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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
ACTS

by Adam Clarke.

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

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

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

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

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments
A derivative of Adam Clarke's Commentary for the Online Bible

produced by

Sulu D. Kelley
1690 Old Harmony Dr.
Concord, NC 28027-8031
(704) 782-4377

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PREFACE TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE book of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES forms the *fifth*, and last, of the historical books of the New Testament. And on this account it has been generally placed at the end of the four Gospels; though in several MSS. and versions it is found at the end of St. Paul's Epistles, as many circumstances in them are referred to by the narrative contained in this book, which is carried down almost to the apostle's death.

This book has had a variety of names: **Πραξεις των Αποστολων**, the *Res Gestæ, Acts or Transactions of the Apostles*, is the title it bears in the *Codex Bezae*. **πραξεις των ἁγιων αποστολων**, *The Acts of the Holy Apostles*, is its title in the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and several others, as well as in several of the ancient versions, and in the Greek and Latin fathers. One or other form of the above title is followed by almost all the editors of the Greek Testament, and translators and commentators in general. By some it has been reckoned a *fifth* Gospel; and by *Æcumenius* it is termed, *The Gospel of the Holy Spirit*; and by *St. Chrysostom*, **το βιβλιον, αποδειξις αναστασεως**, *The Book, The Demonstration of the Resurrection*. These two last characters are peculiarly descriptive of its contents. All the promises which Christ gave of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are shown here to have been fulfilled in the most eminent manner; and, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, the *resurrection* of our blessed Lord has been fully demonstrated. The *calling of the Gentiles* is another grand point which is here revealed and illustrated. This *miracle of miracles*, as one terms it, which had been so frequently foretold by the prophets and by Christ himself, is here exhibited; and by this grand act of the power and goodness of God the Christian Church has been founded and thus the tabernacle and kingdom of God have been immutably established among men. It is truly a *fifth* Gospel, as it contains the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the whole Gentile world.

All antiquity is unanimous in ascribing this book to St. Luke as the author; and, from the commencement of it, we see plainly that it can be attributed to no other; and it seems plain that St. Luke intended it as a continuation of his Gospel, being dedicated to Theophilus, to whom he had dedicated the former; and to which, in the introduction to this, he expressly refers: indeed he has taken up the narrative, in this book precisely in the place where he

had dropped it in the other. *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, &c.*; and from this we may form a safe conjecture, that the two books were written at no greater a distance from each other than the time of the last occurrence recorded in this book. Some have supposed that this book was written from Alexandria; but this does not appear to be probable. The conjecture of Michaelis is much more likely, viz. that it was written from Rome, at which place St. Luke mentions his arrival, in company with St. Paul, shortly before the close of the book. See ~~42816~~ **Acts 28:16**.

Though the time in which the book of the Acts was written is not recorded, yet the same writer observes that, as it is continued to the end of the second year of St. Paul's imprisonment, it could not have been written *before* the year 63; and, had it been written *after* that year, it is reasonable to conclude that it would have related some farther particulars relative to St. Paul; or would at least have mentioned the event of his imprisonment, in which the reader is so much interested. This argument seems conclusive, in reference to the date of this book.

St. Luke's long attendance upon St. Paul, and his having been himself eye-witness to many of the facts which he has recorded, independently of his Divine inspiration, render him a most respectable and credible historian. His medical knowledge, for he is allowed to have been a physician, enabled him, as Professor Michaelis has properly observed, both to form a proper judgment of the miraculous cures which were performed by St. Paul, and to give an account and authentic detail of them. It is worthy also of observation that St. Luke himself does not appear to have possessed the gift of miraculous healing. Though there can be no doubt that he was with St. Paul when shipwrecked at Malta, yet he was not concerned in healing the father of Publius the governor; nor of the other sick persons mentioned ~~42818~~ **Acts 28:8, 9**. These were all healed by the prayers of St. Paul, and the imposition of his hands, and consequently miraculously; nor do we find any evidence that St. Luke was ever employed in this way. This is another proof of the wisdom of God: had the physician been employed to work miracles of healing, the excellence of the power would have been attributed to the *skill* of the man, and not to the *power* of his Maker.

The Acts of the Apostles have been generally considered in the light of a *Church History*, and, consequently, the first ecclesiastical history on

record; but Professor Michaelis very properly contends that it cannot have been intended as a general history of the Christian Church, even for the period of time it embraces, as it passes by all the transactions of the Church at Jerusalem, after the conversion of St. Paul; the propagation of Christianity in Egypt; Paul's journey into Arabia; the state of Christianity at Babylon; (^{<10613>}**1 Peter 5:13**;) the foundation of the Christian Church at Rome; several of St. Paul's voyages; his thrice suffering shipwreck, &c., &c. See more particulars in Lardner and Michaelis.

The object of St. Luke appears to have been twofold: 1. To relate in what manner the gifts of the Holy Spirit were communicated on the day of pentecost, and the subsequent miracles performed by the apostles, by which the truth of Christianity was confirmed. 2. To deliver such accounts as proved the claim of the Gentiles to admission into the Church of Christ; a claim disputed by the Jews, especially at the time when the Acts of the Apostles were written. Hence we see the reason why he relates, (^{<4080>}**Acts 8:1-25**, the conversion of the Samaritans; and ^{<4400>}**Acts 10:1-11:-18**, the story of Cornelius, and the determination of the council in Jerusalem relative to the Levitical law; and for the same reason he is more diffuse in his account of St. Paul's conversion, and his preaching to the Gentiles, than he is on any other subject. In such a restricted manner has St. Luke compiled his history, that Michaelis is of opinion that it was the intention of this apostle to record only those facts which he had either seen himself, or heard from eye witnesses. *Introduct.* vol. v. p. 326, &c.

The book of the Acts has been uniformly and universally received by the Christian Church in all places and ages: it is mentioned and quoted by almost every Christian writer, and its authenticity and importance universally admitted. Arator, a subdeacon in the Church at Rome, in the sixth century, turned it into verse. In ancient times, personal history and important transactions, in most nations, were generally thus preserved; as the facts, through the medium of *verse*, could be the more easily committed to memory.

St. Luke's narration bears every evidence of truth and authenticity. It is not a *made up* history. The language and manner of every speaker are different; and the same speaker is different in his manner, according to the audience he addresses. The speeches of Stephen, Peter, Cornelius, Tertullus, and Paul, are all different, and such as we might naturally expect from the characters in question, and the circumstances in which they were

at the time of speaking. St. Paul's speeches are also suited to the occasion, and to the persons before whom he spoke. When his audience was *heathen*, though he kept the same end steadily in view, yet how different is his mode of address from that used when before a *Jewish* audience! Several of these peculiarities, which constitute a strong evidence of the authenticity of the work, shall be pointed out in the notes. See some good remarks on this head, in *Michaelis' Introduction*, ubi supra.

As St. Luke has not annexed any date to the transactions he records, it is not a very easy matter to adjust the chronology of the Acts; but, as in some places he refers to political facts, the exact times of which are well known, the *dates* of several transactions in his narrative may be settled with considerable accuracy. It is well known, for instance that the *famine* mentioned ~~<4112>~~ **Acts 11:29, 30**, happened in the *fourth* year of the Emperor Claudius, which answers to the *forty-fourth* of the Christian era. From facts of this nature, dates may be derived with considerable accuracy: all such dates are carefully noted at the top of the column, as in the preceding parts of this Commentary; and the chronology is adjusted in the best manner possible. In some cases, *conjecture* and *probability* are the only lights by which this obscure passage can be illuminated. The dates of the *commencement* and the *end* of the book are tolerably certain; as the work certainly begins with the *twenty-ninth* year of the Christian era, ~~<4010>~~ **Acts 1:1** and ends probably with the *sixty-third*, ~~<4231>~~ **Acts 28:30**.

In the book of the Acts we see how the Church of Christ was formed and settled. The apostles simply proclaim the truth of God relative to the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and God accompanies their testimony with the demonstration of his Spirit. What was the consequence? Thousands acknowledge the truth, embrace Christianity, and openly profess it at the most imminent risk of their lives. The change is not a change of merely one religious sentiment or mode of worship for another; but a change of *tempers, passions, prospects, and moral conduct*. All before was *earthly, or animal, or devilish*; or all these together; but now all is *holy, spiritual, and Divine*: the heavenly influence becomes extended, and *nations* are born unto God. And how was all this brought about? Not by might nor power: not by the sword, nor by secular authority; not through worldly motives and prospects; not by pious frauds or cunning craftiness; not by the force of persuasive eloquence: in a word, by nothing but the sole influence of truth itself, attested to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherever religious frauds and secular influence have been

used to found or support a Church; professing itself to be *Christian, there*, we may rest assured, is the fullest evidence that that Church is wholly *antichristian*; and where such a Church, possessing *secular* power, has endeavoured to support itself by *persecution*, and persecution unto privation of *goods*, of *liberty*, and of *life*, it not only shows itself to be *antichristian*, but also *diabolic*. The religion of Christ stands in no need either of human cunning or power. It is the religion of God, and is to be propagated by his power: this the book of the Acts fully shows; and in it we find the true model, after which every Christian Church should be builded. As far as any Church can show that it has followed this model, so far it is holy and apostolic. And when *all* Churches or congregations of people professing Christianity, shall be founded and regulated according to the *doctrines* and *discipline* laid down in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, then the *aggregate body* may be justly called, *The Holy, Apostolic, and Catholic Church*.

The *simplicity* of the primitive Christian worship, as laid down in the book of the Acts, is worthy of particular notice and admiration. Here are no expensive ceremonies: no apparatus calculated merely to impress the senses, and produce emotions in the animal system, “to help,” as has been foolishly said, “the spirit of devotion.” The *heart* is the subject in which this spirit of devotion is kindled; and the *Spirit* of GOD alone is the agent that communicates and maintains the celestial fire; and God, who knows and searches that heart, is the object of its adoration, and the only source whence it expects the grace that pardons, sanctifies, and renders it happy. No strange fire can be brought to this altar: for the God of the Christians can be worshipped only in *spirit* and *truth*; the truth revealed, directing the worship; and the Spirit given, applying that truth, and giving life and energy to every faculty and power. Thus God was worshipped in his own way, and through his own power; every religious act, thus performed, was acceptable to him; the praises of his followers rose up as incense before the throne, and their prayers were heard and answered. As they had but one God, so they had but one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. They received him as the gift of God’s eternal love; sought and found redemption in his blood; and, in a holy and useful life, showed forth the virtues of Him who had called them from darkness into his marvellous light; for no profession of faith was then considered of any worth that was not supported by that love to God and man which is the fulfilling of the law, which is the life and soul of obedience to the Divine testimonies, and

the ceaseless spring of benevolence and humanity. This is the religion of Jesus Christ, as laid down and exemplified in this blessed book.

*“Ye different sects, who all declare,
LO! CHRIST is here, and CHRIST is there,
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show me where the Christians live.”*

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

- Usherian year of the world, 4033.
- Alexandrian æra of the world, 5531.
- Antiochian year of the world, 5521.
- Constantinopolitan year of the world, 5537.
- Year of the æra of the Seleucidæ, 341.
- Year of the Spanish æra, 67.
- Year of the Christian æra, 29.
- Year of the Paschal Cycle, 30.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle, 11.
- Golden Number, 8.
- Solar Cycle, 10.
- Dominical Letter, B.
- Jewish Passover, April 15.
- Epect, 20.
- Year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, 18.
- Year of the CCII. Olympiad, 1.
- Year of Rome, 782.
- Consuls, from Jan. 1, to July 1, L. Rubellius Geminus, and C. Rufius Geminus; and, for the remainder of the year, Aulus Plautius and L. Nonius Asprenas.

For an explanation of these æras, see the *Advertisement* prefixed to the Comment on the Gospel of St Matthew.

CHAPTER 1.

St. Luke's prologue, containing a repetition of Christ's history from his passion till his ascension, 1-9. Remarkable circumstances in the ascension, 10, 11. The return of the disciples to Jerusalem, and their employment there, 12-14. Peter's discourse concerning the death of Judas Iscariot, 15-20, and the necessity of choosing another apostle in his place, 21, 22. Barnabas and

Matthias being set apart by prayer, the apostles having given their votes, Matthias is chosen to succeed Judas, 23-26.

NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

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

O Theophilus] See Clarke's note on "~~2:1~~ Luke 1:3".

To do and teach] These two words comprise his *miracles* and *sermons*. This introduction seems to intimate that, as he had already in his *Gospel* given an account of the *life* and *actions* of our Lord, so in this *second treatise* he was about to give an account of the *lives* and *acts* of some of the *chief apostles*, such as *Peter* and *Paul*.

Verse 2. After that he, through the Holy Ghost, &c.] This clause has been variously translated: the simple meaning seems to be this—that Christ communicated the Holy Spirit to his disciples, after his resurrection, as he had not done before. In ~~24:45~~ **Luke 24:45**, it is said that *he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*; and in ~~3:17~~ **John 20:22**, that *he breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Previously to this, we may suppose that the disciples were only on particular occasions made partakers of the Holy Spirit; but from this time it is probable that they had a measure of this supernatural light and power *constantly resident* in them. By this they were not only able to proclaim the truth, but to discern the meaning of all the Old Testament Scriptures which referred to Christ; and to appoint whatever rites or ordinances were necessary for the establishment of his Church. There were many things which the apostles *said, did, and decreed*, for which they had no verbal instructions from our Lord, at least, none that are recorded in the Gospels; we may therefore conclude that these were suggested to them by that Holy Spirit which now became resident in them, and that it is to this that St. Luke refers in this verse, *After that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles*.

Verse 3. To whom-he showed himself alive-by many infallible proofs] πολλοῖς τεκμηριοῖς; by many proofs of such a nature, and connected with such circumstances, as to render them *indubitable*; for this is the import of the Greek word **τεκμηριον**. The proofs were such as these: 1. Appearing to several different persons at different times. 2. His eating and

drinking with them. 3. His meeting them in Galilee according to his own appointment. 4. His subjecting his body to be touched and handled by them. 5. His instructing them in the nature and doctrines of his kingdom. 6. His appearing to upwards of five hundred persons at once, ^{<4157>}**1 Corinthians 15:6**. And, 7. Continuing these public manifestations of himself for *forty* days.

The several appearances of Jesus Christ, during the forty days of his sojourning with his disciples, between his resurrection and ascension, are thus enumerated by Bishop Pearce: The *first* was to Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ^{<120>}**Matthew 28:1-9**. The *second*, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, ^{<2415>}**Luke 24:15**. The *third*, to Simon Peter, ^{<2234>}**Luke 24:34**. The *fourth*, to ten of the apostles, Thomas being absent, ^{<2236>}**Luke 24:36**, and ^{<3319>}**John 20:19**. (All these four appearances took place on the day of his resurrection.) The *fifth* was to the eleven disciples, Thomas being then with them, ^{<3315>}**John 20:26**. The *sixth*, to seven of the apostles in Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, ^{<3210>}**John 21:4**. The *seventh*, to James, ^{<4157>}**1 Corinthians 15:7**, most probably in Jerusalem, and when Jesus gave an order for all his apostles to *assemble together*, as in ^{<4010>}**Acts 1:4**. The *eighth*, when they were assembled together, and when he led them unto Bethany, ^{<2250>}**Luke 24:50**, from whence he ascended to heaven. But see Clarke's note on "^{<3214>}**John 21:14**", for farther particulars.

Pertaining to the kingdom of God] Whatever concerned the doctrine, discipline, and establishment of the Christian Church.

Verse 4. And, being assembled together] Instead of **συναλιζομενος**, *being assembled together*, several good MSS. and versions read **συναλιζομενος**, *living or eating together*, which refers the conversation reported here to some particular time, when he *sat at meat*, with his disciples. See ^{<11614>}**Mark 16:14**: ^{<2241>}**Luke 24:41-44**. See the *margin*. But probably the common reading is to be preferred; and the meeting on a mountain of Galilee is what is here meant.

The promise of the Father] The HOLY SPIRIT, which indeed was the grand promise of the New Testament, as JESUS CHRIST was of the Old. And as Christ was the grand promise of the Old Testament, during the whole continuance of the old covenant; so is the Holy Ghost, during the whole continuance of the new. As every pious soul that believed in the coming *Messiah*, through the medium of the *sacrifices* offered up under

the law, was made a partaker of the merit of his death, so every pious soul that believes in Christ crucified is made a partaker of the *Holy Spirit*. Thus, as the benefit of the death of Christ extended from the foundation of the world till his coming in the flesh, as well as after, so the *inspiration* of the *Holy Spirit* has been, and will be continued through the whole lapse of time, till his coming again to judge the world. It is by this Spirit that sin is made known, and by it the blood of the covenant is applied; and indeed, without this, the *want* of salvation cannot be discovered, nor the *value* of the blood of the covenant duly estimated. How properly do we still pray, and how necessary is the prayer, “*Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.*”
Communion Service.

Ye have heard of me.] In his particular conversations with his disciples, such as those related ^{<B1416>} **John 14:16-26; 15:26; 16:7-15;** to which passages, and the notes on them the reader is requested to refer: but it is likely that our Lord alludes more particularly to the conversation he had with them on one of the mountains of Galilee.

Verse 5. Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.] This must refer to some conversation that is not distinctly related by the evangelists; as these identical words do not occur in any of the preceding histories. The *Codex Bezae* reads this passage thus: *but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, which ye shall receive not many days hence.* John baptized with water, which was a sign of penitence, in reference to the remission of sin; but Christ baptizes with the Holy Ghost, for the destruction of sin, the illumination of the mind, and the consolation of the heart. John’s baptism was *in reference* to the spiritual kingdom; but Christ’s baptism *established* and *maintained* that kingdom. From this passage we may also learn that baptism does not always mean being *plunged* or *immersed* in water; for as this promise most evidently refers to the communication of the Holy Spirit on the following pentecost, and then he *sat upon each as a cloven tongue of fire*, this certainly has more affinity to *sprinkling* than to *plunging*. However, the mode of administering the sign is of very little consequence; and which is the best mode is exceedingly dubious: the stress should be laid on receiving the *thing* signified—the Holy Ghost, to *illuminate*, *regenerate*, *refine*, and *purify* the heart. With this, sprinkling or immersion are equally efficient: without this, both are worth nothing.

Verse 6. When they therefore were come together] It is very likely that this is to be understood of their assembling on one of the mountains of Galilee, and there meeting our Lord.

At this time restore again the kingdom] That the disciples, in common with the Jews, expected the Messiah's kingdom to be at least in part *secular*, I have often had occasion to note. In this opinion they continued less or more till the day of pentecost; when the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit taught them the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom had now for a considerable time been taken away from Israel; the Romans, not the Israelites, had the government. The object of the disciples' question seems to have been this: to gain information, from their all-knowing Master, whether the time was now fully come, in which the Romans should be thrust out, and Israel made, as formerly, an independent kingdom. But though the verb **αποκαθιστανειν** signifies to *reinstale*, to *renew*, to *restore* to a *former state* or *master*, of which numerous examples occur in the best Greek writers, yet it has also another meaning, as *Schoettgen* has here remarked, viz. of *ending*, *abolishing*, *blotting out*: so *Hesychius* says, **αποκαταστασις** is the same as **τελειωσις**, *finishing*, *making an end* of a thing. And *Hippocrates*, Aph. vi. 49, uses it to signify the *termination* of a disease. On this interpretation the disciples may be supposed to ask, having recollected our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the whole Jewish commonwealth, Lord, *Wilt thou at this time destroy the Jewish commonwealth*, which opposes thy truth, that thy kingdom may be set up over all the land? This interpretation agrees well with all the parts of our Lord's answer, and with all circumstances of the *disciples*, of *time*, and of *place*; but, still, the first is most probable.

Verse 7. The times or the seasons] **χρονους η καιρους**. Times here may signify any large portion of a *period*, *æra*, or *century*-such as an *Olympiad*, *lustrum* or *year*; and *seasons*, the particular *part*, *season*, or *opportunity* in that period, &c., in which it might be proper to do any particular work. God has not only fixed the great *periods* in which he will bring about those great revolutions which his wisdom, justice, and mercy have designed, but he leaves himself at full liberty to choose those particular portions of such periods as may be best for the accomplishment of those purposes. Thus God is no necessary agent-every thing is *put in his own power*, **εν τη ιδια εξουσια**, under his control and authority; nor will he form decrees of which he must become the *necessary* executor. The infinite *liberty* of

acting or not acting, as wisdom, justice, and goodness shall see best, is essential to God, nor can there be a point in the whole of his eternity in which he *must* be the *necessary agent* of a fixed and unalterable *fate*. Infinite, eternal liberty to act or not to act, to create or not create, to destroy or not destroy, belongs to God alone, and we must take care how we imagine decrees, formed even by his own prescience, in reference to futurity, which his power is from the moment of their conception laid under the *necessity* of performing. In every point of time and eternity, God must be *free* to act or not to act, as may seem best to his godly wisdom.

Verse 8. But ye shall receive power] ληψεσθε δυναμιν. Translating different terms of the original by the *same* English word is a source of misapprehension and error. We must not understand δυναμις which we translate *power* in this verse, as we do εξουσια, translated by the same word in the preceding verse. In the one, God's infinite *authority* over all times and seasons, and his uncompellable liberty of acting or not acting in any given case, are particularly pointed out: in the other, the *energy* communicated by him to his disciples, through which they were enabled to *work miracles*, is particularly intended; and δυναμις, in general, signifies such power, and is sometimes put for *that* of which it is the *cause*, viz. a *miracle*. See ^{<4072>}Matthew 7:22; 11:20-23; ^{<4134>}Matthew 13:54, 58; ^{<4105>}Mark 6:5; ^{<2103>}Luke 10:13; and ^{<4122>}Acts 2:22. The disciples were to be made instruments in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ; but this must be by the *energy* of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; nevertheless, this energy would be given in such times and seasons, and in such measures, as should appear best to the infinite wisdom of God. Christ does not immediately answer the question of the disciples, as it was a point savouring too much of mere curiosity; but he gave them such information as was calculated to bring both their faith and hope into action. St. Chrysostom has well observed, "that it is the prerogative of an instructor to teach his disciple, not what *he* wishes to learn, but what his *master* sees best for him:" διδασκαλου τουτο εστι μη α βουλευεται ο μαθητης, αλλ α συμφερει μαθειν, διδασκειν.

Ye shall be witnesses-in all Judea, &c.] Though the word *earth*, η γη, is often used to denote Judea alone, yet here, it is probable, it is to be taken in its largest extent. All the inhabitants of the globe might at that period be considered divisible into three classes. 1. The JEWS, who adhered to the law of Moses, and the prophetic writings, worshipping the true God only, and keeping up the temple service, as prescribed in their law. 2. The

SAMARITANS, a mongrel people, who worshipped the God of Israel in connection with other gods, ^{<12705>}**2 Kings 17:5**, &c., and who had no kind of religious connection with the Jews. See on ^{<0015>}**Matthew 10:5**. And, 3. The GENTILES, the *heathens* through all other parts of the world, who were addicted to *idolatry* alone, and had no knowledge of the true God. By the terms in the text we may see the extent to which this commission of instruction and salvation was designed to reach: to the *Jews*; to the *Samaritans*, and the *uttermost part of the earth*, i.e. to the *Gentile* nations, thus, to the *whole human race* the Gospel of the kingdom was to be proclaimed. When the twelve disciples were sent out to preach, ^{<0015>}**Matthew 10:5**, their commission was very *limited*—they were not to go *in the way of the Gentiles*, nor *enter into any city of the Samaritans*, but preach the Gospel to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*: but here their commission is *enlarged*, for they are to go into *all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*. See ^{<0218>}**Matthew 28:18**.

Verse 9. He was taken up] He was speaking face to face with them, and *while they beheld* he was taken up; he began to ascend to heaven, and they continued to look after him till *a cloud received him out of their sight*—till he had ascended above the region of the clouds, by the density of which all farther distinct vision was prevented. These circumstances are very remarkable, and should be carefully noted. They render insupportable the theory that states, “that our Lord did not ascend to heaven; that his being *taken up* signifies his going into some mountain, the top of which was covered with clouds, or thick vapours; and that the *two men in white garments* were two *priests*, or *Levites*, who simply informed the disciples of his revisiting them again at some future time.” One would suppose that an opinion of this kind could hardly ever obtain credit among people professing *Christianity*; and yet it is espoused by some men of considerable learning and ingenuity. But the mere letter of the text will be ever sufficient for its total confutation. He that believes the text cannot receive such a miserable comment. *Foreign* critics and divines take a most sinful *latitude* on subjects of this kind.

Verse 10. Looked steadfastly] Keeping their eyes intensely fixed on their ascending Lord; continuing to look even after he had ascended above the region of the inferior clouds.

Two men stood by them] Doubtless, *angels* in human shape.

In white apparel] As emblematical of their *purity, happiness, and glory*.

Verse 11. Gazing up into heaven] Not to the top of a mountain, to which an unbridled fancy, influenced by infidelity, would intimate he had ascended, and not to heaven.

This same Jesus] Clothed in human nature. *shall so come in like manner*-with the same body, *descending* from heaven by his sovereign and all-controlling power, *as ye have seen him go into heaven*. Thus shall he come again to judge the quick and the dead. It was a very ancient opinion among Christians, that when Christ should come again to judge the world he would make his appearance on Mount *Olivet*. Some think that his coming again to destroy the Jewish nation is what the angels refer to. See a connected account of the different appearances of Christ at the end of this chapter.

Verse 12. A Sabbath day's journey.] See the difficulties in this verse explained in **Clarke's note on** "^{<245>}**Luke 24:50**". A Sabbath day's journey was *seven furlongs and a half*. Olivet was but *five furlongs* from Jerusalem; and Bethany was *fifteen*. The first region or tract of Mount Olivet, which was called *Bethany*, was distant from the city a Sabbath day's journey, or seven furlongs and a half; and the same distance did that tract called *Bethphage* extend from the city. When, therefore; our Lord came to the place where these two tracts touched each other, he there ascended, which place was distant from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey, as St. Luke here remarks. See the notes referred to above.

Verse 13. They went up into an upper room] This was either a room in the *temple*, or in the house of one of the disciples, where this holy company was accustomed to meet. In ^{<245>}**Luke 24:53**, it is said that, after their return from Mount Olivet, *they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*: it is probable, therefore, that the *upper room* mentioned in this verse is that apartment of the temple mentioned above. But still it is not certain that this place should be so understood; as we have the fullest proofs that the *upper rooms* in private houses were used for the purpose of reading the law, and conferring together on religious matters. See several proofs in *Lightfoot*. Add to this, that the room here mentioned seems to have been the place where all the apostles lodged, **ου ησαν καταμενοντες**, and therefore most probably a *private house*.

Verse 14. These-continued-in prayer and supplication] Waiting for the promise of the Father, according to the direction of our Lord, ^{<244>}**Luke**

24:49. The words **και τη δεησει**, and in supplication, are omitted by ABC*DE, both the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, and some of the primitive fathers. On this evidence, *Griesbach* has left them out of the text; and others contend for the propriety of this omission, because, say they, **τη προσευχη** and **τη δεησει**, prayer and supplication, mean the same thing. Whether the reading be genuine or spurious, this inference is not just. Prayer may simply imply any address to God, in the way of petition or request; supplication, the earnest, affectionate, and continued application to God for the blessing requested from him by prayer. Prayer asks, supplication expostulates, entreats, urges and re-urges the petition.

With the women] Probably those who had been witnesses of his resurrection, with the immediate relatives of the apostles. Peter we know was married, ^{<40814>}**Matthew 8:14**, and so might others of the disciples; and therefore the wives of the apostles, as well as of other pious men, may be here intended.

Verse 15. In the midst of the disciples] **μαθητων**; but instead of this, **αδελφων**, brethren, is the reading of ABC, a few others, with the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*. This seems the best reading, because of what immediately follows; for it was not among the disciples merely that he stood, but among the whole company, which amounted to one hundred and twenty. It is remarkable that this was the number which the Jews required to form a council in any city; and it is likely that in reference to this the disciples had gathered together, with themselves, the number of one hundred and twenty, chosen out of the many who had been already converted by the ministry of our Lord, the twelve disciples, and the seventy-two whom he had sent forth to preach, ^{<21001>}**Luke 10:1**, &c., thus they formed a complete council in presence of which the important business of electing a person in the place of Judas was to be transacted.

Verse 16. The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David] Thus is a strong attestation to the Divine inspiration of the book of Psalms. They were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and spoken by the mouth of David.

Verse 17. Obtained part of this ministry.] **ελαχε τον κληρον**, He obtained the lot of this ministry-not that he or any of the twelve apostles, was chosen to this ministry by lot, but as lot signifies the portion a man has in life, what comes to him in the course of the Divine providence, or as an

especial *gift of God's goodness*, it is used here, as in many other parts of the sacred writings, to signify *office* or *station*. On this subject the reader is referred to the notes on ^{<B1618>}**Leviticus 16:8, 9**; ^{<614D>}**Joshua 14:2**: see also ^{<40126>}**Acts 1:26**.

Verse 18. Purchased a field with the reward of iniquity] Probably Judas did not purchase the field himself, but the money for which he sold his Lord was thus applied, see ^{<4276>}**Matthew 27:6-8**. It is possible, however, that he might have designed to purchase a field or piece of ground with this reward of his iniquity, and might have been in treaty far it, though he did not close the bargain, as his bringing the money to the treasury proves: the priests, knowing his intentions, might have completed the purchase, and, as Judas was now dead, applied the field thus bought for the burial of *strangers*, i.e. Jews from foreign parts, or others who, visiting Jerusalem, had died there. Though this case is possible, yet the passage will bear a very consistent interpretation without the assistance of this conjecture; for, in ordinary conversation, we often attribute to a man what is the *consequence* of his own actions, though such consequence was never designed nor wished for by himself: thus we say of a man embarking in a hazardous enterprise, *he is gone to seek his death*; of one whose conduct has been ruinous to his reputation, *he has disgraced himself*; of another who has suffered much in consequence of his crimes, *he has purchased repentance at a high price*, &c., &c. All these, though *undesigned*, were *consequences* of certain acts, as the *buying of the field* was the consequence of Judas's treason.

And falling headlong, he burst asunder] It is very likely that the 18th and 19th verses {^{<40118>}**Acts 1:18, 19**} are not the words of Peter, but of the historian, St. Luke, and should be read in a parenthesis, and then the 17th and 20th verses {^{<40117>}**Acts 1:17, 20**} will make a connected sense. (In the case of Judas, and the *manner* of his death, see the observations at the end of this chapter. See Clarke "^{<40126>}**Acts 1:26**".

Verse 19. It was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem] The repentance of Judas, his dying testimony in behalf of our Lord's innocence, and his tragical death, were publicly known, as was also the transaction about the purchase of the field, and hence arose the name by which it was publicly known. These circumstances must have lessened the credit of the chief priests, and have prepared the public mind to receive the Gospel of the kingdom, when preached to them after the day of pentecost.

That field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama] This *proper tongue* was not the Hebrew; that had long ceased to be the *proper tongue* in Palestine: it was a sort of Chaldaio-Syriac which was commonly spoken. The word in the Syriac version is [Syriac] *chacal-demo*, and literally signifies *the field of blood*; because it was bought by the price of the *life* or *blood* of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 20. For it is written in the book of Psalms] The places usually referred to are ^{<19825>}**Psalm 69:25:** *Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents.* And ^{<19908>}**Psalm 109:8:** *Let his days be few, and let another take his office,* **wt dqd** *pekudato*, his *overseership*, his *charge of visitation* or *superintendence*, translated by the SEPTUAGINT, **την επισκοπήν**, VULGATE, *episcopatum*; and WE, following both, *bishopric*, but not with sufficient propriety, for surely the office or charge of Judas was widely different from what we call *bishopric*, the diocess, estate, and emoluments of a bishop. **επισκοπος**, *episcopos*, which was corrupted by our Saxon ancestors into [Anglo-Saxon], *biscop*, and by us into *bishop*, signifies literally an *overseer* or *superintendent*, from **επι**, *over*, and **σκεπτομαι**, *I see*, a person who had the *inspection*, *overseeing*, or *superintendence* of others. The ancient **επισκοποι** were persons who had the care of different congregations of the Church of Christ; who travelled, preached, enforced the discipline of the Church, and took care to prevent false doctrines, heresies, &c. Those who still deserve this title, and it is an august and noble one, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. **επισκοπος**, *episcopus*, or *bishop*, is a scriptural and sacred title; was gloriously supported in the primitive Church; and many to the present day are not less ornaments to the title, than the title is ornamental to them. The best defenses of the truth of God, and the Protestant faith, are in the works of the bishops of the *British Churches*.

The words quoted from the *Psalms* were originally spoken against the enemies of David; and as David, in certain particulars, was a type of Christ, the words are applied to *him* in an especial manner who had sinned against his own soul and the life of his Master.

Verse 21. Which have companied with us] They judged it necessary to fill up this blank in the apostolate by a person who had been an *eye witness* of the acts of our Lord.

Went in and out] A phrase which includes all the actions of life.

Verse 22. Beginning from the baptism of John] From the time that Christ was baptized by John in Jordan; for it was at that time that his public ministry properly began.

Must one be ordained] This translation misleads every reader who cannot examine the original text. There is no term for *ordained* in the Greek: **γενεσθαι**, *to be*, is the only word in the verse to which this interpretation can be applied. The New Testament printed at London, by Robert Barker, the king's printer, in 1615, renders this and the preceding verse more faithfully and more clearly than our common version: *Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus was conversant among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day he was taken up from us, must one of them BE MADE a witness with us of his resurrection.* The word *ordained* would naturally lead most readers to suppose that some ecclesiastical *rite* was used on the occasion, such as *imposition of hands*, &c., although nothing of the kind appears to have been employed.

Verse 23. They appointed two] These two were probably of the number of the seventy disciples; and, in this respect, well fitted to fill up the place. It is likely that the disciples themselves were divided in opinion which of these two was the most proper person, and therefore laid the matter before God, that he might decide it by the *lot*. No more than *two candidates* were presented; probably because the attention of the brethren had been drawn to those two alone, as having been most intimately acquainted with our Lord, or in being better qualified for the work than any of the rest; but they knew not which to prefer.

Joseph called Barsabas] Some MSS. read *Joses Barnabas*, making him the same with *Joses Barnabas*, ^{<4036>}**Acts 4:36**. But the person *here* is distinguished from the person *there*, by being called *Justus*.

Verse 24. Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts] **συ, κυριε, καρδιογνωστα**. The word **καρδιογνωστης**, *the searcher of hearts*, seems to be used here as an *attribute* of God; he *knows the hearts*, the most *secret purposes, intentions, and dispositions* of all men; and because he is the *knower of hearts*, he knew which of these men he had qualified the best, by *natural and gracious dispositions and powers*, for the important work to which one of them was now to be appointed.

Verse 25. That he may take part of this ministry, &c.] Instead of **τον κληρον**, *the lot*, which we translate *part*, **τον τοπον**, *the place*, is the reading of ABC*, *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, and the *Itala* in the *Codex Bezae*, and from them the verse may be read thus, *That he may take the place of this ministry and apostleship, (from which Judas fell) and go to his own place*; but instead of **ιδιον**, *own*, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and one of Matthai's MSS., read **δικαιον**, *just-that he might go to his just or proper place*.

This verse has been variously expounded: 1. Some suppose that the words, *that he might go to his own place*, are spoken of Judas, and his punishment in *hell*, which they say must be the *own place* of such a person as Judas.

2. Others refer them to the purchase of the field, made by the thirty pieces of silver for which he had sold our Lord. So he abandoned *the ministry and apostolate*, *that he might go to his own place*, viz. that which he had purchased.

3. Others, with more seeming propriety, state that his *own place* means his *own house*, or *former occupation*; he left this ministry and apostleship that he might resume his former employment in conjunction with his family, &c. This is primarily the meaning of it in ^{<0225>}**Numbers 24:25**: *And Balaam returned to HIS OWN PLACE*, i.e. to his own country, friends, and employment.

4. Others think it simply means the *state of the dead* in general, independently of either *rewards* or *punishments*; as is probably meant by ^{<0103>}**Ecclesiastes 3:20**: *All go unto ONE PLACE: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*.

But, 5. Some of the best critics assert that the words (as before hinted) belong to Matthias-*his own place* being the office to which he was about to be elected. Should any object, this could not be called *his own place*, because he was not yet *appointed* to it, but *hell* might be properly called Judas's *own place*, because, by treason and covetousness, he was fully prepared for that place of torment, it may be answered, that the *own* or *proper place* of a man is that for which he is *eligible* from being qualified for it, though he may not yet possess such a place: so St. Paul, *Every man shall receive HIS OWN reward*, **τον ιδιον μισθον**, called there *his own*, not from his *having* it already in *possession*, for that was not to take place until the resurrection of the just; but from his being *qualified* in this life for

the state of glory in the other. See the observations at the end of the chapter. See Clarke “^{<4012>}Acts 1:26”.

Verse 26. They gave forth their lots] In what manner this or any other question was decided by lot, we cannot precisely say. The most simple form was to put two *stones*, pieces of *board*, *metal*, or *slips of parchment*, with the names of the persons inscribed on them, into an urn; and after prayer, sacrifice, &c., to put in the hand and draw out one of the lots, and then the case was decided. I have considered this subject at large on ^{<6108>}Leviticus 16:8, 9; and ^{<0642>}Joshua 14:2.

He was numbered with the eleven apostles.] The word *συγκατεψηφισθη*, comes from *συν*, *together with*, *κατα*, *according to*, and *ψηφος*, a *pebble* or *small stone*, used for *lots*, and as a means of *enumeration* among the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians; hence the words *calculate*, *calculation*, &c., from *calculus*, a small stone or pebble. From this use of the word, though it signifies in general *to sum up*, *associate*, &c., we may conjecture that the calculus or pebble was used on this occasion. The brethren agreed that the matter should be determined by lot; the lots were cast into the urn; God was entreated to direct the choice; one drew out a lot; the person whose name was inscribed on it was thereby declared to be the object of God’s choice, and accordingly associated with the disciples. But it is possible that the whole was decided by what we commonly call *ballot*, God inclining the hearts of the majority to ballot for Matthias. Nothing *certain* can, however, be stated on this head. Thus the number *twelve* was made up, that these might be the *fountains* under God of the whole *Christian Church*, as the *twelve* sons of Jacob had been of the *Jewish Church*. For it has already been remarked that our Lord formed his Church on the model of the Jewish. See Clarke’s notes on “^{<3170>}John 17:1”, &c. As the Holy Ghost, on the day of pentecost, was to descend upon them and endue them with power from on high, it was necessary that the number *twelve* should be filled up previously, that the newly elected person might also be made partaker of the heavenly gift. How long it was found necessary to keep up the number twelve, we are not informed: the original number was soon broken by persecution and death.

ON the death of Judas there is a great diversity of opinion among learned men and divines.

1. It is supposed, following the bare letter of the text, that Judas *hanged himself*, and that, the rope breaking, he fell down, was burst with the fall, and thus *his bowels gushed out*.
2. That, having hanged himself, he was thrown on the *dunghill*, and, the carcass becoming putrid, the abdomen, which soonest yields to putrefaction burst, and the bowels were thus shed from the body, and possibly torn out by dogs.
3. That, being filled with horror and despair, he went to the top of the house, or to some eminences and threw himself down; and thus, *failing headlong*, his body was broken by the fall, and *his bowels gushed out*.
4. That Satan, having entered into him, caught him up in the air, and thence precipitated him to the earth; and thus, his body being broken to pieces, *his bowels gushed out*. This is Dr. Lightfoot's opinion, and has been noticed on ^{<4276>}**Matthew 27:5**.
5. Others think that he died or was *suffocated* through excessive grief; and that thus the terms in the text, and in ^{<4276>}**Matthew 27:5**, are to be understood. The late Mr. *Wakefield* defends this meaning with great learning and ingenuity.

6. Others suppose the expressions to be figurative: Judas having been *highly exalted*, in being an apostle, and even the *purse-bearer* to his Lord and brother disciples, by his treason forfeited this honour, and is represented as *falling* from a state of the *highest dignity* into the *lowest infamy*, and then dying through excessive grief. The Rev. *John Jones*, in his *Illustrations of the four Gospels*, sums up this opinion thus: "So sensible became the traitor of the distinguished rank which he forfeited, and of the deep disgrace into which he precipitated himself, by betraying his Master, that he was seized with such violent grief as occasioned the rupture of his bowels, and ended in suffocation and death." P. 571.

After the most mature consideration of this subject, on which I hesitated to form an opinion in the note, see Clarke "^{<4276>}**Matthew 27:5**", I think the following observations may lead to a proper knowledge of the most probable state of the case. 1. Judas, like many others, thought that the kingdom of the Messiah would be a *secular* kingdom; and that his own secular interests must be promoted by his attachment to Christ. Of this mind all the disciples seem to have been, previously to the resurrection of Christ. 2. From long observation of his Master's conduct, he was now

convinced that he intended to erect no such kingdom; and that consequently the expectations which he had built on the contrary supposition must be ultimately disappointed. 3. Being *poor* and *covetous*, and finding there was no likelihood of his profiting by being a disciple of Christ, he formed the resolution (probably at the instigation of the chief priests) of betraying him for a sum of money sufficient to purchase a small inheritance, on which he had already cast his eye. 4. Well knowing the uncontrollable power of his Master, he might take it for granted that, though betrayed, he would extricate himself from their hands; and that they would not be capable of putting him either to *pain* or *death*. 5. That having betrayed him, and finding that he did not exert his power to deliver himself out of the hands of the Jews, and seeing, from their implacable malice, that the murder of his most innocent Master was likely to be the consequence, he was struck with deep compunction at his own conduct, went to the chief priests, confessed his own profligacy, proclaimed the innocence of his Master, and returned the money for which he had betrayed him; probably hoping that they might be thus influenced to proceed no farther in this unprincipled business, and immediately dismiss Christ. 8. Finding that this made no impression upon them, from their own words, *What is that to us? See thou to that*, and that they were determined to put Jesus to death, seized with horror at his crime and its consequences, the remorse and agitation of his mind produced a violent dysentery, attended with powerful inflammation; (which, in a great variety of cases, has been brought on by strong mental agitation;) and while the distressful *irritation* of his bowels obliged him to withdraw for relief, he was overwhelmed with grief and affliction, and, having fallen from the *seat*, his bowels were found to have gushed out, through the strong spasmodic affections with which the disease was accompanied. I have known cases of this kind, where the bowels appeared to come literally away by piece meal.

Now; when we consider that the word *ἀπηξάτο*, ^{<41715>} **Matthew 27:5**, which we translate *hanged himself*, is by the very best critics thus rendered, *was choked*, and that the words of the sacred historian in this place, *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*, may be no other than a *delicate* mode of expressing the circumstance to which I have alluded under observation 6, perhaps this way of reconciling and explaining the evangelist and historian will appear, not only probable, but the most likely. To strengthen this interpretation, a few facts may be adduced of deaths brought about in the same way with

that in which I suppose Judas to have perished. The death of *Jehoram* is thus related, ^{<42118>}**2 Chronicles 21:18, 19:** *And after all this, the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease: and it came to pass that, after the end of two years, HIS BOWELS FELL OUT, by reason of his sickness; so he died of sore diseases; ׀׀׀ j tb bethachaluim, with inflammations, or ulcers.* The death of *Herod* was probably of the same kind, ^{<41223>}**Acts 12:23.** That of *Aristobulus*, as described by Josephus, **WAR**, book i. chap. 3, is of a similar nature. Having murdered his mother and brother, his mind was greatly terrified, and his bowels being *torn with excruciating torments, he voided much blood*, and died in miserable agonies. Again, in his **ANTIQ.** book xv. chap. 10., sect. 3, he thus describes the death of *Zenodorus*: “*His bowels bursting, and his strength exhausted by the loss of much blood, he died at Antioch in Syria.*”

Taking it for granted that the death of Judas was *probably* such as related above, collating all the facts and evidences together, can any hope be formed that he died *within the reach of mercy*? Let us review the whole of these transactions.

I. It must be allowed that his crime was *one* of the most inexcusable ever committed by man: nevertheless, it has some *alleviations*. 1. It is possible that he did not think his Master *could be hurt* by the Jews. 2. When he found that he did not use his power to extricate himself from their hands, he deeply relented that he had betrayed him. 3. He gave every evidence of the *sincerity* of his repentance, by going openly to the Jewish rulers: (1.) Confessing his own guilt; (2.) asserting the innocence of Christ; (3.) returning the money which he had received from them; and there (4.) the genuineness of his regret was proved by its being the cause of his death.

But, II. Judas might have acted a much *worse* part than he did: 1. By *persisting* in his wickedness. 2. By slandering the character of our Lord both to the Jewish rulers and to the Romans; and, had he done so, his testimony would have been credited, and our Lord would then have been put to death as a *malefactor, on the testimony of one of his own disciples*; and thus the character of Christ and his Gospel must have suffered extremely in the sight of the world, and these very circumstances would have been pleaded against the authenticity of the Christian religion by every infidel in all succeeding ages. And, 3. Had he persisted in his evil way, he might have lighted such a flame of persecution against the infant cause of Christianity as must, without the intervention of God, have ended in its

total destruction: now, he neither did, nor endeavoured to do, any of these things. In other cases these would be powerful pleadings.

Judas was indisputably a *bad man*; but he might have been *worse*: we may plainly see that there were *depths of wickedness* to which he might have proceeded, and which were prevented by his repentance. Thus things appear to stand previously to his end. But is there any room for *hope* in his *death*? In answer to this it must be understood, 1. That there is presumptive evidence that he did not *destroy himself*; and, 2. That his repentance was sincere. If so, was it not possible for the mercy of God to extend even to his case? It did so to the murderers of the Son of God; and they were certainly *worse* men (strange as this assertion may appear) than Judas. Even *he* gave them the fullest proof of Christ's innocence: their buying the field with the money Judas threw down was the full proof of it; and yet, with every convincing evidence before them, they crucified our Lord. They excited Judas to betray his Master, and crucified him when they had got him into their power; and therefore St. Stephen calls *them* both the *betrayers and murderers of that Just One*, ^{<407>}Acts 7:52: in these respects they were more deeply criminal than Judas himself; yet even to those very betrayers and murderers Peter preaches *repentance*, with the promise of *remission of sins*, and the gift of the *Holy Ghost*, ^{<408>}Acts 3:12-26. If, then, *these* were within the reach of mercy, and we are informed that *a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith*, ^{<409>}Acts 6:7, then certainly Judas was not in such a state as precluded the *possibility* of his salvation. Surely the blood of the covenant could wash out even *his* stain, as it did that more *deeply engrained* one of the other betrayers and murderers of the Lord Jesus.

Should the 25th verse be urged against this *possibility*, because it is there said that Judas *fell from his ministry and apostleship, that he might go to his own place*, and that this *place* is *hell*; I answer, 1. It remains to be proved that this *place* means *hell*; and, 2. It is not clear that the words are spoken of *Judas* at all, but of *Matthias*: *his own place* meaning that vacancy in the apostolate to which he was then elected. See **Clarke's note on** ^{<412>}Acts 1:25".

To say that the repentance of Judas was merely the effect of his *horror*; that it did not spring from compunction of *heart*; that it was *legal*, and not *evangelical*, &c., &c., is saying what none can with propriety say, but God himself, who searches the heart. What renders his case most desperate are

the words of our Lord, ~~403b~~ **Matthew 26:24**: *Wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born!* I have considered this saying in a general point of view in my note on ~~403b~~ **Matthew 26:24**; and, were it not a *proverbial* form of speech among the Jews, to express the state of any *flagrant* transgressor, I should be led to apply it in all its *literal* import to the case of Judas, as I have done, in the above note, to the case of *any* damned soul; but when I find that it was a proverbial saying, and that it has been used in many cases where the fixing of the irreversible doom of a sinner is not implied, it may be capable of a more favourable interpretation than what is generally given to it. I shall produce a few of those examples from *Schoettgen*, to which I have referred in my note, see Clarke on "~~403b~~ **Matthew 26:24**".

In CHAGIGAH, fol. ii. 2, it is said: "Whoever considers these four things, *it would have been better for him had he never come into the world*, viz. That which is *above*-that which is *below*-that which is *before*-and that which is *behind*; and whosoever does not attend to the honour of his Creator, *it were better for him had he never been born.*"

In SHEMOTH RABBA, sect. 40, fol. 135, 1, 2, it is said: "Whosoever knows the law, and does not do it, *it had been better for him had he never come into the world.*"

In VIYIKRA RABBA, sect. 36, fol. 179, 4, and MIDRASH COHELETH, fol. 91, 4, it is thus expressed: "*It were better for him had he never been created; and it would have been better for him had he been strangled in the womb, and never have seen the light of this world.*"

In SOHAR GENES. fol. 71, col. 282, it is said: "If any man be parsimonious towards the poor, *it had been better for him had he never come into the world.*" *Ibid.* fol. 84, col. 333: "If any performs the law, not for the sake of the law, *it were good for that man had he never been created.*" These examples sufficiently prove that this was a common proverb, and is used with a great variety and latitude of meaning, and seems intended to show that the case of such and such persons was not only very deplorable, but extremely dangerous; but does not imply the positive impossibility either of their repentance or salvation.

The utmost that can be said for the case of Judas is this he committed a heinous act of sin and ingratitude; but he repented, and did what he could to undo his wicked act: he had committed the sin unto death, i.e. a sin that

involves the death of the body; but who can say (if mercy was offered to Christ's murderers, and the Gospel was first to be preached at Jerusalem that *these* very murderers might have the first offer of salvation through him whom they had pierced) that the same mercy could not be extended to the wretched Judas? I contend that the chief priests, &c., who instigated Judas to deliver up his Master, and who crucified him-and who crucified him too as a *malefactor*-having at the same time the most indubitable evidence of his *innocence*, were *worse* men than Judas Iscariot himself; and that, if mercy was extended to those, the wretched penitent traitor did not die out of the reach of the yearning of its bowels. And I contend, farther, that there is no positive evidence of the final damnation of Judas in the sacred text.

I hope it will not displease the *humane* reader that I have entered so deeply into the consideration of this most deplorable case. I would not set up knowingly any plea against the *claims of justice*; and God forbid that a *sinner* should be found capable of pleading against the *cries of mercy* in behalf of a fellow culprit! Daily, innumerable cases occur of persons who are betraying the cause of God, and selling, in effect, Christ and their souls for money. Every *covetous* man, who is living for this world alone, is of this stamp. And yet, while they live, we do not despair of their salvation, though they are continually repeating the sin of Judas, with all its guilt and punishment before their eyes! Reader! learn from thy Lord this lesson, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*. The case is before the Judge, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

ACTS

CHAPTER 2.

The day of pentecost being arrived, and the disciples assembled, the Holy Spirit descended as a mighty rushing wind, and in the likeness of fiery tongues sat upon them; in consequence of which, they were all enabled to speak different languages, which they had never learned, 1-4. An account of persons from various countries who there present, and were astonished to hear the apostles declare the wonderful works of God in their respective languages, 5-12. Some cavil, 13, and are confounded by Peter, who asserts that this work is of God; and that thereby a most important prophecy was fulfilled, 14-21. He takes occasion from this to preach Jesus to them, as the true Lord and only Messiah, 22-36. The people are alarmed and convinced, and inquire what they shall do, 37. He exhorts them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, that they may receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, 38-40. They gladly receive his word, about three thousand are baptized and added to the Church in one day; they continue steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, 41, 42. The apostles work many miracles; and the disciples have all things in common, and live in a state of great happiness and Christian fellowship, 43-47.

NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

Verse 1. When the day of pentecost was fully come] The feast of pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the passover, and has its name **πεντηκοστη** from **πεντηκοντα**, fifty, which is compounded of **πεντε**, five, and **ηκοντα**, the decimal termination. It commenced on the fiftieth day reckoned from the first day of unleavened bread, i.e. on the morrow after the paschal lamb was offered. The law relative to this feast is found in ^{<R2315>}**Leviticus 23:15, 16**, in these words: *And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days.* This feast was instituted in commemoration of the giving the law on Mount Sinai; and is therefore sometimes called by the Jews, **hrwt tj mv shimchath torah**, the joy of the law, and frequently the feast of weeks. There is a correspondence between the giving of the law, which is celebrated by this feast of pentecost, together with the crucifixion of our Lord, which took place at the passover, and this descent of the Holy Spirit, which happened at this pentecost. 1. At the passover, the Israelites were delivered from

Egyptian bondage: this was a type of the thralldom in which the human race were to Satan and sin. 2. At the passover Jesus Christ, who was typified by the paschal lamb, was sacrificed for the sin of the world, and by this sacrifice redemption from sin and Satan is now procured and proclaimed. 3. On the pentecost, God gave his law on Mount Sinai, accompanied with thunderings and lightnings. On the pentecost, God sent down his Holy Spirit, like a rushing mighty wind; and tongues of fire sat upon each disciple, in order that, by his influence, that *new law of light and life* might be promulgated and established. Thus, the analogy between the Egyptian bondage and the thralldom occasioned by sin-the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption from sin-the giving of the law, with all its emblematic accompaniments, and the sending down the Holy Spirit, with its symbols of light, life, and power, has been exactly preserved. 4. At the Jewish passover, Christ was degraded, humbled, and ignominiously put to death: at the following festival, the pentecost, he was highly *glorified*; and the all conquering and ever during might of his kingdom then commenced. The Holy Spirit seems to have designed all these analogies, to show that, through all preceding ages, God had the dispensation of the Gospel continually in view; and that the *old law* and its ordinances were only designed as preparatives for the new.

They were all with one accord in one place.] It is probable that the ALL here mentioned means the one hundred and twenty spoken of ^{<4015>}Acts 1:15, who were all together at the election of Matthias. *With one accord, ομοθυμαδον*; this word is very expressive: it signifies that all their *minds*, affections, desires, and wishes, were concentrated in one object, every man having the same end in view; and, having but one desire, they had but one prayer to God, and every heart uttered it. There was no person *uninterested*-none *unconcerned*-none *lukewarm*; all were in *earnest*; and the Spirit of God came down to meet their *united* faith and prayer. When any assembly of God's people meet in the same spirit they may expect every blessing they need.

In one place.-Where this place was we cannot tell: it was probably in the temple, as seems to be intimated in ^{<4024>}Acts 2:46, where it is said *they were daily ομοθυμαδον εν τω ιερω*, with one accord in the temple; and as this was the *third* hour of the day, ^{<4025>}Acts 2:15, which was the Jewish hour of *morning prayer*, as the *ninth* hour was the hour of *evening prayer*, ^{<4030>}Acts 3:1, it is most probable that the *temple* was the *place* in which they were assembled.

Verse 2. A sound from heaven] Probably thunder is meant, which is the harbinger of the Divine presence.

Rushing mighty wind] The passage of a large portion of electrical fluid over that place would not only occasion the *sound*, or thunder, but also *the rushing mighty wind*; as the air would rush suddenly and strongly into the vacuum occasioned by the rarefaction of the atmosphere in that place, through the sudden passage of the electrical fluid; and the wind would follow the direction of the fire. There is a good deal of similarity between this account and that of the appearance of God to Elijah, ^{<1191>}**1 Kings 19:11, 12**, where the *strong wind*, the *earthquake*, and the *fire*, were harbingers of the Almighty's presence, and prepared the heart of Elijah to hear the *small still voice*; so, this *sound*, and the *mighty rushing wind*, prepared the apostles to receive the influences and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In both cases, the *sound*, *strong wind*, and *fire*, although *natural* agents, were *supernaturally* employed. See Clarke's note on "^{<4007>}**Acts 9:7**".

Verse 3. Cloven tongues like as of fire] The tongues were the emblem of the *languages* they were to speak. The *cloven tongues* pointed out the *diversity* of those languages; and the *fire* seemed to intimate that the whole would be a *spiritual* gift, and be the means of bringing *light* and *life* to the souls who should hear them preach the everlasting Gospel in those languages.

Sat upon each of them.] Scintillations, coruscations, or flashes of fire, were probably at first frequent through every part of the room where they were sitting; at last these flashes became *defined*, and a lambent flame, in the form of a cloven tongue, became stationary on the head of each disciple; a proof that the Spirit of God had made each his temple or residence. That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested himself to *Moses*, when he appointed him to deliver Israel, ^{<1182>}**Exodus 3:2, 3**; and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the *law* on Mount Sinai, ^{<121916>}**Exodus 19:16-20**. The Jews, in order to support the pretensions of their *rabbins*, as delivering their instructions by Divine authority and influence, represent them as being *surrounded with fire* while they were delivering their lectures; and that their words, in consequence, penetrated and exhilarated the souls of their disciples. Some of the *Mohammedans* represent Divine inspiration in the same way. In a fine copy of a Persian work, entitled *Ajaceb al Makhlookat*,

or *Wonders of Creation*, now before me, where a marred account of Abraham's sacrifice, mentioned ^{<0150>}**Genesis 15:9-17**, is given, instead of the *burning lamp* passing between the divided pieces of the victim, ^{<0151>}**Genesis 15:17**, Abraham is represented standing between four fowls, the *cock*, the *peacock*, the *duck*, and the *crow*, with his head almost wrapped in a flame of lambent fire, as the emblem of the Divine communication made to him of the future prosperity of his descendants. The painting in which this is represented is most exquisitely finished. This notion of the *manner* in which Divine intimations were given was not peculiar to the Jews and Arabians; it exists in all countries; and the *glories* which appear round the heads of *Chinese*, *Hindoo*, and *Christian saints*, real or supposed, were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that his Spirit, under the emblem of *fire*, sat upon them and became resident in them. There are numerous proofs of this in several Chinese and Hindoo paintings in my possession; and how frequently this is to be met with in *legends*, *missals*, and in the ancient *ecclesiastical books* of the different Christian nations of Europe, every reader acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquity knows well. See the dedication of Solomon's temple, ^{<470>}**2 Chronicles 7:1-3**.

The *Greek* and *Roman* heathens had similar notions of the *manner* in which Divine communications were given: *strong wind*, loud and repeated *peals of thunder*, *coruscations of lightning*, and *lambent flames* resting on those who were objects of the Deities regard, are all employed by them to point out the *mode* in which their gods were reported to make their will known to their votaries. Every thing of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai; for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world, partly by the expelled *Canaanites*, partly by the *Greek sages* travelling through Asiatic countries in quest of philosophic truth: and partly by means of the *Greek version of the Septuagint*, made nearly three hundred years before the Christian æra.

“A *flame of fire* seen upon the *head* of any person was, among the heathens, considered as an *omen* from their gods that the person was under the peculiar care of a supernatural power, and destined to some extraordinary employment. Many proofs of this occur in the Roman poets and historians. Wetstein, in his note on this place, has made an extensive collection of them. I shall quote but one, which almost every reader of the *Æneid* of Virgil will recollect:-

*Talia vociferans gemitu tectum omne replebat:
 Cum subitum, dictuque oritur mirabile monstrum.
 Namque manus inter, mæstorumque ora parentum.
 Ecce levis summo de vertice visus Iuli
 Fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia molli
 Lambere flamma comas, et circum tempora pasci.
 Nos pavidi trepidare metu, crinemque flagrantem
 Excutere, et sanctos restinguere fontibus ignes.
 At pater Anchises oculos ad sidera lætus
 Extulit, et cælo palamas cum voce tetendit:
 Jupiter omnipotens ____
 Daniel auxilium, pater, atque hæc omina firma.
 VIRG. ÆN. ii. v. 679.*

*While thus she fills the house with clamorous cries,
 Our hearing is diverted by our eyes;
 For while I held my son, in the short space
 Betwixt our kisses and our last embrace,
 Strange to relate! from young Iulus' head,
 A lambent flame arose, which gently spread
 Around his brows, and on his temples fed.
 Amazed, with running water, we prepare
 To quench the sacred fire, and slake his hair;
 But old Anchises, versed in omens, rear'd
 His hands to heaven, and this request preferr'd:
 If any vows almighty Jove can bend,
 Confirm the glad presage which thou art pleased to send.
 DRYDEN.*

There is nothing in this poetic fiction which could be borrowed from *our* sacred volume; as Virgil died about twenty years before the birth of Christ.

It may be just necessary to observe, that *tongue of fire* may be a Hebraism: for in ^{<21634>}**Isaiah 5:24**, *va ^wvl leshon esh*, which we render simply *fire*, is literally *a tongue of fire*, as the margin very properly has it. The Hebrews give the name of *tongue* to most things which terminate in a blunt point: so a *bay* is termed in ^{<6152>}**Joshua 15:2**, *^vl lashon*, a tongue. And in ^{<6155>}**Joshua 15:5**, what appears to have been a *promontory* is called *pyh ^wvl leshon hayam*, a tongue of the sea.

It sat upon each] That is, one of those tongues, like flames, sat upon the head of each disciple; and the *continuance* of the appearance, which is

indicated by the word *sat*, shows that there could be no illusion in the case. I still think that in all this case the agent was *natural*, but *supernaturally* employed.

Verse 4. To speak with other tongues] At the building of *Babel* the *language* of the people was *confounded*; and, in consequence of this, they became scattered over the face of the earth: at this *foundation* of the *Christian Church*, the gift of various languages was given to the apostles, that the scattered nations might be *gathered*; and united under one shepherd and superintendent (*επισκοπος*) of all souls.

As the Spirit gave them utterance.] The word *αποφθεγγεσθαι* seems to imply such utterance as proceeded from immediate inspiration, and included oracular communications.

Verse 5. Devout men, out of every nation] Either by these we are simply to understand *Jews* who were born in different countries, and had now come up to Jerusalem to be present at the passover, and for purposes of traffic, or *proselytes* to Judaism, who had come up for the same purpose: for I cannot suppose that the term *ανδρες ευλαβεις*, *devout men*, can be applied to any other. At this time there was scarcely a commercial *nation under heaven* where the Jews had not been scattered for the purpose of trade, merchandize, &c., and from all these nations, it is said, there were persons now present at Jerusalem.

Verse 6. When this was noised abroad] If we suppose that there was a considerable peal of thunder, which followed the escape of a vast quantity of *electric fluid*, and produced the *mighty rushing wind* already noticed on *Acts 2:2*, then the whole city must have been alarmed; and, as various circumstances might direct their attention to the *temple*, having flocked thither they were farther astonished and confounded to hear the disciples of Christ addressing the mixed multitude in the languages of the different countries from which these people had come.

Every man heard them speak in his own language.] Use may naturally suppose that, as soon as any person presented himself to one of these disciples, he, the disciple, was immediately enabled to address him in his own language, however various this had been from the Jewish or Galilean dialects. If a *Roman* presented himself, the disciple was immediately enabled to address him in *Latin*-if a *Grecian*, in *Greek*-an Arab, in *Arabic*, and so of the rest.

Verse 7. Are not all these-Galileans?] Persons who know no other dialect, save that of their own country. Persons wholly uneducated, and, consequently, naturally ignorant of those languages which they now speak so fluently.

Verse 8. How hear we every man in our own tongue] Some have supposed from this that the miracle was not so much wrought on the *disciples* as on their *hearers*: imagining that, although the disciples spoke their *own tongue*, yet every man so understood what was spoken as if it had been spoken in the language in which he was born. Though this is by no means so likely as the opinion which states that the disciples themselves spoke all these different languages, yet the miracle is the same, howsoever it be taken; for it must require as much of the miraculous power of God to enable an Arab to understand a Galilean, as to enable a Galilean to speak Arabic. But that the *gift of tongues* was actually given to the *apostles*, we have the fullest proof; as we find particular ordinances laid down by those very apostles for the regulation of the exercise of this gift; see ^{<4640>}**1 Corinthians 14:1**, &c.

Verse 9. Parthians] Parthia anciently included the northern part of modern *Persia*: it was situated between the *Caspian Sea* and *Persian Gulf*, rather to the eastward of both.

Medes] Media was a country lying in the vicinity of the *Caspian Sea*; having *Parthia* on the east, *Assyria* on the south, and *Mesopotamia* on the west.

Elamites] Probably inhabitants of that country now called *Persia*: both the *Medes* and *Elamites* were a neighbouring people, dwelling beyond the *Tigris*.

Mesopotamia] Now *Diarbec* in Asiatic Turkey; situated between the rivers *Tigris* and *Euphrates*; having *Assyria* on the east, *Arabia Deserta* with *Babylonia* on the south, *Syria* on the west, and *Armenia* on the north. It was called *Padan-aram* by the ancient Hebrews, and by the Asiatics is now called *Maverannhar*, i.e. the country beyond the river.

Judea] This word has exceedingly puzzled commentators and critics; and most suspect that it is not the true reading. Bishop Pearce supposes that **ιουδαιαν** is an adjective, agreeing with **μεσοποταμιαν**, and translates the passage thus: *the dwellers in Jewish Mesopotamia*. He vindicates this

translation by showing that great numbers of the Jews were settled in this country: Josephus says that the *ten tribes* remained in this country till his time; that “there were countless myriads of them there, and that it was impossible to know their numbers.”-**μυριαδες απειροι, και αριθμω γνωσθηναι μη δυναμεναι**. See Ant. lib. xv. c. 2, s. 2, and c. 3, s. 1; Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. 1, 2. This interpretation, however ingenious, does not comport with the present Greek text. Some imagine that **ιουδαιαν** is not the original reading; and therefore they have corrected it into *Syriam*, SYRIA; *Armeniam*, ARMENIA; **ινδιαν**, INDIA; **λυδιαν**, LYDIA; **ιδουμαιαν**, IDUMEA; **βιθυνιαν**, BITHYNIA; and **κιλικιαν**, CILICIA: all these stand on very slender authority, as may be seen in Griesbach; and the last is a mere *conjecture* of Dr. Mangey. If *Judea* be still considered the genuine reading, we may account for it thus: the men who were speaking were known to be *Galileans*; now the Galilean dialect was certainly different from that spoken in Judea-the surprise was occasioned by a Jew being able to comprehend the speech of a Galilean, without any interpreter and without difficulty; and yet it is not easy to suppose that there was such a difference between the two dialects as to render these people wholly unintelligible to each other.

CAPPADOCIA] Was an ancient kingdom of Asia comprehending all that country that lies between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.

PONTUS] Was anciently a very powerful kingdom of Asia, originally a part of *Cappadocia*; bounded on the east by *Colchis*; on the west by the river *Halys*; on the north by the *Black Sea*; and on the south by *Armenia Minor*. The famous *Mithridates* was king of this country; and it was one of the last which the Romans were able to subjugate.

ASIA] Meaning probably *Asia Minor*; it was that part of Turkey in Asia now called *Natolia*.

Verse 10. PHRYGIA] A country in Asia Minor, southward of *Pontus*.

PAMPHYLIA] The ancient name of the country of *Natolia*, now called *Caramania*, between *Lycia* and *Cilicia*, near the *Mediterranean Sea*.

EGYPT] A very extensive country of African bounded by the *Mediterranean* on the north; by the *Red Sea* and the *Isthmus of Suez*, which divide it from *Arabia*, on the east; by *Abyssinia* or *Æthiopia* on the south; and by the *deserts* of *Barca* and *Nubia* on the west. It was called

Mizraim by the ancient Hebrews, and now *Mesr* by the Arabians. It extends 600 miles from north to south; and from 100 to 250 in breadth, from east to west.

LIBYA] In a general way, among the Greeks, signified Africa; but the northern part, in the vicinity of *Cyrene*, is here meant.

CYRENE] A country in Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, southward of the most western point of the Island of Crete.

Strangers of Rome] Persons dwelling at Rome, and speaking the Latin language, partly consisting of regularly descended *Jews* and *proselytes* to the Jewish religion.

Verse 11. Cretes] Natives of *Crete*, a large and noted island in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, now called *Candia*.

Arabians] Natives of *Arabia*, a well known country of Asia, having the *Red Sea* on the *west*; the *Persian Gulf* on the *east*; *Judea* on the *north*; and the *Indian Ocean* on the *south*.

The wonderful works of God.] Such as the incarnation of Christ; his various miracles, preaching, death, resurrection, and ascension; and the design of God to save the world through him. From this one circumstance we may learn that all the people enumerated above were either *Jews* or *proselytes*; and that there was probably none that could be, strictly speaking, called *heathens* among them. It may at first appear strange that there could be found Jews in so many different countries, some of which were very remote from the others; but there is a passage in Philo's Embassy to Caius which throws considerable light on the subject. In a letter sent to Caius by King Agrippa, he speaks of to the holy city of Jerusalem, not merely as the metropolis of Judea, but of many other regions, because of the colonies at different times led out of Judea, not only into *neighbouring* countries, such as Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Coelosyria, but also into those that are *remote*, such as Pamphylia, Cilicia, and the chief parts of Asia as far as Bithynia, and the innermost parts of Pontus; also in the regions of Europe, Thessaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, and the principal parts of Peloponnesus. Not only the continents and provinces (says he) are full of Jewish colonies, but the most celebrated isles also, Eubœa, Cyprus, and Crete, not to mention the countries beyond the Euphrates. All these (a small part of

Babylon and some other præfectures excepted, which possess fertile territories) are inhabited by Jews. Not only my native city entreats thy clemency, but other cities also, situated in different parts of the world, Asia, Europe, Africa; both islands, sea coasts, and inland countries.”
 PHILONIS *Opera*, edit. *Mangey*, vol. ii. p. 587.

It is worthy of remark that almost all the places and provinces mentioned by St. Luke are mentioned also in this letter of King Agrippa. These, being all *Jews* or *proselytes*, could understand in some measure the *wonderful works of God*, of which mere *heathens* could have formed no conception. It was wisely ordered that the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost should take place at this time, when so many from various nations were present to bear witness to what was done, and to be themselves subjects of his mighty working. These, on their return to their respective countries, would naturally proclaim what things they saw and heard; and by this the way of the apostles was made plain; and thus Christianity made a rapid progress over all those parts in a very short time after the resurrection of our Lord.

Verse 13. These men are full of new wine.] Rather *sweet wine*, for *γλευκους*, cannot mean the *mustum*, or *new wine*, as there could be none in Judea so early as pentecost. The *γλευκος*, *gleucus*, seems to have been a peculiar kind of wine, and is thus described by Hesychius and Suidas: *γλευκος, το αποσταγμα της σταφυλης, πριν πατηθη*. *Gleucus is that which distils from the grape before it is pressed*. This must be at once both the strongest and sweetest wine. Calmet observes that the ancients had the secret of preserving wine *sweet* through the whole year, and were fond of taking *morning draughts* of it: to this Horace appears to refer, Sat. l. ii. s. iv. ver. 24.

Aufidius forti miscebat mella Falerno.
Mendose: quoniam vacuis committere venis
Nil nisi lene decet: leni præcordia mulso
Prolueris melius———

Aufidius first, most injudicious, quaffed
Strong wine and honey for his morning draught.
With lenient bev'rage fill your empty veins,
For lenient must will better cleanse the reins.

FRANCIS.

Verse 14. Peter, standing up with the eleven] They probably spoke by turns, not altogether; but Peter began the discourse.

All ye that dwell at Jerusalem] οἱ κατοικοῦντες would be better translated by the word *sojourn*, because these were not *inhabitants* of Judea, but the *strangers* mentioned in ^{<440>}Acts 2:9-11, who had come up to the feast.

Verse 15. But the third hour of the day] That is, about *nine* o'clock in the morning, previously to which the Jews scarcely ever ate or drank, for that hour was the hour of prayer. This custom appears to have been so common that even the most intemperate among the Jews were not known to transgress it; Peter therefore spoke with confidence when he said, *these are not drunken-seeing it is but the third hour of the day*, previously to which even the intemperate did not use wine.

Verse 16. Spoken by the prophet Joel] The prophecy which he delivered so long ago is just now fulfilled; and this is another proof that Jesus whom ye have crucified is the *Messiah*.

Verse 17. In the last days] The time of the Messiah; and so the phrase was understood among the Jews.

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh] Rabbi *Tanchum* says, "When Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, the holy blessed God said, In the time of the old text, each individual prophet prophesied; but, in the times of the Messiah, all the Israelites shall be prophets." And this they build on the prophecy quoted in this place by Peter.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy] The word *prophesy* is not to be understood here as implying the knowledge and discovery of future events; but signifies to teach and proclaim the great truths of God, especially those which concerned redemption by Jesus Christ.

Your young men shall see visions, &c.] These were two of the various ways in which God revealed himself under the Old Testament. Sometimes he revealed himself by a *symbol*, which was a sufficient proof of the Divine presence: *fire* was the most ordinary, as it was the most expressive, symbol. Thus he appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb, and afterwards at Sinai; to Abraham, ^{<0150>}Genesis 15:1-21; to Elijah, ^{<1191>}1 Kings 19:11, 12. At other times he revealed himself by *angelic* ministry: this was frequent, especially in the days of the patriarchs, of which we find many instances in the book of Genesis.

By *dreams* he discovered his will in numerous instances: see the remarkable case of Joseph, ^{<01370>}**Genesis 37:5, 9**; of Jacob, ^{<01280>}**Genesis 28:1**, &c.; ^{<01460>}**Genesis 46:2**, &c.; of Pharaoh, ^{<01400>}**Genesis 41:1-7**; of Nebuchadnezzar, ^{<27010>}**Daniel 4:10-17**. For the different ways in which God communicated the knowledge of his will to mankind, see the note on ^{<01500>}**Genesis 15:1**.

Verse 18. On my servants and on my handmaidens] This properly means persons of the lowest condition, such as *male* and *female slaves*. As the Jews asserted that the spirit of prophecy never rested upon a *poor* man, these words are quoted to show that, under the Gospel dispensation, neither *bond* nor *free*, *male* nor *female*, is excluded from sharing in the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit.

Verse 19. I will show wonders] It is likely that both the prophet and the apostle refer to the calamities that fell upon the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fearful signs and portents that preceded those calamities. See the notes on ^{<01415>}**Matthew 24:5-7**, where these are distinctly related.

Blood, fire, and vapour of smoke] Skirmishes and assassinations over the land, and wasting the country with fire and sword.

Verse 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood] These are figurative representations of *eclipses*, intended most probably to point out the fall of the *civil* and *ecclesiastical* state in Judea: see Clarke's notes on ^{<01405>}**Matthew 24:29**". That the SUN is *darkened* when a total eclipse takes place, and that the MOON appears of a *bloody* hue in such circumstances, every person knows.

Verse 21. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.] The predicted ruin is now impending; and only such as receive the Gospel of the Son of God shall be saved. And that none but the *Christians* did escape, when God poured out these judgments, is well known; and that ALL the Christians did escape, not one of them perishing in these devastations, stands attested by the most respectable authority. See Clarke's note on ^{<01413>}**Matthew 24:13**".

Verse 22. A man approved of God] *αποδεδειγμενον*, *celebrated*, *famous*. The sense of the verse seems to be this: *Jesus of Nazareth, a man sent of God, and celebrated among you by miracles, wonders, and signs;*

and all these done in such profusion as had never been done by the best of your most accredited prophets. And these signs, &c., were such as demonstrated his Divine mission.

Verse 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel] Bp. Pearce paraphrases the words thus: *Him having been given forth*; i.e. sent into the world, and manifested by being *made flesh, and dwelling among you*, as it is said in ^{<4014>}**John 1:14**; see also ^{<4028>}**Acts 4:28**.

Kypke contends that **εκδοτον**, *delivered*, does not refer to GOD, but to *Judas* the traitor “the Jews received Jesus, *delivered* up to them by Judas; the immutable counsel of God so permitting.”

By the determinate counsel, ωρισμενη βουλη; that counsel of God which defined the *time, place, and circumstance*, according (**προγνωσει**) to his *foreknowledge*, which always saw what was the most proper *time and place* for the manifestation and crucifixion of his Son; so that there was nothing *casual* in these things, God having determined that the salvation of a lost world should be brought about in this way; and neither the Jews nor Romans had any power here, but what was given to them from above. It was necessary to show the Jews that it was not through Christ’s *weakness* or *inability to defend himself* that he was taken; nor was it through their *malice* merely that he was slain; for God had determined long before, from the foundation of the world, ^{<6138>}**Revelation 13:8**, to give his Son a sacrifice for sin; and the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Jews were only the incidental means by which the great counsel of God was fulfilled: the counsel of God intending the sacrifice, but never ordering that it should be brought about by such wretched means. This was *permitted*; the other was *decreed*. See the observations at the end of this chapter. See **Clarke** “^{<4027>}**Acts 2:47**”.

By wicked hands have crucified and slain] I think this refers to the Romans, and not to the Jews; the former being the agents, to execute the evil purposes of the latter. It is well known that the Jews acknowledged that they had no power to put our Lord to death, ^{<6181>}**John 18:31**, and it is as well known that the punishment of the *cross* was not a Jewish, but a Roman, punishment: hence we may infer that by **δια χειρων ανομων**, *by the hands of the wicked*, the Romans are meant, being called **ανομοι**, *without law*, because they had no revelation from God; whereas the others had what was emphatically termed **ο νομος του θεου**, *the law of God*, by

which they professed to regulate their worship and their conduct. It was the Jews, therefore, who *caused* our Lord to be crucified by the *hands of the heathen* Romans.

Verse 24. Whom God hath raised up] For, as God alone gave him up to death, so God alone raised him up from death.

Having loosed the pains of death] It is generally supposed that this expression means, the dissolving of those *bonds* or *obligations* by which those who enter into the region of the dead are *detained* there till the day of the resurrection; and this is supposed to be the meaning of *twm yl bj chebley maveth*, in ^{<19818>}**Psalm 116:3**, or *l wav yl bj chebley sheol*, in ^{<19185>}**Psalm 18:5**, and in ^{<10216>}**2 Samuel 22:6**, to which, as a parallel, this place has been referred. But Kypke has sufficiently proved that *λυειν τας ωδινας θανατου*, signifies rather *to REMOVE the pains or sufferings of death*. So Lucian, *Deuteronomy Conscr. Hist.*, says, “a copious sweat to some, *ελυσε τον πυρετον*, REMOVES or carries off the fever.” So STRABO, speaking of the balm of Jericho, says, *λυει δε κεφαλαγιας θαυμαστως*-it wonderfully REMOVES the headache, &c. That Christ did suffer the pains and sorrows of death in his passion is sufficiently evident; but that these were all *removed*, previously to his crucifixion, is fully seen in that calm manner in which he met it, with all its attendant terrors. If we take the words as commonly understood, they mean that it was impossible for the *Prince of Life* to be *left* in the empire of death: his resurrection, therefore, was a necessary consequence of his own Divine power.

Instead of *θανατου*, of death, the *Codex Bezae*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and *Vulgate*, have *αιδου*, of hell, or the *place of separate spirits*; and perhaps it was on no better authority than this various reading, supported but by slender evidence, that, *He descended into hell*, became an article in what is called the apostles’ creed. And on this article many a popish legend has been builded, to the discredit of sober sense and true religion.

Verse 25. For David speaketh concerning him] The quotation here is made from ^{<19108>}**Psalm 16:8-11**, which contains a most remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, every word of which applies to him, and to him *exclusively*. See the notes there.

Verse 26. And my tongue was glad] In the Hebrew it is *ydwbk l gyw vaiyagel kebodi*, “And my glory was glad:” but the evangelist follows the

Septuagint, in reading **και ηγαλλιασατο η γλωσσα μου**, what all the other Greek interpreters in the Hexapla translate **δοξα μου**, *my glory*. And what is to be understood by *glory* here! Why the *soul*, certainly, and not the *tongue*; and so some of the best critics interpret the place.

Verse 27. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell] **εις αιδου**, *in hades*, that is, the state of *separate spirits*, or the state of the *dead*. Hades was a general term among the Greek writers, by which they expressed this state; and this HADES was *Tartarus* to the *wicked*, and *Elysium* to the *good*. See the explanation of the word in the notes, **see Clarke** “⁴⁰¹²³Matthew 11:23”.

To see corruption.] *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, was a sentence pronounced on man *after* the fall: therefore this sentence could be executed on none but those who were *fallen*; but Jesus, being conceived without sin, neither partook of human corruption, nor was involved in the condemnation of fallen human nature; consequently, it was impossible for his body to *see corruption*; and it could not have undergone the *temporary* death, to which it was not naturally liable, had it not been for the purpose of making an *atonement*. It was therefore impossible that the human nature of our Lord could be subject to *corruption*: for though it was possible that the soul and it might be separated for a time, yet, as it had not sinned, it was not liable to dissolution; and its immortality was the necessary consequence of its being pure from transgression.

Verse 28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life] That is, the way from the region of death, or state of the dead and separate spirits; so that I shall resume the same body, and live the same kind of life, as I had before I gave up my life for the sin of the world.

Verse 29. Let me speak freely-of the patriarch David] In *Midris Tillin*, it is said, in a paraphrase on the words, *my flesh shall rest in hope*, “Neither worm nor insect had power over David.” It is possible that this opinion prevailed in the time of St. Peter, and, if so, his words are the more pointed and forcible; and therefore thus applied by Dr. Lightfoot: “That this passage, *Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, &c.*, is not to be applied to David himself appears in that I may confidently aver concerning him, that he was *dead* and *buried*, and never *rose again*; but his soul was left **εις αδου**, *in the state of the dead*, and HE *saw corruption*; for his sepulchre is with us to this day, under that very notion, that it is the sepulchre of David, who died and was there buried; nor is there one

syllable mentioned any where of the resurrection of his body, or the return of his soul *ἐξ ἄδου* *from the state of the dead.*” To this the same author adds the following remarkable note: I cannot slip over that passage, *Hieros. Chagig. fol. 78: Rab. Jose saith, David died at pentecost, and all Israel bewailed him, and offered their sacrifices the day following.* This is a remarkable coincidence; and may be easily applied to him of whom David was a *type*.

Verse 30. According to the flesh, he would raise up Christ] This whole clause is wanting in ACD, one of the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*; and is variously entered in others. *Griesbach* rejects it from the text, and Professor *White* says of the words, “*certissime delenda,*” they should doubtless be expunged. This is a gloss, says *Schoettgen*, that has crept into the text, which I prove thus: 1. The *Syriac* and *Vulgate*, the most ancient of the versions, have not these words. 2. The passage is consistent enough and intelligible without them. 3. They are superfluous, as the mind of the apostle concerning the resurrection of Christ follows immediately in the succeeding verse. The passage therefore, according to *Bp. Pearce*, should be read thus: *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath, of the fruit of his loins, to set on his throne; and foreseeing that he (God) would raise up Christ, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, &c.* “In this transition, the words which Peter quotes for David’s are exactly the same with what we read in the psalm above mentioned; and the circumstance of David’s foreseeing that Christ was to be raised up, and was the person meant, is not represented as a part of the oath; but is only made to be Peter’s assertion, that David, as a prophet, did foresee it, and meant it.”

Verse 31. That his soul was not left in hell] The words *ἡ ψυχή αὐτοῦ*, *his soul*, are omitted by ABCD, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, and *Vulgate*. *Griesbach* has left them out of the text, and Professor *White* says again, *certissime delenda*. The passage may be thus read: “He spake of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not left in hades, neither did his flesh see corruption.” For the *various readings* in this and the preceding verse, see *Griesbach*.

Verse 32. Whereof we all are witnesses.] That is, the whole 120 saw him after he rose from the dead, and were all ready, in the face of persecution and death, to attest this great truth.

Verse 33. By the right hand of God exalted] Raised by *omnipotence* to the highest dignity in the realms of glory, to sit at the right hand of God, and administer the laws of both worlds.

The promise of the Holy Ghost] This was the promise that he had made to them a little before he suffered, as may be seen in ~~<B1416>~~ **John 14:16**, &c., ~~<B1617>~~ **John 16:7**, &c., and after he had risen from the dead. ~~<D249>~~ **Luke 24:49**, and which as the apostle says was *now shed forth*.

Verse 34. David is not ascended] Consequently, he has not sent forth this extraordinary gift, but it comes from his Lord, of whom he said, *The Lord said unto my Lord*, &c. See Clarke's note on these words, "~~<A1244>~~ **Matthew 22:44**".

Verse 35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool.] It was usual with conquerors to put their feet on the necks of vanquished leaders, as emblematical of the state of subjection to which they were reduced, and the total extinction of their power. By quoting these words, Peter shows the Jews, who continued enemies to Christ, that their discomfiture and ruin must necessarily take place, their own *king* and *prophet* having predicted this in connection with the other things which had already been so literally and circumstantially fulfilled. This conclusion had the desired effect, when pressed home with the strong application in the following verse.

Verse 36. Both Lord and Christ.] Not only the Messiah, but the supreme Governor of all things and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men. In the preceding discourse, Peter assumes a fact which none would attempt to deny, viz. that Jesus had been lately crucified by them. He then, 1. Proves his resurrection. 2. His ascension. 3. His exaltation to the right hand of God. 4. The effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was the fruit of his glorification, and which had not only been promised by himself, but foretold by their own prophets: in consequence of which, 5. It was indisputably proved that this same Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the promised Messiah; and if so, 6. The Governor of the universe, from whose power and justice they had every thing to dread, as they refused to receive his proffered mercy and kindness.

Verse 37. When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart] This powerful, intelligent, consecutive, and interesting discourse, supported every where by *prophecies* and corresponding *facts*, left them without

reply and without excuse; and they plainly saw there was no hope for them, but in the mercy of him whom they had rejected and crucified.

What shall we do?] How shall we escape those judgments which we now see hanging over our heads?

Verse 38. Peter said unto them, Repent] μετανοησατε; Humble yourselves before God, and deeply deplore the sins you have committed; pray earnestly for mercy, and deprecate the displeasure of incensed justice. For a definition of repentance, see Clarke on “^{419B}Matthew 3:2”.

And be baptized every one of you] Take on you the public profession of the religion of Christ, by being baptized *in his name*; and thus acknowledge yourselves to be his *disciples* and *servants*.

For the remission of sins] εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων, In reference to the *remission* or *removal of sins*: baptism pointing out the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and it is in reference to that purification that it is administered, and should in consideration never be separated from it. For baptism itself purifies not the conscience; it only points out the *grace* by which this is to be done.

Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.] If ye faithfully use the *sign*, ye shall get the *substance*. Receive the baptism, *in reference* to the removal of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, by whose agency alone the efficacy of the blood of the covenant is applied, and by whose refining power the heart is purified. It was by being baptized in the name of Christ that men took upon themselves the profession of Christianity; and it was in consequence of this that the disciples of Christ were called CHRISTIANS.

Verse 39. For the promise is unto you] Jews of the land of Judea: not only the fulfilment of the *promise* which he had lately recited from the prophecy of *Joel* was made to them, but in this promise was also included the purification from sin, with every gift and grace of the Holy Spirit.

To all that are afar off] To the Jews wherever *dispersed*, and to all the *Gentile nations*; for, though St. Peter had not as yet a formal knowledge of the *calling of the Gentiles*, yet, the Spirit of God, by which he spoke, had undoubtedly this in view; and therefore the words are added, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call*, i.e. all to whom, in the course of his providence and grace, he shall send the preaching of Christ crucified.

Verse 40. Save yourselves from this untoward generation.] Separate yourselves from them: *be ye saved*, σωθητε: the power is present with you; make a proper use of it, and ye shall be delivered from their obstinate unbelief, and the punishment that awaits it in the destruction of them and their city by the Romans.

Verse 41. They that gladly received his word] The word ασμενωσ, which signifies *joyfully, readily, willingly*, implies that they approved of the doctrine delivered; that they were glad to hear of this way of salvation; and that they began immediately to act according to its dictates. This last sense is well expressed in a similar phrase by Josephus: when speaking of the young Israelites enticing the Midianitish women to sin, by fair speeches, he says, αι δε ασμενωσ δεξαμεναι τουσ λογουσ συνηεσαν αυτοισ, Ant. l. iv. c. 4. *Then they who approved of their words consorted with them.* The word is however omitted by ABCD, *Coptic, Sahidic, Æthiopic, Vulgate*, the *Itala* of the *Codex Bezae, Clemens*, and *Chrysostom*.

Were baptized] That is, *in the name of Jesus*, <4028> Acts 2:38, for this was the criterion of a Jew's conversion; and when a Jew had received baptism in *this name* he was excluded from all communication with his countrymen; and no man would have forfeited such privileges but on the fullest and clearest conviction. This baptism was a very powerful means to prevent their apostasy; they had, by receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, renounced Judaism, and all the political advantages connected with it; and they found it indispensably necessary to make the best use of that holy religion which they had received in its stead. Dr. Lightfoot has well remarked, that the Gentiles who received the Christian doctrine were baptized in the *name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*; whereas the Jewish converts, for the reasons already given, were baptized in the *name of the Lord Jesus*.

Were added-three thousand souls.] προσετεθησαν, *They went over from one party to another.* The Greek writers make use of this verb to signify that act by which cities, towns, or provinces *changed their masters, and put themselves under another government.* So these 3000 persons left the scribes and Pharisees, and put themselves under the teaching of the apostles, professing the Christian doctrine, and acknowledging that Christ was come, and that he who was lately crucified by the Jews was the promised and only Messiah; and in this faith they were baptized.

These 3000 were not converted under *one discourse*, nor in *one place*, nor by *one person*. All the apostles preached, some in one language, and some in another; and not in *one house*-for where was there one at that time that could hold such a multitude of people? For, out of the multitudes that heard, 3000 were converted; and if one in *five* was converted it must have been a very large proportion. The truth seems to be by this: All the apostles preached in different parts of the city, during the course of that day; and *in that day*, **τη ημερα εκεινη**, 3000 converts were the fruits of the conjoint exertions of these holy men. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that the account in this place is the fulfilment of the prophecy in **Psalm 110:1**, &c.: *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand; this refers to the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, **Psalm 110:3**. *This was the day of his power*; and while the apostles proclaimed his death, resurrection, and ascension, the people came *willingly* in, and embraced the doctrines of Christianity.

Verse 42. **They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine]** They *received it, retained it, and acted* on its principles.

And fellowship] **κοινωνια**, *community*; meaning *association* for religious and spiritual purposes, The *community of goods* cannot be meant; for this is mentioned **Acts 2:44, 45**, where it is said, they *had all things common*.

And in breaking of bread] Whether this means the *holy eucharist*, or their *common meals*, it is difficult to say. The *Syriac* understands it of the former. *Breaking of bread* was that act which preceded a *feast* or *meal*, and which was performed by the master of the house, when he pronounced the *blessing*-what we would call *grace before meat*. See the form on **Matthew 26:26**.

And in prayers.] In supplications to God for an *increase* of grace and life in their own souls; for *establishment* in the truth which they had received, and for the *extension* of the kingdom of Christ in the salvation of men. Behold the employment of the primitive and apostolic Church. 1. They were builded up on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone. 2. They continued steadfastly in that *doctrine* which they had so evidently received from God. They were *separated from the world*, and lived in a *holy Christian fellowship*, strengthening and building up each other in their most holy faith. 4. They were frequent in breaking bread; in remembrance that Jesus Christ died for

them. 5. They continued in prayers; knowing that they could be no longer faithful than while they were upheld by their God; and knowing also that they could not expect his grace to support them, unless they humbly and earnestly *prayed* for its continuance.

Verse 43. And fear came upon every soul] Different MSS. and versions read this clause thus, *And GREAT fear and TREMBLING came upon every soul in JERUSALEM.* For several weeks past they had a series of the most astonishing miracles wrought before their eyes; they were puzzled and confounded at the manner in which the apostles preached, who charged them home with the deliberate murder of Jesus Christ, and who attested, in the most positive manner, that he was risen from the dead, and that God had sent down that mighty effusion of the Spirit which they now witnessed as a proof of his resurrection and ascension, and that this very person whom they had crucified was appointed by God to be the Judge of quick and dead. They were in consequences stung with remorse, and were apprehensive of the judgments of God; and the *wonders* and *signs* continually wrought by the apostles were at once proofs of the celestial origin of their doctrine and mission, and of their own baseness, perfidy, and wickedness.

Verse 44. And, all that believed] οἱ πιστευοντες, *The believers*, i.e. those who conscientiously credited the doctrine concerning the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and had, in consequence, received redemption in his blood.

Were together] ἐπι το αὐτο. “These words signify either, in *one time*, ^{<400>}Acts 3:1; or in *one place*, ^{<400>}Acts 2:1; or in *one thing*. The last of these three senses seems to be the most proper here; for it is not probable that the believers, who were then 3000 in number, ^{<404>}Acts 2:41, besides the 120 spoken of ^{<401>}Acts 1:15, were used all to meet at *one time*, or in *one place*, in Jerusalem.” See Bp. *Pearce*.

And had all things common] Perhaps this has not been well understood. At all the public religious feasts in Jerusalem, there was a sort of community of goods. No man at such times *hired* houses or beds in Jerusalem; all were lent *gratis* by the owners: *Yoma*, fol. 12. *Megill.* fol. 26. The same may be well supposed of their ovens, cauldrons, tables, spits, and other utensils. Also, provisions of water were made for them at the public expense; *Shekalim*, cap. 9. See *Lightfoot* here. Therefore a sort of community of goods was no strange thing at Jerusalem, at such times as

these. It appears, however, that this community of goods was carried *farther*; for we are informed, ^{<4025>}Acts 2:45, that they *sold their possessions and their goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need*. But, this probably means that, as in consequence of this remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God; and their conversion, they were detained longer at Jerusalem than they had originally intended, they formed a kind of *community for the time being*, that none might suffer want on the present occasion; as no doubt the unbelieving Jews, who were *mockers*, ^{<4013>}Acts 2:13, would treat these new converts with the most marked disapprobation. That an *absolute community of goods* never obtained in the Church at Jerusalem, unless for a *very short time*, is evident from the apostolical precept, ^{<4160>}1 Corinthians 16:1, &c., by which collections were ordered to be made for the poor; but, if there had been a *community of goods* in the Church, there could have been no ground for such recommendations as these, as there could have been no such *distinction* as *rich* and *poor*, if every one, on entering the Church, gave up all his goods to a common stock. Besides, while this sort of community lasted at Jerusalem, it does not appear to have been imperious upon any; persons might or might not thus dispose of their goods, as we learn from the case of Ananias, ^{<4010>}Acts 5:4. Nor does it appear that what was done at Jerusalem at this time obtained in any other branch of the Christian Church; and in this, and in the fifth chap., where it is mentioned, it is neither praised nor blamed. We may therefore safely infer, it was something that was done at this time, on this occasion, through some *local necessity*, which the circumstances of the infant Church at Jerusalem might render expedient for that *place* and on that *occasion* only.

Verse 46. **They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple]** They were present at all the times of public worship, and joined together in *prayers* and *praises* to God; for it is not to be supposed that *they* continued to offer any of the *sacrifices* prescribed by the law.

Breaking bread from house to house] This may signify, that select companies, who were contiguous to each other, frequently ate together at their respective lodgings on their return from public worship. But **κατ' οἶκον**, which we translate *from house to house*, is repeatedly used by the Greek writers for *home*, *at home*, (see *margin*.) for though they had all things in common, each person lived at his own table. *Breaking bread* is used to express the act of taking their meals. The bread of the Jews was

thin, hard, and dry, and was never cut with the knife as ours is, but was simply broken by the hand.

With gladness and singleness of heart] A true picture of genuine Christian fellowship. *They ate their bread:* they had no severe *fasts*; the Holy Spirit had done in their souls, by his refining influence, what others vainly expect from *bodily austerities*. It may be said also, that, if they had no *severe fasts*, they had no *splendid feasts*: all was *moderation*, and all was contentment. They were full of *gladness*, spiritual joy and happiness; and *singleness of heart*, every man worthy of the confidence of his neighbour; and all *walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing.*

Verse 47. Praising God] As the fountain whence they had derived all their spiritual and temporal blessings; seeing him in all things, and magnifying the work of his mercy.

Having favour with all the people.] Every *honest, upright Jew* would naturally esteem these for the simplicity, purity, and charity of their lives. The scandal of the cross had not yet commenced; for, though they had put Jesus Christ to death, they had not yet entered into a systematic opposition to the *doctrines* he taught.

And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.] Though many approved of the life and manners of these primitive Christians, yet they did not become members of this holy Church; God permitting none to be *added* to it, but **τους σωζομενους**, *those who were saved* from their sins and prejudices. The Church of Christ was made up of *saints*; *sinner*s were not permitted to incorporate themselves with it.

One MS. and the *Armenian* version, instead of **τους σωζομενους**, *the saved*, have **τοις σωζομενοις**, *to them who were saved*; reading the verse thus: *And the Lord added daily to those who were saved.* He united those who were daily *converted* under the preaching of the apostles to those who *had already been converted*. And thus every *lost sheep* that was *found* was brought to the *flock*, that, under the direction of the great Master Shepherd, they might go out and in, and find pasture. The words, *to the Church*, **τη εκκλησια**, are omitted by BC, *Coptic, Sahidic, Æthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate*; and several add the words **επι το αυτο**, *at that time*, (which begin the first verse of the next chapter) to the conclusion of this. My old MS. English Bible reads the verse thus: *For so the Lord encreased hem that weren maad saaf, eche day, into the same thing.* Nearly

the same rendering as that in Wiclif. Our translation of **τους σωζομενους**, *such as should be saved* is improper and insupportable. The original means simply and solely those who were *then saved*; those who were redeemed from their sins and baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ. The same as those whom St. Paul addressed, ^{<4018>}**Ephesians 2:8**: *By grace ye are saved, εστε σεσωμενοι*; or, *ye are those who have been saved by grace*. So in ^{<4018>}**Titus 3:5**: *According to his mercy he saved us, εσωσεν ημας*, *by the washing of regeneration*. And in ^{<4018>}**1 Corinthians 1:18**, we have the words **τοις σωζομενοις**, *them who are saved*, to express those who had received the Christian faith; in opposition to **τοις απολλυμενοις**, *to those who are lost*, namely the Jews, who obstinately refused to receive salvation on the terms of the Gospel, the only way in which they could be saved; for it was by embracing the Gospel of Christ that they were put in a *state of salvation*; and, by the grace it imparted, *actually saved* from the power, guilt, and dominion of sin. See ^{<4652>}**1 Corinthians 15:2**: *I made known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye have received, and in which ye stand; and BY WHICH YE ARE SAVED, δι ου και σωζεσθε*. Our translation, which indeed existed long before our present authorized version, as may be seen in Cardmarden's Bible, 1566, Beck's Bible, 1549, and Tindall's Testament, printed by Will. Tylle, in 1548, is bad in itself; but it has been rendered worse by the comments put on it, viz. that those whom God adds to the Church shall necessarily and unavoidably be eternally saved; whereas no such thing is hinted by the original text, be the doctrine of the *indefectibility of the saints* true or false—which shall be examined in its proper place.

ON that awful subject, the *foreknowledge* of God, something has already been spoken: see ^{<4023>}**Acts 2:23**. Though it is a subject which no finite nature can comprehend, yet it is possible so to understand what relates to *us* in it as to avoid those rocks of *presumption* and *despondency* on which multitudes have been shipwrecked. The foreknowledge of God is never spoken of in reference to *himself*, but in reference to *us*: in him properly there is neither *foreknowledge* nor *afterknowledge*. Omniscience, or the *power to know all things*, is an attribute of God, and exists in him as *omnipotence*, or the power to do all things. He can do whatsoever he will; and he does whatsoever is fit or proper to be done. God cannot have *foreknowledge*, strictly speaking, because this would suppose that there was something *coming*, in what we call *futurity*, which had not yet *arrived* at the *presence of the Deity*. Neither can he have any *afterknowledge*,

strictly speaking, for this would suppose that something that *had taken* place, in what we call *pretereity*, or *past time*, had now got *beyond* the *presence of the Deity*. As God exists in all that can be called *eternity*, so he is *equally* every where: nothing can be *future* to him, because he lives in all *futurity*; nothing can be *past* to him, because he equally exists in all *past time*; futurity and pretereity are relative terms to us; but they can have no relation to that God who dwells in every point of eternity; with whom all that is *past*, and all that is *present*, and all that is *future* to man, exists in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal NOW. As God's omnipotence implies his *power to do all things*, so God's *omniscience* implies his *power to know all things*; but we must take heed that we meddle not with the infinite *free agency* of this Eternal Being. Though God *can* do all things, he *does* not all things. Infinite judgment directs the operations of his power, so that though he *can*, yet he *does not* do all things, but only such things as are proper to be done. In what is called illimitable space, he *can* make millions of millions of systems; but he does not see proper to do this. He *can* destroy the solar system, but he *does not do* it: he can fashion and order, in endless variety, all the different beings which now exist, whether material, animal, or intellectual; but he does not do this, because he does not see it *proper* to be done. Therefore it does not follow that, because God *can do all things*, therefore he *must do all things*. God is omniscient, and *can know* all things; but does it follow from this that he must *know all things*? Is he not as *free* in the *volitions* of his *wisdom*, as he is in the *volitions* of his *power*? The contingent as absolute, or the absolute as contingent? God has ordained some things as *absolutely certain*; these he knows as *absolutely certain*. He has ordained other things as *contingent*; these he knows as *contingent*. It would be absurd to say that he foreknows a thing as only *contingent* which he has made *absolutely certain*. And it would be as absurd to say that he foreknows a thing to be *absolutely certain* which in his own eternal counsel he has made *contingent*. By *absolutely certain*, I mean a thing which *must* be, in that *order, time, place, and form* in which Divine wisdom has ordained it to be; and that it can be no *otherwise* than this infinite counsel has ordained. By *contingent*, I mean such things as the infinite wisdom of God has thought proper to poise on the *possibility* of *being* or *not being*, leaving it to the will of intelligent beings to turn the scale. Or, contingencies are such possibilities, amid the succession of events, as the infinite wisdom of God has left to the will of intelligent beings to determine whether any such event shall take place or not. To deny this would involve the most palpable contradictions, and the most

monstrous absurdities. If there be no such things as *contingencies* in the world, then every thing is *fixed* and *determined* by an unalterable decree and purpose of God; and not only all *free agency* is destroyed, but all *agency of every kind*, except that of the Creator himself; for on this ground God is the *only operator*, either in time or eternity: all created beings are only *instruments*, and do nothing but as impelled and acted upon by this almighty and sole Agent. Consequently, every act is *his own*; for if he have purposed them all as *absolutely certain*, having nothing *contingent* in them, then he has *ordained them to be so*; and if no *contingency*, then no *free agency*, and God alone is the sole actor. Hence the *blasphemous*, though, from the premises, *fair* conclusion, that God is the author of all the evil and sin that are in the world; and hence follows that absurdity, that, as God can do nothing that is *wrong*, WHATEVER IS, *is* RIGHT. Sin is no more sin; a vicious human action is no crime, if God have *decreed it*, and by his foreknowledge and will impelled the creature to act it. On this ground there can be no *punishment* for delinquencies; for if every thing be done as God has *predetermined*, and his determinations must necessarily be all *right*, then neither the *instrument* nor the *agent* has done *wrong*. Thus all vice and virtue, praise and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and innocence, are at once *confounded*, and all distinctions of this kind confounded with them. Now, allowing the doctrine of the contingency of human actions, (and it must be allowed in order to shun the above absurdities and blasphemies,) then we see every intelligent creature accountable for its own works, and for the use it makes of the power with which God has endued it; and, to grant all this consistently, we must also grant that God foresees nothing as *absolutely* and *inevitably certain* which he has made *contingent*; and, because he has designed it to be *contingent*, therefore he cannot know it as *absolutely* and *inevitably certain*. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, *to know all that he can know*; no more than he is obliged, because he is *omnipotent*, *to do all that he can do*.

How many, by confounding the self and free agency of God with a sort of continual impulsive necessity, have raised that necessity into an *all-commanding* and *overruling energy*, to which God himself is made subject! Very properly did Milton set his damned spirits about such work as this, and has made it a part of their endless punishment:-

*Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate; and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.
PARAD. LOST, b. ii. l. 557.*

Among some exceptionable expressions, the following are also good thoughts on the free agency and fall of man:-

—————*I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
When only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive, both had served NECESSITY,*

*Not ME.—————
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge, and what they choose, for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.
Ibid, b. iii. l. 98, 103, 120.*

I shall conclude these observations with a short extract from Mr. Bird's Conferences, where, in answer to the objection, "If many things fall out contingently, or as it were by accident, God's foreknowledge of them can be but contingent, dependent on man's free will," he observes: "It is one thing to know that a thing will be done necessarily; and another, to know necessarily that a thing will be done. God doth necessarily foreknow all that will be done; but he doth not know that those things which shall be done voluntarily will be done necessarily: he knoweth that they will be done; but he knoweth withal that they might have fallen out otherwise, for aught he had ordered to the contrary. So likewise God knew that Adam would fall; and yet he knew that he would not fall necessarily, for it was possible for him not to have fallen. And as touching God's preordination

going before his prescience as the cause of all events this would be to make God the author of all the sin in the world; his knowledge comprehending that as well as other things. God indeed foreknoweth all things, because they will be done; but things are not (therefore) done, because he foreknoweth them. It is impossible that any man, by his voluntary manner of working, should elude God's foresight; but then this foresight doth not necessitate the will, for this were to take it wholly away. For as the knowledge of things present imports no necessity on that which is done, so the foreknowledge of things future lays no necessity on that which shall be; because whosoever knows and sees things, he knows and sees them as they are, and not as they are not; so that God's knowledge doth not confound things, but reaches to all events, not only which come to pass, but as they come to pass, whether contingency or necessarily. As, for example, when you see a man walking upon the earth, and at the very same instant the sun shining in the heavens, do you not see the first as voluntary, and the second as natural? And though at the instant you see both done, there is a necessity that they be done, (or else you could not see them at all,) yet there was a necessity of one only before they were done, (namely, the sun's shining in the heavens,) but none at all of the other, (viz. the man's walking upon the earth.) The sun could not but shine, as being a natural agent; the man might not have walked, as being a voluntary one." This is a good argument; but I prefer that which states the knowledge of God to be absolutely *free*, without the *contradictions* which are mentioned above. "But you deny the omniscience of God."-No, no more than I deny his omnipotence, and you know I do not, though you have asserted the contrary. But take heed how you speak about this infinitely free agent: if you will *contradict*, take heed that you do not *blaspheme*. I ask some simple questions on the subject of God's *knowledge* and *power*: if you know these things better than your neighbour, be *thankful*, be *humble*, and pray to God to give you amiable tempers; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. May he be merciful to thee and me!

ACTS

CHAPTER 3.

Peter and John go to the temple at the hour of prayer, and heal a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, 1-8. The people are astonished, and the apostles inform them that it was not by their own power they had healed the man, but through the power of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, 9-16. Peter both excuses and reproves them, and exhorts them to repentance, 17-21. Shows that in Jesus Christ the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled; and that all the prophets testified of Jesus and his salvation, 22-24; and that, in him, the covenant made with Abraham is fulfilled; and that Christ came to bless them by turning them away from their iniquities, 25, 26.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

Verse 1. Peter and John went up together] The words **επι το αυτο**, which we translate *together*, and which are the first words in this chapter in the Greek text, we have already seen, ^{<40247>}**Acts 2:47**, are added by several MSS. and versions to the last verse of the preceding chapter. But they do not make so good a sense *there* as they do *here*; and should be translated, not *together*, which really makes no sense here, but *at that time*; intimating that this transaction occurred nearly about the same time that those took place which are mentioned at the close of the former chapter.

At the hour of prayer] This, as is immediately added, was the *ninth* hour, which answers, in a general way, to our three o'clock in the afternoon. The *third* hour, which was the other grand time of public prayer among the Jews, answered, in a general way, to our *nine* in the morning. **See Clarke's note on** ^{<40215>}**Acts 2:15**".

It appears that there were *three* hours of the day destined by the Jews to public prayer; perhaps they are referred to by David, ^{<19517>}**Psalm 55:17**: EVENING and MORNING, *and at NOON, will I pray and cry aloud*. There are three distinct times marked in the book of the Acts. The **THIRD** hour, ^{<40215>}**Acts 2:15**, answering, as we have already seen, to nearly our *nine* o'clock in the morning; the **SIXTH** hour, ^{<4109>}**Acts 10:9**, answering to about *twelve* with us; and the **NINTH** hour, mentioned in this verse, and answering to our *three* in the afternoon.

The rabbins believed that *Abraham* instituted the time of *morning* prayer; *Isaac*, that at *noon*; and *Jacob*, that of the *evening*: for which they quote several scriptures, which have little reference to the subject in behalf of which they are produced. Others of the rabbins, particularly *Tanchum*, made a more natural division. Men should pray, 1. When the sun *rises*; 2. when the sun has gained the *meridian*; 3. when the sun has *set*, or passed just under the horizon. At each of these three times they required men to offer prayer to God; and I should be glad to know that every Christian in the universe observed the same rule: it is the most natural division of the day; and he who *conscientiously* observes these *three stated times* of prayer will infallibly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 2. A-man lame from his mother's womb] The case of this man must have been *well known*: 1. from the *long standing* of his infirmity: 2. from his being *daily exposed* in a place *so public*. It appears that he had no power to walk, and was what we term a *cripple*, for he was *carried* to the gate of the temple, and *laid* there in order to excite compassion. These circumstances are all marked by St. Luke, the more fully to show the greatness and incontestable nature of the miracle.

The gate-which is called Beautiful] There are different opinions concerning this gate. Josephus observes, Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. 5, sect. 3, that the temple had *nine* gates, which were on every side covered with gold and silver; but there was one gate which was without the holy house, and was of *Corinthian* brass, and greatly excelled those which were only covered with gold and silver: πολυ τη τιμη τας καταργυρους και περιχρυσους υπεραγουσα. The magnitudes of the other gates were equal one to another; but that of the Corinthian gate, which opened on the east, over against the gate of the holy house itself, was much larger: πεντηκοντα γαρ πηχων ουσα την αναστασιν, τεσσαρακοντα πηχεις τας θυρας ειχε, και τον κοσμον πολυτελεστερον, επι δαψιλες παχος αργυρου τε και χρυσου, *for its height was fifty cubits, and its doors were forty cubits, and it was adorned after a most costly manner, as having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold upon them than upon the other*. This last was probably the gate which is here called *Beautiful*; because it was on the outside of the temple, to which there was an easy access, and because it was evidently the most costly, according to the account in Josephus; but it must be granted that the text of Josephus is by no means clear.

Verse 4. Look on us.] He wished to excite and engage his attention that he might see what was done to produce his miraculous cure, and, it is likely, took this occasion to direct his faith to Jesus Christ. **See Clarke's note on** “~~4BIG~~ **Acts 3:16**”. Peter and John probably felt themselves suddenly drawn by the Holy Spirit to pronounce the *healing name* in behalf of this poor man.

Verse 5. Expecting to receive something of them.] Because it was a constant custom for all who entered the temple to carry money with them to give to the *treasury*, or to the *poor*, or to *both*. It was on this ground that the friends of the lame man laid him at the gate of the temple, as this was the most likely place to receive alms.

