nations that did not receive their customs, nor speak their language, 1Co 14:11; and to this day the African coast over against this island is

called Barbary.

For they kindled a fire, &c.: how far is this humanity of heathens beyond that inhumanity which some that are called Christians use towards those that are shipwrecked, and their goods that come on shore!

Acts 28:3

Ver. 3. *A viper;* a creature so venomous, that not only its biting, but (some say) its breath, is deadly: this, upon the warmth of the fire, being benumbed with the cold, and now refreshed, began to stir itself.

Fastened on his hand; as it used to do when it biteth. God by this miracle prepares this people not only to be civil and courteous unto Paul, but to believe the gospel which he preached, wheresoever he went. And this wonderful work of God was (as God's seal to his ministry) to show his authority to be from him.

Acts 28:4

Ver. 4. *Venomous;* so the viper is called by that appellative word, from whence also comes *theriaca*, or treacle, which is made out of flesh, or trochusses, of vipers. And if men can make an antidote out of poison, much more can God bring good out of evil.

This man is a murderer; it is a strange sense that men by the light of nature had of Divine vengeance, especially of God's revenging of murder. Hence they called one of their furies Tisiphone, as one that punished and revenged murder. Yet they were to blame in this case:

1. Because they confine the punishment of wicked men wholly unto this life.
2. In that they did not expect the event; they judged before they knew what would be the end of Paul afterwards.
3. They erred, in that they measured the goodness or badness of a man's

state or cause by his prosperity or adversity.

Acts 28:5

Ver. 5. As Daniel in the lion's den. God is the God of nature, and the most natural properties are restrained when he pleases, and cannot be exerted without his concurrence. Thus the promises our blessed Saviour made, in Mr 16:18 Lu 10:19, were fulfilled according to the letter.

Acts 28:6

Ver. 6. *Should have swollen*; the word signifies primarily to be burnt, and then by burning or scalding to swell, which is accounted the ordinary symptom of the biting of a viper; to swell or blister, as if the part was burnt with fire.

Or fallen down dead suddenly; in those places where there is much more heat, there is more venom in these vipers. And though some are said to live several days after they are bit by them, yet others die very suddenly upon their biting; as the known story of Cleopatra testifies; and condemned persons were sometimes put to death by vipers set unto their breasts.

And said that he was a god; a strange extreme; so uncertain and unequal are men's minds.

Acts 28:7

Ver. 7. This Publius is thought to have been governor for the Romans in this island. Howsoever, he was a man of great account and estate, that could provide for so many as were in the ship, and receive them into his own house.

Acts 28:8

Ver. 8. *A bloody flux*; a painful and dangerous disease; the torment in the

bowels frequently causing a fever.

And prayed; Paul could do nothing of himself, and therefore begs of God the recovery of Publius's father. It is God only that kills and makes alive, 1Sa 2:6.

Laid his hands on him; this imposition of hands was commonly used in miraculous cures, as Mt 9:18 Mk 6:5; and is joined with prayer, Mt 19:13, which it might be a symbol of. Thus Publius was well paid for what he did for Paul and his company. Relieving of the poor and distressed is frequently rewarded in this world, and not only in the world to come. And God now recommends the gospel and the ministry of Paul by this miracle also: for none could do such things as these, unless God were with him.

Acts 28:9

Ver. 9. The fame of this cure, wrought so suddenly, perfectly, and only with the laying on of Paul's hands, could not but spread far and near; especially being done upon the governor: and men are usually very careful about their bodily health and welfare. So that their diseases were blessed occasions to bring them to the knowledge of God in Christ, whom Paul preached; and they might have perished eternally if they had not perished (or been thus near unto perishing) temporally.

Acts 28:10

Ver. 10. They who were cured, rewarded or presented the apostle and his company very liberally. And this was the effect of that inward respect and real esteem they had for them; and was a fruit of their faith.

Acts 28:11

Ver. 11. These *three months* that St. Paul staid at Malta, he spent like a true labourer in the Lord's vineyard, planting a church that was famous for its stedfastness in the truth.

Had wintered in the isle; it was their wont to lay up their ships all the winter season; as we may see, Ac 27:12. And to this day the galleys seldom go out on those seas in winter.

Castor and Pollux; feigned to be the sons of Jupiter, and to have the ordering of tempests, and the care of mariners, and were chosen for the patrons of that ship, by the pagan owners of it.

Acts 28:12

Ver. 12. *Syracuse;* the chief city of Sicily, famous for Archimedes.

We tarried there three days; probably to sell some of their wares, the ship making a trading voyage.

Acts 28:13

Ver. 13. *Rhegium;* a city in the kingdom of Naples, over against Messina in Sicily; so called because that Sicily was believed to be thereabouts rent and plucked from the main land, unto which they held it to have been formerly joined, until by a tempest it became an island.