Verse 6. Silver and gold have I none] Though it was customary for all those who entered the temple to carry some money with them, for the purposes mentioned above, yet so *poor* were the apostles that their had nothing to give, either to the sacred *treasury*, or to the *distressed*. The popish writers are very dexterous at forming analogies between St. *Peter* and the *pope*; but it is worthy of note that they have not attempted any *here*. Even the judicious and generally liberal *Calmet* passes by this important saying of the person whom he believed to have been the *first pope*. *Thomas Aquinas*, surnamed the *angelical doctor*, who was highly esteemed by Pope *Innocent IV.*, going one day into the pope's chamber, where they were reckoning large sums of money, the pope, addressing himself to Aquinas, said: “You see that the Church is no longer in an age in which she can say, *Silver and gold have I none?*” “It is true, holy father,” replied the angelical doctor, “nor can she now say to the lame man, *Rise up and walk!*” This was a faithful testimony, and must have cut deep for the moment. One thing is very remarkable, that though the saints of this church can work no miracles while *alive*, they work many when *dead*; and it is the attestation of those *post mortem* miracles that leads to their canonization. *Thomas a Becket*, who did no good while he lived, is reported to have done much after his death. Many have visited his tomb, and, in days of yore, many were said to be healed of whatsoever disease they had. The age is more enlightened, and the tomb of this reputed saint has lost all its power.

Verse 7. Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength] The suddenness of the cure was the *proof* of the miracle: his walking and leaping were the *evidences* of it.

Verse 8. Walking and leaping, and praising God.] These actions are very naturally described. *He walked*, in obedience to the command of the apostle, rise up and walk: *he leaped*, to try the strength of his limbs and to be convinced of the *reality* of the cure: *he praised God*, as a *testimony* of the gratitude he felt for the cure he had received. Now was fulfilled, in the most *literal* manner, the words of the Prophet Isaiah, ^{<23816>} **Isaiah 35:6:** *The lame man shall leap as a hart.*

Verse 9. And all the people saw him] The miracle was wrought in the most *public manner*, and in the most *public place*, and in a place where the best judgment could be formed of it; for, as it was a Divine operation, the *priests*, &c., were the most proper persons to judge of it; and under their notice it was now wrought.

Verse 11. Held Peter and John] He felt the strongest affection for them, as the *instruments* by which the Divine influence was converted to his diseased body.

In the porch that is called Solomon's] On this portico see Bp. Pearce's note, inserted in this work, ^{<4302>} **John 10:23.**

Verse 12. As though by our own power] **δυναμει**, *Miraculous energy.*

Or holiness] **η ευσεβεια**, Meaning *religious attachment* to the worship of God. Do not think that we have wrought this miracle by any power of our own; or that any supereminent piety in us should have induced God thus to honour us, by enabling us to work it. Instead of **ευσεβεια**, *holiness*, the Syriac of Erpen, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and some copies of the *Itala*, have **εξουσια**, *power* or *authority*; but the first appears to be the legitimate reading.

Verse 13. The God of Abraham, &c.] This was wisely introduced, to show them that HE whom they called *their God* had acknowledged Jesus Christ for *his Son*, and wrought this miracle in his name; and, by thus honouring Jesus whom they slew, he had charged home the guilt of that murder upon them.

Denied him in the presence of Pilate] **ηρνησασθε**, Ye have renounced him as your king, and denounced him to death as a malefactor, when Pilate, convinced of his perfect innocence, was determined, **κριναντος**, *judged* it proper and just, to let him go. Pilate wished to act *according* to justice; you acted *contrary* to justice and equity in all their forms.

Verse 14. Ye denied the HOLY ONE] τον αγιον. A manifest reference to ^{<191610>}**Psalm 16:10:** *Thou wilt not suffer thy HOLY ONE to see corruption;* where the original word **Ēydysj Chasideyca**, thy HOLY ONE, is translated by the Septuagint, τον ὅσιον σου, a word of the same import with that used by Peter.

And desired a murderer] Barabbas: the case must have been fresh in their own remembrance. *Like* cleaves to *like*, and begets its *like*: they were murderers themselves, and so Christ calls them, ^{<12217>}**Matthew 22:7**, and they preferred a murderer to the *holy* and *righteous* ONE of God.

Verse 15. And killed the Prince of life] τον αρχηγον της ζωης, The *author of this life*: not only implying that all life proceeds from Jesus Christ as its *source*, but that the life-giving influence of that religion which they were now proclaiming came all through him. αρχηγος signifies a *prime leader* or *author*, a *captain*, from αρχη, the *beginning*, *head*, or *chief*; and αγω, *I lead*. In ^{<81210>}**Hebrews 2:10**, Christ is called αρχηγος της σωτηριας, the *Captain of salvation*. He *teaches* the doctrine of *life* and *salvation*, *leads* the way in which men should walk, and has purchased the eternal life and glory which are to be enjoyed at the end of the way. So the Jews preferred a *son of death*, a *destroyer of life*, to the *Author* and *Procurer* of *life* and *immortality*!

Whereof we are witnesses.] They had now wrought a most striking miracle in the name of Christ, and immediately proposed themselves as witnesses of his resurrection from the dead; the miracle which they had thus wrought being an unimpeachable proof of this resurrection.

Verse 16. And his name] JESUS, the Saviour: *through faith in his name*, as the *Saviour*, and *author of life*, and all its concomitant blessings, such as *health*, &c. It is not quite clear whether the apostles refer to their *own* faith in Jesus, or to the faith of the *lame man*. It is true Christ had promised that they should perform miracles in his name, ^{<411617>}**Mark 16:17, 18**. And that whatsoever they asked of the Father in his name, he would grant it, ^{<31623>}**John 16:23**. And they might have been led at this time to make request unto God to be enabled to work this miracle; and the faith they had in his *unlimited* power and *unchangeable* truth might have induced them to make this request. Or, the faith might have been that of the *lame man*; the apostles, in the time they desired him to look on them, might have taught him the necessity of believing in Christ in order to his healing; and the

man's mind might have been prepared for this by the miracle of the *gift of tongues*, of which he must have heard; and heard that this mighty effusion of the Spirit had come in the *name* and through the *power of Christ*. However the faith may be understood, it was only the *means* to receive the blessing, which the apostles most positively attribute, not to *their power or holiness*, but to Jesus Christ alone. *Faith* always *receives*; never *gives*.

Verse 17. I wot] οἶδα, *I know*. *Wot* is from the Anglo-Saxon, [A.S.] *to know*; and hence *wit*, science or understanding.

Through ignorance ye did it] This is a very tender excuse for them; and one which seems to be necessary, in order to show them that their state was not utterly *desperate*; for if all that they did to Christ had been through *absolute malice*, (they well knowing who he was,) if any sin could be supposed to be *unpardonable*, it must have been theirs. Peter, foreseeing that they might be tempted thus to think, and consequently to despair of salvation, tells them that their offence was extenuated by their ignorance of the person they had tormented and crucified. And one must suppose that, had they been fully convinced that this Jesus was the only Messiah, they never would have crucified him; but they did not permit themselves to receive conviction on the subject.

Verse 18. But those things-he hath so fulfilled.] Your ignorance and malice have been overruled by the sovereign wisdom and power of God, and have become the instruments of fulfilling the Divine purpose, that Christ must suffer, in order to make an atonement for the sin of the world. *All the prophets* had declared this; some of them in express terms, others indirectly and by symbols; but, as the whole Mosaic dispensation referred to Christ, all that prophesied or ministered under it must have referred to him also.

Verse 19. Repent ye therefore] Now that ye are convinced that this was the Messiah, let your *minds be changed*, and your hearts become contrite for the sins you have committed.

And be converted] επιστρεψατε, Turn to God through this Christ, deeply deploring your transgressions, and believing on his name; *that your sins may be blotted out*, which are not only *recorded* against you, but for which you are condemned by the justice of God; and the punishment due to them must be executed upon you, unless prevented by your repentance, and turning to him whom ye have pierced. The *blotting out* of sins may

refer to the ceremony of the waters of jealousy, where the curse that was written in the book was to be *blotted out with the bitter water*. See **Clarke's note on** “^{<4073>}**Numbers 5:23**”. Their sins were *written down* against them, and cried aloud for punishment; for they themselves had said, *His blood be upon us, and upon our children*, ^{<4175>}**Matthew 27:25**; and unless they took refuge in this *sacrificial blood*, and got their sins *blotted out* by it, they could not be saved.

When the times of refreshing shall come] Dr. Lightfoot contends, and so ought all, that **οπως αν ελθωσι καιροι αναψυξεως**, should be translated, THAT *the times of refreshing* MAY *come*. **αναψυξις**, signifies a *breathing time*, or *respite*, and may be here applied to the *space* that elapsed from this time till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This was a *time of respite*, which God gave them to repent of their sins, and be converted to himself. Taking the word in the sense of *refreshment* in general, it may mean the whole reign of the kingdom of grace, and the blessings which God gives here below to all genuine believers, *peace, love, joy, and communion with himself*. See **Clarke on** “^{<4021>}**Acts 3:21**”.

Verse 20. Which before was preached unto you] Instead of **προκεκηρυγμενον**, *before preached*, ABCDE, fifty-three others, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, the Armenian, Chrysostom, and others, have **προκεχειρισμενον**, who was *before designed*, or *appointed*; and this is without doubt the true reading. Christ crucified was the person whom God had from the beginning *appointed* or *designed* for the Jewish people. It was not a *triumphant* Messiah which they were to expect; but one who was to *suffer* and *die*. Jesus was this person; and by believing in him, as thus suffering and dying for their sins, he should be *again sent*, in the power of his Spirit, to justify and save them.

Verse 21. Whom the heaven must receive] He has already appeared upon earth, and accomplished the end of his appearing; he has ascended unto heaven, to administer the concerns of his kingdom, and there he shall continue till he comes again to judge the quick and the dead.

The times of restitution of all things] The word **αποκαταστασις**, from **απο** which signifies *from*, and **καθιστανειν**, to *establish* or *settle* any thing, viz. in a *good state*; and, when **απο** is added to it, then this preposition implies that this *good state*, in which it is *settled*, was preceded by a *bad one*, from which the change is made to a good one. So in ^{<4006>}**Acts**

1:6, when the disciples said to Christ, *Wilt thou at this time restore again (ἀποκαθίστανεις) the kingdom to Israel?* they meant, as the Greek word implies, *Wilt thou take the kingdom from the Romans, and give it back to the Jews?* Now, as the word is here connected with, *which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets*, it must mean the accomplishment of all the *prophecies* and *promises* contained in the Old Testament relative to the kingdom of Christ upon earth; the whole reign of grace, from the ascension of our Lord till his coming again, for of all these things have the holy prophets spoken; and, as the *grace of the Gospel* was intended to destroy the *reign of sin*, its energetic influence is represented as *restoring all things*, destroying the *bad state*, and establishing the *good*-taking the kingdom out of the hands of sin and Satan, and putting it into those of righteousness and truth. This is done in every believing soul; all things are *restored* to their primitive order; and *the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps the heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God*. The man loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself; and thus all the things of which the holy prophets have spoken since the world began, relative to the salvation of *any soul*, are accomplished in this case; and when such a work becomes *universal*, as the Scriptures seem to intimate that it will, then all things will be restored in the *fullest sense* of the term. As therefore the subject here referred to is that of which all the prophets from the beginning have spoken, (and the grand subject of all their declarations was Christ and his work among men,) therefore the words are to be applied to *this*, and no other meaning. Jesus Christ comes to raise up man from a state of ruin, and restore to him the image of God, as he possessed it at the beginning.

All his holy prophets] **παντων**, *all*, is omitted by ABCD, some others, one Syriac, the Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate. Griesbach leaves it out of the text, and inserts the article **των**, which the Greek MSS. have, in the place of **παντων**. The text reads thus: *Which he hath spoken by his holy prophets, &c.*

Since the world began.] **ἀπ' αἰωνος**; as **αιων** signifies complete and ever-during existence or eternity, it is sometimes applied, by way of accommodation, to denote the *whole course* of any *one period*, such as the Mosaic dispensation. **See Clarke's note on "⁴⁰¹²³³Genesis 21:33"**. It may therefore here refer to that state of things *from* the giving of the law; and as *Moses* is mentioned in the next verse, and none before him, it is probable that the phrase should be so understood here. But, if we apply it to the

commencement of time, the sense is still good: Enoch, the *seventh* from Adam, prophesied of these things; and indeed the birth, life, miracles, preaching sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of Jesus Christ, have been the only theme of all prophets and inspired men from the foundation of the world.

Verse 22. Moses truly said unto the fathers] On this subject the reader is requested to refer to the note, see Clarke “^{<6182>}**Deuteronomy 18:22**”. From this appeal to Moses it is evident that Peter wished them to understand that Jesus Christ was come, not as an ordinary prophet, to exhort to repentance and amendment, But as a *legislator*, who was to give them a *new law*, and whose commands and precepts they were to obey, on pain of endless destruction. Therefore they were to understand that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was that *new law* which should supersede the *old*.

Verse 24. All the prophets from Samuel] Dr. Lightfoot observes: “We have *Moses* and *Samuel* mentioned together in this place, as also ^{<3996>}**Psalm 99:6**, because there were few or no prophets between these two, ^{<0001>}**1 Samuel 3:1**, and the apparition of angels having been more frequent; but, after the decease of Phineas, it is a question whether there was any oracle by *Urim* and *Thummim*, through the defect of prophecy in the high priests, till the times of Samuel. But then it revived in Abimelec, Abiather, &c.” The Jews have a saying, *Hieros. Chagigah*, fol. 77. **μϋαϋκγ Ι ν ᾽βδ Ι αωμϋ** *Samuel was the chief of the prophets*. Perhaps it was in reference to this that Peter said, *All the prophets from Samuel, &c.*

Verse 25. Ye are the children of the prophets] This is the *argumentum ad hominem*: as ye are the children or disciples of the prophets, ye are bound to believe their predictions, and obey their precepts; and not only so, but ye are entitled to their promises. Your duty and your interest go hand in hand; and there is not a blessing contained in the covenant which was made with your fathers but belongs to *you*. Now, as this covenant respected the blessings of the Gospel, you must believe in Jesus Christ, in order to be put in possession of all those blessings.

Verse 26. Unto you first, God, having raised up] As you are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, the *first* offers of salvation belong to *you*, and God thus makes them to you. The great mission of Jesus Christ is directed *first* to *you*, that you may be saved from your sins. God designs to *bless you*, but it is by *turning each of you away from his iniquities*. The

salvation promised in the covenant is *a salvation from SIN*, not from the *Romans*; and no man can have his sin *blotted out* who does not *turn away from it*.

1. We may learn from this that neither *political* nor *ecclesiastical* privileges can benefit the soul, merely considered in themselves: a man may have Abraham for his father, according to the flesh; and have Satan for his father, according to the spirit. A man may be a member of the visible Church of Christ, without any title to the Church triumphant. In short, if a man be not *turned away from his iniquities*, even the death of Christ profits him nothing. *His name shall be called JESUS, for he shall SAVE his people FROM their SINS*.

2. If Christ be the substance and sum of all that the prophets have written, is it not the duty and interest of every Christian, in reading the Scriptures, to search for the testimony they bear to this Christ, and the salvation procured by his death?

ACTS

CHAPTER 4.

The priests And Sadducees are incensed at the apostles' teaching, and put them in prison, 1-3. The number of those who believed, 4. The rulers, elders, and scribes call the apostles before them, and question them concerning their authority to teach, 5-7. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, answers, and proclaims Jesus, 8-12. They are confounded at his discourse and the miracle wrought on the lame man, yet command them not to preach in the name of Jesus, 13-18. Peter and John refuse to obey, 19, 20. They are farther threatened and dismissed, 21, 22. They return to their own company, who all join in praise and prayer to God, 23-30. God answers, and fills them with the Holy Spirit, 31. The blessed state of the primitive disciples, 32-35. The case of Joses, who sells his estate, and brought the money to the common stock. 36. 37.

NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

Verse 1. The priests] These persons had evidenced the most implacable enmity against Christ from the beginning.

The captain of the temple] See this office particularly explained in the note, see Clarke on “^{423b} Luke 22:4”.

The Sadducees] Whose whole system was now in danger by the preaching of the *resurrection* of Christ; for they believed not in the immortality of the soul, nor in any future world. These made a common cause with the priests, &c., to suppress the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and silence the apostles.

Verse 2. Being grieved] *διαπονουμενοι*, They were *thoroughly fatigued* with the continuance of this preaching; their minds suffered more *labour*, *through vexation* at the success of the apostles, than the bodies of the apostles did in their fatiguing exercise of preaching during the whole day.

Verse 4. The number-was about five thousand.] That is, as I understand the passage, the one hundred and twenty which were converted before pentecost, the three thousand converted at pentecost, and one thousand eight hundred and eighty converted since the conversion of the three thousand; making in the whole five thousand, or *ωσει* *about* that number: there might have been more or less; the historian does not fix the number absolutely. A goodly flock in one city, as the commencement of the

Christian Church! Some think all the five thousand were converted on this day; but this is by no means likely.

Verse 5. Their rulers, and elders, and scribes] Those with the high priest Annas formed the Sanhedrin, or grand council of the Jews.

Verse 6. Annas] Though this man was not now actually in the office of high priest, yet he had possessed it for eleven years, bore the title all his life, and had the honour of seeing five of his sons fill that eminent place after him—an honour that never happened to any other person from the commencement of the Mosaic institution. He is the same who is called Ananus by Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 8.

And Caiaphas] He was son-in-law to Annas, ~~EBIB3~~ **John 18:13**, was now high priest, and the same who, a short time before, condemned Christ to be crucified.

And John] Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, with great probability that this was *Jochanan ben Zaccai*, who was very famous at that time in the Jewish nation. Of him it is said in the Talmud, *Jucas*. fol. 60: “Rabbin Jochanan ben Zaccai the priest lived 120 years. He found favour in the eyes of Cæsar, from whom he obtained Jafneh. When he died, the glory of wisdom ceased.” The following is a remarkable passage: *Yoma*, fol. 39: Forty years before the destruction of the city, (the very time of which St. Luke now treats,) when the gates of the temple flew open of their own accord, Rab. Jochanan ben Zaccai said, “O temple! temple! why dost thou disturb thyself? I know thy end, that thou shalt be destroyed, for so the Prophet Zachary hath spoken concerning thee: open thy doors, O Lebanon! that the fire may devour thy cedars.” See *Lightfoot* and *Schoettgen*.

And Alexander] This was probably Alexander Lysimachus, one of the richest Jews of his time, who made great presents to the temple, and was highly esteemed by King Agrippa. See *Calmet*. He was brother to the famous Philo Judæus, and father of Alexander Tiberius, who married Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa the elder, and was governor of Judea after Cuspius Fadus. See Josephus, Ant. l. xix. c. 5, s. 1.

Of the kindred of the high priest] Or rather, as Bp. Pearce renders it, “*of the race of the high priests*, i.e. of the family out of which the high priests were chosen.” It may, however, comprehend those who belonged to the families of *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, and all who were *connected* with the

sacerdotal family. Luke distinctly mentions all these, to show how *formidable* the enemies were against whom the infant Church of Christ had to contend.

Verse 7. By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?] It seems that this council were convinced that the lame man was miraculously healed; but it is very likely that they believed the whole to be the effect of magic; and, as all intercourse with familiar spirits, and all spells, charms, &c., were unlawful, they probably hoped that, on the examination, this business would come out, and that then these disturbers of *their* peace would be put to death. Hence they inquired by what power, **εν ποια δυναμει**, by what supernatural energy; or *in what name*, by what mode of incantation; and who is the spirit you invoke, in order to do these things? False prophets, reputed witches, wizards, &c., were to be brought before the sanhedrin, to be by them judged, acquitted, or condemned, according to the evidence. Some think the words should be thus understood: Who gave you authority to teach publicly! This belongs to the sanhedrin. What, therefore, is your *authority*, and *who* is he who gave it to you?

Verse 8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost] Which guided him into all truth, and raised him far above the fear of man; placing him in a widely different state of mind to that in which he was found when, in the hall of Caiaphas, he denied his Master, through fear of a servant girl. But now was fulfilled the promise of Christ, ^{<0018>}**Matthew 10:18-20**; *And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake; but take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*

Verse 9. The good deed done] **επι ευεργεσια**, The *benefit* he has received in being restored to perfect soundness.

Verse 10. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth] This was a very bold declaration in the presence of such an assembly; but he felt he stood on good ground. The cure of the lame man the day before was notorious; his long infirmity was well known; his person could be easily identified; and he was now standing before them whole and sound: they themselves therefore could judge whether the miracle was true or false. But the *reality* of it was not questioned, nor was there any difficulty about the instruments that were employed; the only question is, *How* have ye done this? and in *whose name*? Peter immediately answers, We have done it in the name of

Jesus of Nazareth whom *ye crucified*, and whom God hath raised from the dead.

Verse 11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders] By your rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, you have fulfilled one of your own prophecies, ^{<1982>}**Psalm 118:22**; and, as *one* part of this prophecy is now so literally fulfilled, ye may rest assured, so shall the *other*; and this rejected stone shall speedily become the head stone of the corner. See Clarke's note on "^{<421>}**Matthew 21:42**".

Verse 12. Neither is there salvation in any other] No kind of *healing*, whether for *body* or *soul*, can come through any but him who is called JESUS. The spirit of *health* resides in him; and from him alone its influences must be received.

For there is none other name] Not only no other *person*, but no *name* except that divinely appointed one, ^{<402>}**Matthew 1:21**, by which salvation from sin can be expected-*none given under heaven*-no other means ever devised by God himself for the salvation of a lost world. All other means were only *subordinate*, and *referred to him*, and had their efficacy from him alone. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and no man ever came, or can come, to the Father but by him.

Verse 13. The boldness of Peter and John] *την παρρησιαν*, The *freedom* and *fluency* with which they spoke; for they spoke now from the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, and their word was with power.

That they were unlearned and ignorant men] *αγραμματοι*, Persons without literature, not brought up in nor given to literary pursuits-*and ignorant*, *ιδιωται*, persons in *private life*, brought up in its occupations alone. It does not mean *ignorance* in the common acceptance of the term; and our translation is very improper. In *no* sense of the word could any of the apostles be called *ignorant men*; for though their spiritual knowledge came all from heaven, yet in all other matters they seem to have been men of good, sound, strong, common sense.

They took knowledge of them] *επεινωσκον* may imply that they *got information*, that they had been disciples of Christ, and probably they might have seen them in our Lord's company; for there can be little doubt that they had often seen our Lord teaching the multitudes, and these disciples attending him.

That they had been with Jesus.] Had they not had his teaching, the present company would soon have confounded them; but they spoke with so much power and authority that the whole sanhedrin was confounded. He who is taught in spiritual matters by Christ Jesus has a better gift than the tongue of the learned. He who is taught in the school of Christ will ever speak to the point, and intelligibly too; though his words may not have that polish with which they who prefer *sound* to *sense* are often carried away.

Verse 14. They could say nothing against it.] They could not gainsay the apostolic doctrine, for that was supported by the miraculous fact before them. If the doctrine be false, the man cannot have been miraculously healed: if the man be miraculously healed, then the doctrine must be true that it is by the name of Jesus of Nazareth that he has been healed. But the man is incontestably healed; therefore the doctrine is true.

Verse 16. A notable miracle hath been done] A miracle has been wrought, and this miracle is *known*, and acknowledged to be such; all Jerusalem knew that he was lame-lame from his birth, and that he had long begged at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and now all Jerusalem knew that he was healed; and there was no means by which such a self-evident fact could be disproved.

Verse 17. But that it spread no farther] Not the news of the miraculous healing of the lame man, but the doctrine and influence which these men preach and exert. More than a thousand people had already professed faith in Christ in consequence of this miracle, (see ~~400~~ **Acts 4:4**.) and if this teaching should be permitted to go on, probably accompanied with similar miracles, they had reason to believe that all Jerusalem (themselves excepted, who had steeled their hearts against all good) should be converted to the religion of him whom they had lately crucified.

Let us straitly threaten them] *απειλη απειλησωμεθα*, *Let us threaten them with threatening, a Hebraism*, and a proof that St. Luke has translated the words of the council into Greek, just as they were spoken.

That they speak-to no man in this name.] Nothing so ominous to them as the name of Christ *crucified*, because they themselves had been his crucifiers. On this account they could not bear to hear salvation preached to mankind through him of whom they had been the betrayers and murderers, and who was soon likely to have no enemies but themselves.

Verse 18. Not to speak-nor teach in the name of Jesus.] Any other doctrine, and any other name, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites and infidels will bear, but the doctrine which is according to godliness, proclaiming salvation through the blood of Christ crucified, they will not bear. If their doctrine were not the truth of God it could not be so unpopular; there is such an enmity in human nature against all that is good and true, that whatever comes from God is generally rejected by wicked men.

Verse 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God] As if they had said: Worldly prudence and a consideration of our secular interests would undoubtedly induce us to obey you; but acting as before God, and following the dictates of eternal truth and justice, we dare not be silent. Can it be right to obey men contrary to the command and will of God? When he commands us to speak, dare we hold our tongue? We have received our authority from God through Christ, and feel fully persuaded of the truth by the Holy Spirit which now dwells in us; and we should be guilty of treason against God, were we on any consideration to suppress his testimony. Your own consciences testify that we should be sinners against our heavenly King, were we to act according to your orders; and the conclusion is, that *we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.*

Verse 21. When they had farther threatened them]

προσαπειλησαμενοι, When they had added to their former threatenings, repeating the former menaces, and adding new penalties.

Finding nothing how they might punish them] Or, as the *Codex Bezae* reads, **μηευρισκοντες αιτιαν, πως κολασωνται**, *not finding, a cause why they might punish them.* This reading is supported by the *Syriac* and *Arabic*. Bp. Pearce says, “This is better sense and better Greek.”

Because of the people] The people saw the miracle, confessed the finger of God, believed on the Lord Jesus, and thus became converts to the Christian faith; and the converts were now so numerous that the sanhedrin was afraid to proceed to any extremities, lest an insurrection should be the consequence.

Verse 22. The man was above forty years old] The disease was of long standing, and consequently the more inveterate; but all difficulties, small or great, yield equally to the sovereign power of God. It is as easy with God to convert a sinner of *forty* or *four-score*, as one of *ten* years old. But he who *now* refuses to obey the call of God has neither reason nor revelation

to support himself even in the most distant hope that he shall get, in a future time, the salvation which he rejects in the present.

Verse 23. They went to their own company] This was properly the first persecution that had been raised up against the Church since the resurrection of Christ; and as the rest of the disciples must have known that Peter and John had been cast into prison, and that they were to be examined before the sanhedrin, and knowing the evil disposition of the rulers toward their brethren, they doubtless made joint supplication to God for their safety. In this employment it is likely Peter and John found them on their return from the council, and repeated to them all their treatment, with the threats of the chief priests and elders.

Verse 24. Lord, thou art God] **δεσποτα, συ ο θεος**, *Thou God art the sovereign Lord*. Thy rule is universal, and thy power unlimited; for thou hast the heaven and its glories, the earth and the sea, and their endlessly varied and numerous inhabitants, under thy direction and control.

Verse 25. By the mouth of thy servant David hast said] Several add, but impertinently, **δια πνευματος αγιου**, *by the Holy Spirit*; but it is sufficient that GOD has said it; and thug we find that David spoke by the inspiration of God; and that the second Psalm relates to Jesus Christ, and predicts the vain attempts made by Jewish and heathen powers to suppress Christianity.

Verse 26. Against the Lord and against his Christ.] **κατα του χριστου αυτου** should be translated, *against his ANOINTED*, because it particularly agrees with **ον εχρισας**, *whom thou hast ANOINTED*, in the succeeding verse.

Verse 27. There is a parenthesis in this verse that is not sufficiently noticed: it should be read in connection with ^{40ES}**Acts 4:28**, thus: *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, (for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,) both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together.*

It is evident that what God's *hand and counsel determined before to be done* was not that which Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, (Romans,) and the people of Israel had done and were doing; for, then, their *rage and vain counsel* would be such as God himself had determined should take

place, which is both impious and absurd; but these gathered together to *hinder* what God had before determined that his Christ or Anointed should perform; and thus the passage is undoubtedly to be understood.

Were gathered together] εν τη πολει ταυτη, *In this very city*, are added by ABDE, and several others; all the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonian*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, and several of the primitive fathers. This reading Griesbach has received into the text. This makes the words much more emphatic; in this thy own city, these different and in all other cases dissentient powers are leagued together against thine Anointed, and are determined to prevent the accomplishment of thy purpose.

Verse 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings] It is not against *us*, but against *thee*, that they conspire: it is not to prevent the success of *our preaching*, but to bring to nought *thy counsel*: the whole of their enmity is against thee. Now, Lord, look upon it; consider this.

And grant unto thy servants] While we are endeavouring to fulfil thy counsels, and can do nothing without thee, sustain our courage, that we may proclaim thy truth with boldness and irresistible power.

Verse 30. By stretching forth thine hand to heal] Show that it is thy truth which we proclaim, and confirm it with miracles, and show how highly thou hast magnified thy Son Jesus, whom they have despised and crucified, by causing signs and wonders to be wrought in his name.

Thy holy child Jesus.] του αγιου παιδος σου should be translated, *thy holy SERVANT*, as in ^{<4025>}Acts 4:25. δαβιδ παιδος σου, *thy servant David*, not *thy CHILD David*: the word is the same in both places.

Verse 31. The place was shaken] This earthquake was an evidence of the presence of God, and a most direct answer to their prayer, as far as that prayer concerned themselves. The earthquake proclaimed the *stretched-out arm of God*, and showed them that resistance against his counsels and determinations must come to nought.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost] And, in consequence of this, *they spake the word of God with boldness*; a pointed answer to a second part of their request, ^{<4029>}Acts 4:29. A right prayer will always have a right and ready answer. Though these disciples had received the Holy Spirit on the day of pentecost, yet they were capable of larger communications; and what they had then received did not preclude the

necessity of frequent supplies, on emergent occasions. Indeed, one communication of this Spirit always makes way and disposes for another. Neither apostle nor private Christian can subsist in the Divine life without frequent influences from on high. Had these disciples depended on their pentecostal grace, they might have sunk now under the terror and menaces of their combined and powerful foes. God gives grace for the *time being*, but no stock for *futurity*, because he will keep all his followers *continually dependent* on himself.

With boldness.] παντι τω θελοντι πιστευειν, *To all who were willing to believe*, is added by DE, two others, *Augustin, Irenæus, and Bede.*

Verse 32. The multitude of them that believed] The whole 5000, mentioned ~~400~~ Acts 4:4, and probably many others, who had been converted by the ministry of the other apostles since that time.

Were of one heart and of one soul] Were in a state of the most perfect friendship and affection. In all the 5000 there appeared to be but one heart and one soul; so perfectly did they agree in all their views, religious opinions, and holy affections. Some MSS. add, και ουκ ην διακρισις εν αυτοις ουδεμια, *and there was no kind of difference or dissension among them.* This remarkable reading is found in the *Codex Bezaë*, another of great authority, E, two others, *Ambrose, Bede, Cyprian, and Zenon.* Diogenes Lærtius relates of Aristotle, ερωτηθεις, τι εστι φιλος; *being asked, What is a FRIEND?* εφη, μια ψυχη δυο σωμασιν ενοικουσα *answered, ONE soul dwelling in TWO bodies.* This saying has been justly celebrated: but what would this wonderful philosopher have thought and said, had he seen these disciples of Jesus, and friends of mankind: *one soul dwelling in 5000 bodies!*

They had all things common.] See Clarke's notes on "~~404~~ Acts 2:44", where this subject is examined. See Clarke below, "~~403~~ Acts 4:34".

Verse 33. With great power gave the apostles witness] This power they received from the Holy Spirit, who enabled them, μεγαλη δυναμει, *with striking miracles*, to give proof of *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*; for this is the point that was particularly to be proved: that he was slain and buried, all knew; that he rose again from the dead, many knew; but it was necessary to give such proofs as should convince and confound all. This preaching and these miracles demonstrated this Divine truth: *Jesus died for your sins-he rose again for your justification; behold what God works in*

confirmation of these glorious truths; believe therefore in the Lord Jesus, and ye shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Great grace was upon them all.] They all received much of the favour or grace of God; and they had much favour with all who feared God. In both these ways this clause may be understood; for *χαρις* means *favour*, whether that be evidenced by *benevolence* or *beneficence*, or by *both*. The favour of God is the *benevolence* of God; but his benevolence is never exerted without the exertions of his *beneficence*. Hence the *grace* or *favour* of God always implies a blessing or gift from the hand of his mercy and power. The favour or benevolence of men may exist without *beneficence*, because it may not be in their power to communicate any gift or benefit, though they are disposed to do it; or, 2dly. the persons who enjoy their favour may not stand in need of any of their kind acts; but it is not so with God: his good will is ever accompanied by his good work; and every soul that is an object of his benevolence stands in the utmost need of the acts of his beneficence. Hence, as he *loved* the world, he gave his Son a ransom for all. All needed his help; and, because they all needed it, therefore all had it. And truly we may say of the whole human race, for whom the Son of God tasted death, that *great grace was upon all*; for ALL have been purchased by his sacrificial death. This by the way.

Verse 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked] It was customary with the Jews to call the poor together, to eat of the sacrifices, but as the priests, &c., were incensed against Christ and Christianity, consequently the Christian poor could have no advantage of this kind; therefore, by making a common stock for the present necessity, the poor were supplied; so there was none among them that lacked. This provision therefore of the community of goods, which could be but temporary, was made both suitably and seasonably. See Bp. Pearce, and see **Clarke's note on "~~4024~~ Acts 2:44"**.

Verse 35. Laid-down at the apostles' feet] To show how cordially and entirely they parted with them. And they entrusted the management of the whole to those men to whom they found God had entrusted the gifts of his Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 36. Joses] Or, *Joseph*, as many excellent MSS. read; but who he was, farther than what is here said, we know not.

Surnamed Barnabas] Or, *Barsabbas*, according to the *Coptic*.

The son of consolation] υιος παρακλησεως; As παρακλησις signifies *exhortation*, as well as *consolation*, and is indeed distinguished from the latter, ^{<464B>}**1 Corinthians 14:3**, the original name was probably **abn rb** *Bar naba*, or **aybn rb** *Bar nebia*, which signifies the *son of prophecy* or *exhortation*; and this is certainly one sense which *prophecy* has in the New Testament; and in this way Barnabas distinguished himself among the apostles. See ^{<44123>}**Acts 11:23**. *And Barnabas EXHORTED them all that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.*

A Levite, and of the country of Cyprus] Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, off Cilicia, and not very distant from the Jewish coast. The Jews were very numerous in that island: see Dion. Cas. lib. 68, 69. Though he was a Levite, he might have had land of his own by private purchase. The Levites, as a tribe, had no land in Israel; but the individuals certainly might make purchases any where in the country: but, as Barnabas was of Cyprus, his land probably lay there; and as it is likely that he was one of those strangers that came up to Jerusalem to the late feast, and was there converted, he might have sold his land in the island to some of his own countrymen who were at Jerusalem at this time; and so, being called to the work of the ministry, continued to associate with the apostles, travelling every where, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God. He was the constant companion of St. Paul, till the separation took place on account of John Mark, mentioned ^{<44156>}**Acts 15:36-39**.

It is worthy of remark that the two apostles of the Gentiles, though of Jewish extraction, were both born in Gentile countries; Paul in Cilicia, Barnabas in Cyprus: this gave them many advantages; served to remove prejudices from the heathens; and gave them no doubt much facility in the Greek tongue, without which they could have done but little in Asia Minor, nor in most parts of the Roman empire where they travelled. How admirably does God determine even the place of our birth, and the bounds of our habitation! When under the influence of the grace of Christ, every thing is turned to a man's advantage. The man whom he calls to his work he will take care to endue with every necessary qualification. And is it too much to say that God never did call a man to preach the Gospel whom he did not qualify in such a manner that both the workman and the work should appear to be of God?

Some have said that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*. Devotion and religion are both scandalized by the saying. Enlightened piety has ever been

the most sincere, steady, and active. God makes those wise who turn unto him; and by experimental religion all the powers of the mind are greatly improved. Every genuine minister of Christ has an enlightened heart; and, to this, it is his duty to add a well-cultivated mind. *Exodus quovis ligno Mercurius non fit*: A blockhead never did, and never can, make a minister.

ACTS

CHAPTER 5.

The hypocrisy of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, and their awful death, 1-11. The apostles work many miracles, and the Church of God is increased, 12-16. The high priest and the Sadducees, being incensed against the apostles, seize and put them in prison, 17, 18. The angel of God delivers them, and commands them to go to the temple, and proclaim the Gospel, 19, 20. The high priest, having gathered the council together in the morning, sends to the prison to have the apostles brought before him, 21. The offers return, and report that they found the prison shut, and the watch set, but that the men had got out, 22, 23. A messenger arrives in the meanwhile, and says that the apostles are preaching in the temple, 24, 25. The captain and officers go and bring them before the council, who expostulate with them, 26-28. The apostles defend themselves, and charge the council with the murder of Christ; and assert his resurrection from the dead and ascension to the right hand of God, 29-32. The council are confounded, and purpose to slay the apostles, 33. Gamaliel gives them seasonable and prudent advice, 34-39. The council agree to it, but, before they discharge the apostles, beat them, and command them not to teach in the name of Jesus, 40. They depart rejoicing in their persecution, and continue to preach Jesus Christ, 41, 42.

NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

Verse 1. But a certain man named Ananias] Of these unhappy people we have no farther account than what is recorded here. In reference to birth, connections, &c., their names are written in the dust. The import of his name, *hymnj chananiyah*, the *grace or mercy of the Lord*, agrees very ill with his conduct.

Verse 2. Kept back part of the price] Ananias and Sapphira were evidently persons who professed faith in Christ with the rest of the disciples. While all were making sacrifices for the present necessity, they came forward among the rest, pretending to bring *all* the money they had got for a possession, *κτημα*, (of what kind we know not,) which they had sold. A *part* of this price, however, they kept back, not being willing to trust entirely to the bounty of Providence, as the others did; thinking probably, that, as the whole was their own, they had a right to do with it as they pleased. And so they had: they were under no necessity to sell their possession; but the act of selling it for the ostensible purpose of bringing it

into the common stock, left them no farther control over it, nor property in it; and their pretense, that the money which they brought was the whole produce of the sale, was a direct lie in itself, and an attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit, under whose influence they pretended to act. This constituted the *iniquity* of their sin.

Verse 3. Why hath Satan filled thine heart] The verb *πληροειν*, which we translate *to fill*, Kypke has showed by many examples to signify, to *instigate, excite, impel, &c.*, and it was a common belief, as well among the heathens as among the Jews and Christians, that, when a man did evil, he was *excited* to it by the influence and malice of an *evil spirit*. It is strange that, by the general consent of mankind, sin against God has been ever considered so perfectly unnatural, and so evil in itself, that no man would commit it unless *impelled* to it by the *agency* of the *devil*. The words of St. Peter here prove that such an agency is not fictitious: if there had been no devil, as some wish and perhaps feel it their interest to believe, or if this devil had no influence on the souls of men, Peter, under the agency of the Holy Spirit, would not have expressed himself in this way; for, if the thing were not so, it would have been the most direct means to lead the disciples to form *false opinions*, or to confirm them in *old and absurd prejudices*.

To lie to the Holy Ghost] *νευσασθαι το πνευμα το ἅγιον*, *To deceive the Holy Spirit*. Every *lie* is told with the *intention to deceive*; and they wished to deceive the apostles, and, in effect, that Holy Spirit under whose influence they professed to act. Lying against the Holy Ghost is in the next verse said to be *lying against God*; therefore the Holy Ghost is GOD.

To keep back part of the price] *νοσφισασθαι απο της τιμης*. The verb *νοσφιζειν, νοσφιζεσθαι*, is used by the Greek writers to signify *purling part of the public money, peculation*. The word is used here with great propriety, as the money for which the estate was sold was *public property*; as it was for this purpose alone that the sale was made.

Verse 4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?] See Clarke's note on "^{416D}Acts 5:2", and see Clarke also on "⁴¹²⁴Acts 2:44".

Verse 5. Fell down, and gave up the ghost] *πεσων εξεψυξε*, *Falling down, he expired, breathed his last*: "Gave up the ghost" is a very improper translation here. See Clarke's notes on "⁰²⁵⁸Genesis 25:8", and see Clarke on "^{4175D}Matthew 27:50". Two things may be remarked here:

1. That the sin of this person was of no ordinary magnitude, else God would not have visited it with so signal a punishment. 2. That Peter must have had the power to *discern the state of the heart*, else he had not known the perfidy of Ananias. This power, commonly called the *discernment of spirits*, the apostles had as a particular gift, not probably *always* but at *select times*, when God saw it necessary for the good of his Church.

Verse 6. The young men arose] Some of the stout young men belonging to the disciples then present, who were the fittest to undertake a work of this kind, which required considerable bodily exertion.

Buried him.] This was on the same day in which he died. It was a clear case that he was dead, and dead by a judgment of God that would not be revoked. As therefore it was no case of *suspended animation*, there was no reason to *delay* the burial.

Verse 9. To tempt the Spirit of the Lord?] So the *Holy Ghost*, *God*, and the *Spirit of the Lord*, are the same person.

Verse 10. Yielded up the ghost] See ^{<44816>}Acts 5:5. It was not by Peter's words, nor through Peter's prayers, nor through *shame*, nor through *remorse*, that this guilty pair died, but by an immediate judgment of God. The question of the salvation of Ananias and Sapphira has not been a little agitated; and most seem inclined to hope that, though their sin was punished by this awful display of the Divine judgment, mercy was extended to their souls. For my own part, I think their sin was what the apostle, ^{<41516>}1 John 5:16, calls a *sin unto death*; a sin which must be punished with temporal death, or the death of the body, while mercy was extended to the soul. It was right in this infant state of the Church to show God's displeasure against *deceit*, *fraud*, and *hypocrisy*: had this guilty pair been permitted to live after they had done this evil, this *long-suffering* would have been infallibly abused by others; and, instead of leading them who had sinned to *repentance*, might have led them to *hardness of heart* by causing them to presume on the mercy of God. That hypocrisy may be afraid to show her face, God makes these *two* an example of his justice; but, because they had not the ordinary respite, we may presume that God extended mercy to them, though cut off almost in the act of sin. Their case, however, cannot become a precedent, allowing them to have received mercy; because those who have seen in this case the *severity* of God must expect much sorer punishment, if, with such an example before their eyes, they

should presume on the *mercy* of their Maker: this would be doing evil that good might come, and the perdition of such would be just.

Verse 11. Great fear came upon all the Church] This judgment answered the end for which it was inflicted; a deeply religious fear occupied every mind, and hypocrisy and deception were banished from this holy assembly. On the word *Church*, see the observations at the end of Matt. 16. **See Clarke** “^{<4062>}**Matthew 16:28**” It has been properly observed that we have in this place a native specimen of a New Testament Church: 1. Called by the Gospel; 2. grafted into Christ by baptism; 3. animated by love; 4. united by all kinds of fellowship; 5. and disciplined by the exemplary punishment of hypocrites. See *Dodd*.

Verse 12. By the hands of the apostles] This verse should be read with the 15th, to which it properly belongs. {^{<4065>}**Acts 5:15**}

Solomon’s porch.] See Clarke’s note on “^{<4062>}**John 10:23**”.

Verse 13. And of the rest, durst no man join him self to them] Who were these called *the rest*, τῶν λοιπῶν? Dr. Lightfoot thinks the 120 are intended, of which he supposes Ananias to have been one; who, all seeing such wonders wrought by the *apostles*, were afraid to associate themselves with them in any way of *equality*, as they saw that God put *peculiar* honour upon them. Calmet more rationally observes, that the Jewish nation was then divided into many *different sects*, who entertained widely different opinions on various articles. The apostles adopted none of these jarring sentiments, and none of the *different sects dared to join themselves to them*; neither *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, nor *Herodians*, as such, were found in this simple, holy Church. *The people* felt the force and power of the apostles’ doctrine, and *magnified them*, no more attending to the teaching of the others: the apostles taught them as men having *authority*, and not as the scribes and Pharisees. This irritated the high priest and his Sadducean council, and led them to adopt the measures mentioned below, ^{<4067>}**Acts 5:17**.

Verse 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord] Believers: 1. Those who credited the Divine mission of Christ. 2. That he was the Messiah. 3. That he died for their sins. 4. That he rose again. 5. That he ascended into heaven. 6. That he sent down the gift of the Holy Spirit. 7. That he ever appeared in the presence of God for them. 8. That it was he who gives repentance and remission of sins. And, 9. He by whom the

world is to be judged. These were simple articles, of the truth of which they had the fullest evidence.

Verse 15. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick] This verse is a continuation of the subject begun in the 12th. {<40512>Acts 5:12} The following is the order in which all these verses should be read, from the 11th to the 15th. {<40511>Acts 5:11-15}

Verse 11. And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Verse 13. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them:

Verse 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord, both men and women.

Verse 12. (last clause.) And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

Verse 12. (first clause.) And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;

Verse 15. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, &c., &c.

How these different verses and clauses of verses, got so intermingled and confounded as they are now in our common text, I cannot tell; but the above will appear at once to be the natural order in which they should be placed.

That-the shadow of Peter passing by] I cannot see all the miraculous influence here that others profess to see. The people who had seen the miracles wrought by the apostles pressed with their sick to share the healing benefit: as there must have been *many* diseased people, it is not likely that the apostles, who generally addressed such persons, prayed and used imposition of hands, could reach all those that were brought to them, as fast as the solicitude of their friends could wish. As, therefore, they could not get Peter or the other apostles, *personally*, to all their sick, they thought if they placed them on that side of the way where the shadow was projected, (the sun probably now declining, and consequently the shadow lengthening,) they should be healed by the *shadow* of the man passing over them, in whose *person* such miraculous powers were lodged. But it does

not appear that the persons who thus thought and acted were of the number of those converts already made to the faith of Christ; nor does it appear that any person was healed in this way. The sacred penman simply relates the *impression* made on the people's minds; and how they acted in consequence of this impression. A popish writer, assuming that the *shadow* of Peter *actually cured all on which it was projected*, argues from this precarious principle in favour of the wonderful efficacy of *relics*! For, says he, "if the shadow of a saint can do so much, how much more may his *bones*, or *any thing* that was in *contact* with his *person*, perform!" Now, before this conclusion can be valid, it must be proved: 1. That the shadow of Peter did actually cure the sick; 2. That this was a virtue common to all the apostles; 3. That all eminent *saints* possess the same virtue; 4. That the *bones*, &c., of the *dead*, possess the same virtue with the *shadow* of the *living*; 5. That those whom they term *saints* were actually *such*; 6. That miracles of healing have been wrought by their *relics*; 7. That touching these *relics* as necessarily produces the miraculous healing as they suppose the shadow of Peter to have done. I think there is not sufficient evidence here that Peter's shadow healed any one, though the people thought it could; but, allowing that it did, no evidence can be drawn from this that any virtue is resident in the relics of *reputed* or *real saints*, by which miraculous influence may be conveyed. It was only in *rare cases* that God enabled even an *apostle* to work a miracle.

After the words, *might overshadow some of them*, the Vulgate adds, *et liberarentur ab infirmitatibus suis*; a Greek MS. (E) has nearly the same words, *και ρυσθωσιν απο πασης ασθενειας ης ειχον*, and that they *might be freed from all the infirmities which they had*: a few other MSS. agree in the main with this reading.

Verse 16. Sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits]

Here it is evident that *sick people* are distinguished from those who were *vexed with unclean spirits*; and therefore they were not one and the same thing. The same distinction is made ^{<4024>}Matthew 4:24; 10:1; ^{<4013>}Mark 1:32, 34; 16:17, 18; and ^{<4040>}Luke 4:40, 41; 7:21.

Verse 17. The high priest-and-the sect of the Sadducees] *αιρεσις των σαδδουκαιων*, *The heresy of the Sadducees*. In this place, as well as in several others, the word *αιρεσις*, *heresy*, has no *evil* meaning in itself; it is a word of distinction, and may receive either a *good* or *bad* colouring from the *persons* or *opinions* designated by it. It signifies a *sect* or *party*,

whether good or bad, distinguished from any other *sect*. **αἵρεσις**, *heresy*, comes from **αἵρω**, *I choose*, and was anciently applied to the *different sects* of the heathen philosophers, the members of each sect having *chosen* their own in preference to all the others. It has been applied among ecclesiastical writers in the same way-when a man *chooses* one party of Christians, in preference to others, to be his companions in the way of salvation; and he *chooses* them and their creed and Christian discipline, because he believes the whole to be more consistent with the oracles of God than any of the rest. The Church of Rome has thought proper to attach a very *bad* meaning to this *innocent* word, and then apply it to all those who can neither credit her *transubstantiation*, depend on her *purgatory*, nor worship her *relics*. A *heretic*, in her acceptance, is one who is *not a papist*, and, because not a papist, utterly *out of the way* and out of the *possibility* of being *saved*. These persons should recollect that, by a then *persecuting brother*, St. Paul, all the apostles, and the whole Church of Christ, were termed **ναζωραίων αἵρεσις**, *the heresy of the Nazarenes*, ~~Acts~~ **Acts 24:5**; and it was *after the way* which the persecuting Jews called *heresy* that St. Paul and the rest of the apostles *worshipped the God of their fathers*, ~~Acts~~ **Acts 24:14**; and it was according to the *strictest* HERESY in the Jewish Church, **ακίριβεστατην αἵρεσιν**, that St. Paul lived before his conversion, ~~Acts~~ **Acts 26:5**; and we find, from ~~Acts~~ **Acts 28:22**, that the *whole Church of Christ* was termed *this heresy*, **ταύτης αἵρεσεως**, and this by persons who intended *no reproach*, but wished simply to distinguish the *Christians* from *scribes*, *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, &c. *Heresy* therefore, in its *first* acceptance, signifies simply *a choice*: afterwards it was applied to designate all those persons who made the same choice; and hence the word *sect* and it became synonymous: in process of time it was applied to those professing Christianity who made, in some cases, a *different choice* as to some *article of faith*, or *form of worship*, from those which had obtained in that part of the Church with which they had been before connected. The majority, from whom they became thus separated, spoke evil of them, and treated them ill, because they presumed to *choose* for *themselves* on the foundation of the Holy Scriptures; and because they would take nothing for the truth of God that was not accredited from heaven. Thus, when the people now called *Protestants*, began to examine their creed according to the Holy Scriptures, and, in consequence of this examination, left out *auricular confession*, *indulgences*, the *priests' power to forgive sins*, *adoration of saints*, *angels*, and *relics*, *purgatory*, and the *doctrine of transubstantiation*, because they

could not find them in the word of God, the papists called them *heretics*, by which *they* meant, in opposition to the meaning of the word, persons holding *damnable errors*; and, as such, they persecuted, *burnt*, and destroyed them wherever they had power. Now be it known to these persecutors, that the Protestants still *choose* to reject opinions and practices which they know to be unscriptural, absurd, and superstitious; and which they have a thousand times *demonstrated to be such*: and, on this ground, may they still be HERETICS!

Were filled with indignation.] ζηλου, *With zeal*. ζηλος, from ζεω, to be *hot*, and λα or λιαν, *very much*, signifies a vehement affection or disposition of the mind, which, according to its object, is either *good or bad, laudable or blamable*. Its meaning in this place is easily discerned; and not improperly translated *indignation*, in our version. We need not be surprised that the *Sadducees* were *filled with indignation*, because the apostles proclaimed the *resurrection* of Christ, and, through that, the *general resurrection*, which was diametrically opposed to their doctrine; for they denied the possibility of a resurrection, and believed not in the being of either *angel or spirit*; nor did they allow of the existence of a spiritual world. See Clarke on “~~400~~ Acts 4:2”.

Verse 18. Put them in the common prison.] It being too late in the evening to bring them to a hearing. To this verse the *Codex Bezae* adds, και επορευθη εις εκαστος εις τα ιδια, *And each of them went to his own house*.

Verse 19. But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors] This was done: 1. To increase the confidence of the apostles, by showing them that they were under the continual care of God; and, 2. To show the Jewish rulers that they were fighting against Him while persecuting his followers, and attempting to prevent them from preaching the Gospel. This was another warning graciously given them by a good and merciful God, that they might repent, and so escape the coming wrath.

Verse 20. All the words of this life.] All the doctrines of life eternal, founded on the *word, death, and resurrection* of Christ Jesus. This is another periphrasis for *Gospel*. *Go to the temple*-the most public place, and *speak to the people*-who come there to worship according to the law, *the words of this life*-the whole doctrine of salvation from *sin and death*; and show that the law is fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus, and that, by his resurrection, he has brought life and immortality to light.

Verse 21. Called the council together] **συνεδριον** The *sanhedrin*, all the senate; **την γερουσιαν**, the *elders*, or what we would call the *aldermen*. How these differed from the **πρεσβυτεριον**, *presbytery*, if they did differ, is not now known.

Verse 23. The prison truly found we shut] All the doors were properly bolted, and the keepers at their post; *but when we had opened*, for it appears they were alone in possession of the keys; how much must this have increased their astonishment when they found that the doors were not *broken* open, the guards properly posted, and every thing as they left it, for they themselves had put the apostles in prison; but, when they had opened, there was no man within!

Verse 24. They doubted of them whereunto this would grow.] They did not know what to think of the *apostles*, whether they had saved themselves by magic, or whether they were delivered by a real miracle; and they were at a loss to tell what the *issue* of these things would be.

Verse 25. Then came one and told them] While they were in the perplexity mentioned above, a messenger surprised them with the information that the very men whom they had imprisoned the preceding night were standing in the temple and teaching the people!

Verse 26. Brought them without violence] On receiving the information mentioned above, proper officers were sent to seize and bring them before the council. The officers, on reaching the temple, found the multitude gladly receiving the doctrine of the apostles, and so intent on hearing *all the words of this life* that they were afraid to show any hostility to the apostles, lest the people should stone them; we may therefore conclude that the officers entreated them to accompany them to the council; and that they felt it their duty to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, and so cheerfully went with them, trusting in the Lord their God.

Verse 28. Did not we straitly command you] **ου παραγγελια παρηγγειλαμεν**, *With commanding did we not command you*; a Hebraism-another proof of the accuracy and fidelity of St. Luke, who seems always to give every man's speech *as he delivered it*; not the *substance*, but the *very words*. See ^{<4017>}**Acts 4:17**.

Not teach in this name?] That is, of JESUS as the *Christ* or *Messiah*. His saving name, and the doctrines connected with it, were the only theme and substance of their discourses.

Intend to bring this men's blood upon us.] You speak in such a way of him to the people as to persuade them that we have crucified an *innocent* man; and that we must on that account fall victims to the Divine vengeance, or to the fury of the people, whom, by your teaching, you are exciting to sedition against us.

Verse 29. We ought to obey God rather than men.] The same answer they gave before, ^{<4049>}Acts 4:19, founded on the same reason, which still stood good. We have received our commission from GOD; we dare not lay it down at the desire or command of *men*. See Clarke's note on "^{<4049>}Acts 4:19".

Verse 30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus] It was well to introduce this, that the council might at once see that they preached no strange God; and that *he* who so highly honoured the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, had yet more highly honoured Jesus Christ in raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand, and proclaiming him as the only giver of salvation and the repentance which leads to it.

Whom ye slew] They charge them again with the murder of Christ, as they had done before, ^{<4040>}Acts 4:10-12, where see the notes.

Verse 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand] By a supereminent display of his *almighty power*, for so the *right hand* of God often means; he has raised him from the dead, and raised his human nature to the throne of his glory. Instead of δεξια, the *right hand*, the *Codex Beza* has δοξη, *to glory*.

A Prince] The leader or director in the way. See the notes on ^{<4015>}Acts 3:15, 19.

And a Saviour] σωτηρα, *A deliverer or preserver*. The word σωτηρ comes from σωω to *save, deliver, preserve, escape from death or danger, bring into a state of security or safety*. JESUS and SAVIOUR are nearly of the same import. See Clarke's note on "^{<3017>}John 1:17". He alone *delivers from sin, death, and hell*: by him alone we *escape from the snares and dangers* to which we are exposed: and it is by and in him, and in connection with him, that we are *preserved blameless and harmless*, and

made the sons of God without rebuke. He alone can *save* the soul from sin, and *preserve* it in that state of salvation.

To give repentance] See this explained, ~~408D~~ **Matthew 3:2.**

Forgiveness of sins.] ἀφεσιν των αμαρτιων, The *taking away of sins*. This is not to be restrained to the mere act of *justification*; it implies the *removal of sin*, whether its *power*, *guilt*, or *impurity* be considered. Through Jesus we have the *destruction* of the *power*, the *pardon* of the *guilt*, and the *cleansing* from the *pollution*, of sin. And was Jesus Christ exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins to ISRAEL? Then none need despair. If such as were *now* before the apostles could be saved, then the salvation of the very worst of transgressors, of *any* or *all* on this side perdition, is gloriously possible. Yes, for he tasted death for every man; and he prayed for his murderers, compared to some of whom JUDAS himself was a *saint*.

The two words in Italics, in this text, *to be*, are impertinently introduced; it reads much better without them.

Verse 32. We are his witnesses] The word αυτου, *his*, is omitted by AD, and several others of good note; the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Æthiopic*, and *Vulgate*. It does not seem to be necessary.

Of these things] των πηματων τουτων, *Of these transactions*: i.e. of Christ's life and miracles, and of your murderous proceedings against him.

And so is also the Holy Ghost] In the gift of tongues lately communicated; and by his power and influence on our souls, by which we are enabled to give irresistible witness of our Lord's resurrection.

To them that obey him.] We obey GOD, not *you*; and therefore God gives us this Spirit, which is in us a fountain of light, life, love, and power. The Spirit of God is given to the obedient: in proportion as a man who has received the *first* influences of it (for without this he cannot *move* in the spiritual life) is obedient to those influences, in the same proportion the gifts and graces, the light, life, and power, of the Holy Spirit, are increased in his soul.

Verse 33. They were cut to the heart] διεπριοντο, Literally, *they were sawn through*, from δια *through*, and πριω, *to saw*. They were stung to the heart, not with *compunction* nor *remorse*, but with *spite*, *malice*, and

revenge: for, having the murder of Christ thus brought home to their consciences, in the first feelings of their malice and revenge, they thought of destroying the persons who had witnessed their nefarious conduct.

Verse 34. A Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law] “This,” says Dr. Lightfoot, “was *Rabban Gamaliel the first*; commonly, by way of distinction, called *Rabban Gamaliel the elder*. He was president of the council after the death of his own father, *Rabban Simeon*, who was the son of *Hillel*. He was St. Paul’s master, and the 35th receiver of the traditions, and on this account might not be improperly termed **νομοδιδασκαλος**, a *doctor of the law*, because he was one that kept and handed down the *Cabala* received from Mount Sinai. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, his son *Simeon* succeeding him in the chair, who perished in the ruins of the city.” Though probably no favourer of Christianity, yet, for a Pharisee, he seems to have possessed a more liberal mind than most of his brethren; the following advice was at once humane, sensible, candid, and enlightened.

Verse 35. What ye intend to do] **τι μελλετε πρασσειν**, *What ye are about to do*: they had already *intended* to destroy them; and they were now *about to do* it.

Verse 36. Rose up Theudas] Josephus, Ant. lib. xx. cap. 4, sect. 1, mentions one named *Theudas* who was the author of an insurrection; about whom there has been much controversy whether he were the person spoken of here by Gamaliel. Every circumstance, as related by Josephus agrees well enough with what is referred to here, except the *chronology*; for the *Theudas* mentioned by Josephus made his insurrection when *Fadus* was governor of Judea; which was at least *ten* years after the time in which the apostles were brought before this council. Much labour has been thrown away in unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the *historian* and the *evangelist*, when it is very probable they speak of different transactions. Bp. *Pearce* thinks “the whole difficulty will disappear if we follow the opinion of Abp. *Usher*, who imagined that Luke’s *Theudas* was the same with that *Judas* of whom Josephus gives this account, Ant. lib. xvii. cap. 12, sect. 5; and War, lib. ii. cap. 4, sect. 1: ‘that a little after the death of Herod the Great, he raised an insurrection in Galilee, and aimed at getting the sovereignty of Judea,’ and that he was defeated and put to death, as is implied in sect. 10, of the same chapter. That *Theudas* and *Judas* might be names for the *same person*, Bp. *Pearce* thinks probable from the

consideration, that the same apostle who is called *Judas* in ^{<B142>}**John 14:22**, and ^{<A766>}**Luke 6:16**, and called *Jude* in ^{<B101>}**Jude 1:1**, is, in ^{<A1018>}**Mark 3:18**, called *Thaddeus*; and, in ^{<A1018>}**Matthew 10:3**, is also called *Lebbeus*. This apostle having the names *Judas* and *Thaddeus* and *Lebbeus* given to him, *two* of these must have been the *same*; because no Jew had more than *two* names, unless when a *patronymic* name was given to him, as when *Joseph* surnamed *Justus* was called *Barsabas*, i.e. the son of *Saba*. It is no unreasonable thing to suppose that *Thaddeus* and *Theudas* are the same name; and that therefore the person called *Theudas* in *Luke* is probably the same whom *Josephus*, in the places above quoted, calls *Judas*.”

Dr. Lightfoot thinks that “*Josephus* has made a slip in his chronology;” and rather concludes that the *Theudas* mentioned in the *Ant. lib. xx. cap. 4, sect. 1*, is the person referred to in the text. I confess the matter does not appear to me of so much consequence; it is mentioned by *Gamaliel* in a careless way, and *St. Luke*, as we have already seen, scrupulously *gives the Lords of every speaker*. The story was no doubt well known, and there were no doubts formed on it by the Jewish Council. We see plainly the *end* for which it was produced; and we see that it answered this end most amply; and certainly we have no farther concern with *Gamaliel* or his story.

Boasting himself to be somebody] λεγων ειναι τινα εαυτον, *Saying that he was a great personage*, i.e., according to the supposition of *Bp. Pearce*, setting himself up to be *king of the Jews*: see the preceding note. After εαυτον, *himself*, μαγαν, *great one*, is added by several very respectable MSS. and versions.

Verse 37. Judas of Galilee] Concerning *Judas of Galilee*, *Rabbi Abraham*, in *Jucasin*, fol. 139, writes thus: “In this time there were three sects: for, besides the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, *Judas of Galilee* began another sect, which was called *Essenes*. They caused the Jews to rebel against the Romans, by asserting that they should not obey strangers; nor call any one *Lord* (or *Governor*) but the holy blessed God above.” *Rabbi Abraham* makes a mistake here: the *Essenes* existed long before the days of *Judas of Galilee*; but it is very possible that he might have been *one* of that sect. *Josephus* mentions the insurrection made by *Judas of Galilee*, *Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 1*, and says it was when *Cyrenius* was governor of *Syria*: see **Clarke’s note on “^{<A101>}Luke 2:2”**. *Bp. Pearce* supposes that there were two απογραφαι, *taxations* or *enrolments*; and that the one mentioned here took place *ten years after* that mentioned in ^{<A101>}**Luke 2:1-5**. He observes

also, in conformity with the note on the preceding verse, that the Judas mentioned here, was not only different from that Judas or *Theudas* spoken of before, but that his pretence for rebellion was *different*; the former wished to have the *empire of Judea*; the latter only maintained that it was *base and sinful to obey a heathen governor*.

Verse 38. Refrain from these men] Do not molest them, leave them to God; for if this counsel and work be of man it will come to nought, like the rebellion of Theudas, and that of Judas of Galilee: for whatever pretends to be done in the name of God, but is not of him, will have his *curse* and not his *blessing*. He whose name is prostituted by it will vindicate his injured honour, and avenge himself.

Verse 39. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it] Because his counsel cannot fail; and his work cannot be counteracted. If he be determined that this doctrine shall prevail, it is vain for us to attempt to suppress it.

Lest haply ye be found-to fight against God.] μηποτε και θεομαχοι ευρεθητε. Some have thought that they saw a parallel to these words in the speech of Diomede, when, seeing *Mars*, associated with Hector, oppose the Grecians, he judged farther opposition vain, and desired his troops to retire from the battle.

Τω δ αιει παρα εις γε θεων, ος λοιγον αμυνει,
Και νυν οι παρα κεινος αρης, βροτω ανδρι εοικως.
Αλλα προς τρωας τετραμμενοι αιεν οπισσω
Εικετε, μηδε θεοις μενεαινεμεν ιφι μαχεσθαι.

Iliad, lib. v. 603.

*Protected always by some power divine;
And Mars attends this moment at his side,
In form a man. Ye therefore still retire,
But facing still your foes: nor battle wage,
However fierce, yet fruitless, with the gods.*

COWPER.

Verse 40. To him they agreed] That is, not to *slay* the apostles, nor to attempt any farther to *imprison* them; but their malevolence could not be thus easily satisfied; and therefore they *beat them*-probably gave each of them thirty-nine stripes; and, having commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, they let them go. It was of JESUS they were afraid: not of

the *apostles*. They plainly saw that, if the doctrine of Christ was preached, it must prevail; and, if it prevailed, they must come to nought. It was a wise saying of the popish bishops in the time of Queen Mary-*If we do not put down this PRINTING, it will put us down*: They laboured to *put down the printing*, but they could not; and, under God, the printing, by exposing the wickedness of their doctrine and practices, and especially by multiplying copies of the New Testament, did most effectually *put them down*.

Verse 41. Rejoicing that they there counted worthy, &c.] The whole verse may be read thus: *But they departed rejoicing from the presence of the sanhedrin, because they there deemed worthy to be dishonoured on account of THE NAME*. The word, $\alpha \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon$, *his*, is omitted by ABCD, several others; Erpen's *Syriac*, and the *Coptic*. THE NAME, probably, by this time, distinguished both the *author* of salvation and the sacred *system of doctrine* which the apostles preached. To *rejoice in persecution*, and *triumph* in the midst of *pain*, shame, disgrace, and various threatened deaths, is the privilege of the *New Testament*. Nothing of this kind, as far as I can recollect, appears even in the choicest *saints* under the Old Testament dispensation. Some of them fretted and mourned, and sometimes even murmured; some merely possessed their souls in *patience*; Christians exulted and triumphed in the God of their salvation. This is no mean proof of the additional light and evidence which the New Testament dispensation affords.

Verse 42. Daily in the temple] That is at the hours of morning and evening prayer; for they felt it their duty to worship God in *public*, and to help others to make a profitable use of the practice. Every man that professes Christianity should, in this respect also, copy their conduct: nor can any man be considered to have any religion, let his sentiments be what they may, who does not attend on the *public worship* of his Maker.

They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus.] Far from *desisting*, they became more *zealous*, yea, *incessant*, in their work. They took advantage of the public assemblies in the temple, as well as of all private opportunities, to *teach* all the truths of their holy religion; and to *preach*, proclaim Jesus as the only Messiah, that he who was crucified rose from the dead, and was exalted a Prince and a Saviour at the right hand of God. How little must these men have regarded their lives, who in the midst of such danger could pursue a line of conduct which, to all human views, must terminate in their ruin. They loved their Master, they loved his work,

they loved their thankless countrymen, they loved their present wages-persecution and stripes, and *hated* nothing but their own lives! These men were proper persons to be employed in converting the world. Preachers of the Gospel, look at those men, and learn at once your duty, your employment, and your interest. Live and preach like apostles, and God will crown your labours with similar success.

ACTS

CHAPTER 6.

The Hellenistic Jews complain against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, 1. To remedy the evil complained of, the apostles appoint seven deacons to superintend the temporal affairs of the Church, 2-6. The progress of the word of God in Jerusalem, 7. Stephen, one of the deacons, becomes very eminent, and confounds various Jews of the synagogues of the Libertines, &c., 8-10. They suborn false witnesses against him, to get him put to death, 11-14. He appears before the council with an angelic countenance, 15.

NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

Verse 1. A murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews] Those who are here termed Grecians, **ἑλληνοῖς**, or Hellenists, were Jews who sojourned now at Jerusalem, but lived in countries where the *Greek language* was spoken, and probably in general knew no other. They are distinguished here from those called *Hebrews*, by which we are to understand *native Jews*, who spoke what was then termed the Hebrew language, a sort of Chaldaio-Syriac.

It has been remarked that Greek words ending in **ιστης** imply *inferiority*. **Ἕλληνας**, *Hellenes*, was distinguished from **ἑλληνοῖς**: the former implies *pure Greeks*, *native Greeks*, who spoke the Greek tongue in its purity; and the latter, Jews or others sojourning among the Greeks, but who spoke the Greek language according to the *Hebrew idiom*. Pythagoras divided his disciples into two classes; those who were capable of entering into the *spirit* and mystery of his doctrine he called **πυθαγορῆες**, *Pythagoreans*; those who were of a different cast he termed **πυθαγορισται**, *Pythagorists*: the former were *eminent* and *worthy* of their master; the latter only *so so*. The same distinction is made between those called **αττικοί** and **αττικισται**, *Attics* and *Atticists*, the pure and less pure Greeks, as between those called **Ἕλληνας** and **ἑλληνοῖς**, *Hellenes* and *Hellenists*, *pure Greeks* and *Græcising Jews*. See *Jamblicus*, Deuteronomy Vit. Pyth. cap. 18, and *Schoettgen* on this place.

The cause of the murmuring mentioned here seems to have been this: When all the disciples had put their property into a common stock, it was

intended that out of it each should have his quantum of supply. The foreign or Hellenistic Jews began to be jealous, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations, that they either had not the *proportion*, or were not *duly* served; the Palestine Jews being *partial* to those of their own country. This shows that the community of goods could never have been designed to become general. Indeed, it was no ordinance of God; and, in any state of society, must be in general impracticable. The apostles, hearing of this murmuring, came to the resolution mentioned below.

Verse 2. It is not reason] *οὐκ ἀρεστὸν ἐστὶ*, *it is not pleasing, proper, or fitting, that we should leave the word of God, that we should give up ourselves, or confide to others, the doctrine of salvation which God has commanded us to preach unto the people.*

And serve tables.] Become providers of daily bread for your widows and poor: others can do this, to whom our important office is not intrusted.

Verse 3. Wherefore-look ye out among you seven men] Choose persons in whom ye can all confide, who will distribute the provisions impartially, and in due time; and let these persons be the objects of the choice both of the Hebrews and Hellenists, that all cause of murmuring and discontent may be done away. Though seven was a *sacred* number among the Jews, yet there does not appear to be any mystery intended here. Probably the *seven* men were to take each his *day* of service; and then there would be a superintendent for these widows, &c., for *each day of the week*.

Of honest report] *μαρτυροῦμενους* Persons to whose character there is authentic *testimony*, well known and accredited.

Full of the Holy Ghost] Saved into the spirit of the Gospel dispensation; and made partakers of that Holy Ghost by which the soul is sanctified, and endued with those graces which constitute the mind that was in Christ.

And wisdom] Prudence, discretion, and economy; for mere piety and uprightness could not be sufficient, where so many must be pleased, and where frugality, impartiality, and liberality, must ever walk hand in hand.

Whom we may appoint] Instead of *καταστήσωμεν*, *we may appoint*, *καταστήσομεν*, *we shall appoint*, is the reading of ABCDE, and several others. It makes, however, very little difference in the sense.

Verse 4. We will give ourselves continually to prayer]

προσκαρτερησομεν., We will *steadfastly* and *invariably* attend, we will *carefully keep* our hearts to this work. The word is very emphatic.

To prayer.-See this defined, <4065> **Matthew 6:5**. Even apostles could not live without prayer; they had no *independent* graces; what they had could not be *retained* without an *increase*; and for this increase they must make prayer and supplication, depending continually on their God.

Ministry of the word.] διακονια του λογου, The *deaconship of the word*. The continual proclamation of the Gospel of their Lord; and, to make this effectual to the souls of the hearers, they must *continue* in *prayer*: a minister who does not *pray much, studies in vain*.

The office of *deacon*, διακονος, came to the Christian from the Jewish Church. Every synagogue had at least three *deacons*, which were called μυσιρρ *parnasim*, from σιρρ *parnes*, to *feed, nourish, support, govern*. The σιρρ *parnas*, or *deacon*, was a sort of judge in the synagogue; and, in each, *doctrine* and *wisdom* were required, that they might be able to *discern* and give *right judgment* in things both *sacred* and *civil*. The ׀zj *chazan*, and ׀mv *shamash*, were also a sort of *deacons*. The first was the priest's *deputy*; and the last was, in some cases, the *deputy* of this *deputy*, or the *sub-deacon*. In the New Testament the *apostles* are called *deacons*, <4004> **2 Corinthians 6:4**; <4037> **Ephesians 3:7**; <51023> **Colossians 1:23**: see also <47115> **2 Corinthians 11:15**. Christ himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, is called the *deacon of the circumcision*, λεγω δε χριστον ιησου διακονον γεγενησθαι περιτομης, <45158> **Romans 15:8**. As the word implies to *minister* or *serve*, it was variously applied, and pointed out all those who were employed in helping the bodies or souls of men; whether *apostles, bishops*, or those whom we call *deacons*. Some remark that there were *two orders of deacons*: 1. Διακονοι της τραπιζης, *deacons of the TABLE*, whose business it was to take care of the alms collected in the Church, and distribute them among the poor, widows, &c. 2. Διακονοι του λογου, *deacons of the WORD*, whose business it was to *preach*, and variously instruct the people. It seems that after the persecution raised against the apostolic Church, in consequence of which they became *dispersed*, the *deaconship of tables* ceased, as did also the *community of goods*; and Philip, who was one of these deacons, who at first served tables, betook himself entirely to preaching of the word: see <4004> **Acts 8:4**,

&c. In the primitive Church, it is sufficiently evident that the deacons gave the bread and wine in the Eucharist to the believers in the Church, and carried it to those who were absent, *Just. Mar. Apol. ii. p. 162*; they also *preached*, and in some cases administered *baptism*. See *Suicer* on the words **διακονος, κηρυσσω**, and **βαπτισμα**. But it appears they did the two last by the special authority of the bishop. In the ancient Roman Church, and in the Romish Church, the number of *seven* deacons, in imitation of those appointed by the apostles, was kept up; and in the council of Neocæsarea it was decreed that this number should never be exceeded, even in the largest cities: vide *Concil. Neocæsar. Canon. xiv.* other Churches varied this number; and the Church of Constantinople had not less than one hundred. Deacons were ordained by the bishops, by *imposition of hands*. None was ordained deacon till he was twenty-five years of age, and we find that it was lawful for them to have wives. See *Suicer* under the word **διακονος**, and see **Clarke's note on** “**Matthew 20:26**”.

In the Church of England, (the purest and nearest to the apostolical model in doctrine and discipline of all national Churches,) a deacon receives ordination by the imposition of the hands of a bishop, in consequence of which he can preach, assist in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in general perform any sacred office, except consecrating the elements, and pronouncing the absolution. No person in this Church can be ordained deacon till he be twenty-three years of age, unless by dispensation from the Abp. of Canterbury. There were *deaconesses*, both in the apostolic and primitive Church, who had principally the care of the women, and visited and ministered to them in those circumstances in which it would have been improper for a deacon to attend. They also assisted in preparing the female candidates for baptism.

At present, the office for which the seven deacons were appointed is, in the Church of England, filled by the churchwardens and overseers of the poor; in other Churches and religious societies, by elders, stewards, &c., chosen by the people, and appointed by the minister.

Verse 5. Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost] A person every way properly fitted for his work; and thus qualified to be the first *martyr* of the Christian Church.

Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch] A heathen Greek, who had not only believed in the God of Israel, but had also received circumcision, and

consequently was a *proselyte of the covenant*; for, had he been only a *proselyte of the gate*, the Jews could not have associated with him. On the word *proselyte*, see the note on ^{<0243>}**Exodus 12:43**. As this is the only proselyte mentioned here, we may presume that all the rest were *native Jews*. From this Nicolas, it is supposed that the sect called *Nicolaitans*, mentioned ^{<0106>}**Revelation 2:6, 15**, derived their origin. Dr. Lightfoot doubts this, and rather inclines to derive the name “from *al wkyn nicola*, *let us eat together*; those brutes encouraging each other to eat meats offered to idols, like those in ^{<0213>}**Isaiah 22:13**, who said, *Let us eat flesh and drink wine, &c.*” Both *Irenæus* and *Epiphanius* derive this sect from Nicolas the deacon. *Clemens Alexandrinus* gives this Nicolas a good character, even while he allows that the sect who taught the community of wives pretended to derive their origin from him. See Clarke on ^{<0106>}**Revelation 2:6**’.

Verse 6. And when they had prayed] Instead of *καὶ*, *and*, the *Codex Bezae* reads *οὗτινες*, *who*, referring the act of praying to the apostles, which removes a sort of ambiguity. The apostles prayed for these persons, that they might in every respect be qualified for their office, and be made successful in it. And, when they had done this, they *laid their hands* upon them, and by this rite appointed them to their office. So then, it plainly appears that the *choice* of the Church was not *sufficient*: nor did the Church think it sufficient; but, as they knew their own members best, the apostles directed them, ^{<0106>}**Acts 6:3**, to *choose* those persons whom they deemed best qualified, according to the criterion laid down by the apostles themselves, that they should be *of honest report*, and *full of the Holy Ghost* and *wisdom*. Let us examine the process of this business: 1. There was an evident *necessity* that there should be more *helpers* in this blessed work 2. The *apostles* called the *disciples* together, that they might consider of this necessity and provide for it, ^{<0106>}**Acts 6:3**. 3. They directed the disciples to *choose out from among themselves* such persons as they judged the most proper for the work. 4. They gave them the *criterion* by which their choice should be directed; not *any* man, not *every* man, not their nearest *relative*, or *best* beloved *friend*; but such as were of *honest report*, whose *public character* was known to be unblemished; and men who were *full of the Holy Ghost*, the influence of which would keep all right *within*, and direct their hearts into all truth; and men who were known to be men of *prudence* and *economy*, for not every good and pious man may be proper for such a work. 5. Seven persons being chosen by the

disciples, according to this criterion, are presented to the apostles for their approbation and confirmation. 6. The apostles, receiving them from the hands of the Church, consecrated them to God by *prayer*, imploring his blessing on them and their labour. 7. When this was done, *they laid their hands upon them* in the presence of the disciples, and thus *appointed* them to this sacred and important work; for it is evident they did not get their commission merely to *serve tables*, but to *proclaim*, in *connection with* and under the *direction* of the apostles, the word of life. Let no man say that any of the things here enumerated was unnecessary, and let no Church pretend or affect to do without them. 1. No preacher or minister should be provided till there is a place for him to labour in, and necessity for his labour. 2. Let none be imposed upon the Church of Christ who is not of that Church, well known and fully approved by that branch of it with which he was connected. 3. Let none be sent to *publish* salvation from *sin*, and the necessity of a *holy life*, whose *moral character* cannot bear the strictest scrutiny among his neighbours and acquaintance. 4. Let none, however *moral*, or well reported of, be sent to convert souls, who has not the most solid reason to believe *that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost*. 5. Let those who have the power to appoint see that the person be a man of *wisdom*, i.e. sound understanding—for a *witling* or a *blockhead*, however upright, will never make a Christian minister; and that he be a man of *prudence*, knowing how to direct his own concerns, and those of the Church of God, with discretion. 6. Let no private person, nor number of private members in a Church, presume to authorize such a person, though in every way qualified to preach the Gospel; for even the one hundred and twenty primitive disciples did not arrogate this to themselves. 7. Let the person be brought to those to whom God has given authority in the Church, and let them, after most solemnly *invoking* God, *lay their hands upon him*, according to the *primitive* and *apostolic plan*, and thus devote him to the work of the ministry. 8. Let such a one from that moment consider himself the property of God and his Church, and devote all his time, talents, and powers, to convert sinners, and build up believers in their most holy faith. 9. And let the Church of God consider such a person as *legitimately* and *divinely* sent, and receive him as the ambassador of Christ.

Verse 7. The word of God increased] By such preachers as the apostles and these deacons, no wonder the doctrine of God increased—became widely diffused and generally known; in consequence of which, the number

of the disciples must be greatly multiplied: for God will ever bless his own word, when ministered by those whom he has qualified to proclaim it.

A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.] This was one of the greatest miracles wrought by the grace of Christ: that persons so intent on the destruction of Christ, his apostles, and his doctrine, should at last espouse that doctrine, is astonishing; and that they who had withstood the evidence of the *miracles* of Christ should have yielded to the doctrine of his *death* and *resurrection*, is worthy of note. And from this we may learn that it is not by *miracles* that sinners are to be converted unto God, but by the *preaching of Christ dying for their offenses, and rising again for their justification*.

Instead of *λερεων*, *priests*, a few MSS., and the *Syriac*, read *ιουδαιων*, *Jews*; for the copyists seem to be struck here with *two* difficulties: 1. That such persons as *these* priests could be converted. 2. That the word *οχλος*, *company*, or *multitude*, could with propriety be applied to this class, which must have been inconsiderable in their numbers, when compared with the rest of the Jews. To preserve the ancient reading, which is undoubtedly genuine, some have altered the text by *conjecture*; and, by putting a comma after *οχλος*, and a *και* before *των ιερεων*, make the text read thus: *And a great multitude, and some of the priests, were obedient to the faith*. This conjecture is unnecessary, as there is no such difficulty here as to require so desperate an expedient, which is not recommended by the evidence of a single MS. or version. 1. The grace of Christ Jesus can save even a murderous Jewish priest: his death is a grand atonement for *all crimes* and for the *worst of sinners*. 2. In the twenty-four courses of priests, there was not a *multitude* merely, but *multitudes*: indeed the number of ecclesiastics at Jerusalem was enormous. A great company out of these might be converted, and yet multitudes be left behind.

Verse 8. Stephen, full of faith and power] Instead of *πιστεως*, *faith*, *χαριτος*, *grace*, is the reading of ABD, several others, the *Syriac* of Erpen, the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*. This reading Griesbach has admitted into the text. Some MSS. join both readings. Stephen was full of *faith*-gave unlimited credence to the promises of his Lord; he was full of *grace*-receiving the fulfilment of those promises, he enjoyed much of the unction of the Divine Spirit, and much of the *favour* of his God; and, in consequence, he was full of *power*, *δυναμεως*,

of the *Divine energy* by which he was enabled to work *great wonders and miracles among the people*.

Verse 9. The synagogue-of the Libertines, &c.] That Jews and proselytes from various countries had now come up to Jerusalem to bring offerings, and to attend the feast of pentecost, we have already seen, ~~<410>~~ **Acts 2:9-11.** The persons mentioned here were *foreign Jews*, who appear to have had a synagogue peculiar to themselves at Jerusalem, in which they were accustomed to worship when they came to the public festivals.

Various opinions have been entertained concerning the *Libertines* mentioned here: Bp. *Pearce's* view of the subject appears to me to be the most correct.

“It is commonly thought that by this name is meant the sons of such Jews as had been slaves, and obtained their freedom by the favour of their masters; but it is to be observed that with these *Libertines* the *Cyrenians* and *Alexandrians* are here joined, as having one and the same synagogue for their public worship. And it being known that the *Cyrenians* (~~<4120>~~ **Acts 2:10**) lived in *Libya*, and the *Alexandrians* in the neighbourhood of it, it is most natural to look for the *Libertines* too in that part of the world. Accordingly we find *Suidas*, in his Lexicon, saying, upon the word *λιβερτινοι*, that it is *ονομα του εθνους*, *the name of a people*. And in *Gest. Collationis Carthagine habitæ inter Catholicos et Donatistas*, published with *Optatus's* works, Paris, 1679, (No. 201, and p. 57.) we have these words: *Victor episcopus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ LIBERTINENSIS dixit, Unitas est illic, publicam non latet conscientiam. Unity is there: all the world knows it.* From these two passages it appears that there was in *Libya* a town or district called *Libertina*, whose inhabitants bore the name of *λιβερτινοι*, *Libertines*, when Christianity prevailed there. They had an episcopal see among them, and the above-mentioned *Victor* was their bishop at the council of *Carthage*, in the reign of the Emperor *Honorius*. And from hence it seems probable that the town or district, and the people, existed in the time of which *Luke* is here speaking. They were *Jews*, (no doubt,) and came up, as the *Cyrenian* and *Alexandrian* Jews did, to bring their offerings to Jerusalem, and to worship God in the temple there. *Cunæus*, in his *Rep. Hebr.* ii. 23, says that the Jews who lived in *Alexandria* and *Libya*, and all other Jews who lived out of the Holy Land, except those of *Babylon* and its neighbourhood, were held in great

contempt by the Jews who inhabited Jerusalem and Judea; partly on account of their quitting their proper country, and partly on account of their using the *Greek* language, and being quite ignorant of the other. For these reasons it seems probable that the *Libertines*, *Cyrenians*, and *Alexandrians*, had a separate synagogue; (as perhaps the *Cilicians* and those of Asia had;) the Jews of Jerusalem not suffering them to be present in their synagogues, or they not choosing to perform their public service in synagogues where a language was used which they did not understand.”

It is supposed, also, that these synagogues had *theological*, if not *philosophical*, schools attached to them; and that it was the disciples or scholars of these schools who came forward to dispute with Stephen, and were enraged because they were confounded. For it is not an uncommon custom with those who have a bad cause, which can neither stand the test of Scripture nor reason, to endeavour to support it by *physical* when logical force has failed; and thus:-

*“Prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks.”*

In the reign of Queen Mary, when popery prevailed in this country, and the simplest women who had read the Bible were an overmatch for the greatest of the popish doctors; as they had neither Scripture nor reason to allege, they burned them alive, and thus terminated a controversy which they were unable to maintain. The same cause will ever produce the same effect: the *Libertines*, *Cilicians*, *Cyrenians*, and *Alexandrians*, pursued this course: Stephen confounded them by *Scripture* and *reason*, and they beat his brains out with *stones*! This was the most effectual way to silence a disputant whose wisdom they could not resist. In the same way were the Protestants treated, when by Scripture and reason they had shown the absurdity and wickedness of that anti-christian system which the fire and the sword were brought forth to establish. These persecutors professed great concern at first for the *souls* of those whom they variously tortured, and at last burned; but their tender mercies were cruel, and when they gave up the body to the flames, they most heartily consigned the soul to Satan. *Scires è sanguine natos*: their conduct proclaimed their genealogy.

Verse 10. They there not able to resist the wisdom, &c.] He was *wise*, well exercised and *experienced*, in Divine things; and, as appears by his defence, in the following chapter, well versed in the Jewish history. The spirit by which he spake was the Holy Spirit, and its power was irresistible.

They were obliged either to *yield* to its teachings, or were *confounded* by its truth. Several MSS. add to this verse, *because he reprov'd them with boldness, they could not resist the truth*. This reading is not genuine, though it exists (but in different forms) in some good MSS.

Verse 11. Then they suborned men] *υπεβαλον*. They made *underhand* work; got associated to themselves profligate persons, who for money would swear any thing.

Blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.] This was the most deadly charge they could bring against him. We have already seen, ~~4004~~ **Matthew 9:4**, that *blasphemy*, when against GOD, signifies speaking *impiously* of his *nature, attributes, or works*; and, when against *men*, it signifies speaking *injuriously* of their *character, blasting their reputation, &c.* These false witnesses came to prove that he had blasphemed *Moses* by representing him as an impostor, or the like; and GOD, by either denying his being, his providence, the justice of his government, &c.

Verse 12. And they] The Libertines, &c., mentioned before, *stirred up the people*—raised a *mob* against him, and, to assist and countenance the mob, got the *elders* and *scribes* to conduct it, who thus made themselves *one* with the basest of the people, whom they collected; and then, altogether, without *law* or *form of justice*, rushed on the good man, seized him, and brought him to a council who, though they sat in the seat of judgment, were ready for every evil work.

Verse 13. Against this holy place] The *temple*, that it shall be destroyed.

And the law] That it *cannot* give *life*, nor save from *death*. It is very likely that they had heard him speak words to this amount, which were all as true as the spirit from which they proceeded; but they gave them a very false colouring, as we see in the succeeding verse.

Verse 15. Saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.] Sayings like this are frequent among the Jewish writers, who represent God as distinguishing eminent men by causing a glory to shine from their faces. *Rabbi Gedalia* said that, “when Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh, they appeared like those *angels* which minister before the *face of the Lord*; for their stature appeared *greater*, and the *splendour of their faces* was like the sun, and their eyes like the wheels of the sun; their beard like clusters of

grapes, and their words like *thunder* and *lightning*; and that, through fear of them, those who were present fell to the earth.”

The like is said of Moses, in *Debarim Rabba*, fol. 75. that “when Sammael (Satan) came to Moses, the *splendour of his face* was like the *sun*, and himself resembled *an angel of God*.” The reader may find several similar sayings in *Schoettgen*.

It appears that the light and power of God which dwelt in his soul shone through his face, and God gave them this proof of the *falsity* of the testimony which was now before them; for, as the *face of Stephen* now *shone* as the *face of Moses* did when he came down from the mount, it was the fullest proof that he had not spoken blasphemous words either against Moses or God, else this splendour of heaven had not rested upon him.

The history of the apostolic Church is a series of wonders. Every thing that could prevent such a Church from being established, or could overthrow it when established, is brought to bear against it. The instruments employed in its erection and defence had neither *might* nor *power*, but what came immediately from God. They work, and God works with them; the Church is founded and built up; and its adversaries, with every advantage in their favour, cannot overthrow it. Is it possible to look at this, without seeing the mighty hand of God in the whole? He permits *devils* and *wicked men* to work-to avail themselves of all their advantages, yet counterworks all their plots and designs, turns their weapons against themselves, and promotes his cause by the very *means* that were used to *destroy* it. How true is the saying, There is neither might nor counsel against the Lord!

ACTS

CHAPTER 7.

Stephen, being permitted to answer for himself relative to the charge of blasphemy brought against him by his accusers, gives a circumstantial relation of the call of Abraham, when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, in Charran, &c., 1-8. The history of Jacob and Joseph, 9-17. The persecution of their fathers in Egypt, 18, 19. The history of Moses and his acts till the exodus from Egypt, 20-37. The rebellion and idolatry of the Israelites in the wilderness, 38-43. The erection of the tabernacle of witness, which continued till the time of David, 44-46. Of the temple built by Solomon for that God who cannot be confined to temples built by hands, 47-50. Being probably interrupted in the prosecution of his discourse, he urges home the charge of rebellion against God, persecution of his prophets, the murder of Christ, and neglect of their own law against them, 51-53. They are filled with indignation, and proceed to violence, 54. He sees the glory of God, and Christ at the right hand of the Father; and declares the glorious vision, 55, 56. They rush upon him, drag him out of the city, and stone him, 57, 58. He invokes the Lord Jesus, prays for his murderers, and expires, 59, 60.

NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

Verse 1. *Are these things so?*] Hast thou predicted the *destruction* of the *temple*? And hast thou said that *Jesus of Nazareth* shall *change our customs*, abolish our religious rites and temple service? Hast thou spoken these *blasphemous things against Moses, and against God*? Here was some *colour of justice*; for Stephen was permitted to defend himself. And, in order to do this he thought it best to enter into a detail of their history from the commencement of their nation; and thus show how kindly God had dealt with *them*, and how ungraciously they and their fathers had requited *Him*. And all this naturally led him to the conclusion, that God could no longer bear with a people the cup of whose iniquity had been long overflowing; and therefore they might expect to find wrath, without mixture of mercy.

But how could St. Luke get all this circumstantial account? 1. He might have been present, and heard the whole; or, more probably, he had the account from St. Paul, whose companion he was, and who was certainly present when St. Stephen was judged and stoned, for he was consenting to

his death, and kept the clothes of them who stoned him. See ^{<4075>}Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:20.

Verse 2. Men, brethren, and fathers] Rather, *brethren and fathers*, for *ανδρες* should not be translated separately from *αδελφοι*. Literally it is men-brethren, a very usual form in Greek; for every person knows that *ανδρες αθηναιοι* and *ανδρες περσαι* should not be translated men-Athenians and men-Persians, but simply *Athenians* and *Persians*. See ^{<4172>}Acts 17:22. So, in ^{<0215>}Luke 2:15, *ανθρωποι ποιμενες* should be translated *shepherds*, not *men-shepherds*. And *ανθρωπος βασιλευς* ^{<0182>}Matthew 18:23, should not be translated *man-king*, but *king*, simply. By translating as we do, *men, brethren, and fathers*, and putting a comma after men, we make Stephen address *three* classes, when in fact there were but *two*: the elders and scribes, whom he addressed as *fathers*; and the *common people*, whom he calls *brethren*. See Bp. Pearce, and see ^{<4087>}Acts 8:27.

The God of glory appeared, &c.] As Stephen was now vindicating himself from the false charges brought against him, he shows that he had uttered no blasphemy, either against God, Moses, or the temple; but states that his accusers, and the Jews in general, were guilty of the faults with which they charged him: that they had from the beginning rejected and despised Moses, and had always violated his laws. He proceeds to state that there is no blasphemy in saying that the temple shall be destroyed: they had been without a temple till the days of David; nor does God ever confine himself to temples built by hands, seeing he fills both heaven and earth; that Jesus is the prophet of whom Moses spoke, and whom they had persecuted, condemned, and at last put to death; that they were wicked and uncircumcised in heart and in ears, and always resisted the Holy Ghost as their fathers did. This is the substance of St. Stephen's defense as far as he was permitted to make it: a defense which they could not confute; containing charges which they most glaringly illustrated and confirmed, by adding the murder of this faithful disciple to that of his all-glorious Master.

Was in Mesopotamia] In that part of it where *Ur* of the Chaldees was situated, near to Babel, and among the rivers, (Tigris and Euphrates,) which gave the name of Mesopotamia to the country. See Clarke's note on ^{<0113>}Genesis 11:31".

Before he dwelt in Charran] This is called *Haran* in our translation of ^{<0113>}**Genesis 11:31**; this place also belonged to Mesopotamia, as well as *Ur*, but is placed *west* of it on the maps. It seems most probable that Abraham had *two* calls, one in *Ur*, and the other in *Haran*. He left *Ur* at the first call, and came to *Haran*; he left *Haran* at the second call, and came into the promised land. See these things more particularly stated in the notes, see Clarke on ^{<0120>}**Genesis 12:1**".

Verse 4. When his father was dead] See Clarke's note on ^{<0125>}**Genesis 11:26**".

Verse 5. Gave him none inheritance] Both Abraham and Jacob had small parcels of land in Canaan; but they had them by *purchase*, not by God's gift; for, as Abraham was obliged to *buy a burying-place* in Canaan, ^{<0123>}**Genesis 23:3-18**, it is obvious he had no *inheritance* there.

And to his seed after him] See ^{<0127>}**Genesis 12:7; 13:15**, and the notes there.

Verse 6. That his seed should sojourn in a strange land] See ^{<0153>}**Genesis 15:13, 14**.

Four hundred years.] MOSES says, ^{<0124>}**Exodus 12:40**, *that the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt was 430 years*. See the note there. St. PAUL has the same number, ^{<017>}**Galatians 3:17**; and so has Josephus, *Ant. lib. ii. cap. 1, sect. 9*; in *Bell. lib. v. cap. 9, sect. 4*. St. Stephen uses the round number of 400, leaving out the odd *tens*, a thing very common, not only in the sacred writers, but in all others, those alone excepted who write professedly on *chronological* matters.

Verse 7. Will I judge] **κρίνω εγω**, *I will punish*, for in this sense the Greek word is frequently taken. "When," says Bp. *Pearce*, "a malefactor is brought before a judge, the judge does *three* things: 1. he tries or judges him; 2. he then gives his judgment or sentence; and, 3. he puts the law in execution, and punishes him. Hence **κρίνω**, at different times, signifies each of these things; and the sense of the word is to be determined by the context. Here it signifies *to punish*, as **κριμα** is used for *punishment*, in ^{<0132>}**Romans 13:2**; ^{<0129>}**1 Corinthians 11:29**, compared with ^{<0130>}**1 Corinthians 11:30, 31**." The Egyptians, to whom the Israelites were in bondage, were punished by the *ten plagues*, described ^{<0179>}**Exodus 7:19-12:30**

Verse 8. He gave him the covenant of circumcision] That is, he instituted the *rite* of circumcision, as a *sign* of that *covenant* which he had made with him and his posterity. See ^{<01170>}**Genesis 17:10**, &c.

And so Abraham begat Isaac και ουτως, And *thus*, in this covenant, he begat Isaac; and as a proof that he was born under this covenant, was a true son of Abraham and inheritor of the promises, he circumcised him the eighth day; and this rite being observed in the family of Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons were born under the covenant; and thus their descendants, the twelve tribes, being born under the same covenant, and practising the same rite, were, by the ordinance of Gods legal inheritors of the promised land, and all the secular and spiritual advantages connected with it.

Verse 9. And the patriarchs] The twelve sons of Jacob, thus called because each was *chief* or *head* of his respective *family* or tribe.

Moved with envy] ζηλωσαντες. We translate ζηλος variously: *zeal* or *fervent affection*, whether its object be good or bad, is its general meaning; and ζηλω signifies to be *indignant*, *envious*, &c. See **Clarke's note on** ^{<04617>}**Acts 5:17**". The brethren of Joseph, hearing of his dreams, and understanding them to portend his future advancement, filled with envy, (with which no ordinary portion of malice was associated,) sold Joseph into the land of Egypt, hoping by this means to prevent his future grandeur; *but God*, from whom the portents came, *was with him*, and made their envy the direct means of accomplishing the great design.

Verse 10. Gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh] God gave him much *wisdom*, in consequence of which he had *favour* with the king of Egypt. See the whole of this remarkable history explained at large, ^{<01401>}**Genesis 41:1-45:28**.

Verse 14. Threescore and fifteen souls.] There are several difficulties here, which it is hoped the reader will find satisfactorily removed in the note on ^{<01463>}**Genesis 46:20**. It is well known that in ^{<01467>}**Genesis 46:27**, and in ^{<01502>}**Deuteronomy 10:22**, their number is said to be *threescore and ten*; but Stephen quotes from the Septuagint, which adds five persons to the account which are not in the Hebrew text, *Machir*, *Gilead*, *Sutelaam*, *Taham*, and *Edem*; but see the note referred to above.

Verse 16. And were carried over to Sychem] "It is said, ^{<015013>}**Genesis 50:13**, that Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of *Machpelah* before

Mamre. And in ^{<01342>}**Joshua 24:32**, and ^{<01319>}**Exodus 13:19**, it is said that the bones of Joseph were carried out of Egypt by the Israelites, and buried in Shechem, which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem. As for the eleven brethren of Joseph, we are told by Josephus, Ant. lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 2, that they were buried in *Hebron*, where their father had been buried. But, since the books of the Old Testament say nothing about this, the authority of Stephen (or of Luke here) for their being buried in *Sychem* is at least as good as that of Josephus for their being buried in Hebron.”-Bp. *Pearce*.

We have the uniform consent of the Jewish writers that all the patriarchs were brought out of Egypt, and buried in Canaan, but none, except Stephen, mentions their being buried in *Sychem*. As *Sychem* belonged to the *Samaritans*, probably the Jews thought it too great an honour for that people to possess the bones of the patriarchs; and therefore have carefully avoided making any mention of it. This is Dr. Lightfoot’s conjecture; and it is as probable as any other.

That Abraham bought for a sum of money] Two accounts seem here to be confounded: 1. The *purchase* made by Abraham of the cave and field of Ephron, which was in the field of Machpelah: this purchase was made from the children of *Heth*, ^{<01218>}**Genesis 23:3, 10, 17**. 2. The purchase made by Jacob, from the sons of *Hamor* or *Emmor*, of a sepulchre in which the bones of Joseph were laid: this was in *Sychem* or *Shechem*, ^{<01319>}**Genesis 33:19**; ^{<01342>}**Joshua 24:32**. The word *Abraham*, therefore, in this place, is certainly a mistake; and the word *Jacob*, which some have supplied, is doubtless more proper. Bp. *Pearce* supposes that Luke originally wrote, **ο ωνησατο τιμησ αργυριου**, *which he bought for a sum of money*: i.e. which *Jacob* bought, who is the last person, of the *singular* number, spoken of in the preceding verse. Those who saw that the word **ωνησατο**, *bought*, had no *nominative* case joined to it, and did not know where to find the proper one, seem to have inserted **αβρααμ**, *Abraham*, in the text, for that purpose, without sufficiently attending to the different circumstances of *his* purchase from that of *Jacob’s*.

Verse 18. Which knew not Joseph.] That is, did not approve of him, of his mode of governing the kingdom, nor of his people, nor of his God. See **Clarke’s note on “^{<01018>}Exodus 1:8”**.

Verse 19. The same dealt subtilty] ουτος κατασοφισαμενος, A word borrowed from the Septuagint, who thus translate the Hebrew **wl hmkj hn** *nithchokmah lo, let us deal wisely with it*, i.e. with *cunning* and *deceit*, as the *Greek* word implies; and which is evidently intended by the *Hebrew*. See ^{<012735>}**Genesis 27:35**, *Thy brother came with subtilty*, which the Targumist explains by **amkwj b** *be-chokma, with wisdom*, that is, *cunning* and *deceit*. For this the Egyptians were so remarkable that **αιγυπτιαζειν**, to *Egyptize*, signified to *act cunningly*, and to *use wicked devices*. Hence the Jews compared them to *foxes*; and it is of them that Canticles, ^{<23215>}**Song of Solomon 2:15**, is understood by the rabbins: *Take us the little foxes which spoil our vines; destroy the Egyptians, who, having slain our male children, sought to destroy the name of Israel from the face of the earth.*

To the end they might not live.] Might not grow up and propagate, and thus build up the Hebrew nation.

Verse 20. Moses-was exceeding fair] αστειος τω θεω, *Was fair to God*, i.e. was divinely beautiful. See Clarke's note on "^{<01002>}**Exodus 2:2**".

Verse 22. In all the wisdom of the Egyptians] Who were, at that time, the most intelligent and best instructed people in the universe. Philo says, Moses was taught *arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, medicine*, and the knowledge of *hieroglyphics*. In *Sohar Cadash*, fol. 46, it is said, "that, of the *ten portions* of wisdom which came into the world, the Egyptians had *nine*, and that all the inhabitants of the earth had only the remaining portion." Much of the same nature may be seen in the *rabbins*, though they apply the term wisdom here to magic.

Was mighty in words and in deeds.] This may refer to the *glorious doctrines* he taught, and the *miracles* he wrought in Egypt. Josephus Ant. lib. ii. cap. 10, sect. 1, gives an account of his being general of an Egyptian army, defeating the Ethiopians, who had invaded Egypt, driving them back into their own country, and taking *Saba* their capital, which was afterwards called *Meroe*. But this, like many other *tales* of the same writer, is worthy of little credit.

Phœnix says the same of Achilles:-

Μυθων τε ρητηρ̄ εμεναι, πρηκτηρα τε εργαων.

Il. ix. v. 443.

Not only an orator of words, but a performer of deeds.

Verse 23. When he was full forty years old] This was a general tradition among the Jews: “Moses was forty years in Pharaoh’s court, forty years in Midian, and forty years he served Israel.”

To visit his brethren] Probably on the ground of trying to deliver them from their oppressive bondage. This desire seems to have been early infused into his mind by the Spirit of God; and the effect of this desire to deliver his oppressed countrymen was his refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter-see ^{<81124>}**Hebrews 11:24**, and thus renouncing all *right* to the Egyptian crown, *choosing rather to endure addiction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*

Verse 24. Smote the Egyptian] See this explained, ^{<1021>}**Exodus 2:11, 12.**

Verse 25. He supposed his brethren would have understood, &c.] He probably imagined that, as he felt from the Divine influence he was appointed to be their deliverer, they would have his Divine appointment signified to them in a similar way; and the act of justice which he now did in behalf of his oppressed countryman would be sufficient to show them that *he* was now ready to enter upon his office, if *they* were willing to concur.

Verse 26. Unto them as they strove] Two Hebrews, See Clarke on ^{<10213>}**Exodus 2:13**, &c.

Verse 30. In a flame of fire in a bush.] See this and the following verses largely explained in the notes, see Clarke ^{<10301>}**Exodus 3:1-8.**

Verse 36. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders, &c.] Thus the very person whom they had rejected, and, in effect, delivered up into the hands of Pharaoh that he might be slain, was the person alone by whom they were redeemed from their Egyptian bondage. And does not St. Stephen plainly say by this, that the very person, Jesus Christ, whom they had rejected and delivered up into the hands of Pilate to be crucified, was the person *alone* by whom they could be delivered out of their *spiritual bondage*, and made partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light? No doubt they felt that this was the drift of his speech.

Verse 37. This is that Moses, which said-A prophet, &c.] This very Moses, so highly esteemed and honoured by God, announced that very

prophet whom ye have lately put to death. See the observations at ^{<6182>}**Deuteronomy 18:22.**

Verse 38. With the angel which spake to him] Stephen shows that Moses received the law by the ministry of angels; and that he was only a mediator between the angel of God and them.

The lively oracles] λογια ζωντα, The *living oracles*. The *doctrines of life*, those *doctrines*-obedience to which entitled them, by the promise of God, to a *long life upon earth*, which spoke to them of that *spiritual life* which every true believer has in union with his God, and promised that *eternal life* which those who are faithful unto death shall enjoy with him in the realms of glory.

The Greek word λογιον, which we translate *oracle*, signifies a *Divine revelation, a communication from God himself*, and is here applied to the *Mosaic law*; to the *Old Testament* in general, ^{<6131>}**Romans 3:2**; ^{<8062>}**Hebrews 5:12**; and to *Divine revelation* in general, ^{<1041>}**1 Peter 4:11.**

Verse 39. In their hearts turned back again into Egypt] Became idolaters, and preferred their Egyptian bondage and their idolatry to the promised land and the pure worship of God. See the whole of these transactions explained at large in the notes on ^{<1233>}**Exodus 32:1-35.**

Verse 42. Then God turned, and gave them up, &c.] He left them to themselves, and then they deified and worshipped the sun, moon, planets, and principal stars.

In the book of the prophets] As this quotation is found in Amos, ^{<3025>}**Amos 5:25**, by the *book of the prophets* is meant the *twelve minor prophets*, which, in the ancient Jewish division of the sacred writings, formed only *one book*.

Have ye offered to me slain beasts] It is certain that the Israelites did offer various sacrifices to God, while in the wilderness; and it is as certain that they scarcely ever did it with an upright heart. They were idolatrous, either in *heart* or *act*, in almost all their religious services; these were therefore so very imperfect that they were counted for *nothing* in the sight of God; for this seems to be strongly implied in the question here asked, *Have ye offered to ME (exclusively and with an upright heart) slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years?* On the contrary, these forty years were little else than a tissue of rebellion and idolatry.

Verse 43. Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them.] This is a literal translation of the place, as it stands in the *Septuagint*; but in the Hebrew text it stands thus: *But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Molech, and Chiun, your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves.* This is the simple version of the place, unless we should translate $\mu\kappa\kappa\iota\ m\ t\omega\kappa\varsigma\ ta\ \mu\tau\alpha\kappa\omega\upsilon$ *venasatem eth Siccuth malkekem, ye took SIKUTH your king,* (instead of *ye took up the tabernacle of your MOLEK,*) as some have done. The place is indeed very obscure, and the two texts do not tend to cast light on each other. The rabbins say *siccuth*, which we translate *tabernacle*, is the name of an *idol*. Molech is generally understood to mean the *sun*; and several persons of good judgment think that by *Remphan* or *Raiphan* is meant the planet *Saturn*, which the *Copts* call $\rho\eta\phi\alpha\nu$, *Rephan*. It will be seen above that instead of *Remphan*, or, as some of the best MSS. have it, *Rephan*, the Hebrew text has $\hat{w}y\kappa$ *Chiun*, which might possibly be a corruption of $\hat{p}y\kappa$ *Reiphan*, as it would be very easy to mistake the k *caph* for r *resh*, and the *vau shurek* w for p *pe*. This emendation would bring the *Hebrew*, *Septuagint*, and the *text of Luke*, nearer together; but there is no authority either from MSS. or *versions* for this correction: however, as *Chiun* is mentioned in no other place, though *Molech* often occurs, it is the more likely that there might have been some very early mistake in the text, and that the *Septuagint* has preserved the true reading.

It was customary for the idolaters of all nations to carry images of their gods about them in their journeys, military expeditions, &c.; and these, being *very small*, were enclosed in little boxes, perhaps some of them in the shape of temples, called *tabernacles*; or, as we have it, ^{<41924>} **Acts 19:24**, *shrines*. These little gods were the *penates* and *lares* among the Romans, and the *tselems* or *talismans* among the ancient eastern idolaters. The Hebrew text seems to refer to these when it says, the *tabernacle* of your Molech, and *Chiun, your images*, $\mu\kappa\gamma\mu\iota\ \times\ tsalmeycem$, your *tselems*, $\tau\omega\varsigma\ \tau\upsilon\pi\omega\varsigma$, the types or simulachres of your gods. See Clarke's note on ^{<0319>} **Genesis 31:19**. Many of those small portable images are now in my own collection, all of copper or brass; some of them the identical *penates* of the ancient Romans, and others the offspring of the *Hindoo* idolatry; they are from an *ounce* weight to *half a pound*. Such images as these I suppose the idolatrous Israelites, in imitation of their neighbours,

the *Moabites, Ammonites, &c.*, to have *carried about* with them; and to such the prophet appears to me unquestionably to allude.

I will carry you away beyond Babylon.] You have carried your idolatrous images about; and I will carry you into captivity, and see if the gods in whom ye have trusted can deliver you from my hands. Instead of *beyond Babylon*, Amos, from whom the quotation is made, says, *I will carry you beyond Damascus*. Where they were carried was into Assyria and Media, see ^{<1706>}**2 Kings 17:6**: now, this was not only *beyond Damascus*, but *beyond Babylon* itself; and, as Stephen knew this to be the fact, he states it here, and thus more precisely fixes the place of their captivity. The Holy Spirit, in his *farther* revelations, has undoubted right to *extend* or illustrate those which he had given *before*. This case frequently occurs when a former prophecy is quoted in later times.

Verse 44. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness]

That is, the tabernacle in which the two tables of stone written by the finger of God were laid up, as a testimony that he had delivered these laws to the people, and that they had promised to obey them. As one great design of St. Stephen was to show the Jews that they placed too much dependence on *outward* privileges, and had not used the law, the tabernacle, the temple, nor the temple service, for the purpose of their institution, he labours to bring them to a due sense of this, that conviction might lead to repentance and conversion. And he farther shows that God did not *confine* his worship to *one place*, or *form*. He was worshipped *without* any *shrine* in the times of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. He was worshipped *with a tabernacle*, or *portable temple*, in the wilderness. He was worshipped also in the *fixed temple* projected by David, but built by Solomon. He asserts farther that his infinite majesty cannot be confined to temples, made by human hands; and where there is neither *tabernacle* nor *temple*, (in any part of his vast dominions,) he may be worshipped acceptably by the upright in heart. Thus he proves that neither tabernacle nor temple are *essentially* requisite for the true worship of the true God. Concerning the tabernacle to which St. Stephen here refers, the reader is requested to consult the notes, see **Clarke** ^{<1278>}**Exodus 25:8**", &c., and the subsequent chapters.

Speaking unto Moses] ὁ λαλῶν, *Who spake*, as in the *margin*; signifying the angel of God who spake to Moses, or God himself. See ^{<1254>}**Exodus 25:40**.

Verse 45. Brought in with Jesus] That is, with JOSHUA, whom the Greek version, quoted by St. Stephen, always writes *ἰησοῦς*, JESUS, but which should constantly be written *Joshua* in such cases as the present, in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

Possession of the Gentiles] *τῶν ἐθνῶν*, of the heathens, whom Joshua conquered, and gave their land to the children of Israel.

Verse 46. Desired to find a tabernacle] This was in David's heart, and it met with the Divine approbation: see ^{<1070>}**2 Samuel 7:2**, &c., and see the purpose, ^{<930>}**Psalm 132:2-5**; but, as David had been a man of war, and had shed much blood, God would not permit him to build the temple; but he laid the plan and made provision for it, and Solomon executed the design.

Verse 48. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands] Here St. Stephen evidently refers to Solomon's speech, ^{<1037>}**1 Kings 8:27**. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded?* Both Solomon and St. Stephen mean that the *majesty* of God could not be contained, not even in the whole vortex of nature; much less in any *temple* which human hands could erect.

As saith the prophet] The place referred to is ^{<2361>}**Isaiah 66:1, 2**: *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest, &c.*, with which the quotation by Stephen agrees.

Verse 50. Hath not my hand made all these things?] Stephen certainly had not finished his discourse, nor drawn his inferences from the facts already stated; but it is likely that, as they perceived he was about to draw conclusions unfavourable to the temple and its ritual, they immediately raised up a clamour against him, which was the cause of the following very cutting address.

Verse 51. Ye stiff-necked] *σκληροτραχηλοι*. A metaphor taken from *untoward oxen*, who cannot be broken into the yoke; and whose strong necks cannot be bended to the right or the left.

Uncircumcised in heart and ears] This was a Jewish mode of speech, often used by the prophets. Circumcision was instituted, not only as a *sign* and *seal* of the *covenant* into which the Israelites entered with their Maker, but also as a type of that *purity* and *holiness* which the law of God

requires; hence there was an *excision* of what was deemed not only *superfluous* but also *injurious*; and by this *cutting off*, the propensity to that crime which ruins the body, debases the mind, and was generally the forerunner of *idolatry*, was happily lessened. It would be easy to prove this, were not the subject too delicate. Where the spirit of disobedience was found, where the heart was prone to iniquity, and the ears impatient of reproof and counsel, the person is represented as *uncircumcised* in those parts, because devoted to iniquity, impatient of reproof, and refusing to obey. In *Pirkey Eliezer*, chap. 29, “Rabbi Seira said, There are *five* species of *uncircumcision* in the world; *four* in *man*, and *one* in *trees*. Those in man are the following:-

“1. Uncircumcision of the EAR. Behold, their EAR is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken, ^{<24610>}**Jeremiah 6:10**.

“2. The uncircumcision of the LIPS. *How shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised LIPS?* ^{<01612>}**Exodus 6:12**.

“3. Uncircumcision of HEART. If then their uncircumcised HEARTS be humbled, ^{<03541>}**Leviticus 26:41**. Circumcise therefore the FORESKIN of your HEART, ^{<61016>}**Deuteronomy 10:16**; ^{<24004>}**Jeremiah 4:4**. For all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the HEART, ^{<24026>}**Jeremiah 9:26**.

“4. The uncircumcision of the FLESH. *Ye shall circumcise the FLESH of your FORESKIN, &c.,* ^{<01711>}**Genesis 17:11**.”

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost] 1. Because they were uncircumcised in *heart*, they always resisted the *influences* of the Holy Spirit, bringing light and conviction to their minds; in consequence of which they became hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and neither repented at the preaching of John, nor credited the glad tidings told them by Christ and the apostles. 2. Because they were uncircumcised in *ears*, they would neither hear nor obey Moses, the prophets, Christ, nor the apostles.

As your fathers did, so do ye.] They were disobedient *children*, of disobedient *parents*: in all their generations they had been disobedient and perverse. This whole *people*, as well as this *text*, are fearful proofs that the Holy Spirit, the almighty energy of the living God, may be resisted and rendered of none effect. This Spirit is not sent to *stocks*, *stones*, or *machines*, but to *human beings* endued with *rational* souls; therefore it is

not to work on them with that *irresistible* energy which it must exert on *inert* matter, in order to conquer the *vis inertiae* or disposition to abide eternally in a motionless state, which is the state of all inanimate beings; but it works upon *understanding, will, judgment, conscience, &c.*, in order to enlighten, convince, and persuade. If, after all, the *understanding*, the eye of the mind, refuses to behold the *light*; the *will* determines to remain obstinate; the *judgment* purposes to draw false inferences; and the *conscience* hardens itself against every check and remonstrance, (and all this is possible to a rational soul, which must be dealt with in a rational way,) then the Spirit of God, being thus resisted, is grieved, and the sinner is left to reap the fruit of his doings. To *force* the man to see, feel, repent, believe, and be saved, would be to alter the essential principles of his creation and the nature of *mind*, and reduce him into the state of a *machine*, the *vis inertiae* of which was to be overcome and conducted by a certain quantum of *physical force*, superior to that resistance which would be the natural effect of the certain quantum of the *vis inertiae* possessed by the subject on and by which this agent was to operate. Now, *man* cannot be operated on in this way, because it is contrary to the laws of his creation and nature; nor can the Holy Ghost work on that as a *machine* which himself has made a *free agent*. Man therefore *may*, and generally *does*, resist the Holy Ghost; and the whole revelation of God bears unequivocal testimony to this most dreadful *possibility*, and most awful *truth*. It is trifling with the sacred text to say that resisting the Holy Ghost here means resisting the laws of Moses, the exhortations, threatenings, and promises of the prophets, &c. These, it is true, the uncircumcised *ear* may resist; but the uncircumcised *heart* is that *alone* to which the *Spirit* that gave the laws, exhortations, promises, &c., speaks; and, as *matter* resists *matter*, so *spirit* resists *spirit*. These were not only uncircumcised in *ear*, but uncircumcised also in *heart*; and therefore they resisted the Holy Ghost, not only in his *declarations* and *institutions*, but also in his *actual* energetic operations upon their *minds*.

Verse 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?]

Ye have not only resisted the Holy Ghost, but ye have *persecuted* all those who have spoken to you in *his name*, and by his *influence*: thus ye prove your opposition to the Spirit *himself*, by your opposition to every thing that *proceeds* from *him*.

They have slain them, &c.] Isaiah, *who showed before of the coming of Christ*, the Jews report, was sawn asunder at the command of Manasseh.

The coming of the Just One] του δικαίου, Meaning Jesus Christ; emphatically called the *just* or *righteous person*, not only because of the *unspotted* integrity of his *heart* and *life*, but because of his plenary *acquittal*, when tried at the tribunal of Pilate: *I find no fault at all in him*. The mention of this circumstance served greatly to aggravate their guilt. The character of *Just One* is applied to our Lord in *three* other places of Scripture: ^{<40314>}**Acts 3:14; 22:14;** and ^{<50816>}**James 5:6.**

The betrayers and murderers] Ye first *delivered him up* into the hands of the Romans, hoping they would have put him to death; but, when they *acquitted* him, then, in opposition to the declaration of his innocence, and in outrage to every *form* of *justice*, ye took and *murdered* him. This was a most terrible charge; and one against which they could set up no sort of defense. No wonder, then, that they were instigated by the spirit of the old destroyer, which they never resisted, to add another murder to that of which they had been so recently guilty.

Verse 53. By the disposition of angels] εις διαταγας αγγελων. After all that has been said on this difficult passage, perhaps the simple meaning is, that there were *ranks*, διαταγαί, of *angels* attending on the Divine Majesty when he gave the law: a circumstance which must have added greatly to the grandeur and solemnity of the occasion; and to this ^{<196817>}**Psalm 68:17** seems to me most evidently to allude: *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in SINAI, in the holy place*. It was not then by the *mouths* nor by the *hands* of angels, as *prime agents*, that Moses, and through him the people, received the law; but God himself gave it, accompanied with *many thousands* of those glorious beings. As it is probable they might be *assisting* in this most glorious solemnity, therefore St. Paul might say, ^{<8019>}**Galatians 3:19**, that it was *ordained by angels*, διαταγεις δι' αγγελων, in the hand of a Mediator. And as they were the only *persons* that could *appear*, for no man hath *seen* God at any time, therefore the apostle might say farther, (if indeed he refers to the same transaction, see the note there,) *the word spoken by angels was steadfast*, ^{<81012>}**Hebrews 2:2**. But the circumstances of this case are not sufficiently plain to lead to the knowledge of what was done by the angels in this most wonderful transaction; only we learn, from the use made of this circumstance by St. Stephen, that it added much to the *enormity* of their transgression, that they did not keep a law, in dispensing of which the *ministry of angels* had been employed. Some think Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are the *angels* here

intended; and others think that the *fire, light, darkness, cloud* and *thick darkness* were the angels which Jehovah used on this occasion, and to which St. Stephen refers; but neither of these senses appears sufficiently natural, and particularly the latter.

Verse 54. They were cut to the heart] διεπριοντο, *They were sawn through.* See Clarke's note on "^{<<4053>}Acts 5:33".

They gnashed on him with their teeth.] They were determined to hear him no longer; were filled with rage against him, and evidently thirsted for his blood.

Verse 55. Saw the glory of God] The *Shekinah*, the splendour or manifestation of the Divine Majesty.

And Jesus standing on the right hand of God] In his official character, as Mediator between God and man.

Stephen had this revelation while in the Sanhedrin; for as yet he had not been *forced out of the city.* See ^{<<4078>}Acts 7:58.

Verse 57. They-stopped their ears] As a proof that he had uttered blasphemy, because he said, *He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.* This was a fearful proof against them; for if Jesus was at the *right hand of God*, then they had murdered an *innocent* person; and they must infer that God's justice must speedily avenge his death. They were determined not to suffer a man to live any longer who could say he saw the *heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God.*

Verse 58. Cast him out of the city, and stoned him] They did not however wait for any sentence to be pronounced upon him; it seems they were determined to stone him *first*, and then prove, after it had been done, that it was done *justly.* For the manner of *stoning* among the Jews, see Clarke's note on "^{<<1823>}Leviticus 24:23".

The witnesses laid down their clothes] To illustrate this whole transaction, see the observations at the end of this chapter. See Clarke "^{<<4070>}Acts 7:60"

Verse 59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God] The word *God* is not found in any MS. or version, nor in any of the primitive fathers except *Chrysostom.* It is not genuine, and should not be inserted here: the whole sentence literally reads thus: *And they stoned Stephen, invoking and*

saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Here is a most manifest proof that *prayer is offered to Jesus Christ*; and that in the most solemn circumstances in which it could be offered, viz., when a man was *breathing his last*. This is, properly speaking, one of the *highest acts of worship* which can be offered to God; and, if Stephen had not conceived Jesus Christ to be GOD, could he have committed his soul into his hands?

We may farther observe that this place affords a full proof of the *immateriality of the soul*; for he could not have commended his spirit to Christ, had he believed that he had no spirit, or, in other words, that his *body and soul were one and the same thing*. Allowing this most eminent saint to have had a correct notion of theology, and that, being full of the Holy Ghost, as he was at this time, he could make no mistake in matters of such vast weight and importance, then these two points are satisfactorily stated in this verse: 1. That *Jesus Christ is GOD*; for Stephen died praying to him. 2. That the soul is *immaterial*; for Stephen, in dying, commends his departing spirit into the hand of Christ.

Verse 60. He kneeled down] That he might die as the *subject* of his heavenly MASTER-*acting and suffering* in the deepest submission to his Divine will and permissive providence; and, at the same time, showing the genuine nature of the religion of his Lord, in pouring out his prayers with his blood in behalf of his murderers!

Lay not this sin to their charge.] That is, do not impute it to them so as to exact punishment. How much did the servant resemble his Lord, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* This was the cry of our Lord in behalf of his murderers; and the disciple, closely copying his Master, in the same spirit, and with the same meaning, varies the expression, crying with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!* What an extent of benevolence! And in what a beautiful light does this place the *spirit* of the *Christian religion!* Christ had given what some have supposed to be an impossible command; *Love your enemies; pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you.* And Stephen shows here, in his own person, how practicable the grace of his Master had made this sublime precept.

He fell asleep.] This was a common expression among the Jews to signify *death*, and especially the death of good men. But this sleep is, properly speaking, not attributable to the *soul*, but to the *body*; for he had commended his spirit to the Lord Jesus, while his body was overwhelmed with the shower of stones cast on him by the mob.

After the word *εκοιμηθη*, *fell asleep*, one MS. adds, *εν ειρηνη*, *in peace*; and the Vulgate has, *in Domino, in the Lord*. Both these readings are *true*, as to the *state* of St. Stephen; but I believe neither of them was written by St. Luke.

The first clause of the next chapter should come in here, *And Saul was consenting unto his death*: never was there a worse division than that which separated it from the end of this chapter: this should be immediately altered, and the amputated member restored to the body to which it belongs.

1. THOUGH I have spoken pretty much at large on the punishment of *stoning* among the Jews, in **Clarke's note on "^(R23)Leviticus 24:23"**, yet, as the following extracts will serve to bring the subject more fully into view, in reference to the case of St. Stephen, the reader will not be displeased to find them here.

Dr. *Lightfoot* sums up the evidence he has collected on this subject, in the following particulars:-

"I. The place of stoning was without the sanhedrin, according as it is said, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp, ^(R34)**Leviticus 24:14**. It is a tradition, the place of stoning was without three camps. The gloss tells us that the court was the camp of the Divine Presence; the mountain of the temple, the camp of the Levites; and Jerusalem, the camp of Israel. Now, in every sanhedrin, in whatever city, the place of stoning was without the city, as it was at Jerusalem.

We are told the reason by the *Gemarists*, why the place of stoning was *without the sanhedrin*, and again *without three camps*: viz. *If the Sanhedrin go forth and sit without the three camps*, they make the place for stoning also distant from the *sanhedrin*, partly lest the *sanhedrin* should seem to kill the man; partly, that by the distance of the place there may be a little stop and space of time before the criminal come to the place of execution, if peradventure any one might offer some testimony that might make for him; for in the expectation of some such thing:-

"II. There stood one at the door of the *sanhedrin* having a handkerchief in his hand, and a horse at such a distance as it was only within sight. If any one therefore say, I have something to

offer in behalf of the condemned person, he waves the handkerchief, and the horseman rides and calls back the people. Nay, if the man himself say, I have something to offer in my own defence, they bring him back four or five times one after another, if it be any thing of moment that he hath to say." I doubt they hardly dealt so gently with the innocent *Stephen*.

"III. If no testimony arise that makes any thing for him, then they go on to stoning him: the crier proclaiming before him, 'N. the son of N. comes forth to be stoned for such or such a crime. N. and N. are the witnesses against him; if any one have any thing to testify in his behalf, let him come forth and give his evidence.'

"IV. When they come within ten cubits of the place where he must be stoned, they exhort him to confess, for so it is the custom for the malefactor to confess, because every one that confesseth hath his part in the world to come, as we find in the instance of *Achan*, &c.

"V. When they come within four cubits of the place, they strip off his clothes, and make him naked.

"VI. The place of execution was twice a man's height. One of the witnesses throws him down upon his loins; if he roll on his breast, they turn him on his loins again. If he die so, well. If not, then the other witness takes up a stone, and lays it upon his heart. If he die so, well. If not, he is stoned by all *Israel*.

"VII. *All that are stoned, are handed also, &c.*" These things I thought fit to transcribe the more largely, that the reader may compare this present action with this rule and common usage of doing it.

"1. It may be questioned for what crime this person was condemned to die? You will say for blasphemy *for the have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God*. But no one is condemned as a blasphemer, unless for *abusing the sacred name with four letters*, viz. **hwHy** YeHoVaH. Hence it is that although they oftentimes accused our Saviour as a blasphemer, yet he was not condemned for this, but because *he used witchcraft and deceived Israel, and seduced them into apostasy*. And those are reckoned among persons that are to be stoned: *He that evilly*

persuades; and he that draws into apostasy; and he that is a conjuror.

“2. It may farther be questioned whether our blessed martyr was condemned by any formal sentence of the *sanhedrin*, or hurried in a tumultuary manner by the people; and so murdered: it seems to be the latter.”

2. The defense of Stephen against the charges produced by his accusers must be considered as being *indirect*; as they had a *show of truth* for the ground of their accusations, it would have been improper *at once* to have roundly denied the charge. There is no doubt that Stephen had *asserted* and *proved* JESUS to be the *Christ* or MESSIAH; and that the whole nation should consider him as such, receive his doctrine, obey him, or expose themselves to the terrible sentence denounced in the prophecy of Moses: *Whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him,* ^{<61819>}**Deuteronomy 18:19**; for they well knew that this word implied that Divine judgments should inevitably fall upon them. To make proper way for this conclusion, Stephen enters into a detail of their history, showing that, from the beginning, God had in view the dispensation which was now opening, and that his designs were uniformly opposed by their impious forefathers. That, notwithstanding all this, God carried on his work: *First*, by *revealing his will* to ABRAHAM, and giving him the *rite of circumcision*, which was to be preserved among his descendants. *Secondly*, to MOSES and AARON in Egypt. *Thirdly*, to the whole congregation of Israel at Mount Sinai, and variously in the wilderness. *Fourthly*, by instituting the *tabernacle worship*, which was completed in the promised land, and continued till the days of Solomon, when the temple was builded, and the worship of God became fixed. *Fifthly*, by the long race of prophets raised up under that temple, who had been all variously persecuted by their forefathers, who departed from the true worship, and frequently became idolatrous; in consequence of which God gave them up into the hands of their enemies, and they were carried into *captivity*. How far St. Stephen would have proceeded, or to what issue he would have brought his discourse, we can only conjecture, as the fury of his persecutors did not permit him to come to a conclusion. But this they saw most clearly, that, *from his statement*, they could expect no mercy at the hand of God, if they persisted in their opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, and that their temple and political existence must fall a sacrifice to their persevering obstinacy. Their guilt stung them to the heart, and they

were determined rather to vent their insupportable feelings by hostile and murderous acts, than in penitential sorrow and supplication for mercy. The issue was the *martyrdom of Stephen*; a man of whom the sacred writings give the highest character, and a man who illustrated that character in every part of his conduct. Stephen is generally called the *proto-martyr*, i.e. the FIRST *martyr* or *witness*, as the word **μάρτυρ** implies; the person who, at the evident risk and ultimate loss of his life, bears testimony to TRUTH. This honour, however, may be fairly contested, and the palm at least divided between him and *John the Baptist*. The martyrdom of Stephen, and the spirit in which he suffered, have been an honour to the cause for which he cheerfully gave up his life, for eighteen hundred years. While Christianity endures, (and it will endure till *time* is swallowed up in *eternity*,) the martyrdom of Stephen will be the *model*, as it has been, for all martyrs, and a cause of triumph to the Church of God.

3. I cannot close these observations without making one remark on his prayer for his murderers. Though this shows most forcibly the *amiable, forgiving spirit* of the martyr, yet we must not forget that *this*, and all the *excellent qualities* with which the mind of this blessed man was endued, proceeded from that HOLY GHOST of whose influences his mind *was full*. The prayer therefore shows most powerfully the *matchless benevolence of GOD*. Even these most unprincipled, most impious, and most brutal of all murderers, were not out of the reach of HIS *mercy*! His Spirit influenced the heart of this martyr to pray for his destroyers; and could such prayers fail? No: Saul of Tarsus, in all probability was the first fruits of them. St. Augustine has properly remarked, *Si Stephanus non orasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet*. If Stephen had not prayed, the Church of Christ could not have numbered among her saints the apostle of the Gentiles. Let this example teach us at once the *spirit* that becomes a disciple of Christ, the efficacy of prayer, and the unbounded philanthropy of God.

ACTS

CHAPTER 8.

A general persecution is raised against the Church, 1. Stephen's burial, 2. Saul greatly oppresses the followers of Christ, 3, 4. Philip the deacon goes to Samaria, preaches, works many miracles, converts many persons, and baptizes Simon the sorcerer, 5-13. Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria; they confirm the disciples, and by prayer and imposition of hands they confer the Holy Spirit, 14-17. Simon the sorcerer, seeing this, offers them money, to enable him to confer the Holy Spirit, 18, 19. He is sharply reprov'd by Peter, and exhorted to repent, 20-23. He appears to be convinced of his sin, and implores an interest in the apostle's prayers, 24. Peter and John, having preached the Gospel in the villages of Samaria, return to Jerusalem, 25. An angel of the Lord commands Philip to go towards Gaza, to meet an Ethiopian eunuch, 26. He goes, meets, and converses with the eunuch, preaches the Gospel to him, and baptizes him, 27-38. The Spirit of God carries Philip to Azotus, passing through which, he preaches in all the cities till he comes to Cæsarea, 39, 40.

NOTES ON CHAP. 8.

Verse 1. Saul was consenting unto his death.] So inveterate was the hatred that this man bore to Christ and his followers that he *delighted* in their destruction. So blind was his heart with superstitious zeal that he thought he did God service by offering him the blood of a fellow creature, whose creed he supposed to be erroneous. The word **συνευδοκῶν** signifies *gladly consenting*, being *pleased* with his murderous work! How dangerous is a party spirit; and how destructive may zeal even for the true worship of God prove, if not inspired and regulated by the spirit of Christ!

It has already been remarked that this clause belongs to the conclusion of the preceding chapter; so it stands in the *Vulgate*, and so it *should* stand in every version.

There was a great persecution] The Jews could not bear the doctrine of Christ's *resurrection*; for this point being proved demonstrated *his innocence* and *their enormous guilt* in his crucifixion; as therefore the apostles continued to insist strongly on the resurrection of Christ, the persecution against them became hot and general.

They were all scattered abroad-except the apostles.] Their Lord had commanded them, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another: this they did, but, wherever they went, they proclaimed the same doctrines, though at the risk and hazard of their lives. It is evident, therefore, that they did not flee from persecution, or the death it threatened; but merely in obedience to their Lord's command. Had they fled through the fear of death, they would have taken care not to provoke persecution to follow them, by continuing to proclaim the same truths that provoked it in the first instance.

That the *apostles* were not also exiled is a very remarkable fact: they continued in Jerusalem, to found and organize the infant Church; and it is marvellous that the hand of persecution was not permitted to touch *them*. Why this should be we cannot tell; but so it pleased the great Head of the Church. Bp. Pearce justly suspects those accounts, in Eusebius and others, that state that the apostles went very shortly after Christ's ascension into different countries, preaching and founding Churches. He thinks this is inconsistent with the various intimations we have of the continuance of the apostles in Jerusalem; and refers particularly to the following texts: ^{<4001>}Acts 8:1, 14, 25; ^{<4026>}Acts 9:26, 27; 11:1, 2; ^{<4120>}Acts 12:1-4; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; ^{<4217>}Acts 21:17, 18; ^{<8017>}Galatians 1:17-19; 2:1, 9. The Church at Jerusalem was the *first* CHRISTIAN Church; and consequently, the *boast* of the Church of Rome is vain and unfounded. From this time a new æra of the Church arose. Hitherto the apostles and disciples confined their labours among their countrymen in Jerusalem. Now persecution drove the latter into different parts of Judea, and through Samaria; and those who had received the doctrine of Christ at the pentecost, who had come up to Jerusalem from different countries to be present at the feast, would naturally return, especially at the commencement of the persecution, to their respective countries, and proclaim to their countrymen the Gospel of the grace of God. To effect this grand purpose, the Spirit was poured out at the day of pentecost; that the multitudes from different quarters, partaking of the word of life, might carry it back to the different nations among whom they had their residence. One of the fathers has well observed, that "these holy fugitives were like so many lamps, lighted by the fire of the Holy Spirit, spreading every where the sacred flame by which they themselves had been illuminated."

Verse 2. Devout men carried Stephen to his burial] The Greek word, **συνεκομισαν**, signifies not only to *carry*, or rather to *gather up*, but also

to do every thing necessary for the *interment* of the dead. Among the Jews, and indeed among most nations of the earth, it was esteemed a work of piety, charity, and mercy, to bury the dead. The Jews did not bury those who were condemned by the Sanhedrin in the burying place of the fathers, as they would not bury the *guilty* with the *innocent*; and they had a separate place for those who were stoned, and for those that were burnt. According to the *Tract Sanh.* fol. 45, 46, the *stone* wherewith any one was stoned, the *post* on which he was hanged, the *sword* by which he was beheaded, and the *cord* by which he was strangled, were buried in the same place with the bodies of the executed persons. As these persons died under the curse of the law, the instruments by which they were put to death were considered as unclean and accursed, and therefore buried with their bodies. Among the ancients, whatever was *grateful* or *useful* to a person in life was ordinarily buried with him; thus the *sword*, *spear*, *shield*, &c., of the soldier were put in the same grave; the *faithful dog* of the hunter, &c., &c. And on this principle the wife of a Brahman burns with the body of her deceased husband.

Made great lamentation over him.] This was never done over any condemned by the Sanhedrin—they only bemoaned such privately; this great lamentation over Stephen, if the same custom then prevailed as afterwards, is a proof that Stephen was not condemned by the Sanhedrin; he probably fell a sacrifice to the fury of the bigoted incensed mob, the Sanhedrin not interfering to prevent the illegal execution.

Verse 3. Saul made havoc of the Church] The word *ελυμαινετο*, from *λυμαινω*, to *destroy*, *devastate*, *ravage*, signifies the act of *ferocious animals*, such as *bears*, *wolves*, and the like, in seeking and devouring their prey. This shows with what persevering rancour this man pursued the harmless Christians; and thus we see in him what bigotry and false zeal are capable of performing.

Entering into every house] For, however it might be to others, a Christian man's house was not *his* castle.

Haling men and women] Neither sparing age nor sex in the professors of Christianity. The word *συρων* signifies *dragging* them before the magistrates, or dragging them *to justice*.

Committed them to prison.] For, as the Romans alone had the power of life and death, the Sanhedrin, by whom Saul was employed, <4250> **Acts**

26:10, could do no more than arrest and imprison, in order to inflict any punishment short of death. It is true, St. Paul himself says that some of them were put to death, see ^{<42510>}**Acts 26:10**; but this was either done by *Roman* authority, or by what was called the *judgment of zeal*, i.e. when the mob took the execution of the laws into their own hands, and massacred those whom they pretended to be blasphemers of God: for these sanctified their murderous outrage under the specious name of *zeal for God's glory*, and quoted the ensample of Phineas as a precedent. Such persons as these formed a sect among the Jews; and are known in ecclesiastical history by the appellation of *Zealots* or *Sicarii*.

Verse 4. They that were scattered-went every where preaching] Thus the very means devised by Satan to destroy the Church became the very instruments of its diffusion and establishment. What are counsel, or might, or cunning, or rage, or malice, against the Lord, whether they are excited by men or devils!

Verse 5. Then Philip] One of the seven deacons, ^{<4065>}**Acts 6:5**, called afterwards, *Philip the Evangelist*, ^{<42108>}**Acts 21:8**.

The city of Samaria] At this time there was no city of Samaria existing: according to Josephus, *Ant.* lib. xiii. cap. 10, sect. 3, Hyrcanus had so utterly demolished it as to leave no vestige of it remaining. Herod the Great did afterwards build a city on the same spot of ground; but he called it **σεβαστη** i.e. *Augusta*, in compliment to the Emperor Augustus, as Josephus tells us, *Ant.* lib. xv. cap. 8, sect. 5; *War*, lib. i. cap. 2. sect. 7; and by this name of *Sebasté*, or *Augusta*, that city, if meant here, would in all probability have been called, in the same manner as the town called *Strato's Tower*, (which Herod built on the sea coasts, and to which he gave the name of *Cæsarea*, in compliment to Augustus Cæsar,) is always called *Cæsarea*, wherever it is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Bp. Pearce.

As Sychem was the very heart and seat of the Samaritan religion, and Mount Gerizim the cathedral church of that sect, it is more likely that *it* should be intended than any other. See *Lightfoot*. As the Samaritans received the same law with the Jews, as they also expected the Messiah, as Christ had preached to and converted many of that people, ^{<3039>}**John 4:39-42**, it was very reasonable that the earliest offers of salvation should be made to *them*, before any attempt was made to evangelize the *Gentiles*. The Samaritans, indeed, formed the connecting link between the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; for they were a mongrel people, made up of both sorts, and

holding both Jewish and Pagan rites. See the account of them on **Matthew 10:5**.

Verse 6. The people with one accord gave heed] He had fixed their attention, not only with the gravity and importance of the matter of his preaching, but also by *the miracles which he did*.

Verse 7. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed] Hence it is evident that these *unclean spirits* were not a species of diseases; as they are here distinguished from the *paralytic* and the *lame*. There is nothing more certain than that the New Testament writers mean real diabolic possessions by the terms *unclean spirits, devils, &c.*, which they use. It is absolute trifling to deny it. If we, in our superior sagacity can show that they were mistaken, that is quite a different matter!

Verse 8. There was great joy in that city.] No wonder, when they heard such glorious truths, and were the subjects of such beneficent miracles.

Verse 9. A certain man called Simon] In ancient ecclesiastical writers, we have the strangest account of this man; they say that he pretended to be the *Father*, who gave the law to Moses; that he came in the reign of Tiberius in the person of the *Son*; that he descended on the apostles on the day of pentecost, in flames of fire, in quality of the *Holy Spirit*; that he was the *Messiah*, the *Paraclete*, and *Jupiter*; that the *woman* who accompanied him, called *Helena*, was *Minerva*, or the *first intelligence*; with many other extravagancies which probably never had an existence. All that we know to be certain on this subject is, that he *used sorcery*, that he *bewitched the people*, and that he *gave out himself to be some great one*.

This might be sufficient, were not men prone to be wise *above* what is written.

Our word *sorcerer*, from the French *sorcier*, which, from the Latin *sors*, a *lot*, signifies the using of *lots* to draw presages concerning the future; a custom that prevailed in all countries, and was practised with a great variety of forms. On the word *lot* see **Clarke's note**, "**Leviticus 16:8**; "**Leviticus 16:9**"; and **Joshua 14:2**.

The Greek word, **μαγευον**, signifies practising the *rites* or *science* of the *Magi*, or [Persic] *Mughan*, the worshippers of fire among the Persians; the same as [Arabic] *Majoos*, and [Arabic] *Majooseean*, from which we have our word *magician*. See **Clarke's note on "Matthew 2:1"**.

And bewitched the people of Samaria] ἐξίστων, *Astonishing, amazing, or confounding* the judgment of the people, from ἐξίστημι, *to remove out of a place or state, to be transported beyond one's self, to be out of one's wits*; a word that expresses precisely the same effect which the tricks or *legerdemain* of a juggler produce in the minds of the common people who behold his feats. It is very likely that Simon was a man of this cast, for the east has always abounded in persons of this sort. The Persian, Arabian, Hindoo, and Chinese jugglers are notorious to the present day; and even while I write this, (July, 1813,) three *Indian* jugglers, lately arrived, are *astonishing the people of London*; and if such persons can *now* interest and amaze the people of a city so cultivated and enlightened, what might not such do among the grosser people of Sychem or Sebaste, eighteen hundred years ago?

That himself was some great one.] That the feats which he performed sufficiently proved that he possessed a most powerful supernatural agency, and could do whatsoever he pleased.

Verse 10. This man is the great power of God.] That is, he is invested with it, and can command and use it. They certainly did not believe him to be *God*; but they thought him to be endued with a great supernatural power.

There is a remarkable reading here in several MSS. which should not pass unnoticed. In ABCDE, several others, together with the *Æthiopic, Armenian, later Syriac, Vulgate, Itala, Origen, and Irenæus*, the word *καλουμενη* is *added* before *μεγαλη*, and the passage reads thus, *This person is that power of God which is CALLED the GREAT*. This appears to be the true reading; but what the Samaritans meant by that power of God which they termed *the Great*, we know not. Simon endeavoured to persuade the people that he was a very great personage, and he succeeded.

Verse 12. But when they believed Philip] So it is evident that Philip's word came with greater power than that of Simon; and that his *miracles* stood the test in such a way as the *feats* of Simon could not.

Verse 13. Simon himself believed also] He was struck with *the doctrine and miracles of Philip*-he saw that these were *real*; he knew his own to be *fictitious*. He believed therefore that Jesus was the Messiah, and was in consequence *baptized*.

Continued with Philip, and wondered] ἐξίστατο, He was as much *astonished* and *confounded* at the miracles of Philip as the people of Samaria were at his *legerdemain*. It is worthy of remark that ἐξίστατο comes from the same root, ἐξίστημι, as the word ἐξίστων, in ^{<408D>}Acts 8:9, and, if our translation *bewitched* be proper there, it should be retained here; and then we should read, *Then Simon himself believed and was baptized, and continued with Philip, being BEWITCHED, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.* We may see, from this circumstance, how improper the term *bewitched* is, in the 9th and 11th verses. {^{<408D>}Acts 8:9,11}

Verse 14. The word of God] The doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They sent unto them Peter and John] There was no individual *ruler* among the apostles—there was not even a *president* of the council; and Peter, far from being *chief* of the apostles, is one of those sent, with the same commission and authority as John, to confirm the Samaritans in the faith.

Verse 15. When they were come down] The very same mode of speaking, in reference to *Jerusalem* formerly, obtains now in reference to *London*. The metropolis in both cases is considered as the *centre*; and all parts, in every direction, no matter how distant, or how *situated*, are represented as *below* the metropolis. Hence we so frequently hear of persons going *up* to Jerusalem: and going *down* from the same. So in London the people speak of going *down* to the country; and, in the country, of going *up* to London. It is necessary to make this remark, lest any person should be led away with the notion that Jerusalem was situated on the highest ground in Palestine. It is a mode of speech which is used to designate a *royal* or *imperial* city.

Prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.] It seems evident from this case, that even the most holy *deacons*, though full of the Holy Ghost themselves, could not confer this heavenly gift on others. This was the prerogative of the *apostles*, and they were only *instruments*; but they were those alone by which the Lord chose to work. They prayed and laid their hands on the disciples, and God sent down the gift; so, the blessing came *from* God *by* the apostles, and not *from* the apostles to the people. But for what purpose was the Holy Spirit thus given? Certainly not for the sanctification of the souls of the people: this they had on believing

in Christ Jesus; and this the apostles never dispensed. It was the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit which were thus communicated: the *speaking with different tongues*, and those *extraordinary* qualifications which were necessary for the successful preaching of the Gospel; and doubtless many, if not all, of those on whom the apostles laid their hands, were employed more or less in the *public work* of the Church.

Verse 17. Then laid they their hands on them] Probably only on some select persons, who were thought proper for public use in the Church. They did not lay hands on *all*; for certainly no hands in this way were laid on Simon.

Verse 18. When Simon saw, &c.] By hearing these speak with different tongues and work miracles.

He offered them money] Supposing that the dispensing this Spirit belonged to them—that they could give it to whomsoever they pleased; and imagining that, as he saw them to be *poor* men, they would not object to take money for their gift; and it is probable that he had gained considerably by his juggling, and therefore could afford to spare some, as he hoped to make it all up by the profit which he expected to derive from this new influence.

Verse 20. Thy money perish with thee] This is an awful declaration; and imports thus much, that *if he did not repent*, he and his ill-gotten goods would perish together; his *money* should be *dissipated*, and his *soul* go into *perdition*.

That the gift of God may be purchased] Peter takes care to inform not only Simon, but all to whom these presents may come, that the Spirit of God is the gift of God alone, and consequently cannot be purchased with money; for what reward can HE receive from his *creatures*, to whom the silver and the gold belong, the cattle on a thousand hills, the earth and its fulness!

Verse 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter] Thou hast no part among the *faithful*, and no *lot in this ministry*. That the word κληρος, which we translate *lot*, is to be understood as implying a *spiritual portion, office, &c.*, see proved in the note on ~~1065~~ **Numbers 26:55**.

Thy heart is not right] It is not through motives of purity, benevolence, or love to the souls of men, that thou desirest to be enabled to confer the

Holy Ghost; it is through pride, vain glory, and love of money: thou wouldest now give a little money that thou mightest, by thy new gift, gain much.

Verse 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness] St. Peter did not suppose his case to be utterly *hopeless*; though his sin, considered in its *motives* and *objects*, was of the most heinous kind.

If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.] His sin, as yet, only existed in *thought* and *purpose*; and therefore it is said, *if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven*.

Verse 23. The gall of bitterness] A Hebraism for *excessive bitterness*: gall, wormwood, and such like, were used to express the dreadful effects of *sin* in the soul; the bitter *repentance*, bitter *regret*, bitter *sufferings*, bitter *death*, &c., &c., which it produces. In ^{<162918>}**Deuteronomy 29:18**, idolatry and its consequences are expressed, by having among them *a root that beareth GALL and WORMWOOD*. And in ^{<81215>}**Hebrews 12:15**, some grievous sin is intended, when the apostle warns them, *lest any root of BITTERNESS springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled*.

Bond of iniquity.] An allusion to the mode in which the Romans secured their prisoners, chaining the *right hand* of the *prisoner* to the *left hand* of the *soldier* who guarded him; as if the apostle had said, Thou art tied and bound by the chain of thy sin; justice hath laid hold upon thee, and thou hast only a short respite before thy execution, to see if thou wilt repent.

Verse 24. Pray ye to the Lord for me] The words of Peter certainly made a deep impression on Simon's mind; and he must have had a high opinion of the apostle's sanctity and influence with God, when he thus commended himself to their prayers. And we may hope well of his repentance and salvation, if the reading of the *Codex Bezae*, and the margin of the later *Syriac* may be relied on: *Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none (ΤΟΥΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΚΩΝ) OF ALL THOSE EVILS which ye have spoken (μοι) TO ME, may come upon me: (ὄς πολλά κλαίων οὐ διελιμπάνεν) WHO WEPT GREATLY, and DID NOT CEASE*. That is, he was an *incessant* penitent. However favourably this or any other MS. may speak of Simon, he is generally supposed to have "grown worse and worse, opposing the apostles and the Christian doctrine, and deceiving many cities and provinces by magical operations; till being at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor *Claudius*, he boasted that he could *fly*, and when exhibiting

before the emperor and the senate, St. Peter and St. Paul being present, who knew that his flying was occasioned by *magic*, prayed to God that the people might be undeceived, and that his power might fail; in consequence of which he came tumbling down, and died soon after of his bruises." This account comes in a most questionable shape, and has no evidence which can challenge our assent. To me, *it* and the rest of the things spoken of Simon the sorcerer appear utterly unworthy of credit. *Calmet* makes a general collection of what is to be found in *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian; Eusebius, Theodoret, Augustine*, and others, on the subject of Simon Magus; and to him, if the reader think it worth the pains, he may refer. The substance of these accounts is given above, and in **Clarke's note on** "^{418B}**Acts 8:9**"; and to say the least of them they are all very *dubious*. The tale of his having an altar erected to him at Rome, with the inscription, *Simoni sancto deo*, "To the holy god Simon," has been founded on an utter mistake, and has been long ago sufficiently confuted. See the inscriptions in *Gruter*, vol. i. p. 96, inscript. No. 5, 6, 7.

Verse 25. And they, when they had-preached-returned to Jerusalem] That is, Peter and John returned, after they had borne testimony to and confirmed the work which Philip had wrought.

Verse 26. Arise, and go toward the south] How circumstantially particular are these directions! Every thing is so precisely marked that there is no danger of the apostle missing his way. He is to perform some great *duty*; but *what*, he is not informed. The *road* which he is to take is marked out; but *what* he is to *do* in that road, or *how far* he is to proceed, he is not told! It is GOD who employs him, and requires of him *implicit* obedience. If he *do his will*, according to the *present direction*, he shall know, by the *issue*, that God hath sent him on an errand worthy of his wisdom and goodness. We have a similar instance of *circumstantial direction* from God in ^{419I}**Acts 9:11**: *Arise, go into the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, &c.* And another instance, still more particular, in ^{419B}**Acts 10:5, 6**: *Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea side.* God never sends any man on a message, without giving him such directions as shall prevent all mistakes and miscarriages, if simply and implicitly followed. This is also strictly true of the doctrines contained in his word: no soul ever missed salvation that simply followed the directions given in the word of God. Those who will refine upon every thing, question the Divine testimony, and dispute with

their Maker, cannot be saved. And how many of this stamp are found, even among *Christians*, professing *strict* godliness!

Gaza, which is desert.] *αυτη εστιν ερημος*, *This is the desert, or this is in the desert.* Gaza was a town about two miles and a half from the sea-side; it was the last town which a traveller passed through, when he went from Phœnicia to Egypt, and was at the entrance into a wilderness, according to the account given by Arrian in *Exped. Alex. lib. ii. cap. 26, p. 102.* [Ed. Gronov.] *That it was the last inhabited town, as a man goes from Phœnicia to Egypt, επι τη αρχη της ερημου*, *on the commencement of the desert.* See Bp. *Pearce*.

Dr. *Lightfoot* supposes that the word *desert* is added here, because at that time the ancient Gaza was actually *desert*, having been destroyed by Alexander, and *μενουσα ερημος*, *remaining desert*, as *Strabo*, lib. xvi. p. 1102, says; and that the angel mentioned this desert Gaza to distinguish it from another city of the *same name*, in the tribe of Ephraim, not far from the place where Philip now was. On this we may observe that, although Gaza was desolated by Alexander the Great, as were several other cities, yet it was afterwards rebuilt by *Gabinius*. See *Josephus, Ant. lib. xv. cap. 5, sect. 3.* And writers of the first century represent it as being flourishing and populous in their times. See *Wetstein*.

Schoettgen thinks that *ερημος*, *desert*, should be referred, not to *Gaza*, but to *οδος*, the *way*; and that it signifies a road that was *less frequented*. If there were two roads to Gaza from Jerusalem, as some have imagined, (see *Rosenmuller*,) the eunuch might have chosen that which was desert, or less frequented, for the sake of privacy in his journeying religious exercises.

Verse 27. A man of Ethiopia] *ανηρ αιθιοψ* should be translated *an Ethiopian*, for the reasons given on ^{<4400>}**Acts 7:2**.

An eunuch] See this word interpreted, on ^{<401912>}**Matthew 19:12**. The term eunuch was given to persons in authority at court, to whom its *literal* meaning did not apply. Potiphar was probably an eunuch only as to his *office*; for he was a *married* man. See ^{<4013736>}**Genesis 37:36; 39:1**. And it is likely that this Ethiopian was of the same sort.

Of great authority] *δυναστης*, *A perfect lord chamberlain* of the royal household; or, rather, her *treasurer*, for it is here said, *he had charge of all her treasure*, *ην επι πασης της γαζης αυτης*. The apparent Greek word

γαζα, *Gaza*, is generally allowed to be *Persian*, from the authority of *Servius*, who, in his comment on *Æn. lib. i. ver. 118*:-

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,
Arma virum, tabulæque, et Troia GAZA per undas.*

*“And here and there above the waves are seen
Arms, pictures, precious goods, and floating men.”
DRYDEN.*

The words of *Servius* are: “*Gaza Persicus sermo est, et significat divitias; unde Gaza urbs in Palæstina dicitur, quod in ea Cambyses rex Persarum cum Ægyptiis bellum inferret divitias suas condidit.*” *GAZA* is a *Persian* word, and signifies *RICHEs*: hence *Gaza*, a city in *Palestine*, was so called because *Cambyses*, king of *Persia*, laid up his *treasures* in it, when he waged war with the *Egyptians*. The nearest *Persian* word of this signification which I find is [*Persian*] *gunj*, or *ganz*, and [*Persian*] *gunja*, which signify a magazine, store, hoard, or hidden treasure. The *Arabic* [*Arabic*] *kluzaneh*, comes as near as the *Persian*, with the same meaning. Hence [*Arabic*] *makhzen*, called *magazen* by the *Spaniards*, and *magazine* by the *English*; a word which signifies a collection of stores or treasures, or the place where they are laid up. It is scarcely necessary to remark that this name is given also to certain monthly publications, which are, or profess to be, a store of treasures, or repository of precious, or valuable things.

But who was *Candace*? It is granted that she is not found in the common lists of *Ethiopic* sovereigns with which we have been favoured. But neither the *Abyssinians* nor the *Jews* admitted women in their genealogies. I shall not enter into this controversy, but shall content myself with quoting the words of *Mr. Bruce*. “It is known,” says he, “from credible writers engaged in no controversy, that this *Candace* reigned upon the *Nile* in *Atbara*, near *Egypt*. Her capital also, was taken in the time of *Augustus*, a few years before the conversion of the slave by *Philip*; and we shall have occasion often to mention her successors and her kingdom, as existing in the reign of the *Abyssinian* kings, long after the *Mohammedan* conquest: they existed when I passed through *Atbara*, and do undoubtedly exist there to this day.”-*Bruce’s Travels*, vol. ii. p. 431.

It does not appear, as some have imagined, that the *Abyssinians* were converted to the *Christian* faith by this *eunuch*, nor by any of the *apostles*; as there is strong historic evidence that they continued *Jews* and *Pagans*

for more than three hundred years after the Christian æra. Their conversion is with great probability attributed to *Frumentius*, sent to Abyssinia for that purpose by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, about A.D. 330. See *Bruce* as above.

The Ethiopians mentioned here are those who inhabited the isle or peninsula of *Meroe*, above and southward of Egypt. It is the district which Mr. Bruce calls *Atbara*, and which he proves formerly bore the name of *Meroe*. This place, according to Diodorus Siculus, had its name from Meroe, daughter of Cambyses, king of Persia, who died there in the expedition which her father undertook against the Ethiopians. Strabo mentions a queen in this very district named *Candace*: his words are remarkable. Speaking of an insurrection of the Ethiopians against the Romans he says: Τουτων δ ησαν και οι βασιλισσης στρατηγοι της Κανδακης, η καθ ημας ηρξε των Αιθιοπων, ανδρικη τις γυνη, πεπηρωνη τον οφθαλμον, “Among these were the officers of Queen CANDACE, who in our days reigned over the Ethiopians. She was a masculine woman, and blind of one eye.” Though this could not have been the *Candace* mentioned in the text, it being a little before the Christian æra, yet it establishes the fact that a queen of this name did reign in this place; and we learn from others that it was a *common* name to the queens of Ethiopia. Pliny, giving an account of the report made by Nero’s messengers, who were sent to examine this country, says, *Ædificia oppidi (Meroes) pauca: regnare feminam CANDACEN; quod nomen multis jam annis ad reginas transiit.* Hist. Nat. lib. vi. cap. 29, ad fin. They reported that “the edifices of the city were few: that a woman reigned there of the name of *Candace*; which name had passed to their queens, *successively*, for many years.” To one of those queens the eunuch in the text belonged; and the above is sufficient authority to prove that queens of this name reigned over this part of Ethiopia.

Had come to Jerusalem for to worship] Which is a proof that he was a worshipper of the God of Israel; but how came he acquainted with the Jewish religion? Let us, for a little, examine this question. In ^{<1100>}**1 Kings 10:1**, &c., we have the account of the visit paid to Solomon by the *queen of Sheba*, the person to whom our Lord refers, ^{<4024>}**Matthew 12:42**, and ^{<2131>}**Luke 11:31**. It has been long credited by the Abyssinians that this queen, who by some is called *Balkis*, by others *Maqueda*, was not only instructed by Solomon in the Jewish religion, but also established it in her own empire on her return; that she had a son by Solomon named *Menilek*,

who succeeded her in the kingdom; and, from that time till the present, they have preserved the Jewish religion. Mr. Bruce throws some light upon this subject: the substance of what he says is the following: “There can be no doubt of the expedition of the queen of Sheba; as Pagan, Moor, Arab, Abyssinian, and all the countries round, vouch for it, nearly in the terms of Scripture. Our Saviour calls her queen of the south; and she is called, in ^{<1100>}**1 Kings 10:1**, &c., ^{<1400>}**2 Chronicles 9:1**, &c., queen of *Sheba* or *Saba*; for *Saba*, *Azab*, and *Azaba*, all signify the *south*: and she is said to have come from the *uttermost parts of the earth*. In our Saviour’s time the boundaries of the known land, *southward*, were *Raptam* or *Prassum*; which were the uttermost parts of the known earth, and were with great propriety so styled by our Lord. The gold, myrrh, cassia, and frankincense, which she brought with her, are all products of that country. The annals of the Abyssinians state that she was a pagan when she left *Saba* or *Azab*, to visit Solomon; and that she was there converted and had a son by Solomon, who succeeded her in the kingdom, as stated above. All the inhabitants of this country, whether Jews or Christians, believe this; and, farther, that the 45th Psalm { ^{<1950>}**Psalm 45:1**, &c. } was a prophecy of her journey to Jerusalem; that she was accompanied by a daughter of Hiram from Tyre; and that the latter part of the Psalm is a prophecy of her having a son by Solomon, and of his ruling over the Gentiles.” Travels, vol. ii. page 395, &c. All this being granted, and especially the Scripture fact of the queen of Sheba’s visit, and the great probability, supported by uninterrupted tradition, that she established the Jewish religion in her dominions on her return, we may at once see that the eunuch in question was a descendant of those *Jews*; or that he was a *proselyte* in his own country to the Jewish faith, and was now come up at the great feast to worship God at Jerusalem. Mr. Bruce may be right; but some think that *Saba*, in Arabia Felix, is meant: see Clarke’s note on ^{<4012>}**Matthew 12:42**”.

Verse 28. Sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.] He had gone to Jerusalem to worship: he had profited by his religious exercises: and even in travelling, he is improving his time. God sees his simplicity and earnestness, and provides him an instructor, who should lead him into the great truths of the Gospel, which, without such a one, he could not have understood. Many, after having done their duty, as they call it, in attending a place of worship, forget the errand that brought them thither, and spend their time, on their return, rather in idle conversation than in reading or

conversing about the word of God. It is no wonder that such should be always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Verse 29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip] This holy man having obeyed the first direction he received from God, and gone southward without knowing the reason why, it was requisite that he should now be informed of the object of his mission: the *Spirit said unto him, go near, and join thyself, &c.* The angel who had given him the first direction had departed; and the influence of the Holy Spirit now completed the information. It is likely that what the Spirit did in this case was by a strong impression on his mind, which left him no doubt of its being from God.

Verse 30. Heard him read the Prophet Esaias] The eunuch, it seems, was reading aloud, and apparently in *Greek*, for that was the common language in Egypt; and, indeed, almost in every place it was understood. And it appears that it was the *Greek version* of the *Septuagint* that he was reading, as the quotation below is from that version.

Verse 31. How can I, except some man should guide me?] This is *no proof* that “the Scriptures cannot be understood without an authorized interpreter,” as some of the papistical writers assert. How could the eunuch know any thing of the Gospel dispensation, to which this scripture referred? That dispensation had not yet been proclaimed to him; he knew nothing about *Jesus*. But where that dispensation has been published, where the four Gospels and the apostolic epistles are at hand, every thing relative to the salvation of the soul may be clearly apprehended by any simple, upright person. There are difficulties, it is true, in different parts of the sacred writings, which neither the *pope* nor his *conclave* can solve; and several which even the *more* enlightened *Protestant* cannot remove; but these difficulties do not refer to matters in which the *salvation of the soul* is immediately concerned: they refer to such as are common to every ancient author in the universe. These difficulties, being understood, add to the beauty, elegance, and justness of the language, thoughts, and turns of expression; and these, only the *few* who are capable of *understanding* are able to *relish*. As to all the rest, all that relates to *faith* and *practice*, all in which the present and eternal interest of the soul is concerned, “the wayfaring man, though a fool, (quite illiterate,) shall not err therein.”

That he would come up, and sit with him.] So earnestly desirous was he to receive instruction relative to those things which concerned the welfare of his soul.

Verse 32. The place of the scripture] περιοχη της γραφης, The *section*, or *paragraph*.

Verse 33. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away] He who was the *fountain of judgment* and *justice* had no justice shown him (*mercy* he needed not) in *his humiliation*; viz. that time in which he *emptied himself*, and appeared in the form of a servant.

Who shall declare his generation] την γενεαν αυτου: Answering to the Hebrew *wrwd doro*, which Bp. Lowth understands as implying *his manner of life*. It was the custom among the Jews, when they were taking away any criminal from *judgment* to *execution*, to call out and inquire whether there was any person who could appear in behalf of the character of the criminal—whether there was any who, from intimate acquaintance with his *manner of life*, could say any thing in his favour? This circumstance I have noticed before, and it has been particularly remarked in the case of Stephen: see at ^{<4070>} **Acts 7:60**. In our Lord's case, this benevolent inquiry does not appear to have been made; and perhaps to this breach of *justice*, as well as of *custom*, the prophet refers; and this shows how minutely the conduct of those bad men was known seven hundred years before it took place. God can *foreknow* what he pleases, and can *do* what he pleases; and all the operations of his infinite mind are just and right. Some think that, *who shall declare his generation?* refers to his *eternal Sonship*; others, to his *miraculous conception* by the *Holy Spirit*, in the womb of the *virgin*; others, to the *multitudinous progeny* of *spiritual children* which should be born unto God, in consequence of his passion and meritorious death. Perhaps the *first*, which refers to the usual custom in behalf of the criminal, is the *best* and most natural sense.

Verse 34. Of whom speaketh the prophet this] This was a very natural inquiry: for in the text itself, and in its circumstances, there was nothing that could determine the meaning, so as to ascertain whether the prophet meant himself or some other person; and the very inquiry shows that the eunuch had thought deeply on the subject.

Verse 35. Began at the same scripture] He did not confine himself to this one scripture, but made this his text, and showed, from the general tenor of the sacred writings, that *Jesus* was the *Christ*, or *Messiah*; and that in *his* person, birth, life, doctrine, miracles, passion, death, and resurrection, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled. This preaching had the

desired effect, for the eunuch was convinced of the truth of Philip's doctrine, and desired to be baptized in the *name of Jesus*.

Verse 36. See, here is water] He was not willing to omit the first opportunity that presented itself of his taking upon *himself* the *profession of the Gospel*. By this we may see that Philip had explained the whole of the Christian faith to him, and the *way* by which believers were brought into the Christian Church.

Verse 37. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.] He believed that Jesus, whom Philip preached to him, was THE CHRIST or *Messiah*, and consequently the *Son of God*.

This whole verse is omitted by ABCG, several others of the first authority, Erpen's edit. of the *Arabic*, the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Æthiopic*, and some of the *Slavonic*: almost all the critics declare against it as spurious. *Griesbach* has left it out of the text; and Professor *White* in his *Crisews* says, "Hic versus *certissime* delendus," *this verse, most assuredly, should be blotted out*. It is found in E, several others of minor importance, and in the *Vulgate* and *Arabic*. In those MSS. where it is extant it exists in a variety of forms, though the sense is the same.

Verse 38. And they went down] They *alighted from the chariot into the water*. While Philip was instructing him, and he professed his faith in Christ, he probably plunged himself under the water, as this was the plan which appears to have been generally followed among the Jews in their baptisms; but the person who had received his confession of faith was he to whom the baptism was attributed, as it was administered by his authority.

Verse 39. The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip] Perhaps this means no more than that the Holy Spirit suggested to the mind of Philip that he should *withdraw abruptly* from the eunuch, and thus leave him to pursue his journey, reflecting on the important incidents which had taken place. Some suppose that the *angel of the Lord*, and the *Spirit of the Lord*, are the same person throughout this chapter. There is a remarkable reading in the *Codex Alexandrinus* which exists thus in two lines:-

ΠΝΑΑΓΙΟΝΕΠΕΠΕΧΕΝΕΠΙΤΟΝΕΥΝΟΥΕΟΝ

The Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch:

But the angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.

This reading is found in several other MSS. and in some *versions*. Many think that the *Spirit* or *angel* of God carried off Philip in some such manner as the Apocrypha represents the transportation of Habakkuk, who was taken up by the hair of the head, and carried from Judea to Babylon! For such an interposition there was no need. When Philip had baptized the eunuch, the Spirit of God showed him that it was not the will of God that he should accompany the eunuch to *Meroe*, but, on the contrary, that he should hasten away to *Ashdod*; as God had in that, and the neighbouring places, work sufficient to employ him in.

Verse 40. Philip was found at Azotus] From the time he left the eunuch, he was not heard of till he got to Azotus, which, according to Dr. Lightfoot, was about 34 miles from Gaza, and probably it was near Gaze that Philip met the eunuch. The Azotus of the New Testament is the Ashdod of the old. It was given by Joshua to the tribe of Judah, ^{<16157>}**Joshua 15:47**. It was one of the five lordships which belonged to the Philistines, and is a seaport town on the Mediterranean Sea, between Gaza on the *south*, and Joppa or Jaffa on the *north*. Herodotus reports, lib. ii. cap. 157, that Psammeticus, king of Egypt, besieged this city 29 years, which, if true, is the longest siege which any city or fortress ever endured.

Preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.] This was *Cæsarea* in *Palestine*, formerly called *Strato's Tower*, built by Herod the Great in honour of Augustus. There was an excellent harbour here made by Herod; and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, it became the *capital* of the whole land of Judea. It must be always distinguished from *Cæsarea Philippi*, which was an inland town not far from the springs of Jordan. Whenever the word *Cæsarea* occurs without *Philippi*, the former is intended. As Philip preached in all the cities of Palestine till he came to Cæsarea, he must have preached in the different cities of the *Philistine* country, *Ashdod*, *Akkaron*, and *Jamnia*, and also in the principal parts of *Samaria*, as these lay in his way from *Gaza* to Cæsarea. As there was a readier disposition to receive the word in those places, the Spirit of the Lord, under whose guidance he acted, did not suffer him to accompany the eunuch to *Abyssinia*. It appears, from ^{<42108>}**Acts 21:8**, that Philip settled at Cæsarea, where he had a house and family, four of his unmarried daughters being prophetesses. It is likely that his itinerant mission ended here; though he continued

occasionally to perform the work of an *evangelist*, and to bring up his family in the knowledge and fear of God, which is the most imperious duty that any master of a family can be called on to perform, and which it is impossible for any man to accomplish by substitute; and which none can neglect without endangering his own salvation.

ACTS

CHAPTER 9.

Saul, bent on the destruction of the Christians, obtains letters from the high priest, authorizing him to seize those whom he should find at Damascus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, 1, 2. On his way to Damascus, he has a Divine vision, is convinced of his sin and folly, is struck blind, and remains three days without sight, and neither eats nor drinks, 3-9. Ananias, a disciple, is commanded in a vision to go and speak to Saul, and restore his sight, 10-16. Ananias goes and lays his hands on him, and he receives his sight, and is baptized, 17-19. Saul, having spent a few days with the Christians at Damascus, goes to the synagogues, proclaims Christ, and confounds the Jews, 20-22. The Jews lay wait to kill him, but the disciples let him down over the walls of the city in a basket, by night, and he escapes to Jerusalem, 23-25. Having wished to associate with the disciples there, they avoid him; but Barnabas takes and brings him to the apostles, and declares his conversion, 26, 27. He continues in Jerusalem preaching Christ, and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews, who endeavour to slay him; but the disciples take him to Cæsarea, and send him thence to his own city Tarsus, 28-30. About this time, the Churches, being freed from persecution, are edified and multiplied, 31. Peter heals Eneas at Lydda, who had been afflicted with the palsy eight years: in consequence of which miracle, all the people of Lydda and Saron are converted, 32-35. Account of the sickness and death of a Christian woman named Tabitha, who dwelt at Joppa; and her miraculous restoration to life by the ministry of Peter, 36-41. Gracious effects produced among the inhabitants of Lydda by this miracle, 42, 43.

NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

Verse 1. Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter] The original text is very emphatic, **ετι εμπνεων απειλης και φονου**, and points out how determinate Saul was to pursue and accomplish his fell purpose of totally destroying the infant Church of Christ. The mode of speech introduced above is very frequent in the Greek writers, who often express any *vehement* and *hostile* affection of the mind by the verb **πνεειν**, to *breathe*, to *pant*; so Theocritus, Idyll. xxii. ver. 82:

Ες μεσσον συναγον, φονον αλλαλοισι πνεοντες.

They came into the assembly, breathing mutual slaughter.

Euripides has the same form, **πυρ πνεουσα και φονον**, *breathing out fire, and slaughter, Iphig. in Taur.*

And *Aristophanes* more fully, referring to all the preparations for war:-

**Αλλα πνεοντας δορυ και λογχας και λευκολοφους τρυφαλειας,
Και πηληκας, και κνημιδας, και θυμους επταβοειους.**

They breathed spears, and pikes, and helmets, and crests, and greaves, and the fury of redoubted heroes.

The figure is a favourite one with *Homer*: hence **μενεα πνειοντες αβαντες**, *the Abantes breathing strength*.-II. ii. 536. And how frequently he speaks of his *fierce* countrymen as, **μενεα πνειοντες αχαιοι**, *the Greeks breathing strength*, see II. iii. 8; xi. 508; xxiv. 364, which phrase an old Scholiast interprets, *being filled with strength and fury*. St. Luke, who was master of the Greek tongue, chose such terms as best expressed *a heart desperately and incessantly bent on accomplishing the destruction of the objects of its resentment*. Such at this time was the heart of Saul of Tarsus; and it had already given full proof of its malignity, not only in the martyrdom of Stephen, but also in making *havoc of the Church*, and in forcibly *entering every house, and dragging men and women*, whom he suspected of Christianity, *and committing them to prison*. See ^{<408B>}**Acts 8:3**.

Went unto the high priest] As the high priest was chief in all matters of an ecclesiastical nature, and the present business was pretendedly *religious*, he was the proper person to apply to for letters by which this virulent persecutor might be accredited. The letters must necessarily be granted in the name of the whole *Sanhedrin*, of which *Gamaliel*, Saul's master, was at that time the *head*; but the *high priest* was the proper organ through whom this business might be negotiated.

Verse 2. Letters to Damascus to the synagogues] Damascus, anciently called **qcmd** *Damask*, and **qcmrd** *Darmask*, was once the metropolis of all Syria. It was situated at fifty miles' distance from the sea; from which it is separated by lofty mountains. It is washed by two rivers, *Amara* or *Abara*, which ran through it, and *Pharpar*, called by the Greeks *Chrysorrhoeas*, the golden stream, which ran on the outside of its walls. It is one of the most ancient cities in the world, for it existed in the time of Abraham, ^{<01415>}**Genesis 14:15**; and how long *before* is not known. The city

of Damascus is at present a place of considerable trade, owing to its being the rendezvous for all the pilgrims from the north of Asia, on their road to and from the temple of *Mecca*. It is surrounded with pretty strong walls, which have *nine* gates, and is between four and five miles in circumference. It contains about 100,000 inhabitants, some say more, the principal part of whom are *Arabs* and *Turks*, with whom live, in a state of considerable degradation, about 15,000 *Christians*. Damascus, like other places of importance, has passed through the hands of many *masters*. It was captured and ruined by *Tiglath Pileser*, who carried away its inhabitants to *Kin*, beyond the Euphrates, about 740 years before the Christian æra; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of *Isaiah*, ^{<23170>} **Isaiah 17:1-3**, and that of *Amos*, **Amos 1:4, 5**. It was also taken by *Sennacherib*, and by the *generals* of Alexander the Great. *Metellus* and *Lælius* seized it, during the war of *Pompey* with *Tigranes*; before Christ 65. It continued under the dominion of the *Romans* till the *Saracens* took possession of it, in A.D. 634. It was besieged and taken by *Teemour lenk*, A.D. 1400, who put all the inhabitants to the sword. The Egyptian *Mamelukes* repaired Damascus when they took possession of *Syria*; but the Turkish Emperor *Selim* having defeated them at the battle of Aleppo in 1516, Damascus was brought under the government of the *Turks*, and in their hands it still remains. In the time of St. Paul it was governed by Aretas, whose father, *Obodas*, had been governor of it under Augustus. Damascus is 112 miles south of Antioch; 130 N.N.E. of Jerusalem; and 270 S.S.W. of Diarbek. Longitude 37° east: latitude 33° 45' north. The fruit tree called the *Damascene*, vulgarly *Damazon*, and the flower called the *Damask* rose, were transplanted from Damascus to the gardens of Europe; and the *silks* and *linens*, known by the name of *Damasks*, were probably first manufactured by the inhabitants of this ancient city.

Any of this way] That is, this *religion*, for so **Ērd derec** in Hebrew, and **ὁδος**, *hodos*, in Hellenistic Greek, are often to be understood. **hw̄y Ērd derec Yehovah**, the way of the Lord, implies the *whole* of the *worship* due to him, and prescribed by himself: the *way* or *path* in which he wills men to *walk*, that they may get safely through life, and finally attain everlasting felicity. The Jewish writers designate the whole doctrine and practice of Christianity by a similar expression, **μυρxωνh Ērd derec hanotsarim**, the *way*, *doctrine*, or *sect* of the Christians.

Whether they were men or women] Provided they were *Jews*; for no converts had as yet been made among the *Gentiles*; nor did the power of the high priest and Sanhedrin extend to any but those who belonged to the *synagogues*. *Pearce*.

In every country where there were Jews and synagogues, the power and authority of the Sanhedrin and high priest were acknowledged: just as papists in all countries acknowledge the authority of the pope. And as there can be but *one pope*, and *one conclave*, so there could be but *one high priest*, and *one Sanhedrin*; and this is the reason why the high priest and sanhedrin at Jerusalem had authority over all Jews, even in the *most distant countries*.

Verse 3. Suddenly there shined round about him] This might have been an extraordinary flash of the *electric fluid*, accompanied with thunder, with which God chose to astonish and confound Saul and his company; but so modified it as to prevent it from striking them dead. *Thunder* would naturally follow such a large quantity of this fluid as appears to have been disengaged at this time; and *out* of this thunder, or immediately *after* it, Christ spoke in an awful and distinct voice, which appears to have been understood by Saul only.

Verse 4. And he fell to the earth] Being struck down with the lightning: many persons suppose he was on horseback, and painters thus represent him; but this is utterly without foundation. Painters are, in almost every case, wretched commentators.

Verse 5. Who art thou, Lord?] *τις εἶ, κύριε*; *Who art thou, SIR?* He had no knowledge who it was that addressed him, and would only use the term *κύριε*, as any Roman or Greek would, merely as a term of *civil respect*.

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest] “Thy enmity is against *me* and my religion; and the injuries which thou dost to my followers I consider as done to *myself*.”

The following words, making twenty in the original, and thirty in our version, are found in no Greek MS. The words are, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: and he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the Lord said unto him*. It is not very easy to account for such a large *addition*, which is not only not found in any Greek MS. yet discovered, but is wanting in the *Itala*, Erpen’s *Arabic*, the *Syriac*,

Coptic, Sahidic, and most of the Slavonian. It is found in the *Vulgate*, one of the *Arabic*, the *Æthiopic*, and *Armenian*; and was probably borrowed from ^{<4064>}**Acts 26:14**, and some marginal notes. It is wanting also in the *Complutensian* edition, and in that of *Bengel*. *Griesbach* also leaves it out of the text.

It is hard for thee, &c.] σκληρον σοι προς κεντρα λακτιζειν. This is a *proverbial* expression, which exists, not only in *substance*, but even in *so many words*, both in the Greek and Latin writers. **κεντρον**, *kentron*, signifies an ox goad, a piece of pointed iron stuck in the end of a stick, with which the ox is urged on when drawing the plough. The origin of the proverb seems to have been this: sometimes it happens that a restive or stubborn ox kicks back against the goad, and thus wounds himself more deeply: hence it has become a proverb to signify the fruitlessness and absurdity of rebelling against lawful authority, and the getting into greater difficulties by endeavouring to avoid trifling sufferings. So the proverb, *Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim*. Out of the *cauldron* into the *fire*. “Out of *bad* into *worse*.” The saying exists, almost in the apostolic form, in the following writers. EURIPIDES, in *Bacch.* ver. 793:-

Θυοίμ αν αυτω μαλλον, η θυμουμενος
Προς κεντρα λακτιζοιμι, θνητος ων, θεω.

“I, who am a frail mortal, should rather sacrifice to him who is a GOD, than, by giving place to anger, kick against the goads.”

And ÆSCHYLUS, in *Agamemnon*, ver. 1633:-

Προς κεντρα μη λακτιζε.

Kick not against the goads.

And again in *Prometh. Vinct.* ver. 323:-

Προς κεντρα κωλον εκτενεις, ορων οτι
Τραχυσ μοναρχος ουδ υπευθυνος κρατει.

“Thou stretchest out thy foot against goads, seeing the fierce monarch governs according to his own will.”

Resistance is of no use: the more thou dost rebel, the more keenly thou shalt suffer. See the *Scholiast* here.

PINDAR has a similar expression, *Pyth.* ii. ver. 171-5 :-

Φερειν δ ελαφρως
 Επαυχενιον λαβοντα
 Ζυγον ἢ αρηγει. Ποτι κεντρον δε τοι
 Λακτιζεμεν, τελεθει
 Ολισθηρος οιμος.

*“It is profitable to bear willingly the assumed yoke.
 To kick against the goad is pernicious conduct.”*

Where see the Scholiast, who shows that “it is ridiculous for a man to fight with fortune: for if the unruly ox, from whom the metaphor is taken, kick against the goad, he shall suffer still more grievously.” TERENCE uses the same figure. *Phorm.* Act i. scen. 2, ver. 27:-

*Venere in mentem mihi istæc: nam inscitia est,
 Adversum stimulum calces.—————*

*“These things have come to my recollection, for it
 is foolishness for thee to kick against a goad.”*

OVID has the same idea in other words, *Trist.* lib. ii. ver. 15:-

*At nunc (tanta meo comes est insania morbo)
 Saxa malum refero rursus ad icta pedem.
 Scilicet et victus repetit gladiator arenam;
 Et redit in tumidas naufraga puppis aquas.*

*But madly now I wound myself alone,
 Dashing my injured foot against the stone:
 So to the wide arena, wild with pain,
 The vanquish'd gladiator hastes again;
 So the poor shatter'd bark the tempest braves,
 Launching once more into the swelling waves.*

Intelligent men, in all countries and in all ages of the world, have seen and acknowledged the folly and wickedness of fighting against God; of murmuring at the dispensations of his providence; of being impatient under affliction; and of opposing the purposes of his justice and mercy. The words contain a universal lesson, and teach us patience under affliction, and subjection to the sovereign will of God; and they especially show the desperate wickedness of endeavouring, by persecution, to hinder the dissemination of the truth of God in the earth. He that kicks against *this* goad does it at the risk of his final salvation. The fable of the *viper and the file* is another illustration of this proverb: it gnawed and licked the file, till

it *destroyed* its *teeth* and *wasted* away its *tongue*. The maxim in the proverb should be early inculcated on the minds of children and scholars; when chastised for their faults, resistance and stubbornness produce increased coercion and chastisement. And let parents and masters learn that the oft-repeated use of the goad and ferula seldom tend to reclaim, but beget obduracy and desperation. The advice of *Columella* to the ploughman, having some relation to the proverb in the text, and a strong bearing on this latter part of the subject, is worthy of the most serious regard: “*Voce potius quam verberibus terreat: ultimaque sint opus recusantibus remedia plagæ. Nunquam stimulo lacessat juvencum, quod retractantem calcitrosunque eum reddit: nonnunquam tamen admoneat flagello.*” COLUMELLA, *Deuteronomy Revelation Rustica*, lib. ii. cap. 2, in fine. “Let the husbandman intimidate his oxen more by his voice than by *blows*, to which he should never have recourse but in *extreme cases*. A *young steer* should never be *goaded*, for this will induce him to *kick* and *run back*; but on proper occasions the *whip*, as an incentive to activity, may be profitably used.” In reference to the same subject, which all concerned should feel to be of the greatest importance I shall close with the advice of one greater than the Roman agriculturist: *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged*, ^{<SIC>} **Colossians 3:21**; but *bring them up* (εν παιδεια και νουθεσια κυριου) *in the discipline and admonition of the Lord*, ^{<SIC>} **Ephesians 6:4**, using the authority that God has given you with a steady hand, actuated by a tender and feeling heart.

Verse 6. Trembling] Under a strong apprehension of meeting the judgment he deserved.

And astonished] At the *light*, the *thunder*, and the *voice*.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?] The word *κυριε*, *Lord*, is here to be understood in its proper sense, as expressing *authority* and *dominion*: in the 5th verse it appears to be equivalent to our word *sir*.

The pride of the Pharisee is now brought down to the dust; and the fury of the persecutor is not only restrained, but the lion becomes a lamb. *What wilt thou have me to do?* Wilt thou condescend to *employ me* among thy meanest *servants*?

Go into the city, and it shall be told thee, &c.] Jesus could have informed him at once what was his will concerning him; but he chose to make one of those very disciples whom he was going to bring in *bonds* to

Jerusalem the *means* of his *salvation*: 1. To show that God will help man by man, that they may learn to love and respect each other. 2. That in the benevolence of Ananias he might see the spirit and tendency of that religion which he was persecuting, and of which he was shortly to become an *apostle*.

Verse 7. Stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.] The men were *ευννεοι*, *stupified*, hearing *της φωνης*, *the voice* or *thunder*, but not distinguishing the *words*, which were addressed to Saul alone; and which were spoken *out* of the thunder, or in a small, still voice, *after* the peal had ceased. The remarkable case, ^{<1191>}**1 Kings 19:11-13**, may serve to illustrate that before us. *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord; and the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; and after the wind an earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; and after the fire a still small voice; and when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave, and behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, WHAT DOST THOU HERE, ELIJAH!* The *thunder* must have been heard by all; the *small, still voice* by Saul alone. This consideration amply reconciles the passage in the text with that in ^{<420>}**Acts 22:9**, where Paul says, *They that were with me saw the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spoke with one. They had heard the thunder which followed the escape of the lightning, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to Saul; they did not hear the words, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, &c.; but they saw and heard enough to convince them that the whole was supernatural; for they were all struck down to the earth with the splendour of the light, and the sound of the thunder, which I suppose took place on this occasion. It has been a question among divines, whether Jesus Christ did really appear to Saul on this occasion. The arguments against the real appearance are not strong. St. Luke tells us that those who were with him heard the voice, but they saw no man; which is a strong intimation that he saw what they did not. Ananias, it seems, was informed that there had been a real appearance, for, in addressing Saul, ^{<4017>}**Acts 9:17**, he says, *The Lord Jesus that APPEARED unto THEE in the way as thou camest, &c.* And Barnabas intimates thus much, when he brought him before the apostles at Jerusalem, for he *declared unto them how he had SEEN the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken unto him; and, ^{<4214>}Acts 22:14*, where the discourse of Ananias is given more at large, he says, *The God of our**

fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know his will, and SEE that JUST ONE, and shouldest HEAR the voice of his mouth; so we find that hearing the voice, or words of his mouth, was not what is called the appearance; for, besides this, there was an actual manifestation of the person of Christ. But St. Paul's own words, ^{<4630>}1 Corinthians 9:1, put the subject out of dispute: Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? HAVE I NOT SEEN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD? To which may be added, ^{<4658>}1 Corinthians 15:8, And last of all, HE WAS SEEN OF ME ALSO, as of one born out of due time.

Verse 8. When his eyes were opened, he saw no man] Instead of *ουδενα*, *no man*, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, the *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, and some others, have *ουδεν* *nothing*. He not only saw no *man*, but he saw nothing, being quite blind; and therefore was led by the hand to Damascus, *μη βλεπων*, being *without sight*.

Verse 9. Neither did eat nor drink.] The anxiety of his mind and the anguish of his heart were so great that he had no appetite for food; and he continued in total darkness and without food for *three days*, till Ananias proclaimed salvation to him in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 10. A certain disciple-named Ananias] A general opinion has prevailed in the Greek Church that this Ananias was one of the seventy-two disciples, and that he was martyred; and they celebrate his martyrdom on the first of October. It has been farther stated that his house was turned into a church, which remains to the present day, though now occupied as a Turkish mosque; but even the Mohammedans have the tradition, and treat his memory with great respect. However this may be, from ^{<4421>}Acts 22:12, we learn, what is of more importance, that *he was a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there. See Clarke on ^{<4497>}Acts 9:17*".

To him said the Lord in a vision] *εν οραματι*. In a strong impression made upon his mind, which left no doubt concerning its *heavenly* origin, nor of the *truth* of the things represented by it. It is very probable that the whole took place in a *dream*.

Verse 11. Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight] How very particular is this direction! And it was necessary that it should be so, that he might see the whole to be a Divine communication; the house was

probably one in which Saul was accustomed to reside when at Damascus; and where he was known as a native of Tarsus.

Tarsus was a city of Cilicia, seated on the *Cydnus*, and now called *Tarasso*. It was, at one period, the capital of all Cilicia, and became a rival to Alexandria and Athens in the arts and sciences. The inhabitants, in the time of Julius Cæsar, having shown themselves friendly to the Romans, were endowed with all the privileges of Roman citizens; and it was on this account that St. Paul claimed the rights of a Roman citizen; a circumstance which, on different occasions, was to him, and the cause in which he was engaged, of considerable service.

Behold, he prayeth] He is earnestly seeking to know my will, and to find the salvation of his soul; therefore, go *speedily*, and direct him. Some have laid needless stress on these words, as if they intimated, that “though Saul as a Pharisee had often *said* his prayers, yet he had never *prayed* them till now.” This is not correct: he could himself testify that, while he was a Pharisee, *he had lived in all good conscience towards God*; and consequently, in that time, made many *faithful* and *fervent* prayers; but he was praying now for instruction, and his prayers were speedily answered.

Verse 12. Hath seen in a vision] While God prepares Ananias, by a vision, to go and minister to Saul, he at the same time prepares Saul, by another vision, to profit by this ministry.

Verse 13. Lord, I have heard by many of this man] This was all done in a *dream*, else this sort of reasoning with his Maker would have been intolerable in Ananias. Saul had been a *notorious* persecutor; *many* could testify of his outrageous acts against the poor followers of Christ.

Thy saints] That is, the *Christians*, or followers of Christ. **ἅγιοι** signifies not only *holy persons*, but also *consecrated* persons; from **α**, *negative*, and **γη**, the *earth*; persons who are *separated* from all *earthly* uses, and *consecrated* to the service of God alone.

Verse 14. And here he hath authority, &c.] Ananias had undoubtedly heard of Saul’s coming, and the commission he had received from the chief priests; and he was about to urge this as a reason why he should have no connection with so dangerous a man.

Verse 15. Go thy way] He was thus prevented from going farther in his reasoning on this subject.

He is a chosen vessel unto me] The word **σκευος** in Greek, and **yl k keley** in Hebrew, though they literally signify a *vessel*, yet they are both used to signify any kind of *instrument*, or the *means* by which an act is done. In the Tract. *Sohar Exod.* fol. 87, on these words of Boaz to Ruth, ~~800~~ **Ruth 2:9**, *When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink, &c.*, there are these remarkable words. “**yl k keley**, *vessels*; that is, the *righteous*, who are called the *vessels* or *instruments* of Jehovah; for it is decreed that the whole world shall bring gifts to the King Messiah; and these are the vessels of the Lord: vessels, I say, which the holy and blessed God uses, although they be *brittle*; but they are brittle only in this world, that they may establish the law and the worship with which the holy and blessed God is worshipped in this world; neither can this ministry be exercised but by *vessels* or *instruments*.”

This mode of speech was common also among the *Greek* and *Roman* writers. So POLYBIUS, speaking of *Damocles*, *Excerpta*, vol. iii. lib. 13, [Edit. Ernesti,] says, **ην υπηρετικον σκευος, και πολλας εχων εφορμας εις πραγματος οικονομιαν**. “He was a useful *instrument*, and fit for the management of affairs.” We find Paul, in ~~204~~ **1 Thessalonians 4:4**, using the same word, **σκευος**, for the *body*, agreeable to the expression of *Lucretius*, iii. 441, *Corpus, quod vas quasi constitit ejus*. “The BODY, which is the VESSEL or instrument of the soul.” See Bp. *Pearce* on this passage.

Chosen vessel.-**σκευος εκλογης** is properly a *Hebraism*, for an *excellent* or *well-adapted instrument*. Every reader of the Bible must have noticed how often the word *chosen* is used there to signify *excelling* or *eminent*: so we use the word *choice*, “*choice men*,” eminent persons; “*choice things*,” excellent articles. So in ~~227~~ **Jeremiah 22:7**: *They shall cut down the choice cedars*, **רj bm wtrkw Ęzra vecaretu MIBCHAR arazeyca; και εκκοψουσι τας εκλεκτατας κεδρους σου**, SEPT. *They shall cut the most EXCELLENT of thy cedars*; or thy cedar trees, which are the most *excellent* of their kind, they will cut down. Whoever considers the character of St. Paul, his education, attainments in natural knowledge, the distinguished part he took—first against Christianity, and afterwards, on the fullest conviction, the part he took in its favour—will at once perceive how well he was every way qualified for the great work to which God had called him.

To bear my name before the Gentiles] To carry the ensign of the cross among the Greeks and Romans; and, by the demonstration of the Spirit, to

confound their wisdom and learning, and prove that neither salvation nor happiness could be found in any other. Hence he was emphatically called, *the apostle of the Gentiles*, ^{<4007>}**1 Timothy 2:7**; ^{<5011>}**2 Timothy 1:11**. See also ^{<4007>}**Galatians 2:7, 8**, and ^{<4008>}**Ephesians 3:8**.

Verse 16. How great things he must suffer] Instead of proceeding as a persecutor, and inflicting sufferings on *others*, I will show him how many things he *himself* must suffer for preaching that very doctrine which he has been hitherto employed in persecuting. Strange change indeed! And with great show of reason, as with incontrovertible strength of argument, has a noble writer, Lord *Lyttleton*, adduced the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and his subsequent conduct, as an irrefragable proof of the truth of Christianity.

Some think that the words, *I will show him*, &c., refer to a visionary representation, which Christ was immediately to give Saul, of the trials and difficulties which he should have to encounter; as also of that *death* by which he should seal his testimony to the truth. If so, what a most thorough conviction must Saul have had of the truth of Christianity, cheerfully and deliberately to give up all worldly honours and profits, and go forward in a work which he knew a *violent death* was to terminate!

Verse 17. Brother Saul] As he found that the *Head* of the Church had adopted Saul into the heavenly family, he made no scruple to give him the right hand of fellowship, and therefore said, *Brother Saul*.

The Lord, even Jesus] Of what use is this intrusive word *even* here? It injures the sense. St. Luke never wrote it; and our translators should not have inserted it. *The Lord Jesus*, the sovereign Jesus who appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Christ could have cured him so miraculously by his own power, without human means, as he had enlightened his heart without them; but he will honour man by making him his *agent*, even in working miracles.

And be filled with the Holy Ghost.] So it appears that the Holy Spirit was given to him at this time, and probably by the imposition of the hands of Ananias. To say that it would be degrading to an apostle to receive the Holy Ghost by means of one who was not an *apostle* is a very flimsy argument against the evidence which the text affords that Saul did receive this Spirit by the ministry of Ananias: besides, Saul was not an *apostle* at

this time; he was not even a *Christian*; and the Holy Ghost, which he received now, was given more to make him a thorough *Christian convert* than to make him an *apostle*. No person will deny that he was *baptized* by Ananias; and certainly there was as strong an objection against an apostle receiving *baptism* from one who was not an apostle as there could be in receiving the Holy Spirit from such a person. It is very likely that Ananias was either one of the seventy disciples commissioned by Jesus Christ himself, or one of those who had been converted on the day of pentecost. If he were the former, any authority that man could have he had. But who was the *instrument* is a matter of little importance; as the *apostleship*, and the *grace* by which it was to be fulfilled, came immediately from Jesus Christ himself. Nor has there ever been an apostle, nor a legitimate successor of an apostle, that was not made such by Christ himself. If we consider the *authority* as coming by *man*, or through *any description of men*, we should be arrested and confounded by the difficult question, Who baptized the apostles? Jesus Christ baptized no man, ~~ROM~~ **John 4:2**. Who then baptized Peter! Can the Roman conclave answer this question? I trow not. It would be as difficult to answer it as to prove Peter's supremacy. We have no evidence who baptized the apostles, who themselves baptized so many others. The truth is, none but Christ ever made an apostle; and none but himself can make and qualify a Christian minister.

Verse 18. **There fell from his eyes as it had been scales]** This was real: he had been so dazzled with the brightness of the light that we may suppose the globe of the eye, and particularly the *cornea*, had suffered considerable injury. The structure of the *cornea* was doubtless much disturbed, and the whole of that humour would be rendered *opaque*, and incapable of permitting the rays of light to pass through the different humours to the *retina*, where all the images of things transmitted through the lenses, or humours, are distinctly painted. In the miraculous cure the membrane was restored to its primitive state, and the opaque matter separated from the *cornea*, in the form of thin *laminae* or *scales*. This being done, the light would have as free a passage as formerly, and the result would be *distinct vision*.

And arose, and was baptized.] That he was baptized by Ananias there is every reason to believe; as he appears to have been the chief Christian at Damascus. As baptism implied, in an adult, the public profession of that faith into which he was baptized, this baptism of Saul proved, at once, his

own sincerity, and the deep and thorough conviction he had of the truth of Christianity.

Verse 19. When he had received meat, he was strengthened] His *mind* must have been greatly worn down under his three days' conviction of sin, and the awful uncertainty he was in concerning his state; but when he was baptized, and had received the Holy Ghost, his *soul* was Divinely invigorated; and now, by taking food, his *bodily* strength, greatly exhausted by three days' fasting, was renewed also. The *body* is not supported by the *bread of life*, nor the *soul* by the *bread that perisheth*: each must have its proper aliment, that the whole man may be invigorated, and be enabled to perform all the functions of the animal and spiritual life with propriety and effect.

Then was Saul certain days with the disciples] Doubtless under *instructions*, relative to the doctrines of Christianity; which he must learn *particularly*, in order to preach them successfully. His miraculous conversion did not imply that he must then have a consummate knowledge of every Christian doctrine. To this day we find that even the genuine Christian convert has a thousand things to learn; and for his instruction he is placed in the Church of Christ, where he is built up on his most holy faith by the ministry and experience of the disciples. Without the communion of saints, who is likely to make a steady and consistent Christian; even though his conversion should have been the most sincere and the most remarkable?

Verse 20. Preached Christ in the synagogues] Instead of *χριστον*, *Christ*, *ιησουν*, *Jesus*, is the reading of ABCE, several others of high importance, together with the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, and *Vulgate*.

The great question to be determined, for the conviction of the Jews, was that JESUS was the Son of God. That the *Christ*, or *Messiah*, was to be the *Son of God*, they all believed. Saul was now convinced that Jesus, whom they had crucified, and who had appeared to him on the way, was the *Son of God*, or *Messiah*; and therefore as such he proclaimed him. The word *Christ* should be changed for *Jesus*, as the latter is, without doubt, the genuine reading.

The first offers of the grace of the Gospel were uniformly made to the Jews. Saul did not at first offer Jesus to the *heathens* at Damascus; but to the *synagogues* of the Jews.

Verse 21. Is not this he that destroyed them] ὁ πορθησας. The verb πορθειν has three acceptations in the Greek writers: 1. *To treat one as an enemy, to spoil him of his goods.* 2. *To lead away captive, to imprison.* 3. *To slay.* Paul was properly πορθων, a destroyer, in all these senses. 1. He acted as the most determined enemy of the Christians: *Being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them to strange cities,* ^{<4251>}Acts 26:11. 2. He shut up many of the saints in prison, ^{<4081>}Acts 8:3; 9:14; 26:10. 3. He persecuted them unto death-gave his voice against them that they might be destroyed, and was a principal instrument in the martyrdom of Stephen. *He breathed threatenings and slaughter.* See ^{<4078>}Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1; 26:10, 11. Therefore these three meanings of the original word are all exemplified in the conduct of Saul.

Verse 22. Confounded the Jews] συνεχυνε, Overwhelmed them so with his arguments that they were obliged to blush for the weakness of their own cause.

Proving that this] ουτος, This person, viz. JESUS, is very Christ; εστιν ο χριστος, IS THE CHRIST, or Messiah. See Clarke on “^{<4021>}Acts 9:21”.

Verse 23. And after that many days were fulfilled] What follows relates to transactions which took place about three years after his conversion, when he had come a second time to Damascus, after having been in Arabia. See ^{<8017>}Galatians 1:17, 18. What he did in Arabia we know not; he probably preached Christ in different Jewish synagogues; but with what fruit we are not told. St. Luke, who could not have been ignorant of this part of his history, passes it over in silence; and any assertion, at this distance of time, relative to his employment in Arabia for those three years, must be both foolish and impertinent.

Verse 24. They watched the gates day and night to kill him.] At this time Damascus was under the government of Aretas, king of Arabia, who was now at war with Herod, his son-in-law, who had put away his daughter in order to marry Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. As Herod was supported by the Romans, Saul’s enemies might intimate that he was in league with them or Herod; and, as the gates of the city were constantly watched and shut, that no spy might enter, and no fugitive get away, they thought it would be easy to apprehend him; and doubtless got orders for the different officers at the gates to be on the look-out that he might not be permitted to escape.

Verse 25. Let him down, by the wall] Favoured, probably, by a house built against or upon the wall, through the window of which they could lower him in a basket; and by this means he made his escape. His escape was something similar to that of the spies at Jericho, ^{<8015>}**Joshua 2:15**.

Verse 26. He assayed to join himself to the disciples] **επειρατο κολλασθαι**, He *endeavoured to get closely united to them*, to be in religious fellowship with them.

Believed not that he was a disciple.] They did not suppose it possible that such a person could be converted to the faith of Christ. The full power of Divine grace, in the conversion of the soul, was not yet completely known.

Verse 27. Barnabas-brought him to the apostles] That is, to Peter and James; for *others of the apostles he saw none*, ^{<8019>}**Galatians 1:19**. It appears that he went up at this time to Jerusalem merely *to see Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days*, ^{<8018>}**Galatians 1:18**. How it came that the apostles and Church at Jerusalem had not heard of Saul's conversion, which had taken place *three years* before, is not easy to be accounted for. The following considerations may help; 1. It is certain that intelligence did not travel speedily in those primitive times; there were few open roads, and no regular posts, except those between military stations. 2. Though there were many *Jews* in Damascus, and several *Christians*, yet the city was *heathen*, and under a heathen king, with whom the Jews at Jerusalem could have little commerce. 3. Though Herod had married the daughter of Aretas, yet, as he had put her away, there were great animosities between the two courts, which at last broke out into an open war; this must have prevented all social and commercial intercourse. 4. The Christians were at that time greatly persecuted by the Jews, and therefore the few that dwelt at Damascus could have little connection, if any, with their brethren at Jerusalem. 5. It might be the interest of the Jews at Jerusalem, supposing they had heard of it, to keep the fact of Saul's conversion as quiet as possible, that the Christian cause might not gain credit by it. 6. They might have heard of his conversion; but either did not fully credit what they had heard, or were not satisfied that the person who now presented himself was the man; for it is not likely that all the Christians at Jerusalem had been personally acquainted with Saul.

Verse 28. He was with them coming in and going out] Freely conversing and associating with them; but this seems to have continued only *fifteen days*. See ^{<4018>}**Galatians 1:18**.

Verse 29. Disputed against the Grecians] That is, the *Hellenistic Jews*, viz. those who lived in Grecian cities, spoke the Greek language, and used the Septuagint version for their scriptures. And thus the *Syriac* version has interpreted this place. See **Clarke's note on** "^{<4001>}**Acts 6:1**", where this subject is largely explained.

Verse 30. They brought him down to Cæsarea] Calmet contends that this was *Cæsarea of Palestine*, and not *Cæsarea Philippi*; it being his opinion, and indeed that of others, that where this word occurs without any addition, in the New Testament, *Cæsarea of Palestine* is meant, and not *Cæsarea Philippi*. See **Clarke on** "^{<4080>}**Acts 8:40**".

Sent him forth to Tarsus.] This was his own city; and it was right that he should proclaim to his own countrymen and relatives that Gospel through which he was become wise to salvation.

Verse 31. Then had the Churches rest] Instead of *ἰα ἐκκλησιαί*, the *Churches*, ABC, several others, the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*, have *ἡἐκκλησία*, the *Church*. Every assembly of God's people was a *Church*; the aggregate of these assemblies was THE CHURCH. The word *εἰρηνῆν*, which we translate *rest*, and which literally signifies *peace*, evidently means, in this place, *prosperity*; and in this sense both it and the Hebrew *שלום* *shalom* are repeatedly used. But what was the cause of this *rest* or *success*? Some say, the conversion of Saul, who before made havoc of the Church; but this is not likely, as *he* could not be a universal cause of persecution and distress, however active and virulent he might have been during the time of his enmity to the Christian Church. Besides his *own persecution*, related above, shows that the opposition to the Gospel continued with considerable virulence three years *after* his conversion; therefore it was not Saul's ceasing to be a persecutor that gave this rest to the Churches. Dr. Lardner, with a greater show of probability, maintains that this rest was owing to the following circumstance: Soon after Caligula's accession to the imperial dignity, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much from the Egyptians in that city; and at length their oratories were all destroyed. In the third year of Caligula, A.D. 39, Petronius, who was made president of Syria in the place of Vitellius, was

sent by the emperor to set up his statue in the temple at Jerusalem. This was a thunder-stroke to the Jews, and so occupied them that they had no time to think of any thing else; apprehending that their temple must be *defiled*, and the *national religion destroyed*, or themselves run the risk of being exterminated if they rebelled against the imperial decree.

The account given by Josephus will set this in a clear point of view.

“Caligula sent Petronius to go with an army to Jerusalem, to set up his statues in the temple, enjoining him if the Jews opposed it, to put to death all that made resistance, and to make all the rest of the nation slaves.

Petronius therefore marched from Antioch into Judea, with three legions, and a large body of auxiliaries raised in Syria. *All were hereupon filled with consternation*, the army being come as far as Ptolemais. The Jews, then, gathering together, went to the plain near Ptolemais, and entreated

Petronius in the first place for their laws, in the next place for themselves. Petronius was moved with their solicitations, and, leaving his army and the statues, went into Galilee, and called an assembly of the heads of the Jews at Tiberias; and, having exhorted them without effect to submit to the emperor’s orders, said, ‘Will ye then fight against Cæsar?’ They answered that they offered up sacrifices twice every day for the emperor and the Roman people; but that if he would set up the images, he ought first of all to sacrifice the whole Jewish nation; and that they were ready to submit themselves, their wives and children, to the slaughter.” Philo gives a similar account of this transaction. See *Lardner’s Credibility*, Works, vol. i. p. 97, &c.

It appears, therefore, that, as these transactions took place about the time mentioned in the text, their persecution from the Romans diverted them from persecuting the Christians; and THEN *had the Churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria*; the terror occasioned by the imperial decree having spread itself through all those places.

Were edified] *οικοδομουμεναι*. A metaphor taken from a building. 1. The ground is marked out; 2. the ichnograph, or dimensions of the building, ascertained; 3. the foundation is digged; 4. the foundation stone laid; 5. the walls builded up with *course upon course*; 6. the top-stone brought on; 7. the roof raised, and the whole covered in; and, 8. the interior part fitted up and adorned, and rendered convenient for the intended inhabitant. This figure frequently occurs in the sacred writings, especially in the New Testament. It has its reason in the original creation of

man: God made the first human being as a *shrine* or *temple*, in which himself might dwell. Sin entered, and the heavenly building was destroyed. The *materials*, however, though all dislocated, and covered with rubbish and every way defiled, yet exist; no essential power or faculty of the soul having been lost. The work of redemption consists in building up this house as it was in the beginning, and rendering it a proper *habitation for God*. The various powers, faculties, and passions, are all to be purified and refined by the power of the Holy Spirit, and *order* and *harmony* restored to the whole soul. All this is beautifully pointed out by St. Peter, ~~1~~¹ **Peter 2:4, 5**: *To whom (Jesus Christ) coming as unto a LIVING STONE, chosen of God and precious, ye also, as LIVING STONES, are BUILT UP a spiritual HOUSE, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ.* And St. Paul, who, from his own profession as a *tent-maker*, could best seize on the metaphor, and press it into this spiritual service, goes through the whole figure at large, in the following inimitable words: *Ye are the HOUSEHOLD of God, and are BUILT upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief CORNERSTONE, in whom all the BUILDING, FITLY FRAMED together, groweth unto a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord: in whom ye also are BUILDED together for a HABITATION of God, through the Spirit,* ~~2~~² **Ephesians 2:19-22**. *Edification* signifies, therefore, an increase in the *light, life, and power of God*; being founded on the doctrine of Christ crucified; having the soul purified from all unrighteousness, and fitted, by *increasing holiness*, to be a permanent residence for the ever-blessed God.

Walking in the fear of the Lord] Keeping a continually *tender conscience*; abhorring all sin; having respect to every Divine precept; *dreading* to offend him from whom the soul has derived its being and its blessings. Without this salutary *fear of God* there never can be any circumspect walking.

In the comfort of the Holy Ghost] In a consciousness of their acceptance and union with God, through his Spirit, by which solid peace and happiness are brought into the soul; the truly religious man *knowing* and *feeling* that he is of God, by the Spirit which is given him: nothing less can be implied in the *comfort of the Holy Ghost*.

Were multiplied.] No wonder that the Church of God increased, when such *lights* as these shone among men. This is a short, but full and forcible

description of the righteousness, purity, and happiness of the primitive Church.

Verse 32. As Peter passed throughout all quarters] Δία παντων, Bp. Pearce thinks, should be translated, not *through all quarters*, but *through all the saints*. The Churches having rest, the apostles made use of this interval of quiet to visit the different congregations, in order to build them up on their most holy faith. Of Saul we hear no more till ~~<4113>~~ **Acts 11:30**, which is supposed to be about *five years* after this time; *eight* in all from his conversion. Peter, it seems, had continued in Jerusalem all the time that the Churches were in a state of persecution throughout the whole land. Great as he was, he never evidenced that *steady determinate courage* by which St. Paul was so eminently distinguished; nor did he ever suffer half so much for God and his truth.

To the saints] The *Jews*, who had been converted to *Christianity*.

Which dwelt at Lydda.] A town in the tribe of Ephraim, almost on the border of Judea, and nigh unto *Joppa*: it was about ten leagues from Jerusalem, and was afterwards known by the name of *Diospolis*, or the *city of Jupiter*.

Verse 33. A certain man named Eneas] This name has been celebrated in the annals of heathen poetry, in that beautiful work of the poet Virgil, called the *Æneid*; which gives an account of the misfortunes, travels, wars, &c., of a Trojan prince of this name, after the destruction of his native city, Troy. On the difference of names which so frequently occurs in some parts of the Scriptures, Calmet makes the following judicious remarks: As both *Greek* and *Hebrew*, or *Syriac*, were commonly spoken in Palestine, most persons had *two* names, one *Greek* and the other *Hebrew*. Thus Peter was called *Cephas* in Hebrew, and *Petros* in Greek. Paul was called *Saul* in Hebrew, and *Paulos* in Greek. The person in ~~<4026>~~ **Acts 9:36**, *Tabitha* in Hebrew, and *Dorcas* in Greek. And the paralytic cured by Peter, *Hananiah* in Hebrew, and *Aineas* in Greek. So *Thomas* was the Hebrew name of the apostle who in Greek was called *Didymus*.

Had kept his bed eight years] This was occasioned by a palsy; and now inveterate and hopeless, through its long standing.

Verse 34. Jesus Christ maketh thee whole] Not *Peter*, for *he* had no power but what was given him from above. And, as an *instrument*, any

man could heal with this power as well as Peter; but God chose to put honour upon those primitive preachers of his word, that men might see that they were commissioned from heaven.

Arise, and make thy bed.] Give now full proof that *Jesus Christ HAS made thee whole*, by *arising*, and by *making* thy bed. He was at *home*, and therefore was not commanded, as the paralytic person, to *take up his bed*; but he was ordered to *make* it—strew it afresh, that all might see that the cure was perfect.

Verse 35. All that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him] Saron was that *champaign country* that lay between Joppa and Lydda. The long *affliction* of this man had been well known; and his *cure*, consequently, became a subject of general examination: it was found to be real. It was known to have been performed by the grace and mercy of Christ; and the consequence of all this conviction was that all these people became *Christians*.

Verse 36. Now there was at Joppa] This was a sea-port town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about a day's journey from Jerusalem. It is supposed to be the same which is called in the Old Testament *Japho*, which belonged to the tribe of Dan, ^{<061946>}**Joshua 19:46**. It is at present called *Jaffa*, and is still a place of considerable note.

A certain disciple named Tabitha] This word is more properly *Syriac* than *Hebrew*. [Syriac] *tebitho* is the word in the Syriac version, and is their manner of writing the Hebrew *ybx tsebi*, the *c teth* being changed for the *x tsaddi*. The word [Syriac] *tabio*, and the feminine [Syriac] *tabitho*, have the same meaning as the Hebrew *ybx tsebi* and the Greek *δορκας*, *Dorcas*, and signify the *gazel* or *antelope*; and it is still customary in the east to give the names of beautiful animals to *young women*. The comparison of fine eyes to those of the antelope is continually occurring in the writings of the Arabic and Persian poets. The person in the tern probably had her name in the same way. She was very beautiful, and was therefore called *Tabitha* and *Dorcas*.

This woman was full of good works] She spent her life in acts of kindness and charity. Her soul was *full* of love to God and man; and her whole time was *filled* up with works of piety and mercy.

Verse 37. She was sick, and died] Even her holiness and usefulness could not prevent her from sickness and death. *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*, is a decree that must be fulfilled, even on the saints; *for the body is dead, sentenced to death, because of sin, though the spirit be life because of righteousness.*

Whom when they had washed] Having the fullest proof that she was *dead*, they prepared for her interment. In most nations of the world it was customary to wash their dead before they buried them, and before they laid them out *to lie in state*, as *Homer* tells us was the case with the body of *Patroclus*:-

Ως ειπων, εταροισις εκεκλετο διος αχιλλευς,
 Αμοι πυρι στησαι τριποδα μεγαν, οφρα ταχιστα
 Πατροκλον λουσειαν
 Και τοτε δη λουσαν τε, και ηλειψαν λιπ̄ ελαιω
 Iliad xviii. 343.

*“So saying, he bade his train surround with fire
 A tripod huge, that they might quickly cleanse
 Patroclus from all stains of clotted gore.
 They on the blazing hearth a tripod placed,
 Infused the water, thrust dry wood beneath,
 And soon the flames, encompassing around
 Its ample belly, warm’d the flood within.
 Soon as the water in the singing brass
 Simmer’d, they bathed him, and with limpid oil
 Anointed. They stretch’d him on his bed, then cover’d him
 From head to feet with linen texture light,
 And with a wide unsullied mantle last.”*
 COWPER.

The *waking* or *watching* of the dead was also practised among the ancient Greeks, as we learn from a preceding paragraph, where *Achilles*, addressing his dead friend *Patroclus*, tells him:-

Τοφρα δε παρα νησι κορωνισι κεισεαι αυτως
 Αμοι δε σε Τρωαι και Δαρδανιδες βαθυκολποι
 Κλαυσονται, νυκτας τε και ηματα δακρυχουσαι
 II. xviii. 338.

*“Mean time, among
 My lofty galleys thou shalt lie, with tears
 Mourn’d day and night, by Trojan captives fair
 And Dardan, compassing thy bier around.”*
 COWPER.

A similar description is given by Virgil of the funeral obsequies of Misenus, Æneid vi. ver. 212.

*Nec minus interea Misenum in littore Teucri
 Flebant, et cineri ingrato suprema ferebant.*

* * * * *

*Pars calidos latices et cœna undantia flammis
 Expediunt, corpusque lavant frigentis et unguent
 Fit gemitus: tum membra toro defleta reponunt,
 Purpureasque super vestes, velamina nota,
 Conjiciunt, &c.*

*“Meanwhile, the Trojan troops, with weeping eyes,
 To dead Misenus pay his obsequies.
 First from the ground a lofty pile they rear
 Of pitch-trees, oaks, and pines, and unctuous fir:
 The fabric’s front with cypress twigs they strew;
 And stick the sides with boughs of baleful yew;
 The topmost part his glitt’ring arms adorn:
 Warm waters then, in brazen cauldrons borne,
 Are pour’d to wash his body, joint by joint;
 And fragrant oils the stiffen’d limbs anoint.
 With groans and cries Misenus they deplore.
 Then on a bier with purple cover’d o’er
 The breathless body, thus bewail’d, they lay.”*
 DRYDEN.

These *rites*, in many respects, resemble those still used among the native Irish. See the account of the funeral ceremonies of the Egyptians, in the notes, see Clarke on “^{<-01512>}Genesis 50:2”. The primitive Christians washed the bodies of their dead not only out of decency and affectionate respect to them, but as a token of their firm belief in the *resurrection of the dead*.

Verse 38. Sent unto him-desiring-that he would not delay to come] Tabitha died at Joppa, and Peter was at Lydda, about four leagues distant. But why did they send for Peter? We cannot tell. It is not likely that they

had any expectation that he should raise her from the *dead*; for none of the apostles had as yet raised any; and if God did not choose to restore *Stephen* to life, this favour could not be reasonably expected in behalf of *inferior* persons. However, they might hope that he who cured Eneas at Lydda might cure Dorcas; for it is probable that they had sent for Peter *before* she died; and in this sense we might understand the **απεστειλαν** of the text.

Verse 39. Showing the coats and garments] **χιτωνας και ιματια**, the *outer* and *inner* garments. These, it appears, she had made for the poor, and more particularly for *poor widows*, in whose behalf she had incessantly laboured.

Verse 40. Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed] It was not even known to Peter that God would work this miracle: therefore he put all the people out, that he might seek the will of God by fervent prayer, and during his supplications be liable neither to *distraction* nor *interruption*, which he must have experienced had he permitted this company of *weeping widows* to remain in the chamber.

And turning-to the body] **σωμα**, The lifeless body, for the *spirit* had already departed.

Said, Tabitha, arose.] During his wrestling with God, he had, undoubtedly, received confidence that she would be raised at his word.

And when she saw Peter, she sat up.] As Dorcas was a woman so eminently holy, her happy soul had doubtless gone to the paradise of God. Must she not therefore be filled with regret to find herself thus called back to earth again? And must not the remembrance of the glories she had now lost fill her with dislike to all the goods of earth? No: for, 1. As a saint of God, her Maker's *will* must be *hers*; because she knew that this *will* must be ever *best*. 2. It is very likely that, in the case of the revivescence of saint or sinner, God mercifully *draws a veil* over all they have seen or known, so that they have no recollection of what they have either seen or heard. Even St. Paul found it impossible to tell what he had heard in the third heaven, though he was probably not in the state of the dead. Of the economy of the invisible world God will reveal nothing. *We walk here by faith, and not by sight.*

Verse 41. Saints and widows] In primitive times the *widows* formed a distinct part of the Christian Church.

Verse 42. Many believed in the Lord.] That is, in Christ Jesus, in whose name and through whose power they understood this miracle to be wrought. This miracle, as well as that at Lydda, was not only the means of strengthening the faith of the disciples, and gaining credit to the cause of Christianity, but also of bringing many sincere converts to the Lord, so that the Church was thereby both *builed up* and *multiplied*.

Verse 43. He tarried many days in Joppa] Taking advantage of the good impression made on the people's minds by the miracle, he preached to them the great truths of Christianity, and thus established them in the faith.

Simon a tanner.] Whether the original word **βυρσευς** signifies a *tanner* or a *currier*, is of little consequence. The person who dealt in the hides, whether of *clean* or *unclean* animals, could not be in high repute among the Jews. Even in Joppa, the trade appears to have been reputed *unclean*; and therefore this Simon had *his house by the sea side*. See ^{<4400>}**Acts 10:6**. Of the trade itself the Talmudists speak with great contempt; they reckon it among *blemishes*. See proofs in *Schoettgen*.

1. **THUS** terminates what has not been improperly called *the first period of the Christian Church*, which began at the day of pentecost, ^{<4400>}**Acts 2:1**, and continued to the resurrection of Dorcas; a period of about *eight years*. During the whole of this time the Gospel was preached to the Jews *only*, no *Gentile* being called before Cornelius, the account of whose conversion, and the Divine vision that led to it, are detailed in the following chapter. Salvation was of the Jews: theirs were the fathers, the covenants, and the promises, and from them came Christ Jesus; and it was right that they should have the first offer of a salvation which, while it was *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, was to be *the glory of the Israelitish people*. When *they* utterly rejected it, then the apostles turned unto the Gentiles. Among them the Christian Church was founded, and thus the *reprobates* became the *elect*, and the *elect* became *reprobates*. Reader! behold the goodness and severity of God! Towards them that fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*, ^{<5172>}**Romans 11:22**. Thou canst only stand by faith; and be not high-minded, but fear. Nothing less than Christ dwelling in thy heart by faith can save thy soul unto eternal life.

2. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is one of the most remarkable facts recorded in the history of the Christian Church. When we consider the *man*; the *manner* in which he was brought to the knowledge of the truth; the *impression* made on his own mind and heart by the vision he had on his way to Damascus, and the *effect* produced in all his subsequent life, we have a series of the most convincing *evidences* of the truth of the Christian religion. In this light he ever viewed the subject himself; the manner of his conversion he ever appealed to, as the most proper apology for his conduct; and, on several most important occasions, he not only refers to it, but enters into a detail of its circumstances, that his hearers might see that the excellency of the power was of GOD and not of *man*.

Saul of Tarsus was not a man of a *light, fickle, and uncultivated* mind. His *natural powers* were vast, his *character* the most decided, and his *education*, as we learn from his historian, and from his writings, was at once both *liberal* and *profound*. He was born and brought up in a city which enjoyed every privilege of which Rome itself could boast, and was a successful rival both of Rome and Athens in arts and science. Though a Jew, it is evident that his education was not confined to matters that concerned his own people and country alone. He had read the best Greek writers, as his style, allusions, and quotations sufficiently prove; and, on matters which concern his own religion, he was instructed by *Gamaliel*, one of the most celebrated doctors the synagogue had ever produced. He was evidently master of the *three* great languages which were spoken among the only people who deserved the name of *nations*-the *Hebrew*, and its prevailing dialect, the *Chaldio-Syriac*; the *Greek*, and the *Latin*; languages which, notwithstanding all the cultivation through which the earth has passed, maintain their rank, which is a most decisive superiority over all the languages of the universe. Was it likely that *such a man*, possessing such a *mind*, cultivated to such an *extent*, could have been *imposed* on or *deceived*? The circumstances of his conversion *forbid* the supposition: they do more; they render it *impossible*. One consideration on this subject will prove that imposture in this case was impossible: he had no communication with Christians; the then that accompanied him to Damascus were of his own mind-virulent, determined enemies to the very name of Christ; and his conversion took place in the *open day*, on the *open road*, in company only with such men as the persecuting high priest and Sanhedrin thought proper to be employed in the extermination of Christianity. In such circumstances, and in such company, no cheat could

be practised. But was not *he* the *deceiver*? The supposition is absurd and monstrous, for this simple reason, that there was no *motive* that could prompt him to feign what he was not; and no *end* that could be answered by assuming the profession of Christianity. Christianity had in it such principles as must expose it to the hatred of Greece, Rome, and Judea. It exposed the absurdity and folly of Grecian and Roman superstition and idolatry, and asserted itself to be the *completion, end, and perfection* of the whole Mosaic economy. It was therefore hated by all those nations, and its followers despised, detested, and persecuted. From the profession of such a religion, so circumstanced, could any man, who possessed even the most moderate share of common sense, expect secular emolument or advantage? No! Had not this apostle of the Gentiles the fullest conviction of the truth of Christianity, the fullest proof of its heavenly influence on his own soul, the brightest prospect of the *reality and blessedness* of the spiritual world, he could not have taken one step in the path which the doctrine of Christ pointed out. Add to this, that he lived long after his conversion, saw Christianity and its influence in every point of view, and tried it in all circumstances. What was the result? The deepest conviction of its truth; so that he counted all things dross and dung in comparison of the excellency of its knowledge. Had he continued a *Jew* he would have infallibly risen to the first dignities and honours of his nation; but he willingly forfeited all his secular privileges and well grounded expectations of secular honour and emolument, and espoused a cause from which he could not only have no expectation of worldly advantage, but which, most evidently and necessarily, exposed him to all sorts of privations, sufferings, hardships, dangers, and death itself! These were not only the unavoidable consequences of the cause he espoused; but he had them fully in his apprehension and constantly in his eye. He *predicted* them, and knew that every step he took was a progressive advance in *additional sufferings*, and the issue of his journey must be a *violent death*!

The whole history of St. Paul proves him to be one of the *greatest* of men; and his conduct after he became a Christian, had it not sprung from a Divine motive, of the truth of which he had the fullest conviction, would have shown him to be one of the *weakest* of men. The conclusion therefore is self-evident, that in St. Paul's *call* there could be no imposture, that in his own *mind* there could be no *deception*, that his conversion was from heaven, and the religion he professed and taught, the infallible and eternal truth of Jehovah. In this full conviction he counted not his life dear unto

him, but finished his rugged race with joy, cheerfully giving up his life for the testimony of Jesus; and thus his luminous sun set in *blood*, to rise again in *glory*. The *conversion* of St. Paul is the *triumph* of Christianity; his *writings*, the fullest exhibition and defence of its doctrines; and his *life* and *death*, a glorious illustration of its *principles*. Armed with this history of Paul's conversion and life, the feeblest believer needs not fear the most powerful infidel. The *ninth chapter* of the *Acts of the Apostles* will ever remain an inexpugnable fortress to *defend* Christianity and *defeat* its enemies. Reader, hath not God *so* done his marvellous works that they may be had in everlasting remembrance?

ACTS

CHAPTER 10.

An angel appears to Cornelius, a centurion, and directs him to send to Joppa, for Peter, to instruct him in the way of salvation, 1-6. He sends accordingly, 7, 8. While the messengers are on their way to Joppa, Peter has a remarkable vision, by which he is taught how he should treat the Gentiles, 9-16. The messengers arrive at the house of Simon the tanner, and deliver their message, 17-22. They lodge there that night, and on the morrow Peter accompanies them to Cæsarea, where they find Cornelius and his friends assembled, waiting the coming of Peter, 23, 24. Peter makes an apology for his coming, and inquires for what purpose Cornelius had sent for him, 25-29. Cornelius answers, 30-33. And Peter preaches unto him Jesus, as the Saviour of the world, and the Judge of quick and dead, 34-43. While he speaks the Holy Ghost descends on Cornelius and his company; and they speak with new tongues, and magnify God, 44-46. Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, 47, 48.

NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

I have already observed (see the conclusion of the preceding chapter) that hitherto the apostles confined their labours among the *Jews* and circumcised *proselytes*, not making any offer of salvation to the *Gentiles*; for they had fully imbibed the opinion that none could enter into the kingdom of God, and be finally saved, unless they were circumcised, and became obedient to the law of Moses. This prejudice would have operated so as finally to prevent them from preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, had not God, by a particular interposition of his mercy and goodness, convinced Peter, and through him all the other apostles, that he had accepted the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews*, and would put no difference between the one and the other, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving the *Gentiles* the Holy Ghost, as he had before given it to the *Jews*. The means which he used to produce this conviction in the minds of the apostles are detailed at length in the following chapter.

Verse 1. There was a certain man in Cæsarea] This was *Cæsarea* of *Palestine*, called also *Strato's Tower*, as has been already noted, and the residence of the Roman procurator.

A centurion] ἑκατονταρχης, The chief or captain of 100 men, as both the Greek and Latin words imply. How the Roman armies were formed, divided, and marshalled, see **Clarke's notes on “~~4116~~ Matthew 20:16”**. A *centurion* among the Romans was about the same rank as a *captain* among us.

The band called the Italian band] The word σπειρα, which we translate *band*, signifies the same as *cohort* or *regiment*, which sometimes consisted of 555 infantry, and 66 cavalry; but the *cohors prima*, or first cohort, consisted of 1105 infantry, and 132 cavalry, in the time of *Vegetius*. But the cavalry are not to be considered as part of the cohort, but rather a company joined to it. A Roman *legion* consisted of *ten* cohorts; the first of which surpassed all the others, both in numbers and in dignity. When in former times the Roman legion contained 6000, each cohort consisted of 600, and was divided into three *manipuli*; but both the legions and cohorts were afterwards various in the numbers they contained. As there were doubtless many *Syrian auxiliaries*, the regiment in question was distinguished from them as consisting of *Italian*, i.e. *Roman*, soldiers. The *Italian cohort* is not unknown among the Roman writers: *Gruter* gives an inscription, which was found in the *Forum Sempronii*, on a fine table of marble, nine feet long, four feet broad, and four inches thick; on which are the following words:-

L. MAESIO. L. F. POL.
RVFO. PROC. AVG.
TRIB. MIL. LEG. X.
APPOLLINARIS. TRIB.
COH. MIL. ITALIC. VOLUNT.
QVAE. EST. IN. SYRIA. PRAEF.
FABRVM. BIS.

See *Gruter's* Inscriptions, p. cccxxxiii-iv.

This was probably the same cohort as that mentioned here by St. Luke; for the *tenth* legion mentioned in the above inscription was certainly in Judea, A.D. 69. *Tacitus* also mentions the *Italica legio*, the Italic legion, lib. i. c. 59, which *Junius Blæsus* had under his command in the province of Lyons. We learn, from the Roman historians, that the *fifth*, *tenth*, and *fifteenth* legions were stationed in Judea; and the *third*, *fourth*, *sixth*, and *twelfth* in *Syria*. The *Italic* legion was in the battle of Bedriacum, fought, A.D. 69, between the troops of Vitellius and Otho; and performed essential services

to the Vitellian army. See *Tacitus*, Hist. lib. ii. cap. 41. The issue of this battle was the defeat of the Othonians, on which Otho slew himself, and the empire was confirmed to Vitellius.

Wherever he sees it necessary, St. Luke carefully gives *dates* and *facts*, to which any might have recourse who might be disposed to doubt his statements: we have had several proofs of this in his Gospel. See especially ~~<B10>~~ **Luke 1:1**, &c., and ~~<B11>~~ **Luke 3:1**, &c., and the notes there.

Verse 2. A devout man] ευσεβης, from ευ, *well*, and σεβομαι, *I worship*. A person who *worships the true God*, and is no idolater.

One that feared God] φοβουμενος τον θεον, One who was acquainted with the true God, by means of his word and laws; who respected these laws, and would not dare to offend his Maker and his Judge. This is necessarily implied in *the fear of God*.

With all his house] He took care to instruct his family in the knowledge which he himself had received; and to establish the worship of God in his house.

Gave much alms] His love to God led him to love men; and this love proved its sincerity by acts of beneficence and charity.

Prayed to God alway.] Felt himself a dependent creature; knew he had no good but what he had received; and considered God to be the fountain whence he was to derive all his blessings. *He prayed to God alway*; was ever in the *spirit* of prayer, and frequently in the *act*. What an excellent character is this! And yet the man was a *Gentile*! He was what a *Jew* would repute *common* and *unclean*: see ~~<H10>~~ **Acts 10:28**. He was, therefore, not circumcised; but, as he worshipped the true God, without any idolatrous mixtures, and was in *good report among all the nation of the Jews*, he was undoubtedly what was called a *proselyte of the gate*, though not a *proselyte of justice*, because he had not entered into the *bond of the covenant by circumcision*. This was a proper person, being so much of a Jew and so much of a Gentile, to form the connecting link between both people; and God chose him that the salvation of the Jews might with as little observation as possible be transmitted to the Gentiles. The choice of such a person, through whom the door of faith was opened to the *heathen* world, was a proof of the wisdom and goodness of God. The man who was chosen to this honour was not a *profligate* Gentile; nor yet a circumcised

proselyte. He was a *Gentile*, amiable and pure in his manners; and, for his piety and charitableness, held in high estimation among all the nation of the *Jews*. Against such a person they could not, with any grace, be envious, though God should pour out upon *him* the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 3. He saw in a vision evidently] The text is as plain as it can be, that an angel of God *did appear* to Cornelius. This was in a *vision*, i.e. *a supernatural* representation; and it was φανερός, *manifestly, evidently made*; and at such a time too as precluded the possibility of his being asleep; for it was *about the ninth hour of the day*, answering to our three o'clock in the afternoon, (see Clarke's note on "^{<4030>}Acts 3:1",) the time of *public prayer*, according to the custom of the Jews, and while Peter was engaged in that sacred duty. The angelic appearance to Cornelius was something similar to that made to Daniel, ^{<2021>}Daniel 9:20-23, and that especially to Zachariah, the father of John Baptist, ^{<0111>}Luke 1:11, &c.

Verse 4. Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial] Being all performed in simplicity and godly sincerity, they were acceptable to the Most High.

Come up for a memorial: This form of speech is evidently borrowed from the sacrificial system of the Jews. Pious and sincere prayers are high in God's estimation; and therefore are said to *ascend* to him, as the *smoke* and *flame* of the burnt-offering appeared to ascend to heaven.

These prayers and alms came up for a *memorial* before God: this is a manifest allusion to the meat-offering, which, in ^{<0216>}Leviticus 2:16, is said to be *hrkza azkerah*, a memorial, (speaking after the manner of men,) to put God in remembrance that such a person was his worshipper, and needed his protection and help. So the prayers and alms of Cornelius ascended before God as an acceptable sacrifice, and were *recorded* in the kingdom of heaven, that the answers might be given in their due season.

Verse 6. Simon a tanner] See Clarke's note on "^{<4043>}Acts 9:43".

What thou oughtest to do.] From this it appears that matters of great moment had occupied the mind of Cornelius. He was not satisfied with the state of his own soul, nor with the degree he possessed of religious knowledge; and he set apart a particular time for extraordinary fasting and prayer, that God might farther reveal to him the knowledge of his will. Perhaps he had heard of Jesus, and had been perplexed with the different

opinions that prevailed concerning him, and now prayed to God that he might know what part he should take; and the answer to this prayer is, "Send to Joppa for Simon Peter, *he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*" This clause, so explanatory, is wanting in almost every MS. and version of note. Griesbach and some others have left it out of the text. But see ^{<41114>}Acts 11:14, where it stands in substance.

Verse 7. And a devout soldier] It has already been remarked that Cornelius had taken care to instruct his family in Divine things; and it appears also that he had been attentive to the spiritual interests of his regiment. We do not find that it was then, even among the Romans, considered a disgrace for a military officer to teach his men lessons of morality, and piety towards God, whatever it may be in some Christian countries in the present time.

Verse 8. He sent them to Joppa.] It has been properly remarked, that from Joppa, Jonah was sent to preach to the *Gentiles* of Nineveh; and from the same place Peter was sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles at Cæsarea.

Verse 9. On the morrow, as they went on their journey] From Joppa to Cæsarea was about twelve or fifteen leagues; the messengers could not have left the house of Cornelius till about two hours before sunset; therefore, they must have travelled a part of the night, in order to arrive at Joppa the next day, towards noon.-*Calmet*. Cornelius sent *two* of his household servants, by way of respect to Peter; probably the *soldier* was intended for their defence, as the roads in Judea were by no means safe.

Peter went up upon the house-top to pray] It has often been remarked that the houses in Judea were builded with flat roofs, on which people walked, conversed, meditated, prayed, &c. The house-top was the place of retirement; and thither Peter went for the purpose of praying to God. In Bengal, some of the rich Hindoos have a *room* on the *top of the house*, in which they perform worship *daily*.

Verse 10. He became very hungry] It seems that this happened about dinner-time; for it appears that they were *making ready*, *παρασκευαζοντων*, *dressing the victuals* for the family. The *dinner* among the ancients was a very slight meal; and they had no *breakfast*: their *supper* was their principal meal. And, in very ancient times, they ate only

once in the day. Supper was the meal at which they saw their friends, the business of the day being then finished.

He fell into a trance] *επεπεσεν ἐπ' αὐτον εκστασις*, *An ecstasy fell upon him.* A person may be said to be in an ecstasy when transported with *joy or admiration*, so that he is *insensible* to every object but that on which he is engaged. Peter's ecstasy is easily accounted for: he went up to the house-top to pray: at first he felt keen hunger; but, being earnestly engaged with God, all natural appetites became absorbed in the intense application of his soul to his Maker. While every passion and appetite was under this Divine influence, and the soul, without let or hinderance, freely conversing with God, then the visionary and symbolical representation mentioned here took place.

Verse 11. And saw heaven opened] His mind now entirely spiritualized, and absorbed in heavenly contemplation, was capable of discoveries of the spiritual world; a world which, with its *πληρωμα*, or *plenitude* of inhabitants, surrounds us at all times; but which we are incapable of seeing through the dense medium of *flesh and blood*, and their necessarily concomitant *earthly passions*. Much, however, of such a world and its economy may be apprehended by him who is purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and who has perfected holiness in the fear of God. But this is a subject to which the *enthusiast* in vain attempts to ascend. The *turbulent working* of his imagination, and the gross earthly crudities which he wishes to obtrude on the world as revelations from God, afford a sufficient refutation of their own blasphemous pretensions.

A great sheet, knit at the four corners] Perhaps intended to be an emblem of the *universe*, and its *various nations*, to the four corners of which the Gospel was to extend, and to offer its blessings to all the inhabitants, without distinction of nation, &c.

Verse 12. All manner of four-footed beasts, &c.] Every species of *quadrupeds*, whether *wild* or *domestic*; all *reptiles*, and all *fowls*. Consequently, both the *clean* and *unclean* were present in this visionary representation: those that the Jewish law allowed to be sacrificed to God, or proper for food; as well as those which that law had prohibited in both cases: such as the *beasts* that do not chew the *cud*; *fish* which have *no scales*; *fowls* of prey and such others as are specified in ^{<B110>}**Leviticus 11:1**, &c., where see the notes.

Verse 13. Rise, Peter, kill and eat.] θυσσον και φαγε, *Sacrifice and eat.*

Though this verb is sometimes used to signify the *slaying* of animals for *food*, yet, as the proper notion is to *slay* for the purpose of *sacrifice*, it appears to me to be better to preserve that meaning here. Animals that were offered in sacrifice were considered as *given to God*; and, when he received the *life*, the flesh was given to those who offered the sacrifice, that they might feed upon it; and every sacrifice had in it the nature of a *covenant*; and covenants were usually made by *eating together* on the flesh of the sacrifice offered on the occasion, God being supposed to be invisibly present with them, and partaking of the feast. The *Jews* and *Gentiles* are certainly represented by the clean and unclean animals in this large vessel: these, by the ministry of the Gospel, were to be offered up a spiritual sacrifice to God. Peter was to be a prime instrument in this work; he was to offer them to God, and rejoice in the work of his hands. The spirit of the heavenly direction seems to be this: “The middle wall of partition is now to be pulled down; the Jews and Gentiles are called to become one flock, under one shepherd and bishop of souls. Thou, Peter, shalt open the door of faith to the *Gentiles*, and be also the minister of the circumcision. Rise up; already a blessed sacrifice is prepared: go and offer it to God; and let thy soul feed on the fruits of his mercy and goodness, in thus showing his gracious design of saving both Jews and Gentiles by Christ crucified.”

Verse 14. Common or unclean.] By *common*, κοινον, whatever was in *general use* among the *Gentiles* is to be understood; by *unclean*, ακαθαρτον, every thing that was *forbidden* by the Mosaic law. However, the one word may be considered as explanatory of the other. The rabbins themselves, and many of the primitive fathers, believed that by the *unclean* animals forbidden by the law the *Gentiles* were meant.

Verse 15. What God hath cleansed] God, who made at first the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, has a right to remove it, whenever and by whatever means he pleases: he, therefore, who made the distinction, for wise purposes, between the clean and the unclean, now pronounces all to be *clean*. He had authority to do the first; he has authority to do the last. God has purposed that the *Gentiles* shall have the Gospel preached to them: *what* he therefore has *cleansed*, “that call not thou *common*.”

Verse 16. This was done thrice] For the greater certainty, and to make the deeper impression on the apostle’s mind.

And the vessel was received up again into heaven.] Both Jews and Gentiles came equally *from* God; and to him, *both*, by the preaching of the Gospel, shall again *return*.

Verse 17. While Peter doubted-the men stood before the gate] In all this we find an admirable display of the economy of Providence. Cornelius prays, and has a vision which prepares him to receive instruction from Peter: Peter prays, and has a vision which prepares and disposes him to give instruction to Cornelius. While he is in doubts and perplexity what the full meaning of the vision might be, the messengers, who had been despatched under the guidance of an especial Providence, came to the door; and the Holy Spirit gives him information that his doubts should be all cleared up by accompanying the men who were now inquiring for him. How exactly does every thing in the conduct of Providence occur; and how completely is every thing adapted to *time*, *place*, and *occasion*! All is in weight, measure, and number. Those simple occurrences which men snatch at, and press into the service of their own *wishes*, and call them *providential openings* may, indeed, be links of a providential chain, in reference to *some other matter*; but unless they be found to speak the *same language* in all their *parts*, occurrence corresponding with occurrence, they are not to be construed as indications of the Divine will in reference to the claimants. Many persons, through these misapprehensions, miscarrying, have been led to charge God foolishly for the unsuccessful issue of some business in which their passions, not his providence, prompted them to engage.

Verse 21. Which were sent unto him from Cornelius] This clause is wanting in almost every MS. of worth, and in almost all the versions.

Behold, I am he whom ye seek] A sudden, unexpected speech, like the address of Æneas to Dido; when the cloud in which he was involved suddenly dissipated, and he appeared with the exclamation,

—————*coram, quem quæritis, adsum!*
Æn. lib. i. 595.

What is the cause therefore ye are come?] He still did not know the full import of the vision; but being informed by the Holy Spirit that three men were seeking him, and that he should go with them, without scruple, he instantly obeyed; and finding them at the door, desired to know why they sought him.

Verse 22. Cornelius the centurion, &c.] They gave him the simple relation which they had received from their master. For the character of Cornelius, see the comment, see Clarke “^{<44102>}Acts 10:2”.

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

Verse 23. Then called he them in, &c.] They had already walked a long journey in a short time, and needed refreshment; and it was thought expedient they should rest that night with Simon the tanner.

Certain brethren from Joppa] They were *six* in number, as we learn from ^{<44112>}Acts 11:12. It was necessary that there should be *several witnesses* of the important transactions which were about to take place; as on no slight evidence would even the *converted* Jews believe that *repentance* unto life, and the *Holy Spirit*, should be granted to the Gentiles.

Verse 24. His kinsmen and near friends.] συγγενεις, His, *relatives*, and αναγκαιους φιλους, his *necessary friends*; but the Syriac makes αναγκαιους an epithet as well as συγγενεις, and thus the passage may be read, *his kinsmen, his domestics, and his friends*. It appears that he had collected the whole circle of his intimate acquaintance, that they also might profit by a revelation which he expected to come immediately from heaven; and these amounted to many persons; see ^{<44107>}Acts 10:27.

Verse 25. Fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.] As Peter’s coming was announced by an *angel*, Cornelius might have supposed that Peter himself was an angel, and of a superior order; seeing he came to announce what the first angel was not employed to declare: it was, probably, in consequence of this thought that he prostrated himself before Peter, offering him the highest act of *civil* respect; for there was nothing in the act, as performed by Cornelius, which belonged to the worship of the true God. *Prostrations* to superiors were common in all Asiatic countries. The *Codex Bezae*, and the later *Syriac* in the margin reads this verse differently from all other MSS. and versions; thus, *But as Peter drew nigh to Cæsarea, one of the servants ran before, and told that he was come: then Cornelius leaped up, and met him, and, falling at his feet, he worshipped him*. This is a very remarkable addition, and relates circumstances that we may naturally suppose did actually take place.

Verse 26. I myself also am a man.] “I am not an *angel*; I am come to you simply, on the part of God, to deliver to you the doctrine of eternal life.”

Verse 27. And as he talked with him] Cornelius had met Peter at some short distance from his house, and they conversed together till they went in.

Verse 28. Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing, &c.] He addressed the whole company, among whom, it appears, there were persons well acquainted with Jewish customs; probably some of them were Jewish proselytes.

But God hath showed me, &c.] He now began to understand the import of the vision which he saw at Joppa. A Gentile is not to be avoided because he is a Gentile; God is now taking down the partition wall which separated them from the Jews.

Verse 29. I ask-for what intent ye have sent for me?] Peter had been informed of this by the servants of Cornelius, ^{<44102>}Acts 10:22; but, as all the company might not have been informed of the circumstances, he, as it were, invites him to tell his story afresh, that his friends, &c., might be the better prepared to receive the truth, which he was about to dispense, in obedience to his Divine commission.

Verse 30. Four days ago I was fasting until this hour] It was then about three o'clock in the afternoon; and it appears that Cornelius had continued his fasts from three o'clock the preceding day to three o'clock the day following; not that he had fasted four days together, as some supposes for even if he did fast four days consecutively, he ate one meal on each day. It is however necessary to remark that the word *νηστευων*, *fasting* is wanting in ABC, *one* other; the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*; but it has not been omitted in any *edition* of the Greek Testament.

Verse 31. Thy prayer is heard] See Clarke's note on ^{<44104>}Acts 10:4". Cornelius *prayed*, *fasted*, and gave *alms*. It was in this *way* he looked for salvation; not to *purchase* it: a thought of this kind does not appear to have entered into his mind; but these were the *means* he used to get his soul brought to the knowledge of the truth. The reader must recollect that in the case of Cornelius there was no *open vision*; he used the light and power which God had already given; and behold how mightily God increased his gifts! He that *hath*, i.e., that uses what he has, shall receive; and no man

can expect any increase of light or life, who does not improve the grace already given.

Verse 33. Are we all here present before God] Instead of *before* GOD, the *Codex Bezae*, *Syriac*, *Aethiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*, read *before* THEE. The people were all waiting for the preacher, and every heart was filled with expectation; they waited as *before God*, from whose messenger they were about to hear the words of life.

Verse 34. God is no respecter of persons] He does God esteem a *Jew*, because he is a *Jew*; nor does he detest a *Gentile* because he is a *Gentile*. It was a long and deeply rooted opinion among the Jews, that God never would extend his favour to the *Gentiles*; and that the descendants of Jacob only should enjoy his peculiar favour and benediction. Of this opinion was St. Peter, previously to the heavenly vision mentioned in this chapter. He was now convinced that *God was no respecter of persons*; that as all must stand before his judgment seat, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, so no one nation, or people, or individual, could expect to find a more favourable decision than another who was precisely in the *same* moral state; for the phrase, *respect of persons*, is used in reference to *unjust decisions* in a *court of justice*, where, through favour, or interest, or bribe, a culprit is acquitted, and a righteous or innocent person condemned. See ^{<B1915>} **Leviticus 19:15**; ^{<B1016>} **Deuteronomy 1:16, 17; 16:19**. And as *there is no iniquity* (decisions contrary to equity) *with God*, so he could not shut out the pious *prayers*, sincere *fasting*, and benevolent *alms-giving* of Cornelius; because the very spring whence they proceeded was his own grace and mercy. Therefore he could not receive even a *Jew* into his favour (in preference to such a person) who had either abused his grace, or made a less godly use of it than this *Gentile* had done.

Verse 35. But in every nation he that feared him, &c.] *In every nation* he who, according to his light and privileges, *fears* God, worships him alone, (for this is the true meaning of the word,) *and worketh righteousness*, abstains from all evil, gives to all their due, injures neither the body, soul, nor reputation of his neighbour, *is accepted with him*. It is not therefore the nation, kindred, profession, mode or form of worship, that the just God regards; but the *character*, the *state of heart*, and the *moral deportment*. For what are *professions*, &c., in the sight of that God who trieth spirits, and by whom actions are weighed! He looks for the grace he has given, the advantages he has afforded, and the improvement

of all these. Let it be observed farther, that no man can be accepted with this just God who does not *live up to the advantages of the state in which providence has placed him*. Why was Cornelius accepted with God while thousands of his countrymen were passed by? Because *he* did not receive the grace of God in vain; he *watched, fasted, prayed, and gave alms*, which they did not. Had he not done so, would *he* have been accepted? Certainly not; because it would then appear that he had received the grace of God in vain, and had not been a worker together with him. Many irreligious men, in order to get rid of the duties and obligations of Christianity, quote this verse in their own favour, while they reject all the Gospel besides; and roundly assert, as they think on the authority of this text, that they need neither believe in Jesus Christ, attend to his Gospel, nor use his ordinances; for, if they fear God and work righteousness, they shall be infallibly accepted with him. Let such know that if they had been born and still were living in a land where the light of the Gospel had never shone, and were there conscientiously following the glimmering ray of celestial light which God had granted, they might, with some show of reason, speak in this way; but, as they are born and live under the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God, the just Judge, will require that *they fear him, and work righteousness, ACCORDING to the LIGHT afforded by that very GOSPEL*. The sincerity, watching, praying, fastings and alms-giving of Cornelius will not be sufficient for them who, as it may be justly said, live in splendours of Christianity. In such a state, God requires that a man shall love him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength; and his neighbour as himself. In the face of such a requisition as this, how will the poor *heathen virtue* of one born in the *pale of Christianity* appear? And if God requires all this, will not a man need all the grace that has been brought to light by the revelation of Jesus Christ to enable him to do it?

Verse 36. The word which God sent, &c.] Few verses in the New Testament have perplexed critics and divines more than this. The ancient copyists seem also to have been puzzled with it; as the great variety in the different MSS. sufficiently proves. A foreign critic makes a good sense by connecting this with the preceding verse, thus: *In every nation he that feared him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him, according to that doctrine which God sent unto the children of Israel, by which he published peace* (i.e. reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles) *by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all*; and, because *Lord of all*, both of Jews and Gentiles, therefore he must be impartial; and, because impartial, or *no*

respector of persons, therefore, in every nation, whether Judea, Greece, or Italy, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

I believe **τον λογου**, *the word*, in this verse, should be translated, *that doctrine*; and probably **ρημα**, which we translate *that word* in ^{<44037>}**Acts 10:37**, should be omitted as it is in the *Codex Bezae*, and its *Itala* version; and if **ον**, which is in ^{<44036>}**Acts 10:36**, be even left out, as it is in ABC, *Coptic* and *Vulgate*, the whole may be literally read thus: *As to the doctrine sent to the children of Israel, preaching the glad tidings of peace (ευαγγελιζομενος ειρηνην) by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all, ye know what was done (το γενομενον) through all Judea, beginning after the baptism which John preached. Jesus, who was from Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with mighty power (δυναμει) went about doing good, and healing all that were tyrannically oppressed (καταδυναστευομενους) by the devil, for God was with him.* Critics have proposed a great variety of modes by which they suppose these verses may be rendered intelligible; and the learned reader may see many in *Wolfius*, *Kypke*, *Rosenmuller*, and others. *Kypke* contends that the word **κυριος**, *Lord*, is to be understood *adjectively*, and ought to be referred to **λογος**, and the 36th verse will then stand thus: *The word which he sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, that word has authority over all.* This amounts nearly to the same sense with the expositions given above; and all proclaim this truth, which the apostle laboured to establish, namely, that God intended the salvation of all men by Jesus Christ; and therefore proclaimed reconciliation to all, by him who is *Lord, maker, preserver, redeemer, and judge* of all. And of this the apostle was now more convinced by the late vision; and his mission from him who is Lord of all to *Cornelius*, a heathen, was a full illustration of the heavenly truth; for the very meeting of *Peter*, once a prejudiced Jew, and *Cornelius*, once an unenlightened Gentile, was a sort of first fruits of this general reconciliation, and a proof that Jesus was LORD of ALL.

Verse 37. That word-ye know] This account of Jesus of Nazareth ye cannot be unacquainted with; because it has been proclaimed throughout all Judea and Galilee, from the time that John began to preach. Ye have heard how he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and of the miracles which he performed; how he went about doing good, and healing all kinds of demoniacs and, by these mighty and beneficent acts, giving the fullest proof that God was with him. This was the exordium of *Peter's* discourse; and

thus he begins, from what they knew, to teach them what they did not know.

St. Peter does not intimate that any miracle was wrought by Christ previously to his being baptized by John. *Beginning at Galilee*. Let us review the mode of Christ's manifestation. 1. After he had been baptized by John, he went into the desert, and remained there forty days. 2. He then returned to the Baptist, who was exercising his ministry at that time at Bethany or Bethabara; and there he made certain disciples, viz., Andrew, Bartholomew, Peter, and Philip. 3. Thence he went to the marriage at Cana, in Galilee, where he wrought his first miracle. 4. And afterwards he went to Capernaum in the same country, by the sea of Galilee, where he wrought many others. This was the *manner* in which Christ manifested himself; and these are the *facts* of which Peter presumes they had a perfect knowledge, because they had been for a long time notorious through all the land.

Verse 38. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth] Here the apostle refers to Christ as the promised *Messiah*; for, as *Messiah* signifies *the anointed one*, and *Christ* has the same signification in Greek, and the *Messiah*, according to the prophets, and the expectation of the Jews, was to work miracles, Peter proclaims Jesus as the *Messiah*, and refers to the miracles which he wrought as the *proof* of it. This delicate, but forcible allusion is lost by most readers.

Verse 39. We are witnesses of all] In this speech St. Peter may refer, not only to the twelve apostles, but to the six brethren whom he had brought with him.

Whom they slew] As the truth of the *resurrection* must depend on the reality of the *death* of Christ, it was necessary that this should be stated, and shown to rest on the most indubitable evidence.

Verse 40. Him God raised up the third day] He lay long enough under the power of death to prove that he was dead; and not too long, lest it should be supposed that his disciples had time sufficient to have practiced some deceit or imposture; and, to prevent this, the Jews took care to have the tomb well guarded during the whole time which he lay there.

Verse 41. Not to all the people] In the order of Divine providence, the public were to be no longer instructed by Jesus Christ *personally*; but it

was necessary that those who were to preach redemption in his name should be thoroughly furnished to this good and great work; therefore, the time he spent on earth, after his resurrection, was devoted to the instruction of his disciples.

Witnesses chosen before of God] That is, God chose such men to attest this fact as were every way best qualified to give evidence on the subject; persons who were always to be found; who might at all times be confronted with those, if any such should offer themselves, who could pretend to prove that there was any imposture in this case; and persons who, from the very circumstances in which they were placed, must appear to have an absolute conviction of the truth of all they attested. The first preachers of the Gospel must be the witnesses of its facts; and these first preachers must be put in such circumstances as to demonstrate, not only that they had no secular end in view, nor indeed could have any, but also that they should be able to evince that they had the fullest conviction of the reality of the eternal world, and of their Master's existence in glory there; as they carried their lives continually in their hands, and regarded them not, so that they might fulfil the ministry which they had received from their Lord, and finish their course with joy.

But why was not Christ, after his resurrection, shown to *all the people*! 1. Because it was impossible that such a thing could be done without mob and tumult. Let it only be announced, "Here is the man who was dead three days, and who is risen from the dead!" what confusion would be the consequence of such an exposure! Some would say, This is he; others, He is like him; and so on; and the valid testimony must be lost in the confusion of the multitude. 2. God chose such witnesses whose testimony should be unimpeachable; the men who knew him best, and who by their depositions in proof of the fact should evidently risk their lives. And, 3. as *multitudes* are never called to witness any fact, but a *few* selected from the rest, whose knowledge is most accurate, and whose veracity is unquestionable, therefore, God showed not Christ risen from the dead to *all the people*, but to *witnesses chosen by himself*; and they were such as perfectly knew him before, and who ate and drank with him after his resurrection, and consequently had the fullest proof and conviction of the truth of this fact.

Verse 42. And he commanded us to preach] By thus assuring them that Jesus Christ was appointed to *judge the world*, he at once showed them the

necessity of *subjection* to him, that they might stand in the day of his appearing.

The Judge of quick and dead.] The word *quick* we retain from our ancient mother tongue, the Saxon [Anglo-Saxon], *to live*, hence [A.S.] and [A.S.], *life*, and [A.S.], *grass*; and from this our *quicks*, *quick-set hedges*, fences made of *living thorns*, &c. By *quick and dead* we are to understand: 1. All that had lived from the foundation of the world till that time; and all that were then alive. 2. All that should be found alive at the day of judgment, as well as all that had died previously.

Verse 43. To him give all the prophets witness] See ^{<23006>} **Isaiah 9:6; 52:7; 53:5, 6; 59:20;** ^{<24134>} **Jeremiah 31:34;** ^{<27024>} **Daniel 9:24;** ^{<33718>} **Micah 7:18,** &c.; and ^{<38130>} **Zechariah 13:1.** As Jesus Christ was the *sum* and *substance* of the law and the Mosaic dispensation, so all the prophets bore testimony, either *directly* or *indirectly*, to him; and, indeed, without him and the salvation he has promised, there is scarcely any meaning in the Mosaic economy, nor in most of the allusions of the prophets.

Remission of sins.] The phrase, **αφεσις αμαρτιων**, means simply the *taking away of sins*; and this does not refer to the *guilt* of sin merely, but also to its *power*, *nature*, and *consequences*. All that is implied in *pardon of sin*, *destruction of its tyranny*, and *purification from its pollution*, is here intended; and it is wrong to restrict such operations of mercy to *pardon alone*.

Verse 44. While Peter yet spake] It is not very likely that the words recorded by St. Luke are *all* that the apostle spoke on this occasion; but, while he continued to discourse with them on this subject, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*; and his descent was known by their being enabled to speak with different kinds of tongues. In what manner this gift was bestowed we cannot tell; probably it was in the same way in which it had been given on the day of pentecost; for as they spake with tongues, which was the effect of the descent of the Spirit as flaming tongues on the heads of the disciples on the day of pentecost, it is very likely that the same appearance now took place.

Verse 45. They of the circumcision-were astonished] Because it was a maxim with them that the *Shechinah* or Divine influence could not be revealed to any person who dwelt beyond the precincts of the promised land. Nor did any of them believe that the Divine Spirit could be

communicated to any *Gentile*. It is no wonder, therefore, that they were amazed when they saw the Spirit of God so liberally given as it was on this occasion.

Verse 46. And magnify God.] They had got *new hearts* as well as *new tongues*; and, having believed with the heart unto righteousness, their tongues made confession unto salvation; and God was magnified for the mercy which he had imparted.

Verse 47. Can any man forbid water] These had evidently received the *Holy Ghost*, and consequently were become members of the mystical body of Christ; and yet St. Peter requires that they shall receive baptism by *water*, that they might become members of the Christian Church. In other cases, they received baptism first, and the Spirit afterwards by the imposition of hands: see ~~<4190>~~ **Acts 19:4-6**, where the disciples who had received only the baptism of John were baptized again with *water* in the name of the Lord Jesus; and, after even this, the apostles *prayed*, and *laid their hands on them*, before they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. So we find that Jesus Christ had his *water baptism* as well as John; and that even he who gave the baptism of the *Holy Ghost* required the administration of *water baptism* also. Therefore the *baptism of the Spirit* did not *supersede* the *baptism by water*; nor indeed can it; as *baptism*, as well as the *supper of our Lord*, were intended, not only to be means of grace, but standing, *irrefragable proofs* of the truth of Christianity.

Verse 48. To be baptized in the name of the Lord.] That is, in the name of Jesus Christ; which implied their *taking upon them the public profession of Christianity*, and believing on Christ Jesus as their Saviour and Sovereign; for, as they were baptized *in his name*, they professed thereby to be his disciples and followers.

Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.] They felt the necessity of farther instruction, and prayed him to continue his ministry a little longer among them; and to this he no doubt consented. This was properly speaking, the commencement of the Christian Church, as composed of Jews and Gentiles, partaking of the same baptism, united under the same *Head*, made partakers of the same Spirit, and associated in the same aggregate body. Now was the middle wall of partition broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with the Jews.

1. GOD is wonderful in all his works, whether they be works of *creation*, *providence*, or *grace*. Every thing proclaims his *power*, his *wisdom*, and his *goodness*. Every where we learn this truth, which is indispensably necessary for all to know who desire to acknowledge God in all their ways that “there is nothing which concerns their present or eternal welfare in which God does not interest himself.” We often, to our great spiritual detriment, lose sight of this truth, because we think that the MAJESTY of God is too *great* to be occupied with those common occurrences by which we are often much affected, in things which relate, not only to our *present*, but also to our *eternal* interests. This is impossible; for God is our *father*, and, being every where present, he sees our state, and his *eye* affects his *heart*.

2. Let the reader examine the chain of Providence (composed indeed of very *minute* links) brought to light in the conversion of Cornelius, the instruction of Peter, and opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, and he will be convinced that “God has way every where, and that all things serve the purposes of his will.” We have already seen how particularly, both by gracious and providential workings, God prepared the mind of Cornelius to receive instruction, and the mind of Peter to give it; so that the receiver and giver were equally ready to be workers together with God. This is a general economy. He who feels his want may rest assured that, even *then*, God has made the necessary provisions for his supply; and that the very *sense* of the want is a proof that the provision is already made. Why then should we lose time in deploring wretchedness, for the removal of which God has made the necessary preparations? Mourning over our miseries will never supply the lack of faith in Christ, and very seldom tends even to humble the heart.

3. As the eye of God is ever upon us, he knows our *trials* as well as our wants; and here, also, he makes the necessary provision for our support. We may be called to suffer, but his grace will be sufficient for us; and, as our troubles increase, so shall the means of our support. And even these trials and temptations will be pressed into our service, for *all things work together for good to them that love God*, ~~✠~~ **Romans 8:28**.

4. We must beware neither to despise outward rites in religion, nor to rest in them. Most people do either the one or the other. God gives us outward helps, because he knows we need them. But do we not sometimes imagine ourselves to be above that which, because of our scantiness of grace, is

really above us? We certainly may *over-rate* ourselves, and *under-rate* God's bounties. He who is taught by the Spirit of God will be saved from both.

ACTS

CHAPTER 11.

Peter returns to Jerusalem, and is accused of having associated with the Gentiles, 1-3. He defends himself by relating at large the whole business concerning Cornelius, 4-17. His defense is accepted, and the whole Church glorifies God for having granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, 18. An account of the proceedings of those who were scattered abroad by the persecution that was raised about Stephen; and how they had spread the Gospel among the circumcision, in Phœnice, Cyprus, and Antioch, 19-21. The Church at Jerusalem, hearing of this, sends Barnabas to confirm them in the faith, 22, 23. His character, 24. He goes to Tarsus to seek Saul, whom he brings to Antioch, where the disciples are first called CHRISTIANS, 25, 26. Certain prophets foretell the dearth which afterwards took place in the reign of the Emperor Claudias, 27, 28. The disciples send relief to their poor brethren to Judea, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, 29. 30.

NOTES ON CHAP. 11.

Verse 1. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea] According to *Calmet*, Judea is here put in opposition to Cæsarea, which, though situated in Palestine, passed for a Greek city, being principally inhabited by Pagans, Greeks, or Syrians.

Verse 2. Contended with him] A manifest proof this that the *primitive* Church at Jerusalem (and no Church can ever deserve this name but the Jerusalem Church) had no conception of St. Peter's *supremacy*, or of his being *prince of the apostles*. He is now called to account for his conduct, which they judged to be reprehensible; and which they would not have attempted to do had they believed him to be Christ's *vicar* upon earth, and the infallible Head of the Church. But this absurd dream is every where refuted in the New Testament.

Verse 3. Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised] In a Jew, this was no small offense; and, as they did not know the reason of St. Peter's conduct, it is no wonder they should call him to account for it, as they considered it to be a positive transgression of the law and custom of the Jews. There is a

remarkable addition here in the *Codex Bezae*, which it will be well to notice. The second verse of the chapter begins thus:-

Now Peter had a desire for a considerable time to go to Jerusalem: and having spoken to the brethren, and confirmed them, speaking largely, he taught them through the countries, (i.e. as he passed to Jerusalem,) and, as he met them, he spoke to them of the grace of God. But the brethren who were of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, &c.

Verse 4. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order] ἐξέτιθετο αυτοις καθεξης. This is the very style of St. Luke; see his Gospel, <4010> **Luke 1:3**. To remove their prejudice, and to give them the fullest reasons for his conduct, he thought it best to give them a simple relation of the whole affair; which he does, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, with a few *additional* circumstances here. See the notes before.

Verse 12. These six brethren] Probably pointing to them, being present, as proper persons to confirm the truth of what he was delivering.

Verse 14. Thou and all thy house shall be saved.] This is an *additional* circumstance: before, it was said, <4410> **Acts 10:6**, *Peter shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*; and, in <4410> **Acts 10:32**, *who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee*. But, in Peter's relation, the matter is more explicitly declared, *he shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved*. He shall announce to you all the doctrine of salvation.

Verse 16. Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.] These words are very remarkable. The words of our Lord, as quoted <4410> **Acts 1:5**, to which St. Peter refers here, have been supposed by many to be referred to the *apostles* alone; but here it is evident that St. Peter believed they were a promise made to all Christians, i.e. to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should believe on Jesus Christ. Therefore, when he saw that the Holy Ghost fell upon those Gentiles, he considered it a fulfilment of our Lord's promise: *ye, that is, all that will believe on me, shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost-not many days hence*, i.e. in a short time this Spirit shall be given, which is to abide with you for ever. Hence we learn that the promise of the Holy Spirit is given to the whole body of Christians-to all that believe on Christ as dying for their sins, and rising for their justification.

Verse 17. God gave them the like gift, &c.] Viz. the Holy Spirit, and its various gifts and graces, in the same way and in the same measure in which he gave them to us Jews. What was I, that I could withstand God? It was not I who called them to salvation: it was God; and the thing is proved to be from God alone, for none other could dispense the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18. They held their peace] Their prejudices were confounded; they considered the subject, and saw that it was from God; then they glorified him, because they saw that he had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life. As the word **μετανοια**, which we translate *repentance*, signifies literally *a change of mind*, it may be here referred to a change of religious views, &c. And as *repentance* signifies a change of *life and conduct*, from evil to good, so the word **μετανοια** may be used here to signify a change from a false religion to the true one; from idolatry, to the worship of the true God. *Rosenmuller* thinks that, in several cases, where it is spoken of the Jews, it signifies their change from a *contempt of the Messiah to reverence for him*, and the consequent embracing of the Christian religion.

The Christians who were present were all satisfied with St. Peter's account and apology; but it does not appear that all were ultimately satisfied, as we know there were serious disputes in the Church *afterwards* on this very subject: see ^{<4156>}**Acts 15:5**, &c., where Christian believers, from among the Pharisees, insisted that it was necessary to circumcise the converted Gentiles, and cause them to keep the law of Moses. This opinion was carried much farther in the Church at Jerusalem afterwards, as may be seen at large in ^{<4212>}**Acts 21:21**, &c.

Verse 19. The persecution that arose about Stephen] That is, those who were obliged to flee from Jerusalem at the time of that persecution in which Stephen lost his life. See ^{<4080>}**Acts 8:1**.

Phœnice] Phœnicia, a country between Galilee and Syria, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including Tyre, Sidon, &c. It is often mentioned as a part of Syria. See ^{<4212>}**Acts 21:2, 3**.

Cyprus] An island of the Mediterranean Sea, over against Syria. See Clarke on "^{<4080>}**Acts 4:30**".

Antioch] A city of Syria, built by Antiochus Seleucus, near the river *Orontes*; at that time one of the most celebrated cities of the east. For the situation of all these, see the *map* accompanying this book.

Unto the Jews only.] For they knew nothing of the vision of St. Peter; and did not believe that God would open the door of faith to the Gentiles. The next verse informs us that there were others who were better instructed. See below.

Verse 20. Men of-Cyrene] The metropolis of the Cyrenaica; a country of Africa, bounded on the east by Marmarica, on the west by the Regio Syrtica, on the north by the Mediterranean, and on the south by the Sahara. Cyrene is now called Cairoan. This city, according to Eusebius, was built in the 37th Olympiad, about 630 years before Christ. In consequence of a revolt of its inhabitants, it was destroyed by the Romans; but they afterwards rebuilt it. It was for a long time subject to the *Arabs*, but is now in the hands of the *Turks*.

Spake unto the Grecians] ἑλληνιστας, *The Hellenists*. Who these were, we have already seen Acts 6 and ~~402~~ Acts 9:29, viz. Jews living in Greek cities and speaking the Greek language. But, instead of ἑλληνιστας, *Grecians*, ἑλληνας, *Greeks*, is the reading of AD*, *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, *Eusebius*, *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, and *Æcumenius*. On this evidence, Griesbach has admitted it into the text; and few critics entertain any doubt of the genuineness of the reading. This intimates that, besides preaching the Gospel to the *Hellenistic Jews*, some of them preached it to *heathen Greeks*; for, were we to adopt the common reading, it would be a sort of *actum agere*; for it is certain that the Hellenistic Jews had already received the Gospel. See ~~401~~ Acts 6:1. And it is likely that these Cyprians and Cyrenians had heard of Peter's mission to Cæsarea, and they followed his example by offering the Christian faith to the heathen. It is worthy of remark that the Jews generally called all nations of the world *Greeks*; as the Asiatics, to the present day, call all the nations of Europe *Franks*.

Verse 21. The hand of the Lord was with them] By the *hand*, *arm*, and, *finger* of God, in the Scripture, different displays or exertions of his power are intended. Here it means that the energy of God accompanied them, and applied their preaching to the souls of all attentive hearers. Without this accompanying influence, even an *apostle* could do no good; and can *inferior* men hope to be able to convince and convert sinners without this? Ministers of the word of God, so called, who dispute the necessity and deny the being of this influence, show thereby that they are intruders into

God's heritage; that they are not sent by *him*, and shall not profit the people at all.

A great number believed] That Jesus was the Christ; and that he had died for their offenses, and risen again for their justification. Because the apostles preached the truth, and the *hand of God* was with them, therefore, *a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord*, becoming his disciples, and taking him for their portion.

Verse 22. The Church which was in Jerusalem] This was the *original*, the *mother Church* of Christianity; not the *Church of Rome*; there were Christian Churches founded in many places, which exist to the present day, before Rome heard the Gospel of the kingdom. A Christian Church means a company of believers in Christ Jesus, united for the purposes of Christian fellowship, and edification in righteousness.

They sent forth Barnabas] It seems, then, that the Church collectively had power to commission and send forth any of its own members, whom it saw God had qualified for a particular work. There must have been, even at that time, an acknowledged superiority of some members of the Church beyond others. The *apostles* held the *first* rank; the *deacons* (probably the same as those called prophets, as being next chosen) the *second*; and perhaps those called *evangelists*, simply preachers of the truth, the *third* rank. Those who knew most of God and sacred things, who were most zealous, most holy, and most useful, undoubtedly had the *pre-eminence*.

Verse 23. Had seen the grace of God] That is, had seen the *effects* produced by the grace of God. By the grace of God, we are to understand: 1. His favour. 2. The manifestations of that favour in the communication of spiritual blessings. And, 3. Principles of light, life, holiness, &c., producing effects demonstrative of the causes from which they sprung. Barnabas saw that these people were objects of the Divine approbation; that they were abundantly blessed and edified together as a Christian Church; and that they had received especial influences from God, by his indwelling Spirit, which were to them *incentives* to faith, hope, and love, and also *principles* of conduct.

Was glad,] Not envious because God had blessed the labours of *others* of his Master's servants, but rejoiced to find that the work of salvation was carried on by such instruments as God chose, and condescended to use. They who cannot rejoice in the conversion of sinners, because *they* have

not been the *means* of it, or because such converts or their ministers have not precisely the same views of certain doctrines which they have themselves, show that they have little, if any thing, of the mind that was in Christ, in them.

With purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.] These converts had begun well; they must *continue* and *persevere*: God gave them the *grace*, the *principle* of life and action; it was their business to *use* this. If they did not, the gift would be resumed. Barnabas well knew that they must have the *grace of God in them* to enable them to do any good; but he knew, also, that its being in them did not necessarily imply that it *must continue* there. God had taught him that if they were not workers together with that grace they would receive it in vain; i.e., the end for which it was given would not be answered. He therefore exhorted them, **τη προθεσει της καρδιας**, with *determination* of heart, with *set, fixed purpose* and *resolution*, that they would cleave unto the Lord, **προσμενειν τω κυριω**, *to remain with the Lord*; to *continue* in union and fellowship with him; to be faithful in keeping his truth, and obedient in the practice of it. To be a Christian is to be united to Christ, to be of one spirit with him: to continue to be a Christian is to continue in that union. It is absurd to talk of being children of God, and of absolute, final perseverance, when the soul has lost its spiritual union. There is no perseverance but *in cleaving to the Lord*: he who in his *works* denies him does not *cleave* to him. Such a one is not of God; if he ever had the salvation of God, he has lost it; he is fallen from grace; nor is there a word in the book of God, fairly and honestly understood, that says such a person shall *absolutely and unavoidably arise* from his fall.

Verse 24. For he was a good man] Here is a proper character of a minister of the Gospel.

1. *He is a good man*: his *bad heart* is changed; his *evil dispositions* rooted out; and the mind that was in Christ implanted in him.

2. *He is full of the Holy Ghost*. He is holy, because the Spirit of holiness dwells in him: he has not a few transient visitations or drawings from that Spirit; it is a *resident* in his soul, and it fills his heart. It is *light* in his *understanding*; it is *discrimination* in his *judgment*; it is *fixed purpose* and *determination* in righteousness in his *will*; it is *purity*, it is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and fidelity in his *affections*

and *passions*. In a word, it has sovereign sway in his heart; it governs all passions, and is the *motive* and *principle* of every righteous *action*.

3. He was full *of faith*. He implicitly credited his Lord; he knew that he could not lie—that his word could not fail; he expected, not only the fulfilment of all promises, but also every degree of help, light, life, and comfort, which God might at any time see necessary for his Church, he prayed for the Divine blessing, and he believed that he should not pray in vain. His faith never failed, because it laid hold on that God who could not change. Behold, ye preachers of the Gospel! an original minister of Christ. Emulate his piety, his faith, and his usefulness.

Much people was added unto the Lord.] No wonder, when they had *such a minister*, preaching by the power of the Holy Ghost, *such a Gospel* as that of Jesus Christ.

Verse 25. To Tarsus, for to seek Saul] The persecution raised against him obliged him to take refuge in his own city, where, as a Roman citizen, his person was in safety. See ^{<402>}Acts 9:29, 30.

Verse 26. He brought him unto Antioch] As this city was the metropolis of Syria, and the third city for importance in the whole Roman empire, Rome and Alexandria alone being more eminent, Barnabas might think it expedient to have for his assistance a person of such eminent talents as Saul; and who was especially appointed by Christ to proclaim the Gospel to the *Gentiles*. Saul appears also to have been a thorough master of the Greek tongue, and, consequently, the better qualified to explain the Gospel to the Greek philosophers, and to defend it against their cavils. Barnabas, also being a native of *Cyprus*, ^{<403>}Acts 4:36, where the Greek language was spoken, was judged to be proper for this mission, perhaps on this account, as well as on account of his disinterestedness, holiness, and zeal.

And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.] It is evident they had the name *Christians* from CHRIST their master; as the *Platonists* and *Pythagoreans* had their name from their masters, *Plato* and *Pythagoras*. Now, as these had their name from those great masters because they attended their teaching, and credited their doctrines, so the disciples were called *Christians* because they took Christ for their teacher, crediting his doctrines, and following the *rule of life* laid down by him. It has been a question, by whom was this name given to the disciples? Some think *they* assumed it; others, that the *inhabitants* of Antioch gave it to

them; and others, that it was given by *Saul* and *Barnabas*. This later opinion is favoured by the *Codex Bezae*, which reads the 25th and 26th verses thus: *And hearing that Saul was at Tarsus, he departed, seeking for him; and having found him, he besought him to come to Antioch; who, when they were come, assembled with the Church a whole year, and instructed a great number; and there they first called the disciples at Antioch Christians.*

The word **χρηματισσαι** in our common text, which we translate *were called*, signifies in the New Testament, to *appoint*, *warn*, or *nominate*, by *Divine direction*. In this sense, the word is used, **Matthew 2:12**; **Luke 2:26**; and in the preceding chapter of this book, **Acts 10:22**. If, therefore, the name was given by *Divine appointment*, it as most likely that *Saul* and *Barnabas* were directed to give it; and that, therefore, the name *Christian* is from God, as well as that grace and holiness which are so essentially required and implied in the character. Before this time. the Jewish converts were simply called, among themselves, *disciples*, i.e. scholars; *believers*, *saints*, *the Church*, or *assembly*; and, by their enemies, *Nazarenes*, *Galileans*, *the men of this way* or *sect*; and perhaps lay other names which are not come down to us. They considered themselves as *one family*; and hence the appellation of *brethren* was frequent among them. It was the design of God to make all who believed of one *heart* and *one soul*, that they might consider him as their Father, and live and love like children of the same household. A *Christian*, therefore, is the highest character which any human being can bear upon earth; and to receive it from God, as those appear to have done-how glorious the title! It is however worthy of remark that this name occurs in only three places in the New Testament: here, and in **Acts 26:28**, and in **1 Peter 4:16**.

Verse 27. Came prophets from Jerusalem] Though the term *prophet* is used in the New Testament simply to signify a *teacher*, (see **Clarke's note on Genesis 20:7**), where the subject is largely explained,) yet here it evidently means also such as are under *Divine inspiration*, and foretold future events. This was certainly the case with *Agabus*, **Acts 11:28**, though, perhaps, his ordinary character was that of a *teacher* or *preacher*. It seems from various scriptures, **Romans 12:4**, &c., **1 Corinthians 13:2-14:40**, that the prophets of the New Testament were: 1. *Teachers* or *preachers* in general. 2. Persons who, on *special occasions*, were under the influence of the *Divine Spirit*, and then foretold certain future events. 3. Persons who recited hymns to the honour of God in the

public assemblies of the Christians. 4. Persons who prayed in those assemblies, having sometimes the gift of tongues, at other times not. From ^{<4022>}**Ephesians 2:20; 3:5**, we learn that the *prophets* of the Christian Church were *inferior* to the *apostles*; but, from ^{<4041>}**Ephesians 4:11**, we see that they were *superior* to all other teachers, even to *evangelists* and *pastors*.

Verse 28. Agabus] This prophet, of whom we know nothing, is once more mentioned, ^{<4210>}**Acts 21:10**. He was probably a *Jew*, but whether converted now to Christianity we cannot tell.

Great dearth throughout all the world] The words **εφ' ολην την οικουμενην** probably here mean *the land of Judea*; though sometimes by this phrase the whole *Roman empire* is intended. In the former sense the disciples appear to have understood it, as the next verse informs us; for they determined to send relief to their brethren in *Judea*, which they could not have done had the famine been *general*. It does not appear that they expected it to extend even to *Antioch* in Syria, where they then were, else they would have thought of making provision for *themselves*.

It is well known from history that there were *several famines* in the reign of Claudius. *Dion Cassius*, lib. lx., mentions a severe famine in the *first* and *second* year of the reign of Claudius, which was sorely felt in Rome itself. This famine, it is supposed, induced Claudius to build a port at *Ostia*, for the more regular supply of Rome with provisions.

A *second* famine happened about the fourth year of this reign, which continued for several years, and greatly afflicted the land of Judea. Several authors notice this, but particularly Josephus, *Ant.* lib. xx. cap. 5, sect. 2, where, having mentioned *Tiberius Alexander* as succeeding to the procuratorship in the place of *Cuspius Fadus*, he says that, “during the government of these procurators, a great famine afflicted Judea.” **επι τουτοις δη και τον μεγαν λιμον κατα την ιουδαιαν συνεβη γενεσθαι.**

A *third* famine is mentioned by Eusebius, in *An. Abrahami*, which commences with the calends of October, A.D. 48, which was so powerful “in Greece that a modius (about *half a bushel* of grain) was sold for six drachms,” about three shillings and sixpence English. Vid. *Euseb.* in Chron. edit. *Scalig.* The same author mentions another famine in Rome, in the tenth year of Claudius, of which *Orosius* gives the details, lib. vii.

A *fourth* famine, which took place in the *eleventh* year of Claudius, is mentioned by *Tacitus*, *Annal. lib. xii. sect. 43*, in which there was so great a dearth of provisions, and famine in consequence, that it was esteemed a Divine judgment. *Frugrum quoque egestas, et orta ex ea famas, in prodigium accipiebatur*. At this time, the same author tells us, that in all the stores of Rome there were no more than fifteen days' provision; and, had not the winter been uncommonly mild, the utmost distress and misery must have prevailed.

It may now be inquired, to which of these famines in the reign of Claudius does the prophecy of Agabus refer? Most learned men are of opinion that the famine of which Agabus prophesied was that mentioned above, which took place in the *fourth* year of this emperor. A.D. 47. This famine is particularly mentioned by *Josephus*, *Ant. lib. xx. cap. 2, sect. 5*, who describes it as "a very great famine, in which many died for want of food."—"That Helena, queen of Adiabene, who had embraced the Jewish religion, sent some of her servants to Alexandria, to buy a great quantity of corn; and others of them to Cyprus, to buy a cargo of dried figs, which she distributed to those who were in want." And in *cap. 5, sect. 2*, he says that this happened" when Tiberius Alexander succeeded Cuspids Fadus; and that under *these procurators* the famine happened in which Queen Helena, at a vast expense, procured relief to the Jews." Dr. Hudson's note on this passage in *Josephus* deserves to be copied: "This," says he, "is that famine foretold by Agabus, ~~44128~~ **Acts 11:28**, which happened when Claudius was consul the *fourth* time, (A.D. 47,) and not that which happened when Claudius was consul the second time, and Cæcina was his colleague, (A.D. 42,) as Scaliger says, upon Eusebius, p. 174. Now when *Josephus* had said, a little after, *cap. 5, sect. 2*, that Tiberius Alexander succeeded Cuspis Fadus as procurator, he immediately subjoins, *under these procurators there happened a great famine in Judea*." From this it is evident that this famine must have continued several years, as it existed under *both* these *procurators*. Fadus, says Mr. Whiston, was not sent into Judea till after the death of Agrippa, i.e. towards the end of the fourth year of Claudius, in the end of A.D. 44, or beginning of 45. So that this famine, foretold by Agabus, happened on the fifth, sixth, and seventh years of Claudius, A.D. 45, 46, and 47. See *Whiston's Josephus*; and see *Krebs' Observat. in Nov. Test.* on this place.

Verse 29. Then the disciples-determined to send relief] These were probably Gentile converts; and as they considered themselves receiving the

spiritual blessings, which they now so happily enjoyed, through the means of the Christians in Judea, they resolved to communicate to them a portion of their *temporal* goods; and every man did this *according to his ability*, i.e. he gave a certain proportion of the property with which the providence of God had entrusted him. The community of goods had for some time ceased.

Verse 30. And sent it to the elders] These probably mean those who first believed on Christ crucified, either of the seventy disciples mentioned Luke, ^{<2100>}**Luke 10:1**, or the one hundred and twenty mentioned, ^{<4015>}**Acts 1:15**, or the seven deacons, ^{<4065>}**Acts 6:5**. Some have divided the primitive disciples into three classes: 1. The **αυτοπται**, those who were *eye witnesses*. 2. The **απαρχαι**, those who were the *first fruits*, or converts of the apostles' preaching. 3. The **διαδοχοι**, those who were the *successors* of the preceding from whom they had *received* the doctrines of the Gospel. It is likely the *deacons* are meant, whose office it was to take care of the poor. See ^{<4060>}**Acts 6:1**, &c.

1. AMONG many highly interesting subjects which have come under review in the preceding chapter, we must have particularly noticed, 1. The care the Church of Christ took to have young converts confirmed in the truths they had received, and built up on their most holy faith, ^{<4412>}**Acts 11:22**. It was indispensably necessary that a *foundation* should be laid; and it was not less so that a proper *superstructure* should be raised. For this work, it was requisite that different gifts and talents should be employed, and Barnabas and Saul must be sent to *confirm* in the faith those whom the disciples, who had been scattered by the persecution raised about Stephen, had converted to Christ, ^{<4419>}**Acts 11:19-22**. It is a great thing to have souls converted to the Lord; it is greater to have them built up on their most holy faith; and few persons, even among the ministers of Christ, have talents for *both*. Even when PAUL *planted*, it required APOLLOS to *water*. A frequent interchange of godly ministers in the Church of Christ is of the utmost consequence to its stability and increase.

2. It appears that CHRISTIANS was the first *general* appellative of the followers of our blessed Lord; and there is presumptive evidence, as we have seen, that this appellative came by *Divine appointment*. How very few of those who profess this religion are satisfied with this title! That very Church that arrogates *all* to itself has totally abandoned this title, and its members call themselves *Roman Catholics*, which is absurd; because the

adjective and substantive include *opposite* ideas: *catholic* signifies *universal*; and *Roman* signifies *of or belonging to Rome*. If it be merely *Roman*, it cannot be *catholic*; if it be *catholic*, it cannot be confined to Rome; but it is not *catholic* nor *universal*, in any sense of the word, for it contains but a small part of the people who profess Christianity. The term *Protestant* has more common sense in it; but not much more piety. Almost all sects and parties proceed in the same line; but *Christian* is a title seldom heard of, and the spirit and practice of Christianity but rarely occur. When all return to the spirit of the Gospel, they will probably resume the appellation of *Christians*.

3. An early *fruit* of Christianity was mercy to the poor; and especially to the poor followers of Christ. He has left the poor ever with us, as his representatives, to exercise our bowels of commiseration, and thus teach us to feel and practice mercy. To every man professing Christianity, the religion of Jesus Christ says most authoritatively, *With every man who is pinched by poverty, share what the providence of God has not made absolutely necessary for thy own support*. What God has given us more than we need is entrusted to us for the benefit of those that are in poverty and affliction. He who can, and does not, help the poor, is a disgrace to Christianity; and he who does not lend his hand for the support of the cause of God is a worthless member of the Church of Christ. He who shows no mercy shall have judgment without mercy. And he who spends in pampering the flesh what should be given to the poor shall have a fearful account to give in the day of the Lord.

ACTS

CHAPTER 12.

Herod persecutes the Christians, 1. Kills James, 2. And casts Peter into prison, 3, 4. The Church makes incessant prayer for his deliverance, 5. An angel of God opens the prison doors and leads him out, 6-10. Peter rejoices, and comes to the house of Mary, where many were praying, and declares how he was delivered, 11-17. The soldiers who kept the prison are examined by Herod, and he commands them to be put to death, 18, 19. Herod is enraged against the people of Tyre, but is appeased by their submission, 20. He makes an oration to the people, receives idolatrous praises, and an angel of the Lord unites him, and he dies a miserable death, 21-23. The word of God increases, 24. Barnabas and Saul, having fulfilled their ministry, return from Jerusalem accompanied by John Mark, 25.

NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

Verse 1. Herod the king] This was *Herod Agrippa*, the son of *Aristobulus*, and grandson of *Herod the Great*; he was nephew to *Herod Antipas*, who beheaded John the Baptist, and brother to *Herodias*. He was made king by the Emperor Caligula, and was put in possession of all the territories formerly held by his uncle *Philip* and by *Lysanias*; viz. *Iturea*, *Trachonitis*, *Abilene*, with *Gaulonitis*, *Batanæa*, and *Penias*. To these the Emperor Claudius afterwards added *Judea* and *Samaria*; which were nearly all the dominions possessed by his grandfather, Herod the Great. See ~~<BIB>~~**Luke 3:1**; see also an account of the Herod family, see in **Clarke's note on** ~~<BIB>~~**Matthew 2:1**".

To vex certain of the Church.] That is, to destroy its chief ornaments and supports.

Verse 2. He killed James the brother of John with the sword.] This was *James the greater*, son of Zebedee, and must be distinguished from *James the less*, son of Alphaeus. This latter was put to death by Ananias the high priest, during the reign of Nero. This James with his brother John were those who requested to sit on the right and left hand of our Lord, see ~~<BIB>~~**Matthew 20:23**; and our Lord's prediction was now fulfilled in one of them, who by his martyrdom drank of our Lord's cup, and was baptized with his baptism. By the death of James, the number of the apostles was reduced to *eleven*; and we do not find that ever it was filled up. The

apostles never had any *successors*: God has continued their *doctrine*, but not their *order*.

By *killing with the sword* we are to understand *beheading*. Among the Jews there were *four* kinds of deaths: 1. *Stoning*; 2. *burning*; 3. *killing with the sword*, or *beheading*; and, 4. *strangling*. The third was a Roman as well as a Jewish mode of punishment. *Killing with the sword* was the punishment which, according to the Talmud, was inflicted on those who drew away the people to any strange worship, *Sanhedr.* fol. iii. James was probably accused of this, and hence the punishment mentioned in the text.

Verse 3. He proceeded-to take Peter also.] He supposed that these two were pillars on which the infant cause rested; and that, if these were removed, the building must necessarily come down.

The days of unleavened bread.] About the latter end of March or beginning of April; but whether in the third or fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, or earlier or later, cannot be determined.

Verse 4. Four quaternions of soldiers] That is, *sixteen*, or four companies of *four men* each, who had the care of the prison, each company taking in turn one of the four watches of the night.

Intending after Easter to bring him forth] *μετα το πασχα*, *After the passover*. Perhaps there never was a more unhappy, not to say absurd, translation than that in our text. But, before I come to explain the word, it is necessary to observe that our term called Easter is not exactly the same with the Jewish passover. This festival is always held on the fourteenth day of the first vernal full moon; but the Easter of the Christians, never till the *next* Sabbath after said full moon; and, to avoid all conformity with the Jews in this matter, if the fourteenth day of the first vernal full moon happen on a Sabbath, then the festival of Easter is deferred till the Sabbath following. The first vernal moon is that whose fourteenth day is either on the day of the vernal equinox, or the next fourteenth day after it. The vernal equinox, according to a decree of the council of *Nice*, is fixed to the 21st day of March; and therefore the first vernal moon is that whose fourteenth day falls upon the 21st of March, or the first fourteenth day after. Hence it appears that the next Sabbath after the fourteenth day of the vernal moon, which is called the *Paschal term*, is always *Easter day*. And, therefore, the earliest *Paschal term* being the 21st of March, the 22d of March is the *earliest* Easter possible; and the 18th of April being the latest

Paschal term, the seventh day after, that is the 25th of April, is the *latest* Easter possible.

The term *Easter*, inserted here by our translators, they borrowed from the ancient Anglo-Saxon service-books, or from the version of the Gospels, which always translates the **το πασχα** of the Greek by this term; e.g.

<080> **Matthew 26:2**: *Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover.* [Anglo-Saxon] *Wite ye that aefter twam dagum beoþ Eastro.*

<0169> **Matthew 16:19**: *And they made ready the passover.* [Anglo-Saxon] *And hig gegearwodon hym Easter thenunga* (i.e. the *paschal supper*.) Prefixed to

<0201> **Matthew 28:1**, are these words: [Anglo-Saxon] *This part to be read on Easter even.* And, before <0208> **Matthew 28:8**, these words:

[Anglo-Saxon] <0142> **Mark 14:12**: *And the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the passover.* [Anglo-Saxon] *And þam forman daege asimorum, tha hi Eastron offrodon.* Other examples occur in this version. *Wiclif* used the word *paske*, i.e. *passover*; but *Tindal*, *Coverdale*, *Becke*, and *Cardmarden*, following the old Saxon mode of translation, insert *Easter*: the *Geneva Bible* very properly renders it the *passover*. The Saxon [Anglo-Saxon] are different modes of spelling the name of the goddess *Easter*, whose festival was celebrated by our pagan forefathers on the month of April; hence that month, in the Saxon calendar, is called [Anglo-Saxon] *Easter month*. Every view we can take of this subject shows the gross impropriety of retaining a name every way exceptionable, and palpably absurd.

Verse 5. Prayer was made without ceasing] The Greek word **εκτενης** signifies both *fervour* and *earnestness*, as well as *perseverance*. These prayers of the Church produced that miraculous interference mentioned below, and without which Peter could not have thus escaped from the hands of this ruthless king.

Verse 6. Sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains] Two soldiers guarded his person; his right hand being bound to the left hand of one, and his left hand bound to the right hand of the other. This was the Roman method of guarding their prisoners, and appears to be what is intimated in the text.

Verse 7. Smote Peter on the side] He struck him in such a way as was just sufficient to awake him from his sleep.

His chains fell off from his hands.] The chains mentioned above, by which he was bound to the two soldiers.

Verse 8. Gird thyself] It seems Peter had put off the principal part of his clothes, that he might sleep with more comfort. His resuming all that he had thrown off was a proof that every thing had been done leisurely. There was no evidence of any hurry; nor of any design to elude justice, or even to avoid meeting his accusers in any legal way. It appears that the two soldiers were overwhelmed by a deep sleep, which fell upon them from God.

Verse 9. He-wist not] He *knew* not; from the Anglo-Saxon, [A.S.], *to know*. He supposed himself to be in a dream.

Verse 10. The first and-second ward] It is supposed that ancient Jerusalem was surrounded by *three* walls: if so, then passing through the gates of these three walls successively is possibly what is meant by the expression in the text. The prison in which he was confined might have been that which was at the outer wall.

Iron gate] This was in the innermost wall of the three, and was strongly plated over with iron, for the greater security. In the east, the gates are often thus secured to the present day. *Pitts* says so of the gates of Algiers; and *Pocock*, of some near Antioch. Perhaps this is all that is meant by the *iron gate*. One of the quaternions of soldiers was placed at each gate.

Which opened-of his own accord] Influenced by the unseen power of the angel.

The angel departed from him.] Having brought him into a place in which he no longer needed his assistance. What is proper to God he always does: what is proper to man he requires *him* to perform.

Verse 11. When Peter was come to himself] Every thing he saw astonished him; he could scarcely credit his eyes; he was in a sort of ecstasy; and it was only when the angel left him that he was fully convinced that all was real.

Now I know-that the Lord hath sent his angel] The poor German divine is worthy of pity, who endeavoured to persuade himself and his countrymen that all this talk about the angel was mere illusion; that Peter was delivered in a way which he could not comprehend, and therefore was

led to attribute to a particular providence of God what probably was done by the prefect of the prison, who favoured him! But it is the study of this writer to banish from the word of God all supernatural influence; and to reduce even the miracles of Christ to simple operations of nature, or to the workings of imagination and the prejudices of a weak and credulous people. Such men should at once cast off the mask which so thinly covers their infidelity, and honestly avow themselves to be, what they are, the enemies of revelation in general, and of the Christian religion in particular. Peter could say, *Now I know of a certainty that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me, &c.* No such thing, says Mr. E., Peter was *deceived*; it was not the *Lord*, it was the *prefect* or some other person. Now we know that Peter spoke by the Holy Ghost; but we have no much testimony of Mr. E. nor of any of his associates.

And all the expectation of the-Jews.] It seems they had built much on the prospect of having him sacrificed, as they already had James.

Verse 12. And when he had considered] When he had weighed every thing, and was fully satisfied of the Divine interposition, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, the author of the Gospel, where it appears many were gathered together making prayer and supplication, and probably for Peter's release.

Verse 13. As Peter knocked] The door was probably shut for fear of the Jews; and, as most of the houses in the east have an area before the door, it might have been at this outer gate that Peter stood knocking.

A damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.] She came to inquire who was there. Rhoda signifies a *rose*; and it appears to have been customary with the Jews, as Grotius and others remark, to give the names of flowers and trees to their daughters: thus *Susannah* signifies a *lily*, *Hadassah*, a *myrtle*, *Tamar*, a *palm tree*, &c., &c.

Verse 15. It is his angel.] It was a common opinion among the Jews that every man has a *guardian angel*, and in the popish Church it is an article of faith. The Jews also believed that angels often assumed the likeness of particular persons. They have many stories of the appearance of Elijah in the likeness of different rabbins. As *αγγελος* signifies in general a *messenger*, whether Divine or human, some have thought that the angel or messenger here means a servant or person which the disciples supposed was sent from Peter to announce something of importance to the brethren:

it was also an opinion among the Jews, even in the time of the apostles, as appears from Philo, that the departed souls of good men officiated as ministering angels; and it is possible that the disciples at Mary's house might suppose that Peter had been murdered in the prison; and that his spirit was now come to announce this event, or give some particular warning to the Church.

Verse 17. Declared-how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.] He still persisted in the belief that his deliverance was purely supernatural. It seems that some modern critics could have informed him of his mistake. See ^{<4121>}Acts 12:11.

Show these things unto James, and to the brethren] That is, in one word, show them to the Church, at the *head* of which James undoubtedly was; as we may clearly understand by the part he took in the famous council held at Jerusalem, relative to certain differences between the believing Jews and Gentiles. See ^{<4153>}Acts 15:13-21. There is still no *supremacy* for Peter. He who was bishop or overseer of the Church at Jerusalem was certainly at the head of the whole Church of God at this time; but James was then bishop or inspector of the Church at Jerusalem, and, consequently, was the only *visible head* then upon earth.

He departed-into another place.] Some popish writers say that he went to Rome, and founded a Christian Church there. Those who can believe any thing may believe this. *Where* he went we know not; but it is probable that he withdrew for the present into a place of privacy, till the heat of the inquiry was over relative to his escape from the prison; for he saw that Herod was intent on his death.

Verse 19. Commanded that they should be put to death.] He believed, or pretended to believe, that the escape of Peter was owing to the negligence of the keepers: jailers, watchmen, &c., ordinarily suffered the same kind of punishment which should have been inflicted on the prisoner whose escape they were supposed to have favoured.

He went down from Judea to Cæsarea] How soon he went down, and how long he stayed there, we know not.

Verse 20. Highly displeased with them of Tyre] On what account Herod was thus displeased is not related by any historian, as far as I have been

able to ascertain. Josephus, who speaks of this journey of Herod to Cæsarea, says nothing of it; and it is useless for us to conjecture.

Having made Blastus-their friend] Blastus was probably a eunuch, and had considerable influence over his master Herod; and, to reach the master, it is likely they *bribed* the chamberlain.

Desired peace] The Tyrians and Sidonians being equally subjects of the Roman government with the inhabitants of Galilee, Herod could not go to war with them; but, being irritated against them, he might prevent their supplies: they therefore endeavoured to be on *peaceable*, i.e. friendly, terms with him.

Their country was nourished by the king's country.] That is, they had all their supplies from Galilee; for Tyre and Sidon, being places of trade and commerce, with little territory, were obliged to have all their provisions from the countries under Herod's jurisdiction. This had been the case even from the days of Solomon, as we learn from ^{<1051>}**1 Kings 5:11**; where it is said that *Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat, for food to his household; and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.* See also ^{<2717>}**Ezekiel 27:17**.

Verse 21. Upon a set day, &c.] A day on which games, &c., were exhibited in honour of the Roman emperor. What this refers to, we learn from Josephus. "Herod, having reigned three years over ALL *Judea*, (he had reigned over the tetrarchy of his brother Philip four years before this,) went down to Cæsarea, and there exhibited shows and games in honour of Claudius, and made vows for his health. On the second day of these shows, he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture most truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun's rays, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those who looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, '*He is a god:*' and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a *man*, yet shall we henceforth own thee as *superior to mortal nature.*' Nor did the king rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But, looking up, he saw an owl on a certain rope over his head, and immediately conceived that this bird was to him a messenger of ill tidings; and he fell into the deepest sorrow; a severe pain also arose in his bowels, and he died after five days' severe illness." This is

the sum of the account given by Josephus, *Ant. lib. xix. cap. 8, sect. 2.* [See *Whiston's* edition.] Notwithstanding the embellishments of the Jewish historian, it agrees in the main surprisingly with the account given here by St. Luke. Josephus, it is true, suppresses some circumstances which would have been dishonourable to this impious king; and, according to his manner, *puts a speech in Herod's mouth*, when he found himself struck with death, expressive of much humility and contrition. But this speech is of no authority. When Josephus takes up and pursues the *thread of mere historical narration*, he may be safely trusted; but whenever he begins to *embellish*, or put *speeches in the mouths of his actors*, he is no longer to be credited. He even here transforms an *angel of the Lord* into an *owl*, and introduces it most improbably into his narration; as if an owl, a bird of all others that can least *bear the light*, should come and perch on the pavilion of the king, when the sun was *shining with the most resplendent rays!*

Verse 23. The angel of the Lord smote him] His death was most evidently a judgment from God.

Because he gave not God the glory] He did not rebuke his flatterers, but permitted them to give him that honour that was due to God alone. **See Clarke on “^{<4121>}Acts 12:21”**.

And was eaten of worms] Whether this was the *morbus pedicularis*, or whether a violent inflammation of his bowels, terminating in putrefaction, did not actually produce *worms*, which, for several days, swarmed in his infected entrails, we cannot tell. It is most likely that this latter was the case; and this is at once more agreeable to the *letter* of the text, and to the circumstances of the case as related by Josephus.

And gave up the ghost.] That is, he died of the disorder by which he was then seized, after having lingered, in excruciating torments, for *five days*, as Josephus has stated. Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod the Great died of the same kind of disease. See the observations at the end of ^{<4025>}**Acts 1:26** relative to the death of Judas.

Verse 24. But the word of God] The Christian doctrine preached by the apostles *grew* and *multiplied*-became more *evident*, and had daily *accessions*; for the spirit of *revelation* rested on those men, and God was daily *adding* to that *word* as circumstances required, in order to complete that testimony of his which we now find contained in the New Testament. As there is in the original an allusion to the *vegetation* of grain, (ηυξανε, *it*

grew, as corn grows, the stalk and the ear; και επληθυνετο, it was multiplied, as the corn is in the full ear,) there is probably a reference to the *parable of the SOWER and his seed*; for the *seed is the word of God, and the doctrine of the kingdom*. It was *liberally sown*; it grew *vigorously*, and became *greatly multiplied*. And why? Because it was the *word, the doctrine of God*-there was no *corruption* in it; and because God *watered it with the dew of heaven* from on high.

Verse 25. Returned from Jerusalem] That is, to *Antioch*, after the death of Herod.

When they had fulfilled their ministry] When they had carried the alms of the Christians at Antioch to the poor saints at Jerusalem, according to what is mentioned, ^{<4112>}**Acts 11:29, 30**, to support them in the time of the coming famine.

And took with them John, whose surname was Mark.] This was the son of Mary, mentioned ^{<4121>}**Acts 12:12**. He accompanied the apostles to Cyprus, and afterwards in several of their voyages, till they came to *Perga in Pamphylia*. Finding them about to take a more extensive voyage, he departed from them. See the case, ^{<4131>}**Acts 13:13; 15:37-40**.

1. WHEN the nature, spirit, and tendency of Christianity are considered, we may well be astonished that it should ever find a persecutor among the souls it was designed to instruct and save! *Devils* can have no part in it, and therefore we may naturally expect them, through *envy* and *malice*, to oppose it; but that *men*, for whose use and salvation the wisdom and mercy of God made it, should reject its offers of mercy, and persecute to death those who proclaimed it, is the most unaccountable thing that can be conceived. What a proof is this of *mere maliciousness*, where the persecutor not only serves no self-interest by it, but destroys, as far as he can, all that could promote his own present and eternal happiness! This argues such blindness of understanding, hardness of heart, and derangement of mind, as can be accounted for only on the supposition of a nature totally fallen from God, righteousness, and truth. The Jews crucify Christ, and martyr Stephen; and Herod murders James; and both join together to persecute the *followers* of Christ and destroy his cause. Reader, consider the consequences: this *bad people* were permitted to remain till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were then cut off by a most terrible judgment; and Herod was visited for his transgressions in such a most awful way as strongly marked the displeasure of God against

persecutors. If a *man* contend with a *man*, the contest is in a certain way *equal*-the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; but when a man enters the lists against his *Maker*, as every *persecutor* does, wo unto that man!-he must be torn in pieces, when there is none to deliver.

2. How true is the saying, there is neither counsel nor might against the Lord! In the midst of all troubles and afflictions, that kingdom of heaven which is *like a grain of mustard seed* grew and increased, and became a mighty tree which is now filling the whole earth, and fowl of every wing are flying to lodge in its branches. Ride on, and be thou prosperous, O Christ! We wish thee good luck with thine honour.

ACTS

CHAPTER 13.

Of the prophets and teachers in the Church of Antioch, 1. By command of the Holy Spirit the Church appoints Saul and Barnabas to a particular work, 2, 3. They depart, and travel to Seleucia, Cyprus, and Salamis, preaching in the Jewish synagogues, 4, 5. At Paphos they meet with Bar-Jesus or Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer, who endeavoured to prevent the deputy of the island from receiving the Christian faith, 6-8. Saul, for the first time called Paul, denounces the judgments of God upon him, and he is struck blind, 9-11. The deputy, seeing this, is confirmed in the faith, 12. Paul and his company leave Paphos, and come to Pamphylia, where John Mark leaves them, and returns to Jerusalem, 13. Paul and Barnabas proceed to Antioch; and, coming into a synagogue of the Jews, are requested by the rulers of it to preach to the people, 14,15. Paul preaches, and proves that Jesus is the Christ, 16-41. The Gentiles desire the sermon to be preached to them the next Sabbath, and many of the Jews and proselytes receive the Christian faith, 42, 43. The next Sabbath the whole city attend; and the Jews, filled with envy, contradict and blaspheme, 44, 45. Paul and Barnabas with great boldness show that, by the order of God, the Gospel was to be preached first to them; but, seeing they had rejected it, it should now be taken from them, and sent to the Gentiles, 46, 47. The Gentiles rejoice and receive the truth, 48, 49. The Jews raise a persecution against the apostles, and expel them, 50. They come to Iconium, full of joy and the Holy Ghost, 51, 52.

NOTES ON CHAP. 13.

Verse 1. Certain prophets and teachers] προφηται και διδασκαλοι.

It is probable that these were not distinct offices; both might be vested in the same persons. By *prophets* we are to understand, when the word is taken simply, persons who were frequently inspired to predict future events, and by *teachers*, persons whose ordinary office was to instruct the people in the Christian doctrine. These also, to be properly qualified for the office, must have been endued with the influence of the Holy Spirit; for, as but a very small portion of the Scriptures of the New Testament could have as yet been given, it was necessary that the teachers should derive much of their own teaching by immediate revelation from God. On prophets and teachers, see the note on ^{<4412>}Acts 11:27.

Barnabas] Of whom see before, ^{<4412>}Acts 11:22-24.

Simeon-Niger] Or *Simeon the Black*, either because of his complexion, or his hair. It was on reasons of this kind that surnames, *urnoms*, name upon name were first imposed. Of this Simeon nothing farther is known.

Lucius of Cyrene] See ^{<4112>}Acts 11:20.

Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod] Our margin has given the proper meaning of the original word **συντροφος**, *a foster-brother*; i.e. Manaen was the son of the woman who nursed Herod Antipas; and the son, also, whose milk the young Herod shared. Of a person whose name was Manæn or Menahem, and who was in the court of Herod, we read several things in the Jewish writers. They say that this man had the gift of prophecy, and that he told Herod, when he was but a child, that he would be king. When Herod became king he sent for him to his court, and held him in great estimation. It might have been the son of this Menahem of whom St. Luke here speaks. Dr. Lightfoot has shown this to be at least *possible*.

Verse 2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted] On Mondays and Thursdays it was usual with the more pious Jews to attend the public service in their synagogues, and to fast: the former is what we are to understand by *ministering to the Lord*. On the Sabbaths they attended the service in the synagogue, but did not fast. The Greek word, **λειτουργουντων**, signifies *performing the office of praying, supplicating, rendering thanks, &c.*: hence the word **λειτουργια**, *liturgy, the work of prayer, &c.*, from **λιτη**, *supplication*, according to some; or rather from **λειτος**, *common*, and **εργον**, *work*, the *common or public work*, in which all the people were engaged.

The Holy Ghost said] A revelation of the Divine will was made to some person then present; probably to either *Simeon*, or *Lucius*, or *Manaen*, mentioned before.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul.] Consecrate, or set them apart, for the particular work whereunto I have called them. *How* this was done, we find in the next verse.

Verse 3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them] 1. *They fasted*: this was probably done by the whole Church. 2. *They prayed*, that God would bless and prosper them in their work. 3. *They laid hands upon them*; thus solemnly appointing them to that

particular work. But was it by this fasting, praying, and imposition of hands that these men were qualified for this work? No. God had already *called* them to it, ^{<413D>} **Acts 13:2**, and he who called them had qualified them. Both their call and their qualification came from God; but he chose that they should have also the sanction of that Church of which they had been members; and therefore he said, *Separate me*, &c. The ordination of elders among the Jews was by *three persons*; and here we find three, *Simeon*, *Lucius*, and *Manaen*, ordaining two others, *Barnabas* and *Saul*. But how did the Jews ordain? Not by imposition of hands: this is strictly forbidden, see Maimon. Sanh. chap. 4. "After what manner is the ordaining of elders for ever? Not that they should lay their hands on the head of an elder; but only that they should call him *Rabbi*, and say to him, Behold, thou art ordained, and hast power of judging, &c." It is remarkable that the imposition of hands in the ordaining of elders was not used among the ancient Jews, probably never under the *first temple*; and rarely, if ever, under the *second*. See Lightfoot on this place. The Church at Antioch, however, did depart from this custom: they put their hands on the heads of Barnabas and Saul; thus designating them to be the persons whom they, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, sent to preach the Gospel of Christ to the heathen.

When the Holy Spirit said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*, and the elders of the Church, in consequence, prayed, fasted, and laid their hands upon them, they certainly understood that by acting thus they fulfilled the mind of the Spirit. Hence, is it not evident that, when the elders of the Church of God have good reason to believe that He has called certain persons to the work of the ministry, and qualified them for that work, they should proceed as the elders of the Church of Antioch did; and by *fasting*, *prayer*, and *imposition of hands*, separate those persons for the work whereunto God has called them. Such persons will consider themselves accountable to GOD and his *Church*, and should take care how they use the gift and authority received from *both*. Is it not being wise above what is written to say, "When God has called and given authority, there is no need of ordination or appointment from man?" I would just ask the objector, Why, then, when God had called Barnabas and Saul to the work, did he command the Church to *separate them* to him for that *very work*? And why did they, in obedience, *fast*, *pray*, and *lay hands upon them*? I shall dispute with no man about the superior excellence of the *episcopal* or *presbyterian* form in

ordination: if all the preliminaries be right, they may be both equally good, for all that I have ever been able to learn to the contrary; but that there should be *some* proper scriptural form attended to, I am fully satisfied. Besides, if the plan of the Church at Antioch were regularly and faithfully followed, in sending forth the ministers of the Gospel, no man can prove that God would not own them in an especial manner, and more particularly prosper their work. But, O ye rulers of the Church! be careful, as ye shall answer it to God, never to lay hands on the head of a man whom ye have not just reason to believe God has called to the work; and whose eye is single, and whose heart is pure. Let none be sent to teach Christianity, who have not experienced it to be the power of God to the salvation of their own souls. If ye do, though they have *your* authority, they never can have the blessing nor the approbation of God. “*I sent them not: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.*” ~~<4123>~~ **Jeremiah 23:32.**

Verse 4. Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost] By his *influence*, *authority*, and under his *continual direction*. Without the *first*, they were not *qualified* to go; without the *second*, they had no *authority* to go; and without the *third*, they could not *know where to go*.

Departed, unto Seleucia] This is generally understood to be *Seleucia* of *Pieria*, the first city on the coast of *Syria*, coming from *Cilicia*; near the place where the river *Orontes* pours itself into the sea.

They sailed to Cyprus.] A well known island in the Mediterranean Sea. See Clarke on “~~<4123>~~ Acts 4:36”.

Verse 5. Salamis] The capital of the island of Cyprus; afterwards called *Constantia*, and now *Salina*, situated on the eastern part of the island.

They preached the word of God] *τον λογον*, The doctrine of God, the Christian religion, emphatically so called.

They had also John to their minister.] This was *John Mark*, of whom we heard, ~~<4123>~~ **Acts 12:25**; for their *minister*, *υπηρετην*, to assist them in minor offices, as *deacon* or *servant*, that they might give themselves wholly to the doctrine of the Lord.

Verse 6. Gone through the isle] *ὅλην*, *The whole isle*, is added here by ABCDE, several others, both the *Syrian*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*; and also by several of the Greek fathers; and this must

be the true reading, for it is evident they ran through the whole island from east to west.

Unto Paphos] This town, next in importance to *Salamis*, was situated on the western part of the isle; and having gone from *Salamis* to this place is a proof that they had gone through the whole island from east to west, according to the *reading* noticed above. There was probably no town in the universe more dissolute than *Papas*. Here Venus had a superb temple: here she was worshipped with *all her rites*; and from this place she was named the *Paphian Venus*, the *queen of Paphos*, &c. This temple and whole city were destroyed by an earthquake; so that a vestige of either does not now remain. There are two islands which go by this name, both adjoining, and on the west side of the island of Cyprus. One is called *Old Paphos*, the other *New Paphos*; the latter is probably the island here mentioned, though they are often confounded. On this island there is a Christian Church, dedicated to St. George, in which service is performed by the Greek ministers. It is a bishop's see, suffragan to the Abp. of *Nicosia*.

A certain sorcerer] *τινα μαγον*, *A magician*, one who used magical arts, and pretended to have commerce with supernatural agents. A person who dealt in *sleight of hand*, or *leger-de-main*. Such as I have supposed Simon Magus to be. See Clarke's note on "~~418~~ Acts 8:9".

A false prophet]. A deceiver, one who pretended to have a Divine commission, a fortune teller.

Bar-Jesus] That is, *the son of Jesus* or *Joshua*; as *Bar-jona* is the son of *Jonah*; *Bar-tholomew*, the son of *Thalmi*, &c.

Verse 7. The deputy of the country] *αυθυπατω*, *The proconsul*. Rosenmuller and others remark, that in those days the Romans sent two different kinds of governors into the provinces. Some of the provinces were *Cæsarean* or *imperial*, and into those they sent *propretors*; others belonged to the *senate* and *people of Rome*, and into those they sent *proconsuls*. Cyprus had formerly been an imperial province; but Augustus, who made the distinction, had given it to the *people*, whence it was governed by a proconsul. See *Dion Cass. Hist. Rom. lib. iv. p. 523*. [Edit. *Leunclav.*]

Sergius Paulus] This proconsul is not mentioned any where else: he became a Christian, had his name written in the book of life, and, probably on that very account, blotted out of the *Fasti Consulares*.

A prudent man] **ανδρι συνετω**, A man of *good sense*, of a *sound understanding*, and therefore wished to hear the doctrine taught by these apostles; he did not persecute the men for their preaching, but sent for them that he might hear for himself.

Verse 8. But Elymas, the sorcerer, (for so is his name by interpretation)] That is, Elymas is the interpretation of the word **μαγος**, or *sorcerer*; not of the word *Bar-Jesus* as some have imagined; and to support which they have been led into strange etymologies on the word **βαρ'ιησους**, *Bar-Jesus*. But how is *Elymas*, **ελυμας**, the interpretation of the word **μαγος**, *magician* or *sorcerer*? Ans. Both names are *Asiatic*; but neither Hebrew nor Greek. I have already observed, in **Clarke's note on ²³⁰⁰Matthew 2:1**", that [Persic] *mogh* in Persian means an idolater, a worshipper of fire, and sometimes what we term a magician. Elymas is from the Arabic [Arabic] *ilm*, knowledge, science, doctrine, art; from *alama*, he was *wise, skilled, &c.*; hence [Persic] *aleem* or *alymon*, a *doctor* or *learned man*, and, with the Greek termination, **ελυμας**, Elymas, the interpretation of [Persic] *mogh*, Greek **μαγος**, *magos*, a magician, a wise man, *doctor, &c.*

Verse 9. Saul, who also is-Paul] This is the first time the name Paul occurs, and the last time in which this apostle is called Saul, as his common or general name.

Saul, I wav Shaul, was the name of the first Israelitish king, and signifies *asked, sought*; from **I av shaal**, he asked, inquired, &c.

Paul, Paulus, if derived from the Latin, signifies *little, dwarfish*: but if from the Hebrew, **al p pala**, it signifies *extraordinary, wonderful*; and this appears to have been the derivation assigned to it by *St. Jerome*, com. in Ep. Pauli ad Philem., who translates it *mirabilis*, wonderful, and *Hesychius* must have had the same in view, for he defines it thus, **παυλος, θαυμαστος, η εκλεκτος, συμβουλος**, Paul, wonderful, or elect, counsellor. The lexicographer had probably here in view, ²³⁰⁶**Isaiah 9:6**: *his name shall be called (xy[wy al p pelé yoëts) wonderful, counsellor*; which he might corrupt into *paulus*, and thus make his **θαυμαστος**

συμβουλος out of it by way of explanation. *Triller*, however, supposes the συμβουλος of Hesychius to be corrupted from συνδουλος *fellow servant*, which is a term not unfrequently applied to apostles, &c., in the New Testament, who are called the *servants of God*; and it is used by Paul himself, ^{<510107>} **Colossians 1:7; 4:7**. The *Latin* original is the most probable. It is well known that the Jews in the apostolic age had frequently *two* names, one *Hebrew*, the other *Greek* or *Roman*. Saul was born of Jewish parents, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he had therefore his *first* name from that language, **I wav** *Shaul*, asked or begged; as it is possible he might have been a child for whom his parents had addressed their fervent petitions to God. The case of Samuel is one in point. See ^{<001010>} **1 Samuel 1:9-18**. As he was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, he was consequently born a free Roman citizen; and hence his parents would naturally give him, for *cognomen*, some name borrowed from the *Latin* tongue, and *Paulus*, which signifies *little*, might indicate that he was at his birth a *small* or *diminutive* child. And it is very likely that he was *low* in *stature* all his days; and that it is to this he refers himself, ^{<471010>} **2 Corinthians 10:10**, *for his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*. If he were small in stature, his voice would be naturally low and feeble; and the Greeks, who were fond of a *thundering eloquence*, would despise him on this very account.

Filled with the Holy Ghost] Therefore the sentence he pronounced was not from *himself*, but from God. And indeed, had he not been under a Divine influence, it is not likely he would have ventured thus to accost this sorcerer in the presence of the governor, who, no doubt, had greatly admired him.

Verse 10. O full of all subtilty] **δολου**, *Deceit*, pretending to supernatural powers without possessing any, and having only *cunning* and *deceit* as their substitutes.

And-mischief] **ραδιουργιας**, from **ραδιος**, *easy*, and **εργον**, *a work*; one who is *ready at his work*; a word which excellently well defines a *juggler*, one who is *expert at sleight of hand*; though it is often employed to signify an abandoned and accomplished villain.

Child of the devil] **υιε διαβολου**, *Son of the devil*, possessing his nature; filled with his cunning; and, in consequence, practising deceit.

Enemy of all righteousness] **εχθρεπασης δικαιοσυνης**; Opposed in thy heart to all that is *just*, *true*, and *good*.

Wilt thou not cease to pervert, &c.] οὐ παύσῃ διαστρεφῶν. Wilt thou not cease *perverting*? He had probably laboured in this bad work from the beginning of Paul's ministry in the place; and God in his mercy had borne with him; and no doubt the apostle had *warned* him, for thus much seems implied in the reproof. What a terrible character is given of this bad man! He no doubt passed among the people for what we call a *clever fellow*; and he was so clever as to hide himself under a pretty dense mask; but God, who searches the heart, plucked it off, and tells him, and those who were perverted by him, what an accomplished deceiver and knave he was.

The right ways of the Lord] τὰς ὁδοὺς κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας, *The ways of the Lord, the straight ways.* This saying is very emphatical. The ways of Elymas were *crooked* and *perverse*; *the ways of the Lord*, the doctrine taught by him, *plain* and *straight*. What is here said of the conduct and teaching of Elymas, for he was a *false prophet*, is true of all *false doctrine*: it is *complex*, *devious*, and *tortuous*: while the doctrine of God is *simple*, *plain*, and *straight*; directing in the way, the sure way, that leads to present peace and everlasting happiness. From the phraseology which the apostle employs in this terrible address to Elymas, we may learn, as well as from his name *Bar-Jesus*, that he was by birth and education a *Jew*. On this account he was the greater enemy to Christianity; and on this same account he was the less excusable.

Verse 11. The hand of the Lord is upon thee] The *power* of God is now about to deal with thee in the way of *justice*.

Thou shalt be blind] Every word here proves the immediate inspiration of Paul. He was full of the Holy Ghost when he began this address: by the light of that Spirit he discerned the state of Elymas, and exposed his real character; and, by the prophetic influence of that same Spirit, he predicted the calamity that was about to fall upon him, while as yet *there was no sign of his blindness!* Mark this!

Not seeing the sun for a season.] In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. This blindness was not to be *perpetual*: it was intended to be the means of awakening and softening the hard heart of this poor sinner. There is an ancient tradition, and it is mentioned both by *Origen* and *Chrysostom*, that Elymas, in consequence of this became a sincere convert to the religion of Christ. Origen says: "And Paul by a word striking him blind, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paul, **διὰ τῶν πονῶν ἐπιστρέφει αὐτὸν εἰς θεοσεβείαν**, by anguish converted him to

godliness.” And, commenting on-*Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun, αχρη καιρου*, for a season, asks, “And why for a season? That, being smitten on account of his transgressions, and brought to repentance, he might at last be deemed worthy to see the sun, not only with his *body*, but with his *mind*; that the Divine virtue might be proclaimed in restoring him to sight, and his soul, believing, might receive godliness.” Com. in Exod., vol. i. p. 117, edit. de la Rue, Par. 1733.

There fell on him a mist and darkness] *αχλυσ*, *achlus*, is a disordered state of the eye, in which the patient sees through a *thick mist*. This thick mist, or perturbed state of the eye, took place first: it increased, and *σκοτος*, *thick*, positive *darkness*, was the issue.

He went about] *πεπιαγων*. Not knowing how to take a right step, he *groped* about in great uncertainty; and, not being able to find his way, he sought for some persons to lead him by the hand. This state of Elymas is inimitably expressed in one of the cartoons of Raphael, now at Hampton-court, (and lately engraved, in the true spirit of the original, by Mr. Thomas Holloway,) in which his whole figure expresses the depth of *distress, concern, uncertainty, and confusion*; and, to use a word common in exhibiting this matchless piece of painting, *he is blind from head to foot*. In this manner the text authorizes the painter to express the state of this miserable culprit.

Verse 12. The deputy-believed] This was a proof that the doctrine was true; and that the power of God, from which nothing could be concealed, and which nothing could resist, was with these preachers.

Being astonished] *εκπλησσομενος*, Being struck with astonishment, as Elymas was struck with blindness. Thus the word of God is a two-edged sword: it smites the sinner with judgment or compunction; and the sincere inquirer after truth, with conviction of its own worth and excellence.

Verse 13. Paul and his company loosed from Paphos] They sailed away from this island, leaving, it may be presumed, Elymas a sincere and deeply humbled *penitent*; and Sergius Paul, a thorough and happy *believer* in the doctrine of Christ.

Previously to this time, St. Luke always mentions Barnabas *before* Paul; but after this he mentions Paul always *first*; probably after seeing how God

had distinguished him in the late proceedings at Cyprus; as much of the Holy Spirit now rested upon him.

They came to Perga in Pamphylia] As Perga was not a maritime town, it is conjectured that the apostles sailed up the river *Cestrus*, in order to come to this place, which, according to *Strabo*, was situated about sixty leagues up this river, and near to which was a famous temple dedicated to *Diana*. For Pamphylia, see ^{<4120>}**Acts 2:10**.

And John departing from them] Why John Mark left his brethren at this place we are not informed; probably he went to visit his pious mother Mary at Jerusalem, and to see Peter, to whom he is supposed to have been much attached. It certainly was not with the approbation of Paul that he left them at this place, as we learn from ^{<4153>}**Acts 15:38**; yet his departure does not seem to have merited the displeasure of Barnabas; for John Mark having met these apostles at Antioch, when Paul purposed to revisit the various places where they had planted the word of God, Barnabas was willing to take him with them; but Paul would not consent, because he had *departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work*, ^{<4153>}**Acts 15:35-39**, and this occasioned a separation between Barnabas and Paul. It does not appear that John Mark was under any obligation to accompany them any longer or any farther than he pleased. He seems to have been little else than their *servant*, and certainly was not divinely appointed to this work, as *they* were; and consequently might leave them *innocently*, though not *kindly*, if they could not readily supply his place. In this respect John Mark might be to blame; but Barnabas, whose *nephew* he was, could look over this fault more easily than Paul, who could not find those motives to pass by what was reprehensible in his conduct which natural affection might furnish to his brother apostle.

Verse 14. They came to Antioch in Pisidia] This place is mentioned thus to distinguish it from *Antioch* in *Syria*, with which it had nothing in common but the name. There were several cities and towns in various districts of these countries called *Antioch*: some have reckoned up not less than *twelve*. Pisidia, in which this was situated, was a province of Asia Minor, near to Pamphylia, having Phrygia on the north, and Pamphylia on the south. The position of all these places may be seen on the *map*.

Into the synagogue on the Sabbath day] Though Paul was now on a special mission to the *Gentiles*, yet he availed himself of every opportunity, in every place, of making the *first* offer of salvation to the *Jews*.

Verse 15. After the reading of the law and the prophets] A certain portion of the *law* and another of the *prophets*, was read every Sabbath; and the law was so divided as to be read over once every year. In the notes at the conclusion of Deuteronomy, I have considered this subject at large, and given a complete table of the *Parashoth*, sections of the law, and *Haphtaroth*, sections of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath in the year in the Jewish synagogues. To have an exact view of every part of the Jewish ecclesiastical economy, the reader will do well to consult the above mentioned *table*, and those which follow it: they have been drawn up with great care, attention, and indescribable labour.

It has been a question, in what language were the law and prophets read in a synagogue of *Pisidia*, for in that district Strabo informs us that *four* languages were spoken, viz. the *Pisidian*, the *Solyman*, the *Greek*, and the *Lydian*. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, with great probability, that the Scriptures were read in the original *Hebrew*; and that an interpreter tendered the reading to the people in their mother tongue. There is no doubt that the Jews and proselytes understood the Greek tongue well; and they certainly had the *Septuagint* version among them.

The rulers of the synagogue] These were the persons whose business it was to read the appointed sections, and to take care of the synagogue and its concerns; and to see that all was done decently and in order.

Sent unto them] Seeing them to be Jews, they wished them to give some suitable address to the people, i.e. to the Jews who were then engaged in Divine worship; for the whole of the following discourse, which greatly resembles that of St. Stephen, ^{<407>}**Acts 7:1-53**, is directed to the *Jews* alone; and this was probably spoken either in *Hebrew* or *Greek*.

Ye men and brethren] **ανδρες αδελφοι**, *Men brethren*, a Hebraism for, “Ye men who are our brethren,” i.e. *Jews*, as we ourselves are; but **ανδρες** is often an expletive, as we have already seen. **See Clarke’s note on** ^{<407>}**Acts 7:2**”.

If ye have any word of exhortation] **ει εστι λογος εν υμιν παρακλησεως** *If ye have any subject of consolation*, any word of *comfort* to us, who are sojourners in this strange land, speak it. The *Consolation of Israel* was an epithet of the Messiah among the Jews; and it is probable that it was in reference to him that the rulers of the synagogue spoke. That **παρακλησις** is to be understood here as meaning *consolation*, and this in

reference to the Messiah, the whole of the following discourse will prove to the attentive reader; in which Paul shows the care and protection of God towards his people Israel, and the abundant provision he had made for their salvation by Jesus Christ. They wished for *consolation*, and he declared unto them *glad tidings*, and many felt the power and comfort of the doctrine of the cross.

Verse 16. Men of Israel] Ye that are *Jews by birth*; and ye that fear God-ye that are *proselytes* to the Jewish religion. In this discourse Paul proves that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, sent from God, not only for the salvation of the *Jews*, but of the *whole human race*. And this he does, not with the rhetorician's arts, but in a plain, simple detail of the history of Christ, and the most remarkable transactions of the people of God, which referred to his manifestation in the flesh. *Rosenmuller*.

Verse 17. The God of-our fathers] The apostle begins his discourse with the Egyptian bondage, and their deliverance from it, as points the most remarkable and striking in their history; in which the providence and mighty power of God, exerted so frequently in their behalf, were peculiarly conspicuous.

Exalted the people] Even when they were strangers in the land, and greatly oppressed, God exalted them; made them a terror to their enemies, and multiplied them greatly.

With a high arm] A literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, *hmr [wrzb bezeroâ ramah*, with a lifted-up arm, to protect them and destroy their enemies. The meaning of the phrase is, *a manifest display of the Divine power*.

Verse 18. About the time of forty years] The space of time between their coming out of Egypt, and going into the promised land.

Suffered he their manners] *ετροποφορησεν αυτους*; He dealt indulgently with them: howsoever they behaved towards him, he mercifully bore with, and kindly treated them. But instead of *ετροποφορησεν*, ACE, some others, with the *Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Æthiopic*, and some of the fathers, read *ετροφοφορησεν*, which signifies, he *nourished and fed them*, or *bore them about in his arms as a tender nurse does her child*. This reading confirms the *marginal* conjecture, and agrees excellently with the scope of the place, and is a reading at least of equal value with that in the

commonly received text. Griesbach has admitted it, and excluded the other. Both, when rightly understood, speak nearly the same sense; but the latter is the most expressive, and agrees best with Paul's discourse, and the history to which he alludes. See the same form of expression, ^{<04112>}**Numbers 11:12**; ^{<02904>}**Exodus 19:4**; ^{<2346B>}**Isaiah 46:3, 4; 63:9**.

Verse 19. Destroyed seven nations] The *Canaanites, Hittites, Girgasites, Amorites, Hivites, Peresites, and Jebusites*. The rabbins frequently call them **twmwa h**[**bv** *Shebaah Omoth*, the *Seven Nations*].

Verse 20. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years] This is a most difficult passage, and has been termed by Scaliger, *Crux Chronologorum*. The apostle seems here to contradict the account in ^{<1001>}**1 Kings 6:1**: *And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, he began to build the house of the Lord.*

Sir Norton Knatchbull, in his annotations upon difficult texts, has considered the various solutions proposed by learned men of the difficulty before us; and concludes that the words of the apostle should not be understood as meaning *how long* God gave them judges, but *when* he gave them; and therefore proposes that the first words of this verse, **και μετα ταυτα, ως ετεσι τετρακοσιοις και πεντηκοντα**, should be referred to the words going *before*, ^{<4137>}**Acts 13:17**, that is, to the *time* WHEN *the God of the children of Israel chose their fathers*.

“Now this time wherein God may properly be said to have chosen their fathers, about 450 years before he gave them judges, is to be computed from the birth of Isaac, in whom God may properly be said to have chosen their fathers; for God, who had chosen Abraham out of all the people of the earth, chose Isaac at this time out of the children of Abraham, in whose family the covenant was to rest. To make this computation evident, let us observe that from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob are 60 years; from thence to their going into Egypt, 130; from thence to the exodus, 210; from thence to their entrance into Canaan, 40; from that to the division of the land (about which time it is probable they began to settle their government by *judges*) 7 years; which sums make 447: viz. 60 + 130 + 210 + 40 + 7 = 447. And should this be reckoned from the

year *before* the birth of Isaac, when God established his covenant between himself and Abraham, *and all his seed after him*, ^{<01719>}**Genesis 17:19**, at which time God *properly chose their fathers*, then there will be 448 years, which brings it to within *two* years of the 450, which is sufficiently exact to bring it within the apostle's **ως**, *about*, or *nearly*.

“Some have made the period 452 years; which, though *two* years *more* than the apostle's round number, is still sufficiently reconcilable with his qualifying particle **ως**, *about*. And it may be added that the most correct writers often express a sum *totally*, but not *exactly*: so, with *Demosthenes* and *Plautus*, we find that called a *talent* where some *drachms* were either *wanting* or *abounding*.”

The sacred writers often express themselves in the same way: e.g. *He made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it about*. Now we know that the circumference of any circle is only in *round* numbers to its diameter as *three to one*; but, correctly, is considerably more, nearly as 22 to 7. But even the Spirit of God does not see it necessary to enter into such niceties, which would only puzzle, and not instruct the common reader.

Calmet has paraphrased these passages nearly to the same sense: the text may be thus connected; ^{<41319>}**Acts 13:19**. *And having destroyed; seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot, about one hundred and fifty years after. And afterwards he gave them judges, to the time of Samuel the prophet*. The paraphrase of Calmet is the following: “*The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers in the person of Abraham; he promised him the land of Canaan; and four hundred and fifty years after this promise, and the birth of Isaac, who was the son and heir of the promise, he put them in possession of that land which he had promised so long before.*” As this view of the subject removes all the principal difficulties, I shall not trouble my reader with other modes of interpretation.

Verse 21. Saul the son of Cis] In all proper names quoted from the Old Testament, we should undoubtedly follow, as nearly as possible, the same orthography: **vyq** *Kish*, was the name of this king's father, and so we spell it in the Old Testament, and yet have transformed it into *Cis* in the New, where the orthography is almost entirely lost.

The space of forty years.] Reckoning from the time of his anointing by Samuel to the time of his death, from A.M. 2909 to 2949.

Verse 22. David-a man after mine own heart] That is, a man who would rule the kingdom according to God's will. Dr. Benson's observation on this point is very judicious: "When it is said that David was *a man after God's own heart*, it should be understood, not of his *private*, but of his *public*, character. He was *a man after God's own heart*, because he ruled the people according to the Divine will. He did not allow of *idolatry*; he did not set up for *absolute power*. He was guided in the government of the nation by the *law of Moses*, as the standing rule of government, and by the *prophet*, or the *Divine oracle*, whereby God gave directions upon particular emergencies. Whatever Saul's private character was, he was not *a good king in Israel*. He did not follow the *law*, the *oracle*, and the *prophet*; but attempted to be *absolute*, and thereby to subvert the *constitution* of the kingdom. That this was the meaning of David's being *a man after God's own heart* will easily appear by comparing ^{<091528>}**1 Samuel 15:28; 28:17, 18;** ^{<131013>}**1 Chronicles 10:13, 14;** ^{<197870>}**Psalm 78:70, &c.;** ^{<19820>}**Psalm 89:20, &c."**

Verse 23. Of this man's seed hath God-raised-a Saviour] That Jesus Christ came in a direct and indisputable line from David, according to both *promise* and *prophecy*, may be seen in the notes on ^{<40101>}**Matthew 1:1, &c.**, and particularly in the notes at the end of Luke 3. And that the Messiah was promised to come from the family of David, see ^{<23101>}**Isaiah 11:1, 2,** and ^{<42316>}**Jeremiah 23:5, 6.**

Verse 24. John-preached-the baptism of repentance] On the nature and effects of John's preaching, see **Clarke's notes on** ^{<40101>}**"Matthew 3:1"**, &c., and ^{<40110>}**Luke 3:10-15.**

Verse 25. As John fulfilled his course] *As John was fulfilling his race, he said, &c.* It has been supposed that the word **δρομον**, *course*, or *race*, is used here to point out the *short duration* of the Baptist's ministry, and the fervent zeal with which he performed it. It signifies properly his *ministry*, or *life*. A man's work, employment, function, &c., is his *race*, *course*, or *way of life*. John had a *ministry* from God; and he discharged the duties of it with zeal and diligence; bore the fatigues of it with patience and resignation; and was gloriously successful in it, because the hand of the Lord was with him.

Verse 26. Men and brethren] This should have been translated brethren simply. See Clarke note on “~~Acts~~ Acts 7:2”.

Children of the stock of Abraham] All ye that are *Jews*.

And whosoever among you feared God] That is, all ye who are *Gentiles*, and are now *proselytes* to the Jewish religion.

The word of this salvation] The *doctrine* that contains the promise of *deliverance from sin*, and the means by which it is brought about; all which is founded on Jesus, of the stock of David, dying and rising again for the salvation of *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Verse 27. Because they knew him not] A gentle excuse for the persecuting high priests, &c. They did not know that Jesus was the Christ, because they did not know the prophets: and *why* did they not know the prophets, *which were read every Sabbath day*? Because they did *not desire to know his will*; and therefore they knew not the *doctrine of God*: nor did they know that, in condemning Christ, they fulfilled those very Scriptures which were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues.

Verse 28. They found no cause of death in him] No reason why he should be condemned. Though they accused him of several things, yet they could not substantiate the most trifling charge against him; and yet, in opposition to all justice and equity, desired Pilate to put him to death! This points their perfidy in the strongest light.

Verse 29. They took him down from the tree] The apostle passes rapidly over several circumstances of his *death*, that he might establish the fact of his *resurrection*.

Verse 30. But God raised him from the dead] And thus gave the fullest proof of his innocence. God alone can raise the dead; and he would not work a miracle so very extraordinary, but on some extraordinary occasion.

Verse 31. He was seen many days, &c.] The thing was done but a very short time since; and many of the witnesses are still alive, and ready to attest the fact of this resurrection in the most unequivocal manner.

Verse 32. We declare unto you glad tidings] We proclaim that Gospel to you which is the fulfilment of the promise made unto the fathers.

Verse 33. Written in the second Psalm] Instead of **τω ψαλμω τω δευτερω** *the second Psalm*, **πρωτω ψαλμω**, *the first Psalm*, is the reading of D, and its *Itala* version, and several of the primitive fathers. Griesbach has received it into the text; but not, in my opinion, on sufficient evidence. The reason of these various readings is sufficiently evident to those who are acquainted with Hebrew MSS. In many of these, *two* Psalms are often written as *one*; and the *first* and *second* Psalms are written as *one* in *seven* of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's* MSS. Those who possessed such MSS. would say, *as it is written in the FIRST Psalm*; those who referred to MSS. where the two Psalms were *separate*, would say, *in the SECOND Psalm*, as they would find the quotation in question in the first verse of the second Psalm. There is, therefore, neither contradiction nor difficulty here; and it is no matter which reading we prefer, as it depends on the simple circumstance, whether we consider these two Psalms as *parts* of one and the same, or whether we consider them as two *distinct* Psalms.

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.] It has been disputed whether this text should be understood of the *incarnation* or of the *resurrection* of our Lord. If understood of his *incarnation*, it can mean no more than this, that the *human nature* of our blessed Lord was begotten by the energy of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the blessed virgin; for as to his Divine nature, which is allotted to be God, it could neither be *created* nor *begotten*. See some reasons offered for this on ~~ROMS~~ **Luke 1:35**; and, if those be deemed insufficient, a *thousand* more may be added. But in the above reasons it is demonstrated that the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* of Christ is absolutely irreconcilable to reason, and contradictory to itself. ETERNITY is that which has had no *beginning*, nor stands in any reference to *time*: SON supposes *time*, *generation*, and *father*; and time also antecedent to such generation: therefore the rational conjunction of these two terms, *Son* and *eternity*, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and *opposite* ideas.

If the passage in question be understood of the *resurrection* of Christ, it points out that the human nature, which was produced by the power of God in the womb of the virgin, and which was the *Son of God*, could see no corruption; and therefore, though it died for sin, must be raised from the dead before it saw corruption. Thus God owned that human nature to be peculiarly his own; and therefore Jesus Christ *was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*, ~~ROMS~~ **Romans 1:4**.

Verse 34. No more to return to corruption] To the *grave*, to *death*, the *place* and *state* of *corruption*; for so we should understand the word **διαφθοραν** in the text.

The sure mercies of David.] Τα οσια Δαβιδ τα πιστα. These words are quoted literatim from the *Septuagint* version of ^{<2581B>}**Isaiah 55:3**; where the Hebrew is **מַן־מַנְה דָּוִד יְדַסְגַּ** *chasdey David ha-neemanim*, of which the Greek is a faithful translation; and which *sure mercies of David* St. Paul considers as being fulfilled in the *resurrection of Christ*. From this application of the words, it is evident that the apostle considered the word *David* as signifying the *Messiah*; and then the *sure* or *faithful mercies*, being such as relate to the new covenant, and the various blessings promised in it, are evidently those which are sealed and confirmed to mankind by the resurrection of Christ; and it is in this way that the apostle applies them. Had there not been the fullest proof of the resurrection of Christ, not one of the promises of the new covenant could have been considered as *sure* or *faithful*. If he did *not* rise from the dead, then, as said the apostle, *your faith and our preaching are vain*, ^{<61514>}**1 Corinthians 15:14**.

The following observations of Bp. Pearce are judicious: “For the sense of these words, we must have recourse to what God said to David in ^{<10711>}**2 Samuel 7:11, 12, &c.**, explained by what is said in ^{<15803>}**Psalm 89:3, 4, 28, 29, 36**, where frequent mention is made of a covenant established by God with David, and sworn to by God, that David’s *seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, and as the sun, to all generations*. This covenant and this oath are the sure and sacred things of which Isaiah, ^{<2581B>}**Isaiah 55:3**, speaks; and Luke in this place. And Paul understood them as relating to the kingdom of Jesus, (the Son of David,) which was to be *an everlasting kingdom*; and if an *everlasting* one, then it was necessary that Jesus should have been (as he was) *raised from the dead*; and, to support this argument, Paul, in the next verse, strengthens it with another, drawn from ^{<19160>}**Psalm 16:10.**” See also the note among the *marginal* readings.

Verse 36. David-fell on sleep-and saw corruption] David died, was buried, and never rose again; therefore, David cannot be the person spoken of here: the words are true of some other person; and they can be applied to Jesus Christ *only*; and in him they are most exactly fulfilled. See the notes on ^{<4122>}**Acts 2:29, 30, &c.**

Verse 38. Be it known unto you, therefore] This is the legitimate conclusion: seeing the word of God is true, and he has promised an endless succession to the seed of David; seeing David and all his family have failed in reference to the *political* kingdom, a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual succession must be intended, that the sure covenant and all its blessings may be continued. Again: seeing the person by whom this is to be done is to see no corruption;-seeing David has died, and has seen (fallen under the power of) corruption;-seeing Jesus the Christ has wrought all the miracles which the prophets said he should work;-seeing he has suffered all the indignities which your prophets said he must suffer;-seeing after his death he has most incontestably *risen again* from the dead, and has not fallen under the power of corruption,-then he must be the very person in whom all the predictions are fulfilled, and the person through whom all the blessings of the covenant must come.

Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins] See the notes on ⁴⁴⁶³Acts 5:30, 31. Remission of sins, the removal of the *power*, *guilt*, and *pollution* of sin comes alone through this man, whom ye crucified, and who is risen from the dead.

Verse 39. And by him] On his account, and through him, *all that believe* in his Divine mission, and the end for which he has been manifested, namely, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, *are justified from all things*, from the guilt of all transgressions committed against God; *from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*; because it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, or any other rite or service of this kind, could take away sin from the soul, cancel its guilt in the conscience, or make an atonement to the Divine justice; but *this* is the sacrifice which God has required; this is every way suited to the end for which it has been instituted; and this is the sacrifice alone which God can accept. Your law says, "Do this, and ye shall live;" and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Ye have not done these things required; ye have not continued in any good thing; ye have not only not done all things commanded, but ye have done *none*, none as they *ought* to be done; and therefore ye are under the *curse*. The Gospel says, Believe on the Lord Jesus; credit his Divine mission; consider his death an *atonement* for sin; believe in his *resurrection*, as a proof that the atonement is made, believe that he suffered, died, and rose again for *your justification*; and that for his sake God, though he be

infinitely *just*, can be the justifier of all who believe in him. By the law of Moses there is neither justification nor salvation: in Jesus Christ there are both, and all the sure mercies of David. Therefore, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be *justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*.

Verse 40. Beware-lest that come upon you, &c.] If you reject these benefits, now freely offered to you in this preaching of Christ crucified, you may expect such judgment from the hand of God as your forefathers experienced, when, for their *rebellion* and their *contempt* of his benefits, their *city* was *taken*, their *temple destroyed*, and *themselves* either *slain* by the sword, or carried into *captivity*. It is evident that St. Paul refers to ^{<3016>}**Habakkuk 1:5-10**; and in those verses the desolation by the *Chaldeans* is foretold. Never was there a prophecy more correctly and pointedly applied. These Jews *did continue* to slight the benefits offered to them by the Lord; and they persevered in their rebellion: what was the consequence? The *Romans* came, took their city, burnt their temple, slew upwards of a million of them, and either carried or sold the rest into captivity. How exactly was the prophecy in both cases fulfilled!

Verse 41. Behold, ye despisers] There is a remarkable difference here between the Hebrew text in Habakkuk, and that in the Septuagint, which is a little abridged here by St. Paul. I shall exhibit the three texts. Heb:- *rpsy yk wnymat al mukymyb l [p l [p yk whmt whmthw wcybhw mywgb war*

Reu bagoyim vehabitu vehitammehu; temehu; ki poal pael bimeycem, lo teaminu hi yesupar.

Behold, ye among the heathen, (nations,) and regard, and be astonished; be astonished, for I am working a work in your days, which; when it shall be told, ye will not credit. See *Houbigant*.

Sept. *ιδετε οι καταφρονηται, και επιβλεψατε, και θαυμασατε θαυμασια, και αφανισθητε διοτι εργον εγω εργαζομαι εν ταις ημεραις υμων, ο ου μη πιστευσητε, εαν τις εκδιηγηται υμιν*. See, ye despisers, and look attentively, and be astonished, (or hide yourselves,) for I work a work in your days, which, if any one will tell to you, ye will not believe.

St. Luke. ἰδετε οἱ καταφρονηται, και επιβλεψατε, και θαυμασατε, θαυμασια, και αφανισθητε οτι εργον εγω εργαζομαι εν ταις ημεραις υμων, εργον ω ου μη πιστευσητε, εαν τις εκδιηγηται υμιν. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and be astonished, (or *hide yourselves*;) for I work a work in your days, which, if any one will tell unto you, ye will not believe.

I have taken Luke's quotation from the best MSS., and I have quoted the *Septuagint* according to the *Codex Alerandrinus*; and the quotations are exactly the same, not only in words, but almost in letters, with the exception of *επιβλεψατε* and *θαυμασια* which the evangelist omits, and which I have included in crotchets in the text of St. Luke, merely that the *place* of the omission may be the better seen. It may now be necessary to inquire how St. Luke and the *Septuagint* should substitute *ye despisers*, for *ye among the heathen*, in the Hebrew text?

Without troubling myself or my readers with laborious criticisms on these words, with which many learned men have loaded the text, I will simply state my opinion, that the prophet, instead of *μυγwb bagoyim, among the heathen*, wrote *μydgwb bogadim, despisers, or transgressors*: a word which differs only in a *single letter, d daleth*, for *w vau*; the latter of which might easily be mistaken by a transcriber for the other, especially if the horizontal stroke of the *d daleth* happened to be a little *faint* towards the left; as, in that case, it would wear the appearance of a *w vau*; and this is not unfrequently the case, not only in MSS., but even in *printed books*. It seems as evident as it can well be that this gives the word which the *Septuagint* found in the copy from which they translated: their evidence, and that of the apostle, joined to the consideration that the interchange of the two letters mentioned above might have been easily made, is quite sufficient to legitimate the reading for which I contend. *Houbigant* and several others are of the same mind.

The word *αφανισθητε*, which we translate *perish*, signifies more properly *disappear*, or *hide yourselves*; as people, astonished and alarmed at some coming evil, betake themselves to flight, and *hide themselves* in order to avoid it.

Verse 42. When the Jews were gone out] That part of them in whom the words of the prophet were fulfilled, viz. those who, though they had the clearest relation of so interesting a history, would not believe it: they shut

their eyes against the light, and hardened their hearts against the truth. There were other Jews in the assembly that *did* believe, and were saved.

The Gentiles besought] There is some doubt whether the original, **παρεκαλουν τα εθνη**, should be translated *the Gentiles besought*; or *they besought the Gentiles*: for the words will bear either, but the latter sense more naturally. When the Jews retired, determining not to credit what was spoken, the apostle, seeing the Gentiles of a better mind, requested them to come and hear those words, or doctrines, the next Sabbath. But, *the next*, **το μεταξυ**, as Hiesychius defines it, **μετ ολιγον, ανα μεσον**, *shortly*, or *betwixt*, may mean the *after part* of the same Sabbath, or the *course of the ensuing week*, between the two Sabbaths; for *Mondays* and *Thursdays*, or the second and fifth days of the week, were times in which those who feared God usually met together in the synagogue; for it is a maxim with the rabbins, that no *three days* should elapse without reading of the law.

On this verse there is a great number of various readings: instead of, *when the Jews were going out of the synagogue*, ABCDE, several others of great repute, with all the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*, read, *As they were going out, they entreated that these words should be preached unto them in the course of the week*, or the next Sabbath. So that, according to this well accredited reading, the words, **εκ της συναγωγης των ιουδαιων**, are left out in the *first* clause, **αυτων** being put in their place; and **τα εθνη**, *the Gentiles*, is wholly omitted in the second clause. The most eminent critics approve of this reading; indeed it stands on such authority as to render it almost indubitable. Of the **αυτων**, *them*, which is substituted for the first clause, Professor White says, *lectio indubie genuina*: this reading is undoubtedly genuine; and of the **τα εθνη εις**, he says, *certissime delenda*: they should certainly be expunged. We are therefore to understand the words thus: that, “as they were going out on the breaking up of the assembly, some of them desired that they might have these doctrines preached to them on the ensuing week or Sabbath.” And thus all the ambiguity of the verse vanishes.

Verse 43. Many of the Jews] Direct descendants from some of the twelve tribes; *and religious proselytes*, heathens who had been converted to Judaism, and, having submitted to circumcision, had become *proselytes of the covenant*: though some think that the expression means *proselytes of the gate*-persons who believed in one God, like the Jews, but who had not received circumcision.

Persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.] That is, that they should continue to credit the Gospel; to receive the spirit and influence of it; to bring forth the fruits of that spirit; and thus continue under the favour and approbation of God.

Verse 44. The next Sabbath day] The good news had spread far and wide, by means of the converted Jews and proselytes.

Almost the whole city] *Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles*, came together to hear **τον λογον του θεου**, *this doctrine of God*, this Divine teaching, by which so many of their kindred and acquaintance had become so wise and happy. It is not by *public* discourses merely that people are converted to God; but by the *private* teaching and godly conduct of those who have received the truth; for, as these are scattered throughout society, they are a *leaven* in every place.

Verse 45. The Jews-were filled with envy] See Clarke on “^{<40517>}Acts 5:17”. These could not bear the Gentiles, who believed in Christ, to be *equal* with them; and yet; according to the Gospel, it was really the case.

Contradicting] The arguments and statements brought forward by the disciples; *and blaspheming*, speaking impiously and injuriously of Jesus Christ. This is probably what is meant.

Verse 46. Waxed bold] **παρησιασαμενοι**; Having great liberty of speech; a strong, persuasive, and overpowering eloquence. They had eternal *truth* for the basis of this discourse; a multitude of *incontestable facts* to support it; an all-persuading eloquence to illustrate and maintain what they had asserted.

Should first have been spoken to you] When our Lord gave his apostles their commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, he told them they must begin first at Jerusalem, ^{<41615>}**Mark 16:15**; ^{<02447>}**Luke 24:47**. In obedience therefore to this command, the apostles (in every place where they preached) made their *first offers* of the Gospel to the *Jews*.

Ye put it from you] **απωθεισθε αυτον**, *Ye disdain* this doctrine, and consider it *contemptible*: so the word is frequently used.

And judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life] Was this meant as a strong *irony*? “Ye have such humbling thoughts of yourselves, that ye think

the blessings of the Gospel too good to be bestowed on such worthless wretches as ye are.” Or did the apostle mean that, by their *words* and *conduct* on this occasion, they had passed *sentence* on themselves, and, in effect, had decided that they were unworthy of the grace of the Gospel; and God now ratifies that judgment by removing those blessings from *them*, and sending them to the *Gentiles*?

Verse 47. For so the Lord commanded us] The apostles could quote a pertinent scripture for every thing they did; because the outlines of the whole Gospel dispensation are founded in the *law* and the *prophets*; and they were now building the Church of God according to the pattern shown them in the Mount. In the things of God, no *man* nor *minister* should go farther than he can say, *Thus it is written*, and *thus it behoves me to do*; and let him see that his quotations are fairly made, and not a detached passage or member of a sentence produced, because it seems to look like the system he wishes to establish.

I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles] This quotation is from ²³⁴⁰⁶ **Isaiah 49:6**, and was most fully in point. The Jews could not resist the testimony of their own prophet; and the Gentiles rejoiced to find that the offers of salvation were to be made so specifically to *them*.

For salvation unto the ends of the earth.] The very name of the Messiah, viz JESUS, announced the *design* and *end* of his mission. He is the *Saviour*, and is to be proclaimed as such to *the ends of the earth*; to all mankind; to every *nation*, and *people*, and *tongue*; and, wherever the Gospel is preached, there is a free, full, and sincere offer of salvation to every soul that hears it. And the offer is proof sufficient, in itself, that there is a power to receive its blessings given to those to whom the offer is made; as it would be of no use to offer them a salvation which it was designed they either *should* not or *could* not receive. A son of Satan might be capable of such dissimulation and bad faith; but the holy God cannot.

Verse 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.] This text has been most pitifully misunderstood. Many suppose that it simply means that those in that assembly who were *fore-ordained*; or *predestinated* by God’s decree, to eternal life, believed under the influence of that decree. Now, we should be careful to examine *what* a word means, before we attempt to *fix* its meaning. Whatever **τεταγμενοι** may mean, which is the word we translate *ordained*, it is neither **προτεταγμενοι** nor **προορισμενοι** which the apostle uses, but simply **τεταγμενοι**, which

includes no idea of *pre-ordination* or *pre-destination* of any kind. And if it even did, it would be rather hazardous to say that all those who believed at this time were such as actually *persevered unto the end*, and *were saved unto eternal life*. But, leaving all these precarious matters, what does the word **τεταγμενος** mean? The verb **ταττω** or **τασσω** signifies to *place, set, order, appoint, dispose*; hence it has been considered here as implying the *disposition* or *readiness of mind* of several persons in the congregation, such as the *religious proselytes* mentioned ^{<4134>}**Acts 13:43**, who possessed the reverse of the *disposition* of those Jews who *spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming*, ^{<4135>}**Acts 13:45**. Though the word in this place has been variously translated, yet, of all the meanings ever put on it, none agrees worse with its nature and known signification than that which represents it as intending those who were *predestinated* to eternal life: this is *no* meaning of the term, and should never be applied to it. Let us, without prejudice, consider the scope of the place: the *Jews* contradicted and blasphemed; the *religious proselytes* heard attentively, and received the word of life: the one party were utterly *indisposed*, through their own stubbornness, to receive the Gospel; the others, destitute of prejudice and prepossession, were glad to hear that, in the order of God, the Gentiles were included in the covenant of salvation through Christ Jesus; they, therefore, in this good *state* and *order* of mind, believed. Those who seek for the plain meaning of the word will find it here: those who wish to make out a sense, not from the Greek word, its use among the best Greek writers, and the obvious sense of the evangelist, but from their own creed, may continue to puzzle themselves and others; *kindle their own fire, compass themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of their own fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled; and, in consequence, lie down in sorrow*, having bidden adieu to the true meaning of a passage so very simple, taken in its connection, that one must wonder how it ever came to be misunderstood and misapplied. Those who wish to see more on this verse may consult *Hammond, Whitby, Schoettgen, Rosenmuller, Pearce, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and Dodd*.

Verse 49. **The word of the Lord was published, &c.]** Those who had come from different parts, and were converted, carried the glad tidings to their respective neighbourhoods; and thus the doctrine was *published throughout all the region* of Pisidia, where they then were. **See Clarke on** ^{<4134>}**Acts 13:44**".

Verse 50. Devout and honourable women] It is likely that these were *heathen matrons*, who had become *proselytes* to the Jewish religion; and, as they were persons of affluence and respectability, they had considerable influence with the *civil* magistracy of the place, and probably their husbands were of this order; and it is likely that they used that influence, at the instigation of the Jews, to get the apostles expelled from the place.

Verse 51. They shook off the dust of their feet against them] This was a very significant rite; by it, they in effect said: Ye are worse than the heathen: even your very land is accursed for your opposition to God, and we dare not permit even its dust to cleave to the soles of our feet; and we shake it off, in departing from your country, according to our Lord's command, (^{<41014>}**Matthew 10:14**), for a testimony against you, that we offered you salvation, but ye rejected *it* and persecuted *us*. The Jews, when travelling in *heathen* countries, took care, when they came to the *borders* of their own, to shake off the dust of their feet, lest any of the unhallowed ground should defile the sacred land of *Israel*.

Came unto Iconium.] According to Strabo, Iconium was a small fortified town, the capital of Lycaonia, at present called *Cogni*. "Lycaonia was a province at the back of Pamphylia, higher up in Asia Minor, and to the northeast of Pamphylia." *Pearce*.

Verse 52. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.] Though in the world they had tribulation, yet in Christ they had peace; and, while engaged in their Master's work, they always had their Master's wages. The happiness of a genuine Christian lies far beyond the reach of earthly disturbances, and is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. The martyrs were more happy in the *flames* than their persecutors could be on their beds of down.

St. Paul's sermon at Antioch has been thus analyzed.

1. His prologue, ^{<41316>}**Acts 13:16**, addressed to those who fear God.
2. His narrative of God's goodness to Israel: 1. In their deliverance from Egypt. 2. In their support in the wilderness. 3. In his giving them the land of Canaan. 4. In the judges and kings which he had given for their governors, ^{<4137>}**Acts 13:7-22**.
3. His proposition, that *Jesus* was the Christ, the Saviour of the world, ^{<41323>}**Acts 13:23**.

4. The illustration of this proposition, proving its truth: 1. From Christ's stock and family, ^{<4132>}**Acts 13:23**. 2. From the testimony of his forerunner, ^{<4134>}**Acts 13:24**. 3. From the resurrection of Christ, ^{<4130>}**Acts 13:30**; which was corroborated with the testimony of many Galileans, ^{<4131>}**Acts 13:31**, and of the prophets, David, ^{<4133>}**Acts 13:33, 35**, and Isaiah, ^{<4134>}**Acts 13:34**.
5. He anticipates objections, relative to the unjust condemnation, death and burial of Christ, ^{<4127>}**Acts 13:27-29**.
6. His epilogue, in which he excites his audience to embrace the Gospel on two considerations: 1. The benefits which they receive who embrace the Gospel, ^{<4138>}**Acts 13:38, 39**. 2. The danger to which they were exposed who should despise and reject it, ^{<4130>}**Acts 13:40, 41**.

ACTS

CHAPTER 14.

Paul and Barnabas, having preached at Iconium with great success, are persecuted, and obliged to flee to Lystra and Derbe, 1-6. Here they preach, and heal a cripple; on which, the people, supposing them to be gods, are about to offer them sacrifices, and are with difficulty prevented by these apostles, 7-18. Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, coming thither, induce the people to stone Paul; who, being dragged out of the city as dead, while the disciples stand around him, rises up suddenly, and returns to the city, and the next day departs to Derbe, 19, 20. Having preached here, he and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the disciples, and ordaining elders in every Church, 21-23. They pass through Pisidia and Pamphylia, 24. Through Perga and Attalia, 25; and sail to Antioch in Syria, 26. When, having called the disciples together, they inform them of the door of faith opened to the Gentiles, and there abode a long time with the Church, 27, 28.

NOTES ON CHAP. 14.

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

So spake] *και λαλησαι ουτως*. With such power and demonstration of the Spirit, *that a great multitude both of the Jews*, genuine descendants of one or other of the twelve tribes, *and also of the Greeks, ελληνων*, probably such as were proselytes of the gate, *believed*, received the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and confided in its Author for salvation, according to the apostles' preaching.

Verse 2. Stirred up the Gentiles] *των εθνων*, Such as were mere *heathens*, and thus distinguished from the *Jews*, and the *Greeks* who were proselytes.

Evil affected] *εκακωσαν*, *Irritated or exasperated their minds against the brethren*, the disciples of Christ; one of their appellations before they were called *Christians* at Antioch. See Clarke on "~~41126~~ Acts 11:26".

Verse 3. Long time therefore abode they] Because they had great success, therefore they continued a long time, gaining many converts, and building up those who had believed, in their most holy faith; notwithstanding the opposition they met with, both from the unbelieving Jews and heathens.

Speaking boldly] *παρρησιαζομενοι*, Having *great liberty of speech*, a copious and commanding eloquence, springing from a consciousness of the truth which they preached.

The word of his grace] The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the *doctrine of God's grace, mercy, or favour* to mankind.

And granted signs and wonders to be done] For no apostle could work a miracle by himself; nor was any sign or wonder wrought even by the greatest apostle, but by an especial grant or dispensation of God. This power was not resident in them at all times; it was only now and then communicated, when a miracle was necessary for the confirmation of the truth preached.

Verse 4. The multitude of the city was divided] The Jews treated the apostles as false teachers, and their miracles as impositions; and many of the people held with *them*: while the others, who had not hardened their hearts against the truth, felt the force of it; and, being without prejudice, could easily discern the miracles to be the work of God, and therefore held with the *apostles*.

Verse 5. An assault made] *ὄρημη*, A *desperate attempt* was made by *their rulers*, i.e. by the heathen rulers of the people, and the rulers of the synagogue.

To use them despitefully] To expose them, bring them into contempt, and make them appear as monsters, or movers of sedition; and then to *stone them* for this falsely alleged crime.

Verse 6. They were ware of it] They were informed of the scheme, and of the attempt that was about to be made, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe; they did not leave the *province* of Lycaonia, but went to other towns and cities. Lystra lay to the south and Derbe to the north of Iconium, according to the general opinion. Strabo, Geogr. lib. xii., tells us expressly, that Iconium was within Lycaonia, *Thence are the Lycaonian hills plain, cold, naked, and pastures for wild asses. About these places stands Iconium, a town built in a better soil.* Ptolemy also, Tab. Asiæ, i. cap. 6, places Iconium in Lycaonia. How comes it, then, that St. Luke does not call Iconium a city of Lycaonia, as well as Derbe and Lystra? Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap. 27, solves this difficulty, by stating, that *there was granted a tetrarchy out of Lycaonia, on that side which borders upon Galatia,*

consisting of fourteen cities; the most famous of which is Iconium. See Lightfoot.

Verse 7. And there they preached the Gospel.] Wherever they went, they were always employed in their Master's work. Some MSS. of considerable note add here, *and all the people were moved at their preaching, but Paul and Barnabas tarried at Lystra.*

Verse 8. Impotent in his feet] ἀδυνατος τοις ποσιν, He had no muscular power, and probably his ancle bones were dislocated; or he had what is commonly termed *club feet*; this is the more likely, as he is said to have been *lame from his mother's womb*, and to have *never walked*.

Verse 9. That he had faith to be healed] How did this faith come to this poor heathen? Why, by *hearing the word of God preached*: for it is said, *the same heard Paul speak*. And it appears that he credited the doctrine he heard, and believed that Jesus *could*, if he *would*, make him whole. Besides, he must have heard of the miracles which the apostles had wrought, see ^{<414B>} **Acts 14:3**; and this would raise his expectation of receiving a cure.

Verse 10. Said with a loud voice] After this clause the following is found in CD, and several others, either in the text or margin: σοι λεγω εν τω ονοματι του κυριου ιησου χριστου, *I say unto thee, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, "stand upright on thy feet." This reading is also in several *versions*; and though it may not stand on such evidence as to entitle it to a place in the text, yet it is not likely that St. Paul would not have used the *sacred name* on such an occasion; especially as this appears to have been the usual form. See ^{<410B>} **Acts 3:6**.

He leaped and walked.] Giving the fullest proof of his restoration: his *leaping*, however, might have been through joy of having received his cure.

Verse 11. Saying, in the speech of Lycaonia] What this language was has puzzled the learned not a little. *Calmet* thinks it was a corrupt Greek dialect; as Greek was the general language of Asia Minor. Mr. *Paul Ernest Jablonski*, who has written a dissertation expressly on the subject, thinks it was the same language with that of the *Cappadocians*, which was mingled with Syriac. That it was no dialect of the Greek must be evident from the circumstance of its being here distinguished from it. We have sufficient proofs from ancient authors that most of these provinces used different

languages; and it is correctly remarked, by Dr. Lightfoot, that the *Carians*, who dwelt much nearer Greece than the Lycaonians, are called by *Homer*, βαρβαροφωνοι, people of a barbarous or strange language; and *Pausanias* also called them *Barbari*. That the language of *Pisidia* was distinct from the Greek we have already seen, **Clarke's note on "Acts 13:15"**. We have no light to determine this point; and every search after the language of Lycaonia must be, at this distance of time, fruitless.

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.] From this, and from all heathen antiquity, it is evident: 1. That the heathen did not consider the Divine nature, how low soever they rated it, to be like the human nature. 2. That they imagined that these celestial beings often assumed *human forms* to visit men, in order to punish the evil and reward the good. The *Metamorphoses* of *Ovid* are full of such visitations; and so are *Homer*, *Virgil*, and other poets. The angels visiting *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Lot*, &c., might have been the foundation on which most of these heathen fictions were built.

The following passage in *HOMER* will cast some light upon the point:-

Και τε θεοι, ξεινοισιν εοικότες αλλοδαποισι,
 Παντοιοι τελεθοντες, επιστρωφωσι πολης,
 Ανθρωπων υβριν τε και ευνομιην εφορωντες.

Hom. *Odyss.* xvii. ver. 485.

*For in similitude of strangers oft,
 The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
 Repair to populous cities, where they mark
 The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.*

COWPER.

OVID had a similar notion, where he represents *Jupiter* coming down to visit the earth, which seems to be copied from *Genesis*, **Genesis 18:20, 21:** *And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know.*

*Contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures:
 Quam cupiens falsam, summo delabor Olympo.
 Et deus humana lustrò sub imagine terras.
 Longa mora est, quantum noxæ sit ubique repertum,
 Enamerare: minor fuit ipsa infamia vero.
 Metam. lib. i. ver. 211.*

*The clamours of this vile, degenerate age,
 The cries of orphans, and the oppressor's rage,
 Had reached the stars: "I will descend," said I,
 In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
 Disguised in human shape, I travelled round
 The world, and more than what I heard, I found.
 DRYDEN.*

It was a settled belief among the Egyptians, that their gods, sometimes in the likeness of *men*, and sometimes in that of animals which they held sacred, descended to the earth, and travelled through different provinces, to punish, reward, and protect. The Hindoo *Avatars*, or incarnations of their gods, prove how generally this opinion had prevailed. Their *Poorana* are full of accounts of the descent of *Brahma*, *Vishnoo*, *Shiva*, *Naradu*, and other gods, in *human shape*. We need not wonder to find it in Lycaonia.

Verse 12. They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius] The heathens supposed that *Jupiter* and *Mercury* were the gods who most frequently assumed the human form; and Jupiter was accustomed to take Mercury with him on such expeditions. Jupiter was the *supreme god* of the heathens; and Mercury was by them considered the *god of eloquence*. And the ancient fable, from which I have quoted so largely above, represents Jupiter and Mercury coming to this very region, where they were entertained by *Lycaon*, from whom the *Lycaonians* derived their name. See the whole fable in the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

As the ancients usually represented Jupiter as rather an aged man, large, noble, and majestic; and Mercury young, light, and active, the conjecture of Chrysostom is very probable, that Barnabas was a large, noble, well-made man, and probably in years; and St. Paul, young, active, and eloquent; on which account, they termed the former *Jupiter*, and the latter *Mercury*. That Mercury was eloquent and powerful in his words is allowed by the heathens; and the very epithet that is applied here to Paul, $\eta\nu\ \omicron\ \eta\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\upsilon$, *he was the chief or leader of the discourse*, was

applied to Mercury. So Jamblichus de Myster. Init. **θεος ο των λογων ηγεμων ο ερμης**. And Macrobius, Sat. i. 8: *Scimus Mercurium vocis et sermonis potentem. We know that Mercury is powerful both in his voice and eloquence.* With the Lycaonians, the *actions* of these apostles proved them to be gods; and the different parts they took appeared to them to fix their character, so that one was judged to be *Jupiter*, and the other *Mercury*.

Verse 13. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city]

There is a meaning here, which ordinary readers will not readily apprehend. Many cities were put under the protection of a particular deity; and the image of that deity placed at the entrance, to signify that he was the guardian and protector. To this St. Luke, every where as accurate as he is circumstantial, refers. Lystra, it appears, was under the guardianship of *Jupiter Propulaius*, **διος προπυλαιου**, which St. Luke translates, **του διος οντος της πολεως**, *the Jupiter that was before the city*, which is another term for *Jupiter Custos*, or Jupiter the guardian. All these deities, according to the attributes they sustained, had their peculiar *priests, rites, and sacrifices*; and each a peculiar service and priest for the office he bore; so that *Jupiter Brontes*, Jupiter the thunderer, had a different service from *Jupiter Custos*, Jove the guardian. Hence we can see with what accuracy St. Luke wrote: the person who was going to offer them sacrifices was the priest of *Jupiter Custos*, under whose guardianship the city of Lystra was, and whom the priest supposed had visited the city in a human form; and Barnabas, probably for the reasons already assigned, he imagined was the person; and as Mercury, the god of eloquence, was the *general attendant* of Jupiter, the people and the priest supposed that Paul, who had a powerful, commanding eloquence, was *that* god, also disguised. A beautiful figure of such an image of Jupiter as, I suppose, stood before the gate of Lystra, still remains; and a fine engraving of it may be seen in Gruter's Inscriptions, vol. i. p. xx. Jupiter is represented naked, sitting on a *curule* or consular *chair*; in his right hand he holds his *thunder*, and a long *staff* in his left; at his right, stands the *eagle* prepared for flight; and, above, the *winged cap* and *caduceus* of Mercury. On the base is the inscription, IUPPITER CUSTOM DOMUS AUG. *Jupiter, the guardian of the house of Augustus.* As the *preserver* or *guardian* of towns, he was generally styled *Jupiter Custos, Serenus* and *Servator*. His name, JUPITER, i.e. *jurans pater*, the helping father, entitled him, in those days of darkness, to general regard. On this false god, who long engrossed the worship of even the

most enlightened nations on the earth, much may be seen in Lactantius, *Divinar. Institution.* lib. i., in the *Antiquite expliquée* of *Montfaucon*; and various inscriptions, relative to his character as *guardian*, &c., may be seen in *Gruter*, as above.

Oxen and garlands] That is, oxen adorned with *flowers*, their *horns gilded*, and *neck* bound about with *fillets*, as was the custom in sacrificial rites. They also crowned the *gods* themselves, the *priests*, and gates of the *temples*, with flowers. Of this method of adorning the victims, there are numerous examples in the Greek and Latin writers. A few may suffice. Thus OVID:-

*Victima labe carens et præstantissima forma
Sistitur ante aras; et vittis præsignis et auro.
OVID, Met. lib. xv. ver. 130.*

*The fairest victim must the powers appease,
So fatal 'tis sometimes too much to please:
A purple filet his broad brow adorns
With flowery garlands, crown, and gilded horns.
DRYDEN.*

*Huic Anius niveis circumdata tempora vittis
Concutiens, et tristis ait;—————
Ibid. lib. xiii. ver. 643.*

*The royal prophet shook his hoary head,
With fillets bound; and, sighing, thus he said——
CALCOTT.*

—————*fovet ignibus aras,
Muneribus deos implet: feriuntque secures
Colla torosa boum victorum cornua vittis.
Ibid. lib. vii. ver. 427.*

*Rich curling fumes of incense feast the skies,
A hecatomb of voted victims dies,
With gilded horns, and garlands on their head,
In all the pomp of death to th' altar led.
TATE.*

VIRGIL also refers to the same rites and circumstances:-

*Sæpe in honore deum medio stans hostia ad aram
Lanea dum nivea circumdatur infula vitta,
Inter cunctantes cecidit moribunda ministros.
VIRG. Georg. lib. iii. ver. 486.*

*The victim ox that was for altars pressed,
Trimmed with white ribbons, and with garlands dressed,
Sunk of himself, without the god's command,
Preventing the slow sacrificer's hand.
DRYDEN.*

Many similar examples may be seen in *Wetstein* and others.

At the time of worship, the *Hindoo* priests place *garlands of flowers on the head of the image*. Whether the garlands were intended to decorate the *oxen* or the *apostles*, we cannot say; but in either case the conduct of the *Lycaonians* was conformable to that of the modern *Hindoos*.

Verse 15. We also are men of like passions with you] This saying of the apostles has been most strangely perverted. A pious commentator, taking the word *passion* in its *vulgar* and most *improper* sense, (a *bad temper*, an *evil propensity*,) and supposing that these holy men wished to confess that they also had many *sinful infirmities*, and *wrong tempers*, endeavours to illustrate this sense of the word, by appealing to the *contention of Paul and Barnabas*, &c., &c. But the expression means no more than, “we are truly *human beings*, with the same powers and appetites as your own; need food and raiment as you do; and are all *mortal* like yourselves.”

That ye should turn from these vanities] That is, from these *idols* and *false gods*. How often false gods and idolatry are termed *vanity* in the Scriptures, no careful reader of the Bible needs to be told. What a bold saying was this in the presence of a *heathen* mob, intent on performing an act of their superstitious worship, in which they no doubt thought the safety of the state was concerned. The ancient fable related by Ovid, *Metam.* lib. i. ver. 211-239, to which reference has already been made, will cast some light on the conduct of the *Lystrians* in this case. The following is its substance:-“Jupiter, having been informed of the great degeneracy of mankind, was determined himself to survey the earth. Coming to this province, (*Lycaonia*,) disguised in human shape, he took up his residence at the palace of *Lycaon*, then king of that country: giving a sign of his godhead, the people worship him: *Lycaon* sneers, doubts his divinity, and

is determined to put it to the trial. Some ambassadors from the Molossian state having just arrived, he slew one of them, boiled part of his flesh, and roasted the rest, and set it before Jupiter: the god, indignant at the insult, burnt the palace, and turned the impious king into a *wolf*.” From this time, or, rather, from this fable, the whole province was called *Lycaonia*. The simple people now seeing such proofs of *supernatural* power, in the miracles wrought by *Barnabas* and *Paul*, thought that Jupiter had *again* visited them; and fearing lest they should meet with his indignation, should they neglect duly to honour him, they brought *oxen and garlands*, and would have offered them sacrifice, had they not been prevented by the apostles themselves. This circumstance will account for their whole conduct; and shows the reason why Jupiter was the tutelar god of the place. As, therefore, the people took them for *gods*, it was necessary for the apostles to show that they were but *men*; and this is the whole that is meant by the **ομοιοπαθεις ανθρωποι**, *men of like passions, fellow mortals*, in the text, which has been so pitifully *mistaken* by some, and *abused* by others.

The living God] Widely different from those *stocks and stones*, which were objects of their worship.

Which made heaven and earth] And as all things were *made* by his *power*, so all *subsist* by his *providence*; and to him alone, all worship, honour, and glory are due.

Verse 16. Who in times past suffered all nations, &c.] The words **παντα τα εθνη**, which we here translate, *all nations*, should be rendered, *all the Gentiles*, merely to *distinguish* them from the *Jewish people*: who having a revelation, were not left to *walk in their own ways*; but the *heathens*, who had not a *revelation*, were *suffered* to form their creed, and mode of worship, according to their own *caprice*.

Verse 17. He left not himself without witness] Though he gave the Gentiles no revelation of his will, yet he continued to govern them by his gracious providence; doing them *good* in general; *giving them rain* to fertilize their grounds, and *fruitful seasons* as the result; so that *grass* grew for the *cattle* and *corn* for the service of *man*.

Filling our hearts with food] Giving as much food as could reasonably be *wished*, so that *gladness*, or general happiness, was the result. Such was the gracious provision made for man, at all times, that the *economy* and

bounty of the Divine Being were equally evidenced by it. He never gives *less* than is *necessary*, nor *more* than is *sufficient*. His *economy* forbids men to *waste*, by giving them in general no *profusion*. His *bounty* forbids them to *want*, by giving as much as is *sufficient* for all the *natural wants* of his creatures. By not giving *too much*, he prevents *luxury* and *riot*: by giving *enough*, he prevents *discontent* and *misery*. Thus he does mankind *good*, by causing his rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, and his sun to shine upon the evil, and the good. Thus he is said *not to have left himself without witness*: for his providential dealings are the *witnesses* of his *being*, his *wisdom*, and his *bounty*; and thus the *invisible things of God*, even his *eternal power and Godhead*, were clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, ^{<40120>}**Romans 1:20**. Therefore those who continued to worship *stocks* and *stones* were *without excuse*. These were great and striking *truths*; and into what *detail* the apostles now went, we cannot say; but it is likely that they spoke much more than is here related, as the next verse states that, with all these sayings, they found it difficult to prevent the people from offering them sacrifice.

Verse 19. There came thither certain Jews from Antioch] Those were, no doubt, the same who had raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, at Iconium and Antioch, before: they followed the apostles with implacable malice; and what they could not do *themselves* they endeavoured to do by *others*, whose minds they first *perverted*, and then *irritated* to deeds of fell purpose.

And having stoned Paul] Alas! of what real worth is *popular fame*? How *uncertain*, and how *unworthy* to be counted! These poor heathens acted just like the people of Malta, ^{<40201>}**Acts 28:4-6**. When the viper fastened on the hand of Paul, they concluded he was a *murderer*: when they found it did him no damage, they changed their minds, and said he was a **GOD!** When the Lycaonians saw the miracles that Paul did, they said he was the *god Mercury*: when the persecuting Jews came, they persuaded them that he was an impostor; and then they endeavoured to stone him to death.

Supposing he had been dead.] They did not leave stoning him till they had the fullest evidence that he was dead; and so, most probably, he was.

Verse 20. The disciples stood round about him] No doubt in earnest prayer, entreating the *Author of life* that his soul might again return to its battered tenement.

He rose up] Miraculously restored, not only to *life*, but to *perfect soundness* so that he was able to walk into the city, that his persecutors might see the mighty power of God in his restoration, and the faith of the young converts be confirmed in the truth and goodness of God. It is strange that neither the young converts at Lystra, nor Barnabas, were involved in this persecution! It seems to have had Paul *alone* for its *object*; and, when they thought they had despatched him, they did not think of injuring the rest.

Verse 21. Preached the Gospel to that city] Derbe, a city in the same province. See Clarke on “~~4406~~ Acts 14:6”.

They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium] Behold the *courage* of these Christian men! They counted not their lives dear to them, and returned to do their Masters work in the *very places* in which they had been so grievously persecuted, and where one of them had been apparently stoned to death! The man who knows he is God’s ambassador, and that his life depends on his fidelity to his Master, knows he has nothing but his God to *fear*.

Verse 22. Confirming the souls of the disciples] The word *disciple* signifies literally a *scholar*. The Church of Christ was a *school*, in which Christ himself was *chief Master*; and his apostles *subordinate teachers*. All the *converts* were *disciples* or *scholars*, who came to this *school* to be instructed in the knowledge of *themselves* and of their GOD: of their duty to *Him*, to the *Church*, to *society*, and to *themselves*. After having been initiated in the principles of the heavenly doctrine, they needed line upon line, and precept upon precept, in order that they might be *confirmed* and established in the truth. Though it was a great and important thing to have their *heads*, their *understanding*, properly informed, yet, if the *heart* was not disciplined, information in the understanding would be of little avail; therefore they *confirmed the SOULS of the disciples*. As there must be some particular *standard* of truth, to which they might continually resort, that their faith might stand in the power of God, it was necessary that they should have such a *system of doctrine* as they knew came from God. These doctrines were those which contained all the essential principles of Christianity, and this was called THE FAITH; and, as they must have *sound principles*, in order that they might have *righteous practices*, so it was necessary that they should *continue* in that *faith*, that it might produce that

obedience, without which even *faith* itself, however excellent, must be useless and dead.

Again, as the *spirit* of the *world* would be ever opposed to the *spirit* of *Christ*, so they must make up their minds to expect persecution and *tribulation* in various forms, and therefore had need of *confirmed souls* and *strong faith*, that, when trials came, they might meet them with becoming fortitude, and stand unmoved in the cloudy and dark day. And as the mind must faint under trouble that sees no prospect of its *termination*, and no conviction of its *use*, it was necessary that they should keep in view the *kingdom of God*, of which they were *subjects*, and *to* which, through their *adoption* into the heavenly family, they had a *Divine right*. Hence, from the apostles teaching, they not only learned that they should meet with *tribulation*, *much tribulation*, but, for their encouragement, they were also informed that these were the very *means* which God would use to bring them into his own kingdom; so that, if they had *tribulation* in the *way*, they had a *heaven of eternal glory* as the *end* to which they were continually to direct their views.

Verse 23. When they had ordained them elders] *Elder* seems to be here the name of an *office*. These were all *young* or *new converts*, and yet among *them* the apostles constitute *elders*. They appointed persons the most experienced, and the most advanced in the Divine life, to watch over and instruct the rest. But what is the meaning of the word *χειροτονησαντες*, which we translate *ordained*? The word *ordain* we use in an *ecclesiastical* sense, and signify by it the appointment of a person to an office in the Church, *by the imposition of the hands of those who are rulers in that Church*. But *χειροτονια* signifies the *holding up* or *stretching out* the *hand*, as *approving* of the *choice* of any person to a particular work: whereas *χειροθεσια* signifies the *imposition of hands*. “Zonaras gives he proper meaning of the word in the text, in his Scholia upon the first canon of the apostles, *νυν μὲν χειροτονια καλειται, κ. τ. λ.* ‘Nowadays, a course of prayers and invocation on the Holy Spirit, when one is initiated into the priesthood, and receives consecration, is called *χειροτονια*, *cheirotonia*, so termed because the bishop *extends his hand* over him whom he blesses, when he is chosen into holy orders. Anciently, the choice or suffrage was called *cheirotonia*; for, when it was lawful for the multitude in their cities to choose their priests or bishops, they met together, and some chose one man, some another; but, that it might appear whose suffrage won, they say the electors did use *εκτεινειν τας χειρας*,

to stretch forth their hands, and by their hands so stretched forth, or up, they were numbered who chose the one, and who the other; and him who was elected by the most suffrages they placed in the high priesthood. And from hence was the name *cheirotomia* taken, which the fathers of the councils are found to have used, calling their suffrage *cheirotomia*.’ St. Paul, ^{<4089>}**2 Corinthians 8:19**, intimates that St. Luke was thus appointed to travel with him **χειροτονηθεις υπο των εκκλησιων**, *who was chosen of the Churches*. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, uses the same term, **πρεπον εστιν υμιν, ως εκκλησια θεου, χειροτονησαι επισκοπον**, *ye ought, as a Church of God, to choose your bishop*.” Much more on this subject may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull, who contends that *cheirotomia* implies simply *appointment* or *election*, but not what he calls *ordination* by the *imposition of hands*. I believe the simple truth to be this, that in ancient times the people chose by the *cheirotomia* (lifting up of hands) their spiritual pastor; and the *rulers* of the Church, whether *apostles* or *others*, appointed that person to his office by the *cheirothesia*, or *imposition of hands*; and perhaps each of these was thought to be equally necessary: the *Church agreeing* in the *election* of the person; and the *rulers* of the Church appointing, by *imposition of hands*, the person thus elected. See Clarke’s note on “^{<4086>}**Acts 6:6**”.

And had I prayed with fasting] This was to implore God’s special assistance; as they well knew that, without his influence, even *their* appointment could avail nothing.

Commended them to the Lord] To his especial care and protection.

Verse 24. Passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.] See Clarke’s note on “^{<4133>}**Acts 13:13**”.

Verse 25. They went down into Attalia] This was a sea-port town in Pamphylia. Thus we find the apostles travelled from Derbe to Lystra; from Lystra to Iconium; from Iconium to Antioch of Pisidia; from Antioch to Perga in Pamphylia; and from Perga to Attalia; and it appears that they travelled over three provinces of Asia Minor, *Pamphylia*, *Lycaonia*, and *Pisidia*. See Calmet, and see the *map*.

Verse 26. And thence sailed to Antioch] This was Antioch in *Syria*; and to reach which, by sea, they were obliged to coast a part of the Mediterranean Sea, steering between *Cyprus* and *Cilicia*; though they might have gone the whole journey by *land*.

Whence they had been recommended-for the work which they fulfilled.] The reader will recollect that it was from this Antioch they had been sent to preach the Gospel to the heathen in Asia Minor: see ^{<4130>}**Acts 13:1, 2**; and that they *fulfilled* that *work*: see in the same chapter, ^{<4134>}**Acts 13:48**; and the circumstantial account of their travels and preaching given in this chapter.

Verse 27. Had gathered the Church together] The Church by which they had been sent on this very important and successful mission.

They rehearsed all that God had done with them] Not what they had done *themselves*; but what GOD made them the *instruments* of working.

And how he had opened the door of faith] How God by his providence and grace had made a way for preaching Christ crucified among the heathen; and how the heathen had received that Gospel which, through faith in Christ Jesus, was able to save their souls.

Verse 28. And there they abode long time] How long the apostles tarried here we cannot tell; but we hear no more of them till the council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the following chapter, which is generally supposed to have been held in the year 51 of our Lord; and, if the transactions of this chapter took place in A.D. 46, as chronologers think, then there are *five* whole years of St. Paul's ministry, and that of other apostles, which St. Luke passes by in perfect silence. It is very likely that all this time Paul and Barnabas were employed in extending the work of God through the different provinces contiguous to Antioch; for St. Paul himself tells us that he preached the Gospel so far as Illyria, ^{<4519>}**Romans 15:19**, on the side of the Adriatic Gulf: see its situation on the map. Many of the tribulations and perils through which the Apostle Paul passed are not mentioned by St. Luke, particularly those of which he himself speaks, ^{<47123>}**2 Corinthians 11:23-27**. He had been five times scourged by the Jews; thrice beaten by the Romans; thrice shipwrecked; a whole night and day in the deep, probably saving his life upon a *plank*; besides frequent journeyings, and perils from his countrymen, from the heathen, from robbers, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, &c., &c. Of none of these have we any circumstantial account. Probably most of these happened in the *five years* which elapsed between the apostles' return to Antioch, and the council of Jerusalem.

IN reading the Acts of the Apostles we may have often occasion to remark that in preaching the Gospel they carefully considered the *different circumstances* of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, and suited their address accordingly. When speaking to the former, of the necessity of crediting the Gospel, because without it they could not be saved, they took care to support all their assertions by *passages* drawn from the LAW and the PROPHETS, as every Jew considered those books to be of Divine authority, and from their decision there was no appeal. But, in addressing the *Gentiles*, who had no *revelation*, they drew the proof of their doctrine from the *visible creation*; and demonstrated, by plain reasoning, the absurdity of their idolatrous worship, and called them off from those *vanities* to the worship of the *living* and true *God*, who *made* and *governs all things*, and *who gave them* such proofs of his being, wisdom, and goodness, in the provision made for their comfort and support, that they had only to reflect on the subject in order to be convinced of its *truth*. And while, in consequence, they saw the *absurdity* of their own system, they would at once discover the reasonableness of that religion which was now offered to them, in the name and on the authority of that God who had fed and preserved them all their life long, and girded them when they knew him not. The *Gentiles* felt the force of these reasonings, yielded to the truth, and became steady followers of Christ crucified; while the *Jews*, with all their light and advantages, hardened their hearts against it, though they had no other arguments than what *contradiction* and *blasphemy* could provide! Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before *them*. Do not many, even in the present day, copy their example, revile the truth, take up with the *shadow* instead of the *substance*, and rest just as much in the *letter* of *Christianity*, as ever the *Jews* did in the *letter* of the *law*? This is a deplorable fact which cannot be successfully controverted.

2. We have already had occasion to note five years of a chasm in the apostolic history. God himself does not choose to have *all* the *labours* and *sufferings* of his servants *recorded*. Their recompense is in heaven; and it is enough that God knows their work, who alone can reward it. And yet every faithful servant of God will feel that the reward is *all of grace*, and *not of debt*; for the amount of their good is just the sum of what God *has condescended to do by them*. How studious are men to record the smallest transactions of their lives, while much of the life and labours of Jesus Christ and his apostles are written in the *sand*, and no longer legible to man; or written before the throne, where they are seen only by God and his angels.

In many cases, the *silence* of Scripture is not less instructive than its most pointed *communications*.

3. We cannot consider the effect produced on the minds of the people of Lystra, without being surprised that *a single miracle*, wrought *instrumentally* by *men*, should excite so much attention and reverence, and that we should be unmoved by the *myriads* wrought by the *immediate* hand of GOD.

4. How *difficult* it is to get men brought to worship God, though they have the highest reasons and most powerful motives for it; and yet how *ready* are they to offer an incense to *man* that is due only to God himself! We applaud the apostles for rejecting with horror the sacrifices offered to them: common sense must have taught them this lesson, even independently of their piety. Let *us* beware that we take not that praise to ourselves which belongs to our Maker. *Gross* flattery is generally rejected, because a man cannot receive it without being rendered ridiculous; but who rejects even *inordinate praise*, if it be delicately and artfully prepared!

CHAPTER 15.

Certain teachers from Judea insist on the necessity of the converted Gentiles being circumcised, 1. Paul and Barnabas are sent to Jerusalem to consult the apostles on this subject, 2. They come to Jerusalem, and inform the apostles of the conversion of the Gentiles; and of the trouble which certain Pharisees had occasioned concerning circumcision, 3-5. The apostles having assembled to consider the question, Peter delivers his opinion, 6-11. Barnabas and Paul relate their success among the Gentiles, 12. James delivers his judgment, 13-21. The apostles and elders agree to what he proposes, and send Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas to the converted Gentiles, 22; and send an epistle containing their decree to the Churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, 23-29. Paul and his company return, and read the epistle to the brethren at Antioch, which produces great joy; and Judas and Silas preach to them, 30-32. Judas returns to Jerusalem, but Silas continues with Paul and Barnabas, teaching and preaching, 33-35. Paul proposes to Barnabas to visit the Churches where they had preached; and, on the latter determining to take John Mark with them, Paul refuses, 36-38. They disagree; and Barnabas, taking John Mark, sails to Cyprus, 39. And Paul, taking Silas, goes through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches, 40, 41.

NOTES ON CHAP. 15.

Verse 1. Except ye be circumcised, &c.] The persons who taught this doctrine appear to have been converts to Christianity; but, supposing that the Christian religion was intended to *perfect* the Mosaic, and not to supersede it, they insisted on the necessity of circumcision, because, by that, a man was made debtor to the whole law, to observe all its rites and ceremonies. This question produced great disturbance in the apostolic Church; and, notwithstanding the decree mentioned in this chapter, the apostles were frequently obliged to interpose their authority in order to settle it; and we find a whole Church, that at Galatia, drawn aside from the simplicity of the Christian faith by the subtilty of Judaizing teachers among themselves, who insisted on the necessity of the converted Gentiles being circumcised.

Ye cannot be saved.] Ye can neither enjoy God's blessing in time, nor his glory in eternity. Such an assertion as this, from any reputable authority, must necessarily shake the confidence of young converts.

Verse 2. No small dissension and disputation] Paul and Barnabas were fully satisfied that God did not design to bring the converted Gentiles under the yoke of circumcision: they knew that Jesus Christ was the end of the law for righteousness (justification) to every one that believed, and therefore they opposed the Judaizing teachers. This was one of the first controversies in the Christian Church; but, though the difference of sentiment was considerable, it led to no breach of Christian charity nor fellowship among themselves.

They determined that Paul, &c.] This verse is read very differently in the *Codex Bezae*: γενομενης δε εκτασεως και ζητησεως ουκ ιλιγης τω παυλω και τω βαρναβα συν αυτοις. ελεγεν γαρ ο παυλος μενειν ουτως, καθες επιστευσαν, δισχυριζομενος. οιδε εληλυθοτες απο ιερουσαλημ, παρηγγειλαν αυτοις, τω παυλω και βαρναβα και τισιν αλλοις, αναβαινειν προς τους αποστολους και πρεσβυτερους εις ιερουσαλημ, οπως κριθωσιν επ αυτοις (αυτων) περι του ζητηματος τουτου. *But when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, Paul said, with strong assurance, that they should remain so as they had believed. But those who came from Jerusalem charged Paul and Barnabas and certain others to go up to the apostles and elders to Jerusalem, that a determination might be made by them concerning this question.*

And certain other of them] If this be the journey to which St. Paul alludes, ^{<RM>}**Galatians 2:1-5**, then he had *Titus* with him; and how many elders went from the Church of Antioch we cannot tell. This journey was 14 years after Paul's conversion, and was undertaken by express *revelation*, as he informs us, ^{<RM>}**Galatians 2:2**, which revelation appears to have been given to certain persons in the Church of Antioch, as we learn from this verse, and not to Paul and Barnabas themselves.

Verse 3. Being brought on their way by the Church] That is; the members of the Church provided them with all necessaries for their journey; for it does not appear that they had any property of their own.

Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles] Much stress is laid on this: it was a miracle of God's mercy that the Gentiles should be received into the Church of God; and they had now the fullest proof that the thing was likely to become *general*, by the conversion of Cornelius, the conversion of the people of Antioch, of Cyprus, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, &c., &c.

Verse 4. They were received of the Church] The whole body of Christian believers.

The apostles] Either the whole or part of the *twelve*; though we read of none but *John, Peter, and James*. See ^{<4000>}**Galatians 2:9**.

And elders] Those who were *officers* in the Church, under the apostles.

They declared] To this council they gave a succinct account of the great work which God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. This was St. Paul's third journey to Jerusalem after his conversion. See an account of his *first* journey, ^{<4025>}**Acts 9:26**, and of his *second* in ^{<4113>}**Acts 11:30**.

Verse 5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees] This verse appears to be part of the declaration made by Paul and Barnabas to this council: for, having stated how God blessed their ministry among the Gentiles, they proceed to declare how all the good work was likely to be destroyed by certain Pharisees, who, having received the Christian faith, came down to Antioch, and began to teach the necessity of circumcision, &c., and thus filled the minds of the young converted Gentiles with doubtful disputations. See the *margin*.

Verse 6. The apostles and elders came together] This was the first council ever held in the Christian Church; and we find that it was composed of the *apostles* and *elders* simply.

Verse 7. When there had been much disputing] By those of the sect of the believing Pharisees; for they strongly contended for circumcision, and at the head of these, tradition tells us, was *Cerinthus*, a name famous in the primitive Church, as one who laboured to unite the law and the Gospel, and to make the salvation promised by the latter dependent on the performance of the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the former. Though the apostles and elders were under the inspiration of the Almighty, and could by this inspiration have immediately determined the question, yet it was highly necessary that the objecting party should be permitted to come forward and allege their reasons for the doctrines they preached, and that these reasons should be fairly met by argument, and the thing proved to be *useless* in itself, *inexpedient* in the present case, and *unsupported* by any express authority from God, and serving no purpose to the Gentiles, who in their uncircumcised state, by believing in Christ Jesus, had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

Peter rose up, and said] This was after the matters in dispute had been fully debated; and now the apostles, like judges, after hearing counsel on both sides, proceed to give judgment on the case.

A good while ago] ἀφ' ἡμερων αρχαιων, *From the days of old*: a phrase which simply signifies *some years ago*; and, if he here refers to the conversion of Cornelius, (see ^{<4100>}**Acts 10:1-48**,) he must mean about *ten* years before this time; but it is more likely that he refers to that time when Christ gave him *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, that he might *open the door* of faith to the Gentiles.

God made choice among us] That is, he chose me to be the first apostle of the Gentiles.

Verse 8. And God which knoweth the hearts] ο καρδιογνωστης θεος. We had this epithet of the Divine Being once before; see ^{<4024>}**Acts 1:24**, and the note there: it occurs no where else in the New Testament.

Bare them witness] Considered them as proper or fit to receive the Gospel of Christ. It is properly remarked by learned men, that μαρτυρειν τινι, *to bear witness to any person*, signifies *to approve*, *to testify in behalf of*. Here it signifies that, as God evidently sent the Gospel to the Gentiles, and, by the preaching of it, conveyed the Holy Spirit to them who believed, and as he can make no improper judgment of any who knows all hearts and their secrets, therefore what he had done was right: he saw that it was time for them to receive the Gospel; and he saw that they might be safely trusted with this heavenly deposit; and the experience of eighteen hundred years has justified the conduct of God.

Verse 9. Put no difference between us and them] Giving them the Holy Spirit, though *uncircumcised*, just as he had given it to us who were *circumcised*: an evident proof that, in the judgment of God, circumcision was *no preparation* to receive the Gospel of Christ. And as the purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit was the grand object of the religion of God, and that alone by which the soul could be prepared for a blessed immortality, and the Gentiles had received that *without* circumcision, consequently, the *shadow* could not be considered of any worth, now the *substance* was communicated.

Verse 10. Now therefore why tempt ye God] A God, by giving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, evidently shows he does not design them to be

circumcised, in order to become debtors to the law, to fulfill all its precepts, &c., why will ye provoke him to displeasure by doing what he evidently designs shall not be done?

A yoke-which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?] This does not refer to the *moral law*-that was of eternal obligation-but to the *ritual law*, which, through the multitude of its sacrifices, ordinances, &c., was exceedingly burthensome to the Jewish people. And had not God, by an especial providence, rendered both their fields and their flocks very fruitful, they could not possibly have borne so painful a ritual.

There is a curious story in *Midrash Shochar, told in Yalkut Simeoni*, part i. fol. 229, where Korah is represented as showing the oppressive nature of the law, and avarice of its priests, in justification of his rebellion. "There was," said he, "a widow in our neighbourhood who had two orphan children: she had one field; and, when she began to plough it, one came and said, *Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together*. when she went to sow it, he said, *Thou shalt not sow thy field with divers seeds*. When she began to reap, and to gather the sheaves together, he said, *Leave a handful and the corners of the field for the poor*. When she prepared to thresh it, he said, *Give me the wave-offering, and the first and second tithes*. She did as she was commanded, and then went and sold her field, and bought two ewes, that she might clothe herself and family with the wool, and get profit by the lambs. When they brought forth their lambs, Aaron came and said, Give me the firstlings, for the holy blessed God hath said, *All the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb, shall be thine*. She yielded to his demands, and gave him two lambs. When shearing time came, he said, *Give me the first fruits of the wool*. When the widow had done this, she said, I cannot stand before this man; I will kill my sheep and eat them. When she had killed the sheep, Aaron came and said, *Give me the shoulder, and the jaws, and the ventricle*. The widow said, Though I have killed my sheep, I am not delivered from this man; I therefore consecrate the whole to God. Then Aaron said, ALL belongs to me, for the holy blessed God hath said, *Every thing that is consecrated in Israel shall be his*, i.e. the priest's. He therefore took the whole carcasses, and marched off, leaving the widow and her orphan daughters overwhelmed with affliction." This is a terrible picture of the requisitions of the Mosaic ritual; and, though exaggerated, it contains so many true features that it may well be said, *This is a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear*. See *Schoettgen*. In the same vexatious way may the tithes of the national Church in this country be

exacted, and in this very way is the exaction frequently exercised. It is high time that these abuses should be corrected.

Verse 11. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved] This seems to be an answer to an objection, “Has not God designed to save *us*, the Jews, by an *observance* of the *law*; and *them*, the Gentiles, by the *faith* of the *Gospel*?” No: for we Jews can be saved no other way than through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this is the way in which the Gentiles in question have been saved. There is but one way of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, the grace, mercy, or favour coming by and through the Lord Jesus, the Christ; this is now fully opened to the Gentiles; and we believe we shall be saved in the same way.

Verse 12. All the multitude kept silence] The strong facts stated by St. Peter could not be controverted. His speech may be thus analyzed: 1. Circumcision is a sign of the purification of the heart. 2. That purification can only be effected by the Holy Ghost. 3. This Holy Spirit was hitherto supposed to be the portion of those only who had received circumcision. 4. But the Gentiles, who were never circumcised, nor kept any part of the law of Moses, have had their hearts purified by faith in Christ Jesus. 5. As God, therefore, has given *them* the thing *signified*, he evidently does not intend that the *sign* should be administered. 6. Should we impose this burthensome rite, we should most evidently be provoking God, who plainly shows us that he intends no more to save in this way. 7. Therefore it is evident that both Jews and Gentiles are to be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gave audience to Barnabas and Paul] These apostles came forward next, to corroborate what Peter had said, by showing the miracles and wonders which God had by them wrought among the Gentiles. Peter stated facts: Paul and Barnabas confirmed the statement.

Verse 13. James answered] He was evidently *president* of the council, and is generally called bishop of Jerusalem. The rest either *argued* on the subject, or gave their *opinion*; James alone pronounced the *definitive sentence*. Had Peter been *prince* and *head* of the apostles, and of the Church, he would have appeared here in the character of *judge*, not of mere *counsellor* or *disputant*. Thy popish writers say that “James presided because the council was held in his own church.” These men forget that there was not then what they term a Church on the face of the earth. The Church, or assembly of believers, then met in private houses; for there was

no *building* for the exclusive purpose of Christian worship then, nor till long after. These writers also forget that the pope pretends to be the head of the catholic or universal Church; and, consequently, no man can *preside* where he is present, but himself. Peter did not *preside* here; and this was the first ecclesiastical council, and now, if ever, he should have assumed his character of *prince* and *chief*; but he did not; nor did any of the other apostles invite him to it, which they would have done had they thought that Jesus Christ constituted him *head* of the *Church*. From this very circumstance there is the most demonstrative evidence that *Peter was no pope*, and that the *right* of his pretended successor is a *nonentity*.

Verse 14. Simeon hath declared] It is remarkable that James does not give him even the *title* which he received from our Lord at the time in which he is *supposed* to have been made *head* of the *Church*, and *vicar* of *Christ* upon earth; so that, it is evident, James did not understand our Lord as giving Peter any such pre-eminence; and, therefore, he does not even call him *Peter*, but simply *Simeon*. It is truly surprising that such a vast number of important pretensions should rest on such slight foundations! If *tradition*, no matter how *interrupted* or *precarious*, did not lend its support, feeble as that necessarily must be, the cause tried by plain *Scripture* would fall to the ground.

To take out of them a people for his name.] To form *among* the Gentiles, as he had *among* the Jews, a people called by his name and devoted to his honour.

Verse 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets] Peter had asserted the *fact* of the conversion of the Gentiles; and James shows that that fact was the fulfilment of declarations made by the prophets.

Verse 16. After this I will return, and will build again, &c.] These two verses, 16th and 17th, are quoted from ^{<AMBI>}Amos 9:11, 12, nearly as they now stand in the best editions of the *Septuagint*, and evidently taken from that version, which differs considerably from the Hebrew text. As St. James quoted them as a prophecy of the *calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God*, it is evident the Jews must have understood them in that sense, otherwise they would have immediately disputed his application of them to the subject in question, and have rejected his conclusion by denying the premises. But that the words were thus understood by the ancient Jews, we have their own testimony. In *Sanhedr.* fol. 69, we have these remarkable words: “Rabbi Nachman said to Rabbi Isaac, ‘Whence art

thou taught when *Bar Naphli* will come?’ He saith unto him, ‘Who is this *Bar Naphli*?’ The other replied, ‘He is the *Messiah*.’ ‘Dost thou then call the *Messiah Bar Naphli*?’ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘for it is written, *In that day I will build again the tabernacle of David, תל פנה HANOPHELETH, which is falling down.*’“ This is evidently a quotation from ^{<301>}**Amos 9:11**, and a proof that the Jews understood it to be a prophecy concerning the *Messiah*. See *Lightfoot*.

Verse 17. That the residue of men might seek] Instead of this, the Hebrew has, *That they may possess the remnant of Edom*. Now it is evident that, in the copy from which the Seventy translated, they found **wvrdy** *yidreshu, they might seek*, instead of **wvryy** *yireshu, they may possess*, where the whole difference between the two words is the change of the **y yod** for a **d daleth**, which might be easily done; and they found **µda** *adam, man, or men*, instead of **µwda** *Edom, the Idumeans*, which differs from the other only by the insertion of **w vau** between the two last letters. None of the MSS. collated by *Kennicott* and *Deuteronomy Rossi* confirm these readings, in which the *Septuagint*, *Arabic*, and *St. James* agree. It shows, however, that even in Jerusalem, and in the early part of the apostolic age, the *Septuagint* version was quoted in preference to the *Hebrew* text; or, what is tantamount, was quoted in cases where we would have thought the *Hebrew* text should have been preferred, because better *understood*. But God was evidently preparing the way of the Gospel by bringing this venerable version into general credit and use; which was to be the means of conveying the truths of Christianity to the whole *Gentile* world. How precious should this august and most important version be to every *Christian*, and especially to every *Christian minister*! A version, without which no man ever did or ever can critically understand the *New Testament*. And I may add that, without the assistance afforded by this version, there never could have been a correct translation of the *Hebrew* text, since that language ceased to be vernacular, into any language. Without it, even *St. Jerome* could have done little in translating the *Old Testament* into *Latin*; and how much all the modern versions owe to *St. Jerome*’s *Vulgate*, which owes so much to the *Septuagint*, most *Biblical* scholars know.

Verse 18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning] As if he had said, This is not a new counsel of God: he had purposed, from the time he called the *Israelites*, to make the *Gentiles* partakers of the same

grace and mercy; and ultimately to destroy those rites and ceremonies which separated them from each other. He therefore has sent the Gospel of his Son, proclaiming equally peace to him that is *afar off*, the *Gentiles*, and to him that is *nigh*, the *Jews*.

The whole of this verse is very dubious: the principal part of it is omitted by the most ancient MSS., and Griesbach has left *γνωστα απ αιωνος* doubtful, and has thrown *εστι τω θεω παντα τα εργα αυτου* out of the text. Of the former clause, Professor *White*, in his *Crisews*, says, “*forsitan delenda*,” “*probably* these words should be blotted out.” And of the latter clause he says, “*certissime delenda*,” “*most assuredly* these should be blotted out.” Supposing the whole to be genuine, critics have laboured to find out the sense. Some very learned men, and particularly *Schleusner*, contend that the word *γνωστα*, from *γνωσκειν*, *to know*, should be understood here in the same sense in which *ady yada* is in many parts of the Old Testament, which not only signifies *to know*, but *to approve, love, &c.* They therefore would translate the passage thus: *All the works of God are ever dear unto him.* And, if so, consequently we might naturally expect him to be merciful to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*; and the evidence now afforded of the conversion of the *Gentiles* is an additional proof that all God’s works are equally dear to him.

Verse 19. Wherefore my sentence is] *διο εγω κρινω*, *Wherefore I judge.* There is an authority here that does not appear in the speech of St. Peter; and this authority was felt and bowed to by all the council; and the decree proposed by St. James adopted.

Verse 20. But that we write unto them] Four things are prohibited in this decree: 1. Pollutions of idols; 2. fornication; 3. things strangled; 4. blood. By the *first*, POLLUTIONS of IDOLS, or, as it is in ^{<41525>} **Acts 15:25**, *meats offered to idols*, not only all *idolatry* was forbidden, but eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, knowing that they were thus offered, and joining with idolaters in their *sacred feasts*, which were always an incentive either to *idolatry* itself, or to the impure acts generally attendant on such festivals.

By the *second*, FORNICATION, all uncleanness of every kind was prohibited; for *πορνεια* not only means *fornication*, but *adultery, incestuous mixtures*, and especially the *prostitution* which was so common at the idol

temples, viz. in *Cyprus*, at the worship of *Venus*; and the shocking disorders exhibited in the *Bacchanalia*, *Lupercalia*, and several others.

By the *third*, THINGS STRANGLLED, we are to understand the *flesh* of those *animals* which were *strangled* for the purpose of *keeping the blood in the body*, as such animals were esteemed a greater delicacy.

By the *fourth*, BLOOD, we are to understand, not only the thing itself, for the reasons which I have assigned in the note on ~~<0000>~~ **Genesis 9:4**, and for others detailed at the end of this chapter; but also all *cruelty*, *manslaughter*, *murder*, &c., as some of the ancient fathers have understood it.

Instead of **του αιμαρτος**, *blood*, some have conjectured that we should read **χοιρειας**, *swine's flesh*; for *they* cannot see, *first*, that there can be any *harm* in eating of blood; and, *secondly*, that, as the other *three* things neither have nor can have any moral evil in them, it would seem strange that they should be coupled with a thing which, on all hands, is confessed to have much moral turpitude. Answers to such trifling objections will be found at the end of the chapter. It is only necessary to add that this **χοιρειας**, which is the critical emendation of Dr. *Bentley*, is not supported by one MS. or *version* in existence.

At the close of this verse, the *Codex Bezae*, and several others, add a *fifth* thing, *And not to do to others what they would not have done to themselves*. Though this is a very *ancient* reading, it does not appear to be genuine.

Verse 21. Moses of old time hath in every city] The sense of this verse seems to be this: As it was necessary to write to the *Gentiles* what was strictly necessary to be observed by *them*, relative to these points, it was not so to the converted *Jews*; for they had *Moses*, that is, the *law*, *preached to them*, **κατα πολιν**, *in the city*, that is, *Antioch*; and, by the reading of the law in the synagogues every Sabbath day, they were kept in remembrance of those institutions which the *Gentiles*, who had not the law, could not know. Therefore, James thought that a letter to the converted *Gentiles* would be sufficient, as the converted *Jews* had already ample instruction on these points.

Verse 22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church] James determined *what* ought to be done; and the whole assembly resolved *how* that should be done.

Chosen men of their own company] Paul and Barnabas were to return: they could have witnessed to the Church at Antioch what was done at the council at Jerusalem; but as it was possible that their testimony might be suspected, from the part they had already taken in this question at Antioch, it was necessary that a deputation from the council should accompany them. Accordingly Judas and Silas are sent to corroborate by their oral testimony what was contained in the letters sent from the council.

Verse 23. Send greeting unto the brethren-of the Gentiles] There was no occasion to send such a letter to the brethren which were of the *Jews*, because that law which had been so long read in their synagogues taught them all those things; and therefore the epistle is sent exclusively to the *Gentiles*. The word *greeting* is in the original *χαίρειν*, *to be well, to be safe*; a very usual form in Greek epistles, the word *ευχομαι* being understood, *I wish thee to be well*.

Verse 24. Certain which went out from us] So the persons who produced these doubtful disputations at Antioch, &c., had gone out from the apostles at Jerusalem, and were of that Church: persons zealous for the law, and yet, strange to tell, so conscientiously attached to the Gospel that they risked their personal safety by professing it.

To whom we gave no such commandment] As, therefore, they went out from that Church, they should have taught nothing which was not owned and taught by it; much less should they have taught in opposition to it.

Verse 26. Men that have hazarded their lives] This was a high character of Paul and Barnabas: they had already suffered much in the cause of Christ, and exposed their lives to the most imminent danger, and were intent on the same work, notwithstanding the increasing dangers in the way.

Verse 27. Judas and Silas-shall-tell you the same things] These were proofs that the testimony of Paul and Barnabas was true; and that the letter was not *forged*, as they could witness the same things which the letter contained.

Verse 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us] The whole council had met under his *direction*; had consulted under his *influence*; and gave forth their decree from his especial *inspiration*.

Necessary things] They were *necessary*, howsoever burthensome they might appear; and necessary, not only for the time, place, or occasion; but for *all times, all places, and all occasions*. See this proved in the observations at the end of this chapter.

Verse 29. Ye shall do well.] But, if they did not keep themselves from these things, they would *do ill*; that is, they would *sin* against God, whose Spirit had commanded them to keep from these things. And who can do any of these forbidden things, and keep either a *guiltless* or a *tender* conscience?

Fare-well.] An old English form of expressing *good wishes* and *good will*. It is compounded of [Anglo-Saxon] *to go*, and [A.S.], *much, well, very much*. *Go well, go prosperously!*-tantamount with *good speed!* may you succeed well! may God direct you! Like to that other form of sound words, *God be with you!* corrupted now into *good by to ye!* And of the same meaning with *adieu!* a Dieu, *to God*; that is, *I commend you to God*. All these terms savour not only of *good will*, or *benevolence*, but also of *piety*. Our pious ancestors believed that nothing was safe, nothing protected, nothing prosperous, over which the shield of God was not extended; and, therefore, in their familiar good wishes, they *gave each other to God*. The Greek word *ερρωσθε*, *errhosthe*, here used, from *ρωνυμι*, *to strengthen, make strong*, has nearly the same signification: *be strong, courageous, active, be in health, and be prosperous!* What a pity that such benevolent and pious wishes should degenerate into *cool formalities*, or *unmeaning compliments!*

Verse 31. They rejoiced for the consolation.] It was not a matter of small moment to have a question on which such stress was laid decided by an apostolic council, over which the Spirit of God presided.

Verse 32. Judas and Silas, being prophets] That is, being *teachers* in the Church. This signification of the word *prophet* we have often already seen. See the notes on ^{<41127>}Acts 11:27; 13:1.

Exhorted the brethren] To abide steadily attached to God, and to each other, in peace, love, and unity.

And confirmed them.] In the blessed truths they had already received.

Verse 33. They were let go] That is, both had liberty to depart; but Silas chose to stay a little longer with the brethren.

Verse 34. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas, &c.] This whole verse is wanting in ABEG, a great number besides, with the *Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Slavonic, Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*. It does not appear to have been originally in the text.

Verse 36. Let us go-and visit our brethren in every city] This heavenly man projected a journey to *Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Iconiam, Lystra, Derbe, Antioch* in Pisidia, and elsewhere; for in all these places he had preached and founded Churches in the preceding year. He saw it was necessary to *water* the seed he had *planted*; for these were young converts, surrounded with impiety, opposition, and superstition, and had few advantages among themselves.

Verse 37. Barnabas determined to take with them John] John Mark was his sister's son; and natural affection might have led him to the partiality here mentioned.

Verse 38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them] On this subject, see Clarke's note on "^{<<41313>}Acts 13:13".

Verse 39. The contention was so sharp between them] For all this sentence, there is only in the Greek text *εγενετο ουν παροξυσμος*; *there was therefore a paroxysm, an incitement, a stirring up*, from *παροξυνω*, compounded of *παρα*, *intensive*, and *οξυνω*, *to whet, or sharpen*: there was a sharp contention. But does this imply *anger* or *ill-will* on either side? Certainly not. Here, these two apostles differed, and were strenuous, each in support of the part he had adopted. "Paul," as an ancient Greek commentator has it, "being influenced only with the love of righteousness; Barnabas being actuated by love to his relative." John Mark had been tried in trying circumstances, and he failed; Paul, therefore, would not trust him again. The affection of Barnabas led him to hope the best, and was therefore desirous to give him another trial. Barnabas would not give up: Paul would not agree. They therefore agreed to depart from each other, and take different parts of the work: each had an attendant and companion at hand; so Barnabas took John Mark, and sailed to Cyprus: Paul took Silas, and went into Syria. John Mark proved faithful to his uncle

Barnabas; and Silas proved faithful to his master Paul. To all human appearance it was best that they separated; as the Churches were more speedily visited, and the work of God more widely and more rapidly spread. And why is it that most men attach blame to this difference between Paul and Barnabas? And why is it that this is brought in as a proof of the *sinful imperfection* of these holy apostles? Because those who thus treat the subject can never differ with another without *feeling wrong tempers*; and then, as destitute of good breeding as they are of humility, they attribute to others the angry, proud, and wrathful dispositions which they feel in themselves; and, because they *cannot* be angry and sin not, they suppose that even *apostles* themselves cannot. Thus, in fact, we are always bringing our own moral or immoral qualifications to be a standard, by which we are to judge of the characters and moral feelings of men who were actuated by zeal for God's glory, brotherly kindness, and charity. Should any man say there was *sin* in this contention between Paul and Barnabas, I answer, there is no evidence of this in the text. Should he say, the word *παροξυσμος*, *paroxysm*, denotes this, I answer, *it does not*. And the verb *παροξυνομαι* is often used in a *good sense*. So Isocrates ad Demosth. cap. xx. *μαλιστα δ αν παροξυνθειης ορεχθηναι των καλων εργαων*, "But thou wilt be the more *stirred up* to the love of good works." And such persons forget that this is the very form used by the apostle himself, ^{<SIC>}**Hebrews 10:24**: *και κατανοωμεν αλληλους εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργαων* which, these objectors would be highly displeas'd with me, were I to translate, *Let us consider one another to an angry contention of love and good works*. From these examples, it appears that the word is used to signify *incitement* of any kind; and, if taken in a medical sense, to express the *burning fit* of an ague: it is also taken to express a *strong excitement* to the love of God and man, and to the fruits by which such love can be best proved; and, in the case before us, there was certainly nothing contrary to this pure principle in either of those heavenly men. See also Kypke on ^{<SIC>}**Hebrews 10:24**.

Verse 40. Being recommended-unto the grace of God.] Much stress has been laid upon this, to show that Barnabas was in the *wrong*, and Paul in the *right*, because "the brethren recommended Paul and Silas to the grace of God; but they did not recommend Barnabas and John Mark: this proves that the Church condemned the conduct of Barnabas, but approved that of Paul." Now, there is no proof that the Church did not recommend Barnabas to the grace of God, as well as Paul; but, as St. Luke had for the

present dropped the story of Barnabas, and was now going on with that of Paul and Silas, he begins it at this point, viz. his being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God; and then goes on to tell of his progress in Syria, Derbe, Lystra, &c., &c. See the next chapter. And with this verse should the following chapter begin; and this is the division followed by the most correct copies of the Greek text.

Verse 41. Confirming the Churches.] This was the object of his journey: they were young converts, and had need of establishment; and there is no doubt that, by showing them the decision made at the late council of Jerusalem, their faith was greatly strengthened, their hope confirmed, and their love increased. It was this consideration, no doubt, that led some ancient MSS. and some versions to add here, *They delivered them the decrees of the apostles and elders to keep*; which clause certainly was not an original part of the text, but seems to have been borrowed from the fourth verse of the following chapter. Some have thought that the fourth and fifth verses of the next chapter really belong to this place; or that the first, second, and third verses of it should be read in a parenthesis; but of this there does not appear to be any particular necessity.

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

ACTS

CHAPTER 16.

Paul, coming to Derbe and Lystra, meets with Timothy, the son of a Jewess by a Greek father, whom he circumcises and takes with him into his work, 1-3. As they pass through the different cities, they deliver the apostles' decrees to the Churches; and they are established in the faith, and daily increase in numbers, 4, 5. They travel through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and to Troas, 6-8. Where Paul has a vision, relative to his preaching in Macedonia, 9, 10. Leaving Troas, he sails to Samothracia and Neapolis, and comes to Philippi in Macedonia, 11, 12. Lydia, a seller of purple, receives the apostles teaching; and she and her family are baptized, 13-16. A young woman, with a spirit of divination, dispossessed by St. Paul, 16-18. Her masters, finding their gain by her soothsaying gone, make an attack upon Paul and Silas, drag them before the magistrates, who command them to be beaten, thrust into the closest prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, 19-24. Paul and Silas singing praises at midnight, the prison doors are miraculously opened, and all the bonds of the prisoners loosed, 25, 26. The keeper being alarmed, supposing that the prisoners were fled, is about to kill himself, but is prevented by Paul, 27-28. He inquires the way of salvation, believes, and he and his whole family are baptized, 29-34. The next morning the magistrates order the apostles to be dismissed, 35, 36. Paul pleads his privilege as a Roman, and accuses the magistrates of injustice, who, being alarmed, come themselves to the prison, deliver them, and beg them to depart from the city, 37-39. They leave the prison, enter into the house of Lydia, comfort the brethren, and depart, 40.

NOTES ON CHAP. 16.

Verse 1. A certain disciple] Bishop Pearce would read the latter part of this verse and the beginning of the next thus—*A certain disciple named Timotheus, (the son of a certain Jewish woman that believed, but of a father who was a Greek,) who was well reported of by the brethren, &c.*

This Timothy was the same person to whom St. Paul wrote those two noble epistles which are still extant. His mother's name was *Eunice*, as we learn from ^{SCOTUS} **2 Timothy 1:5**. What his father's name was we know not; he was either a mere *heathen*, or, at most, only a *proselyte of the gate*, who never submitted to circumcision: had he submitted to this rite, he would, no doubt, have circumcised his son; but the son being without it is a proof that the father was so too. Some MSS. state that Timothy's mother was now a *widow*; but this does not appear to be well founded.

Verse 2. Which was well reported of] These words are spoken of *Timothy*, and not of his *father*. At this time *Timothy* must have been very young; for, several years after, when appointed to superintend the Church at *Crete*, he appears to have been then so young that there was a danger of its operating to the prejudice of his ministry: ^{<50412>}**1 Timothy 4:12**, *Let no man despise thy youth*. He had a very early religious education from his godly mother *Eunice*, and his not less pious grandmother *Lois*; and, from his religious instructions, was well prepared for the work to which God now called him.

Verse 3. Took and circumcised him] For this simple reason, that the Jews would neither have heard him preach, nor would have any connection with him, had he been otherwise. Besides, *St. Paul* himself could have had no access to the Jews in any place, had they known that he associated with a person who was uncircumcised: they would have considered both to be *unclean*. The circumcision of *Timothy* was a merely *prudential* regulation; one rendered imperiously necessary by the circumstances in which they were then placed; and, as it was done merely in reference to this, *Timothy* was laid under no necessity to observe the Mosaic ritual, nor could it prejudice his spiritual state, because he did not do it in order to *seek justification by the law*, for this he had before, through the faith of *Christ*. In ^{<4118>}**Galatians 2:3-5**, we read that *Paul* refuses to circumcise *Titus*, who was a Greek, and his parents *Gentiles*, notwithstanding the entreaties of some zealous Judaizing Christians, as their object was to bring him under *the yoke of the law*: here, the case was widely different, and the necessity of the measure indisputable.

Verse 4. They delivered them the decrees for to keep] τα δογματα, τα κεκριμενα υπο των αποστολων. *Bishop Pearce* contends that τα δογματα, *the decrees*, is a gloss which was not in the text originally; and that the τα κεκριμενα, the *judgments* or *determinations* of the apostles, was all that was originally written here. He supports his opinion by a reference to the word κρινω, *I judge*, used by *James*, ^{<41519>}**Acts 15:19**, whence the whole decision, as it referred-1. to the inexpediency of circumcising the *Gentiles*; and, 2. to the necessity of observing the four precepts laid down, was called τα κεκριμενα, the *things that were judged*, or *decided on*; the *judgments* of the apostolic council. Instead of γεγραμμενα, the *Syrian* has a word that answers to γεγραμμενα, the *decrees that were written*. The word δογμα, from δοκεω, to *think proper*, *determine*, *decree*, signifies an ordinance or decree, properly and

deliberately made, relative to any important point, and which, in reference to that point, has the force of law. Our term *dogma*, which we often abuse, is the Greek word in English letters.

Verse 5. And so were the Churches established] The disputations at Antioch, relative to circumcision, had no doubt spread far and wide among other Churches, and unhinged many. The decrees of the apostles came in good time, and prevented farther mischief: the people, saved from uncertainty, became established in the faith; and the Church had a daily accession of converted souls.

Verse 6. Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.] The Asia mentioned here could not be *Asia Minor* in general, for Galatia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Pamphylia, were provinces of it, and in these the apostles preached; but it was what was called *Proconsular Asia*, which included only *Ionia*, *Æolia*, and *Lydia*. The apostles were not suffered to visit these places at this time; but they afterwards went thither, and preached the Gospel with success; for it was in this *Proconsular Asia* that the seven Churches were situated. God chose to send his servants to another place, where he saw that the word would be affectionately received; and probably those in Proconsular Asia were not, as yet, sufficiently prepared to receive and profit by it.

Verse 7. After they were come to Mysia] They passed through Phrygia into Mysia, which lay between Bithynia on the north, Phrygia on the east, *Æolia* on the south, and the Mediterranean on the west.

But the Spirit suffered them not] God saw that that was not the most proper time to preach the word at Bithynia; as he willed them to go immediately to Macedonia, the people there being ripe for the word of life. Instead of *το πνευμα*, *the Spirit* merely, *το πνευμα ιησου*, *the Spirit of JESUS*, is the reading of ABCDE, several others, with both the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, and several of the *fathers*. The reading is undoubtedly *genuine*, and should be immediately restored to the text.

Verse 8. Came down to Troas.] The *Troad*, or part of Phrygia Minor in which the celebrated city of *Troy* was formerly situated. This city was first built by *Dardanus*, who was its king, and from whom it was called *Dardania*; from *Tros*, his grandson, it was called *Troja*, or *Troy*; and from his son, *Ilus*, it was called *Ilium*. It has been long so completely destroyed

that no ascertainable vestige of it remains; insomuch that some have even doubted of its existence. Those who contend for the reality of the history of Troy suppose it to have stood on the site of the modern village *Bounarbachi*, about twelve miles from the sea, on an eminence, at the termination of a spacious plain.

Verse 9. A vision appeared to Paul in the night] Whether this was in a *dream*, or whether a *representation* made to the *senses* of the apostle, we cannot tell. A man of Macedonia appeared to him, and made this simple communication, *Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

Some suppose that the *guardian angel* of Macedonia appeared to St. Paul in a human shape; others, that it was a Divine communication made to his imagination in a dream.

Verse 10. We endeavoured to go into Macedonia] This is the first place that the historian St. Luke refers to himself: *WE endeavoured, &c.* And, from this, it has been supposed that he joined the company of Paul, for the first time, at Troas.

Assuredly gathering] *συμβιβαζοντες*, Drawing an inference from the vision that had appeared.

That the Lord had called us for to preach] That is, they inferred that they were called to *preach the Gospel* in Macedonia, from what the vision had said, *come over and help us*; the *help* meaning, *preach to us the Gospel*. Instead of *ο κυριος*, *the Lord*, meaning JESUS, several MSS., such as ABCE, several others, with the *Coptic, Vulgate, Theophylact*, and *Jerome*, have *ο θεος*, GOD. Though this stands on very reputable authority, yet the former seems to be the better reading; for it was the SPIRIT of JESUS, ^{<4167>}**Acts 16:7**, that would not suffer them to go into *Bithynia*, because he had designed that they should immediately preach the Gospel in Macedonia.

Verse 11. Loosing from Troas] Setting sail from this place.

With a straight course to Samothracia] This was an island of the Ægean Sea, contiguous to *Thrace*, and hence called *Samothracia*, or the *Thracian Samos*. It is about twenty miles in circumference, and is now called *Samandrachi* by the Turks, who are its present masters.

And the next day to Neapolis.] There were many cities of this name; but this was a sea-port town of Macedonia, a few miles eastward of Philippi. *Neapolis* signifies the *new city*.

Verse 12. And from thence to Philippi] This was a town of Macedonia, in the territory of the *Edones*, on the confines of Thrace, situated on the side of a steep eminence. It took its name from Philip II., king of Macedon. It is famous for two battles, fought between the imperial army, commanded by *Octavianus*, afterwards *Augustus*, and *Mark Antony*, and the republican army, commanded by *Brutus* and *Cassius*, in which these were successful; and a second, between *Octavianus* and *Antony* on the one part, and *Brutus* on the other. In this battle the republican troops were cut to pieces, after which *Brutus* killed himself. It was to the Church in this city that St. Paul wrote the epistle that still goes under their name. This place is still in being, though much decayed, and is the see of an archbishop.

The chief city of that part of Macedonia] This passage has greatly puzzled both critics and commentators. It is well known that, when *Paulus Æmilius* had conquered Macedonia, he divided it into four parts, μερη, and that he called the country that lay between the rivers Strymon and Nessus, the *first part*, and made Amphipolis its *chief city*, or metropolis; Philippi, therefore, was not its *chief city*. But Bishop *Pearce* has, with great show of reason, argued that, though *Amphipolis* was made the chief city of it by *Paulus Æmilius*, yet *Philippi* might have been the chief city in the days of St. Paul, which was two hundred and twenty years after the division by P. Æmilius. Besides, as it was at this place that Augustus gained that victory which put him in possession of the whole Roman empire, might not he have given to *it* that dignity which was before enjoyed by Amphipolis? This is the most rational way of solving this difficulty; and therefore I shall not trouble the reader with the different modes that have been proposed to *alter* and *amend* the Greek text.

And a colony] That is, a colony of Rome; for it appears that a colony was planted here by Julius Cæsar, and afterwards enlarged by Augustus; the people, therefore, were considered as freemen of Rome, and, from this, call themselves *Romans*, <416> **Acts 16:21**. The Jewish definition of aynl q *kolonia* (for they have the *Latin* word in *Hebrew* letters, as St. Luke has it. here, κολωνια, in *Greek* letters) is, *a free city, which does not pay tribute*.

Verse 13. By a river side, where prayer was wont to be made] οὐ νομιζέτο προσευχῆ εἶναι, *where it was said there was a proseucha.* The proseucha was a *place of prayer*, or a *place used for worship*, where there was no synagogue. It was a large building uncovered, with seats, as in an amphitheatre. Buildings of this sort the Jews had by the sea side, and by the sides of rivers. See this subject considered at large in **Clarke's note on "Luke 6:12"**. It appears that the apostles had *heard* from some of the Gentiles, or from some of the Jews themselves, that there was a *place of prayer* by the river side; and they went out in quest of it, knowing that, as it was the Sabbath, they should find some Jews there.

Spake unto the women] Probably this was before the time of their public worship, and while they were waiting for the assembling of the people in general; and Paul improved the opportunity to speak concerning Christ and salvation to the women that resorted thither.

Verse 14. Lydia, a seller of purple] She probably had her name from the province of *Lydia*, in which the city of *Thyatira* was situated. The Lydian women have been celebrated for their beautiful purple manufactures.

Which worshipped God] That is, she was a *proselyte* to the Jewish religion; as were probably all the women that resorted hither.

Whose heart the Lord opened] As she was a sincere worshipper of God, she was prepared to receive the heavenly truths spoken by Paul and his companions; and, as she was *faithful* to the grace she had received, so God gave her more grace, and gave her now a Divine conviction that what was spoken by Paul was true; and therefore *she attended unto the things*-she believed them and received them as the doctrines of God; and in this faith she was joined by her whole family, and in it they were all baptized.

Verse 15. If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord] The meaning seems to be this: If my present reception of the Gospel of Christ be a proof to you that I have been faithful to the Lord, in the light previously imparted, and that I am as likely to be faithful to this *new grace* as I have been to that already received, and, consequently, not likely by light or fickle conduct to bring any discredit on this Divine work, *come into my house, and abide there.* It is wrong to suppose that this woman had not received a measure of the light of God *before* this time.

And she constrained us.] She used such entreaties and persuasions that at last they consented to lodge there.

Verse 16. As we went to prayer] εἰς προσευχῆν, *Into the proseucha*: see Clarke on “^{<41613>}Acts 16:13”, and see Clarke on “^{<40612>}Luke 6:12”. The article, τῆν, is added here by ABCE, several others, *Origen* and *Theophylact*: thus makes the place more emphatic, and seems to determine the above meaning of προσευχῆν to be right—not the *act of prayer* or *praying* to God, but the *place*, the *oratory*, in which these proselytes assembled for the purpose of praying, reading the law and the prophets, and such like exercises of devotion. It appears that the apostles spent some time here; as it is evident, from this and the following verses, that they often resorted to this place to preach the Gospel.

Possessed with a spirit of divination] εχουσαν πνευμα πυθωνος, *Having a spirit of Python*, or of *Apollo*. Python was, according to fable, a huge serpent, that had an oracle at Mount Parnassus, famous for predicting future events; Apollo slew this serpent, and hence he was called *Pythius*, and became celebrated as the foreteller of future events; and all those, who either could or pretended to predict future events, were influenced by the spirit of *Apollo Pythius*. As often-times the priestesses of this god became greatly agitated, and gave answers apparently from their *bellies*, when their mouths remained close, πυθων was applied to the εγγαστριμυθοι, or *ventriloquists*. Hesychius defines πυθων, δαιμονιον μαντικον, a *divining demon*; and it was evidently such a one that possessed this young woman, and which Paul expelled, ^{<41618>}Acts 16:18. See on this subject, **Clarke’s notes on “^{<41931>}Leviticus 19:31”**, and see **Clarke on “^{<45181>}Deuteronomy 18:11”**.

Brought her masters much gain by soothsaying] μαντευουενη, *By divination*, or what we call *telling fortunes*. Our term *soothsaying* coming from the Anglo-Saxon [A.S.], *truth*; and [A.S.], *to say*, i.e. *truth saying*, or *saying the truth*. For, as it was supposed among the heathen that such persons spoke by the inspiration of their *god*, consequently what they said must be *true*. However, our translators might have used a term here that would not have been so creditable to this Pythoness; for, what she said concerning the apostles excepted, she certainly could not be supposed to tell the *truth*, while her inspiration came from him who is the *father of lies*. But Satan will sometimes conceal himself under the guise of *truth*, that he may the more effectually *deceive*. See below.

Verse 17. These men are the servants, &c.] It is astonishing how such a testimony could be given in such a case; every syllable of it *true*, and at the same time full, clear, and distinct. But mark the deep design and artifice of this evil spirit: 1. He well knew that the Jewish law abhorred all *magic, incantations, magical rites, and dealings with familiar spirits*; he therefore bears what was in itself a true testimony to the apostles, that by it he may destroy their credit, and ruin their usefulness. The Jews, by this testimony, would be led at once to believe that the apostles were in compact with these demons, and that the miracles they wrought were done by the agency of these wicked spirits, and that the whole was the effect of *magic*; and this, of course, would harden their hearts against the preaching of the Gospel. 2. The GENTILES, finding that their own demon bore testimony to the apostles, would naturally consider that the whole was *one system*; that *they* had nothing to learn, nothing to correct; and thus the preaching of the apostles must be useless to *them*. In such a predicament is this, nothing could have saved the credit of the apostles but their dispossessing this woman of her familiar spirit, and that in the most incontestable manner; for what could have saved the credit of Moses and Aaron, when the magicians of Egypt turned their *rods into serpents*, had not Aaron's *rod devoured theirs*? And what could have saved the credit of these apostles but the casting out of this spirit of divination, with which, otherwise, both Jews and Gentiles would have believed them in compact?

Verse 18. Paul, being grieved] Probably for the reasons assigned above.

Turned-to the spirit] Not to the *woman*; she was only the *organ* by which the spirit acted.

I command thee, in the name of Jesus] Jesus is the *Saviour*; Satan is *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, the *destroyer*. The sovereign *Saviour* says to the *destroyer*, *Come out of her; and he came out in the same hour*. Every circumstance of this case proves it to have been a *real possession*. We have already had several opportunities of remarking the great accuracy of St. Luke in his accounts of demoniacs: his education as a *physician* gave him advantages to detect imposture of this kind where it subsisted; but he sees none in this case. He speaks of the *spirit* and the *damsel* as *distinct* persons. The *damsel* had a *spirit* of divination. Paul turned to the *spirit*, and said, I command THEE to *come out* of HER; and *he came out* in the same hour. Had not St. Luke considered this as a *real case of diabolic possession*, he has made use of the most improper language he could

choose; language and forms of speech calculated to deceive all his readers, and cause them to believe a lie. But it is impossible that the holy apostle could *do so*, because he was a *good man*; and it is not likely he could be deceived by a parcel of *charlatans*, because he was a *wise man*; and it would be absurd to suppose that, while he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he could be imposed on by the *cunning* of even the *devil* himself.

Verse 19. When her masters saw] It appears she was maintained by some men, who received a certain pay from every person whose *fortune she told*, or to whom she made any *discovery of stolen goods*, &c., &c.

The hope of their gains was gone] ἡ ἐλπις, *This hope*; viz. the *spirit*. So completely was this spirit cast out that the girl could divine no more; and yet she continued a heathen still, for we do not hear a word of *her* conversion. Had she been converted, got baptized, and been associated with the apostles, the family of Lydia, &c., there would have been some show of reason to believe that there had been *no possession* in the case, and that the *spirit of divination* coming out of her meant no more than that, through scruple of conscience, she had left off her imposing arts, and would no longer continue to pretend to do what she knew she could not perform. But she still continued with her masters, though now utterly unable to disclose any thing relative to futurity!

Drew them into the market-place] This was the place of public resort, and, by bringing them here, they might hope to excite a general clamour against them; and probably those who are here called *τους αρχοντας*, *the rulers*, were *civil magistrates*, who kept offices in such public places, for the preservation of the peace of the city. But these words, *the rulers*, are suspected to be an interpolation by some critics: I think on no good ground.

Verse 20. Brought them to the magistrates] στρατηγοις, *The commanders of the army*, who, very likely, as this city was a Roman colony, possessed the sovereign authority. The *civil magistrates*, therefore, having heard the case, as we shall soon find, in which it was pretended that the safety of the state was involved, would naturally refer the business to the decision of those who had the supreme command.

Exceedingly trouble our city] They are destroying the public peace, and endangering the public safety.

Verse 21. And teach customs] εθη, Religious opinions, and religious rites.

Which are not lawful for us to receive] The Romans were very jealous of their national worship. *Servius*, on the following lines of Virgil, has given us correct information on this point; and has confirmed what several other writers have advanced:-

Rex Evandrus ait: Non hæc solemnia nobis

—————
Vana superstitio, veterumque ignara deorum, Imposuit.
Æn. viii. v. 185, &c.

King Evander said:-It is not vain superstition, ignorant of the ancient worship of the gods, which has imposed these rites on us. *Duo dicit*, says *Servius: non ideo Herculem colimus; aut quia omnem religionem veram putamus; aut quia deos ignoramus antiquos. Cautum enim fuerat, et apud Athenienses, et apud Romanos; ne quis NOVAS introduceret RELIGIONES: unde et Socrates damnatus est: et Chaldæi et Judæi unt urbe depulsi.*

“He says two things: we do not worship Hercules because we believe every religion to be true; nor are we ignorant of the ancient gods. Great care was taken, both among the Athenians and Romans, that no one should introduce any *new religion*. It was on this account that Socrates was condemned, and on this account the Chaldeans and the Jews were banished from Rome.”

CICERO, Deuteronomy Legibus, lib. ii. c. 8, says: *Separatim nemo habessit deos; neve NOVOS; sed nec ADVENAS, nisi publice ADSCITOS, PRIVATIM colunto.* “No person shall have any *separate* gods, nor *new ones*; nor shall he privately worship any *strange gods*, unless they be *publicly allowed*.” The whole chapter is curious. It was on such laws as these that the people of Philippi pleaded against the apostles. These men bring *new gods*, new worship, new rites; we are Romans, and the laws forbid us to worship any new or strange god, unless publicly allowed.

Verse 22. The multitude rose up together] There was a general outcry against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes, and delivered them to the mob, commanding the lictors, or beadles, to beat them with rods, ραβδιζειν. This was the Roman custom of treating criminals, as *Grotius* has well remarked.

Verse 23. Laid many stripes upon them] The Jews never gave more than thirty-nine stripes to any criminal; but the Romans had no law relative to this: they gave as many as they chose; and the apostles had, undoubtedly, the fullest measure. And perhaps St. Paul refers to this, where he says, ^{<471123>}**2 Corinthians 11:23:** *εν πληγαις υπερβαλλοντως*, *in stripes beyond measure or moderation.*

Verse 24. The inner prison] Probably what we would call the *dungeon*; the darkest and most secure cell.

Made their feet fast in the stocks.] The *το ξυλον*, which we here translate *stocks*, is supposed to mean two large pieces of wood, pierced with holes like our stocks, and fitted to each other, that, when the legs were in, they could not be drawn out. The holes being pierced at different distances, the legs might be separated or divaricated to a great extent, which must produce extreme pain. It is this circumstance to which it is supposed Prudentius refers, in speaking of the torments of St. Vincent:-

*Lignoque plantas inserit,
Divaricatis cruribus.*

“They placed his feet in the stocks, his legs greatly distended!” If the apostles were treated in this way, lying on the bare ground with their flayed backs, what agony must they have suffered! However, they could sing praises notwithstanding.

Verse 25. At midnight Paul and Silas-sang praises] Though these holy men felt much, and had reason to fear more, yet they are undismayed, and even happy in their sufferings: they were so fully satisfied that they were right, and had done their duty, that there was no room for regret or self-reproach. At the same times they had such consolations from God as could render any circumstances not only tolerable, but delightful. They *prayed*, first, for grace to support them, and for pardon and salvation for their persecutors; and then, secondly, *sang praises* to God, who had called them to such a state of salvation, and had accounted them worthy to suffer shame for the testimony of Jesus. And, although they were in the inner prison, they sang so *loud* and so *heartily* that the prisoners heard them.

Verse 26. There was a great earthquake] Thus God bore a miraculous testimony of approbation to his servants; and, by the earthquake, and loosing the bonds of the prisoners, showed, in a symbolical way, the nature

of that religion which they preached: while it shakes and terrifies the guilty, it proclaims deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound; and sets at liberty them that are bruised.

Every one's bands were loosed.] And yet so eminently did God's providence conduct every thing, that not one of the prisoners made his escape, though the doors were open, and his bolts off!

Verse 27. The keeper of the prison-would have killed himself] Every jailor was made responsible for his prisoner, under the same penalty to which the prisoner himself was exposed. The jailor, awaking, and finding the prison-doors open, taking it for granted that all the prisoners had made their escape, and that he must lose his life on the account, chose rather to die by his own hand than by that of others. For it was customary among the heathens, when they found death inevitable, to take away their own lives. This custom was applauded by their philosophers, and sanctioned by some of their greatest men.

Verse 28. Do thyself no harm] As it was now dark, being midnight, St. Paul must have had a Divine intimation of what the jailor was going to do; and, to prevent it, cried out aloud, *Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.*

Verse 29. He called for a light] That he might see how things stood, and whether the words of Paul were true; for on this his personal safety depended.

Came trembling] Terrified by the earthquake, and feeling the danger to which his own life was exposed.

Fell down before Paul and Silas] The persons whom a few hours before he, according to his office, treated with so much asperity, if not cruelty, as some have supposed; though, by the way, it does not appear that he exceeded his *orders* in his treatment of the apostles.

Verse 30. Brought them out] Of the dungeon in which they were confined.

What must I do to be saved?] Whether this regard personal or eternal safety, it is a question the most interesting to man. But it is not likely that the jailor referred here to his personal safety. He had seen, notwithstanding the prison doors had been miraculously opened, and the bonds of the

prisoners all loosed, that not one of them had escaped: hence he could not feel himself in danger of losing his life on *this* account; and consequently it cannot be his *personal safety* about which he inquires. He could not but have known that these apostles had been preaching among the people what they called the *doctrine of salvation*; and he knew that for expelling a demon they were delivered into his custody: the Spirit of God had now convinced his heart that *he was lost*, and needed *salvation*; and therefore his earnest inquiry is *how* he should obtain it. The answer of the apostles to the jailor shows that his inquiry was not about his *personal safety*; as his *believing* on Jesus Christ could have had no effect upon that, in his present circumstances. Men who dispute against this sense of the word are not aware that the Spirit of God can teach any thing to a *heart*, which the head of a person has not previously learned. Therefore, they say it was impossible that a heathen could make such an inquiry in reference to his *eternal state*, because he could know nothing about it. On this ground, how impertinent would the answer of the apostles have been: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be put in a state of PERSONAL SAFETY, and thy family!* I contend that neither *he* nor *his family* were in any danger, as long as not one prisoner had escaped; he had, therefore, nothing from this quarter to fear; and, on the ground against which I contend, his own question would have been as impertinent as the apostles' answer.

Verse 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus] Receive the religion of Christ, which we preach, and let thy household also receive it, and ye shall be all placed in the sure way to final salvation.

Verse 32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord] Thus, by teaching him and all that were in his house the *doctrine of the Lord*, they plainly pointed out to them the way of salvation. And it appears that he and his whole family, who were capable of receiving instructions, embraced this doctrine, and showed the sincerity of their faith by immediately receiving baptism. And, by the way, if *he and all his were baptized straightway*, **παραχρημα**, immediately, instantly, at that very time, *dum ipsa res agitur*, it is by no means likely that there was any *immersion* in the case; indeed, all the circumstances of the case, the dead of the night, the general agitation, the necessity of despatch, and the words of the text, all disprove it. The apostles, therefore, had another method of administering baptism besides *immersion*, which, if practised according to the Jewish formalities, must have required considerable time, and not a little publicity. As the Jews were

accustomed to receive whole families of heathens, young and old, as proselytes, by *baptism*, so here the apostles received *whole families*, those of Lydia and the jailor, by the same rite. It is therefore pretty evident that we have in this chapter very presumptive proofs: 1. That *baptism* was administered without *immersion*, as in the case of the jailor and his family; and 2. That *children* were also received into the Church in this way; for we can scarcely suppose that the whole families of Lydia and the jailor had no children in them; and, if they had, it is not likely that they should be omitted; for the Jewish practice was invariably to receive the heathen *children* with their proselyted parents.

Verse 33. Washed their stripes] *ελουσεν απο των πληγων*, *He washed from the stripes*: i.e. he washed the *blood from the wounds*; and this would not require putting them into a *pool*, or *bath*, as some have ridiculously imagined.

Verse 34. He set meat before them] They were sufficiently exhausted, and needed refreshment; nor had the apostles any such inherent miraculous power as could prevent them from suffering through hunger, or enable them to heal their own grounds. As they were the instruments of bringing *health* to his *soul*, he became the instrument of *health* to their *bodies*. Genuine *faith* in Christ will always be accompanied with *benevolence* and *humanity*, and every fruit that such dispositions can produce. The jailor *believed-brought* them into his *house-washed their stripes-and set meat before them*.

Verse 35. And the magistrates sent the sergeants] The original word, *παβδουχους*, means the *lictors*, persons who carried before the consul the *fascies*, which was a hatchet, round the handle of which was a bundle of *rods* tied. Why the magistrates should have sent an order to dismiss the apostles, whom they had so barbarously used the preceding evening, we cannot tell, unless we receive the reading of the *Codex Bezae* as genuine, viz. *ἡμερας δε γενομενης, συνηλθον οι στρατηγοι επι το αυτο εις την αγοραν, και αναμνησθεντες τον σεισμον τον γεγοντα, εφοβηθησαν, και απεστειλαν τους ραβδουχους κ. τ. λ.* *And when it was day, the magistrates came together into the court, AND REMEMBERING THE EARTHQUAKE THAT HAD HAPPENED, they were afraid, and they sent the sergeants, &c.* The *Itala* version of this same MS. has the same reading: so has also the margin of the later *Syriac*. If this MS. be correct, the *cause* of the dismissal of the apostles is at once evident: the earthquake had alarmed

the magistrates; and, taking it for granted that this was a *token* of the *Divine displeasure* against them for their unprincipled conduct towards those good men, they wished to get as quietly rid of the business as they could, and therefore sent to dismiss the apostles. Whether this reading be genuine or not, it is likely that it gives the true cause of the magistrates' conduct.

Verse 37. They have beaten us openly-being Romans] St. Paul well knew the Roman laws; and on their violation by the magistrates he *pleads*. The *Valerian* law forbade any Roman citizen to be *bound*. The *Porcian* law forbade any to be *beaten with rods*. “*Poreia lex virgas ab omnium civium Romanorum corpore amovit.*” And by the same law the liberty of a Roman citizen was never put in the power of the *lictor*. “*Porcia lex libertatem civium licitori eripuit.*” See CICERO, *Orat. pro Rabirio*. Hence, as the same author observes, *In Verrem*, *Orat. 5*: “*Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum, scelus verberari.*” It is a transgression of the law to bind a Roman citizen: it is wickedness to scourge him. And the illegality of the proceedings of these magistrates was farther evident in their condemning and punishing them *unheard*. This was a gross violation of a common maxim in the Roman law. *Causa cognita, possunt multi absolvi; incognita, nemo condemnari potest.* Cicero. “Many who are accused of evil may be absolved, when the cause is *heard*; but *unheard*, no man can be condemned.” Every principle of the law of nature and the law of nations was violated in the treatment these holy men met with from the unprincipled magistrates of this city.

Let them come themselves and fetch us out.] The apostles were determined that the magistrates should be humbled for their illegal proceedings; and that the people at large might see that they had been unjustly condemned, and that the majesty of the Roman people was insulted by the treatment they had received.

Verse 38. They feared when they heard-they were Romans.] They feared, because the Roman law was so constituted that an insult offered to a citizen was deemed an insult to the whole Roman people. There is a remarkable addition here, both in the *Greek* and *Latin* of the *Codex Bezae*. It is as follows: “And when they were come with many of their friends to the prison, they besought them to go out, saying: We were ignorant of your circumstances, that ye were righteous men. And, leading them out,

they besought them, saying, Depart from this city, lest they again make an insurrection against you, and clamour against you.”

Verse 40. Entered into the house of Lydia] This was the place of their residence while at Philippi: see ^{<4165>}**Acts 16:15**.

They comforted them, and departed.] The magistrates were sufficiently humbled, and the public at large, hearing of this circumstance, must be satisfied of the innocency of the apostles. They, therefore, after staying a reasonable time at the house of Lydia, and exhorting the brethren, departed; having as yet to go farther into Macedonia, and to preach the Gospel in the most polished city in the world, the city of Athens. See the succeeding chapter.

GREAT and lasting good was done by this visit to Philippi: a Church was there founded, and the members of it did credit to their profession. To them the apostle, who had suffered so much for their sakes, was exceedingly dear; and they evidenced this by their contributions to his support in the times of his necessity. They sent him money *twice* to Thessalonica, ^{<5046>}**Philippians 4:16**, and once to Corinth, ^{<7109>}**2 Corinthians 11:9**, and long afterwards, when he was prisoner in Rome, ^{<5049>}**Philippians 4:9, 14, 18**. About five or six years after this, St. Paul visited Philippi on his way to Jerusalem, and he wrote his epistle to them about ten years after his first journey thither. The first members of the Church of Christ in this place were Lydia and her family; and the next in all probability were the jailor and *his* family. These doubtless became the instruments of bringing many more to the faith; for the false imprisonment and public acquittal of the apostles by the magistrates must have made their cause popular; and thus the means which were used to prevent the sowing of the seed of life in this city became the means by which it was sown and established. Thus the wrath of man praised God; and the remainder of it he did restrain. Never were these words more exactly fulfilled than on this occasion.

ACTS

CHAPTER 17.

Paul and his company, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, come to Thessalonica, where they preach the Gospel to the Jews, several of whom believe, 1-4. Others raise a mob, and bring Jason, who had received the apostles, before the magistrates, who, having taken bail of him and his companions, dismiss them, 5-9. Paul and Silas are sent away by night unto Berea, where they preach to the Jews, who gladly receive the Gospel, 10-12. Certain Jews from Thessalonica, hearing that the Bereans had received the Gospel, come thither and raise up a persecution, 13. Paul is sent away by the brethren to Athens, where he preaches to the Jews, 14-17. He is encountered by the Epicureans and Stoics, who bring him to the Areopagus, and desire him to give a full explanation of his doctrine, 18-20. The character of the Athenians, 21. Paul preaches to them, and gives a general view of the essential principles of theology, 22-31. Some mock, some hesitate, and some believe, and, among the latter, Dionysias and Damaris, 32-34.

NOTES ON CHAP. 17.

Verse 1. Passed through Amphipolis] This city was the metropolis of the first division of Macedonia, as made by Paulus Æmilius: see the note on ~~41610~~ **Acts 16:10**. It was builded by Cimon, the Athenian general, who sent 10,000 Athenians thither as a colony. It stood in an island in the river Strymon, and had its name of *Amphipolis* because included *between* the two grand branches of that river where they empty themselves into the sea, the river being on *both sides of the city*.

Apollonia] This was another city of Macedonia, between Amphipolis and Thessalonica. It does not appear that St. Paul stopped at any of these cities: and they are only mentioned by the historian as places through which the apostles passed on their way to Thessalonica. It is very likely that in these cities there were no Jews; and that might have been the reason why the apostles did not preach the Gospel there, for we find them almost constantly beginning with the Jews; and the Hellenist Jews, living among the Gentiles, became the *medium* through which the Gospel of Christ was conveyed to the heathen world.

Thessalonica] This was a celebrated city of Macedonia, situated on what was called the *Thermaic* Gulf. According to *Stephanus Byzantinus*, it was

embellished and enlarged by Philip, king of Macedon, who called it *Thessalonica, the victory of Thessalia*, on account of the *victory* he obtained there over the *Thessalians*; but, prior to this, it was called *Therma*. But Strabo, Tzetzes, and Zonaras, say that it was called *Thessalonica*, from Thessalonica, wife of Cassander, and daughter of Philip. It is now in possession of the Turks, and is called *Salonichi*, which is a mere corruption of the original name.

A synagogue of the Jews.] ἡ συναγωγή, THE *synagogue*; for the *article* here must be considered as emphatic, there probably being no other synagogue in any other city in Macedonia. The Jews in different parts had other places of worship called *proseuchas*. as we have seen, ^{<41613>}Acts 16:13. At Thessalonica alone they appear to have had a *synagogue*.

Verse 2. As his manner was] He constantly offered salvation first to the Jews; and for this purpose attended their Sabbath-days' meetings at their synagogues.

Verse 3. Opening and alleging] παρατιθεμνος, *Proving by citations*. His method seems to have been this: 1st. He collected the scriptures that spoke of the Messiah. 2d. He applied these to Jesus Christ, showing that in him all these scriptures were fulfilled, and that he was the Saviour of whom they were in expectation. He showed also that the *Christ*, or Messiah, *must needs suffer*-that this was predicted, and was an essential mark of the true Messiah. By proving this point, he corrected their false notion of a triumphant Messiah, and thus removed the scandal of the cross.

Verse 4. The devout Greeks] That is, Gentiles who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, so far as to renounce idolatry, and live a moral life, but probably had not received circumcision.

Verse 5. The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them] Instead of this sentence, the most correct MSS. and versions read simply, προσλαβομενοι δε οι ιουδαιοι. *But the Jews taking, &c.*, leaving out the words, ζηλωσαντες, απειθουντες, *which believed not, moved with envy*: these words do not appear to be genuine; there is the strongest evidence against them, and they should be omitted.

Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort] This is not a very intelligible translation. The original is, των αγοραιων τινας ανδοας πονηρους. The word αγοραιοι, which we translate the *baser sort*, is by Hesychius

explained, **οι εν αγορα αναστρεφομενοι**, those who transact business in courts of justice. The same word is used by the Jews in Hebrew letters to signify judges; and **twayrwga mywg l v agorioth shel goyim**, signifies *judges of the Gentiles*. These were probably a low kind of lawyers, what we would call *pettifoggers*, or *attorneys* without principle, who gave advice for a trifle, and fomented disputes and litigations among the people. The *Itala* version of the *Codex Bezae* calls them *quosdam forenses*, certain lawyers. As the Jews, from their small number, could not easily raise up a mob, they cunningly employed those unprincipled men, who probably had a certain degree of juridical credit and authority, to denounce the apostles as *seditionous men*; and this was, very likely, the reason why they employed those in preference to any others. They were such as always attended forensic litigations, waiting for a job, and willing to defend any side of a question for money. They were *wicked men of the forensic tribe*.

Gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar] And, after having made this sedition and disturbance, charged the whole on the peaceable and innocent apostles! This is precisely the same way that persecution against the truth and followers of Christ is still carried on. Some wicked man in the parish gets a wicked attorney and a constable to head a mob, which they themselves have raised; and, having committed a number of outrages, abusing men and women, haul the minister of Christ to some magistrate who knows as little of his office as he cares for the Gospel; they there charge the outrages which *themselves* have committed on the preacher and his peaceable hearers; and the peacemaker, appointed by a good king, according to the wise and excellent regulations of a sound constitution, forgetting *whose minister he is*, neither *administers justice* nor *maintains truth*; but, espousing the part of the mob, assumes, *ex officio*, the character of a persecutor. The preacher is imprisoned, his hearers fined for listening to that Gospel which has not only made them wise unto salvation, but also peaceable and orderly citizens, and which would have had the same effect on the unprincipled *magistrate*, the *parish squire*, and the *mob*, had they heard it with the same reverence and respect. Had I not witnessed such scenes, and such prostitution of justice, I could not have described them.

Assaulted the house of Jason] This was the place where the apostles lodged; and therefore his goods were clear spoil, and his person fair game. This is a case which frequently occurs where the Gospel is preached in its spirit and power. And, even in this moat favoured kingdom, the most

scandalous excesses of this kind have been committed, and a justice of the peace has been found to sanction the proceedings; and, when an appeal has been made to the laws, a grand jury has been found capable of throwing out the *true bill*!

Verse 6. These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also] The very character our forefathers had for preaching that Gospel, in every part of the land, by which the nation has been illuminated, the mob disciplined into regularity and order, and the kingdom established in the hands of the best of monarchs.

Verse 7. These all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar] Persecutors always strive to affect the *lives* of the objects of their hatred, by accusing them of *sedition*, or plots against the *state*.

That there is another king, one Jesus.] How malevolent was this saying! The apostles proclaimed Jesus as king-that is true; but never once insinuated that his kingdom *was* of *this world*. The *reverse* they always maintained.

Verse 8. And they troubled the people and the rulers] It is evident that there was no disposition in either the people or the rulers to persecute the apostles. But these wicked Jews, by means of the *unprincipled, wicked lawyers*, those *lewd fellows of the baser sort*, threw the subject into the form of *law*, making it a *state question*, in which form the rulers were obliged to notice it; but they showed their unwillingness to proceed in a matter which they saw proceeded from malice, by letting Jason and his companions go off on *bail*.

Verse 9. Taken security] λαβοντες το ικανον, *Having taken what was sufficient, or satisfactory. Sufficient* for the present, to prove that the apostles were upright, peaceable, and loyal men; and that Jason and his friends were the like, and would be, at any time, forthcoming to answer for their conduct. Perhaps this is the sense of the phrase in the text.

Verse 10. Sent away Paul and Silas by night] Fearing some farther machinations of the Jews and their associates.

Berea] This was another city of Macedonia, on the same gulf with Thessalonica; and not far from Pella, the birth place of *Alexander the Great*.

Verse 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica] ἠσαν εὐγενεστεροί, *Were of a better race, extraction, or birth*, than those at Thessalonica; but the word refers more to their *conduct*, as a proof of their *better disposition*, than to their *birth*, or any peculiar *lineal nobility*. It was a maxim among the Jews, that “none was of a *noble spirit* who did not employ himself in the study of the law.” It appears that the *Bereans* were a *better educated* and *more polished* people than those at *Thessalonica*; in consequence far from persecuting: 1. They heard the doctrine of the Gospel attentively. 2. They received this doctrine with readiness of mind: when the evidence of its truth appeared to them sufficiently convincing, they had too much dignity of mind to refuse their assent, and too much ingenuousness to conceal their approbation. 3. They searched the Scriptures, i.e. of the Old Testament, to see whether these things were so: to see whether the *promises* and *types* corresponded with the alleged fulfilment in the person, works, and sufferings of Jesus Christ. 4. They continued in this work; they searched the Scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so.

Verse 12. Therefore many of them believed] From the manner in which they heard, received, and examined the word preached to them, it was not likely they could be deceived. And, as it was the *truth* that was proclaimed to them, it is no wonder that they apprehended, believed, and embraced it.

Of honourable women which were Greeks] Probably mere *heathens* are meant; and these were some of the chief families in the place. Thus we find that the preaching of Paul at Berea was made the instrument of converting both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Verse 13. The Jews of Thessalonica-stirred up the people.] With what implacable malice did these men persecute the Gospel! And in the same spirit they continue to the present day, though it is evidently the sole cause of their wretchedness.

Verse 14. To go as it were to the sea] This passage is generally understood to mean that the disciples took Paul towards the sea, *as if he had intended to embark, and return to Troas*, but with the *real design* to go to *Athens*. But it is more likely that his conductors, in order to his greater safety, left the public or more frequented road, and took him *coastwise* to Athens. Or, by taking a vessel at that part of the sea nearest to *Berea*, they might have coasted it to Athens, which was quite a possible case; and, as we do not hear of his stopping at any place on his journey to

preach, it is very probable that he went by sea to this city. Though sleights and feints may be allowable in cases of life and death, yet there does not appear an absolute necessity for any in this case. And, as the text does not necessarily point any out, so we need not have recourse to any. I take it for granted, therefore, that Paul went by sea to Athens.

Silas and Timotheus abode there still.] The persecution, it seems, was directed principally against Paul. *Lo! he stayeth his rough wind on the day of his east wind.* Silas and Timotheus, holy men, were left behind to water the seed which Paul had planted.

Verse 15. Brought him unto Athens] This was one of the most celebrated cities in the world, whether we consider its *antiquity*, its *learning*, its *political consequence*, or the *valour* of its *inhabitants*. This city, which was the capital of Attica, and the seat of the Grecian empire was founded by *Cecrops*, about A.M. 2447, before Christ 1557, and was called by him *Cecropia*. About thirteen or fourteen hundred years before Christ, in the reign either of *Erechtheus*, or *Erichthonius*, it was called Athens, from *αθηνη*, a name of *Minerva*, to whom it was dedicated, and who was always considered the protectress of the city. The whole city at first was built upon a hill or rock, in the midst of a spacious plain; but, in process of time, the whole plain was covered with buildings which were called the lower city; while the ancient was called *Acropolis*, or the upper city. In its most flourishing state this city was not less than one hundred and seventy-eight stadia, or twenty-two Roman miles in circumference. The buildings of Athens were the most superb, and best executed, in the world; but every thing is now in a state of ruin. Mr. Stuart, in his three folio vols. of the *Antiquities of Athens*, has given correct representations of those that remain, with many geographical notices of much importance. The greatest men that ever lived, scholars, lawyers, statesmen, and warriors, were Athenians. Its institutions, laws, and literature, were its own unrivalled boast, and the envy of the world. The city still exists; the Acropolis in a state of comparative repair. It is now in the hands of the Greeks; but the Turks, who held it till lately, have turned the celebrated *Parthenon*, or temple of *Minerva*, into a mosque. The inhabitants are reckoned at about one thousand. Christianity, planted here by St. Paul, still subsists; and about two-thirds of the inhabitants of Athens are Christians, who have several churches or oratories here, and it is the residence of a Greek bishop, who is a metropolitan. He who considers the ancient glory

of this city, whether in its heathen or Christian antiquity, cannot but *sigh* over its present state.

Verse 16. He saw the city wholly given to idolatry.] κατειδωλον, *Full of idols*, as the *margin* has it, and very properly. Whoever examines the remains of this city, as represented by Mr. Stuart in his *Antiquities*, already referred to, will be satisfied of the truth of St. Luke's remark: *it was full of idols*. Bishop Pearce produces a most apposite quotation from *Pausanias*, which confirms the observation: ουκ ην αλλαχου τοσαυτα ιδειν ειδωλα. *There was no place where so many idols were to be seen.* PAUS. in *Attic.* cap. xvii. 24.

PETRONIUS, who was contemporary with St. Paul, in his *Satyr.* cap. xvii., makes Quartilla say of Athens: *Utique nostra regio tam PRÆSENTIBUS PLENA EST NUMINIBUS, ut facilius possis DEUM quam HOMINEM invenire.* Our region is so *full of deities* that you may more frequently meet with a *god* than a *man*.

Verse 17. Disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews] Proving that Jesus was the Messiah: and *with the devout persons*, probably *heathens*, proselyted to the Jewish religion. *And in the market:* I suppose the αγορα here means some such place as our *exchange*, where people of business usually met, and where the philosophers conversed and reasoned. The *agora* was probably like the Roman *forum*, and like places of public resort in all countries, where people of leisure assembled to converse, hear the news, &c.

Verse 18. Certain philosophers of the Epicureans] These were the followers of *Epicurus*, who acknowledged no gods except in *name*, and absolutely denied that they exercised any government over the world or its inhabitants; and that the chief good consisted in the gratification of the appetites of sense. These points the Epicureans certainly held; but it is not clear that *Epicurus* himself maintained such doctrines.

And of the Stoics] These did not deny the existence of the gods; but they held that all human affairs were governed by *fate*. They did not believe that any good was received from the hands of their gods; and considered, as *Seneca* asserts, that any good and wise man was equal to Jupiter himself. Both these sects agreed in denying the *resurrection* of the body; and the former did not believe in the immortality of the soul.

EPICURUS, the founder of the *Epicurean* sect, was born at *Athens*, about A.M. 3663, before Christ 341.

ZENO, the founder of the *Stoic* sect, was born in the isle of *Cyprus*, about thirty years before Christ. His disciples were called *Stoics* from the **στοα**, a famous *portico* at *Athens*, where they studied. Besides these two sects, there were two others which were famous at this time; viz. the *Academics* and the *Peripatetics*. The founder of the first was the celebrated PLATO; and the founder of the second, the no less famous ARISTOTLE. These sects professed a much purer doctrine than the *Epicureans* and *Stoics*; and it does not appear that they opposed the apostles, nor did they enter into public disputations with them. Against the doctrines taught by the Epicureans and Stoics, several parts of St. Paul's discourse, in the following verses, are directly pointed.

What will this babbler say?] The word **σπερμολογος**, which we translate *babbler*, signifies, literally, *a collector of seeds*, and is the "name of a *small bird* the lives by picking up seeds on the road." The epithet became applied to persons who collected the sayings of others, without *order* or *method*, and detailed them among their companions in the same way. The application of the term to *prating*, *empty*, *impertinent* persons, was natural and easy, and hence it was considered a term of *reproach* and *contempt*, and was sometimes used to signify the vilest sort of men.

A setter forth of strange gods] **ξενων δαιμονιων**, *Of strange or foreign demons*. That this was strictly forbidden, both at *Rome* and *Athens*, see Clarke on "**Acts 16:21**".

There was a difference, in the heathen theology, between **θεος**, *god*, and **δαιμων**, *demon*: the **θεοι**, were such as were *gods by nature*: the **δαιμονια**, were *men* who were *deified*. This distinction seems to be in the mind of these philosophers when they said that the apostles seemed to be setters forth of *strange demons*, because they preached unto them *Jesus*, whom they showed to be a *man*, suffering and dying, but afterwards raised to the throne of God. This would appear to them tantamount with the deification of *heroes*, &c., who had been thus honoured for their especial services to mankind. Horace expresses this in two lines, 2 Epist. i. 5:-

*Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux,
Post ingentia facta, deorum in templa recepti.*

“Romulus, father Bacchus, with Castor and Pollux, for their eminent services, have been received into the temples of the gods.”

Verse 19. They took him, and brought him unto Areopagus] The Areopagus was a *hill* not far from the *Acropolis*, already described, where the supreme court of justice was held; one of the most sacred and reputable courts that had ever existed in the Gentile world. It had its name, *αρειος παγος*, *Areopagus*, or the *Hill of Mars*, or *Ares*, from the circumstance, according to poetic fiction, of Mars being tried there, by a court of *twelve gods*, for the murder of *Halirrhothius*, son of *Neptune*: the meaning of which is, that *Ares*, a Thessalian prince, having slain *Halirrhothius*, the son of a neighbouring prince, for having violated his daughter *Alcippe*, was here tried by twelve judges, by whom he was honourably acquitted: in the Athenian laws the death of the *ravisher* was the regular forfeiture for his crime. The justice administered in this court was so strict and impartial, that, it was generally allowed, both the plaintiff and defendant departed satisfied with the decision. “Innocence, when summoned before it, appeared without apprehension; and the guilty, convicted and condemned, retired with out daring to murmur.” The place in which the judges sat was *uncovered*; and they held their sittings by night, to the end that nothing might distract their minds from the great business on which they were to decide; and that the *sight* of the accused might not affect them either with pity or aversion. In reference to this, all pleaders were strictly forbidden to *use any means whatever to excite either pity or aversion, or to affect the passions*; every thing being confined to *simple relation, or statement of facts*. When the two parties were produced before the court, they were placed between the bleeding members of victims slain on the occasion, and were obliged to take an oath, accompanied by horrible imprecations on themselves and families, that they would testify nothing but truth. These parties called to witness the *eumenides*, or furies, the punishers of the perjured in the infernal world; and, to make the greater impression on the mind of the party swearing, the temple dedicated to these infernal deities was contiguous to the court, so that *they* appeared as if witnessing the oaths and recording the appeal made to themselves. When the case was fully heard, the judges gave their decision by throwing down their flint pebbles, on two boards or tables, one of which was for the *condemnation*, the other for the *acquittal*, of the person in question.

Verse 20. Thou bringest-strange things to our ears] The doctrine of the apostles was different from any they had ever heard: it was wholly spiritual

and divine; thus it was *strange*: it was contrary to their customs and manners; and thus it was *strange* also. As it spoke much of the exaltation and glory of Jesus Christ, they supposed him to be a *setter forth of strange gods*: and, therefore, on the authority of the laws, which forbade the introduction of any *new deities*, or *modes of worship*, he was called before the Areopagus.

Verse 21. All the Athenians and strangers which were there] As Athens was renovated for its wisdom and learning, it became a place of public resort for philosophers and students from different parts of the then civilized world. The flux of students was in consequence great; and these, having much leisure time, would necessarily be curious to know what was passing in the world, and would frequently assemble together, in places of public resort, to meet with strangers just come to the city; and either, as St. Luke says, to tell or hear some new thing.

“The Athenian writers give the same account of their fellow citizens. DEMOSTHENES, in his reply to *Epist. Philippi*, represents the Athenians as *πυνθανομενοι κατα την αγοραν, ει τι λεγεται νεωτερον*; *inquiring, in the place of public resort, if there are any NEWS*. We find, likewise, that when Thucydides, iii. 38, had said, *μετα καινοτητος μεν λογου απατασθαι αριστοι*, *Ye are excellent in suffering yourselves to be deceived by NOVELTY of speech*, the old scholiast makes this remark upon it, (almost in the words of St. Luke,) *ταυτα προς τους. αθηνοιους αινιττεται, ουδεν τι μελετωντας, πλην λεγειν τι και ακουειν καινον*; *He here blames the Athenians, who made it their only business to tell and hear something that was NEW.*”-Bp. Pearce. This is a striking feature of the city of London in the present day. The itch for news, which generally argues a worldly, shallow, or unsettled mind, is wonderfully prevalent: even ministers of the Gospel, negligent of their sacred function, are become in this sense Athenians; so that the book of God is neither read nor studied with half the avidity and spirit as a *newspaper*. These persons, forgetful not only of their calling, but of the very spirit of the Gospel, read the account of a battle with the most violent emotions; and, provided the victory falls to their favourite side, they exult and triumph in proportion to the number of thousands that have been slain! It is no wonder if such become political preachers, and their sermons be no better than husks for swine. To such *the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed*. God pity such miserable Athenians, and direct them to a more *suitable* employment!

Verse 22. Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill] That is, in the midst of the judges, who sat in the *Areopagus*.

Ye are too superstitious.] *κατα παντα ως δεισιδαιμονεστερους υμας θεωρω*; I perceive that in all respects ye are greatly addicted to religious practices; and, as a religious people, you will candidly hear what I have got to say in behalf of that worship which I practise and recommend. See farther observations at the end of the chapter. **See Clarke “⁴¹⁷³⁴ Acts 17:34”**

Verse 23. Beheld your devotions] *σεβασματα*, *The objects of your worship*; the different *images* of their gods which they held in religious veneration, sacrificial instruments, altars, &c., &c.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.] *ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟ ΘΕΩ*. That there was an altar at Athens thus inscribed, we cannot doubt after such a testimony; though St. Jerome questions it in part; for he says St. Paul found the inscription in the *plural* number, but, because he would not appear to acknowledge a *plurality of gods*, he quoted it in the *singular*: *Verum, quia Paulus non pluribus Diis indigebat ignotis, sed uno tantum ignoto Deo, singulari verbo usus est. Epist. ad Magn.* This is a most foolish saying: had Paul done so, how much would such a begging of the question have prejudiced his defence in the minds of his intelligent judges! Æcumenius intimates that St. Paul does not give the *whole* of the inscription which this famous altar bore; and which he says was the following: *θεοις ασιας και ευρωπης και αιβυης, θεω αγνωστω και ξενω*, *To the gods of Asia, and Europe, and Africa: TO THE UNKNOWN and strange GOD.* Several eminent men suppose that this *unknown god* was the God of the Jews; and, as his name *hwhy* was considered by the Jews as *ineffable*, the *θεος αγνωστος* may be considered as the *anonymous god*; the god whose *name* was *not known*, and must not be pronounced. That there was such a god acknowledged at Athens we have full proof. *Lucian* in his *Philopatris*, cap. xiii. p. 769, uses this form of an oath: *νη τον αγνωστον τον εν αθηναις*, *I swear by the UNKNOWN GOD at ATHENS.* And again, cap. xxix. 180: *ημεις δε τον εν αθηναις αγνωστον εφευροντες και προσκυνησαντες, χειρας εις ουρανον εκτειναντες, τουτω ευχαριστησομεν ως καταξιωθεντες*, &c. *We have found out the UNKNOWN god at ATHENS-and worshipped him with our hands stretched up to heaven; and we will gave thanks unto him, as being thought worthy to be subject to this power.* Bp. Pearce properly asks, Is it likely that *Lucian*, speaking thus, (whether in jest or in earnest,)

should not have had some notion of there being at Athens an altar inscribed to *the unknown God*? *Philostratus*, in *vit. Apollon.* vi. 3, notices the same thing, though he appears to refer to several altars thus inscribed: **καὶ ταῦτα ἀθηνησι, οὐ καὶ ἀγνώστων θεῶν βῶμοι ἰδρύνται**, *And this at ATHENS, where there are ALTARS even to the UNKNOWN GODS.* *Pausanias*, in *Attic.* cap. 1. p. 4, edit. Kuhn., says that *at Athens there are βῶμοι θεῶν τῶν ὀνομαζομένων ἀγνώστων, *altars of gods which are called, The UNKNOWN ones.* *Minutius Felix* says of the Romans, *Aras extruunt etiam ignotis numinibus.* “They even build altars to UNKNOWN DIVINITIES.” And *Tertullian*, contra Marcion, says, *Invenio plane Diis ignotis aras prostitutas: sed Attica idolatria est.* “I find altars allotted to the worship of *unknown gods*: but this is an Attic idolatry.” Now, though in these last passages, both *gods* and *altars* are spoken of in the *plural* number; yet it is reasonable to suppose that, on each, or upon some one of them, the inscription **ἀγνώστω θεῷ**, *To the unknown god*, was actually found. The thing had subsisted long and had got from Athens to Rome in the days of *Tertullian* and *Minutius Felix*. See Bp. Pearce and Dr. Cudworth, to whose researches this note is much indebted.*

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship] There is here a fine *paronomasia*, or play on the words. The apostle tells them that (on their system) they were a very religious people—that they had an altar inscribed, **ἀγνώστω θεῷ**, to the *unknown God*: *him therefore*, says he, *whom, ἀγνοοῦντες*, *ye unknowingly* worship, I proclaim to you. Assuming it as a truth, that, as the true God was *not known* by them, and that there was an altar dedicated to the *unknown god*, his God was that god whose nature and operations he now proceeded to declare. By this fine turn he eluded the force of that law which made it a capital offense to introduce any new god into the state, and of the breach of which he was charged, ^{<41718>}**Acts 17:18**; and thus he showed that he was bringing neither *new god* nor *new worship* among them; but only explaining the worship of one already acknowledged by the state, though not as yet *known*.

Verse 24. God that made the world, &c.] Though the *Epicureans* held that the world was not made by God, but was the effect of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, yet this opinion was not popular; and the *Stoics* held the contrary: St. Paul assumes, as an acknowledged truth, that there was a God who made the world and all things. 2. That this God could not be *confined* within temples made with hands, as he was the *Lord* or governor of heaven and earth. 3. That, by fair consequence, the gods whom they

worshipped, which were *shut up in their temples* could not be *this God*; and they must be *less* than the places in which they were contained. This was a strong, decisive stroke against the whole system of the Grecian idolatry.

Verse 25. Neither is worshiped with men's hands] This is an indirect stroke against making of images, and offering of sacrifices: he is not worshipped with *human hands*, *as if he needed any thing*, or required to be represented under a particular *form* or *attitude*; nor has he required victims for his support; for it is impossible that he should need any thing who himself gives *being*, *form*, and *life*, to all creatures.

Giveth-life, and breath, and all things] These words are elegantly introduced by St. Paul: God gives *life*, because he is the *fountain* of it: he gives *breath*, the faculty of breathing or respiration, by which this life is preserved; and though breathing or respiration, be the act of the animal, yet the **πνοην**, the *faculty* of breathing, and extracting from the atmosphere what serves as a pabulum of life, is given by the influence of God, and the continued power thus to respire, and extract that pure *oxygen gas* which is so evident a support of animal life, is as much the *continued* gift of God as life itself is. But, as much more is necessary to keep the animal machine in a state of repair, God gives the **τα παντα**, all the other things which are requisite for this great and important purpose, that the end for which life was given may be fully answered. St. Paul also teaches that Divine worship is not enacted and established *for* GOD, but *for* the use of his *creatures*: he needs nothing that man can give him; for man has nothing but what he has received from the hand of his Maker.

Verse 26. Hath made of one blood] In AB, some others, with the *Coptic*, *Aethiopic*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, *Clement*, and *Bede*, the word **αιματος**, *blood*, is omitted. *He hath made of one* (meaning Adam) *all nations of men*; but **αιμα**, *blood*, is often used by the best writers for *race*, *stock*, *kindred*: so Homer, *Iliad*, vi. ver. 211:

ταυτης τοι γενεης τε και αιματος ευχομαι ειναι.

I glory in being of that same race and blood.

So Virgil, *Æn.* viii. ver. 142, says;

Sic genus amborum scindit se SANGUINE ab uno.

Thus, from one stock, do both our stems divide.

See many examples of this form in *Kypke*. The Athenians had a foolish notion that they were *self-produced*, and were the *aboriginals* of mankind. Lucian ridicules this opinion, **αθηναιοι φασι τους πρωτους ανθρωπους εκ της αττικης αναφοναι, καθαπερ τα λαχανα**. *The Athenians say that the first men sprung up in Attica, like radishes*. Luc. *Philo-pseud.* 3.

To dwell on all the face of the earth] God in his *wisdom* produced the whole human race from one man; and, having in his *providence* scattered them over the face of the earth, by showing them that they sprang from one common source, has precluded all those contentious wars and bloodshed which would necessarily have taken place among the nations of the world, as each in its folly might have arrogated to itself a higher and more excellent origin than another.

And hath determined the times before appointed] Instead of **προτεταγμενους καιρους**, *the times before appointed*, ABDE, and more than forty others, with both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, MS. *Slavonian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*, read **προστεταγμενους καιρους**, *the appointed times*. The difference between the two words is this: **προτασσειν** signifies *to place before others*; but **προστασσειν** is to *command, decree, appoint*. The **προστεταγμενοι καιροι**, are the constituted or decreed times; that is, the times appointed by his providence, on which the several families should go to those countries where his wisdom designed they should dwell. See ^{<0110>}**Genesis 10:5-32**; and see *Pearce* and *Rosenmuller*.

And the bounds of their habitations] Every family being appointed to a particular place, that their posterity might possess it for the purposes for which infinite wisdom and goodness gave them their being, and the place of their abode. Every nation had its lot thus appointed by God, as truly as the Israelites had the land of Canaan. But the removal of the Jews from their own land shows that a people may forfeit their original inheritance, and thus the *Canaanites* have been supplanted by the Jews; the Jews by the Saracens; the Saracens by the Turks; the Greeks by the Romans; the Romans by the Goths and Vandals; and so of others. See the notes on ^{<0110>}**Genesis 11:1-32**.

Verse 27. That they should seek the Lord] This is a conclusion drawn from the preceding statement. God, who is infinitely great and

self-sufficient, has manifested himself as the maker of the world, the creator, preserver, and governor of men. He has assigned them their portion, and dispensed to them their habitations, and the various blessings of his providence, to the end that they should seek him in all his works.

Feel after him] *ψηλαφησειαν αυτον*, That they might grope after him, as a person does his way who is blind or blindfolded. The Gentiles, who had not a revelation, must grope after God, as the principle of spiritual life, that they might find him to be a Spirit, and the source of all intellectual happiness; and the apostle seems to state that none need despair of finding this fountain of goodness, because *he is not far from every one of us*.

Verse 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being] He is the very *source* of our *existence*: the principle of *life* comes from him: the principle of *motion*, also, comes from him; one of the most difficult things in nature to be properly apprehended; and a strong proof of the continual presence and energy of the Deity.

And have our being] *και εσμεν*, *And we are*: we *live* in *him*, *move* in *him*, and *are* in *him*. Without him we not only can do nothing, but without him we are nothing. *We are*, i.e. we continue *to be*, because of his continued, present, all-pervading, and supporting energy. There is a remarkable saying in *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 104. “The holy blessed God never does evil to any man. He only withdraws his gracious presence from him, and then he necessarily perisheth.” This is philosophical and correct.

As certain also of your own poets] Probably he means not only *Aratus*, in whose poem, entitled *Phænomena*, the words quoted by St. Paul are to be found literatim, *του γαρ και γενος εσμεν*; but also *Cleanthus*, in whose *Hymn to Jupiter* the same words (*εκ σου γαρ γενος εσμεν*) occur. But the sentiment is found in several others, being very common among the more enlightened philosophers. By saying *your own poets*, he does not mean poets born at *Athens*, but merely *Grecian* poets, *Aratus* and *Cleanthus* being chief.

We are also his offspring.] *του γαρ και γενος εσμεν* The *Phænomena* of *Aratus*, in which these words are found, begins thus:-

Εκ Διος αρχωμεσθα, τον ουδεποτ ανδρες εωμεν
 Αρρητον, μεσται δε διος πασαι μεν αγυιαι,
 Πασαι δ ανθρωπων αγοραι, μεστη δε θαλασσα,
 Και λεμενες, παντη δε διος κεκρημεθα παντες,

ΤΟΥ ΓΑΡ ΚΑΙΓΕΝΟΣ ΕΣΜΕΝ, οδ ηπιος ανθρωποισι
 Δεξια σημαίνει. κ. τ. λ.

*With Jove we must begin; nor from him rove;
 Him always praise, for all is full of Jove!
 He fills all places where mankind resort,
 The wide-spread sea, with every shelt'ring port.
 Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball;
 All need his aid; his power sustains us all.
 For we his offspring are; and he in love
 Points out to man his labour from above:
 Where signs unerring show when best the soil,
 By well-timed culture, shall repay our toil, &c., &c.*

Aratus was a Cilician, one of St. Paul's own countrymen, and with his writings St. Paul was undoubtedly well acquainted, though he had flourished about 300 years before that time.

Verse 29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, &c.] This inference of the apostle was very strong and conclusive; and his argument runs thus: "If we are the offspring of God, he cannot be like those *images of gold, silver, and stone*, which are formed by the *art and device of man*; for the parent must resemble his offspring. Seeing, therefore, that *we* are *living and intelligent* beings, HE from whom we have derived that being must be *living and intelligent*. It is necessary, also, that the object of religious worship should be much more *excellent* than the worshipper; but a *man* is, by innumerable degrees, more excellent than an *image* made out of *gold, silver, or stone*; and yet it would be impious to worship a *man*: how much more *so* to worship these *images* as *gods*! Every man in the Areopagus must have felt the power of this conclusion; and, taking it for granted that they had felt it, he proceeds:-

Verse 30. The times of this ignorance God winked at] He who has an indisputable right to demand the worship of all his creatures has mercifully overlooked those acts of idolatry which have disgraced the world and debased man; but *now*, as he has condescended to give a revelation of himself, he *commands*, as the sovereign, *all men every where*, over every part of his dominions, *to repent*, μετανοειν, *to change their views, designs, and practices; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness*; and, as justice will then be done, no *sinner*, no persevering *idolater*, shall escape punishment.

The word **υπεριδειν**, which we translate, *to wink at*, signifies simply *to look over*; and seems to be here used in the sense of *passing by*, not particularly noticing it. So God overlooked, or passed by, the times of heathenish ignorance: as he had not given them the *talent* of *Divine revelation*, so he did not require the improvement of that talent; but now, as he had given them that revelation, he would no longer *overlook*, or *pass by*, their ignorance or its fruits.

Verse 31. He hath appointed a day] He has fixed the time in which he will judge the world, though he has not revealed this time to man.

By that man whom he hath ordained] He has also appointed the judge, by whom the inhabitants of the earth are to be tried.

Whereof **he hath given assurance]** **πιστιν παρασχων πασιν**, Having given to all this *indubitable proof*, that Jesus Christ shall judge the world, by raising him from the dead. The sense of the argument is this: “Jesus Christ, whom we preach as the Saviour of men, has repeatedly told his followers that he would judge the world; and has described to us, at large, the whole of the proceedings of that awful time, ^{<4053>}**Matthew 25:31**, &c.; ^{<4025>}**John 5:25**. Though he was put to death by the Jews, and thus he became a victim for sin, yet God raised him from the dead. By raising him from the dead, God has set his seal to the doctrines he has taught: one of these doctrines is, that he *shall judge the world*; his resurrection, established by the most incontrovertible evidence, is therefore a proof, an incontestable proof, that he shall judge the world, according to his own declaration.”

Verse 32. When they heard of the resurrection, &c.] Paul undoubtedly had not finished his discourse: it is likely that he was about to have proclaimed salvation through Christ crucified; but, on hearing of the *resurrection* of the body, the assembly instantly broke up; the *Epicureans* mocking, **εχλευαζον**, *began to laugh*; and the *Stoics* saying they would take another opportunity to hear him on that subject. And thus the assembly became dissolved before the apostle had time to finish his discourse, or to draw all the conclusions he had designed from the premises he had laid down. St. Stephen’s discourse was interrupted in a similar manner. See ^{<40754>}**Acts 7:54**, and the note there.

Verse 33. So Paul departed from among them.] He could not be convicted of having done any thing contrary to the law; and, when the assembly broke up, he was permitted to go about his own business.

Verse 34. Certain men clave unto him] Became affectionately united to him, *and believed* the doctrines he had preached.

Dionysius the Areopagite] There can be no doubt that this man was one of the *judges* of this *great court*, but whether the *president* or otherwise we cannot tell. Humanly speaking, his conversion must have been an acquisition of considerable importance to the Christian religion; for no person was a judge in the Areopagus who had not borne the office of *archon*, or chief governor of the city; and none bore the office of judge in this court who was not of the *highest reputation* among the people for his *intelligence* and *exemplary conduct*. In some of the popish writers we find a vast deal of groundless conjecture concerning Dionysius, who, they say, was first bishop of Athens, and raised to that dignity by Paul himself; that he was a *martyr* for the truth; that Damaris was his *wife*, &c., &c., concerning which the judicious Calmet says, *Tout cela est de peu d' autorite*. "All this has little foundation."

1. IN addition to what has been said in the notes on this subject, I may add, the original word *δεισιδαμονεστερος*, from *δειδω*, *I fear*, and *δαμων*, a *demon*, signifies, "greatly addicted to the worship of the invisible powers;" for, as the word *δαμων* signifies either a *good* or *evil* spirit, and *δειδω*, *I fear*, signifies not only to *fear* in general, but also to *pay religious reverence*, the word must be here taken in its *best sense*; and so undoubtedly St. Paul intended it should; and so, doubtless, his audience understood him; for it would have been very imprudent to have charged them with *superstition*, which must have been extremely *irritating*, in the very commencement of a discourse in which he was to defend himself, and prove the truth of the Christian religion. He stated a *fact*, acknowledged by the best Greek writers; and he reasoned from that fact. The fact was that the Athenians were the most religious people in Greece, or, in other words, the most idolatrous: that there were in that city more *altars*, *temples*, *sacrifices*, and *religious services*, than in any other place. And independently of the authorities which may be quoted in support of this assertion, we may at once perceive the probability of it from the consideration that Athens was the grand university of Greece: that here philosophy and every thing relating to the worship of the gods was taught;

and that religious services to the deities must be abundant. Look at our own universities of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*; here are more *prayers*, more *religious acts* and *services*, than in any other places in the nation, and very properly so. These were founded to be seminaries of *learning* and *religion*; and their very statutes suppose *religion* to be essential to *learning*; and their founders were in general *religious characters*, and endowed them for *religious purposes*. These, therefore, are not superstitious services; for, as *superstition* signifies “unnecessary fears or scruples in religion; observance of unnecessary and uncommanded rites or practices,”-JOHNSON, it cannot be said of those services which are founded on the *positive command of God*, for the more effectual help to religious feelings, or as a preventive of immoral practices. I consider the Athenians, therefore, acting in conformity to their own *laws* and *religious institutions*; and Paul grants that they were much addicted to religious performances: this he pays as a compliment, and then takes occasion to show that their religion was defective: they had not a right object of devotion; they did not know the true God; the *true God* was to them the *unknown God*; and *this* an altar in their own city acknowledged. He therefore began to declare that glorious Being to them whom they ignorantly worshipped. As they were greatly addicted to religious services, and acknowledged that there was a Being to them *unknown*, and to whom they thought it necessary to *erect an altar*, they must, consistently with their character as a religious people, and with their own concession in the erection of this altar, hear quietly, patiently, and candidly, a discourse on *that God* whose *being* they acknowledged, but whose *nature* they did not know. Thus St. Paul, by acknowledging their religious disposition, and seizing the fact of the *altar* being inscribed to the unknown God, assumed a right which not a philosopher, orator, or judge in the Areopagus could dispute, of bringing the whole subject of Christianity before them, as he was now brought to his trial, and put on his defense. The whole of this fine advantage, this grand stroke of rhetorical prudence, is lost from the whole account, by our translation, *ye are in all things too superstitious*, thus causing the defendant to commence his discourse with a *charge* which would have roused the indignation of the Greeks, and precluded the possibility of their hearing any thing he had to say in defense of his conduct.

2. That the original word, on the right interpretation of which I have laid so much stress, is taken in a *good* sense, and signifies *religious worship* and *reverence*, I shall show by several proofs; some of which may be seen in

Mr. *Parkhurst*, under the word **δεισιδαιμονια**, which *Suidas* explains by **εულαβεια περι το θειον**, *reverence towards the Deity*. And *Hesychius*, by **φοβοθεια**, *the fear of God*. “In this good sense it is often used by *Diodorus Siculus*. *Herodotus* says of *Orpheus*, *he led men, εις δεισιδαιμονιαν*, *to be religious; and exhorted them, επι το ευσεβειν*, *to piety*; where it is manifest that **δεισιδαιμονια** must mean *religion*, and not *superstition*. But, what is more to the present purpose, the word is used by *Josephus*, not only where a heathen calls the pagan religion **δεισιδαιμονιας**, (*Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 5. s. 3.*) or where the Jewish religion is spoken of by this name, in several edicts that were made in its favour by the Romans, (as in *Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 10, s. 13, 14, 16, 18, 19.*) but also where the historian is expressing his *own thoughts* in his *own words*: thus, of King *Manasseh*, after his repentance and restoration, he says, **εσπουδαζεν παση περι αυτον (θεον) τη δεισιδαιδαιμονια χρησθαι**, *he endeavoured to behave in the MOST RELIGIOUS manner towards God. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 3, s. 2.* And, speaking of a riot that happened among the Jews on occasion of a Roman soldier’s burning the book of the law, he observes that the Jews were drawn together on this occasion, **τη δεισιδαιμονια**, *by their religion*, as if it had been by an engine; **οργανω τινι**.-*Deuteronomy Bell. lib. ii. cap. 12, s. 2.*” It would be easy to multiply examples of this use of the word; but the reader may refer, if necessary, to *Wetstein*, *Pearce*, and others.

3. That the Athenians were reputed, in this respect, a *devout* people, the following quotations may prove. *Pausanias*, in *Attic. cap. xvii. p. 39*, edit. *Kuhn.*, says that *the Athenians were not only more humane, αλλα και εκ θεους ευσεβειν*, *but more devout towards the gods*; and again he says, **δηλα τε εναργως, οσοις πλεον τι ετερων ευσεβειας μετεστιν**, *it appears plainly how much they exceed others in the worship of the gods*; and, in *cap. xxiv. p. 56*, he says, **αθηνιοις περισσοτερον τι, η τοις αλλοις, εκ τα θεια εστι σπουδης**, *that the Athenians are abundantly more solicitous about Divine matters than others*. And *Josephus* seals this testimony by the assertion, *contr. Apion, ii. 10: αθηναιους ευσεβεστατους των ελληνων παντες λεγουσι*; *Every body says that the Athenians are the most religious people of all the Greeks*.-See *Bp. Pearce*. From all these authorities it is palpable that *St. Paul* must have used the term in the sense for which I have contended.

4. In the preceding notes, I have taken for granted that *Paul* was brought to the *Areopagus* to be tried on the charge of *setting forth strange gods*. *Bp.*

Warburton denies that he was brought before the Areopagus on any charge whatever; and that he was taken there that the judges might hear him explain his doctrine, and not to defend himself against a charge which he does not once notice in the whole of his discourse. But there is one circumstance that the bishop has not noticed, viz. that St. Paul was not permitted to finish his discourse, and therefore could not come to those *particular parts of the charge* brought against him which the bishop thinks he must have taken up most pointedly, had he been accused, and brought there to make his defense. The truth is, we have little more than the apostle's *exordium*, as he was evidently interrupted in the prosecution of his defense. As to the supposition that he was brought by philosophers to the Areopagus, that they might the better hear him explain his doctrine, it appears to have little ground; for they might have heard him to as great advantage in any other place: nor does it appear that this court was ever used, except for the solemn purposes of justice. But the question, whether Paul was brought to the Areopagus that he might be tried by the judges of that court, Bishop Pearce answers with his usual judgment and discrimination. He observes: 1. "We are told that one effect of his preaching was, that he converted Dionysius the Areopagite, ^{<4173>} **Acts 17:34**; and this seems to show that he, who was a judge of that court, was *present*, and, if so, probably *other judges* were present also. 2. If they who brought Paul to Areopagus wanted only to satisfy their curiosity, they had an opportunity of doing that *in the market*, mentioned ^{<4171>} **Acts 17:17**. Why then did they remove him to another place? 3. When it is said that they brought Paul to Areopagus, it is said that *they took him*, **επιλαβομενοι αυτοι**, or rather, *they laid hold on him*, as the Greek word is translated, ^{<4236>} **Luke 23:26; 20:20, 26**, and as it ought to have been here, in ^{<4213>} **Acts 21:30, 33**, and especially in this latter verse. 4. It is observable that Paul, in his whole discourse at the Areopagus, did not make the least attempt to move the passions of his audience, as he did when speaking to Felix, ^{<4425>} **Acts 24:25**, and to Agrippa, ^{<4459>} **Acts 26:29**; but he used *plain and grave reasonings* to convince his hearers of the soundness of his doctrine.

"Now, we are told by *Quinctilian*, in *Inst. Orat.* ii. 16, that *Athenis actor movere affectus vetabatur*: the actor was forbidden to endeavour to excite the passions. And again, in vi. 1, that *Athenis affectus movere etiam per præconem prohibebatur orator*: among the Athenians, the orator was prohibited by the public crier to move

the passions of his auditory. And this is confirmed by *Philostratus* in *procem. lib. i. de Vit. Sophist.*; and by *Athenæus*, in *Deipnosoph. xiii. 6.* If, therefore, it was strictly forbidden at Athens to move the affections of the courts of justice, especially in that of the Areopagus, we see a good reason why Paul made no attempt in that way; and, at the same time, we learn how improperly the painters have done all they could, when they represent Paul speaking at Athens, endeavouring both by his looks and gestures to raise those several passions in his hearers which their faces are meant to express.”

I have only to add here, that, though St. Paul did not endeavour to excite any passions in his address at the Areopagus, yet each sect of the philosophers would feel themselves powerfully affected by every thing in his discourse which tended to show the emptiness or falsity of their doctrines; and, though he attempted to move no passions, yet, from these considerations, their passions would be strongly moved. And this is the idea which the inimitable Raphael took up in his celebrated cartoon on this subject, and which his best copier, Mr. Thomas Holloway, has not only *engraved* to the life, but has also described in language only inferior to the cartoon itself; and, as it affords no mean comment on the preceding discourse, my readers will be pleased to find it here.

By the cartoons of Raphael, we are to understand certain Scripture pieces painted by Raphael d’Urbino, and now preserved in the palace at Hampton court. They are allowed to be the chefs d’œuvre in their kind. They have been often engraved, but never so as to give an adequate representation of the matchless originals, till Mr. Thomas Holloway, who has completely seized the spirit of the artist, undertook this most laborious work, in which he has been wholly engaged for several years; and in which he has, for some time past, associated with himself Messrs. *Slann* and *Webb*, two excellent artists, who had formerly been his own pupils. The cartoon to which I have referred has been some time finished, and delivered to the subscribers; and with it that elegant description, from which the following is a copious extract:-

“The eye no sooner glances on this celebrated cartoon than it is immediately struck with the commanding attitude of the speaker, and the various emotions excited in his hearers.

“The interest which the first appearance of St. Paul at Athens had occasioned, was not calculated to subside on a sudden; his doctrines were too new, and his zeal too ardent. From the multitude it ascended to the philosophers. The Epicureans and Stoics particularly assailed him. Antecedently to the scene described in the picture, among the various characters already encountered by the apostle, many undoubtedly, in their speculations upon Divine subjects, had often imagined a sublimer religion than that commonly acknowledged: such, therefore, would make it their business to hear him again. Others, to whom truth was of less value than the idle amusement of vain disquisition, felt no other motive than curiosity. By far the greater part, however, obstinately bigoted to their particular tenets, and abhorring innovation, regarded him as impious, or a mere babbler: these also wished to hear him again, but with no other than the insidious view, that, by a more regular and explicit profession of his doctrines, he might expose his own absurdities, or render himself obnoxious to the state. The drapery accords with the majesty of the figure; and the light is so managed, especially on the arms and hands, as greatly to assist the energy of the action.

“The painter has proceeded, from the warmth of full conviction, through various gradations, to the extremes of malignant prejudice, and invincible bigotry.

“In the foreground, on the right, is *Dionysius*, who is recorded to have embraced the new religion. With the utmost fervour in his countenance, and with a kind of sympathetic action and unconscious eagerness, he advances a step nearer. His eye is fixed on the apostle: he longs to tell him his conversion, already perhaps preceded by conviction wrought in his mind by the reasonings of the sacred teacher on previous occasions, in the synagogue, and in the forum or marketplace. He appears not only touched with the doctrine he receives, but expresses an evident attachment to his instructor: he would become his host and protector.

“This figure is altogether admirable. The gracefulness of the drapery and of the hair; the masculine beauty of the features; the perspective drawing of the arms; the life and sentiment of the hands, the right one especially, are inimitable.

“Behind is *Damaris*, mentioned with him as a fellow believer. This is the only female in the composition; but the painter has fully availed himself of the character, in assisting his principle of contrast; an excellence found in all the works of Raphael. Her discreet distance, her modest deportment, her pious and diffident eye, discovering a degree of awe, the decorum and arrangement of her train, all interest the mind in her favour.

“Next to these, but at some distance, is a *Stoic*. The first survey of this figure conveys the nature of his peculiar philosophy—dignity and austerity. Raphael has well understood what he meant in this instance to illustrate. His head is sunk in his breast; his arms are mechanically folded; his eyes, almost shut, glance towards the ground: he is absorbed in reflection. In spite of his stoicism, discomposure and perplexity invade his soul, mixed with a degree of haughty mortification.

“Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed that ‘the same idea is continued through the whole figure, even to the drapery, which is so closely muffled about him that even his hands are not seen;’ and that, ‘by this happy correspondence between the expression of the countenance and the disposition of the parts, the figure appears to *think from head to foot.*’

“Behind the Stoic are two young men, well contrasted in expression: anger in the elder, and in the other, youthful pride, half abashed, are finely discriminated.

“Beyond, in the same continued half circle with the Stoic, is perhaps exhibited the most astonishing contrast ever imagined; that of *inexorable sternness*, and *complete placidity*.

“Of the two figures, the first is denominated a *Cynic*, who, disappointed in his expectation of the ridiculous appearance which he conceived the apostle, when confronted, would make among them, abandons his mind to rage. His formidable forehead concentrates its whole expression: with a fixed frown and threatening eye, he surveys the object of his indignation. He alone would engage to confute him, or punish his temerity. His eager impatience and irritation are not discovered in his features only; he

raises his heel from the ground, and leans with a firmer pressure on his crutch, which seems to bend beneath him.

“Pass from him to the more polished *Epicurean*. This figure exhibits perfect repose of body and mind: no passions agitate the one; no action discomposes the other. His hands, judiciously concealed beneath beautiful drapery, shows there can be no possible motion or employment for them. His feet seem to sleep upon the ground. His countenance, which is highly pleasing, and full of natural gentleness, expresses only a smile of pity at the fancied errors of the apostle, mingled with delight derived from his eloquence. He waits, with an inclined head, in passive and serene expectation. If a shrewd intelligence is discovered in his eyes, it is too gentle to disturb the general expression of tranquillity.

“Behind are two other young men: the first discovers a degree of superciliousness with his vexation; his companion is more disgusted, and more morose.

“These, and the two young figures previously described, are not introduced merely to fill up the group; they may be intended as pupils to the philosophers before them, though by some considered as young Romans, who have introduced themselves from ennui or curiosity.

“Beyond is a character in whose mind the force of truth and eloquence appears to have produced conviction; but pride, vanity, or self-interest, impel him to dissemble. His finger, placed upon the upper lip, shows that he has imposed silence upon himself.

“In the centre is seated a group from the academy. The skill of *Raphael* in this instance is eminent. These figures are not only thrown into shade, to prevent their interference with the principal figure; but, from their posture, they contribute to its elevation, and at the same time vary the line of the standing group.

“It seems as if the old philosopher in profile, on the left, had offered some observations on the apostle’s address; and that he was eagerly listening to the reply of his sage friend, in whose features we behold more of the spirit of mild philosophy. The action of his fingers denotes his habit of reasoning, and regularity of argument. The

middle figure behind appears to be watching the effect which his remarks would produce.

“The action of the young man, pointing to the apostle, characterizes the keen susceptibility and impetuosity of his age. His countenance expresses disgust, approaching to horror. The other young man turns his head round, as though complaining of unreasonable interruption. The drapery of both the front figures in this group is finely drawn: the opening action of the knees in the one is beautifully followed and described by the folds; in the other, the compression, in consequence of the bent attitude, is equally executed; the turn of the head gives grace and variety to the figure.

“The head introduced beyond, and rather apart, is intended to break the two answering lines of the dark contour of the apostle’s drapery, and the building in the background.

“In the group placed behind the apostle, the mind is astonished at the new character of composition. The finest light imaginable is thrown upon the sitting figure; and, as necessary, a mass of shade is cast upon the two others.

“It is difficult to ascertain what or whom Raphael meant by that corpulent and haughty personage wearing the cap. His expression, however, is evident: malice and vexation are depicted in his countenance; his stride, and the action of his hand, are characteristic of his temperament.

“The figure standing behind is supposed to be a *magician*. His dark hair and beard, which seem to have been neglected, and the keen mysterious gaze of his eye, certainly exhibit a mind addicted to unusual studies. Under him, the only remaining figure is one who listens with malignant attention, as though intending to report every thing. He has the aspect of a spy. His eye is full of danger to the apostle; and he crouches below that he may not be disturbed by communication.

“If this figure be considered with reference to *Dionysius*, it may be remarked that *Raphael* has not only contrasted his characters, but even the two ends of his picture. By this means the greatest possible force is given to the subject. At the first survey, the

subordinate contrasts may escape the eye, but these greater oppositions must have their effect.

“When, from this detailed display of the cartoon, the eye again glances over the whole subject, including the dignity of the architecture; the propriety of the statue of Mars, which faces his temple; the happy management of the landscape, with the two conversation figures; the result must be an acknowledgment that in this one effort of art is combined all that is great in drawing, in expression, and in composition.” *Holloway’s* description of *Raphael’s* Cartoon of Paul preaching at Athens.

ACTS

CHAPTER 18.

Paul, leaving Athens, comes to Corinth, meets with Aquila and Priscilla, and labours with them at tent-making, 1-3. He preaches, and proves that Jesus was the Christ, 4, 5. The Jews oppose and blaspheme; and he purposes to go to the Gentiles, 6. Justus, Crispus, and several of the Corinthians believe, 7, 8. Paul has a vision, by which he is greatly comforted, 9, 10. He continues there a year and six months, 11. Gallio being deputy of Achaia, the Jews make insurrection against Paul, and bring him before the deputy, who dismisses the cause; whereupon the Jews commit a variety of outrages, 12-17. Paul sails to Syria, and from thence to Ephesus, where he preaches, 18-20. He leaves Ephesus-goes to Cæsarea, visits Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia, 21-23. Account of Apollos and his preaching, 24-28.

NOTES ON CHAP. 18.

Verse 1. Paul departed from Athens] How long he stayed here, we cannot tell; it is probable it could not be less than three months; but, finding that the Gospel made little progress among the Athenians, he resolved to go to Corinth.

CORINTH was situated on the isthmus that connects Peloponnesus to Attica; and was the capital of all *Achaia*, or Peloponnesus. It was most advantageously situated for trade; for, by its two ports, the *Lecheum* and *Cenchreaë*, it commanded the commerce both of the *Ionian* and *Ægean* Sea. It was destroyed by the Romans under Mummius, about one hundred and forty-six years before Christ, in their wars with Attica; but was rebuilt by Julius Cæsar, and became one of the most considerable cities of Greece. Like other kingdoms and states, it has undergone a variety of revolutions: from the oppressive and destructive government of the Turks it has been lately restored to that of the Greeks; but it is greatly reduced, its whole population amounting only to between thirteen and fourteen thousand souls. It is about 46 miles east of Athens, and 342 S.W. of Constantinople. Its public buildings were very superb; and there the *order* called the *Corinthian Order*, in architecture, took its rise.

Verse 2. A certain Jew named Aquila] Some have supposed that this Aquila was the same with the Onkelos, mentioned by the Jews. See the article in Wolfius, *Bibl. Hebr.* vol. ii. p. 1147. We have no evidence that

this Jew and his wife were at this time converted to the Christian religion. Their conversion was most likely the fruit of St. Paul's lodging with them-*Pontus*. See Clarke's note on "~~400~~Acts 2:9".

Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome] This edict of the Roman emperor is not mentioned by *Josephus*; but it is probably the same to which *Suetonius* refers in his life of Claudius; where he says, *Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*. "He expelled the Jews from Rome, as they were making continual insurrections, under their leader *Chrestus*." Who this *Chrestus* was we cannot tell; probably *Suetonius* means *Christ*; but this I confess does not appear to me likely. There might have been a Jew of the name of *Chrestus*, who had made some disturbances, and, in consequence, Claudius thought proper to banish all Jews from the city. But how could he intend *Christ*, who was never at Rome? nor did any one ever personate him in that city; and it is evident he could not refer to any spiritual influence exerted by *Christ* on the minds of the people. Indeed he speaks of *Chrestus* as being the person who was the cause of the disturbances. It is no fictitious name, no name of an absent person, nor of a *sect*; but of one who was well known by the disturbances which he occasioned, and for which it is likely he suffered, and those of his nation were expelled. This decree, which was made, not by the *senate*, but by the emperor himself, continued only in force during his life, if so long; for in a short time after this Rome again abounded with Jews.

Verse 3. He abode with them, and wrought] Bp. Pearce observes that it was a custom among the Jews, even of such as had a better education than ordinary, which was Paul's case, ~~423~~Acts 22:3, to learn a trade, that, wherever they were, they might provide for themselves in case of necessity. And though Paul, in some cases, lived on the bounty of his converts, yet he chose not to do so at Ephesus, ~~408~~Acts 20:34; nor at Corinth or other places, ~~4012~~1 Corinthians 4:12; ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 9:8, 9; ~~5008~~1 Thessalonians 3:8; and this Paul did for a reason which he gives in ~~4710~~2 Corinthians 11:9-12. While he was at Corinth he was supplied, when his own labour did not procure him enough, "by the brethren which came to him there from Macedonia." It appears that the apostle had his lodging with Aquila and Priscilla; and probably a portion of the profits of the business, after his board was deducted. It was evidently no reproach for a man, at *that time*, to unite public teaching with an honest useful trade. And why should it be so *now*? May not a man who has acquired a thorough

knowledge of the Gospel way of salvation, explain that way to his less informed neighbours, though he be a tent-maker, (what perhaps we would call a house-carpenter,) or a shoemaker, or any thing else? Even many of those who consider it a cardinal sin for a *mechanic* to *preach* the Gospel, are providing for themselves and their families in the same way. How many of the clergy, and other ministers, are farmers, graziers, schoolmasters, and sleeping partners in different *trades* and *commercial* concerns! A tent-maker, in his place, is as useful as any of these. Do not ridicule the mechanic because he preaches the Gospel to the salvation of his neighbours, lest some one should say, in a language which you glory to have learned, and which the mechanic has not, *Mutato nomine, de TE fabula narrator*.

There are different opinions concerning that is meant here by the **σκηνοποιος**, which we translate *tent-maker*. Some think it means a maker of those small *portable tents*, formed of *skins*, which soldiers and travellers usually carried with them on their journeys; others suppose that these tents were made of linen cloth. Some think that the trade of St. Paul was making *hangings* or *curtains*, such as were used at the theatres; others think the **σκηνοποιος** was a sort of *umbrella-maker*; others, a *weaver*, &c., &c. In short, we know not what the trade was. I have generally preferred the notion of a carpenter, or *faber lignarius*. Whatever it was, it was an honest, useful calling, and Paul got his bread by it.

Verse 4. He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath] Discoursed at large concerning Jesus as the Messiah, proving this point from their own Scriptures, collated with the facts of our Lord's life, &c.

And persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.] Many, both Jews and proselytes, were convinced of the truth of his doctrine. Among his converts was *Epenetus*, the first fruit of his labour in Achaia, ^{<4514B>} **Romans 16:5**; and the family of *Stephanas* was the next; and then *Crispus* and *Caius*, or *Gaius*; all of whom the apostle himself baptized, ^{<4014>} **1 Corinthians 1:14-16**. See Clarke on ^{<4480>} "Acts 18:8".

Verse 5. When Silas and Timotheus were come] We have seen, ^{<44713>} **Acts 17:13**, that when Paul was obliged to leave Berea, because of the persecution raised up against him in that place, he left Silas and Timotheus behind; to whom he afterwards sent word to rejoin him at Athens with all speed. It appears, from ^{<31810>} **1 Thessalonians 3:10**, that, on Timothy's coming to Athens, Paul immediately sent him, and probably Silas with him,

to comfort and establish the Church at Thessalonica. How long they laboured here is uncertain, but they did not rejoin him till some time after he came to Corinth. It appears that he was greatly rejoiced at the account which Timothy brought of the Church at Thessalonica; and it must have been immediately after this that he wrote his first epistle to that Church, which is probably the *first*, in order of time, of all his epistles.

Paul was pressed in spirit] **συνειχετο τω πνευματι**, or he was *constrained by the Spirit* of God, in an extraordinary manner, to *testify to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ*. Instead of **τω πνευματι**, *in the spirit*, **τω λογω**, *in the word or doctrine*, is the reading of ABDE, three others; both the *Syriac, Coptic, Vulgate, Basil, Chrysostom*, and others. Griesbach has received this reading into the text, and Bp. Pearce thus paraphrases the verse: “And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul set himself, *together* with them, wholly *to the word*; i.e. he was fully employed, now that he had their assistance, it preaching the Gospel, called *the word* in ^{<400>}**Acts 4:4; 16:6, 32; 17:11**. St. Luke seems to have intended to express here something relating to St. Paul which was the *consequence* of the coming of Silas and Timotheus; and that was rather labouring with them more abundantly in *preaching the word* than his being “*pressed in spirit*.” This appears to be the true sense of the word, and that **τω λογω** is the genuine reading there can be no doubt. **συνειχετο**, which we translate *pressed*, and which the Vulgate translates *instabat*, Bp. Pearce thinks should be translated *una cum illis instabat*, he earnestly strove together with them, **τω λογω**, *in preaching the word*. The true sense is given by Calmet, *Paul s’employoit a precher encore avec plus d’ardeur*, Paul was employed with more ardour in preaching, and testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. From this time we hear no more of Silas; probably he died in Macedonia.

Verse 6. When they opposed] **αντιτασσομενων**, Systematically opposing, putting themselves in *warlike order* against him: so the word implies.

And blasphemed] This is precisely the way in which they still act. They have no arguments against Jesus being the Messiah; but, having made a covenant with unbelief, as soon as they are pressed on this point, they rail and blaspheme.-See the *Tela ignea Satanæ*, by *Wagenseil*.

He shook his raiment] This was an action similar to that of *shaking the dust of the feet*; see Clarke on “^{<4104>}Matthew 10:14”. See a parallel act, and its signification, in ^{<41613>}Nehemiah 5:13: *Also I SHOOK MY LAP, and said, So shall God SHAKE every man FROM HIS HOUSE and FROM his LABOUR; even thus shall he be SHAKEN OUT and EMPTIED.* St. Paul’s act on this occasion seems to have been the same with this of Nehemiah, and with the same signification; and it is likely that he was led by a Divine impulse to do it—thus signifying the shaking and emptying out of this disobedient people, which took place about sixteen years afterwards.

Your blood be upon your own heads] That is, ye alone are the cause of the destruction that is coming upon yourselves and upon your country.

I am clean] καθαρος εγω, I am *pure* or *innocent* of your death and ruin. I have proposed to you the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the only means by which ye can be saved, and ye have utterly rejected it. I shall labour no more with you; and, from henceforth, shall confine my labours to the *Gentiles*. St. Paul must refer to the Jews and Gentiles of *Corinth* particularly; for he preached to the Jews occasionally in other places; see ^{<41908>}Acts 19:8, 9; and several were brought to the knowledge of the truth. But it seems as if the Jews from this time *systematically* opposed the Gospel of Christ; and yet, *general tenders* of this salvation were made to them wherever the apostles came; and when they rejected them, the word was sent to the Gentiles; see ^{<41908>}Acts 19:8, 9.

Pure from blood, or *pure* from guilt, is commonly expressed by καθαρος; thus *Heliodorus*, lib. i. p. 49: εις δευρο διετελεσα καθαραν εμαυτην απο της ομιλιας φυλαττουσα, *Until now I have lived, preserving myself pure*: and *Alciphron*, lib. i. epist. 7, ad. fin.: ουδε μιαναι λυθρωτας χειρας, ας η θαλαττα εκ παιδος εις δευρο καθαρας αδικηματων εφυλαξε, *Nor to stain with pollution the hands which a seafaring life has kept from a child until now pure from iniquity.*

Verse 7. And he departed thence] From his former lodging, or that quarter of the city where he had dwelt before with Aquila and Priscilla; and went to lodge with *Justus*, apparently a proselyte of the gate. This person is called *Titus*, and *Titus Justus*, in several MSS. and *versions*.

Verse 8. Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue] This person held an office of considerable consequence; and therefore his conversion to Christianity must have been very galling to the Jews. It belonged to the

chief or ruler of the synagogue to preside in all the assemblies, interpret the law, decide concerning things lawful and unlawful, punish the refractory, excommunicate the rebellious, solemnize marriages, and issue divorces. It is likely that, on the conversion of Crispus, Sosthenes was chosen to succeed him.

Many of the Corinthians] Those to whom the sacred historian refers were probably Gentiles, and were the fruits of the apostle's labours after he had ceased to preach among the Jews.

Verse 9. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision] It is likely that Paul was at this time much discouraged by the violent opposition of the Jews, and probably was in danger of his life; see ^{<41810>}Acts 18:10; and might have been entertaining serious thoughts of ceasing to preach, or leaving Corinth. To prevent this, and comfort him, God was pleased to give him this vision.

Be not afraid] That this comfort and assurance were necessary himself shows us in his first epistle to these Corinthians, ^{<41013>}Acts 2:3: *I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*

Verse 10. No man shall set on thee] *και ουδεις επιθησεται σοι*, No man shall be permitted to *lay violent hands* upon thee. It is very likely that the Jews had conspired his death; and his preservation was an act of the especial interposition of Divine Providence.

I have much people in this city.] *εν τη πολει ταυτη*, *In this very city*: there are many here who have not resisted my Spirit, and consequently are now under its teachings, and are ready to embrace my Gospel as soon as thou shalt declare it unto them.

Verse 11. He continued there a year and six months] He was now confident that he was under the *especial* protection of God, and therefore continued *teaching the word*, *τον λογον*, the doctrine of God. It is very likely, that it was during his stay here that he wrote his *first* epistle to the *Thessalonians*, and the *second* not long after; and some think that the epistle to the *Galatians* was written during his stay at Corinth.

Verse 12. When Gallio was the deputy of Achaia] The Romans comprehended, under the name of Achaia, all that part of Greece which lay between Thessaly and the southernmost coasts of Peloponnesus. *Pausanias*, in *Attic*. vii. 16, says that the Romans were accustomed to send

a governor into that country, and that they called him the *governor of Achaia*, not of *Greece*; because the *Achæans*, when they subdued Greece, were the *leaders* in all the Grecian affairs see also *Suetonius*, in his life of *Claudius*, cap. xxv., and *Dio Cassius*, lx. 24. Edit. Reimari.

Deputy] *ανθυπατευοντος*, serving the office of *ανθυπατος*, or deputy: see **Clark's note on "^{<4130>}Acts 13:7"**.

Gallio] This deputy, or proconsul, was eldest brother to the celebrated *Lucius Annæus Seneca*, the stoic philosopher, preceptor of Nero, and who is so well known among the learned by his works. The name of Gallio, was at first *Marcus Annæus Novatus*; but, having been adopted in the family of *Gallio*, he took the name of *Lucius Junius Gallio*. He, and Annæus Mela his brother, father of the poet *Lucan*, shared in the disgrace of their brother *Seneca*; and by this tyrant, Nero, whose early years were so promising, the three brothers were put to death; see *Tacitus*, *Annal.* lib. xv. 70, and xvi. 17. It was to this *Gallio* that *Seneca* dedicates his book *Deuteronomy Ira*. *Seneca* describes him as a man of the most amiable mind and manners: "Quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potent; nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quam hic omnibus: cum interim tanta naturalis boni vis est, uti artem simulationemque non redoleat:" vide *Senec. Præfat. ad Natural. Quæst.* 4. He was of the sweetest disposition, affable to all, and beloved by every man.

Statius, *Sylvar.* lib. ii. 7. ver. 30, Ode on the *Birthday of Lucan*, says not a little in his favour, in a very few words:-

*Lucanum potes imputare terris;
Hoc plus quam Senecam dedisse mundo,
Aut dulcem generasse Gallionem.*

You may consider nature as having made greater efforts in producing *Lucan*, than it has done in producing *Seneca*, or even the *amiable* GALLIO.

And brought him to the judgment seat] They had no power to punish any person in the Roman provinces, and therefore were obliged to bring their complaint before the Roman governor. *The powers that be are ordained of God.* Had the *Jews* possessed the *power* here, *Paul* had been put to death!

Verse 13. Persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law.] This accusation was very insidious. The *Jews* had permission by the Romans to

worship their own God in their own way: this the *laws allowed*. The Roman worship was also *established* by the law. The Jews probably intended to accuse Paul of acting contrary to *both* laws. “He is not a Jew, for he does not admit of circumcision; he is not a Gentile, for he preaches against the worship of the gods. He is setting up a *worship of his own*, in opposition to *all laws*, and persuading many people to join with him: he is therefore a most dangerous man, and should be put to death.”

Verse 14. Paul was now about to open his mouth] He was about to enter on his defense; but Gallio, perceiving that the prosecution was through envy and malice, would not put Paul to any farther trouble, but determined the matter as follows.

If it were a matter of wrong] **αδικημα**, Of *injustice*; any thing contrary to the *rights* of the subject.

Or wicked lewdness] **ραδιουργημα πονηρον**, *Destructive mischief*. (See Clarke’s note on “⁴¹³⁰Acts 13:10”, where the word is explained.) Something by which the subject is grievously *wronged*; were it any crime against *society* or against the *state*.

Reason would that I should bear with you.] **κατα λογον αν ηνεσχομην υμων**, *According to reason, or the merit of the case, I should patiently hear you*.

Verse 15. But if it be a question of words] **περι λογου**, Concerning *doctrine and names*-whether the person called *Jesus* be the person you call the *Messiah*. And of *your law*-any particular nicety, concerning that *law* which is *peculiar* to *yourselves*: *Look ye* to it-settle the business among yourselves; the Roman government does not meddle with such matters, and I will not take upon me to-decide in a case that does not concern my office. As if he had said: “The Roman laws give religious liberty to Jews and Greeks; but, if controversies arise among you on these subjects, decide them among yourselves, or dispute about them as much as you please.” A better answer could not be given by man; and it was highly becoming the acknowledged meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of this amiable man. He concluded that the state had no right to control any man’s religious opinion; *that* was between the *object* of his worship and his own *conscience*; and therefore he was not authorized to intermeddle with subjects of this nature, which the law left to every man’s private judgment. Had all the rulers of the people in every country acted as this sensible and

benevolent Roman, laws against *liberty of conscience*, concerning religious persecution, would not be found to be, as they not are, blots and disgraces on the statute books of almost all the civilized nations of Europe.

Verse 16. And he drave them from the judgment seat.] He saw that their accusation was both *frivolous* and *vexatious*, and he ordered them to depart, and the assembly to disperse. The word **απηλασεν**, which we translate *he drave*, does not signify here any act of violence on the part of Gallio or the Roman officers, but simply an *authoritative dismissal*.

Verse 17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes] As this man is termed the chief ruler of the synagogue, it is probable that he had lately succeeded Crispus in that office; see ^{<418B>}**Acts 18:8**; and that he was known either to have embraced Christianity, or to have favoured the cause of St. Paul. He is supposed to be the same person whom St. Paul associates with himself in the first epistle to the Corinthians, ^{<6010>}**1 Corinthians 1:1**. Crispus might have been removed from his presidency in the synagogue as soon as the Jews found he had embraced Christianity, and Sosthenes appointed in his place. And, as he seems to have speedily embraced the same doctrine, the Jews would be the more enraged, and their malice be directed strongly against *him*, when they found that the proconsul would not support them in their opposition to Paul.

But why should *the Greeks* beat Sosthenes? I have in the above note proceeded on the supposition that this outrage was committed by the *Jews*; and my reason for it is this: **οι Ἕλληνες**, *the Greeks*, is omitted by AB, two of the oldest and most authentic MSS. in the world: they are omitted also by the *Coptic* and *Vulgate*, *Chrysostom*, and *Bede*. Instead of **οι Ἕλληνες**, three MSS., one of the eleventh, and two of the thirteenth century, have **ιουδαιοι**, *the Jews*; and it is much more likely that the *Jews* beat one of their *own rulers*, through envy at his conversion, than that the *Greeks* should do so; unless we allow, which is very probable, (if **Ἕλληνες**, *Greeks*, be the true reading,) that these Hellenes were Jews, born in a Greek country, and speaking the Greek language.

And Gallio cared for none of those things.] και ουδεν τουτων θω γαλλιωني εμελεν. *And Gallio did not concern himself*, did not *intermeddle with any of these things*. As he found that it was a business that concerned their own religion, and that the contention was among themselves, and that they were abusing one of their own sect only, he did

not choose to interfere. He, like the rest of the Romans, considered the Jews a most despicable people, and worthy of no regard; and their present conduct had no tendency to cause him to form a different opinion of them from that which he and his countrymen had previously entertained. It is not very likely, however, that Gallio *saw* this outrage; for, though it was before the judgment seat, it probably did not take place till Gallio had left the court; and, though he might be told of it, he left the matter to the *lictors*, and would not interfere.

The conduct of Gallio has been, in this case, greatly censured; and I think with manifest injustice. In the business brought before his tribunal, no man could have followed a more prudent or equitable course. His whole conduct showed that it was his opinion, that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with *religious opinions* or the *concerns of conscience*, in matters where the *safety of the state* was not implicated. He therefore refused to make the subject a matter of legal discussion. Nay, he went much farther; he would not even interfere to prevent either the Jews or the apostles from making proselytes. Though the complaint against the apostles was, that they were *teaching men to worship God contrary to the law*; see **Clarke's note on "^{<<41815>}Acts 18:15"**, yet, even in this case, he did not think it right to exert the *secular* power to restrain the *free discussion* and teaching of matters which concerned the *rights of conscience* in things pertaining to the worship of the gods. As to his not preventing the tumult which took place, we may say, if he did see it, which is not quite evident, that he well knew that this could rise to no serious amount; and the *lictors*, and other minor officers, were there in sufficient force to prevent any serious riot, and it was their business to see that the public peace was not broken, besides, as a heathen, he might have no objection to permit this people to pursue a line of conduct by which they were sure to bring themselves and their religion into contempt. These wicked Jews could not disprove the apostle's doctrine, either by argument or Scripture; and they had recourse to manual logic, which was an indisputable proof of the badness of their own cause, and the strength of that of their opponents.

But in consequence of this conduct Gallio has been represented as a man perfectly *careless* and *unconcerned* about religion in general; and therefore has been considered as a proper *type* or *representative* of even professed Christians, who are not *decided* in their religious opinions or conduct. As a heathen, Gallio certainly was *careless* about both *Judaism* and *Christianity*. The *latter* he had probably never heard of but by the cause

now before his judgment seat; and, from any thing he could see of the *other*, through the medium of its professors, he certainly could entertain no favourable opinion of it: therefore in neither case was he to blame. But the words, *cared for none of those things*, are both misunderstood and misapplied: we have already seen that they only mean that he would not *intermeddle* in a controversy which did not belong to his province and sufficient reasons have been alleged why he should act as he did. It is granted that many preachers take this for a text, and preach useful sermons for the conviction of the *undecided* and *lukewarm*; and it is to be deplored that there are so many undecided and careless people in the world, and especially in reference to what concerns their eternal interests. But is it not to be lamented, also, that there should be preachers of God's holy word who attempt to explain passages of Scripture which they do not understand. For he who preaches on *Gallio cared for none of those things*, in the way in which the passage has, through mismanagement, been popularly understood, either does not understand it, or he willingly perverts the meaning.

Verse 18. And Paul-tarried there yet a good while] The persecuting Jews plainly saw, from the manner in which the proconsul had conducted this business, that they could have no hope of raising a *state persecution* against the apostles; and the laws provided so amply for the *personal* safety of every Roman citizen that then were afraid to proceed any farther in their violence. It would not be unknown that Paul was possessed of the *right of Roman citizenship*; and therefore his person was sacred as long as he did nothing contrary to the *laws*.

It is probable that at this time Paul stayed, on the whole, at Corinth, about two years.

Having shorn his head in Cenchrea] But who was it that shorn his head? *Paul* or *Aquila*? Some think the latter, who had bound himself by the Nazarite vow, probably before he became a Christian; and, being under that vow, his conscience would not permit him to disregard it. There is nothing in the text that absolutely obliges us to understand this action as belonging to *St. Paul*. It seems to have been the act of *Aquila* alone; and therefore both *Paul* and *Priscilla* are mentioned before *Aquila*; and it is natural to refer the vow to the latter. Yet there are certainly some weighty reasons why the vow should be referred to *St. Paul*, and not to *Aquila*; and interpreters are greatly divided on the subject. *Chrysostom, Isidore of*

Seville, Grotius, Hammond, Zegerus, Erasmus, Baronius, Pearce, Wesley, and others, refer the vow to Aquila.-*Jerome, Augustin, Bede, Calmet, Dodd, Rosenmuller,* and others, refer it to St. Paul. Each party has its strong reasons-the matter is doubtful-the bare letter of the text determines nothing: yet I cannot help leaning to the latter opinion. Perhaps it was from feeling the difficulty of deciding *which* was under the vow that the *Æthiopic* and *two Latin versions*, instead of **κείραμενος**, *having shaved*, in the singular, appear to have read **κείραμενοι**, *they shaved*; and thus put both *Paul* and *Aquila* under the vow.

Cenchrea. This was a port on the *east* side of the isthmus of Corinth, opposite to the *Lecheum*, which was the other port on the *west*. And it is likely that it was at *Cenchrea* that St. Paul took shipping for Syria, as it would be more convenient for him, and a shorter passage to embark at *Cenchrea*, in order to go by the *Ægean* Sea to Syria, than to embark at the *Lecheum*, and sail down into the Mediterranean. This isthmus is generally described now as dividing the Gulf of *Lepanto*, on the *west*, from the Gulf of *Engia*, or *Eginaon*, on the *east*.

Verse 19. He came to Ephesus] Where it appears he spent but one Sabbath. It is supposed that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at this place, and that he went on alone to Jerusalem; for it is certain they were at Ephesus when Apollos arrived there. See ~~41824~~ **Acts 18:24, 26.**

EPHESUS was at the time in which St. Paul visited it, one of the most flourishing cities of Asia Minor. It was situated in that part anciently called *Ionia*, but now *Natolia*. It abounded with the most eminent orators, philosophers, &c., in the world; and was adorned with the most splendid buildings. Here was that famous temple of *Diana*, reputed one of the *seven wonders of the world*. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is in a state of almost entire ruin. The temple of *Minerva*, which had long served as a Christian church, is now so completely ruined that its site cannot be easily determined; though some ruins of the walls are still standing, with five or six marble columns, forty feet in length, and seven in diameter, *all of one piece*. It still has a good harbour, and is about forty miles from *Smyrna*. In *Chandler's Travels in Asia Minor*, some curious information is given concerning this once eminent city. His account concludes thus: "The Ephesians are now a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility: the representative of an *illustrious* people, and inhabiting the *wrecks* of their *greatness*: some

beneath the vaults of the *Stadium*, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some live by the abrupt precipice, in the sepulchres which received the ashes of their ancestors. Such are the present citizens of Ephesus; and such is the condition to which that renowned city has been gradually reduced. Its streets are obscured and overgrown; a herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. *We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre, and of the Stadium.* The glorious pomp of its *heathen worship* is no longer remembered; and *Christianity*, which was there nursed by *apostles*, and fostered by *general councils*, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on, in an existence hardly visible." *Travels in Asia Minor*, p. 130. Reader! This city was once the capital of Asia Minor; and its ruins alone prove that it has existed: and it was one of those *seven Churches* to which a letter was expressly dictated by Jesus Christ himself! Ephesus is properly no more! and the Church of Ephesus is blotted put of the map of Christianity! Be silent and adore.

Verse 21. I must-keep this feast] Most likely the *passover*, at which he wished to attend for the purpose of seeing many of his friends, and having the most favourable opportunity to preach the Gospel to thousands who would attend at Jerusalem on that occasion. The whole of this clause, *I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem*, is wanting in ABE, six others; with the *Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate*. Griesbach leaves it in the text, with the mark of *doubtfulness*; and Professor White, in his *Crisews*, says, *probabiliter delenda*. Without this clause the verse will read thus: *But he bade them farewell, saying, I will return again unto you, if God will.* And this he did before the expiration of that same year, ^{<4490>}**Acts 19:1**, and spent three years with them, ^{<4421>}**Acts 20:31**, extending and establishing the Church at that place.

Verse 22. Landed at Cæsarea] This must have been Cæsarea in Palestine.

Gone up] To *Jerusalem*, though the name is not mentioned: but this is a common form of speech in the evangelists, Jerusalem being always meant when this expression was used; for the word $\alpha\nu\alpha\beta\alpha\iota\nu\omega$, *to go up*, is often used absolutely, to signify, *to go to Jerusalem*: e.g. GO ye UP unto this feast; I GO not UP yet, ^{<3708>}**John 7:8**. *But when his brethren were GONE UP, then WENT he also UP unto the feast,* ^{<3710>}**John 7:10**. *There were certain Greeks-that CAME UP to worship,* ^{<3121>}**John 12:20**. St. Paul himself uses a similar form of expression. *There are yet but twelve days since I WENT UP*

to Jerusalem, for to worship, ^{<4241>}Acts 24:11. So all parts of England are spoken of as being below London: so we talk of going *up* to London; and people in London talk of going *down* to the country.

Saluted the Church] That is, the Church at Jerusalem, called emphatically THE CHURCH, because it was the FIRST Church—the MOTHER, or APOSTOLIC Church; and from it all other Christian Churches proceeded: those in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, &c. Therefore, even this last was only a *daughter* Church, when in its *purest* state.

Went down to Antioch.] That is, *Antioch* in *Syria*, as the word is generally to be understood when without *addition*, so *Cæsarea* is always to be understood *Cæsarea* in *Palestine*, when without the addition of *Philippi*.

Verse 23. Went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia] Both were provinces of Asia Minor: see Clarke on “^{<4210>}Acts 2:10”.

In order] καθεξης, A word peculiar to St. Luke; see his Gospel, ^{<4018>}Luke 1:3; 8:1; and his history of the Acts, ^{<4433>}Acts 3:24; 11:4, and the place above; the only places where this word occurs in the New Testament. It properly signifies, *in order, distinctly, particularly*; from κατα, *according to*, and εξη, *order*, as opposed to *confusion*, indistinctness, &c. If St. Paul went up to Jerusalem at this time, which we are left to *infer*, for Luke has not expressed it, (^{<4182>}Acts 18:22,) it was his *fourth* journey thither; and this is generally supposed to have been the twenty-first year after his conversion. His *first* journey is mentioned ^{<4436>}Acts 9:26; his *second*, ^{<4113>}Acts 11:30; his *third*, ^{<4154>}Acts 15:4; and his *fourth*, ^{<4182>}Acts 18:22, the place above.

Verse 24. A certain Jew named Apollos] One MS., with the *Coptic* and *Armenian*, calls him *Apelles*; and the *Codex Bezae*, *Apollonius*. It is strange that we should find a Jew, not only with a Roman name, as *Aquila*, an *eagle*; but with the name of one of the *false* gods, as *Apollos* or *Apollo* in the text. Query: Whether the parents of this man were not originally *Gentiles*, but converted to Judaism after their son Apollo (for so we should write the word) had been born and named.

Born at Alexandria] This was a celebrated city of Egypt, built by Alexander the Great, from whom it took its name. It was seated on the Mediterranean Sea, between the Lake Mareotis and the beautiful harbour

formed by the Isle of Pharos, about twelve miles west of the Canopic branch of the Nile, in lat. 31°. 10'. N. This city was built under the direction of Dinocrates, the celebrated architect of the temple of Diana at Ephesus. It was in this city that *Ptolemy Soter* founded the famous academy called the Museum, in which a society of learned men devoted themselves to philosophical studies. Some of the most celebrated schools of antiquity flourished here; and here was the *Tower of Pharos*, esteemed one of the *seven* wonders of the world. Alexandria was taken by the French, July 4, 1798, under the command of Bonaparte; and was surrendered to the English under General, now Lord, Hutchinson, in 1801. And, in consequence of the treaty of peace between France and England, it was restored to the Turks. Near this place was the celebrated *obelisk*, called *Cleopatra's Needle*; and the no less famous column, called *Pompey's Pillar*. This city exhibits but very slender remains of its ancient splendour.

An eloquent man] Having strong rhetorical powers; highly cultivated, no doubt, in the Alexandrian schools.

Mighty in the Scriptures] Thoroughly acquainted with the *law* and *prophets*; and well skilled in the Jewish method of interpreting them.

Verse 25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord]

κατηχημενος; He was *catechized*, *initiated*, in *the way*, the *doctrine*, of Jesus as the Christ.

Being fervent in the spirit] Being full of *zeal* to propagate the truth of God, he taught *diligently*, ακριβως *accurately*, (so the word should be translated,) the things of Christ as far as he could know them through the *ministry of John the Baptist*; for it appears he knew nothing more of Christ than what John preached. Some suppose we should read ουκ, *not*, before ακριβως, *correctly*, or *accurately*, because it is said that Aquila and Priscilla expounded the way of the Lord, ακριβεστερον, *more perfectly*, rather *more accurately*; but of this emendation there is not the slightest necessity; for surely it is possible for a man to teach *accurately* what he knows; and it is possible that another, who possesses *more* information on the subject than the former, may teach him *more accurately*, or give him a larger portion of knowledge. Apollo knew the baptism of John; but he knew nothing farther of Jesus Christ than that baptism taught; but, as far as he knew, he taught *accurately*. Aquila and Priscilla were acquainted with the whole doctrine of the Gospel: the doctrine of Christ dying for our sins,

and rising again for our justification; and in *this* they instructed Apollo; and this was *more accurate* information than what he had before received, through the medium of John's ministry.

Verse 26. They took him unto them] This eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who was even a public teacher, was not ashamed to be indebted to the instructions of a Christian *woman*, in matters that not only concerned his own salvation, but also the *work of the ministry*, in which he was engaged. It is disgraceful to a man to be ignorant, when he may acquire wisdom; but it is no disgrace to acquire wisdom from the meanest person or thing. The adage is good: *Despise not advice, even of the meanest: the gagging of geese preserved the Roman state.*

Verse 27. When he was disposed to pass into Achaia] There is a very long and important *addition* here in the *Codex Bezae*, of which the following is a translation: *But certain Corinthians, who sojourned at Ephesus, and heard him, entreated him to pass over with them to their own country. Then, when he had given his consent, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples at Corinth, that they should receive this man. Who, when he was come, &c.* The same addition is found in the *later Syriac*, and in the *Itala* version in the *Codex Bezae*.

Which had believed through grace.] These words may either refer to *Apollo*, or to the *people* at Corinth. It was *through grace* that *they* had believed; and it was *through grace* that *Apollo* was enabled to *help them much*.

The words *δια της χαριτος*, *through grace*, are wanting in the *Codex Bezae*, the *later Syriac*, the *Vulgate*, one copy of the *Itala*, and in some of the *fathers*. But this omission might have been the effect of carelessness in the writers of those copies from which the foregoing were taken: the words convey the same idea that is expressed by St. Paul, ~~1~~ **1 Corinthians 3:6**: *Paul planted, and Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.* Though this eminent man became the instrument of mightily helping the believers in Corinth, yet he was also the *innocent* cause of a sort of *schism* among them. For some, taken by his commanding eloquence, began to range themselves on his side, and prefer him to all other teachers. This evil St. Paul reprehends and corrects in his first epistle to the Corinthians. St. Jerome says that *Apollo* became bishop of Corinth.

Verse 28. He mightily convinced the Jews] ευτονως διακατηλεγγετο; *He vehemently confuted the Jews; and that publicly, not in private conferences, but in his public preaching: showing by the scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Jews received as divinely inspired, that Jesus, who had lately appeared among them, and whom they had crucified, was the Christ, the promised Messiah, and that there was salvation in none other; and that they must receive him as the Messiah, in order to escape the wrath to come. This they refused to do; and we know the consequence. Their city was sacked, their temple burnt, their whole civil and religious polity subverted, more than a million of themselves killed, and the rest scattered over the face of the earth.*

1. THE *Christian religion* did not *hide* itself in corners and obscure places at first, in order, *privately*, to get strength, before it dared to show itself publicly. *Error*, conscious of its weakness, and that its pretensions cannot bear examination, is obliged to observe such a cautious procedure. With what caution, circumspection, and privacy, did *Mohammed* propose his new religion! He formed a party by little and little, in the most private manner, before he ventured to exhibit his pretensions openly. Not so *Christianity*: it showed itself in the *most public manner*, not only in the teaching of *Christ*, but also in that of the *apostles*. Even after the crucifixion of our Lord, the apostles and believers went to the *temple*, the most *public place*; and in the most *public manner* taught and worked miracles. JERUSALEM, the seat of the doctors, the judge of religion, was the *first place* in which, by the command of their Lord, the disciples preached *Christ* crucified. They were, therefore, not afraid to have their cause tried by the most rigid *test of Scripture*; and in the very place, too, where that Scripture was best understood.

2. When the same apostles. carried this Gospel to heathen countries, did they go to the *villages*, among the *less informed* or comparatively *ignorant Greeks*, in order to form a *party*, and shield themselves by getting the multitude on their side? No! They went to *Cæsarea*, to *Antioch*, to *Thessalonica*, to *ATHENS*, to *CORINTH*, to *EPHESUS*; to the very places where *learning* flourished most, where *sciences* were best cultivated, where *imposture* was most likely to be detected, and where the *secular power* existed in the most *despotic manner*, and could at once have crushed them to nothing could they have been *proved* to be *impostors*, or had they not been under the immediate protection of Heaven! Hence it is evident that these holy men feared no *rational* investigation of their

doctrines, for they taught them in the face of the most celebrated schools in the universe!

3. They preached *Christ crucified* in JERUSALEM, where it was the most solemn interest of the Jews to *disprove* their doctrine, that they might exculpate themselves from the murder of Jesus Christ. They preached the same Christ, and the vanity of *idolatry*, in *Athens*, in *Corinth*, and in *Ephesus*, where idolatry existed in the plenitude of its power; and where all its interests required it to make the moat desperate and formidable stand against those *innovators*. What but the fullest confidence of the truth of what they preached, the fullest conviction of the Divinity of their doctrine, and the supernatural influence of God upon their souls, could ever have induced these men to preach Christ crucified, either at *Jerusalem*, or at *Athens*? I scruple not to assert that the *bold, public* manner in which the apostles preached the Gospel, among the Jews and Greeks, is a most incontestable proof of the conviction they had of its *truth*; and the *success* with which they were favoured is a demonstration that what they preached as truth God proved to be the truth, by stretching forth his hand to heal, and causing signs and wonders to be wrought in the name of the holy child Jesus. This is an additional proof of the sincerity of the apostles, and of the truth of Christianity. If Paul and Peter, Barnabas and Silas, had not had the fullest persuasion that their doctrine was of God, they would never have ventured to propose it before the *Sanhedrin* in JERUSALEM, the *literati* of CORINTH, and the *Stoics* and *inexorable judges* of the *Areopagus* at ATHENS.

4. We may be surprised to find that, even among the *Jews* as well as the *Gentiles*, there were persons who used *curious arts*. Those were inexcusable; *these* were to be *pitied*. Blind as every man is by nature, yet he is conscious that without *supernatural* assistance he can neither secure the *good* he needs, nor avoid the *evil* he fears: therefore, he endeavours to associate to himself the influence of *supernatural* agents, in order to preserve him in safety, and make him happy. Thus forsaking and forgetting the *fountain* of *living water*, he hews out to himself *cisterns* that can hold no water. The existence of magical arts and incantations, whether real or pretended, prove the general belief of the existence of a *spiritual world*, and man's consciousness of his own weakness, and his need of supernatural help. When shall the eye be directed solely to HIM from whom alone true help can come, by whom evil is banished, and happiness restored!

CHAPTER 19.

Paul, coming to Ephesus, finds certain disciples who had not received the gift of the Holy Ghost, knowing only the baptism of John, but receive it through the imposition of his hands, 1-7. He preaches for three months in the synagogues, 8. Many being hardened, he leaves the synagogues, and teaches daily in the school of Tyrannus for two years, 9, 10. He works many miracles, 11, 12. Account of the vagabond exorcist Jews, and the seven sons of Sceva, 13-17. Many are converted, and burn their magical books, 18-20. Paul purposes to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome; but, having sent Timotheus and Erastus to Macedonia, continues a little longer in Asia, 21, 22. Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, raises an uproar against Paul, which, after some tumultuous proceedings, is appeased by the town clerk, 23-41.

NOTES ON CHAP. 19.

Verse 1. And it came to pass-while Apollos was at Corinth] The *Codex Bezae* begins this chapter differently. *But then Paul was desirous, according to his own counsel, to go to Jerusalem, the Spirit commanded him to return into Asia: then, passing through the upper parts, he came to Ephesus.* This addition is also found in the *Latin* or *Itala* part of the same MS., and in the *margin* of the *later Syriac*.

Paul having passed through the upper coasts] That is, through those parts of Asia Minor that lay eastward of Ephesus, such as Galatia, Phrygia, and probably Lycaonia and Lydia; and it is in reference to Ephesus that these are called the *upper coasts*. See their situation on the map.

Verse 2. Have ye received the Holy Ghost] It is likely that these were Asiatic Jews, who, having been at Jerusalem about twenty-six years before this, had heard the preaching of John, and received his baptism, believing in the *coming* Christ, whom John had proclaimed; but it appears that till this time they had got no farther instruction in the Christian religion. Paul, perceiving this, asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed? For it was the common privilege of the disciples of Christ to receive, not only the ordinary graces, but also the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; and thus the disciples of Christ differed from those of John, and of all others. John baptized with *water*; Jesus baptized with the *Holy*

Ghost. And to this day the genuine disciples of Christ are distinguished from all false religionists, and from nominal Christians, by being made partakers of this Spirit, which enlightens their minds, and convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; quickens their souls, witnesses to their conscience that they are the children of God, and purifies their hearts. Those who have not received these blessings from the Holy Spirit, whatever their profession may be, know nothing better than John's baptism: good, excellent in its kind, but ineffectual to the salvation of those who live under the meridian of Christianity.

We have not so much as heard whether, &c.] That is, they had not heard that there were particular gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to be received. They could not mean that they had not heard of the Holy Spirit; for John, in his baptism, announced Christ as about to baptize with the Holy Ghost, <M16> **Matthew 3:11;** <M16> **Luke 3:16;** but they simply meant that they had not heard that this Spirit, in his gifts, had been given to or received by any one.

Verse 4. That they should believe on him which should come after] John baptized them with the baptism of repentance; this was *common* to all the baptisms administered by the Jews to proselytes; but telling them that they should believe on him who was coming, was *peculiar* to John's baptism.

Verse 5. When they heard this, &c.] As there is no evidence in the New Testament of persons being *rebaptized*, unless this be one, many criticisms have been hazarded to prove that these persons were not *rebaptized*. I see no need of this. To be a *Christian*, a man must be baptized in the *Christian faith*: these persons had not been baptized into that faith, and therefore were not Christians: they felt this, and were immediately baptized *into the name of the Lord Jesus*. This is a plain case; but let one instance be produced of a person being rebaptized, who had *before* been baptized in the name of the *holy Trinity*, or even in the *name of Jesus* alone. In my view, it is an awful thing to *iterate baptism* when it had been before *essentially* performed: by "*essentially* performed," I mean, administered by *sprinkling, washing, or plunging*, by or in *water*, in the name of the *Father, Son, and Spirit*, being invoked at the time. Whoever has had this has the *essence* of baptism, as far as that can be conferred by *man*; and it matters not at *what period of his life* he has had it; it is a substantial baptism, and by it the person has been fully consecrated to the holy and blessed Trinity;

and there should not be an *iteration* of this consecration on any account whatever. It is totally contrary to the canon law; it is contrary to the decisions of the best divines; it is contrary to the practice of the purest ages of the Church of God; it is contrary to the New Testament, and tends to bring this sacred ordinance into disrepute.

Verse 6. They spake with tongues, and prophesied.] They received the miraculous gift of different languages; and in those languages they *taught* to the people the great doctrines of the Christian religion; for this appears to be the meaning of the word **προεφητευον**, *prophesied*, as it is used above.

Verse 8. Spake boldly-three months] We have often remarked that St. Paul, in every place, made his first offers of salvation to the *Jews*; and it was only when *they* rejected it, that he turned to the *Gentiles*; see **Acts 18:6**. And the same line of conduct he pursues here: he goes to the school of Tyrannus, at least a public place, to which *all* might resort, when they obstinately rejected the Gospel in the synagogue.

Disputing and persuading] **διαλεγομενους, και πειθων**, Holding conversations with them, in order to persuade them of the truth of the doctrine of Christ.

Verse 9. When divers were hardened] **τινες**, When *some* of them were hardened; several no doubt felt the power of Divine truth, and yielded consent. Our term *divers*, one of the most *bald* in our language, has too general a meaning for this place.

Behold the effect of the word of God! It is a savour of life unto life, or death unto death, according as it is received or rejected. The twelve men mentioned above received it affectionately, and *they* were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; the others were hardened, for they refused to believe; and they calumniated the doctrine, and became Satan's preachers among the multitude, to prejudice them against Christ and his religion.

Separated the disciples] Paul, and those converted under his ministry, had doubtless been in the habit of attending public worship in the *synagogue*: but, on the persecuting conduct of these Jews; he and his converts wholly withdrew from the synagogue, and took a place for themselves; and constantly afterwards held their own meetings at a school room, which they hired no doubt for the purpose.

The school of one Tyrannus.] For σχολη, *the school*, one MS. has συναγωγη, *the synagogue*; and, for Tyrannus, some have Tyrannios. Some have considered the original word as being an epithet, rather than the name of a person; and think that a *prince* or *nobleman* is intended, because τυραννος, *tyrant*, is taken in this sense: but this is a most unlikely conjecture. It appears that the person in question was a *schoolmaster*, and that he *lent* or *hired* his room to the apostles; and that they preached daily in it to as many, both Jews and Gentiles, as chose to attend. It is very likely that Tyrannus was a Jew, and was at least well affected to the Christian cause; for we have many proofs that individuals among them kept *schools* for the instruction of their youth; besides the schools or academies kept by the more celebrated rabbins. See *Schoettgen* and *Vitringa*. The school of Tyrannus might have been such a place as *Exeter Hall*, and such like places for public and especially for extraordinary religious meetings in London.

Verse 10. By the space of two years] The schoolhouse of Tyrannus was his regular chapel; and it is likely that in it he taught *Christianity*, as Tyrannus taught *languages* or *sciences*.

All they-in Asia heard the word] Meaning, probably, the Proconsular Asia, for the extent of which see **Clarke's note on “~~Acts~~ Acts 16:6”**.

Jews and Greeks.] For, although he ceased preaching in the synagogues of the Jews, yet they continued to hear him in the school of Tyrannus. But it is likely that Paul did not confine himself to this place, but went about through the different towns and villages; without which, how could *all Asia* have heard the word? By *Greeks*, we are to understand, not only the *proselytes* of the gate, but the *heathens* in general.

Verse 11. God wrought special miracles] δυναμεις τε ου τας τυχαυσας, Miracles of no *ordinary* kind, i.e. extraordinary miracles.

Verse 12. Handkerchiefs or aprons] σουδαρια η σιμικινθια, Probably the *sudaria* were a sort of handkerchiefs, which, in travelling, were always carried in the hand, for the convenience of wiping the face; and the *simikinthia* were either the sashes or girdles that went about the loins. These, borrowed from the apostle, and applied to the bodies of the diseased, became the means, in the hand of God, of their restoration to health.

The diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.] Here, there is a most evident distinction made between the *diseases* and the *evil spirits*: hence they were not *one* and the *same thing*.

Verse 13. Certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists] **ΤΙΝΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ ΕΞΟΡΚΙΣΤΩΝ;** *Certain of the Jews who went about practicing exorcisms. Vagabond* has a very bad acceptance among us; but, literally, *vagabundus* signifies a *wanderer*, one that has no settled place of abode. These, like all their countrymen, in all places, went about to get their bread in what way they could; making trial of every thing by which they could have the prospect of gain. Finding that Paul cast out demons through the name of Jesus, they thought, by using the same, they might produce the same effects; and, if they could, they knew it would be to them an ample source of revenue; for demoniacs abounded in the land.

Verse 14. Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests] The original **ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΩΣ**, dignifies a *Jewish high priest*; but it is not probable that any sons, much less seven sons of a Jewish *high priest*, should be strolling exorcists: it is therefore likely that **ΥΙΟΙ ΣΚΕΥΑ ΤΙΝΟΣ ΙΕΡΕΩΣ**, *the sons of Skeva, a certain priest*, as it stands in the *Codex Bezae*, is the true reading. The whole verse in that MS. reads thus: *Among them there also the sons of Skeva, a priest, who wished to do the same: for they were accustomed to exorcise such persons. And entering in to the demoniac, they began to invoke that Name, saying, We command thee by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, to go out. And the evil spirit angered, and said unto them, Jesus I know, &c.* It has been often remarked that in our Lord's time there were many of the Jews that professed to cast out demons; and perhaps to this our Lord alludes, ^{<4127>}**Matthew 12:27**. See **Clark's note there;** "^{<4127>}**Matthew 12:27**".

Josephus, in speaking of the wisdom of Solomon, says that he had that skill by which demons are expelled; and that he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they are cast out; and that those arts were known among his countrymen down to his own time; and then gives us the following relation: "I have seen a certain man of my own country whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacs, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a *ring*, that had a *root* of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and, when the man fell

down, immediately he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of *Solomon*, and reciting the incantations that he had composed. And when Eleazar would persuade the spectators that he had such power, he set at a little distance *a cup of water*, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it; and, when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were showed very manifestly.” *Joseph. ANTIQ.* book viii. cap. 2, sect. 5. *Whiston’s* edition.

That there were such incantations among the Jews we know well, and that there are still such found, and that they are attributed to Solomon; but that they are *his* remains to be proved; and could this even be done, a point remains which can never be proved, viz. that those *curious arts* were a part of that wisdom which he received from God, as Josephus intimates. Indeed, the whole of the above account gives the strongest suspicion of its being a trick by the Jewish juggler, which neither Josephus nor the emperor could detect; but the *ring*, the *root*, the *cup of water*, the *spell*, &c.; all indicate imposture. Magicians among the Jews were termed $\mu\nu\ \gamma\iota\ [\ b$ *baaley shem*, Masters of the Name, that is, the name of *Jehovah* $hwhyh$ by a certain pronunciation of which they believed the most wonderful miracles could be wrought. There were several among them who pretended to this knowledge; and, when they could not deny the miracles of our Lord, they attributed them to his knowledge of the true pronunciation of this most sacred name.

Verse 15. Jesus I know, and Paul I know] In the answer of the demoniac, the verb is varied: $\tau\omicron\nu\ \iota\eta\sigma\omicron\nu\nu\ \gamma\iota\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\omega,\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \pi\alpha\upsilon\lambda\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\mu\alpha\iota,\ \upsilon\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \tau\iota\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma\ (\tau\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma)\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon$. I acknowledge Jesus, and am acquainted with Paul; but of whom are ye? Ye belong to neither; ye have no authority. And he soon gave them full proof of this. This distinction is observed in my old MS. Bible: *I have knowe Jesu, and I wote Poule; forsothe who ben yee.*

Verse 16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was, &c.] Thus we find that one man was more powerful than these *seven brothers*; so that he stripped them of their upper garments, and beat and wounded the whole! Was not this a proof that he derived his strength from the evil spirit that dwelt in him?

Verse 17. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.] They saw that there was a sovereign power in the name of Jesus, which could not be

imitated by these lying exorcists: they therefore revered this name, and despised those pretenders.

Exorcisms or *adjurations* of evil spirits were very frequent in the primitive Church: the name of JESUS was that alone which was used. The primitive fathers speak strong and decisive words concerning the power of this *name*; and how demons were tormented and expelled by it, not only from individuals, but from the temples themselves. Exorcists formed a distinct class in the Church; hence we read of *presbyters*, *deacons*, *exorcists*, *lectors*, and *door-keepers*. The adjuration was commonly used over the *catechumens*, before they were admitted to baptism. *Gregory* of Nazianzen, and *Cyril* of Jerusalem speak much of this rite. See my *Succession of Sacred Literature*, under *Cyril*, and GREGORY Nazianzen; and see *Suicer*, under *εξορκισμος*.

Verse 19. Which used curious arts] *τα περιεργα*. From the use of this word in the Greek writers, we know that it signified *magical arts*, *sorceries*, *incantations*, &c. Ephesus abounded with these. Dio Cassius, speaking of the Emperor Adrian, says, *ὁ αδριανος περιεργοτατος ην και μαντειαις και μαγγανειαις παντοδαπαις εχρητο*. “Adrian was *exceedingly addicted to curious arts*, and practised *divination and magic*.” These practices prevailed in all nations of the earth.

Brought their books together] The *εφεσια γραμματα*, or *Ephesian characters*, are celebrated in antiquity; they appear to have been *amulets*, inscribed with strange characters, which were carried about the body for the purpose of curing diseases, expelling demons, and preserving from evils of different kinds. The books brought together on this occasion were such as taught the *science, manner* of formation, *use*, &c., of these charms.

Suidas, under *εφεσια γραμματα*, *Ephesian letters*, gives us the following account. “Certain obscure incantations.-When Milesius and Ephesius wrestled at the Olympic games, Milesius could not prevail, because his antagonist had the *Ephesian letters* bound to his heels; when this was discovered, and the letters taken away, it is reported that Milesius threw him thirty times.”

The information given by *Hesychius* is still more curious: *εφεσια γραμματα*. ην μεν παλαι σῆ, υστερον δε προσεθεσαν τινες απατεωνες και αλλα, φασι δε των πρωτων τα ονοματα, ταδε ΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΚΑΤΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΛΙΕ, ΤΕΤΡΑΞ, ΔΑΜΝΑΜΕΝΕΥΣ, ΑΙΣΙΟΝ, δηλοι δε, το

μεν ασκιον, σκοτος, το δε κατα σκιον, φως, το δε λιξ, γη, τετραξ δε, ενιαυτος, δαμναμενευς δε, ηλιος, αισιον δε, αληθες. ταυτα ουν ιερα εστι και αγια. “The Ephesian letters or characters were formerly *six*, but certain deceivers added others afterwards; and their names, according to report, were these: ASKION, KATASKION, LIX, TETRAX, DAMNAMENEUS, and AISION. It is evident that *Askion* signifies DARKNESS; *Kataskion*, LIGHT; *Lix*, the EARTH; *Tetrax*, the YEAR; *Damnameneus*, the SUN; and *Aision*, TRUTH. These are holy and sacred things.” The same account may be seen in *Clemens Alexandrinus*; Strom. lib. v. cap. 8, where he attempts to give the etymology of these different terms. These words served, no doubt, as the keys to different spells and incantations; and were used in order to the attainment of a great variety of ends. The *Abraxas* of the *Basilidians*, in the second century, were formed on the basis of the *Ephesian letters*; for those instruments of incantation, *several of which are now before me*, are inscribed with a number of *words and characters* equally as unintelligible as the above, and in many cases more so.

Then it is said they brought their books together, we are to understand the books which treated of these curious arts; such as the *εφεσια γραμματα*, or *Ephesian characters*.

And burned them before all] These must have been thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity, and of the unlawfulness of their own arts.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver.] Some think that the *αργυριον*, which we translate *piece of silver*, means a *shekel*, as that word is used ^{<0016>} **Matthew 26:16**, where see the note; 50,000 shekels, at 3s., according to Dean Prideaux’s valuation, (which is that followed throughout this work,) would amount to 7,500£.

But, as this was a *Roman* and not a *Jewish* country, we may rationally suppose that the Jewish coin was not here current; and that the *αργυριον*, or *silver coin*, mentioned by St. Luke, must have been either *Greek* or *Roman*; and, it is very likely that the *sestertius* is meant, which was always a *silver* coin, about the value, according to Arbuthnot, of *two-pence*, or 1*d.* 3*q*3/4., which answers to the *fourth* part of a *denarius*, rated by the same author at 7 3/4*d.* Allowing this to be the coin intended, the 50,000 *sestertii* would amount to 403£. 12*s.* 11*d.*

The Vulgate reads, *denariorum quinquaginta millium*, fifty thousand *denarii*, which, at 7 3/4 *d.*, will amount to 1,614*£. 11s. 8d.* The reading of the *Itala* version of the Codex Bezae is very singular, *Denariorum sestertia ducenta*. “Two hundred sesterces of denarii;” which may signify no more than “two hundred sestertii of Roman money;” for in this sense *denarius* is certainly used by Cicero, *Orat. pro Quint.*; where *ad denarium solvere*, means to pay in Roman money, an expression similar to our word *sterling*. This sum would amount to no more than 1*£. 12s. 3 1/2d.* But that which is computed from the sestertius is the most probable amount.

Verse 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.] The Codex Bezae reads this verse thus: “So mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed; *and the faith of God increased and multiplied.*” It is probable that it was about this time that St. Paul had that conflict which he mentions, ^{<46152>}**1 Corinthians 15:32**: *If I after the manner of men, have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, &c.* See the note there. It means some severe trials not here mentioned, unless we may suppose him to refer to the ferocious insurrection headed by Demetrius, mentioned at the end of this chapter. See Clarke “^{<44938>}**Acts 19:38**”

Verse 21. Paul purposed in the spirit, &c.] Previously to this he appears to have concerted a journey to Macedonia, and a visit to Corinth, the capital of Achaia, where he seems to have spent a considerable time, probably the whole winter of A.D. 58; see ^{<46165>}**1 Corinthians 16:5, 6**; and afterwards to go to Jerusalem; but it is likely that he did not leave Ephesus till after pentecost, A.D. 59. (^{<46168>}**1 Corinthians 16:8.**) And he resolved, if possible, to see Rome, which had been the object of his wishes for a considerable time. See ^{<60110>}**Romans 1:10, 13; 16:23.**

It is generally believed that, during this period, while at Ephesus, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. He had heard that some strange disorders had entered into that Church:-1. That there were *divisions* among them; some extolling *Paul*, beyond all others; some, *Peter*; others, *Apollon*. 2. He had learned from Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, whom he saw at Ephesus, ^{<46167>}**1 Corinthians 16:17; 7:1**, that several *abuses* had crept into their religious assemblies. 3. That even the *Christians* went to law with each other, and that before the *heathens*. And, 4. That a person professing Christianity in that city, had formed a matrimonial contract with his step-mother. It was to remedy those disorders that he wrote his first

epistle to the Corinthians, in which he strongly reprehends all the above evils.

Verse 22. So he sent into Macedonia] He desired *Timothy* to go as far as Corinth, ^{<4048>}**1 Corinthians 4:18**, and after that to return to him at Ephesus, ^{<4616>}**1 Corinthians 16:11**; but he himself continued in Asia some time longer; probably to make collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem. *Erastus*, mentioned here for the first time, appears to have been the *chamberlain*, **οικονομος**, either of *Ephesus* or *Corinth*; see ^{<5162>}**Romans 16:23**. He was one of St. Paul's companions, and is mentioned as being left by the apostle at Corinth, ^{<5040>}**2 Timothy 4:20**.

Verse 23. No small stir about that way.] Concerning the *Gospel*, which the apostles preached; and which is termed *this way*, ^{<4002>}**Acts 9:2**, where see the note.

Verse 24. Silver shrines for Diana] It is generally known that the temple of Diana at Ephesus was deemed one of the *seven wonders of the world*, and was a most superb building. It appears that the *silver shrines* mentioned here were small portable representations of this temple, which were bought by strangers as matters of *curiosity*, and probably of *devotion*. If we can suppose them to have been *exact models* of this famous temple, representing the whole exterior of its magnificent workmanship, which is possible, they would be held in high estimation, and probably become a sort of substitute for the temple itself, to worshippers of this goddess who lived in distant parts of Greece. The temple of Diana was raised at the expense of all Asia Minor, and yet was two hundred and twenty years in building, before it was brought to its sum of perfection. It was in length 425 feet, by 220 in breadth; and was beautified by 127 columns, which were made at the expense of so many *kings*; and was adorned with the most beautiful statues. To procure himself an everlasting fame, Erostratus burned it to the ground the same night on which Alexander the Great was born. It is reported that Alexander offered to make it as magnificent as it was before, provided he might put his name on the front; but this was refused. It was afterwards rebuilt and adorned, but Nero plundered it of all its riches. This grand building remains almost entire to the present day, and is now turned into a Turkish mosque. See an account of it in Montfaucon, *Antiq. Expliq.* vol. ii., with a beautiful drawing on plate vi., No. 20. See also Stuart's *Athens*. There were also *pieces of silver* struck with a representation of the temple of Minerva on one side: many coins occur in

the reigns of the first Roman emperors, where temples, with idols in the porch, appear on the reverse; and several may be seen in *Musellius*, in the reigns of Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, &c. A beautiful representation of the temple of Diana at Ephesus may be seen on a medal engraved by Montfaucon, in his *Antiq. Expliq. Suppl.* vol. ii. plate 33. It has eight Doric columns in front, which Pliny says were *sixty feet* in length. In the entrance, the figure of Diana is represented with a sort of tower upon her head; her arms are supported by two staves; at her feet are represented two stags with their backs towards each other. The sun is represented on the right side of her head, and the moon as a crescent on the left. On each side and at the bottom of this temple are the words, *πρωτων ασιας εφεσιων*. Some think that the medals here referred to are the same that are meant by the *silver shrines* made by Demetrius and his craftsmen. **See Clarke's note on "⁴⁴⁹²⁷Acts 19:27"**.

Brought no small gain] There were many made, many sold, and probably at considerable prices.

Verse 25. By this craft we have our wealth.] The word *ευπορια* not only signifies *wealth*, but also *abundance*. It was a most lucrative trade; and he plainly saw that, if the apostles were permitted to go on thus preaching, the worship of Diana itself would be destroyed; and, consequently, all the gain that he and his fellows derived from it would be brought to nought.

Verse 26. This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people] From the mouth of this heathen we have, in one sentence, a most pleasing account of the success with which God had blessed the labours of the apostles: not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, they had persuaded and converted much people; for they had insisted that they could be no gods which are made with hands; and this the common sense of the people must at once perceive.

Verse 27. The temple of the great goddess Diana] From a number of representations of the Ephesian goddess Diana, which still remain, we find that she was widely different from *Diana the huntress*. She is represented in some statues all covered over with *breasts*, from the shoulders down to the feet; in others she is thus represented, from the breast to the bottom of the abdomen, the thighs and legs being covered with the heads of different animals. From this it is evident that, under this name and form, *nature*, the nourisher and supporter of all things, was worshipped: the *sun* and *moon*,

being grand agents, in all natural productions, were properly introduced as her attributes or symbols. Because she was the representative of universal nature, she was called, in opposition to *Diana* the *huntress* and *goddess* of *chastity*, the GREAT *goddess Diana*; not only worshipped in Asia, but throughout the whole world; both the Greeks and the Romans unanimously conjoining in her worship.

Several statues of this Ephesian Diana still remain; and some beautiful ones are represented by *Montfaucon*, in his *Antiq. Expliq.* vol. i. book iii. cap. 15, plates 46, 47, 48. From this father of antiquaries, much information on this subject may be derived. He observes that the original statue of Diana of Ephesus, which was in that noble temple, esteemed one of the wonders of the world, was made of *ivory*, as *Pliny* says; but *Vitruvius* says it was made of *cedar*; and others, of the wood of the *vine*. The images of this goddess are divided into several bands, or compartments; so that they appear swathed from the breasts to the feet. On the *head* is generally represented a large tower, two stories high. A kind of *festoon* of flowers and fruit descends from her *shoulders*; in the void places of the festoon a *crab* is often represented, and sometimes crowned by two *genii* or *victories*. The *arms* are generally extended, or stretched a little out from the sides; and on each one or two *lions*. Below the festoon, between the two first bands, there are a great number of *paps*: hence she has been styled by some of the ancients, *Multimammia*, and *πολυμαστος*, the goddess with the *multitude of paps*: on one figure I count nineteen. Between the second and third bands, *birds* are represented; between the third and fourth, a *human head* with *tritons*; between the fourth and fifth, heads of *oxen*. Most of the *images* of this goddess are represented as swathed nearly to the ancles, about which the folds of her robe appear. Though there is a general resemblance in all the images of the Ephesian Diana, yet some have more figures or symbols, some less: these symbols are generally *paps*, *human figures*, *oxen*, *lions*, *stags*, *griffins*, *sphinxes*, *reptiles*, *bees*, *branches of trees*, and *roses*.

That nature is intended by this goddess is evident from the inscription on two of those represented by *Montfaucon*: *παναιολος φυσικς παντων μητηρ*, *Nature, full of varied creatures, and mother of all things*. It is evident that this Diana was a composition of several deities: her *crown of turrets* belongs to *Cybele*, the mother of the gods; the *lions* were sacred to her also; the *fruits* and *oxen* are symbols of *Ceres*; the *griffins* were sacred to *Apollo*; and the *deer* or *stags* to *Diana*. The *crab* being placed within

the festoon of flowers evidently refers to the northern tropic *Cancer*; and the *crab* being *crowned* in that quarter may refer to the sun having *accomplished* his course, and begun to return with an increase of light, heat, &c: The *paps*, or *breasts*, as has already been observed, show her to be the *nurse of all things*; and the different *animals* and *vegetables* represented on those images point out nature as the supporter of the animal and vegetable world: the *moon* and *tritons* show her influence on the *sea*; and the *sun* her influence on the *earth*. All these things considered, it is no wonder that this goddess was called at Ephesus the *Great Diana*, and that she was worshipped, not only in that city, but in all the world. In the worship of this deity, and in the construction of her images, the heathens seem to have consulted common sense and reason in rather an unusual manner. But we must observe, also, that among the Greeks and Romans they had two classes of deities: the *Dii Majores*, and the *Dii Minores*: the great gods, and the minor gods. The latter were innumerable; but the former; among whom was *Diana*, were only twelve—*Jupiter*, *Neptune*, *Apollo*, *Mars*, *Mercury*, and *Vulcan*; *Juno*, *Vesta*, *Ceres*, *Diana*, *Venus*, and *Minerva*. These twelve were adored through the whole Gentile world, under a variety of names.

Verse 29. The whole city was filled with confusion] Thus we find the peace of the whole city was disturbed, not by an *apostle* preaching the Gospel of Christ, but by one interested, unprincipled knave, who did not even plead *conscience* for what he was doing; but that it was by this craft he and his fellows got their wealth, and he was afraid to lose it.

Rushed-into the theatre.] The theatres, being very spacious and convenient places, were often used for *popular* assemblies and public deliberation, especially in matters which regarded the safety of the state. There are several proofs of this in ancient authors. So *Tacitus*, Hist. ii. 80, speaking concerning *Vespasian*, says: *Antiochensium theatrum ingressus, ubi illis consultare mos est, concurrentes et in adulationem effusus alloquitur*. “Having entered into the theatre of the Antiochians, where it was the custom to hold consultations, the people running together, and being profuse in flattery, he addressed them.” *Frontinus*, in *Stratagem* lib. iii. cap. 2, speaking of a public meeting at the *theatre* at *Agrigentum*, observes, *ubi ex more Græcorum locus consultationi præbebatur*; which, according to the custom of the Greeks, is the place for public deliberation. See several examples in *Kypke*.

Verse 31. Certain of the chief of Asia] *τινες των ασιαρχων*; Some of the *Asiarchs*. The *Asiarchs* were those to whom the care and regulation of the public games were intrusted: they were a sort of *high priests*, and were always persons of considerable riches and influence. These could not have been Christians; but they were what the sacred text states them to have been, *αυτω φιλοι*, *his friends*; and foreseeing that Paul would be exposed to great danger if he went into the theatre, amidst such a tumultuous assembly, they sent a message to him, entreating him not to go into danger so apparent. Query: Did he not go, and fight with these wild beasts at Ephesus? ^{<46152>} **1 Corinthians 15:32.**

Verse 32. Some-cried one thing, and some another] This is an admirable description of a tumultuous mob, gathered together without law or reason; getting their passions inflamed, and looking for an opportunity to commit outrages, without *why* or *wherefore-principle* or *object*.

For the assembly was confused] *ἡ εκκλησια*; The same word which we translate *church*; and thus we find that it signifies any assembly, *good* or *bad*, *lawful*, or *unlawful*; and that only the circumstances of the case can determine the precise nature of the assembly to which this word is applied.

Verse 33. They drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward] From this and the following verses it is pretty evident that this Alexander was brought forward on this occasion by the Jews, that he might make an oration to the multitude, in order to exculpate the *Jews*, who were often by the heathens confounded with the *Christians*; and cast the whole blame of the uproar upon Paul and his party. And he was probably chosen because he was an able *speaker*; and when he beckoned with his hand; to gain an audience, the Greeks, knowing that he was a *Jew*, and consequently as much opposed to the worship of Diana as Paul was, would not hear him; and therefore, to drown his apology, *τω δημω*, *for the people*, viz. the Jews, they vociferated for the space of two hours, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* There does not seem any just ground from the text to suppose that this Alexander was a *Christian*; or that he was about to make an apology *for the Christians*: it is generally believed that he is the same with *Alexander the coppersmith*, of whom St. Paul speaks, ^{<5044>} **2 Timothy 4:14**, and whom, with *Philetus*, he was obliged to excommunicate, ^{<50120>} **1 Timothy 1:20**. By *the Jews putting him forward*, we are to understand their earnestness to get him to undertake *their defence*, and criminate, as much as possible, St. Paul and his companions,

and the Christian cause in general; which he would no doubt have done, without vindicating the worship of Diana, which, as a Jew, he would not dare to attempt.

Verse 35. When the town-clerk] ὄγραμματοεὺς, Literally, the *scribe*. The Syriac has [Syriac] *reisha damedinato*, the *chief* or *prince of the city*. The later Syriac has, *the scribe of the city*. Some think that the word *recorder* would do better here than *town-clerk*; and indeed it is evident that a magistrate of considerable authority and influence is intended—the *mayor* or *sovereign* of the city.

Ye men of Ephesus] The speech of this man may be thus analyzed: 1. He states that there was no need of a public declaration that the Ephesians were worshippers of Diana; this every person knew, and nobody attempted to contest it, ^{<41935>} **Acts 19:35, 36**. 2. That the persons accused were not guilty of any public offence, nor of any breach of the laws of the city, ^{<41937>} **Acts 19:37**. 3. That, if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, ^{<41938>} **Acts 19:38, 39**. 4. That they themselves, by this tumultuous meeting, had exposed themselves to the censure of the law, and were in danger of being called into question for it, ^{<41940>} **Acts 19:40**. See *Dodd*.

Is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana] The word νεωκορος, *neocoros*, which we translate *worshipper*, signified at first, among the ancient Greeks, no more than *sweeper of the temple*, and answered nearly to our *sexton*: in process of time, the care of the temple was intrusted to this person: at length the *neocori* became persons of great consequence, and were those who offered sacrifices for the life of the emperor. Whole cities took this appellation, as appears on many ancient coins and medals; and *Ephesus* is supposed to have been the *first* that assumed this title. “What man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is the *Neocoros* of the great goddess Diana?” As if he had said: “The whole city is devoted to her worship: it is reputed an honour to our highest characters even to sweep her temple, and open and shut her doors. Besides, we offer to her the highest sacrifices; and are intrusted with the religious service that pertains to the emperor’s safety.”

Of the image which fell down from Jupiter?] The original image of the Ephesian Diana (see *Clarke* on “^{<41927>} **Acts 19:27**”) was supposed to have descended from heaven; which intimates that it was so *old* that no person

knew either its *maker* or the *time* in which it was formed, and it was the interest of the *priests* to persuade the people that this image had been sent to them as a present from Jupiter himself. Several images and sacred things were supposed, among the heathens, to be presents immediately from heaven. Euripides states the image of Diana of Tauri to be of this kind; and calls it **διοπετες αγαλμα**, the image fallen from Jupiter. Numa pretended that the *ancilia*, or sacred shields, had come from heaven. In imitation of these, many of the Italian papists believe that the *shrine of our lady of Loretto* was also a Divine gift to their country. St. Isidore, of Damietta, says that the heathen, in order to induce the people to believe that such images came from heaven, either banished or slew the artists that had formed them, that there might be no evidence of the *time* in which, or the *persons* by whom, they were made: this point secured, it was easy to persuade the credulous multitude that they had been sent from heaven. The story of the *Palladium*, on which the safety of Troy was said to depend, is well known. It was an image of Minerva, and also supposed to have descended from Jupiter.

Verse 37. These men-are neither robbers of churches] ἱρεσυλους; Spoilers of sacred places. As his design evidently was to appease and conciliate the people, he fixed first on a most incontrovertible fact: These men have not spoiled your temples; nor is there any evidence that they have even blasphemed your goddess. The apostles acted as prudent men should: they endeavoured to *enlighten* the minds of the multitude, that the absurdity of their gross errors might be the more apparent; for, when they should know the *truth*, it was likely that they would at once abandon such gross *falsehood*.

Verse 38. If Demetrius-have a matter against any man] If it be any breach of law, in reference to Demetrius and the artists, *the law is open*, **αγοραιοι αγωνται**; these are the terms of law, public courts, times of sessions or assize; or, rather, *the judges are now sitting*: so the words may be understood. *And there are deputies*, **ανθυπατοι**, *proconsuls*, appointed to guard the peace of the state, and to support every honest man in his right: *let them implead one another*; let the one party bring forward his action of assault or trespass, and the other put in his defense: the laws are equal and impartial, and justice will be done to him who is wronged.

Verse 39. But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters] In which the safety of the state, or the national worship, is concerned, know

that such a matter is not the business of the mob; it must be heard and determined *in a lawful assembly*, **εν τη εννομω εκκλησια**, one legally constituted, and properly authorized to hear and determine on the subject.

Verse 40. For we are in danger, &c.] Popular commotions were always dreaded by the Roman government; and so they should by all governments; for, when *might* has nothing to direct its operations but *passion*, how destructive must these operations be! One of the Roman laws made all such commotions of the people *capital* offenses against those who raised them. *Qui cætum et concursus fecerit, capite puniatur*: “He who raises a mob shall forfeit his life.” If such a law existed at Ephesus—and it probably did, from this reference to it in the words of the town-clerk or recorder—then Demetrius must feel himself in great personal danger; and that his own life lay now at the mercy of those whom he had accused, concerning whom he had raised such an outcry, and against whom nothing disorderly could be proved.

Verse 41. He dismissed the assembly.] **την εκκλησιαν**. Another proof that the word **εκκλησια**, which we generally translate *church*, signifies an *assembly* of any kind, good or bad, legal or illegal.

1. *How forcible are right words!* From the conduct of this prudent, sensible man, we may learn how much influence persons of this character may have, even over the unbridled multitude. But, where the *civil* power associates itself with the *lawless might* of the *many*, THERE must be confusion and every evil work. What a blessing to the community is the *civil law*! Were it not for this, the unthinking multitude would destroy others, and at last destroy themselves. *Law* and *justice* are from God; and the *civil power*, by which they are supported and administered, should be respected by all who regard the safety of their persons or property.

2. Though the ministry of St. Paul was greatly blessed at Ephesus, and his preaching appears to have been very popular, yet this sunshine was soon darkened: peace with the world cannot last long; the *way of the Lord* will always be opposed by those who love their *own ways*.

3. How few would make an *outward* profession of religion, were there no *gain* connected with it! And yet, as one justly observes, religion is rendered *gainful* only by some *external* part of it. For this very reason, the *external* part of religion is always *on the increase*, and none can find fault with it without raising storms and tempests; while the *internal* part wastes and

decays, no man laying it to heart. Demetrius and his fellows would have made no stir for their *worship*, had not the apostle's preaching tended to discredit that *by which they got their wealth*. Most of the outcries that have been made against all revivals of religion—revivals by which the Church has been called back to its primitive principles and purity, have arisen out of *self-interest*. The cry of, *the Church is in danger*, has been echoed only by those who found their *secular* interest at stake; and knew that *reformation* must unmask them and show that the slothful and wicked servants could no longer be permitted to live on the revenues of that Church which they disgraced by their lives, and corrupted by their false doctrines. He that eats the Church's bread should do the Church's world: and he that will not *work* should not be permitted to *eat*.

ACTS

CHAPTER 20.

Paul retires to Macedonia, 1. He goes into Greece, where he tarries three months and, purposing to sail to Syria, he returns through Macedonia, 2, 3. Several persons accompany him into Asia, and then go before and tarry for him at Troas, 4, 5. Paul and Luke sail from Philippi, and in five days reach Troas, where they meet their brethren from Asia, and abide there seven days, 6. On the first day of the week, the disciples coming together to break bread, Paul preaching to them, and continuing his speech till midnight, a young man of the name of Eutychus, being in a deep sleep, fell from the third loft and was killed, 7-9. Paul restores him to life, resumes his discourse, and continuing it till daybreak, then departs, 10-12. Luke and his companions come to Assos, whither Paul comes by land, 13. He embarks with them at Assos, comes to Mitylene, 14. Sails thence, and passes by Chios, arrives at Samos, tarries at Trogyllium, and comes to Miletus, 15. Purposing to get as soon as possible to Jerusalem, he sends from Miletus, and calls the elders of the Church of Ephesus, to whom he preaches a most directing sermon, gives them the most solemn exhortations, kneels down and prays with them, takes a very affecting leave of them, and sets sail for Cæsarea, in order to go to Jerusalem, 16-38.

NOTES ON CHAP. 20.

Verse 1. After the uproar was ceased] The tumult excited by Demetrius apparently induced Paul to leave Ephesus sooner than he had intended. He had written to the Corinthians that he should leave that place after pentecost, ^{<41618>} **1 Corinthians 16:8**; but it is very probable that he left it sooner.

Verse 2. He came into Greece] εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Into *Hellas*, Greece properly so called, the regions between Thessaly and Propontis, and the country of Achaia. He did not, however, go there immediately: he passed through Macedonia, ^{<4401>} **Acts 20:1**, in which he informs us, ^{<47015>} **2 Corinthians 7:5-7**, that he suffered much, both from *believers* and *infidels*; but was greatly *comforted* by the *arrival of Titus*, who gave him a very flattering account of the prosperous state of the Church at Corinth. A short time after this, being still in Macedonia, he sent Titus back to Corinth, ^{<47016>} **2 Corinthians 8:16, 17**, and sent by him the *second epistle* which he wrote to that Church, as Theodoret and others suppose. Some time after, he visited Corinth himself, according to his promise, ^{<41615>} **1**

Corinthians 16:5. This was his *third* voyage to that city, ^{<47124>}**2**

Corinthians 12:14; 13:1. What he did there at this time cannot be distinctly known; but, according to St. Augustin, he ordered every thing relative to the holy eucharist, and the proper manner in which it was to be received. See *Calmet*.

Verse 3. Abode three months] Partly, as we may suppose, at Corinth, at Athens, and in Achaia; from which place he is supposed to have sent his epistle to the *Romans*, because he continued longer here than at any other place, and mentions several of the *Corinthians* in his salutations to the believers of Rome.

When the Jesus laid wait for him] Paul had determined to go by sea to Syria, and from thence to Jerusalem. This was the first object of his journey; and this was the readiest road he could take; but, hearing that the Jews had *laid wait* for him, probably to attack his ship on the voyage, seize his person, sell him for a slave, and take the money which he was carrying to the *poor saints* at Jerusalem, he resolved to go as much of the journey as he conveniently could, by land. Therefore, he returned through Macedonia, and from thence to Troas, where he embarked to sail for Syria, on his way to Jerusalem. The whole of his journey is detailed in this and the following chapter. See also the *map*.

Verse 4. And there accompanied him] Rather, says Bishop Pearce, *there followed him as far as to Asia*; for they were not in his company till he set sail from Philippi, and came to them at Troas, in Asia, whither they had gone before, and where they tarried for him, ^{<44315>}**Acts 20:5**.

Into Asia] *αχρι της ασιας*; These words are wanting in two MSS., *Erpen*, the *Æthiopic*, *Coptic*, and *Vulgate*. Some think that they embarrass this place; for how these could *accompany* him into Asia, and *go before* him, and *tarry for him* at Troas, ^{<44316>}**Acts 20:6**, is not so very clear; unless we suppose, what I have glanced at in the table of contents, that they came with him to Asia, but, he tarrying a short time, they *proceeded* on their journey, and stopped for him at Troas, where he shortly after rejoined them. Mr. Wakefield gets rid of the difficulty by reading the verse thus: *Now Sopater of Berea accompanied him; but Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy of Lystra, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia, went before, and tarried for us at Troas.*

Sopater of Berea] Sopater seems to be the same as *Sosipater*, whom St. Paul mentions as his *kinsman*, ^{<45162>}**Romans 16:21**. ADE, more than twenty others, with the *Coptic, Armenian, later Syriac* in the margin, *Vulgate, Itala, Theophylact, Origen, and Bede*, add **πυρρου**, *Sopater the SON OF PYRRHUS*. Griesbach has received this into his text.

Aristarchus of Thessalonica] This person occurs in ^{<44929>}**Acts 19:29**, and is mentioned there as a *Macedonian*. He attended Paul in his journey to Rome, ^{<4272>}**Acts 27:2**, and was his *fellow labourer*, **Philemom 1:24**, and his *fellow prisoner*, ^{<51040>}**Colossians 4:10, 11**. *Secundus* is mentioned nowhere but in this place.

Gaius of Derbe] This is supposed to be the same who is mentioned ^{<44926>}**Acts 19:26**, and who is there called a *man of Macedonia*, of which some suppose he was a *native*, but descended from a family that came from *Derbe*; but as *Gaius*, or *Caius*, was a very common name, these might have been two distinct persons. One of this name was baptized by St. Paul at Corinth, ^{<40114>}**1 Corinthians 1:14**, and entertained him as his *host* while he abode there, ^{<51623>}**Romans 16:23**, and was probably the same to whom St. John directs his *third epistle*.

And Timotheus] *Of Lystra*, is added by the *Syriac*. This was the same person of whom mention is made, ^{<44160>}**Acts 16:1**, and to whom St. Paul wrote the *two epistles* which are still extant; and who was a native of *Lystra*, as we learn from the above place. It was on this evidence, probably that the ancient *Syriac* translator added, *of Lystra*, to the text. This reading is not supported by any MSS.

Tychicus-of Asia] This person was high in the confidence of St. Paul. He styles him a *beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord*, whom he sent to the Ephesians, that *he might know their affairs, and comfort their hearts*, ^{<40021>}**Ephesians 6:21, 22**. He sent him for the same purpose, and with the same commendations, to the Colossians, ^{<51007>}**Colossians 4:7, 8**. Paul seems also to have designed him to superintend the Church at Crete in the absence of Titus; see ^{<41812>}**Titus 3:12**. He seems to have been the most intimate and confidential friend that Paul had.

Trophimus.] Was an *Ephesian*; and both he and *Tychicus* are called **εφεσιοι**, *Ephesians*, instead of **ασιανοι**, *Asiatics*, in the Codex Bezae, both Greek and Latin, and in the *Sahidic*. He accompanied Paul from Ephesus into Greece, as we see here; and from thence to Jerusalem,

Acts 21:29. He had, no doubt, travelled with him on other journeys, for we find, by **2 Timothy 4:20**, that he was obliged to leave him sick at Miletus, being then, as it is likely, on his return to his own kindred at Ephesus.

Verse 5. Tarried for us at Troas.] See the preceding verse. *Troas* was a small town in Phrygia Minor, in the province called the *Troad*: see **Acts 16:8**.

Verse 6. Days of unleavened bread] The seven days of the passover, in which they ate unleavened bread. See the account of this festival in the notes on **Exodus 12:1-51**. It is evident, from the manner in which St. Luke writes here, that he had not been with St. Paul since the time he accompanied him to *Philippi*, **Acts 16:10-12**; but he now embarks at Philippi with the apostle, and accompanies him to Troas, and continues with him through the rest of his journey.

To Troas in five days] So long they were making this voyage from Philippi, being obliged to keep always *by the coast*, and in sight of the land; for the magnetic needle was not yet known. See the situation of these places upon the *map*.

Verse 7. Upon the first day of the week] What was called **κυριακη**, *the Lord's day*, the Christian Sabbath, in which they commemorated the resurrection of our Lord; and which, among all Christians, afterwards took the place of the *Jewish Sabbath*.

To break bread] To break [Syriac] *eucaristia*, the eucharist, as the Syriac has it; intimating, by this, that they were accustomed to receive the holy sacrament on each Lord's day. It is likely that, besides this, they received a common meal together. Some think the **αγαπη**, or *love feast*, is intended.

Continued his speech until midnight.] At what time he *began* to preach we cannot tell, but we hear *when he concluded*. He preached during the whole night, for he did not leave off till the break of the next day, **Acts 20:11**, though about midnight his discourse was interrupted by the fall of Eutychus. As this was about the time of pentecost, and we may suppose about the beginning of May, as Troas was in about 40 degrees of north latitude, the sun set there at *seven P.M.* and rose at *five A.M.*, so that the night was about *eight* hours long; and taking all the interruptions together, and they could not have amounted to more than *two* hours, and taking no

account of the preceding day's work, Paul must have preached a sermon not less than *six* hours long. But it is likely that a good part of this time was employed in hearing and answering questions; for **διελεγετο**, and **διαλεγομενου**, may be thus understood.

Verse 8. Upper chamber] It was in an *upper chamber* in the temple that the primitive disciples were accustomed to meet: on that account, they might have preferred an *upper chamber* whenever they could meet with it. The pious Quesnel supposes that the *smoke*, issuing from the *many lamps* in this upper chamber, was the cause of Eutychus falling asleep; and this, he says, the apostle mentions, in charity, to excuse the young man's appearing negligent.

Verse 9. There sat in a window] This was probably an opening in the wall, to let in light and air, for there was no *glazing* at that time; and it is likely that Eutychus fell backward through it, down to the ground, on the outside; there being nothing to prevent his falling *out*, when he had once lost the power to take care of himself, by getting into a deep sleep.

Verse 10. And Paul-fell on him] **επεπεσεν αυτω**, Stretched himself upon him, in the same manner as Elisha did on the Shunammite's son, ^{<1243>}**2 Kings 4:33-35**; though the action of lying on him, in order to communicate *warmth* to the flesh, might not have been continued so long as in the above instance; nor indeed was it necessary, as the natural warmth had not yet left the body of Eutychus; but the son of the Shunammite had been some time dead.

Verse 11. Had broken bread] Had taken some refreshment, in order to their journey.

And talked a long while] **ομιλησας**, Having *familiarly conversed*, for this is the import of the word, which is very different from the **διελεγετο**, of the *seventh* verse, and the **διαλεγομενου**, of the *ninth*; which imply solemn, grave discourse.

Verse 13. Sailed unto Assos] *Assos*, according to *Pausanias*, *Eliac.* ii. 4, and *Pliny*, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 27, was a maritime town of Asia, in the *Troad*. *Strabo* and *Stephanus* place it in *Mysia*. It was also called *Apollonia*, according to *Pliny*, *Ib. lib.* v. 30. The passage by sea to this place was much longer than by land; and therefore St. Paul chose to go by *land*, while the others went by sea.

Intending to take in Paul] ἀναλαμβάνειν, *To take him in AGAIN*; for it appears he had already been aboard that same vessel: probably the same that had carried them from Philippi to Troas, ~~Acts~~ **Acts 20:6**.

Verse 14. Came to Mitylene.] This was a seaport town in the isle of *Lesbos*: see its place in the *map*.

Verse 15. Over against Chios] This was a very celebrated island between *Lesbos* and *Samos*, famous in antiquity for its extraordinary *wines*. At this island the apostle did not touch.

Arrived at Samos] This was another island of the *Ægean Sea*, or *Archipelago*. It does not appear that they landed at *Samos*: they passed close by it, and anchored at *Trogyllium*. This was a promontory of *Ionia*, which gave name to some small islands in the vicinity of *Samos*: της δε τρωγυλίου προκειται νησιον ομωνυμον: before *Trogyllium* is situated an island of the same name. *Strabo*, lib. xiv. p. 635. *Pliny* also mentions this place, *Hist. Nat.* lib. v. cap. 31. Near this place was the mouth of the famous river *Mæander*.

Came to Miletus.] A celebrated city in the province of *Caria*, about twelve or fifteen leagues from *Ephesus*, according to *Calmet*. *Miletus* is famous for being the birthplace of *Thales*, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and founder of the *Ionic* sect of philosophers. *Anaximander* was also born here, and several other eminent men. The Turks, who lately possessed it, call it *Melas*.

Verse 16. To sail by Ephesus] Not to touch there at this time.

To be at Jerusalem the day of pentecost.] That he might have the opportunity of preaching the kingdom of God to multitudes of Jews from different places, who would come up to Jerusalem at that feast; and then he no doubt expected to see there a renewal of that day of pentecost in which the Spirit was poured out on the disciples, and in consequence of which so many were converted to God.

Verse 17. He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church.] These are called επισκοποι, *bishops*, ~~Acts~~ **Acts 20:28**. By the πρεσβυτεροι, *presbyters* or *elders*, here, we are to understand all that were in *authority* in the Church, whether they were επισκοποι, *bishops* or *overseers*, or *seniors* in years, knowledge, and experience. The πρεσβυτεροι, or *elders*, were probably the first order in the Church; an

order which was not so properly constituted, but which rose out of the state of things. From these *presbuteroi* the *episcopoi*, overseers or superintendents, were selected. Those who were *eldest* in years, Christian knowledge, and experience, would naturally be preferred to all others, as overseers of the Church of Christ. From the Greek word *πρεσβυτερος*, comes the Latin *presbyterus*, the English *presbyter*, the French *prestre*, and our own term *priest*; and all, when traced up to their original, signify merely an *elderly* or *aged* person; though it soon became the name of an *office*, rather than of a *state* of years. Now, as these elders are called *επισκοποι*, *bishops*, in ^{<4018>}Acts 20:28, we may take it for granted that they were the same *order*; or, rather, that these superintendents of the Church were indifferently called either *presbyters* or *bishops*.

As he had not time to call at Ephesus, he thought it best to have a general convocation of the heads of that Church, to meet him at Miletus, that he might give them the instructions mentioned in the succeeding parts of this chapter.

Verse 18. After what manner I have been with you] The Codex Bezae adds here, *for three years, and even more*, which reading might have been borrowed from ^{<4018>}Acts 20:31, though the time assigned by it is too long.

Verse 19. Serving the Lord with all humility, &c.] This relates not only to his zealous and faithful performance of his *apostolic functions*, but also to his *private walk* as a Christian; and shows with what carefulness this apostle himself was obliged to walk, in order to have his calling and election, as a Christian, ratified and made firm.

Verse 20. I kept back nothing] Notwithstanding the dangers to which he was exposed, and the temptations he must have had to suppress those truths that were less acceptable to the unrenewed nature of man, or to the particular prejudices of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, he fully and faithfully, at all hazards, declared what he terms, ^{<4017>}Acts 20:27, *the whole counsel of God*. “Behold here,” says the judicious and pious Calmet, “the model of a good shepherd—full of doctrine and zeal: he communicates with profusion, and yet with discretion, without jealousy and without fear, what God had put in his heart, and what charity inspires. A good shepherd, says St. Bernard, should always have abundance of bread in his *scrip*, and his *dog* under command. His *dog* is his *zeal*, which he must *lead*, *order*, and *moderate*; his *scrip* full of bread is his *mind* full of useful knowledge; and he should ever be in readiness to give nourishment to his flock.” He who

will quarrel with this sentiment, because of the *uncouthness* of the simile, needs pity, and deserves censure.

Verse 21. Testify both to-Jews and-Greeks] He always *began* with the *Jews*; and, in this case, he had preached to them alone for three months, ^{<4198>}Acts 19:8-10, and only left their synagogues when he found, through their obstinacy, he could do them no good.

Repentance toward God, &c.] As all had sinned against God, so all should humble themselves before him against whom they have sinned; but *humiliation* is no *atonement* for sin; therefore *repentance* is insufficient, unless *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ accompany it. *Repentance* disposes and prepares the soul for *pardonning mercy*; but can never be considered as making compensation for past acts of transgression. This *repentance* and *faith* were necessary to the salvation both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; for all had sinned, and come short of God's glory. The *Jews* must repent, who had sinned so much, and so long, against light and knowledge. The *Gentiles* must repent, whose scandalous lives were a reproach to man. *Faith* in Jesus Christ was also indispensably necessary; for a *Jew* might repent, be sorry for his sin, and suppose that, by a proper discharge of his religious duty, and bringing proper sacrifices, he could conciliate the favour of God: No, this will not do; nothing but *faith in Jesus Christ*, as the end of the law, and the great and only vicarious sacrifice, will do; hence he testified to them the necessity of faith in this Messiah. The *Gentiles* might repent of their profligate lives, turn to the true God, and renounce all idolatry: this is well, but it is not sufficient: they also have sinned, and their present amendment and faith can make no atonement for what is past; therefore, they also must believe on the Lord Jesus, who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification.

Verse 22. I go bound in the spirit] δεδεμενος τω πνευματι-Either meaning the *strong influence* of the *Divine Spirit* upon his mind, or the *strong propensity* in his own *will, wish, and desire*, to visit Jerusalem; and in this sense δεειν, *to bind*, is sometimes used. But it appears more consistent with the mind of the apostle, and with that influence under which we find that he constantly acted, to refer it to the influence of the Holy Ghost; υπο του πνευματος, being *under the power of that Spirit*; as if he had said: "I have now no choice-God has not left me either to the advices of friends, or to my own prudence: the Spirit of God *obliges* me to go to Jerusalem, and yet does not intimate to me what peculiar trials shall

befall me there: I have only the general intimation that, in every city where I proclaim the Gospel, bonds and afflictions await me.” This sense of the word *Kypke* has largely defended in his note here.

Verse 24. None of these things move me] ουδενος λογον ποιουμαι; I consider them as nothing; I value them not a straw; they weigh not with me.

Neither count I my life dear] I am not my own; my life and being are the Lord’s; he requires me to employ them in his service; I act under his direction, and am not anxious about the issue.

Finish my course with joy] τον δρομον μου, *My ministerial function.* We have already met with this word in application to the same subject, ^{<4132>}Acts 13:25, where see the note. And the apostle here adds, by way of explanation, και την διακονιαν, *even that ministry* which I have received of the Lord. The words μετα χαρας, *with joy*, are omitted by ABD, some others; the *Syriac, Erpen, Coptic, Sahidic, Æthiopic, Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*. If we consider them as genuine they may imply thus much: that the apostle wished to fulfil his ministry in such a way as might meet with the Divine approbation; for nothing could give him *joy* that did not *please and glorify God*.

To testify] διαμαρτυρασθαι, *Earnestly, solemnly, and strenuously to assert, vindicate, and prove the Gospel of the grace of God*, not only to be in *itself* what it professes to be, but to be also the power of God for salvation to every one that believes.

Verse 25. Ye all-shall see my face no more.] This probably refers simply to the *persons who were now present*; concerning whom he might have had a Divine intimation, that they should not be found in life when he should come that way again. Or it may refer only to *Ephesus and Miletus*. From the dangers to which he was exposed, it was, humanly speaking, unlikely that he should *ever* return; and this may be all that is implied: but that he did revisit those parts, though probably not Miletus or Ephesus, appears likely from ^{<3012>}Philippians 1:25-27; 2:24; *Philemom* 1:22; ^{<8131>}Hebrews 13:19-23. But in all these places he speaks with a measure of uncertainty: he had not an absolute evidence that he should *not* return; but, in his own mind, it was a matter of *uncertainty*. The Holy Spirit did not think proper to give him a direct revelation on this point.

Verse 26. I am pure from the blood of all] If any man, *Jew* or *Gentile*, perish in his sins, his blood shall be upon him; he, alone, shall be accessory to his own perdition. I am blameless, because I have fully shown to both the way to escape from every evil.

Verse 27. I have not shunned to declare] ου υπεστιλαμην, *I have not suppressed or concealed* any thing, through *fear* or *favour*, that might be beneficial to your souls. This is properly the meaning of the original word. See Clarke's note on "~~420~~ Acts 20:20".

All the counsel of God.] All that God has *determined* and *revealed* concerning the salvation of man—the whole doctrine of Christ crucified, with repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus as the Messiah and great atoning Priest. In ~~2306~~ Isaiah 9:6, Jesus Christ is called the *wonderful counsellor*, αἰ π x[wy *Pele Poets*, which the *Septuagint* translate μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος, *The messenger of the great counsel*. To this the apostle may have referred, as we well know that this version was constantly under his eye. Declaring therefore to them the whole counsel of God, πασην την βουλην του θεου, the whole of that counsel or design of God, was, in effect, declaring the whole that concerned the *Lord Jesus*, who was the *messenger* of this *counsel*.

Verse 28. Made you overseers] εθετο επισκοπους, *Appointed you bishops*; for so we translate the original word in most places where it occurs: but *overseers*, or *inspectors*, is much more proper, from επι, *over*, and σκεπτομαι, *I look*. The persons who examine into the spiritual state of the flock of God, and take care to lead them in and out, and to find them pasture, are termed *episcopoi*, or *superintendents*. The office of a *bishop* is from God; a true pastor only can fulfil this office: it is an office of most awful responsibility; few there are who *can* fill it; and, of those who occupy this high and awful place, perhaps we may say there are *fewer* still who discharge the *duties* of it. There are, however, through the good *providence* of God, Christian bishops, who, while they are honoured by the calling, do credit to the sacred function. And the annals of our Church can boast of at least as many of this class of men, who have served their God and their generation, as of any other order, in the proportion which this order bears to others in the Church of Christ. That *bishop* and *presbyter*, or *elder*, were at this time of the same order, and that the word was indifferently used of both, see noticed on ~~4317~~ Acts 20:17.

Feed the Church of God] This verse has been the subject of much controversy, particularly in reference to the term **θεου**, *of GOD*, in this place; and concerning it there is great dissension among the MSS. and versions. Three readings exist in them, in reference to which critics and commentators have been much divided; viz. **εκκλησιαν του θεου**, *the Church of GOD*; **του κυριου**, *of the LORD*; **κυριου και θεου**, *of the LORD and GOD*. From the collections of *Wetstein* and *Griesbach*, it appears that but *few* MSS., and none of them very *ancient*, have the word **θεου**, *of GOD*; with these only the *Vulgate*, and the later *Syriac* in the text, agree. **κυριου**, *of the LORD*, is the reading of ACDE, several others, the *Sahidic*, *Coptic*, later *Syriac* in the margin, *Armenian*, *Æthiopia*, and some of the *fathers*. **κυριου και θεου**, *of the LORD and of GOD*, is the reading of the *great majority*; though the *most ancient* are for **κυριου**, *of the LORD*: on this ground *Griesbach* has admitted this reading into the text, and put **κυριου και θεου** in the *margin*, as being next in authority.

Mr. Wakefield, who was a professed and conscientious Unitarian, decides for **του θεου**, *of GOD*, as the *true reading*; but, instead of translating **του ιδιου αιματος**, *with his own blood*, he translates, *by his own Son*, and brings some passages from the Greek and Roman writers to show that **αιμα** and *sanguis* are used to signify *son*, or near *relative*; and, were this the only place where *purchasing with his own blood* occurred, we might receive this saying; but, as the redemption of man is, throughout the New Testament, attributed to the *sacrificial death of Christ*, it is not likely that this very *unusual* meaning should apply here. At all events, we have here a proof that the Church was purchased by the blood of Christ; and, as to his *Godhead*, it is sufficiently established in many other places. When we grant that the greater evidence appears to be in favour of **του κυριου**, *feed the Church of the Lord, which he has purchased with his own blood*, we must maintain that, had not this *Lord* been GOD, his blood could have been no purchase for the souls of a lost world.

Verse 29. After my departing] Referring, most likely, to his *death*; for few of these evils took place during his life.

Grievous wolves] Persons professing to be *teachers*; Judaizing Christians, who, instead of feeding the flock, would feed themselves, even to the oppression and ruin of the Church.

Verse 30. Also of your own selves, &c.] From out of your own assembly *shall men arise, speaking perverse things*, teaching for truth what is erroneous in itself, and perversive of the genuine doctrine of Christ crucified.

To draw away disciples] To make *schisms* or *rents* in the Church, in order to get a *party to themselves*. See, here, the cause of divisions in the Church: 1. The superintendents lose the life of God, neglect the souls of the people, become greedy of gain, and, by secular extortions, oppress the people. 2. The members of the Church, thus neglected, oppressed, and irritated, get their minds alienated from their rapacious pastors. 3. Men of sinister views take advantage of this state of distraction, foment discord, preach up the necessity of *division*, and thus the people become *separated* from the great body, and associate with those who profess to care for their souls, and who disclaim all secular views. In this state of distraction, it is a high proof of God's love to his heritage, if one be found who, possessing the *true apostolic doctrine* and *spirit*, rises up to call men back to the primitive truth, and restore the primitive discipline. How soon the *grievous wolves* and *perverse teachers* arose in the Churches of Asia Minor, the first chapters of the Apocalypse inform us. The *Nicolaitans* had nearly ruined the Church of *Ephesus*, ^{<4010>}**Revelation 1:2, 6**. The same sect, with other false teachers, infested the Church of *Pergamos*, and preached there the doctrine of *Balaam*, ^{<4124>}**Revelation 2:14, 15**. A false prophetess seduced the Church of *Thyatira*, ^{<4121>}**Revelation 2:20**. All these Churches were in Asia Minor, and probably bishops or ministers from each were present at this convocation.

Verse 31. Therefore watch, and remember] The only way to abide in the truth is to *watch* against evil, and for good; and to *keep in mind* the heavenly doctrines originally received. *Unwatchfulness* and *forgetfulness* are two grand inlets to apostasy.

By the space of three years] **τριετιαν**. The Greek word here does not necessarily mean three *whole* years: it may be months more or less. In ^{<4198>}**Acts 19:8, 10**, we have an account of his spending *two years and three months* among them; probably this is all that is intended. One MS., perceiving that the time of *three years* was not completed, inserts **διετιαν**, *the space of two years*.

Verse 32. I commend you to God] Instead of **τω θεω**, *to GOD*, several MSS. have **τω κυριω**, *to the LORD*; neither reading makes any difference in the sense.

And to the word of his grace] The doctrine of salvation by Christ Jesus.

Which is able to build you up] The *foundation* is Jesus Christ; God is the great *master-builder*; the *doctrine of his grace*, or *mercy*, points out the *order* and *manner*, as well as the *extent*, &c., of this building. Let us observe the order of these things: 1. The soul of man, which was formerly the *habitation* of God, is now in a state of ruin. 2. The *ruins* of this soul must be repaired, that it may again become a *habitation of God through the Spirit*. 3. Jesus Christ is the only *foundation* on which this house can be *rebuilt*. 4. The *doctrine of God's grace* is the *model*, or *plan*, according to which the building can be raised. 5. When re-edified, each is to be a lively temple of the Lord, made *inwardly pure* and *outwardly righteous*, and thus prepared for a state of bliss. 6. Being made *children of God*, by faith in Christ Jesus, and *sanctified* by his Spirit, they have a right to the heavenly *inheritance*; for only the children of the family can possess the celestial estate. Thus we find they must be saved by grace, and be made thereby children of God; be *sanctified* by his Spirit; and, then, being prepared for, they are removed, in due time, into the heavenly inheritance.

Verse 33. I have coveted no man's silver, &c.] And from this circumstance they would be able to discover the grievous wolves, and the perverters; for these had nothing but their *own interests* in view; whereas the genuine disciples of Christ neither coveted nor had worldly possessions. St. Paul's account of his own disinterestedness is very similar to that given by Samuel of his, ~~1~~ **1 Samuel 12:3-5**.

Verse 34. These hands have ministered, &c.] It was neither "*sin nor discredit*" for the apostle to work to maintain himself, when the circumstances of the Church were such that it could not support him. Still many eminent ministers of God are obliged to support themselves and their families, at least *in part*, in the same way, while indefatigably testifying the Gospel of the grace of God. Whatever it may be to the *people*, it is no cause of reproach to the *minister*, to be *obliged* thus to employ himself.

Verse 35. I have showed you all things] The preposition **κατα** is to be understood before **παντα**; and the clause should be read thus-*I have showed you IN all things, &c.*

It is more blessed to give than to receive.] That is, the giver is more *happy* than the *receiver*. *Where*, or on *what occasion*, our Lord spake these words we know not, as they do not exist in any of the four evangelists. But that our Lord did speak them, St. Paul's evidence is quite sufficient to prove. The sentiment is worthy of Christ. A truly generous mind, in affluence, rejoices in opportunities to do good, and feels *happy* in having such opportunities. A man of an independent spirit, when reduced to poverty, finds it a severe trial to be obliged to live on the bounty of another, and feels pain in receiving what the other feels a happiness in communicating. Let, therefore, the man who is able to give feel himself *the obliged person*, and think how much *pain* the feeling heart of his supplicant must endure, in being obliged to forego his native independence, in soliciting and receiving the bounty of another. I am not speaking of *common beggars*; these have got their minds already *depraved*, and their *native independence* reduced, by *sin* and *idleness*, to *servility*.

Verse 36. He kneeled down and prayed] Kneeling is the proper posture of a supplicant, it argues at once both *humility* and *submission*; and he who prays to God should endeavour to feel the utmost measures of both.

Verse 37. Fell on Paul's neck] Leaned their heads against his shoulders, and kissed his neck. This was not an unusual custom in the east.

Verse 38. That they should see his face no more] This was a most solemn meeting, and a most affecting parting. The man who had first pointed out to them the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they had been brought into so glorious a state of salvation, is now going away, in all likelihood, to be seen no more till the day in which the quick and dead shall stand before the throne of judgment. Such a scene, and its correspondent feelings, are more easily imagined than described.

1. As the disciples are stated to have come together on *the first day of the week*, we may learn from this that, ever since the apostolic times, the *Lord's day*, now the *Christian Sabbath*, was set apart for *religious exercises*; such as the *preaching of God's holy word*, and celebrating the *sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. Besides its being the *day on which our blessed Lord rose from the dead*, the practice of the apostles and the primitive Church is an additional reason why we should religiously celebrate this first day of the week. They who, professing the Christian religion, still prefer the Jewish Sabbath, have little to support them in the New Testament. How prone is man to affect to be wise *above* what is

written, while he is, in almost every respect, *below* the teaching so plainly laid down in the Divine word.

2. The charge of St. Paul to the pastors of the Church of Christ at Ephesus and Miletus contains much that is interesting to every *Christian minister*:

1. If he be sent of God at all, he is sent to *feed the flock*. 2. But, in order to feed them, he must have the *bread of life*. 3. This bread he must distribute in its *due season*, that each may have that portion that is suitable to time, place, and state. 4. While he is feeding others, he should take care to have his *own soul fed*: it is possible for a minister to be the instrument of feeding others, and yet starve himself. 5. If Jesus Christ intrust to his care the *souls he has bought by his own blood*, what an awful account will he have to give in the day of judgment, if any of them perish through his neglect!

Though the sinner, dying in his sins, has his own blood upon his head, yet, if the watchman has not faithfully warned him, his blood will be required at the watchman's hand. Let him who is concerned read Ezekiel, ~~23:3~~ **Ezekiel 33:3-5**, and think of the account which he is shortly to give unto God.

3. *Tenderness* and *sympathy* are not inconsistent with the highest state of grace. Paul warns his hearers day and night with *tears*. His hearers now *weep sore* at the departure of their beloved pastor. They who can give up a Christian minister with indifference, have either profited little under that ministry, or they have backslidden from the grace of God. The pastors should love as *fathers*, the converts as *children*; and all feel themselves *one family*, under that great *head*, Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 21.

Paul and his company sail from Miletus, and come to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, 1. Finding a Phœnician ship at Patara, they go on board, sail past Cyprus, and land at Tyre, 2, 3. Here they find disciples, and stay seven days, and are kindly entertained, 4, 5. Having bade the disciples farewell, they take ship and sail to Ptolemais, salute the brethren, stay with them one day, come to Cæsarea, and lodge with Philip, one of the seven deacons, 6-9. Here they tarry a considerable time, and Agabus the prophet foretells Paul's persecution at Jerusalem, 10, 11. The disciples endeavour to dissuade him from going; but he is resolute, and he and his company depart, 12-16. They are kindly received by James and the elders, who advise Paul, because of the Jews, to show his respect for the law of Moses, by purifying himself, with certain others that were under a vow; with which advice he complies, 17-26. Some of the Asiatic Jews, finding him in the temple, raise an insurrection against him, and would have killed him had he not been rescued by the chief captain, who orders him to be bound and carried into the castle, 27-36. Paul requests liberty to address the people, and is permitted, 37-40.

NOTES ON CHAP. 21.

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

Coos] An island in the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea, one of those called the *Sporades*. It was famous for the worship of Æsculapius and Juno; and for being the birthplace of *Hippocrates*, the most eminent of *physicians*, and *Apelles*, the most celebrated of *painters*.

Rhodes] Another island in the same sea, celebrated for its *Colossus*, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. This was a brazen statue of Apollo, so high that ships in full sail could pass between its legs. It was the work of *Chares*, a pupil of *Lysippus*, who spent twelve years in making it. It was 106 feet high, and so great that few people could fathom its thumb. It was thrown down by an earthquake about 224 years before Christ, after having stood sixty-six years. When the Saracens took possession of this island, they sold this prostrate image to a Jew, who loaded 900 camels with the brass of it; this was about A.D. 660, nearly 900 years after it had been thrown down.

Patara] One of the chief seaport towns of Syria.

Verse 2. Phœnicia] A part of Syria. See Clarke's note on "^{<4119>}Acts 11:19".

Verse 3. Cyprus] See Clarke's note on "^{<4096>}Acts 4:36", and see the *track* of this journey on the *map*.

Tyre] A city of Phœnicia, one of the most celebrated maritime towns in the world. See Clarke's notes on "^{<4123>}Acts 12:20"; and see Clarke "^{<4121>}Matthew 11:21".

There the ship was to unlade her burden.] The freight that she had taken in at Ephesus she was to unlade at Tyre; to which place she was bound.

Verse 4. Who said to Paul through the Spirit] We cannot understand this as a *command* from the Holy Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem, else Paul must have been highly criminal to have disobeyed it. *Through the Spirit*, must either refer to their own great *earnestness* to dissuade him from taking a journey which they plainly saw would be injurious to him-and so Bp. Pearce understands this place; or, if it refer to the Holy Spirit, it must mean that if he regarded his personal safety he must not, at this time, go up to Jerusalem. The Spirit foretold Paul's persecutions, but does not appear to have forbidden his journey; and Paul was persuaded that, in acting as he was about to do, whatever personal risk he ran, he should bring more glory to God, by going to Jerusalem, than by tarrying at Tyre or elsewhere. The purport of this Divine communication was, "If thou go up to Jerusalem the Jews will persecute thee; and thou wilt be imprisoned, &c." As he was apprized of this, he might have desisted, for the whole was conditional: Paul might or might not go to Jerusalem; if he did go, he would be persecuted, and be in danger of losing his life. The Holy Spirit neither commanded him to go, nor forbade him; the whole was conditional; and he was left to the free exercise of his own judgment and conscience. This was a similar case to that of David in Keilah, ^{<1023>}1 **Samuel 23:9-13**. David prevented the threatened evil by leaving Keilah: Paul fell into it by going to Jerusalem.

Verse 5. When we had accomplished those days] That is, the seven days mentioned in the preceding verse.

And they all brought us on our way, with wives and children] It is not likely that Paul, Silas, Luke, &c., had either wives or children with them; and it is more natural to suppose that the brethren of Tyre, with *their* wives and children are those that are meant; these, through affection to the apostles, accompanied them from their homes to the ship; and the coming out of the husbands, wives, and children, shows what a general and affectionate interest the preaching and private conversation of these holy men had excited.

Kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.] As God fills heaven and earth, so he may be worshipped *every where*; as well, when circumstances require it, on the *seashore* as in the temple. We have already seen, in the case of Lydia, that the Jews had proseuchas by the river sides, &c.; and an observation in Tertullian seems to intimate that they preferred such places, and in the open air offered their petitions to God by the seashore: Omissis templis, per omne littus, quocumque in aperto aliquando jam preces ad cœlum mittunt. *Tertul. de Jejuniis*.

Verse 6. Taken-leave] ἀσπασαμενοι; *Having given each other the kiss of peace*, as was the constant custom of the Jews and primitive Christians.

They returned home] That is, the men, their wives, and their children.

Verse 7. We came to Ptolemais] This was a seaport town of Galilee, not far from Mount Carmel, between Tyre and Cæsarea, where the river Belus empties itself into the sea. It was at first called Accho, (and this is the reading of the Syriac and Arabic,) and belonged to the tribe of Asher, <0013>**Judges 1:31**; it was enlarged and beautified by the first of the Egyptian Ptolemies, from whom it was called *Ptolemais*. This place terminated St. Paul's voyage; and this is what is expressed in the text: *And we came from Tyre to Ptolemais, where our voyage ended*. See the Greek text.

Verse 8. We that were of Paul's company] οι περι τον παυλον, This clause is wanting in ABCE, and many others; the *Syriac, Coptic, Vulgate, Armenian, &c.*

Came unto Cæsarea] This was Cæsarea of *Palestine*, already sufficiently described, see **Clarke on “<4080>Acts 8:40”**.

Philip the evangelist] One of the seven deacons, who seems to have settled here after he had baptized the eunuch. See **Clarke on “<4080>Acts 8:40”**.

Verse 9. Four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.] Probably these were no more than *teachers* in the Church: for we have already seen that this is a frequent meaning of the word *prophesy*; and this is undoubtedly one thing intended by the prophecy of Joel, quoted ^{<4027>}**Acts 2:17, 18**, of this book. If Philip's daughters might be *prophetesses*, why not *teachers*?

Verse 10. Agabus.] See Clarke's note on "^{<4128>}**Acts 11:28**".

Verse 11. Took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands, &c.] This was no doubt a *prophet*, in the commonly received sense of the term; and his mode of acting was like that of the ancient prophets, who often accompanied their predictions with significant emblems. Jeremiah was commanded to bury his girdle by the river Euphrates, to mark out the captivity of the Jews. ^{<4130>}**Jeremiah 13:4**. For more examples of this figurative or symbolical prophesying, see ^{<4270>}**Jeremiah 27:2, 3; 28:4**; ^{<2301>}**Isaiah 20:1-6**; ^{<3040>}**Ezekiel 4:1-17; 12:1-28**, &c.

Into the hands of the Gentiles.] That is, the *Romans*, for the *Jews* had not, properly speaking, the power of life and death. And, as Agabus said he should be *delivered into the hands of the Gentiles*, he showed thereby that they would attempt to destroy his *life*. This prediction of Agabus was literally fulfilled: see ^{<4213>}**Acts 21:33**.

Verse 12. Besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.] For they all understood the prophecy to be *conditional* and *contingent*; and that it was in Paul's power to turn the scale.

Verse 13. I am ready, not to be bound only] He was resolute and determined; but was under no constraining necessity. See Clarke's note on "^{<4210>}**Acts 21:4**".

Verse 14. The will of the Lord be done.] May that which is most for his glory take place! They plainly saw from the prophecy what would take place, if Paul went to Jerusalem; and every one saw that he had power to go, or not to go.

Verse 15. Took up our carriages] **αποσκευασαμενοι**; We made ourselves ready; packed up our things; got our baggage in order. This is what the text means.

Verse 16. And brought with them one Mnason, &c.] It is not very likely that they would bring a man *with* them with whom they were to *lodge* in

Jerusalem; therefore, the text should perhaps be read as Bp. Patrick proposes: *There went with us certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, bringing us to one Mnason, with whom we were to lodge.* This is most likely, as the text will bear this translation. But it is possible that Mnason, formerly of Cyprus, now an inhabitant of Jerusalem, might have been down at Cæsarea, met the disciples, and invited them to lodge with him while they were at Jerusalem; and, having transacted his business at Cæsarea, might now accompany them to Jerusalem. His being *an old disciple* may either refer to his having been a very *early* convert, probably one of those on the day of pentecost, or to his being now an *old man*.

Verse 18. Went in with us unto James] This was *James the Less*, son of Mary; and cousin to our Lord. He appears to have been bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, and perhaps the only apostle who continued in that city. We have already seen what a very important character he sustained in the council. See ^{<4151>}**Acts 15:13.**

All the elders were present.] It appears that they had been convened about matters of serious and important moment; and some think it was relative to Paul himself, of whose arrival they had heard, and well knew how many of those that believed were disaffected towards him.

Verse 19. Declared particularly, &c.] He no doubt had heard that they were prejudiced against him; and, by declaring what God had done by him among the Gentiles, showed how groundless this prejudice was: for, were he a bad man, or doing any thing that he should not do, God would not have made him such a singular instrument of so much good.

Verse 20. How many thousands] **ποσα μυριαδες;** How many myriads, how many times 10,000. This intimates that there had been a most extraordinary and rapid work even among the Jews; but what is here spoken is not to be confined to the Jews of Jerusalem, but to all that had come from different parts of the land to be present at this pentecost.

They are all zealous of the law] The Jewish economy was not yet destroyed; nor had God as yet signified that the whole of its observances were done away. He continued to tolerate that dispensation, which was to be in a certain measure in force till the destruction of Jerusalem; and from that period it was impossible for them to observe their own ritual. Thus God abolished the Mosaic dispensation, by rendering, in the course of his providence, the observance of it *impossible*.

Verse 21. Thou teachest-to forsake Moses, &c.] From any thing that appears in the course of this book to the contrary, this information was incorrect: we do not find Paul preaching thus to the Jews. It is true that, in his *epistles*, some of which had been written *before* this time, he showed that circumcision and uncircumcision were equally unavailable for the salvation, of the soul, and that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified; but he had not yet said to any Jew, *forsake Moses, and do not circumcise your children*. He told them that Jesus Christ had delivered them from the yoke of the law; but they had, as yet, liberty to wear that yoke, if they pleased. He had shown them that their ceremonies were *useless* but not *destructive*; that they were only dangerous when they depended on them for salvation. This is the sum of what Paul had taught on this subject.

Verse 22. The multitude must needs come together] Whether this refers to a regular convocation of the Church, or to a tumult that would infallibly take place when it was heard that the apostle was come, we cannot pretend to say; but it is evident that James and the elders wished some prudent steps to be taken, in order to prevent an evil that they had too much reason to fear.

Verse 23. We have four men which have a vow] From the *shaving* of the head, mentioned immediately after, it is evident that the four men in question were under the vow of Nazariteship; and that the days of their vow were nearly at an end, as they were about to shave their heads; for, during the time of the *Nazariteship*, the hair was permitted to grow, and only shaven off at the termination of the vow. Among the Jews, it was common to make vows to God on extraordinary occasions; and that of the *Nazarite* appears to have been one of the most common; and it was permitted by their law for any person to perform this vow by *proxy*. See the law produced in my note, see Clarke on “^{402b}Numbers 6:21”. “It was also customary for the richer sort to bestow their charity on the poorer sort for this purpose; for Josephus, Ant. lib. xix. cap. 6, sec. 1, observes that Agrippa, on his being advanced from a *prison* to a *throne*, by the Emperor Claudius, came to Jerusalem; and there, among other instances of his religious thankfulness shown in the temple, **ναζαραιων ξυρασθαι διεταξε μαλα συχνους**, *he ordered very many Nazarites to be shaven*, he furnishing them with money for the expenses of that, and of the sacrifices necessarily attending it.” See Bp. Pearce.

Verse 24. Be at charges with them] Or, rather, *be at charges for them*: help them to bear the expense of that vow. Eight lambs, four rams, besides oil, flour, &c., were the expenses on this occasion. See the notes on **Numbers 6:1-21**.

Thou-walkest orderly and keepest the law.] Perhaps this advice meant no more than, Show them, by such means as are now in thy power, that thou art not an enemy to Moses; that thou dost still consider the law to be holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Paul did so, and bore the expenses of those who, from a scruple of conscience, had made a vow, and perhaps were not well able to bear the expense attending it. Had they done this in order to acquire justification through the law, Paul could not have assisted them in any measure with a clear conscience; but, as he did assist them, it is a proof that they had not taken this vow on them for *this* purpose. Indeed, *vows* rather referred to a *sense of obligation*, and the *gratitude* due to God for mercies already received, than to the procuring of future favours of any kind. Besides, God had not yet fully shown that the law was abolished, as has already been remarked: he tolerated it till the time that the iniquity of the Jews was filled up; and then, by the destruction of Jerusalem, he swept every rite and ceremony of the Jewish law away, with the besom of destruction.

Verse 25. As touching the Gentiles] See the notes on **Acts 15:1-21**, and the additional observations at the end of that chapter. See Clarke **“Acts 15:41”**

Verse 26. To signify the accomplishment, &c.] *διαγγελλων*, *Declaring* the accomplishment, &c. As this declaration was made to the priest, the sense of the passage is the following, if we suppose Paul to have made an offering for himself, as well as the four men: “The next day, Paul, taking the four men, began to purify, set himself apart, or consecrate himself with them; entering into the temple, he publicly declared to the priests that he would observe the separation of a Nazarite, and continue it for seven days, at the end of which he would bring an offering for himself and the other four men, according to what the law prescribed in that case.” But it is likely that Paul made no offering for himself, but was merely at the expense of theirs. However we may consider this subject, it is exceedingly difficult to account for the conduct of James and the elders, and of Paul on this occasion. There seems to have been something in this transaction which we do not fully understand. See Clarke’s note on **“Numbers 6:21”**.

“Besides their typical and religious use, sacrifices were also intended for the support of the state and civil government; inasmuch as the ministers of state were chiefly maintained by them: so that the allotments to the priests out of the sacrifices may be considered as designed, like the civil-list money in other nations, for the immediate support of the crown and the officers of state. On these principles we are able to account for Paul’s sacrificing, as we are informed he did, *after* the commencement of the Christian dispensation; an action which has been severely censured by some as the greatest error of his life: hereby he not only gave, say they, too much countenance to the Jews in their superstitious adherence to the law of Moses, after it was abrogated by Christ, but his offering these typical sacrifices, after the antitype of them was accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ, was a virtual denial of Christ, and of the virtue of his sacrifice, which superseded all others. Paul’s long trouble, which began immediately after this affair, some have looked upon as a judgment of God upon him for this great offense. But, if this action were really so criminal as some suppose, one cannot enough wonder that so good and so wise a man as Paul was should be guilty of it; and that the Apostle James and the other Christian elders should all advise him to it, ^{<4218>}**Acts 21:18, 23, 24**. It is likewise strange that we find no censure ever passed on this action by any of the sacred writers; not even by Paul himself, who appears so ready, on other occasions, to acknowledge and humble himself for his errors and failings: on the contrary he reflects with comfort on his having complied with the customs of the Jews in order to remove their prejudices against him and his ministry, and against the Gospel which he preached, and to win them over to embrace it: ‘Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; and this I do for the Gospel’s sake.’ ^{<4020>}**1 Corinthians 9:20, 23**.

“To elucidate this point; we are to consider that there was a political as well as a typical use of sacrifices; and that, though the typical ceased upon the sacrifice of Christ, yet the political continued till God in his providence broke up the Jewish state and polity about forty years after our Saviour’s death. Till that time it was not merely lawful, but matter of duty, for good subjects to pay the dues which were appointed by law for the support of the government and magistracy. Now, of this kind was the sacrifice which Paul offered; and in this view they were paid by Christians dwelling in Judea, as well as by those who still adhered to the

Jewish religion. So that, upon the whole, this action, for which Paul has been so much censured, probably amounts to nothing more than paying the tribute due to the magistrate by law, which the apostle enjoins upon all other Christians in all other nations, ^{<5136>}**Romans 13:6.**" -*Jennings' Jewish Antiquities*, p. 17.

Verse 27. The Jews which were of Asia] These pursued him with the most deliberate and persevering malice in every place; and it appears that it was through them that the false reports were sent to and circulated through Jerusalem.

Verse 28. This is the man that teacheth, &c.] As much as if they had said: This is the man concerning whom we wrote to you; who in every place endeavours to prejudice the Gentiles against the *Jews*, against the *Mosaic law*, and against the *temple* and its services.

Brought Greeks also into the temple] This was a most deliberate and malicious untruth: Paul could accomplish no purpose by bringing any Greek or Gentile into the temple; and their having seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with him, *in the city* only, was no ground on which to raise a slander that must so materially affect both their lives. Josephus informs us, *War*, lib. v. cap. 5, sec. 2, that on the wall which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites was an inscription in Greek and Latin letters, which stated that *no stranger was permitted to come within the holy place on pain of death*. With such a prohibition as this before his eyes, was it likely that St. Paul would enter into the temple in company with an uncircumcised Greek? The calumny refutes itself.

Verse 30. They took Paul] They tumultuously seized on him; *and drew him out of the temple*, out of the court of the Israelites, where he was worshipping: *and-the doors were shut*; the doors of the court of the Gentiles, probably to prevent Paul from getting any succour from his friends in the city; for their whole proceedings show that they purposed to murder him: they brought him out of the court of the Israelites, *that court* being peculiarly holy, that it might not be defiled by his blood; and they shut the court of the Gentiles, that they might have the opportunity unmolested of killing him in that place; for the court of the Gentiles was reckoned to be less holy than than that of the Israelites.

Verse 31. The chief captain of the band] The Roman tribune, who had a troop of soldiers under him, which lodged in general in the castle of

Antonia, which was built at the angle where the northern and western porticoes of the outer court of the temple were joined together. This castle was built by John Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews: it was at first called *Baris*, and was the royal residence of the *Asmoneans*, as long as they reigned in Jerusalem. It was beautified by Herod the Great, and called *Antonia*, in honour of his friend Mark *Antony*. By this castle the temple was commanded, as it stood on higher ground. Josephus describes this castle, *War*, b. v. chap. 5, sec. 8, “as having four towers, from one of which the whole temple was overlooked; and that one of the towers was joined to the porticoes of the temple, and had a double pair of stairs from it, by which soldiers in the garrison were used to come down with their arms to the porticoes, on the festival days, to keep the people quiet; for, as the temple was a guard to the city, so this castle was a guard to the temple.” “It seems, therefore,” says Bp. Pearce, “to me very plain, that the place where the Jews were about to kill Paul was the court of the Gentiles, the porticoes being there; and that the chief captain came down there to his rescue.” The name of this chief captain, or tribune, was *Claudius Lysias*, as we learn from ^{<4235>}**Acts 23:26**.

Verse 32. Ran down unto them] Ran down the stairs to the porticoes mentioned above.

Verse 33. And took him] With *great violence*, according to ^{<4207>}**Acts 24:7**, probably meaning an *armed force*.

To be bound with two chains] To be bound between two soldiers; his right hand chained to the left hand of the one, and his left hand to the right of the other. See Clarke’s note on ^{<4126>}**Acts 12:6**”.

Verse 35. And when he came upon the stairs] Those mentioned in the note on ^{<4231>}**Acts 21:31**.

Verse 36. Away with him.] That is, Kill him; despatch him! for so much this phrase always means in the mouth of a Jewish mob. See Clarke on ^{<2218>}**Luke 23:18**”, and see Clarke ^{<4315>}**John 19:15**”.

Verse 37. Canst thou speak Greek?] Claudius Lysias was not a **Roman**; he had, as himself informs us, purchased his citizenship of Rome with a great sum of money; (see ^{<4228>}**Acts 22:28**;) and it is very likely that he was but imperfectly acquainted with the Latin tongue; and the tumult that was now made, and the discordant noise, prevented him from clearly

apprehending what was said; and, as he wished to know the merit of the cause, he accosted Paul with, ἑλληνιστι γινώσκεις, *Dost thou understand Greek?* And when he found that he did understand it, he proceeded to question him as below.

Verse 38. Art not thou that Egyptian, &c.] The history to which Claudius Lysias refers is taken from Josephus, *Ant.* lib. xx. cap. 7, sec. 6, and *War*, lib. ii. cap. 13, sec. 5, and is in substance as follows: An Egyptian, whose name is not known, pretended to be a prophet, and told his followers that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down before them, if they would assist him in making an attack on the city. He had address enough to raise a rabble of 30,000 men, and with these advanced as far as the Mount of Olives; but Felix, the Roman governor, came suddenly upon him, with a large body of Roman troops, both infantry and cavalry: the mob was speedily dispersed, four hundred killed, two hundred taken prisoners, and the Egyptian himself, with some of his most faithful friends, escaped; of whom no account was ever afterwards heard. As Lysias found such an outcry made against Paul, he supposed that he must be some egregious malefactor, and probably *that* Egyptian who had escaped, as related above. Learned men agree that St. Luke refers to the same fact of which Josephus speaks; but there is a considerable difference between the *numbers* in Josephus, and those in Luke: the former having 30,000, the latter only 4000. The small number of killed and prisoners, only 600 in all, according to Josephus, leads us to suspect that his number is greatly exaggerated; as 600 in killed and prisoners of a mob of 30,000, routed by regular infantry and cavalry, is no kind of proportion; but it is a sufficient proportion to a mob of 4000. Dean Aldridge has supposed that the number in Josephus was originally 4000, but that ancient copyists mistaking the Greek Δ delta, *four*, for Λ lambda, *thirty*, wrote 30,000, instead of 4000. See Havercamp's edition, vol. ii. p. 177. There is another way of reconciling the two historians, which is this: When this Egyptian impostor at first began to make great boasts and large promises, a multitude of people, to the amount at least of 30,000, weary of the Roman yoke, from which he promised them deliverance, readily arranged themselves under his banners. As he performed nothing that he promised, 26,000 of these had melted away before he reached Mount Olivet: this remnant the Romans attacked and dispersed. Josephus speaks of the number he had in the beginning; St. Luke, of those that he had when he arrived at Mount Olivet.

That were murderers?] Σικαριων: *Sicarii*, assassins: they derived their name from *sica*, a sort of crooked knife, which they concealed under their garments, and privately stabbed the objects of their malice. *Josephus*.

Verse 39. I am a man which am a Jew] A periphrasis for, *I am a Jew*. See Clarke's note on "~~407~~ Acts 7:2".

Of Tarsus-no mean city] In Clarke's notes on "~~409~~ Acts 9:11", I have shown that Tarsus was a city of considerable importance, and in some measure a rival to Rome and Athens; and that, because of the services tendered to the Romans by the inhabitants, Julius Cæsar endowed them with all the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. When St. Paul calls it *no mean city*, he speaks a language that was common to those who have had occasion to speak of Tarsus. XENOPHON, *Cyri Anabas*. i., calls it, πολιν μεγαλην και ευδαιμονα, *a great and flourishing city*. JOSEPHUS, *Ant. lib. i. cap. 6, sec. 6*, says that it was παρ' αυτοις των πολεων η αξιολογωτατη μητροπολις ουσα, *the metropolis and most renowned city among them (the Cilicians.)* And AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, xiv. 8, says, *Ciliciam Tarsus nobilem, urbs perspicabilis*: "Tarsus, a very respectable city; adorns Cilicia."

Verse 40. Paul stood on the stairs] Where he was out of the reach of the mob, and was surrounded by the Roman soldiers.

Beckoned with the hand] *Waving* the hand, which was the sign that he was about to address the people. So VIRGIL says of Turnus, when he wished, by single combat between himself and Æneas, to put an end to the war:-

*Significatque manu, et magno simul incipit ore:
Parcite jam, Rutuli; et vos tela inhibete, Latini.*

*He beckoned with his hand, and cried out with a loud voice,
Desist, ye Rutulians; and, ye Latins, cease from throwing your javelins.*

He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue] What was called then the Hebrew, viz. the Chaldalo-Syriac; very well expressed by the *Codex Bezae*, τη ιδια διαλεκτω, *in their own dialect*.

Never was there a more unnatural division than that in this chapter: it ends with a single comma! The best division would have been at the end of the 25th verse.

PAUL'S embarkation at Tyre is very remarkable. The simple manner in which he was escorted to the ship by the disciples of Tyre, *men, women, and children*, and their affectionate and pious parting, kneeling down on the shore and commending each other to God, are both impressive and edifying. Nothing but Christianity could have produced such a spirit in persons who now, perhaps for the first time, saw each other in the flesh. Every *true Christian* is a *child of God*; and, consequently, all children of God have a spiritual affinity. They are all partakers of the same *Spirit*, are united to the same *Head*, are actuated with the same *hope*, and are going to the same *heaven*. These love one another with pure hearts fervently; and these alone are capable of disinterested and lasting friendship. Though this kind of friendship cannot *fail*, yet it may err; and with officious affection endeavour to prevent us from bearing a necessary and most honourable cross. See ^{<4212>}**Acts 21:12, 13**. It should, therefore, be kept within *Scriptural* bounds.

ACTS

CHAPTER 22.

Paul, in his address to the people, gives an account of his birth and education, 1-3. His prejudices against Christianity, 4, 5. And of his miraculous conversion, and call to the apostleship, 6-21. The Jews, hearing him say that God had sent him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, become exceedingly outrageous, and clamour for his life, 22, 23. The chief captain orders him to be examined by scourging; but he, pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, escapes the torture, 24-29. The next day the chief captain brings Paul before the chief priests and their council, 30.

NOTES ON CHAP. 22.

Verse 1. Men, brethren, and fathers] A Hebrew form of expression for *brethren and fathers*: for *two* classes only are addressed. See Clarke's note on "~~400~~ Acts 7:2".

Hear ye my defense] μου της απολογιας, *This apology of mine*; in this sense the word *apology* was anciently understood: hence the *Apologies* of the primitive fathers, i.e. their defenses of the Christian religion. And this is as proper literal meaning; but it is *now* used only as implying an *excuse for improper conduct*. That this is an abuse of the term requires no proof.

Verse 2. When they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue] He had probably been traduced by the Jews of Asia as a mere *Gentile*, distinguished only by his virulence against the Jewish religion; which virulence proceeded from his malice and *ignorance*.

Verse 3. I am verily a man which am a Jew] A periphrasis for, *I am really a Jew*: and his mentioning this adds weight to the conjecture in the preceding note. He shows that he could not be ignorant of the Jewish religion, as he had had the best instructor in it which Jerusalem could produce.

Yet brought up, &c.] Bp. Pearce proposes that this verse should be thus read and translated: *but brought up in this city; instructed at the feet of Gamaliel, according to the most exact manner, being exceedingly zealous for the law of our fathers, as ye all are this day.*

Born in Tarsus] See Clarke's notes on "^{<4091>}Acts 9:11"; and see Clarke "^{<4213>}Acts 21:39".

Feet of Gamaliel] See a full account of this man in Clarke's note on "^{<4053>}Acts 5:34".

It has been generally supposed that the phrase, *brought up at the feet*, is a reference to the Jewish custom, viz. that the disciples of the rabbins sat on *low* seats, or on the ground, whilst the rabbin himself occupied a lofty chair. But we rather learn, from Jewish authority, that the disciples of the rabbins *stood* before their teachers, as Vitringa has proved in his treatise Deuteronomy Synag. Vet. lib. i. p. 1, cap. 7. Kypke, therefore, contends that *παρα τους ποδας*, *at the feet*, means the same as *πλησιον*, *near*, or *before*, which is not an unfrequent mode of speech among both sacred and profane writers. Thus, in ^{<4035>}Acts 4:35, 37; 5:2, *ετιθουν παρα τους ποδας των αποστολων*, *they laid it at the apostles' feet*, means only, *they brought it to the apostles*. So in 2 Macc. iv. 7, *παρα ποδας ηδη τον φοην ορωντες κειμενον*, *they saw death already lying at their feet*; that is, as the Syriac translator has properly rendered it, *they saw death immediately before them*. So Themistius, Or. 27, p. 341, who adds the term by which the phrase is explained, *εστι και πλησιον αι τω δυναμενω λαμβανειν*, *ante pedes id temper et prope est, illi qui accipere potest*. Also Lucian, Deuteronomy Conser. Hist. p. 669, *ων παρα ποδας οι ελεγχοι*. The refutation of which is at hand. The same kind of form occurs in the Hebrew, ^{<12108>}Exodus 11:8: All the people that are at *thy feet*, *Ëyl grb beragleica*, i.e. who are *with thee*, *under thy command*, ^{<101516>}2 Samuel 15:16. *And the king went out, and all his household*, *wyl grb beraglaiv*, *at his feet*; that is, *with him*, in his *company*. See Kypke. The phrase is used in the same sense among the *Hindoos*: *I learned this at my father's feet*-instead of, *I learned it of my father*. *I was taught at the feet of such a teacher*-*my teacher's feet say so*; meaning, simply, such and such persons taught me.

According to the perfect manner] That is, according to that *strict* interpretation of the law, and especially the traditions of the elders, for which the Pharisees were remarkable. That it is Pharisaism that the apostle has in view, when he says he was taught *according to*, *ακριβειαν*, *the most extinct manner*, is evident; and hence, in ^{<4215>}Acts 26:5, he calls Pharisaism *ακριβεστατην*, *the most exact system*; and, under it, he was zealous towards God; scrupulously exact in every part of his duty,

accompanying this with reverence to the supreme Being, and deep concern for his honour and glory.

Verse 4. I persecuted this way] ταυτην την οδον; *This doctrine, the way of worshipping God, and arriving at a state of blessedness. See Clarke on “<409D>Acts 9:2”.*

Binding and delivering into prisons] See Clarke on “<408B>Acts 8:3”; and see Clarke “<409D>Acts 9:2”.

Verse 5. The high priest doth bear me witness, &c.] He probably referred to the *letters of authority* which he had received from the high priest, and the *whole estate of the elders*, παν το πρεσβυτεριον, *the whole of the presbytery*, that is, the *sanhedrin*; and it is likely, that he had those letters to produce. This zeal of his against Christianity was an ample proof of his *sincerity* as a Pharisaical Jew.

Verses 6. - 13. As I made my journey, &c.] See the whole of this account, and all the particular circumstances, considered at large in **Clarke’s notes on “<409D>Acts 9:1”**, &c., and the observations at the conclusion of that chapter. See Clarke “<409B>Acts 9:43”

Verse 14. And see that Just One] The Lord Jesus, called the *Just One*, in opposition to the Jews, who crucified him as a *malefactor*: see **Clarke’s note on “<407D>Acts 7:52”**. This is an additional proof that Jesus Christ did actually *appear* unto Saul of Tarsus.

Verse 15. Thou shalt be his witness unto all] Thou shalt proclaim Christ crucified, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Verse 16. Arise, and be baptized] Take now the profession of Christ’s faith most solemnly upon thee, by being baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Wash away thy sins, &c.] Let this washing of thy body represent to thee the washing away of thy sins: and know that this *washing away of sin* can be received only by invoking the name of the Lord.

Verse 17. When I was come again to Jerusalem] It is likely that he refers to the first journey to Jerusalem, about three years after his conversion, <402S>Acts 9:25, 26, and <801S>Galatians 1:18.

I was in a trance] This circumstance is not mentioned any where else, unless it be that to which himself refers in ^{<4713D>}**2 Corinthians 12:2-4**, when he conceived himself transported to the third heaven; and, if the case be the *same*, the appearance of Jesus Christ to him, and the command given, are circumstances related only in this place.

Verse 19. I imprisoned and beat in every synagoge] This shows what an active instrument Saul of Tarsus was, in the hands of this persecuting priesthood, and how very *generally* the followers of Christ *were* persecuted, and how difficult it was at this time to profess Christianity.

Verse 20. When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed] See Clarke on "^{<4078>}**Acts 7:58**"; and see Clarke "^{<4480>}**Acts 8:1**". All these things Paul alleged as *reasons* why he could not expect to be received by the Christians; for how could they suppose that *such* a persecutor could be converted?

Verse 21. I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.] This was the particular appointment of St. Paul: he was *the apostle of the Gentiles*; for, though he preached frequently to the Jews, yet to *preach* the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to write for the conversion and establishment of the Gentile world, were his peculiar destination. Hence we find him and his companions travelling every where; through *Judea, Phœnicia, Arabia, Syria, Cilicia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Phrygia, Macedonia, Greece, Asia*, the *Isles of the Mediterranean Sea*, the *Isles of the Ægean Sea, Italy*, and some add *Spain* and even *Britain*. This was the *diocess* of this primitive bishop: none of the apostles travelled, none preached, none laboured as this man; and, we may add, none was so greatly owned of God. The *epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude*, are great and excellent; but, when compared with those of Paul, however glorious they may be, they have no glory comparatively, by reason of that glory which excelleth. Next to Jesus Christ, St. Paul is the glory of the Christian Church. Jesus is the foundation; Paul, the master-builder.

Verse 22. They gave him audience unto this word] Namely, that God had sent him to the Gentiles: not that they refused to preach the *law* to the Gentiles, and make them proselytes; for this they were fond of doing, so that our Lord says, *they compassed sea and land to make a proselyte*; but they understood the apostle as stating that God had rejected *them*, and called the *Gentiles* to be his *peculiar people in their place*; and this they could not bear.

Away with such a fellow] According to the law of Moses, he who attempted to seduce the people to any strange worship was to be *stoned*, ^{<61315>}**Deuteronomy 13:15**. The Jews wished to insinuate that the apostle was guilty of this crime, and that therefore he should be stoned, or put to death.

Verse 23. Cast off their clothes] Bishop Pearce supposes that *shaking their upper garments* is all that is meant here; and that it was an ancient custom for men to do so when highly pleased or greatly irritated; but it is likely that some of them were now actually throwing off their clothes, in order to prepare to stone Paul.

Threw dust into the air] In sign of *contempt*, and by way of *execration*. Shimei acted so, in order to express his contempt of David, ^{<101613>}**2 Samuel 16:13**, where it is said, *he cursed him as he went, and threw stones at him*; or, as the margin, *he dusted him with dust*. Their *throwing dust in the air* was also expressive of extraordinary rage and vindictive malice. The apostle, being guarded by the Roman soldiers, was out of the power of the mob; and their throwing dust in the air not only showed their *rage*, but also their *vexation* that they could not get the apostle into their power. It is still used as a token of hostility and defiance. M. Denon, (Travels in Egypt, vol. iii. p. 98,) on coming down the Nile to Cairo, stopped at the ancient city of *Antinæ*, to examine its ruins. "Being desirous of obtaining a view of the whole of these ruins, we ascended a little hill, and soon perceived the inhabitants of the modern village assembling behind an opposite eminence: scarcely had we come over against them than, supposing our intentions to be hostile, they called out for assistance, and *threw dust into the air, in token of defiance*. The alarm spread, and they began firing upon us."

Verse 24. Examined by scourging] As the chief captain did not understand the Hebrew language, he was ignorant of the *charge* brought against Paul, and ignorant also of the *defence* which the apostle had made; and, as he saw that they grew more and more outrageous, he supposed that Paul must have given them the highest provocation; and therefore he determined to put him to *the torture*, in order to find out the nature of his crime. The practice of putting people to the *rack*, in order to make them *confess*, has, to the disgrace of human nature, existed in all countries.

Verse 25. And as they bound him, &c.] They were going to tie him to a post, that they might scourge him.

Is it lawful, &c.] The Roman law absolutely forbade the *binding* of a Roman citizen. See Clarke's note on "^{<416>}Acts 16:37".

Verse 28. With a great sum obtained I this freedom] So it appears that the freedom, even of Rome, might be *purchased*, and that it was sold at a very *high price*.

But I was free born.] It has been generally believed that the inhabitants of Tarsus, born in that city, had the same rights and privileges as Roman citizens, in consequence of a *charter* or *grant* from Julius Cæsar. Calmet disputes this, because Tarsus was a *free* not a *colonial* city; and he supposes that Paul's father might have been rewarded with the freedom of Rome for some military services, and that it was in consequence of *this* that Paul was born free. But that the city of Tarsus had such privileges appears extremely probable. In ^{<423>}Acts 21:39, Paul says he was *born at Tarsus in Cilicia*, and in ^{<428>}Acts 22:28, he says he was *free born*; and, at ^{<426>}Acts 22:26, he calls himself a *Roman*; as he does also ^{<416>}Acts 16:37. From whence it has been concluded, with every show of reason, that Tarsus, though no Roman colony, yet had this privilege granted to it, that its natives should be citizens of Rome. PLINY, in *Hist. Nat.* lib. v. 27, tells us that Tarsus was a *free city*. And APPIAN, *Deuteronomy Bello Civil.* lib. v. p. 1077, edit. *Tollii*, says that Antony, *ταρσεας ελευθερους ηφιει, και ατελεις φορων*, made the people of Tarsus free, and discharged them from paying tribute. DIO CASSIUS, lib. xlvii. p. 508, edit. *Reimar*, farther tells us, *Adeo Cæsari priori, et ejus gratia etiam posteriori, favebant Tarsenses, ut urbem suam pro Tarso JULIOPOLIN vocaverint*: "that, for the affection which the people of Tarsus bore to Julius Cæsar, and afterwards to Augustus, the former caused their city to be called *Juliopolis*." The Greek text is as follows:- *ουτω προσφιλωσ τω καισαρι προτερω, και δι εκεινον τω δευτερω, οι ταρσεισ ειχον, ωστε και ιουλιοπολιν σφασ απ αυτου μετονομασαι*. To which I add, that PHILO, de *Virt.* vol. ii. p. 587, edit. *Mang.*, makes Agrippa say to Caligula, *φιλων ενιων πατριδας ολασ της ρωμαικης ηξιωσασ πολιτειασ*, *You have made whole countries, to which your friends belong, to be citizens of Rome*. See Clarke's note on "^{<423>}Acts 21:39". These testimonies are of weight sufficient to show that Paul, by being born at Tarsus, might have been *free born*, and a *Roman*. See Bishop Pearce on ^{<416>}Acts 16:37.

Verse 29. After he knew that he was a Roman] He who was going to scourge him durst not proceed to the torture when Paul declared himself to

be a *Roman*. A passage from Cicero, Orat. pro Verr. Act. ii. lib. v. 64, throws the fullest light on this place: Ille, quisquis erat, quem tu in crucem rapiebas, qui tibi esset ignotus, cum civem se Romanum esse diceret, apud te Prætozem, si non effugium, ne moram quidem mortis mentione atque usurpatione civitatis assequi potuit? “Whosoever he might be whom thou wert hurrying to the rack, were he even unknown to thee, if he said that he was a *Roman citizen*, he would necessarily obtain from thee, the Prætor, by the simple mention of *Rome*, if not an escape, yet at least a delay of his punishment.” The whole of the sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sections of this oration, which speak so pointedly on this subject, are worthy of consideration. Of this privilege he farther says, Ib. in cap. lvii., *Illa vox et exclamatio*, Civis Romanus sum, *quæ sæpe multis in ultimis terris opem inter barbaros et salutem tulit*, &c. That exclamation, *I am a Roman citizen*, which often times has brought assistance and safety, even among barbarians, in the remotest parts of the earth, &c.

PLUTARCH likewise, in his *Life of Pompey*, (vol. iii. p. 445, edit. Bryan,) says, concerning the behaviour of the pirates, when they had taken any Roman prisoner, *ἐκεινο δε ην υβριστικωτατον κ. τ. λ.* *what was the most contumelious was this; when any of those whom they had made captives cried out, ῥώμαιος ειναι*, THAT HE WAS A ROMAN, and told them his name, they pretended to be surprised, and be in a fright, and smote upon their thighs, and fell down (on their knees) to him, beseeching him to pardon them! It is no wonder then that the torturer desisted, when Paul cried out that he was a *Roman*; and that the chief captain was alarmed, because he had bound him.

Verse 30. He-commanded-all their council to appear] Instead of *ἐλθειν*, *to come*, which we translate, *to appear*, *συνελθειν*, *to assemble*, or *meet together*, is the reading of ACE, nearly twenty others, the *Æthiopic*, *Arabic*, *Vulgate*, *Chrysostom*, and *Theophylact*: this reading Griesbach has received into the text; and it is most probably the true one: as the chief captain wished to know the certainty of the matter, he desired the Jewish council, or Sanhedrin, to assemble, and examine the business thoroughly, that he might know of what the apostle was accused; as the law would not permit him to proceed against a Roman in any judicial way, but on the clearest evidence; and, as he understood that the cause of their enmity was something that concerned their religion, he considered the Sanhedrin to be the most proper judge, and therefore commanded them *to assemble*; and there is no doubt that he himself, and a sufficient number of

soldiers, took care to attend, as the person of Paul could not be safe in the hands of persons so prejudiced, unprincipled, and enraged.

This chapter should end with the twenty-ninth verse, and the following should begin with the thirtieth; this is the most natural division, and is followed by some of the most correct editions of the original text.

1. IN his address to the council, Paul asserts that he is a *Jew*, born of and among Jews; and that he had a regular *Jewish education*; and he takes care to observe that he had early imbibed all the *prejudices* peculiar to his countrymen, and had given the fullest proof of this in his persecution of the Christians. Thus, his assertions, concerning the *unprofitableness* of the *legal ceremonies*, could neither be attributed to *ignorance* nor *indifference*. Had a *Gentile*, no matter how learned or eminent, taught thus, his whole teaching would have been attributed to ignorance, prejudice, and envy. God, therefore, in his endless mercy, made use of a most eminent, learned, and bigoted *Jew*, to demonstrate the *nullity* of the whole Jewish system, and show the *necessity* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. At the close of this chapter, Dr. Dodd has the following judicious remark:—"As *unrighteous* as it was in the Roman officer, on this popular clamour, to attempt putting this holy apostle to the torture, so *reasonable* was St. Paul's plea, as a Roman citizen, to decline that suffering. It is a prudence worthy the imitation of the bravest of men, not to throw themselves into unnecessary difficulties. True courage widely differs from rash and heedless temerity; nor are we under any obligation, as *Christians*, to give up our *civil privileges*, which ought to be esteemed as the gifts of God, to every insolent and turbulent invader. In a thousand circumstances, *gratitude* to *God*, and *duty* to *men*, will oblige us to *insist upon them*; and a generous concern for those who may come after us should engage us to labour to transmit them to posterity *improved* rather than *impaired*." This should be an article in the creed of every genuine *Briton*.

ACTS

CHAPTER 23.

Paul defending himself before the high priest, he commands him to be smitten on the mouth, 1, 2. Paul sharply reproveth him, and, being reprov'd for this by one of the attendants, accounts for his conduct, 3-5. Seeing that the assembly was composed of Pharisees and Sadducees, and that he could expect no justice from his judges, he asserts that it was for his belief in the resurrection that he was called in question, on which the Pharisees declare in his favour, 6-9. A great dissension arises, and the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be pulled to pieces, brings him into the castle, 10. He is comforted by a dream, 11. More than forty persons conspire his death, 12-15. Paul's sister's son, hearing of it, informs the captain of the guard, 16-22. He sends Paul by night, under a strong escort of horse and foot, to Cæsarea, to Felix, and with him a letter, stating the circumstances of the case, 23-33. They arrive at Cæsarea, and Felix promises him a hearing when his accusers shall come down, 34, 35.

NOTES ON CHAP. 23.

Verse 1. I have lived in all good conscience] Some people seem to have been unnecessarily stumbled with this expression. What does the apostle mean by it? Why, that, while he was a *Jew*, he was *one* from principle of conscience; that what he did, while he continued Jew, he did from the same principle; that, when God opened his eyes to see the nature of Christianity, he became a Christian, because God persuaded his conscience that it was right for him to become one; that, in a word, he was *sincere* through the whole course of his religious life, and his conduct had borne the most unequivocal proofs of it. The apostle means, therefore, that there was no part of his life in which he acted as a dishonest or hypocritical man; and that he was now as fully determined to maintain his profession of Christianity as he ever was to maintain that of Judaism, previously to his acquaintance with the Christian religion.

Verse 2. The high priest, Ananias] There was a high priest of this name, who was sent a prisoner to Rome by Quadratus, governor of Syria, to give an account of the part he took in the quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans; see Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6, s. 8; but whether he ever returned again to Jerusalem, says Dr. Lightfoot, is uncertain; still more uncertain whether he was ever restored to the office of high priest; and most uncertain of all whether he filled the chair when Paul pleaded his

cause, which was some years after Felix was settled in the government. But *Krebs* has proved that this very Ananias, on being examined at Rome, was found innocent, returned to Jerusalem, and was restored to the high priesthood; see Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9, s. 2; but of his death I find nothing certain. See *Krebs* on this place, (Observat. in Nov. Testament. e Flavio Josepho,) who successfully controverts the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, mentioned at the beginning of this note. There was one Ananias, who is said to have perished in a tumult raised by his own son about five years after this time; see Jos. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 9. War, lib. ii. cap. 17.

To smite him on the mouth.] Because he professed to have a good conscience, while believing on Jesus Christ, and propagating his doctrine.

Verse 3. God shall smite thee, thou whited wall] Thou hypocrite! who sittest on the seat of judgment, pretending to hear and seriously weigh the defense of an accused person, who must in justice and equity be presumed to be innocent till he is proved to be guilty; and, instead of acting according to the law, commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law, which always has the person of the prisoner under its protection; nor ever suffers any penalty to be inflicted but what is prescribed as the just punishment for the offense. As if he had said: "Thinkest thou that God will suffer such an insult on his laws, on justice, and on humanity, to pass unpunished?"

Verse 5. I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest] After all the learned labour that has been spent on this subject, the simple meaning appears plainly to be this:-

St. Paul did not know that Ananias was high priest; he had been long absent from Jerusalem; *political changes* were frequent; the high priesthood was no longer in *succession*, and was frequently bought and sold; the Romans put down one high priest, and raised up another, as political reasons dictated. As the person of Ananias might have been wholly unknown to him, as the *hearing* was very sudden, and there was scarcely any time to consult the formalities of justice, it seems very probable that St. Paul, if he ever had known the person of Ananias, had forgotten him; and as, in a council or meeting of this kind, the presence of the high priest was not indispensably necessary, he did not know that the person who presided was not the *sagan*, or high priest's deputy, or some other person put in the seat for the time being. I therefore understand the words above in their most obvious and literal sense. He knew not who the

person was, and God's Spirit suddenly led him to denounce the Divine displeasure against him.

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.] If I had known he was the high priest, I should not have publicly pronounced this execration; for respect is due to his *person* for the sake of his *office*. I do not see that Paul intimates that he had done any thing through inadvertence; nor does he here confess any fault; he states two facts:-1. That he did not know him to be the high priest. 2. That such a one, or any ruler of the people, should be revered. But he neither recalled or made an apology for his words: he had not committed a trespass, and he did not acknowledge one. We must beware how we attribute either to him in the case before us.

Verse 6. I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee] Instead of **φαρισαίου**, *of a Pharisee*, ABC, some others, with the *Syriac* and *Vulgate*, have **φαρισαίων**, *of the Pharisees*; which, if acknowledged to be the genuine reading, would alter the sense thus, *I am a Pharisee, and a disciple of the Pharisees*, for so the word *son* is frequently understood.

Of the hope and resurrection] Concerning the hope of the resurrection, the **καί**, *and*, being here redundant; indeed, it is omitted by the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, and *Æthiopic*. St. Paul had preached the resurrection of the dead, on the foundation and evidence of the resurrection of Christ. For *this*, he and the apostles were, some time before, imprisoned by the high priest and elders, ^{<400>}**Acts 4:1-3; 5:17**, because they preached, THROUGH JESUS, the resurrection of the dead. This they could not bear; for, if Jesus Christ rose from the dead, their malice and wickedness, in putting him to death, were incontrovertibly established.

Verse 7. And the multitude was divided] St. Paul, perceiving the assembly to consist of Sadducees and Pharisees, and finding he was not to expect any justice, thought it best thus to divide the council, by introducing a question on which the Pharisees and Sadducees were at issue. He did so; and the Pharisees immediately espoused his side of the question, because in opposition to the Sadducees, whom they abhorred, as irreligious men.

Verse 8. The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection] It is strange, since these denied a future state, that they observed the ordinances of the law; for they also believed the five books of Moses to be a revelation from God: yet they had nothing in view but *temporal good*; and they understood the promises in the law as referring to these things alone. In order,

therefore, to procure them, they watched, fasted, prayed, &c., and all this they did that they might obtain happiness in the present life. See the account of the Pharisees and Sadducees, ^{<ABCD>} **Matthew 3:7; 16:1.**

Verse 9. The scribes-rose, and strove] διεμαχοντο, They contended forcibly-they came to an open rupture with the Sadducees; and, in order to support their own party against them, they even admitted as truth, St. Paul's account of his miraculous conversion, and therefore they said, *if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, &c.* He had previously mentioned that Jesus Christ had appeared to him, when on his way to Damascus; and, though they might not be ready to admit the doctrine of *Christ's resurrection*, yet they could, consistently with their own principles, allow that the *soul* of Christ might appear to him; and they immediately caught at this, as furnishing a strong proof against the doctrine of the Sadducees, who neither believed in angel nor spirit, while the Pharisees confessed both.

Let us not fight against God.] These words are wanting in ABCE, several others, with the *Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian*, later *Syriac, Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*.

Verse 10. The chief captain-commanded the soldiers to go down] It appears that the chief captain was present during these transactions, and that he had a body of soldiers in readiness in the castle of Antonia; and it was from *this* that he commanded them to *come down*; for the rescue and preservation of Paul.

Verse 11. Be of good cheer, Paul] It is no wonder if, with all these trials and difficulties, St. Paul was much dejected in mind; and especially as he had not any direct intimation from God what the end of the present trials would be: to comfort him and strengthen his faith, God gave him this vision.

So must thou bear witness also at Rome.] This was pleasing intelligence to Paul, who had long desired to see that city, and preach the Gospel of Christ there. He appears to have had an intimation that he should see it; but *how*, he could not tell; and this vision satisfied him that he should be sent thither by God himself. This would settle every fear and scruple concerning the issue of the present persecution.

Verse 12. That they would neither eat nor drink, &c.] These forty Jews were no doubt of the class of the *sicarii* mentioned before, (similar to those

afterwards called *assassins*;) a class of fierce zealots, who took justice into their own hand; and who thought they had a right to despatch all those who, according to their views, were not orthodox in their religious principles. If these were, in their bad way, *conscientious* men, must they not all perish through hunger, as God put it out of their power to accomplish their vow? No: for the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution was held among the Jews as among the Papists: hence it is said, in *Hieros. Avodah Zarah*, fol. 40: “He that hath made a vow not to eat any thing, wo to him, if he eat; and wo to him, if he do not eat. If he eat, he sinneth against his *vow*; and if he do not eat, he sinneth against his *life*.” What must such a man do in this case? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose him from his vow, as it is written, ^{<01218>} **Proverbs 12:18**: “*The tongue of the wise is health.*” When vows were so easily dispensed with, they might be readily multiplied. See *Lightfoot*.

Verse 15. And we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.] We shall lie in wait, and despatch him before he can reach the chief captain. The plan was well and deeply laid; and nothing but an especial providence could have saved Paul.

Verse 16. Paul’s sister’s son] This is all we know of Paul’s family. And we know not how this young man got to Jerusalem; the family, no doubt, still resided at Tarsus.

Verse 17. Bring this young man unto the chief captain] Though St. Paul had the most positive assurance from Divine authority that he should be preserved, yet he knew that the Divine providence acts by reasonable and prudent means; and that, if he neglected to use the means in his power, he could not expect God’s providence to work in his behalf. He who will not help himself, according to the means and power he possesses, has neither reason nor revelation to assure him that he shall receive any assistance from God.

Verse 23. Two hundred soldiers] *στρατιωτας*, *Infantry* or *foot soldiers*.
Horsemen threescore and ten] There was always a certain number of horse, or cavalry, attached to the *foot*.

Spearman] *δεξιολαβους*, Persons who held a spear or javelin in their hand; from *εν τη δεξια λαβειν* *taking or holding a thing in the right hand*. But the *Codex Alexandrinus* reads *δεξιοβολους*, from *δεξια*, the

right hand, and βαλλειν, *to cast or dart*, persons who threw javelins. But both words seem to mean nearly the same thing.

The third hour of the night] About nine o'clock P.M., for the greater secrecy, and to elude the cunning, active malice of the Jews.

Verse 24. Provide them beasts] One for Paul, and some others for his immediate keepers.

Felix the governor.] This Felix was a freed man of the Emperor Claudius, and brother of Pallas, chief favourite of the emperor. Tacitus calls him *Antonius Felix*; and gives us to understand that he governed with all the authority of a king, and the baseness and insolence of a quondam slave. *E libertis Antonius Felix per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.* Hist. v. 9. He had, according to Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, chap. 28, *three queens* to his wives; that is, he was married thrice, and each time to the daughter or niece of a king. Drusilla, the sister of Agrippa, was his wife at this time; see ~~4242~~ **Acts 24:24**. He was an unrighteous governor; a base, mercenary, and bad man: see ~~4242~~ **Acts 24:2**.

Verse 25. He wrote a letter after this manner] It appears that this was not only the *substance* of the letter, but the *letter itself*: the whole of it is so perfectly formal as to prove this; and in this simple manner are all the letters of the ancients formed. In this also we have an additional proof of St. Luke's accuracy.

Verse 30. I sent straightway to thee] As the proper person before whom this business should ultimately come, and by whom it should be decided.

Farewell.] επιωσο, *Be in good health.*

Verse 31. Antipatris.] This place, according to Josephus, Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 23, was anciently called *Capharsaba*, and is supposed to be the same which, in **1 Macc. vii. 31**, is called *Capharsalama*, or *Carphasalama*. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and denominated *Antipatris*, in honour of his father *Antipater*. It was situated between Joppa and Cæsarea, on the road from Jerusalem to this latter city. Josephus says it was fifty *stadia* from Joppa. The distance between Jerusalem and Cæsarea was about *seventy* miles.

Verse 32. On the morrow they left the horsemen] Being now so far from Jerusalem, they considered Paul in a state of safety from the Jews,

and that the seventy horse would be a sufficient guard; the four hundred foot, therefore, returned to Jerusalem, and the horse went on to Cæsarea with Paul. We need not suppose that all this troop did reach Antipatris on the *same* night in which they left Jerusalem; therefore, instead of, *they brought him by night to Antipatris*, we may understand the text thus—*Then the soldiers took Paul by night, and brought him to Antipatris*. And the thirty-second verse need not to be understood as if the foot reached the castle of Antonia the *next day*, (though all this was possible,) but that, having reached *Antipatris*, and refreshed themselves, they set out the same day, on their march to Jerusalem; *on the morrow they returned*, that is, they *began* their march back again *to the castle*. See Clarke on “~~420~~ Acts 24:1”.

Verse 33. Who] That is, the seventy horsemen mentioned above.

Verse 35. I will hear thee] διακουσομαι σου; I will give thee a fair, full, and attentive hearing *when thy accusers are come*; in whose presence thou shalt be permitted to defend thyself.