Puteoli is a sea town not far from Naples.

Acts 28:14

Ver. 14. *Where we found brethren;* Christians, as some think, for so they mutually called one another. But it is not so probable that any should profess Christianity so near unto Rome, and that it should be no more known or believed in Rome. Others therefore think that the apostle means Jews, whom he calls *brethren* (being, as himself, descended from Abraham); for so he calls the Jews he found at Rome, Ac 28:17; who yet called the Christians a sect, adding, that it was every where spoken against, Ac 28:22.

Rome is known to be the chief city in Italy, and to have been the empress

of the world, and famous for the church to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistle, known by its inscription unto them.

Acts 28:15

Ver. 15. *Appii forum*; a place about one and fifty miles, or seventeen leagues, from Rome; so called from Appius Claudius, who made a way from Rome thither, called from his name: The Appian Way; and had his statue there set up; which is the reason why it is called thus: for the Romans did call those places *fora*, where such statues were placed. (The concourse to see those statues might bring them to become markets).

The three taverns; as that was a place of resort for the buying and selling of other commodities, so this for the affording of necessary provision; a little town, hence so called, about three and thirty miles, or eleven leagues, from Rome. So that some came a greater, some a lesser way to meet with Paul, and show their respect unto him. These brethren are thought to have been converted by such as at the day of Pentecost were present when those miracles were wrought, Ac 2:10, it being expressly said, that there were strangers from Rome.

Took courage; God moving so many not to be ashamed of his bonds.

Acts 28:16

Ver. 16. *The captain of the guard*; the *praefectus praetorio*, being commander-in-chief over the soldiers, and unto whom the prisoners of state were usually committed.

Paul was suffered to dwell by himself; God by this means giving Paul an opportunity to go abroad at his pleasure; though chained, as Ac 28:20, yet he might preach the gospel, and that was not bound, 2Ti 2:9. And now God is with Paul, as he was with Joseph, in prison, Ge 39:21, and procures him favour.

Acts 28:17

Ver. 17. *Paul called the chief of the Jews together;* Paul does this not only out of an extraordinary love which he had for that people, but also because the apostles were commanded *to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,* Mt 10:5,6. The whole economy of the gospel is a doing good for evil. So did our Saviour, who is the author and subject of it; and so must his messengers or ministers do, or they are not like to do any good at all; for the world will hate them, 1Jo 3:13.

Acts 28:18

Ver. 18. *Examined me;* as Festus did in the presence of king Agrippa, Ac 25:26, who, they were both unbelievers, yet justified Paul, acknowledging that he had not committed any thing worthy of bonds, much less of death. Thus our Saviour was declared innocent by Pilate, Lu 23:4,14.

Acts 28:19

Ver. 19. *The Jews spake against it;* the Jews used all their oratory and interest against Paul, both before Felix and Festus. And had it been in Festus's power, (which after Paul's appeal it was not), he would have sacrificed Paul to the malice of the Jews; and by that means got their favour, whom he had so incensed against them.

Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of; Paul did not so much want matter, as mind, to accuse the Jews; and he declares, that whatsoever he had suffered, his intentions were not to calumniate them, but to vindicate himself.

Acts 28:19

Ver. 19. *The Jews spake against it;* the Jews used all their oratory and interest against Paul, both before Felix and Festus. And had it been in Festus's power, (which after Paul's appeal it was not), he would have sacrificed Paul to the malice of the Jews; and by that means got their

favour, whom he had so incensed against them.

Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of; Paul did not so much want matter, as mind, to accuse the Jews; and he declares, that whatsoever he had suffered, his intentions were not to calumniate them, but to vindicate himself.

Acts 28:20

Ver. 20. *For the hope of Israel:* see Ac 23:6 24:21. This *hope* is either,

1. Of the resurrection, as in the forementioned places; and Ac 26:6,7; or:
2. The Messiah; Christ is the hope of Israel, so they pretended for many ages, and him now Paul preached.

I am bound with this chain; for though he had his liberty to go abroad, yet he was chained with his right hand to the soldier's left hand who went with him, and could not possibly be loosened unwittingly from him.

Acts 28:21

Ver. 21. The high priest, and the rest of them that had persecuted Paul, did either despond of their cause, when it should come to be impartially heard; or were supine and negligent in a matter which they pretended so highly to concern their religion; but self-ends, their present ease and reputation, were the main matters they contended for.

Acts 28:22

Ver. 22. *Sect,* or heresy, for so they called the Christian religion, Ac 24:5,14.

Every where it is spoken against; of all conditions of men, governors and people, and in all places; as, Lu 2:34, Christ is said to be *a sign that shall be spoken against*.

Acts 28:23

Ver. 23. *His lodging;* the house which he had hired, as Ac 28:16, and Ac 28:30.