In Herod’s judgment-hall.] εν τω πραιτωριω, *In Herod’s prætorium*, so called because it was built by Herod the Great. The prætorium was the place where the Roman *prætor* had his residence; and it is probable that, in or near this place, there was a sort of *guard room*, where state prisoners were kept. Paul was lodged here till his accusers should arrive.

ON the preceeding chapter many useful observations may be made.

1. Paul, while acting contrary to the Gospel of Christ, pleaded *conscience* as his guide. *Conscience* is generally allowed to be the *rule of human actions*; but it cannot be a *right* rule, unless it be *well informed*. While it is *unenlightened* it may be a guide to the perdition of its professor, and the cause of the ruin of others. That conscience can alone be trusted in which the light of God’s Spirit and God’s truth dwells. An ill-informed conscience may burn even the saints for God’s sake!

2. No circumstance in which a man can be placed can excuse him from showing respect and reverence to the *authorities* which God, in the course of his providence, has instituted for the benefit of civil or religious society. All such authorities come originally from God, and can never lose any of their *rights* on account of the persons who are invested with them. An *evil*

can never be of *use*, and a *good* may be *abused*; but it loses not its character, essential qualities, or usefulness, because of this abuse.

3. Paul availed himself of the discordant sentiments of his judges, who had agreed to show him no justice, that he might rid himself out of their hands. To take advantage of the sentiments and dispositions of an audience, without deceiving it, and to raise dissension between the enemies of the truth, is an impotent artifice, when *truth* itself is not violated and when *error* is exposed thereby to public view.

4. The Pharisees and Sadducees strove together. God frequently raises up defenders of the principles of truth, even among those who, in practice, are its decided enemies. "Though," says one, "I do not like the truth, yet will I defend it." A man clothed with sovereign authority, vicious in his heart, and immoral in his life, fostered those principles of truth and righteousness by which error was banished from these lands, and pure and undefiled religion established among us for many generations.

5. The *providence of God*, and his *management of the world*, are in many respects great mysteries; but, as far as we are individually concerned, all is plain. Paul had the fullest assurance, from the mouth of Christ himself, that *he should see Rome*; and, consequently, that he should be extricated from all his present difficulties. Why then did he not quietly sit still, when his nephew informed him that forty men had conspired to murder him? Because he knew that God made use of the *prudence* with which he has endowed man as an *agent* in that very providence by which he is supported; and that to neglect the natural means of safety with which God provides us is to tempt and dishonour him, and induce him in *judgment* to use those means *against us*, which, in his *mercy*, he had designed for our comfort and salvation. *Prudence* is well associated even with an apostolical spirit. Every *being* that God has formed, he designs should accomplish those functions for which he has endowed it with the requisite powers.

6. *Claudius Lysias* sent Paul to Felix. "In the generality of human events," says one, "we do not often distinguish the designs of God from those of men. The design of *Lysias*, in preserving Paul from the rage of the Jews, was to render his own conduct free from exception: the design of God was, that he might bring Paul safely to Rome, that he might attack idolatry in its strongest fort, and there establish the Christian faith." God governs the world, and works by *proper* means; and counterworks *evil* or *sinister*

devices, so as ultimately to accomplish the purposes of his will, and cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

7. Felix acted *prudently* when he would not even hear St. Paul till he had his *accusers face to face*. How many false judgments, evil surmises, and uncharitable censures would be avoided, did men always adopt this reasonable plan! Hear either side of a complaint separately, and the evil seems very great: hear both together, and the evil is generally lessened by one half. *Audi et alteram partem*-hear the other side, says a heathen: remember, if you have an ear for the first complainant, you have one also for the second.

ACTS

CHAPTER 24.

After five days, Ananias the high priest, the elders, and one Tertullus, an orator, come to Cæsarea to accuse Paul, 1. The oration of Tertullus, 2-9. Paul's defence, 10-21. Felix, having heard his defence, proposes to leave the final determination of it till Claudius Lysias should come down; and, in the mean time, orders Paul to be treated with humanity and respect, 22, 23. Felix, and Drusilla his wife, hear Paul concerning the faith of Christ; and Felix is greatly affected, 24, 25. On the expectation of obtaining money for his liberation, Felix keeps Paul in prison, 26, and being superseded in the government of Judea by Porcius Festus, in order to please the Jews, he leaves Paul bound, 27.

NOTES ON CHAP. 24.

Verse 1. After five days] These days are to be reckoned from the time in which Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem, and twelve days after he had arrived in that city; see ^{<42411>}Acts 24:11. Calmet reckons the days thus:-St. Luke says that Paul was apprehended at Jerusalem when the seven days of his vow were *nearly* ended, ^{<42127>}Acts 21:27; that is, at the end of the *fifth* day after his arrival. The next day, which was the *sixth*, he was presented before the Sanhedrin. The night following, he was taken to Antipatris. The next day, the *seventh*, he arrived at Cæsarea. *Five* days afterwards, that is, the *twelfth* day after his arrival at Jerusalem, the high priest and the elders, with Tertullus, came down to accuse him before Felix.-But see Clarke's note on "^{<4233>}Acts 23:32".

A certain orator named Tertullus] This was probably a Roman proselyte to Judaism; yet he speaks every where as a *Jew*. Roman orators, advocates; &c., were found in different provinces of the Roman empire; and they, in general, spoke both the Greek and Latin languages; and, being well acquainted with the Roman laws and customs, were no doubt very useful. *Luitprandus* supposed that this Tertullus was the same with him who was colleague with Pliny the younger, in the consulate, in the year of Rome, 852; who is mentioned by Pliny, *Epist.* v. 15. Of this there is no satisfactory proof.

Verse 2. Tertullus began to accuse him] There are three parts in this oration of Tertullus:-1. The *exordium*. 2. The *proposition*. 3. The

conclusion. The *exordium* contains the praise of Felix and his administration, merely for the purpose of conciliating his esteem, ^{<424D>}Acts 24:2-4; The *proposition* is contained in ^{<424E>}Acts 24:5. The *narration* and *conclusion*, in ^{<424F>}Acts 24:6-8.

By thee we enjoy great quietness] As bad a governor as Felix most certainly was, he rendered some services to Judea. The country had long been infested with robbers; and a very formidable banditti of this kind, under one Eliezar, he entirely suppressed. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6; Bell. lib. ii, cap. 22. He also suppressed the sedition raised by an Egyptian impostor, who had seduced 30,000 men; see on ^{<424G>}Acts 21:38. He had also quelled a very afflictive disturbance which took place between the *Syrians* and the *Jews of Cæsarea*. On this ground Tertullus said, *By thee we enjoy great quietness; and illustrious deeds are done to this nation by thy prudent administration*. This was all true; but, notwithstanding this, he is well known from his own historians, and from Josephus, to have been not only a very bad man, but also a very bad governor. He was mercenary, oppressive, and cruel; and of all these the Jews brought proofs to Nero, before whom they accused him; and, had it not been for the interest and influence of his brother *Pallas*; he had been certainly ruined.

Verse 3. We accept it always, and in all places] We have at *all times* a grateful sense of thy beneficent administration, and we talk of it *in all places*, not only before thy face, but behind thy back.

Verse 4. That I be not farther tedious unto thee] That I may neither trespass on thy *time*, by dwelling longer on this subject, nor on thy *modesty*, by thus enumerating thy beneficent deeds.

Hear us of thy clemency] Give us this farther proof of thy kindness, by hearkening to our present complaint. The whole of this *exordium* was *artful* enough, though it was *lame*. The orator had certainly a very *bad cause*, of which he endeavoured to make the *best*. Felix was a bad man and bad governor; and yet he must praise him, to conciliate his esteem. Paul was a very *good man*, and nothing amiss could be proved against him; and yet he must endeavour to blacken him as much as possible, in order to please his unprincipled and wicked employers. His oration has been blamed as *weak, lame, and imperfect*; and yet, perhaps, few, with so *bad a cause*, could have made *better* of it.

Verse 5. For we have found this man, &c.] Here the *proposition* of the orator commences. He accuses Paul, and his accusation includes *four* particulars:- 1. He is a *pest*, **λοιμος**; an exceedingly bad and wicked man. 2. He excites disturbances and seditions against the Jews. 3. He is the chief of the sect of the Nazarenes, who are a very bad people, and should not be tolerated. 4. He has endeavoured to pollute and profane the temple, and we took him in the fact.

A pestilent fellow] The word **λοιμος**, *pestis*-the plague or pestilence, is used by both *Greek* and *Roman* authors to signify a very bad and profligate man; we have weakened the force of the word by translating the substantive adjectively. Tertullus did not say that Paul was a *pestilent fellow*, but he said that he was the very *pestilence itself*. As in that of Martial, xi. 92:-

Non vitiosus homo es, Zoile, sed vitium.

“Thou art not a vicious man, O Zoilus, but thou art vice itself.”

The words **λοιμος**, and *pestis*, are thus frequently used.-See *Wetstein*, Bp. *Pearce*, and *Kypke*.

A mover of sedition] Instead of **στασιν**, *sedition*, ABE, several others, with the *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, and *Æcumenius*, read **στασεις**, *commotions*, which is probably the true reading.

Among all the Jews] Bp. *Pearce* contends that the words should be understood thus-*one that stirreth up tumults AGAINST all the Jews*; for, if they be understood otherwise, Tertullus may be considered as accusing his countrymen, as if they, at Paul's instigation, were forward to make insurrections every where. On the contrary, he wishes to represent them as a *persecuted* and *distressed* people, by means of Paul and his Nazarenes.

A ringleader] **πρωτοστατην**. This is a military phrase, and signifies the *officer who stands on the right of the first rank*; the *captain of the front rank of the sect of the Nazarenes*; **της των ναζωραιων αιρεσεως**, *of the heresy of the Nazarenes*. This word is used six times by St. Luke; viz. in *this* verse, and in ^{<4214>}**Acts 24:14**, and in ^{<41517>}**Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5; 28:22**; but in none of them does it appear necessarily to include that *bad sense* which we generally assign to the word *heresy*.-See **Clarke's note on** ^{<41517>}**Acts 5:17**”, where the subject is largely considered; and see farther on ^{<4214>}**Acts 24:14**.

Verse 6. Hath gone about to profane the temple] This was a heavy charge, if it could have been substantiated, because the Jews were permitted by the Romans to put any person to death who profaned their temple. This charge was founded on the gross calumny mentioned, ^{<42>}**Acts 21:28, 29**; for, as they had seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with Paul in the city, they pretended that he had brought him into the temple.

Would have judged according to our law] He pretended that they would have tried the case fairly, had not the chief captain taken him violently out of their hands; whereas, had not Lysias interfered, they would have murdered him on the spot.

Verse 7. With great violence] *μετα πολλης βιας*, I rather think, means *with an armed force*. Tertullus intimates that Lysias interfered contrary to law, and brought soldiers to support him in his infringement on their constitution. This is what he seems to say and complain of; for the Jews were vexed with Lysias for rescuing the apostle from their hands.

Verse 8. Commanding his accusers to come, &c.] Here Tertullus closes his *opening* and *statement* of the case; and now he proceeds to *call* and examine his *witnesses*; and they were no doubt examined one by one, though St. Luke sums the whole up in one word—*The Jews also assented, saying, that these things were so*. Whoever considers the *plan* of Tertullus's speech, will perceive that it was both *judicious* and *artful*. Let us take a view of the whole:—1. He praises Felix to conciliate his favour. 2. He generally states the great blessings of his administration. 3. He states that the Jews, throughout the whole land, felt themselves under the greatest obligations to him, and extolled his prudent and beneficent management of the public affairs every where. 4. That the prisoner before him was a very bad man; a disturber of the public peace; a demagogue of a dangerous party; and so lost to all sense of religion as to attempt to profane the temple! 5. That, though he should have been punished on the spot, yet, as they were ordered by the chief captain to appear before him, and show the reason why they had seized on Paul at Jerusalem, they were accordingly come; and, having now exhibited their charges, he would, 6. proceed to examine witnesses, who would prove all these things to the satisfaction of the governor. 7. He then called his witnesses, and their testimony confirmed and substantiated the charges. No bad cause was ever more judiciously and cunningly managed.

Verse 10. Then Paul-answered] The apostle's *defence* consists of *two parts*: -1. The *exordium*, which has for its object the praise of his judge, whose qualifications to discern and decide on a question of this nature he fully allows; and expects, from this circumstance, to have a favourable hearing. 2. The *tractation*, which consists of two parts: I. REFUTATION: 1. of the charge of polluting the temple; 2. of stirring up sedition; 3. of being a leader of any sect who had a different worship from the God of their fathers. II. AFFIRMATION: 1. that he had lived so as to preserve a good conscience towards God, and towards men; 2. that so far from *polluting* the temple, he had been *purified* in it, and was found thus worshipping according to the law of God; 3. that what Tertullus and his companions had witnessed was perfectly false; and he defied them to produce a single proof, and appeals to those who had been witnesses of his conduct in Jerusalem, who should have been there could they have proved any thing against him.

Thou hast been of many years a judge] *Cumanus* and *Felix* were, for a time, joint governors of Judea; but, after the condemnation of *Cumanus*, the government fell entirely into the hands of *Felix*; and from Josephus we learn that this was now the *sixth* or *seventh* year of his administration, which might be called *many years*, when the very frequent removals of the governors of the provinces are considered. See Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. 7, and see the *margin*.

A *judge*-*κριτην*, the same here in signification as the Hebrew *cpv shophet*, which means a *ruler* or *governor*. This was the title of the ancient governors of Israel.

The more cheerfully] *ευθυμωτερον*, With a *better heart* or *courage*, because, as thy long residence among us has brought thee to a thorough acquaintance with our customs, I may expect a proper decision in my favour, my cause being perfectly sound.

Verse 11. There are yet but twelve days] This is his *reply* to their charge of *sedition*; the improbability of which is shown from the *short time* he had spent in Jerusalem, quite insufficient to organize a sedition of any kind; nor could a single proof be furnished that he had attempted to seduce any man, or unhinge any person from his allegiance by subtle disputations, either in the *temple*, the *synagogues*, or the *city*. So that this charge necessarily fell

to the ground, self-confuted, unless they could bring substantial proof against him, which he challenges them to do.

Verse 14. That after the way which they call heresy] See the explanation of this word in **Clarke's note on "^{<44517>}Acts 5:17"**, and see before, ^{<4416>}**Acts 24:5**, where what is here translated *heresy*, is there rendered *sect*. At this time the word had no bad acceptation, in reference to religious opinions. The Pharisees themselves, the most *respectable* body among the Jews, are called a *sect*; for Paul, defending himself before Agrippa, says that he *lived a Pharisee according to the strictest* **αἰρεσιν**, *sect, or heresy of their religion*. And Josephus, who was a Pharisee, speaks, **της των φαρισαίων αιρεσεως**, *of the heresy or sect of the Pharisees*. LIFE, chap. xxxviii. Therefore it is evident that the word *heresy* had no *bad* meaning among the Jews; it meant simply a *religious sect*. Why then did they use it by way of degradation to St. Paul? This seems to have been the cause. They had already *two* accredited *sects* in the land, the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*: the interests of each of these were pretty well balanced, and each had a part in the government, for the *council*, or *Sanhedrin*, was composed both of *Sadducees* and *Pharisees*: see ^{<44216>}**Acts 23:6**. They were afraid that the *Christians*, whom they called *Nazarenes*, should form a *new sect*, and divide the interests of both the preceding; and *what* they feared, *that* they charged them with; and, on this account, the *Christians* had both the *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees* for their enemies. They had charged Jesus Christ with plotting against the state, and endeavouring to raise seditions; and they charged his followers with the same. This they deemed a proper engine to bring a *jealous* government into action.

So worship I the God of my fathers] I bring in no *new object* of worship; no new *religious creed*. I believe all things as they profess to believe; and acknowledge the *Law* and the *Prophets* as divinely inspired books; and have never, in the smallest measure, detracted from the *authority* or *authenticity* of either.

Verse 15. And have hope toward God, &c.] I not only do not hold any thing by which the general creed of this people might be altered, in reference to the *present state*; but, also, I hold nothing different from their belief in reference to a *future state*; for, if I maintain the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead*, it is what *themselves allow*.

Verse 16. And herein do I exercise myself] And this very tenet is a pledge for my good behaviour; for as I believe there will be a resurrection, both of the *just* and *unjust*, and that *every man* shall be judged for the *deeds done in the body*, so *I exercise myself day and night, that I may have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.*

Toward God] In entertaining no opinion contrary to *his* truth; and in offering no *worship* contrary to *his* dignity, purity, and excellence.

Toward **men.]** In *doing* nothing to them that I would not, on a change of circumstances, they should do to me; and in *withholding* nothing by which I might comfort and serve them.

Verse 17. Now, after many years, &c.] And as a full proof that I act according to the dictates of this Divine and beneficent creed, though I have been many years absent from my own country, and my political relation to it is almost necessarily dissolved, yet, far from coming to disturb the peace of society, or to injure any person, I have brought *ALMS to my nation*, the fruits of my own *earning* and *influence* among a *foreign people*, and *OFFERINGS* to my God and his temple, proving hereby my attachment to my country, and my reverence for the worship of my country's God.

Verse 18. Found me purified in the temple] And the Jews of Asia, who stirred up the persecution against me in Jerusalem, found me purified in the temple, regularly performing the religious vow into which I had entered; giving no cause for suspicion; for I made no *tumult*, nor had I any *number of people* with me, by whom I could have accomplished any seditious purpose.

Verse 20. Any evil doing in me while I stood before the council] The Jews of Asia, the most competent witnesses, though my declared enemies, and they who stirred up the persecution against me, should have been here: why are *they* kept back? Because they could prove *nothing* against me. Let these, therefore, who *are* here, depose, if they have found any evil in me, or proved against me, by my most virulent adversaries, when examined before them in their council at Jerusalem.

Verse 21. Except it be for this one voice] The Sadducees who belong to that council, and who deny the resurrection of the dead, may indeed blame me for professing my faith in this doctrine; but as this is a doctrine credited by the *nation* in general, and as there can be nothing criminal in such a

belief, and there can bring no accusation against me relative to any thing else, this, of course, is the sum of all the charges to which I am called to answer before you this day.

Verse 22. And when Felix heard these things] There is considerable difficulty in this verse. Translators greatly vary concerning the sense; and the MSS. themselves read variously. Mr. Wakefield's translation appears to be as proper as most: *Now Felix, upon hearing these things, put them off by saying, When Lysias the captain is come down, after I have gained a more exact knowledge of this doctrine, I will inquire fully into your business.*

Calmet's translation is nearly to the same sense:-

Felix, having heard these things, put them off to another time, saying, When I shall have acquired a more accurate knowledge of this sect, and when the tribune Lysias shall have come from Jerusalem, I will judge of your business.

And this mode of interpretation is rendered the more *likely* from the circumstance, that, previously to the coming down of Lysias, Felix had sent for Paul, concerning the faith of Christ; and this he appears to have done, that he might be the better qualified to judge of the business, when it should come again before him. **See Clarke on “⁴²⁰Acts 24:20”**.

Verse 23. He commanded a centurion to keep Paul] He gave him into the custody of a captain, by whom he was most likely to be well used: *and to let him have liberty*; he freed him from the chains with which he was bound to the soldiers, his keepers. **See Clarke on “⁴²¹Acts 21:33”**. *And that he should forbid none of his acquaintance, των ιδιων*, of his own people, his fellow apostles, and the Christians in general, *to minister or come unto him*; to furnish him with any of the *conveniences and comforts* of life, and *visit* him as often as they pleased. This was an ample proof that Felix found no evil in him; and he would certainly have dismissed him but for two reasons: 1. He wanted to *please the Jews*, who, he knew, could depose grievous things against his administration. 2. *He hoped to get money* from the apostle, or his friends, as the purchase of his liberty.

Verse 24. His wife Drusilla] We have already seen that Felix was *thrice* married: two of his wives were named *Drusilla*; one was a Roman, the niece or grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, mentioned by Tacitus,

lib. v. cap. 9. The other, the person in the text, was a *Jewess*, daughter to Herod Agrippa the Great. See ^{<4120>}**Acts 12:1**, &c. When she was but *six* years of age, she was affianced to *Epiphanes*, son of *Antiochus*, king of *Comagene*, who had promised to embrace Judaism on her account; but, as he did not keep his word, her brother Agrippa (mentioned ^{<42513>}**Acts 25:13**) refused to ratify the marriage. About the year of our Lord 53, he married her to *Azizus*, king of the *Emesenes*, who received her on condition of being *circumcised*. Felix having seen her, fell desperately in love with her, and by means of a pretended Jewish magician, a native of Cyprus, persuaded her to leave her husband; on which Felix took her to wife. She appears, on the whole, to have been a person of indifferent character; though one of the finest women of that age. It is said that she, and a son she had by Felix, were consumed in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. See *Josephus*, *Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 7, and see *Calmet* and *Rosenmuller*.

Heard him concerning the faith in Christ.] For the purpose mentioned in **Clarke's note on** "^{<44201>}**Acts 24:21**", that he might be the more accurately instructed in the doctrines, views, &c., of the Christians.

Verse 25. As he reasoned of righteousness] **δικαιοσύνης**; The principles and requisitions of *justice* and *right*, between God and man; and between man and his fellows, in all *relations* and *connections* of life.

Temperance] **εγκρατείας**, *Chastity*; *self-government* or *moderation* with regard to a man's appetites, passions, and propensities of all kinds.

And judgment to come] **κριματος του μελλοντος**; The day of retribution, in which the *unjust*, *intemperate*, and *incontinent*, must give account of all the deeds done in the body. This discourse of St. Paul was most solemnly and pointedly adapted to the state of the person to whom it was addressed. Felix was tyrannous and oppressive in his government; lived under the power of avarice and unbridled appetites; and his incontinence, intemperance, and injustice, appear fully in depriving the king of Emesa of his wife, and in his conduct towards St. Paul, and the *motives* by which that conduct was regulated. And as to Drusilla, who had forsaken the husband of her youth, and forgotten the covenant of her God, and become the *willing* companion of this bad man, she was worthy of the strongest reprehension; and Paul's reasoning on *righteousness*, *temperance*, and *judgment*, was not less applicable to *her* than to her unprincipled paramour.

Felix trembled] “The reason of Felix’s fear,” says Bp. Pearce, “seems to have been, lest Drusilla, who was a Jewess, and knew that what she had done was against the law of Moses, might be influenced by Paul’s discourse, and Felix’s happiness with her disturbed. What is said of Felix, ^{<42>}**Acts 24:26**, seems to show that he had no remorse of conscience for what he had done.” On the head of Drusilla’s scruples, he had little to fear; the king of Emesa, her husband, had been dead about three years before this; and as to *Jewish* scruples, she could be little affected by them: she had already acted in opposition to the Jewish law, and she is said to have turned *heathen* for the sake of Felix. We may therefore hope that Felix felt regret for the iniquities of his life; and that his conscience was neither so *scared* nor so *hardened*, as not to receive and retain some gracious impressions from such a discourse, delivered by the authority, and accompanied with the influence, of the Spirit of God. His frequently sending for the apostle, to speak with him in private, is a proof that he wished to receive farther instructions in a matter in which he was so deeply interested; though he certainly was not without motives of a baser kind; for he hoped to get money for the liberation of the apostle.

Go thy way for this time] His conscience had received as much terror and alarm as it was capable of bearing; and probably he wished to hide, by privacy, the confusion and dismay which, by this time, were fully evident in his countenance.

Verse 26. He hoped also that money should have been given him] Bp. Pearce asks, “How could St. Luke know this?” To which I answer: From the report of St. Paul, with whom Felix had frequent conferences, and to whom he undoubtedly expressed this wish. We may see, here, the most unprincipled *avarice*, in Felix, united to *injustice*. Paul had proved before him his innocence of the charges brought against him by the Jews. They had retired in confusion when he had finished his defence. Had Felix been influenced by the common principles of justice, Paul had been immediately discharged; but he detained him on the hope of a ransom. He saw that Paul was a respectable character; that he had opulent friends; that he was at the head of a very numerous sect, to whom he was deservedly dear; and he took it, therefore, for granted that a considerable sum of money would be given for his enlargement. Felix was a *freed* man of the Emperor Claudius; consequently, had once been a *slave*. The stream rises not above its source: the meanness of the *slave* is still apparent, and it is now insufferable, being

added to the authority and influence of the *governor*. *Low-bred* men should never be intrusted with the administration of public affairs.

Verse 27. After two years] That is, from the time that Paul came prisoner to Cæsarea.

Porcius Festus] This man was put into the government of Judea about A.D. 60, the *sixth* or *seventh* year of Nero. In the succeeding chapter we shall see the part that *he* took in the affairs of St. Paul.

Willing to show the Jews a pleasure] As he had not got the money which he expected, he hoped to be able to prevent the *complaints* of the Jews against his government, by leaving Paul, in some measure, in their hands. For it was customary for governors, &c., when they left, or were removed from a particular district or province, to do some *public, beneficent act*, in order to make themselves *popular*. But Felix gained nothing by this: the Jews pursued him with their complaints against his administration, even to the throne of the emperor. Josephus states the matter thus: "Now when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix, by Nero, the principal of the Jewish inhabitants of Cæsarea went up to Rome, to accuse Felix. And he certainly would have been brought to punishment, had not Nero yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother *Pallas*, who was at that time in the highest reputation with the emperor."—*Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9*. Thus, like the dog in the fable, by *snatching* at the *shadow*, he lost the *substance*. He hoped for money from the apostle, and got none; he sought to conciliate the friendship of the Jews, and miscarried. Honesty is the best policy: he that fears God need fear nothing else. Justice and truth never deceive their possessor.

1. *Envy* and *malice* are indefatigable, and torment themselves in order to torment and ruin others. That a *high priest*, says pious *Quesnel*, should ever be induced to leave the holy city, and the functions of religion, to become the accuser of an innocent person; this could be no other than the effect of a terrible dereliction, and the punishment of the abuse of sacred things.

2. Tertullus begins his speech with *flattery*, against which every judge should have a shut ear; and then he proceeds to *calumny* and *detraction*. These generally succeed each other. He who *flatters* you, will in course *calumniate* you for receiving his flattery. When a man is conscious of the

uprightness of his cause, he must know that to attempt to support it by any thing but *truth* tends directly to debase it.

3. The *resurrection of the body* was the grand object of the genuine Christian's hope; but the ancient Christians only hoped for a *blessed* resurrection on the *ground* of reconciliation to God through the death of his Son. In vain is our hope of glory, if we have not got a *meetness* for it. And who is *fit* for this state of blessedness, but he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and whose heart is purified from deceit and guile!

4. We could applaud the lenity shown to St. Paul by Felix, did not his own conduct render his *motives* for this lenity very suspicious. "To think no evil, where no evil seems," is the duty of a Christian; but to refuse to see it, *where* it most evidently appears, is an imposition on the understanding itself.

5. *Justice, temperance, and a future judgment*, the subjects of St. Paul's discourse to Felix and Drusilla, do not concern an iniquitous judge alone; they are subjects which should affect and interest every Christian; subjects which the eye should carefully examine, and which the heart should ever feel. *Justice* respects our conduct in life, particularly in reference to others: *temperance*, the *state and government* of our souls, in reference to God. He who does not exercise himself in these has neither the *form* nor the *power* of godliness; and consequently must be overwhelmed with the shower of Divine wrath in the day of God's appearing. Many of those called *Christians*, have not less reason to tremble at a display of these truths than this *heathen*.

ACTS

CHAPTER 25.

Porcius Festus being appointed governor of Judea, instead of Felix, the Jews beseech him to have Paul brought up to Jerusalem, that he might be tried there; they lying in wait to kill him on the way, 1-3. Festus refuses, and desires those who could prove any thing against him, to go with him to Cæsarea, 4, 5. Festus, having tarried at Jerusalem about ten days, returns to Cæsarea, and the next day Paul is brought to his trial, and the Jews of Jerusalem bring many groundless charges against him, against which he defends himself, 6-8. In order to please the Jews, Festus asks Paul if he be willing to go up to Jerusalem, and be tried there, 9. Paul refuses, and appeals to Cæsar, and Festus admits the appeal, 10-13. King Agrippa, and Bernice his wife, come to Cesarea to visit Festus, and are informed by him of the accusations against Paul, his late trial, and his appeal from them to Cæsar, 14-21. Agrippa desires to hear Paul; and a hearing is appointed for the following day, 22. Agrippa, Bernice, the principal officers and chief men of the city being assembled, Paul is brought forth, 23. Festus opens the business with generally stating the accusations against Paul, his trial on these accusations, the groundless and frivolous nature of the charges, his own conviction of his innocence, and his desire that the matter might be heard by the king himself, that he might have something specifically to write to the emperor, to whom he was about to send Paul, agreeably to his appeal, 24-27.

NOTES ON CHAP. 25.

Verse 1. Now when Festus was come into the province] By the province is meant Judea; for, after the death of Herod Agrippa, Claudius thought it imprudent to trust the government in the hands of his son Agrippa, who was then but seventeen years of age; therefore *Cuspius Fadus* was sent to be procurator. And when afterwards Claudius had given to Agrippa the tetrarchate of Philip, that of Batanea and Abila, he nevertheless kept the province of Judea more immediately in his own hands, and governed it by procurators sent from Rome. *Joseph. Ant. lib. xx. cap. 7, sec. 1.* Felix being removed, *Porcius Festus* is sent in his place; and having come to Cæsarea, where the Roman governor generally had his residence, after he had tarried three days, he went up to Jerusalem, to acquaint himself with the nature and complexion of the ecclesiastical government of the Jews; no doubt, for the purpose of the better administration of justice among them.

Verse 2. The high priest-informed him against Paul] They supposed that as Felix, to please them, on the *resignation* of his government, had left Paul bound, so Festus, on the *assumption* of it, would, to please them, deliver him into their hand; but, as they wished this to be done under the *colour of justice*, they exhibited a number of charges against Paul, which they hoped would appear to Festus a sufficient reason why a new trial should be granted; and he be sent to Jerusalem to take this trial. Their *motive* is mentioned in the succeeding verse.

Verse 4. Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea] It is truly astonishing that Festus should refuse this favour to the heads of the Jewish nation, which, to those who were not in the secret, must appear so very reasonable; and especially as, on his coming to the government, it might be considered an act that was likely to make him popular; and he could have no interest in denying their request. But God had told Paul that he should testify of him at Rome; and he disposed the heart of Festus to act as he did; and thus disappointed the malice of the Jews, and fulfilled his own gracious design.

He-would depart shortly] So had the *providence* of God disposed matters that Festus was obliged to return speedily to Cæsarea; and thus had not time to preside in such a trial at Jerusalem. And this reason must appear sufficient to the Jews; and especially as he gave them all liberty to come and appear against him, who were able to *prove* the alleged charges.

Verse 5. Let them-which among you are able] οἱ δυνατοί, *Those who have authority*; for so is this word often used by good Greek authors, and by *Josephus*. Festus seems to have said: “I have heard clamours from the multitude relative to this man; but on such clamours no accusation should be founded: yourselves have only the voice of the multitude as the foundation of the request which you now make. I cannot take up accusations which may affect the life of a Roman citizen on such pretences. Are there any *respectable men* among you; men in *office* and *authority*, whose *character* is a pledge for the *truth* of their depositions, who can prove any thing against him? If so, let these come down to Cæsarea, and the cause shall be tried before me; and thus we shall know whether he be a malefactor or not.”

Verse 6. When he had tarried-more than ten days] The *strangeness* of this mode of expression suggests the thought that our printed text is not quite correct in this place; and this suspicion is confirmed by an

examination of MSS. and versions: *ημερας ου πλειους οκτω η δεκα*, NOT *more than EIGHT OR ten days*, is the reading of ABC, several others of great respectability, with the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*. Griesbach admits this reading into the text: and of it Professor White says, *Lectio indubie genuina*: "This is doubtless the genuine reading."

Verse 7. The Jews-laid many and grievous complaints against Paul]

As they must have perceived that the Roman governors would not intermeddle with questions of their law, &c., they no doubt invented some *new charges*, such as *sedition*, *treason*, &c., in order to render the mind of the governor evil affected towards Paul; but their malicious designs were defeated, for *assertion* would not go for *proof* before a Roman tribunal: this court required *proof*, and the blood-thirsty persecutors of the apostle could produce *none*.

Verse 8. While he answered for himself] In this instance St. Luke gives only a general account, both of the accusations and of St. Paul's defense. But, from the words in this verse, the charges appear to have been threefold: 1. That he had broken the law. 2. That he had defiled the temple. 3. That he dealt in treasonable practices: to all of which he no doubt answered *particularly*; though we have nothing farther here than this, *Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.*

Verse 9. Willing to do the Jews a pleasure] This was *merely to please them*, and conciliate their esteem; for he knew that, as Paul was a Roman citizen, he could not oblige him to take a new trial at Jerusalem.

Verse 10. I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat] Every procurator represented the person of the emperor in the province over which he presided; and, as the seat of government was at Cæsarea, and Paul was now before the tribunal on which the emperor's representative sat, he could say, with the strictest propriety, that he stood *before Cæsar's judgment seat*, where, as a freeman of Rome, he should be tried.

As thou very well knowest.] The record of this trial before Felix was undoubtedly left for the inspection of Festus; for, as he left the *prisoner* to his successor, he must also leave the *charges* against him, and the *trial* which he had undergone. Besides, Festus must be assured of his innocence, from the trial through which he had just now passed.

Verse 11. For if I be an offender] If it can be proved that I have broken the laws, so as to expose me to capital punishment, I do not wish to save my life by subterfuges; I am before the only competent tribunal; here my business should be ultimately decided.

No man may deliver me unto them] The words of the apostle are very strong and appropriate. The Jews asked as a *favour*, *χαριν*, from Festus, that he would send Paul to Jerusalem, ^{<425B>}**Acts 25:3**. Festus, willing to do the Jews *χαριν*, this *favour*, asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged, ^{<425B>}**Acts 25:9**. Paul says, I have done nothing amiss, either against the Jews or against Cæsar; therefore no man *με δυναται αυτοις χαρισασθαι*, can make a PRESENT of me to them; that is, *favour* them so far as to put my life into their hands, and thus *gratify* them by my death. Festus, in his address to Agrippa, ^{<42516>}**Acts 25:16**, admits this, and uses the same form of speech: *It is not the custom of the Romans, χαριζεσθαι*, gratuitously to give up any one, &c. Much of the beauty of this passage is lost by not attending to the original words. See Clarke on “^{<42516>}**Acts 25:16**”.

I appeal unto Cæsar.] A freeman of Rome, who had been tried for a crime, and sentence passed on him, had a right to appeal to the emperor, if he conceived the sentence to be unjust; but, even *before* the sentence was pronounced, he had the privilege of an appeal, in criminal cases, if he conceived that the judge was doing any thing contrary to the laws. ANTE *sententiam appellari potest in criminali negotio, si iudex contra leges hoc faciat.*-GROTIUS.

An appeal to the emperor was highly respected. The *Julian* law condemned those magistrates, and others having authority, as violaters of the public peace, who had put to death, tortured, scourged, imprisoned, or condemned any Roman citizen who had appealed to Cæsar. *Lege Julia de vi publica damnatur, qui aliqua potestate præditus, Civem Romanum ad Imperatorem appellansem necarit, necarive jusserit, torserit, verberaverit, condemnaverit, in publica vincula duci jusserit.* Pauli Recept. Sent. lib. v. t. 26.

This law was so very sacred and imperative, that, in the persecution under Trajan, Pliny would not attempt to put to death Roman citizens who were proved to have turned Christians; hence, in his letter to Trajan, lib. x. Ep. 97, he says, *Fuerunt alii similis amentia, quos, quia cives Romani erant,*

annotavi in urbem remittendos. ‘There were others guilty of similar folly, whom, finding them to be Roman citizens, I have determined to send to the city.’ Very likely these had appealed to Cæsar.

Verse 12. Conferred with the council] From this circumstance, we may learn that the appeal of Paul to Cæsar was *conditional*; else Festus could not have deliberated with his council whether it should be granted; for he had no power to refuse to admit such an appeal. We may, therefore, understand Paul thus: ‘I now stand before a tribunal where I *ought* to be judged; if *thou* refuse to hear and try this cause, rather than go to Jerusalem, I appeal to Cæsar.’ Festus, therefore, consulted with the council, whether he should proceed to try the cause, or send Paul to Rome; and it appears that the majority were of opinion that he should be sent to Cæsar.

Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar, &c.] Rather, *Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar, and to Cæsar thou shalt go.* The Jews were disappointed of their hope; and Festus got his hand creditably drawn out of a business with which he was likely to have been greatly embarrassed.

Verse 13. King Agrippa] This was the son of Herod Agrippa, who is mentioned ^{<4120>} **Acts 12:1.** Upon the death of his father’s youngest brother, Herod, he succeeded him in the kingdom of Chalcis, by the favour of the Emperor Claudius: *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 4, s. 2;* and *Bell. lib. ii. cap. 12, s. 1.* Afterwards, Claudius removed him from that kingdom to a larger one, giving him the tetrarchy of Philip, which contained Trachonitis, Batanea, and Gaulonitis. He gave him, likewise, the tetrarchy of Lysanias, and the province which *Varus* had governed. *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 6, s. 1;* *Bell. lib. ii. cap. 19, s. 8.* Nero made a farther addition, and gave him four cities, *Abila, Julias* in Peræa, *Tarichæa* and *Tiberias* in Galilee: *Jos. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, s. 4;* *Bell. lib. ii. cap. 13, s. 2.* Claudius gave him the power of appointing the high priest among the Jews; *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 1, s. 3;* and instances of his exercising this power may be seen in *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, s. 8, 11.* This king was strongly attached to the Romans, and did every thing in his power to prevent the Jews from rebelling against them; and, when he could not prevail, he united his troops to those of Titus, and assisted in the siege of Jerusalem: he survived the ruin of his country several years. See Bishop *Pearce* and *Calmet*.

Bernice, or, as she is sometimes called, *Berenice*, was sister of this Agrippa, and of the *Drusilla* mentioned ^{<4121>} **Acts 24:24.** She was at first

married to her *uncle* Herod, king of Chalcis, *Jos.* Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 9, s. 1; and, on his death, went to live with her brother Agrippa, with whom she was violently suspected to lead an incestuous life. Juvenal, as usual, mentions this in the broadest manner-Sat. vi. ver. 155:-

*Deinde adamas notissimus, et Berenices
In digito factus pretiosior: hunc dedit olim
Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.*

“Next, a most valuable diamond, rendered more precious by being put on the finger of Berenice; a barbarian gave it to this incestuous woman formerly; and Agrippa gave this to his sister.” *Josephus* mentions the report of her having *criminal conversation with her brother Agrippa*, *φημης επισχουσης, οτι τυδελφω συνηει*. To shield herself from this scandal, she persuaded *Polemo*, king of *Cilicia*, to embrace the Jewish religion, and marry her; this he was induced to do on account of her *great riches*; but she soon left him, and he revolted to heathenism: see *Jos.* Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, s. 3. After this, she lived often with her brother, and her life was by no means creditable; she had, however, address to ingratiate herself with Titus Vespasian, and there were even rumours of her becoming empress-propterque insignem reginæ Berenices amorem, cui etiam *nuptias pollicitus* ferebatur.-*Suet.* in Vit. Titi. Which was prevented by the murmurs of the Roman people: *Berenicen statim ab urbe dimisit, invitus invitam*.-*Ibid.* *Tacitus* also, Hist. lib. ii. cap. 1, speaks of her love intrigue with Titus. From all accounts she must have been a woman of great address; and, upon the whole, an exceptionable character.

Verse 14. Declared Paul’s cause unto the king] Festus knew that Agrippa was better acquainted with such matters than he was; and he wished, in some sort, to make him a party in this business.

Verse 15. Desiring to have judgment against him.] Instead of *δικην*, *judgment*, *καταδικην*, *condemnation*, *sentence of death*, is the reading of ABC, and several others, which is probably genuine. This is evidently the meaning of the place, whichever reading we prefer. Nothing could satisfy these men but the death of the apostle. It was not *justice* they wanted, but his destruction.

Verse 16. It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die] *χαριζεσθαι τινα ανθρωπον*, To MAKE A PRESENT of *any man*;

gratuitously to give up the life of any man, through *favour* or caprice. Here is a reference to the subject discussed on ^{<4251>} **Acts 25:11**.

Before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, &c.]
 For this righteous procedure the Roman laws were celebrated over the civilized world. APPIAN, in his *Hist. Roman.*, says: ου πατριον σφισιν ακριτους καταδικαζεσθαι. *It is not their custom to condemn men before they have been heard.* And PHILO *Deuteronomy Præsid. Rom.*, says: τοτε γαρ κοινους εαυτους παρεχοντες δικαστας εξ ισου, και των κατηγορων και απολογουμενων ακουομενοι, μηδενος ακιτου προκαταγινωσκειν αξιουντες, εβραβευον ουτε προς εχθραν, ουτε προς χαριν, αλλα προς την φυσιν της αληθειας, τα δοξαντα ειναι δικαια. “For then, by giving sentence in common, and hearing *impartially* both *plaintiff* and *defendant*, not thinking it right to *condemn any person unheard*, they decided as appeared to them to be just; without either *enmity* or *favour*, but according to the merits of the case.” See Bp. *Pearce*. England can boast such laws, not only in her *statute books*, but in *constant operation* in all her courts of justice. Even the king himself, were he so inclined, could not imprison nor punish a man without the regular procedure of the law; and *twelve honest men*, before whom the evidence has been adduced, the case argued, and the law laid down and explained, are ultimately to judge whether the man be guilty or not guilty. *Here*, in this *favoured* country, are no *arbitrary imprisonments*-no *Bastilles*-no *lettres de cachet*. *Lex facit Regem*: the law makes the king, says *Bracton*, and the king is the grand executor and guardian of the laws-laws, in the eyes of which the *character*, *property*, and *life* of every subject are sacred.

Verse 18. They brought none accusation of such things as I supposed]
 It was natural for Festus, at the first view of things, to suppose that Paul must be guilty of some very atrocious crime. When he found that he had been twice snatched from the hands of the Jews; that he had been brought to Cæsarea, as a prisoner, two years before; that he had been tried once before the Sanhedrin, and once before the governor of the province; that he had now lain two years in bonds; and that the high priest and all the heads of the Jewish nation had united in accusing him, and whose condemnation they loudly demanded; when, I say, he considered all this, it was natural for him to suppose the apostle to be some flagitious wretch; but when he had tried the case, and heard their accusations and his defence, how surprised was he to find that scarcely any thing that amounted to a crime was laid to his charge; and that nothing that was laid to his charge could be *proved*!

Verse 19. Questions-of their own superstition] περι της ιδιας δειδιδαμονιας; *Questions concerning their own religion. Superstition* meant something as *bad* among the Romans as it does among us; and is it likely that *Festus*, only a *procurator*, should thus speak to *Agrippa*, a KING, concerning his *own religion*? He could not have done so without offering the highest insult. The word δεισιδαμονια must therefore simply mean *religion-the national creed*, and the *national worship*, as I have at large proved it to mean, in the observations at the end of ~~<4173>~~ **Acts 17:34**.

And of one Jesus, which was dead, &c.] In this way does this poor heathen speak of the death and resurrection of Christ! There are many who profess Christianity that do not appear to be much farther enlightened.

Verse 20. I doubted of such manner of questions] Such as, whether he had broken their law, defiled their temple; or whether this Jesus, who was dead, was again raised to life.

Verse 21. Unto the hearing of Augustus] εις την του σεβαστου διαγνωσιν; *To the discrimination of the emperor*. For, although σεβαστος is usually translated *Augustus*, and the Roman emperors generally assumed this epithet, which signifies no more than *the venerable*, *the august*, get here it seems to be used merely to express the *emperor*, without any reference to any of his attributes or titles.

Verse 22. I would also hear the man myself] A spirit of curiosity, similar to that of Herod, ~~<2238>~~ **Luke 23:8**.

As Herod, the father of this Agrippa, had been so active an instrument in endeavouring to destroy Christianity, having killed James, and was about to have put Peter to death also, had not God sent him to his own place, there is no doubt that Agrippa had heard much about Christianity; and as to St. Paul, his conversion was so very remarkable that his *name*, in connection with *Christianity*, was known, not only throughout Judea, but through all Asia Minor and Greece. Agrippa, therefore might naturally wish to see and hear a man of whom he had heard so much.

Verse 23. With great pomp] μετα πολλης φαντασιας; *With much phantasy*, great splendour, great parade, *superb attendance* or *splendid retinue*: in this sense the Greek word is used by the best writers. *Wetstein* has very justly remarked, that these children of Herod the Great made this *pompous appearance* in that very city where, a few years before, their

father, for *his* PRIDE, was smitten of God, and eaten up by worms! How seldom do the living lay any of God's judgments to heart!

The place of hearing] A sort of *audience* chamber, in the palace of Festus. This was not a *trial* of Paul; there were no Jews present to accuse him, and he could not be tried but at Rome, as he had appealed to Cæsar. These grandees wished to hear the man speak of his religion, and in his own defense, through a principle of curiosity.

Verse 26. I have no certain thing to write] Nothing alleged against him has been substantiated.

Unto my Lord] The title *κύριος*, *Dominus*, *Lord*, both *Augustus* and *Tiberius* had absolutely refused; and forbade, even by public edicts, the application of it to themselves. Tiberius himself was accustomed to say that he was *lord* only of his *slaves*, *emperor* or general of the *troops*, and *prince* of the *senate*. See *Suetonius*, in his life of this prince. The succeeding emperors were not so modest; they affected the title. Nero, the then emperor, *would* have it; and Pliny the younger is continually giving it to Trajan in his letters.

Verse 27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, &c.] Every reader must feel the awkward situation in which Festus stood. He was about to send a *prisoner* to Rome, to appear before Nero, though he had not *one charge* to support against him; and yet he *must* be sent, for he had appealed to Cæsar. He hoped therefore that Agrippa, who was of the Jewish religion, would be able to discern more particularly the merits of this case; and might, after hearing Paul, direct him how to draw up those letters, which, on sending the prisoner, must be transmitted to the emperor.

This chapter ends as exceptionably as the twenty-first. It should have begun at ^{<442513>}Acts 25:13, and have been continued to the end of the twenty-sixth chapter, or both chapters have been united in one.

1. FROM St. Paul's appeal to Cæsar, we see that it is lawful to avail ourselves, even in the *cause of God*, of those *civil privileges* with which his mercy has blessed us. It is often better to fall into the hands of the *heathen* than into the hands of those who, from mistaken views of religion, have their hearts filled with bitter persecuting zeal. Those who can murder a man, pretendedly for God's sake, because he does not think exactly with

them on *ceremonial* or *speculative* points of divinity, have no portion of that religion which came down from God.

2. The Jews endeavoured by every means to deny the resurrection of our Lord; and it seems to have been one part of their accusation against Paul, that he asserted that the man, Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen from the dead. On this subject, a pious writer observes: “What a train of errors and miseries does *one single instance of deceit* draw after it; and what a judgment upon those, who, by corrupting the guards of the sepulchre, the witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord, have kept the whole nation in infidelity!” Thus it often happens in the world that *one* bad counsel, *one* single lie or calumny, once established, is the source of infinite evils.

3. The grand maxim of the Roman law and government, *to condemn no man unheard, and to confront the accusers with the accused*, should be a sacred maxim with every magistrate and minister, and among all private Christians. How many harsh judgments and uncharitable censures would this prevent! Conscientiously practised in all Christian societies, detraction, calumny, tale-bearing, whispering, backbiting, misunderstandings, with every unbrotherly affection, would necessarily be banished from the Church of God.

ACTS

CHAPTER 26.

Paul answers for himself before Agrippa, to whom he pays a true compliment, in order to secure a favourable hearing, 1-3; gives an account of his education from his youth up, 4, 5; shows that the Jews persecuted him for his maintaining the hope of the resurrection, 6-8; states his persecution of the Christians, 9-11; gives an account of his miraculous conversion, 12-16; and of his call to the ministry, 16-18. His obedience to that call, and his success in preaching the doctrine of Christ crucified, 19-23. While he is thus speaking, Festus interrupts him, and declares him to be mad through his abundant learning, 24; which charge he modestly refutes with inimitable address, and appeals to King Agrippa for the truth and correctness of his speech, 25-27. On which, Agrippa confesses himself almost converted to Christianity, 28. Paul's affectionate and elegant address to him on this declaration, 29. The council breaks up, and they all pronounce him innocent, 30-32.

NOTES ON CHAP. 26.

Verse 1. Then Paul stretched forth the hand] This act, as we have already seen on ^{<4214>}Acts 21:40, was merely to gain attention; it was no rhetorical flourish, nor designed for one. From knowing, partly by descriptions, and partly by ancient statues, how orators and others who address a concourse of people stood, we can easily conceive the attitude of St. Paul. When the right hand was stretched out, the left remained under the cloak, which being thrown off the right shoulder, to give the arm the fuller liberty, it then rested on the left: under these circumstances, the hand could be stretched out gracefully, but was confined to no one attitude, though the third and fourth fingers were generally clenched.

Verse 2. I think myself happy] As if he had said, This is a peculiarly fortunate circumstance in my favour, that I am called to make my defense before a judge so intelligent, and so well acquainted with the laws and customs of our country. It may be necessary just to observe that this Agrippa was king of Trachonitis, a region which lay on the north of Palestine, on the east side of Jordan, and south of Damascus. For his possessions, see Clarke on ^{<4251>}Acts 25:13”.

Verse 4. My manner of life, &c.] The apostle means to state that, though born in Tarsus, he had a regular Jewish education, having been sent up to

Jerusalem for that purpose; but at what age does not appear; probably about twelve, for at this age the male children were probably brought to the annual solemnities. See Clarke on “^{<4024>}Luke 2:41”.

Verse 5. After the most straitest sect] That is, the Pharisees; who were reputed the *strictest* in their *doctrines*, and in their *moral practices*, of all the sects then among the Jews. The sects were the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and *Essenes*.

Verse 6. For the hope of the promise] This does not appear to mean, *the hope of the Messiah*, as some have imagined, but *the hope of the resurrection of the dead*, to which the apostle referred in ^{<4236>}Acts 23:6, where he says to the Jewish council, (from which the Roman governor took him,) *of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question*: see the notes there. And here he says, *I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise, &c.*, and *to which*, he says, ^{<4267>}Acts 26:7, *the twelve tribes hope to come*. The Messiah *had* come, and was gone again, as Paul well knew; and what is here meant is something which the Jews hoped to *come to*, or *attain*; not what was *to come to them*; and this singular observation excludes the Messiah from being meant. It was the resurrection of all men from the dead which Paul’s words signified; and this the Jews had been taught to hope for, by many passages in the Old Testament. I shall only add, that when, in the next verse, this hope of the promise is mentioned as what the Jews did then *hope*, **καταντησαι**, *to come to*, it is the very same word which Paul, in ^{<5131>}Philippians 3:11, uses to express the same thing: *If by any means*, (says he) **καταντησω**, *I might attain to, the resurrection of the dead*. Bp. Pearce.

Verse 8. That God should raise the dead?] As Agrippa believed in the true God, and knew that one of his attributes was *omnipotence*, he could not believe that the resurrection of the dead was an *impossible* thing; and to this belief of his the apostle appeals; and the more especially, because the Sadducees denied the doctrine of the resurrection, though they professed to believe in the same God. *Two* attributes of God stood pledged to produce this resurrection: his *truth*, on which his promise was founded; and his *power*, by which the thing could be easily effected, as that power is *unlimited*.

Some of the best critics think this verse should be read thus: *What! should it be thought a thing incredible with you, if God should raise the dead?*

Verse 10. Many of the saints] From what is said in this verse, it seems that Paul, before his conversion, was invested with much power: he imprisoned the Christians; punished many in various synagogues; compelled them to blaspheme-to renounce, and, perhaps, to execrate Christ, in order to save their lives; and *gave his voice*, exerted all his influence and authority, against them, in order that they might be put to death; and from this it would seem that there were other persons put to death besides St. Stephen, though their names are not mentioned.

Verse 11. Being exceedingly mad against them] Only a *madman* will persecute another because of his differing from him in religious opinion; and the fiercest persecutor is he who should be deemed the most furious madman.

Unto strange cities.] Places out of the jurisdiction of the Jews, such as Damascus, which he immediately mentions.

Verse 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus] See the whole account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus explained at large, in **Clarke's notes on <<400>Acts 9:2**", &c.

Verse 16. But rise, &c.] The particulars mentioned here, and in the two following verses, are not given in <<400>Acts 9:1-9, nor in <<4216>Acts 22:6-11, where he gives an account of his conversion. He has detailed the different circumstances of that important event, as he saw it necessary; and perhaps there were several others which then took place, that he had no opportunity of mentioning, because there was nothing in succeeding occurrences which rendered it necessary to produce them.

To make thee a minister] ὑπηρετην, *An under-rower*; that is, one who is *under the guidance and authority of another*; an *assistant*, or *servant*. So Paul was to act solely under the authority of Jesus Christ; and *tug hard at the oar*, in order to bring the vessel, through the tempestuous ocean, to the safe harbour. See the concluding observations on John 6, see **Clarke <<307>John 6:71**".

And a witness] μαρτυρα, *A martyr*. Though this word literally means a *witness*, yet we apply it only to such persons as have borne testimony to the truth of God at the hazard and expense of their lives. In this sense, also, ancient history states St. Paul to have been a *witness*; for it is said he was beheaded at Rome, by the command of Nero.

In the which I will appear] Here Christ gives him to understand that he should have farther communications from himself; and this may refer either to those interpositions of Divine Providence by which he was so often rescued from destruction, or to those encouragements which he received in dreams, visions, trances, &c., or to that general inspiration under which he was enabled to apprehend and reveal the secret things of God, for the edification of the Church. To all of which may be added that *astonishing power* by which he was so often enabled to work miracles for the confirmation of the truth.

Verse 17. Delivering thee from the people] From the *Jews-and* from the *Gentiles*, put here in opposition to the *Jews*; and both meaning *mankind* at large, wheresoever the providence of God might send him. But he was to be delivered from the malice of the *Jews*, that he might be sent with salvation to the *Gentiles*.

Verse 18. To open their eyes] To be the instrument of informing their *understanding* in the things of God.

To turn them from darkness to light] From *heathenism* and *superstition* to the *knowledge* and *worship* of the true God.

From **the power of Satan unto God]** *της εξουσιας του σατανα*, From the *authority* and *domination* of Satan; for as the kingdom of darkness is his kingdom, so those who live in this darkness are under his dominion; and he has *authority* and *right* over them. The blessed Gospel of Christ is the means of bringing the soul from this state of spiritual darkness and wretchedness to the light and liberty of the children of God; and thus they are brought from under the *power* and *authority of Satan*, to be under the *power and authority of GOD*.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins] That all their sins may be pardoned, and their souls sanctified; for nothing less is implied in the phrase, *αφεσις αμαρτιων*, which signifies the *taking away* or *removal of sins*.

And inheritance] By remission of sins, i.e. the removal of the guilt and pollution of sin, they become children of God; and, if *children*, then *heirs*; for the children of the heavenly family shall alone possess the heavenly *estate*. And as the inheritance is said to be *among them that are*

SANCTIFIED, this is a farther proof that **αφεσις αμαρτιων** signifies, not only the *forgiveness of sins*, but also the *purification of the heart*.

By faith that is in me.] By believing on Christ Jesus, as dying for their offenses, and rising again for their justification. Thus we see that not only this salvation comes through *Christ*, but that it is to be received by *faith*; and, consequently, neither by the merit of *works*, nor by that of *suffering*.

Verse 19. I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision] This, O Agrippa, was the cause of my conversion from my prejudices and mal-practices against the doctrine of Christ. The vision was from heaven; I received it as such, and began to preach the faith which I had before persecuted.

Verse 20. But showed first unto them of Damascus] He appears to have preached at Damascus, and in the neighbouring parts of Arabia Deserta, for about three years; and afterwards he went up to Jerusalem. See <4017>Galatians 1:17, 18; and see Clarke's note on "<44023>Acts 9:23".

That they should repent] Be deeply humbled for their past iniquities, and *turn to God* as their *Judge* and *Saviour*, avoiding all *idolatry* and all *sin*; and thus *do works meet for repentance*; that is, show by their *conduct* that they had *contrite hearts*, and that they sincerely sought salvation from God alone. For the meaning of the word *repentance*, see Clarke's note on "<4012>Matthew 3:2".

Verse 21. For these causes the Jews-went about to kill me.] These *causes* may be reduced to *four heads*:-1. He had maintained the *resurrection of the dead*. 2. The *resurrection of Christ*, whom they had crucified and slain. 3. That this *Jesus was the promised Messiah*. 4. He had *offered salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews*. He does not mention the accusation of having *defiled the temple*, nor of *disloyalty to the Roman government*; probably, because his adversaries had abandoned these charges at his preceding trial before Festus: see <4258>Acts 25:8; and see *Calmet*.

Verse 22. Having-obtained help of God] According to the gracious promise made to him: see <4257>Acts 26:17.

Witnessing both to small and great] Preaching before kings, rulers, priests, and peasants; fearing no evil, though ever surrounded with evils; nor slackening in my duty, notwithstanding the opposition I have met with

both from Jews and Gentiles. And these continual interpositions of God show me that I have not mistaken my call, and encourage me to go forward in my work.

Verse 23. That Christ should suffer] That *the Christ*, or *Messiah*, should suffer. This, though fully revealed in the prophets, the prejudices of the Jews would not permit them to receive: they expected their Messiah to be a *glorious secular prince*; and, to reconcile the fifty-third of Isaiah with their system, they formed the childish notion of two Messiahs—*Messiah ben David*, who should reign, conquer, and triumph; and *Messiah ben Ephraim*, who should suffer and be put to death. A distinction which has not the smallest foundation in the whole Bible.

As the apostle says he preached *none other things than those which Moses and the prophets said should come*, therefore he understood that both Moses and the prophets spoke of the *resurrection of the dead*, as well as of the *passion and resurrection of Christ*. If this be so, the favourite system of a learned bishop cannot be true; viz. that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was unknown to the ancient Jews.

That he should be the first that should rise from the dead] That is, that he should be the first who should rise from the dead so as *to die no more*; and to give, in his own person, the proof of the resurrection of the human body, no more to return under the empire of death. In no other sense can Jesus Christ be said to be the *first that rose again from the dead*; for Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite. A dead man, put into the sepulchre of the Prophet Elisha, was restored to life as soon as he touched the prophet's bones. Christ himself had raised the widow's son at Nain; and he had also raised Lazarus, and several others. All these died again; but the human nature of our Lord was raised from the dead, and can die no more. Thus he was the first who rose again from the dead to return no more into the empire of death.

And should show light unto the people] Should give the true knowledge of the law and the prophets to the Jews; for these are meant by the term *people*, as in ^{<42617>} **Acts 26:17**. And to the *Gentiles*, who had no revelation, and who sat in the valley of the shadow of death: these also, through Christ, should be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and be made a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. That the Messiah should be the *light* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the prophets had clearly foretold: see ^{<23101>} **Isaiah 60:1**: *Arise and shine*, or be

illuminated, for thy LIGHT is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And again, ^{<23906>}Isaiah 49:6: I will give thee for a LIGHT to the GENTILES, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth. With such sayings as these Agrippa was well acquainted, from his education as a Jew.

Verse 24. Paul, thou art beside thyself] “Thou art mad, Paul!” “Thy great learning hath turned thee into a madman.” As we sometimes say, *thou art cracked, and thy brain is turned*. By the τα πολλὰ γραμματα it is likely that Festus meant no more than this, that Paul had got such a vast variety of knowledge, that his brain was overcharged with it: for, in this speech, Paul makes no particular show of what we call *learning*; for he quotes none of their celebrated authors, as he did on other occasions; see ^{<41728>}Acts 17:28. But he here spoke of spiritual things, of which Festus, as a Roman heathen, could have no conception; and this would lead him to conclude that Paul was actually *deranged*. This is not an uncommon case with many professing Christianity; who, when a man speaks on experimental religion, on the life of God in the soul of man-of the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins-of the witness of the Spirit, &c., &c., things essential to that Christianity by which the soul is saved, are ready to cry out, *Thou art mad*: he is an enthusiast: that is, a religious madman; one who is not worthy to be regarded; and yet, strange to tell, these very persons who thus cry out are surprised that Festus should have supposed that Paul was *beside himself*!

Verse 25. I am not mad, most noble Festus] This most sensible, appropriate, and modest answer, was the fullest proof he could give of his *sound sense* and *discretion*. The title, κρατιστε, *most noble*, or *most excellent*, which he gives to Festus, shows at once that he was far above indulging any sentiment of *anger* or *displeasure* at Festus, though he had called him a *madman*; and it shows farther that, with the strictest conscientiousness, even an *apostle* may give *titles of respect* to men in power, which taken *literally*, imply much more than the persons *deserve* to whom they are applied. κρατιστος, which implies *most excellent*, was merely a *title* which belonged to the *office* of Festus. St. Paul hereby acknowledges him as the *governor*; while, perhaps, *moral excellence* of any kind could with no propriety be attributed to him.

Speak forth the words of truth and soberness.] αληθειας και σωφροσυνης, Words of *truth* and of *mental soundness*. The very terms

used by the apostle would at once convince Festus that he was mistaken. The **σωφροσύνη** of the apostle was elegantly opposed to the **μανία** of the governor: the one signifying *mental derangement*, the other *mental sanity*. Never was an answer, on the spur of the moment, more happily conceived.

Verse 26. Before whom also I speak freely] This is a farther judicious apology for himself and his discourse. As if he had said: Conscious that the king understands all these subjects well, being fully versed in the law and the prophets, I have used the utmost freedom of speech, and have mentioned the tenets of my religion in their *own appropriate terms*.

This thing was not done in a corner.] The preaching, miracles, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, were most public and notorious; and of them Agrippa could not be ignorant; and indeed it appears, from his own answer, that he was not, but was now more fully persuaded of the truth than ever, and almost led to embrace Christianity.

Verse 27. Believest thou the prophets?] Having made his elegant compliment and vindication to Festus, he turns to Agrippa; and, with this strong *appeal* to his religious feeling, says, *Believest thou the prophets?* and immediately anticipates his reply, and, with great address, speaks for him, *I know that thou believest*. The inference from this belief necessarily was: “As thou believest the prophets, and I have proved that the prophets have spoken about Christ, as suffering and, triumphing over death, and that all they say of the Messiah has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, then thou must acknowledge that my doctrine is true.”

Verse 28. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.] **εν ολιγω με πειθεις χριστιανον γενεσθαι.** This declaration was almost the necessary consequence of the apostle’s reasoning, and Agrippa’s faith. If he believed the prophets, see ⁴⁰²Acts 26:22, 23, and believed that Paul’s application of their words to Christ Jesus was correct, he must acknowledge the *truth* of the Christian religion; but he might *choose* whether he would *embrace* and *confess* this truth, or not. However, the sudden appeal to his religious faith extorts from him the declaration, *Thou hast nearly persuaded me to embrace Christianity*. How it could have entered into the mind of any man, who carefully considered the *circumstances* of the case, to suppose that these words of Agrippa are spoken *ironically*, is to me unaccountable. Every circumstance in the case proves them to have been the genuine effusion of a heart persuaded of the

truth; and only prevented from fully acknowledging it by secular considerations.

Verse 29. I would to God, &c.] εὐξαίμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ—So fully am I persuaded of the infinite excellence of Christianity, and so truly happy am I in possession of it, that *I most ardently wish that not only thou, but this whole council, were not only almost, but altogether, such as I am, these CHAINS excepted.* Thus, while his heart glows with affection for their best interests, he wishes that they might enjoy all his blessings, if possible, without being obliged to bear any cross on the account. His *holding up his chain*, which was probably now detached from the soldier's arm, and wrapped about his own, must have made a powerful impression on the minds of his audience. Indeed, it appears they could *bear the scene no longer*; the king was overwhelmed, and rose up instantly, and so did the rest of the council, and went immediately aside; and, after a very short conference among themselves, they unanimously pronounced him innocent; and his *last word*, **τῶν δεσμῶν**, BONDS! and the *action* with which it was accompanied, had made such a deep impression upon their hearts that they conclude their judgment with that very identical word **δεσμῶν**. Would to God, says the apostle, that all who hear me this day were altogether such as as I am, except *these BONDS!* The whole council say—This man hath done nothing worthy of death nor of BONDS! **Δεσμῶν**, BONDS, is *echoed* by them from the last words of the apostle; as we may plainly perceive that, seeing such an innocent and *eminent* man suffering such indignity had made a deep impression upon their hearts. Alas! why should such a man be in B-O-N-D-S!

Verse 32. Then said Agrippa, &c.] The king himself, who had participated in the strongest emotions on the occasion, feels himself prompted to wish the apostle's immediate liberation; but this was now rendered impracticable, because he had appealed to Cæsar; the appeal was no doubt registered, and the business must now proceed to a full hearing. Bp. Pearce conjectures, with great probability, that Agrippa, on his return to Rome, represented Paul's case so favourably to the emperor, or his ministers of state, that he was soon set at liberty there, as may be concluded from ^{<4283>}**Acts 28:30**, that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired place; and to the same cause it seems to have been owing that *Julius*, who had the care of Paul as a prisoner in the ship, treated him courteously; see ^{<4278>}**Acts 27:3, 43**. And the same may be gathered from ^{<4284>}**Acts 28:14**,

16. So that this defence of the apostle before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, &c., was ultimately serviceable to his important cause.

1. THE conversion of Saul was a wonderful work of the Spirit of God; and, as we have already seen, a strong proof of the truth of Christianity; and the apostle himself frequently appeals to it as such.

2. His mission to the Gentiles was as extraordinary as the calling of the Gentiles itself. Every thing is *supernatural* in a work of *grace*; for, because *nature* cannot produce the effects, the *grace of God*, which implies the co-operation of his omniscience, omnipotence, and endless mercy, undertakes to perform the otherwise impossible task.

3. *From the commission of St. Paul*, we see the *state* in which the Gentile world was, previously to the preaching of the Gospel.

1. Their *eyes* are represented *as closed*; their understanding was darkened; and they had no right apprehension of spiritual or eternal things.

2. They were in a state of *darkness*; living without the knowledge of the true God, in a *region* where nothing but *ignorance* prevailed.

3. They were *under the dominion and authority of Satan*; they were his vassals, and he claimed them as his *right*.

4. They were in a state of *guiltiness*; living, in almost every respect, in opposition to the dictates even of *nature* itself.

5. They were *polluted*; not only irregular and abominable in their *lives*, but also impure and unholy in their hearts. Thus far their *state*.

Behold what the grace of the Gospel is to do for these Gentiles, in order to redeem them from this state:-

1. It *opens their eyes*; gives them an *understanding*, whereby they may discern the truth; and, without this illumination from above, the truth of God can never be properly apprehended.

2. It *turns them from the darkness to the light*; a fine metaphor, taken from the act of a blind man, who is continually turning his eyes towards the light, and rolling his eyes upwards towards the sun, and in all directions, that he may collect as many of the scattered rays as he can, in order to form distinct vision. In this way the Gentiles appeared to be, *in vain*, searching

after the light, till the Gospel came, and turned their eyes to the Sun of righteousness.

3. They are brought from under the *bondage* and *slavery* of *sin* and *Satan*, to be put under the obedience of Jesus Christ. So that Christ and his grace as truly and as fully *rule* and *govern* them as sin and Satan did formerly. This is a proof that the change is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

4. He *pardons their sin*, so that they are no longer liable to endless perdition.

5. He *sanctifies* their nature, so that they are capable of loving and serving him fervently with pure hearts; and are thus rendered fit for the enjoyment of the inheritance among the saints in light.

Such a salvation, from such a bondage, does the Gospel of Christ offer to the Gentiles-to a lost world. It is with extreme difficulty that any person can be persuaded that he needs a similar work of grace on his heart to that which was necessary for the conversion of the Gentiles. We may rest assured that no man is a Christian merely by birth or education. If Christianity implies the life of God in the soul of man-the remission of sins-the thorough purification of the heart, producing that holiness without which none can see the Lord, then it is evident that God alone can do this work, and that neither *birth* nor *education* can bestow it. By birth, every man is sinful; by practice, every man is a transgressor; for all have sinned. God alone, by faith in Christ Jesus, can save the sinner from his sins. Reader, has God saved *thee* from this state of wretchedness, and brought thee “into the glorious liberty of his children?” Let thy conscience answer for itself.

ACTS

CHAPTER 27.

It being determined that Paul should be sent to Rome, he is delivered to Julius, a centurion, 1. They embark in a ship of Adramyttium, and come the next day to Sidon, 2, 3. They sail thence, and pass Cyprus, Cilicia, and Pamphylia, and come to Myra, 4, 5. They are transferred there to a ship of Alexandria going to Italy; sail past Cnidus, Crete, Salmone, and come to the Fair Havens, 6-8. Paul predicts a disastrous voyage, 9-11. They sail from the Fair Havens, in order to reach Crete, and winter there; but, having a comparatively favourable wind, they sail past Crete, and meet with a tempest, and are brought into extreme peril and distress, 12-20. Paul's exhortation and prediction of the loss of the ship, 21-26. After having been tossed about in the Adriatic Sea, for many days, they are at last shipwrecked on the island of Melita; and the whole crew, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six persons, escape safe to land, on broken fragments of the ship, 27-44.

NOTES ON CHAP. 27.

Verse 1. And when it was determined, &c.] That is, when the governor had given orders to carry Paul to Rome, according to his appeal; together with other prisoners who were bound for the same place.

We should sail] By this it is evident that St. Luke was with Paul; and it is on this account that he was enabled to give such a circumstantial account of the voyage.

Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.] Lipsius has found the name of this cohort on an ancient marble; see Lips. in *Tacit.* Hist. lib. ii. The same cohort is mentioned by *Suetonius*, in his life of Nero, 20.

Verse 2. A ship of Adramyttium] There were several places of this name; and in different MSS. the name is variously written. The port in question appears to have been a place in Mysia, in Asia Minor. And the abbé *Vertot*, in his history of the *Knights of Malta*, says it is now called *Mehedia*. Others think it was a city and seaport of *Africa*, whence the ship mentioned above had been fitted out; but it is more probable that the city and seaport here meant is that on the coast of the Ægean Sea, opposite Mitylene, and not far from Pergamos. See its situation on the *map*.

Aristarchus, a Macedonian] We have seen this person with St. Paul at Ephesus, during the disturbances there, ^{<4192>}**Acts 19:29**, where he had been seized by the mob, and was in great personal danger. He afterwards attended Paul to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia, ^{<4304>}**Acts 20:4**. Now, accompanying him to Rome, he was there a *fellow prisoner* with him, ^{<5040>}**Colossians 4:10**, and is mentioned in St. Paul's epistle to Philemon, ^{<50124>}**Philemon 1:24**, who was probably their common friend.-*Dodd*. Luke and Aristarchus were certainly not prisoners at this time, and seem to have gone with St. Paul merely as his companions, through affection to him, and love for the cause of Christianity. How Aristarchus became his *fellow prisoner*, as is stated ^{<5040>}**Colossians 4:10**, we cannot tell, but it could not have been at this time.

Verse 3. Touched at Sidon] For some account of this place, see Clarke's notes on "^{<40121>}**Matthew 11:21**"; and see Clarke "^{<44220>}**Acts 12:20**".

Julius courteously entreated Paul] At the conclusion of the preceding chapter, it has been intimated that the kind treatment which Paul received, both from Julius and at Rome, was owing to the impression made on the minds of Agrippa and Festus, relative to his innocence. It appears that Julius permitted him to go ashore, and visit the Christians which were then at Sidon, without using any extraordinary precautions to prevent his escape. He was probably accompanied with the soldier to whose arm he was chained; and it is reasonable to conclude that this soldier would *fare* well on St. Paul's account.

Verse 4. We sailed under Cyprus] See Clarke on "^{<4036>}**Acts 4:36**".

Verse 5. Pamphylia] See Clarke on "^{<4020>}**Acts 2:10**".

Myra, a city of Lycia.] The name of this city is written variously in the MSS., *Myra*, *Murra*, *Smyra*, and *Smyrna*. Grotius conjectures that all these names are *corrupted*, and that it should be written *Limyra*, which is the name both of a *river* and *city* in Lycia. It is certain that, in common conversation, the first syllable, *li*, might be readily dropped, and then *Myra*, the word in the text, would remain. Strabo mentions both *Myra* and *Limyra*, lib. xiv. p. 666. The former, he says, is *twenty stadia from the sea*, **επι μετεωρου λοφου**, *upon a high hill*: the latter, he says, is the name of a *river*; and *twenty stadia up this river is the town Limyra itself*. These places were not far distant, and one of them is certainly meant.

Verse 6. A ship of Alexandria] It appears, from ~~4278~~ Acts 27:38, that this ship was laden with *wheat*, which she was carrying from Alexandria to Rome. We know that the Romans imported much corn from Egypt, together with different articles of *Persian* and *Indian* merchandise.

Verse 7. Sailed slowly many days] Partly because the *wind* was contrary, and partly because the vessel was *heavy laden*.

Over against Cnidus] This was a city or promontory of Asia, opposite to Crete, at one corner of the peninsula of Caria. Some think that this was an island between Crete and a promontory of the same name.

Over against Salmone] We have already seen that the island formerly called *Crete* is now called *Candia*; and Salmone or *Sammon*, or *Samonium*, now called Cape *Salamon*, or *Salamina*, was a promontory on the eastern coast of that island.

Verse 8. The Fair Havens] This port still remains, and is known by the same name; it was situated towards the northern extremity of the island.

Was the city of Lasea.] There is no city of this name now remaining: the Codex Alexandrinus reads *αλασσα*, *Alassa*; probably *Lysia*, near the port of *Gortyna*, to the eastward.

Verse 9. Sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past] It is generally allowed that the fast mentioned here was that of the *great day of atonement* which was always celebrated on the *tenth* day of the *seventh* month, which would answer to the latter end of our *September*; see ~~18169~~ **Leviticus 16:29; 23:27**, &c. As this was about the time of the autumnal equinox, when the Mediterranean Sea was sufficiently tempestuous, we may suppose this feast alone to be intended. To sail after this feast was proverbially dangerous among the ancient Jews. See proofs in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 10. I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt, &c.] Paul might either have had this intimation from the Spirit of God, or from his own knowledge of the state of this sea after the autumnal equinox, and therefore gave them this prudent warning.

Verse 11. The centurion believed the master] *τω κυβερνητη*, the *pilot*; and owner of the ship, *τω ναυκληρω*, the *captain* and *proprietor*. This latter had the command of the ship and the crew; the *pilot* had the guidance

of the vessel along those dangerous coasts, under the direction of the captain; and the centurion had the power to cause them to proceed on their voyage, or to go into port, as he pleased; as he had other state prisoners on board; and probably the ship itself was freighted for government. Paul told them, if they proceeded, they would be in danger of shipwreck; the *pilot* and *captain* said there was *no* danger; and the *centurion*, believing them, commanded the vessel to proceed on her voyage. It is likely that they were now in the port called *the Fair Havens*.

Verse 12. Might attain to Phœnice] It appears that the *Fair Havens* were at the *eastern* end of the island, and they wished to reach *Phœnice*, which lay farther towards the *west*.

Toward the south-west and north-west.] *κατα λιβα και κατα χωρον*. The *libs* certainly means the *south-west*, called *libs*, from *Libya*, from which it blows towards the Ægean Sea. The *chorus*, or *caurus*, means a *north-west* wind. Virgil mentions this, *Geor.* iii. ver. 356.

Semper hyems, semper spirantes frigora cauri.

*“It is always winter; and the cauri,
the north-westers, ever blowing cold.”*

Dr. Shaw lays down this, and other winds, in a Greek compass, on his map, in which he represents the drifting of St. Paul’s vessel from Crete, till it was wrecked at the island of Melita. *Travels*, p. 331, 4to. edit.

Verse 13. When the south wind blew softly] Though this wind was not very favourable, yet, because it blew *softly*, they supposed they might be able to make their passage.

They sailed close by Crete.] Kept as near the coast as they could. See the track on the map.

Verse 14. A tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.] Interpreters have been greatly perplexed with this word; and the ancient copyists not less so, as the word is variously written in the MSS. and versions. Dr. Shaw supposes it to be one of those tempestuous winds called *levanters*, which blow in all directions, from N.E. round by the E. to S.E. The *euroclydon*, from the circumstances which attended it, he says, “seems to have varied very little from the true *east* point; for, as the ship could not bear, *αντοφθαλμειν*, *loof up*, against it, ^{<42715>}**Acts 27:15**, but they *were obliged to let her drive*, we cannot conceive, as there are no remarkable currents in

that part of the sea, and as the rudder could be of little use, that it could take any other course than as the winds directed it. Accordingly, in the description of the storm, we find that the vessel was first of all *under the island Clauda*, ^{<42716>}Acts 27:16, which is a little to the southward of the parallel of that part of the coast of Crete from whence it may be supposed to have been driven; then it was *tossed* along the bottom of the *Gulf of Adria*, ^{<42727>}Acts 27:27, and afterwards broken to pieces, ^{<42741>}Acts 27:41, at *Melita*, which is a little to the *northward* of the parallel above mentioned; so that the direction and course of this particular *euroclydon* seems to have been first at *east by north*, and afterwards, pretty nearly *east by south*.” These winds, called now *levaners*, and formerly, it appears, *euroclydon*, were no determinate winds, blowing always from one point of the compass: *euroclydon* was probably then, what *levanter* is now, the name of any tempestuous wind in that sea, blowing from the *north-east* round by *east* to the *south-east*; and therefore St. Luke says, there rose against it (i.e. the vessel) a tempestuous wind called *euroclydon*; which manner of speaking shows that he no more considered it to be confined to any one particular point of the compass, than our sailors do their *levanter*. Dr. Shaw derives *ευροκλυδων* from *ευρου κλυδων*, an *eastern tempest*, which is the very meaning affixed to a *levanter* at the present day.

The reading of the Codex Alexandrinus is *ευρακυλων*, the *north-east* wind, which is the same with the *euro-aquilo* of the Vulgate. This reading is approved by several eminent critics; but Dr. Shaw, in the place referred to above, has proved it to be insupportable.

Dr. Shaw mentions a custom which he has several times seen practised by the Mohammedans in these *levaners*:—After having tied to the mast, or ensign staff, some apposite passage from the Koran, they collect *money*, sacrifice a *sheep*, and throw them both into the sea. This custom, he observes, was practised some thousand years ago by the Greeks: thus *Aristophanes*:-

Ἀρνῖ, ἀρνα μελαιναν, παιδες, εξενεγκατε,
Τυφως γαρ εκβαινειν παρασκευαζεται.

Ran. Act. iii. s. 2, ver. 871.

*A lamb! boys, sacrifice a black lamb immediately:
For a tempest is about to burst forth.*

Virgil refers to the same custom:-

*Sic fatus, meritos aris mactavit honores:
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
Nigram hyemi pecudem, zephyris felicibus albam.
Æn. iii. ver. 118.*

Thus he spake, and then sacrificed on the altars the proper eucharistic victims:-

*A bull to Neptune, and a bull to thee, O beautiful Apollo;
A black sheep to the north wind, and a white sheep to the west.*

And again:-

**Tres Eryci vitutos, et tempestatibus agnam,
Cædere deinde jubet.
Æn. v. ver. 772.**

*Then he commanded three calves to be sacrificed to Eryx,
and a lamb to the tempests.*

In the days of the Prophet Jonah the mariners in this sea were accustomed to do the same. *Then they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and vowed vows;* <33116> **Jonah 1:16.** See Shaw's Travels, 4to. edit. p. 329-333.

The heathens supposed that these *tempests* were occasioned by evil *spirits*: and they sacrificed a *black sheep* in order to drive the demon away. See the ancient Scholiast on Aristophanes, in the place cited above.

Sir George Staunton (Embassy to China, vol. ii. p. 403) mentions a similar custom among the Chinese, and gives an instance of it when the yachts and barges of the embassy were crossing the Yellow River:-

“The amazing velocity with which the Yellow River runs at the place where the yacht and barges of the embassy were to cross it rendered, according to the notions of the Chinese crews, a sacrifice necessary to the spirit of the river, in order to insure a safe passage over it. For this purpose, the master, surrounded by the crew of the yacht, assembled upon the fore-castle; and, holding as a victim in his hand a cock, wrung off his head, which committing to the stream, he consecrated the vessel with the blood spouting from the body, by sprinkling it upon the deck, the masts, the anchors, and the doors of the apartments; and stuck upon them a few of the feathers

of the bird. Several bowls of meat were then brought forward, and ranged in a line across the deck. Before these were placed a cup of oil, one filled with tea, one with some ardent spirit, and a fourth with salt; the captain making, at the same time, three profound inclinations of his body, with hands uplifted, and muttering a few words, as if of solicitation to the deity. The loo, or brazen drum, was beaten in the meantime forcibly; lighted matches were held towards heaven; papers, covered with tin or silver leaf, were burnt; and crackers fired off in great abundance by the crew. The captain afterwards made libations to the river, by emptying into it, from the vessel's prow, the several cups of liquids; and concluded with throwing in also that which held the salt. All the ceremonies being over, and the bowls of meat removed, the people feasted on it in the steerage, and launched afterwards, with confidence, the yacht into the current. As soon as she had reached the opposite shore, the captain returned thanks to heaven, with three inclinations of the body.

“Besides the daily offering and adoration at the altar erected on the left or honourable side of the cabin in every Chinese vessel, the solemn sacrifices above described are made to obtain the benefit of a fair wind, or to avert any impending danger. The particular spot upon the forecastle, where the principal ceremonies are performed, is not willingly suffered to be occupied or defiled by any person on board.”

Verse 15. And when the ship was caught] συναρπασθεντος δε του πλοιου. The ship was violently hurried away before this strong *levanter*; so that it was impossible for her, *αντοφθαλμειν*, to *face the wind*, to *turn her prow to it*, so as to *shake it out*, as I have heard sailors say, and have seen them successfully perform in violent tempests and squalls.

We let her drive.] We were obliged to let her go right before this tempestuous wind, whithersoever it might drive her.

Verse 16. A certain island-called Claudia] Called also *Gaudos*; situated at the south-western extremity of the island of Crete, and now called *Gozo*, according to Dr. Shaw.

Much work to come by the boat] It was likely to have been washed overboard; or, if the boat was in *tow*, at the stern of the vessel, which is

probable, they found it very difficult to save it from being *staved*, or broken to pieces.

Verse 17. Undergirding the ship] This method has been used even in modern times. It is called frapping the ship. A stout cable is slipped under the vessel at the prow, which they can conduct to any part of the ship's keel; and then fasten the two ends on the deck, to keep the planks from starting: as many rounds as they please may be thus taken about the vessel. An instance of this kind is mentioned in Lord Anson's Voyage round the World. Speaking of a Spanish man-of-war in a storm: "They were obliged to throw overboard all their upper-deck guns, and take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening." P. 24, 4to. edit. The same was done by a British line-of-battle ship in 1763, on her passage from India to the Cape of Good Hope.

The quicksands] εἰς τὴν συρτιν, Into the *syrt*. There were *two* famous *syrts*, or quicksands, on the African coast; one called the *syrtis major*, lying near the coast of Cyrene; and the other, the *syrtis minor*, not far from Tripoli. Both these, like our *Goodwin Sands*, were proverbial for their multitude of ship-wrecks. From the *direction* in which this vessel was driven, it is not at all likely that they were in danger of drifting on any of these *syrts*, as the vessel does not appear to have been driven near the *African* coast through the whole of her voyage. And as to what is said,

<4277> **Acts 27:27**, of their being *driven up and down in Adria*,

διαφερομενων εν τω αδρια, it must mean their being *tossed about* near to Sicily, the sea of which is called *Adria*, according to the old Scholiast upon Dionysius's *Periegesis*, ver. 85: το σικελικον τουτο το πελαγος αδριαν καλουσι, *they call this Sicilian sea, Adria*. We are therefore to consider that the apprehension, expressed in <4277> **Acts 27:17**, is to be taken *generally*: they were afraid of falling into some *shoals*, not knowing in what part of the sea they then were; for they had seen neither sun nor stars for many days; and they had no compass, and consequently could not tell in what direction they were now driving. It is wrong therefore to mark the course of this voyage, as if the vessel had been driven across the whole of the Mediterranean, down to the African coast, and near to the *syrts*, or shoal banks; to which there is scarcely any reason to believe she had once approximated during the whole of this dangerous voyage.

Strake sail] χαλασαντες το σκευος. What this means is difficult to say. As to *striking* or *slackening sail*, that is entirely out of the question, in

such circumstances as they were; when it is evident they could carry *no sail at all*, and must have gone under *bare poles*. Some think that *lowering the yards*, and *taking down the top-mast*, is what is intended; but in such a perilous situation this would have been of little service. Others think, letting go their *main* or *sheet anchor*, is what is meant; but this seems without foundation, as it would have been foolishness in the extreme to have hoped to *ride out* the storm in such a sea. Passing by a variety of meanings, I suppose *cutting away*, or by some means letting down the *mast*, is the action intended to be expressed here; and this would be the most likely means of saving the vessel from foundering.

Verse 18. Lightened the ship] Of *what*, we know not; but it was probably cumbrous *wares*, by which the *deck* was thronged, and which were prejudicial to the due *trim* of the vessel.

Verse 19. The tackling of the ship.] την σκευην; All supernumerary anchors, cables, baggage, &c.

Verse 20. Neither sun nor stars in many days appeared] And consequently they could make no observation; and, having no *magetical* needle, could not tell in what direction they were going.

Verse 21. After long abstinence] πολλης δε ασιτιας υπαρχουσης. Mr. Wakefield connects this with the preceding verse, and translates it thus: *Especially as there was a great scarcity of provisions*. But this by no means can agree with what is said, ~~42734~~ **Acts 27:34-38**. The vessel was a *corn vessel*; and they had not as yet thrown the *wheat* into the sea, see ~~42738~~ **Acts 27:38**. And we find they had *food* sufficient to eat, but were discouraged, and so utterly hopeless of life that they had no appetite for food: besides, the storm was so great that it is not likely they could *dress* any thing.

Have gained this harm and loss.] It seems strange to talk of *gaining a loss*, but it is a correct rendering of the original, κερδησαι, which expresses the idea of *acquisition*, whether of *good* or *evil*. Those who wish it, may see this use of the term well illustrated by Bp. *Pearce*, in his note on this verse. The *harm* was damage to the vessel; the *loss* was that of the merchandise, furniture, &c.

Verse 22. There shall be no loss of-life] This must be joyous news to those from whom *all hope that they should be saved was taken away*:
 <4271>**Acts 27:20.**

Verse 23. The-God, whose I am, and whom I serve] This Divine communication was intended to give credit to the apostle and to his doctrine; and, in such perilous circumstances, to speak so confidently, when every appearance was against him, argued the fullest persuasion of the truth of what he spoke; and the fulfilment, so exactly coinciding with the prediction, must have shown these heathens that the God whom Paul served must be widely different from theirs.

Verse 24. God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.] Two hundred and seventy-six souls saved for the sake of one man! This was a strong proof of God's approbation of Paul; and must at least have shown to Julius the centurion that his prisoner was an injured and innocent man.

Verse 26. We must be cast upon a certain island.] The angel which gave him this information did not tell him the name of the island. It turned out to be *Melita*, on which, by the violence of the storm, they were wrecked some days after.

Verse 27. Driven up and down in Adria] See Clarke's note on
 <4271>**Acts 27:17**".

Deemed that they drew near to some country] They judged so, either by the *smell of land*, which those used to the sea can perceive at a considerable distance, or by the agitation of the sea, *rippling* of the tide, flight of sea-birds, &c.

Verse 28. And sounded] βολισαντες, *Heaving the lead.*

Twenty fathoms] οργυιας εικοσι, About *forty yards* in depth. The οργυια is thus defined by the Etymologicon: σημαίνει την εκτασιν των χειρων, συν τω πλατει του στηθους, *It signifies the extent of the arms, together with the breadth of the breast.* This is exactly the quantum of our *fathom*.

Verse 29. Cast four anchors out of the stern] By this time the storm must have been considerably abated; though the agitation of the sea could not have subsided much. The anchors were cast out of the stern to prevent the vessel from drifting ashore, as they found that, the farther they *stood in*,

the shallower the water grew; therefore they *dropped the anchor astern*, as even one *ship's length* might be of much consequence.

Verse 30. The shipmen] *The sailors-let down the boat.* Having lowered the boat from the deck into the sea, they pretended that it was necessary to carry some anchors *ahead*, to keep her from being carried in a dangerous direction by the tide, but with the real design to make for shore, and so leave the prisoners and the passengers to their fate. This was timely noticed by the pious and prudent apostle; who, while simply depending on the promise of God, was watching for the safety and comfort of all.

Verse 31. Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.] God, who has promised to save your lives, promises this on the condition that ye make use of every means he has put in your power to help yourselves. While, therefore, ye are using these means, expect the co-operation of God. If these sailors, who only understand how to work the ship, leave it, ye cannot escape. Therefore prevent their present design. On the economy of Divine Providence, see **Clarke's notes on “~~40:35~~ Acts 23:35”**.

Verse 32. The soldiers cut off the ropes] These were probably the only persons who dared to have opposed the will of the *sailors*: this very circumstance is an additional proof of the accuracy of St. Luke.

Verse 33. While the day was coining on] It was then apparently about day-break.

This day is the fourteenth day that ye have-continued fasting] Ye have not had one *regular meal* for these fourteen days past. Indeed we may take it for granted that, during the whole of the storm, very little was eaten by any man: for what appetite could men have for food, who every moment had death before their eyes?

Verse 34. A hair fall from the head] A proverbial expression for, ye shall neither lose your lives nor suffer any hurt in your bodies, if ye follow my advice.

Verse 35. Gave thanks to God] Who had provided the food, and preserved their lives and health to partake of it. Some think that he celebrated the *holy eucharist* here: but this is by no means likely: he would not celebrate such a mystery among ungodly sailors and soldiers, Jews and heathens; nor was there any necessity for such a measure.

Verse 38. They lightened the ship] They hoped that, by casting out the lading, the ship would *draw less water*; in consequence of which, they could get nearer the shore.

Verse 39. They knew not the land] And therefore knew neither the nature of the coast, nor where the proper port lay.

A-creek with a shore] *κολπον*, *Sinum*, a bay, with a shore; a neck of land perhaps on either side, running out into the sea, and this little bay or gulf between them; though some think it was a tongue of land, running out into the sea, having the sea on both sides, at the point of which these *two seas meet*, ^{<42741>}**Acts 27:41**. There is such a place as this in the island of *Malta*, where, tradition says, Paul was shipwrecked; and which is called *la Cale de St. Paul*. See *Calmet*.

Verse 40. Taken up the anchors] Weighed all the anchors that they had cast out of the stern. Some think the meaning of the word is, they slipped their cables; and so left the anchors in the sea. This opinion is expressed in the *margin*.

Loosed the rudder bands] Or, the bands of the rudders; for large vessels in ancient times had two or more rudders, one at the side, and another at the stern, and sometimes one at the prow. The *bands*, *ζευκτηριας*, were some kind of fastenings, by which the rudders were hoisted some way out of the water; for, as they could be of no use in the storm, and, should there come fair weather, the vessel could not do without them, this was a prudent way of securing them from being broken to pieces by the agitation of the waves. These bands being loosed, the rudders would fall down into their proper places, and serve to steer the vessel into the creek which they now had in view.

Hoisted up the mainsail] *αρτεμονα* is not the *mainsail*, (which would have been quite improper on such an occasion,) but the *jib*, or triangular sail which is suspended from the foremast to the *bowspirit*; with this they might hope both to steer and carry in the ship.

Verse 41. Where two seas meet] The tide running down from each side of the tongue of land, mentioned ^{<42739>}**Acts 27:39**, and meeting at the point.

Ran the ship aground] In striving to cross at this point of land, they had not taken a sufficiency of *sea-room*, and therefore ran *aground*.

The forepart stuck fast] Got into the sands; and perhaps the shore here was very *bold* or steep, so that the stem of the vessel might be immersed in the quicksands, which would soon close round it, while the stern, violently agitated with the surge, would soon be broken to pieces. It is extremely difficult to find the true meaning of several of the nautical terms used in this chapter. I have given that which appeared to me to be the most likely; but cannot absolutely say that I have everywhere hit the true meaning.

Verse 42. The soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners] What blood-thirsty, cowardly villains must these have been! Though, through the providence of God, those poor men had escaped a watery grave, and had borne all the anxiety and distresses of this disastrous voyage, as well as the others, now that there is a likelihood of all getting safe to land that could swim, lest these should swim to shore, and so escape, those men, whose trade was in human blood, desired to have them massacred! We have not many traits in the histories of the most barbarous nations that can be a proper counterpart to this quintessence of humano-diabolic cruelty.

Verse 43. Willing to save Paul, &c.] Had *one* fallen, for the reasons those cruel and dastardly soldiers gave, so must *all* the rest. The centurion save that Paul was not only an innocent, but an extraordinary and divine man; and therefore, for his sake, he prevented the massacre; and, unloosing every man's bonds, he commanded those that could to swim ashore and escape. It is likely that all the soldiers escaped in this way, for it was one part of the Roman military discipline to teach the soldiers to *swim*.

Verse 44. And the rest] That could not swim: *some on boards*, planks, spars, &c., got *safe to land*; manifestly by an especial providence of God; for how otherwise could the sick, the aged, the terrified, besides women and children, (of which, we may naturally suppose, there were some,) though on planks, get safe to shore?—where still the *waves* were *violent*, ^{<4274>}**Acts 27:41**, and they without either skill or power to steer their unsafe flotillas to the land? It was (in this case, most evidently) God who brought them to the haven where they would be.

1. PAUL had appealed to Cæsar; and he must go to Rome to have his cause heard. God admitted of this appeal, and told his servant that he should testify of him at Rome; and yet every thing seemed to conspire together to prevent this appeal, and the testimony which the apostle was to bear to the truth of the Christian religion. The Jews laid wait for his life; and when he had escaped out of *their* hands, and from their territories, then the winds

and the sea seemed to combine to effect his destruction. And God suffered all this *malice of men*, and *war of elements*, to fight against his servant, and yet overruled and counterworked the whole, so as to promote his own glory, and bring honour to his apostle. Had it not been for this malice of the Jews, *Festus, Felix, Agrippa, Berenice*, and many Roman nobles and *officers*, had probably never heard the Gospel of Christ. And, had it not been for Paul's *tempestuous* voyage, the 276 souls that sailed with him could not have had such displays of the power and wisdom of the Christians' God as must have struck them with reverence, and probably was the cause of the conversion of many. Had the voyage been *smooth* and *prosperous*, there would have been no occasion for such striking interferences of God; and, had it not been for the *shipwreck*, probably the inhabitants of Malta would not so soon have heard of the Christian religion. God serves his will by every occurrence, and presses every thing into the service of his own cause. This is a remark which we have often occasion to make, and which is ever in place. We may leave the government of the world, and the government of the Church, most confidently to God; hitherto he has done all things well; and his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth, are still the same.

2. In considering the dangers of a sea voyage, we may well say, with pious Quesnel, To what perils do persons expose themselves, either to raise a fortune, or to gain a livelihood! How few are there who would expose themselves to the same for the sake of God! They commit themselves to the mercy of the waves; they trust their lives to a plank and to a pilot; and yet it is often with great difficulty that they can trust themselves to the providence of God, whose knowledge, power, and goodness, are infinite; and the visible effects of which they have so many times experienced.

3. What assurance soever we may have of the will of God, yet we must not forget human means. The life of all the persons in this ship was given to St. Paul; yet he does not, on that account, expect a visible miracle, but depends upon the blessing which God will give to the care and endeavours of men.

4. God fulfils his promises, and conceals his almighty power, under such means and endeavours as seem altogether human and natural. Had the crew of this vessel neglected any means in their own power, their death would have been the consequence of their *inaction* and *infidelity*.

CHAPTER 28.

St. Paul, and the rest of the crew, getting safely ashore, find that the island on which they were shipwrecked is called Melita, 1. They are received with great hospitality by the inhabitants, 2. A viper comes out of the bundle of sticks, laid on the fire, and seizes on Paul's hand, 3. The people, seeing this, suppose him to be a murderer, and thus pursued by Divine vengeance, 4. Having shook it off his hand, without receiving any damage, they change their minds, and suppose him to be a god, 5, 6. Publius, the governor of the island, receives them courteously, and Paul miraculously heals his father, who was ill of a fever, &c., 7, 8. He heals several others also, who honour them much, and give them presents, 9, 10. After three months' stay, they embark in a ship of Alexandria, land at Syracuse, stay there three days, sail thence, pass the straits of Rhegium, and land at Puteoli; find some Christians there, tarry seven days, and set forward for Rome, 11-14. They are met at Appii Forum by some Christians, and Paul is greatly encouraged, 15. They come to Rome, and Julius delivers his prisoners to the captain of the guard, who permits Paul to dwell by himself only attended by the soldier that kept him, 16. Paul calls the chief Jews together, and states his case to them, 17-20. They desire to hear him concerning the faith of Christ, 21, 22; and, having appointed unto him a day, he expounds to them the kingdom of Christ, 23. Some believe, and some disbelieve; and Paul informs them that, because of their unbelief and disobedience, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, 24-29. Paul dwells two years in his own hired house, preaching the kingdom of God, 30, 31.

NOTES ON CHAP. 28.

Verse 1. They knew that the island was called Melita.] There were two islands of this name: one in the *Adriatic Gulf*, or Gulf of Venice, on the coast of Illyricum, and near to Epidaurus; the other in the Mediterranean Sea, between Sicily and Africa, and now called *Malta*. It is about fifty miles from the coast of Sicily; twenty miles long, and twelve miles in its greatest breadth; and about sixty miles in circumference. It is one immense rock of white, soft freestone, with about one foot depth of earth on an average, and most of this has been brought from Sicily! It produces cotton, excellent fruits, and fine *honey*; from which it appears the island originally had its name; for *μελι*, *meli*, and in the genitive case, *μελιτος*, *melitos*, signifies *honey*. Others suppose that it derived its name from the Phœnicians, who established a colony in it, and made it a place of *refuge*, when they extended their traffic to the ocean, because it was furnished with excellent

harbours: (on the E. and W. shores:) hence, in their tongue, it would be called *hcyl m Meliteh*, escape or refuge, from *cl m malat*, to *escape*.

The *Phæacians* were probably the *first* inhabitants of this island: they were expelled by the *Phœnicians*; the Phœnicians by the *Greeks*; the Greeks by the *Carthaginians*; the Carthaginians by the *Romans*, who possessed it in the time of the apostle; the Romans by the *Goths*; the Goths by the *Saracens*; the Saracens by the *Sicilians*, under Roger, earl of Sicily, in 1190. Charles V., emperor of Germany, took possession of it by his conquest of Naples and Sicily; and he gave it in 1525 to the *knights of Rhodes*, who are also called the knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1798, this island surrendered to the *French*, under Bonaparte, and in 1800, after a blockade of two years, the island being reduced by famine, surrendered to the *British*, under whose dominion it still remains (1814.) Every thing considered, there can be little doubt that this is the *Melita* at which St. Paul was wrecked, and not at that other island in the *Adriatic*, or *Venitian Gulf*, as high up *northward* as Illyricum. The following reasons make this greatly evident: 1. *Tradition* has unvaryingly asserted this as the place of the apostle's shipwreck. 2. The island in the Venitian Gulf, in favour of which Mr. Bryant so learnedly contends, is totally *out of the track* in which the *euoclydon* must have driven the vessel. 3. It is said, in ~~4281~~ **Acts 28:11**, that another ship of Alexandria, bound, as we must suppose, for Italy, and very probably carrying *wheat* thither, as St. Paul's vessel did, (~~4273~~ **Acts 27:38**.) had been driven out of its course of sailing, by stress of weather, up to the Illyricum *Melita*, and had been for that cause obliged to winter in the isle. Now this is a *supposition* which, as I think, is too much of a *supposition* to be made. 4. In St. Paul's voyage to Italy from Melita, on board the Alexandrian ship that had wintered there, he and his companions landed at Syracuse, ~~4281~~ **Acts 28:12, 13**, and from thence went to Rhegium. But if it had been the *Illyrican Melita*, the proper course of the ship would have been, first to *Rhegium*, before it reached *Syracuse*, and needed not to have gone to Syracuse at all; whereas, in a voyage from the present *Malta* to Italy, it was necessary to reach Syracuse, in Sicily, before the ship could arrive at Rhegium in Italy. See the map; and see Bp. Pearce, from whom I have extracted the *two* last arguments.

That Malta was possessed by the *Phœnicians*, before the Romans conquered it, Bochart has largely proved; and indeed the language to the present day, notwithstanding all the political vicissitudes through which the island has passed, bears sufficient evidence of its *Punic* origin. In the year

1761, near a place called *Ben Ghisa*, in this island, a sepulchral cave was discovered, in which was a square stone with an inscription in *Punic* or *Phœnician characters*, on which Sir Wm. Drummond has written a learned essay, (London, Valpy, 1810, 4to.) which he supposes marks the burial place, at least of the *ashes*, of the famous Carthaginian general, *Hannibal*. I shall give this inscription in Samaritan characters, as being the present form of the ancient Punic, with Sir Wm. Drummond's translation:-

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

[Samaritan MSS. majuscule]

*Chadar Beth olam kabar Chanibaal
Nakeh becaleth haveh, rach-
m dæh Amos beshuth Chanibaal ben Bar-melec.*

*“The inner chamber of the sanctuary of the sepulchre of Hannibal,
Illustrious in the consummation of calamity.*

He was beloved;

The people lament, when arrayed

In order of battle,

Hannibal the son of Bar-Melec.”

As this is a curious piece, and one of the largest remains of the Punic language now in existence, and as it helps to ascertain the ancient inhabitants of this *island*, I thought it not improper to insert it here. For the illustration of this and several other points of Punic antiquity, I must refer the curious reader to the essay itself.

Verse 2. The barbarous people] We have already seen that this island was peopled by the Phœnicians, or Carthaginians, as Bochart has proved, *Phaleg.* chap. xxvi.; and their ancient language was no doubt in use among them at that time, though mingled with some Greek and Latin terms; and this language must have been unintelligible to the Romans and the Greeks. With these, as well as with other nations, it was customary to call those βαρβαροι, *barbarians*, whose language they did not understand. St. Paul himself speaks after this manner in ^{<4641>}**1 Corinthians 14:11:** *If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a BARBARIAN, and he that speaketh shall be a BARBARIAN unto me.* Thus *Herodotus* also, lib. ii. 158, says, βαρβαρους παντας αιγυπτιοι καλεουσι τους μη σφι ομογλωσσους, *The Egyptians call all those BARBARIANS who have*

not the same language with themselves. And *Ovid*, when among the *Getes*, says, in *Trist.* ver. 10:-

BARBARUS hic ego sum, quia non INTELLIGOR ulli.

“Here I am a barbarian, for no person understands me.”

Various etymologies have been given of this word. I think that of Bp. Pearce the best. The Greeks who traded with the Phœnicians, formed this word from their observing that the Phœnicians were generally called by the name of their parent, with the word *rb* *bar*, prefixed to that name; as we find in the New Testament men called *Bar-Jesus*, *Bar-Tholomeus*, *Bar-Jonas*, *Bar-Timeus*, &c. Hence the Greeks called them βαρῖβαροι, meaning the men who are called *Bar Bar*, or have no other names than what begin with *Bar*. And because the Greeks did not understand the language of the Phœnicians, their first, and the Romans in imitation of them, gave the name of *Barbarians* to all such as talked in a language to which they were strangers.” No other etymology need be attempted; this is its own proof; and the *Bar-melec* in the preceding epitaph is, at least, collateral evidence. The word *barbarian* is therefore no term of *reproach* in itself; and was not so used by ancient authors, however fashionable it may be to use it so now.

Because of the present rain and-of the cold.] This must have been sometime in *October*; and, when we consider the *time of the year*, the *tempestuousness of the weather*, and their escaping to shore *on planks*, *spars*, &c., wet of course to the skin, they must have been very *cold*, and have needed all the kindness that these well disposed people showed them. In some parts of Christianized Europe, the inhabitants would have attended on the beach, and knocked the survivors on the head, that they might convert the wreck to their own use! This barbarous people did not act in this way: they joined hands with God to make these sufferers live.

Verse 3. There came a viper out of the heat] We may naturally suppose that there had been fuel laid *before* on the fire, and that the viper was in this fuel, and that it had been revived by the *heat*; and, when St. Paul laid his bundle on the fire, the viper was then in a state to lay hold on his hand.

Verse 4. The venomous beast] το θηριον, The venomous animal; for *θηριον* is a general name among the Greek writers for *serpents*, *vipers*, *scorpions*, *wasps*, and such like creatures. Though the viper fastened on

Paul's hand, it does not appear that it really *bit* him; but the Maltese supposed that it had, because they saw it fasten on his hand.

Vengeance suffereth not to live.] These heathens had a general knowledge of *retributive* justice; and they thought that the stinging of the serpent was a proof that Paul was a *murderer*. There is a passage in *Bamidbar Rabba*, fol. 239, that casts some light on this place. "Although the Sanhedrin is ceased, yet are not the *four* deaths ceased. For he that deserves *stoning* either falls from his *house*, or a *wild beast* tears and devours him. He that deserves *burning* either falls into the *fire*, or a *serpent* bites him. He that deserves *cutting of with the sword* is either betrayed into the power of a *heathen kingdom*, or the *robbers break in upon him*. He that deserves *strangling* is either *suffocated* in the *water*, or dies of a *quinsy*." See *Lightfoot*.

As these people were heathens, it is not likely that they had any correct notion of the justice of the *true God*; and therefore it is most probable that they used the word **δικη**, not to express the quality or attribute of any being, but the goddess *Dikê*, or vindictive Justice, herself, who is represented as punishing the iniquities of men.

Hesiod makes a goddess of what the Maltese called **Δικη**, or *Justice*:-

Η δε τε παρθενος εστι δικη, διος εκγεγαυια,
 Κυδνη ἰ αιδοιη τε θεοις, οι ολυμπον εχουσιν,
 Και ῥ οποῖ αν τις μιν βλαπτη σκολιως ονοταζων.
 Αυτικα παρ δι πατρι καθεζομενη κρονιωνι
 Γηρυεῖ ανθρωπων αδικον νοον,

Hesiod. Opera, ver. 254.

*JUSTICE, unspotted maid, derived from Jove,
 Renown'd and revered by the gods above:
 When mortals violate her sacred laws,
 When judges hear the bribe and not the cause,
 Close by her parent god, behold her stand,
 And urge the punishment their sins demand.*
 COKE.

Verse 5. Shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.] This is a presumptive evidence that the viper did not *bite* St. Paul: it fastened on his hand, but had no power to injure him.

Verse 6. When he should have swollen] *πιμπρασθαι*, When he should have been *inflamed*: by means of an acrid poison introduced into the blood, it is soon coagulated; and, in consequence, the extremities of the vessels become obstructed, strong inflammation takes place, and all the parts become most painfully swollen.

Lucan, ix. v. 791, gives a terrible account of this effect of the bite of a serpent:-

—————*illi rubor igneus ora*
Succedit, tenditque cutem, pereunte figura
Miscens cuncta tumor jam toto corpore major:
Humanumque egressa modum super omnia membra
Efflatur sanies late tollente veneno.
Ipse latet penitus, congesto corpore mersus;
Nec lorica tenet distenti corporis auctum.

And straight a sudden flame began to spread,
And paint his visage with a glowing red.
With swift expansion swells the bloated skin,
Nought but an undistinguished mass is seen;
While the fair human form lies lost within,
The puffy poison spreads and heaves around,
Till all the man is in the monster drown'd.

ROWE.

See other ensamples, in **Clarke's notes** on "⁶⁻⁰²¹⁰⁵Numbers 21:6".

Said that he was a god.] As *Hercules* was one of the gods of the Phœnicians, and was worshipped in Malta under the epithet of *αλεξικακος*, the *dispeller of evil*, they probably thought that Paul was *Hercules*; and the more so, because *Hercules* was famous for having destroyed, in his youth, two serpents that attacked him in his cradle.

Verse 7. The chief man of the island] The term *πρωτος*, CHIEF, used hereby St. Luke, was the ancient title of the *governor* of this island, as is evident from an inscription found in Malta, which runs thus:-

Α. Κ. υιος, κυρ. ιππευς. πρμ. πρωτος Μελιταιων,

Lucius Caius, son of Quirinus, a Roman knight, CHIEF of the Melitese. See *Bochart*, Phaleg. and Chan. vol. i. chap. 498, &c., and *Grotius*. This title is another proof of the accuracy of St. Luke, who uses the very epithet by which the Roman governor of that island was distinguished.

Verse 8. The father of Publius lay sick] *πυρετοις και δυσεντερια;* Of a fever and dysentery; perhaps a *cholera morbus*.

Paul-prayed] That God would exert his power; *and laid his hands on him*, as the means which God ordinarily used to convey the energy of the Holy Spirit, and *healed him*; God having conveyed the healing power by this means. In such a disorder as that mentioned here by St. Luke, where the bowels were in a state of inflammation, and a general fever aiding the dysentery in its work of death, nothing less than a *miracle* could have made an *instantaneous* cure in the patient. Such a cure was wrought, and even the *heathens* saw that it was *the hand of God*.

Verse 9. Others-which had diseases] Luke was a *physician*; yet we do not find him engaging in these cures. As a medical man, he might have been of use to the father of Publius; but he is not even *consulted* on the occasion. *Paul enters in to him, prays for him, lays his hands on him*, and he is healed. The other diseased persons who are mentioned in this verse were doubtless healed in the same way.

Verse 10. Honoured us with many honours] The word *τιμη*, as Bishop Pearce has remarked, is often used to signify a pecuniary *recompense*, or *present*. The Greek word seems to be thus used in ^{<54517>}**1 Timothy 5:17**. *Let the elders which rule well be accounted worthy of double HONOUR, τιμης*, which St. Chrysostom, on the place, explains thus: *την των αναγκαιων χορηγιαν*, *a supplying them with all necessary things*. Diodorus Siculus, and Xenophon, used the word in the same way. In the sense of a *pecuniary recompense*, or *price*, paid for any thing, the word *τιμη* is met with in ^{<4161>}**1 Corinthians 6:20**; and ^{<41723>}**1 Corinthians 7:23**. And in the Septuagint, ^{<04217>}**Numbers 22:17**; compared with ^{<04218>}**Numbers 22:18**; ^{<19185>}**Psalms 8:5**; and ^{<1912>}**Psalms 49:12**; ^{<11819>}**Proverbs 3:9**. Bp. Pearce.

Such things as were necessary.] They had before given them many presents, and now they gave them a good *sea stock*; all that was necessary for their passage