He expounded and testified the kingdom of God; Paul expounded the Scriptures, and by them proved our Saviour to be the Messiah; and that the kingdom of the Messiah, which God had promised, and Moses and the prophets had foretold, was now come.

Persuading them concerning Jesus; using such proofs and arguments as were cogent enough to prove what he asserted; and which also did thoroughly persuade or prevail with several of them.

From morning till evening; thus Paul *laboured more abundantly*, 1Co 15:10.

Acts 28:24

Ver. 24. Thus there are different soils into which the word is cast, as appears in the parable of the sower, Mt 13:19,20, &c. Thus Paul found by experience what he says, 2Th 3:2, that *all men have not faith*; and *the word preached doth not profit*, unless it be *mixed with faith in them that hear it*, Heb 4:2.

Acts 28:25

Ver. 25. *They agreed not among themselves;* thus Christ came *to send fire on the earth*, Lu 12:49: not that the gospel does this in itself; for it is *the gospel of peace*, Eph 6:15, not only betwixt God and man, but betwixt man and man; and if its precepts were observed, love, meekness, and goodness would banish all hatred, pride, and contention out of the hearts and lives of men; but this arises out of the corruption that is in man, and from the evil one that sows his tares amongst us.

After that Paul had spoken one word; Paul spake this eminent and remarkable word, or sentence, that they might (if possible) be pricked in their hearts at the hearing of God's judgments denounced against them.

Acts 28:26

Ver. 26. As their fathers did hear the many prophecies concerning the miseries and calamities which for their sins were to come upon them, as also concerning the Messiah which was to come, but did not believe them or entertain them as they ought; so these their children (through the righteous judgment of God) inherited their fathers' sins, and should be heirs also of their punishments. Thus we see, that *Scriptura prophetica saepius impletur*; and what was spoken and fulfilled in that generation so long before, was also in this so many hundred years after.

Acts 28:27

Ver. 27. Though God did forsake this people, (being first forsaken of them), and withdraw his gratuitous assistance from them, yet it is all justly charged upon them, they having by their sins said unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,* Job 21:14.

Their eyes have they closed; they winked, as those that were loth to see, though they could not but see, the truths Paul preached concerning the Messiah; prejudicate opinions and self-conceit hindering them from coming unto the acknowledgment of them.

I should heal them, or pardon them; for by guilt the soul is wounded.

Acts 28:28

Ver. 28. *The salvation of God;* so the gospel is called; because:

1. The finding of it out.
2. The preparing of it by sending his Son.
3. The revealing of it, and;

4. Its efficacy, is only of God.

Is sent unto the Gentiles; as by our Saviour's commission, Mt 28:19, and Lu 24:47, does appear. And Paul had by experience found the effects of it, as may be seen in all this book of his travels, where we may find many of the Gentiles were obedient unto the word, which the Jews gainsaid and blasphemed.

Acts 28:29

Ver. 29. Some accusing of Paul, others vindicating of him; some believing, as Ac 28:24, others not believing; our Saviour, and his gospel too, being for the rising and falling of many.

Acts 28:30

Ver. 30. Of what nation or quality soever they were, Paul preached salvation to them upon the gospel condition of faith and holiness; and in that imitated God and our Saviour, who refuse none that thus come unto him. And though Paul might have had greater security from trouble by the Jews if he would have desisted, yet a necessity was laid upon him, and a woe unto him if he did not preach the gospel, as 1Co 9:16, which may abundantly excuse and justify him.

Acts 28:31

Ver. 31. *The kingdom of God;* the gospel is so called; as also Paul preached that kingdom of God which is to come at the end of the world, which falls in with the subject he was so often upon, concerning the resurrection; which if men did but believe effectually, all the other ends of preaching would be easily obtained.

Those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ's precepts and miracles, his death and resurrection.

No man forbidding him: God, who puts bounds to the raging sea, had

stopped the Jews' malice, and bidden it go no further; and he who delivered Daniel from the lions, had delivered Paul from Nero, and would have delivered him, had not his death been more for the glory of God, and the good of Paul himself, than his life; which at last he offered in confirmation of the truths which he had preached; which he foresaw, 2Ti 4:6, and, as Eusebius says, it came to pass accordingly.

This book may be called, not only *πραξεις*, but *τερατα*; not only the Acts, but the wonders, of the Apostles: though the holy penman and the apostles meekly contented themselves with that name by which at present it is called, yet what wonders are contained in it! Not only such as were wrought *by* the apostles, but *for* them, to deliver, preserve, and encourage them; insomuch as the attempt to silence them, and to hinder the progress of the gospel preached by them, proved as vain as if men had endeavoured to hinder the sun from shining, or the wind from blowing.

Now unto him, who is able to work so as none can hinder, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen.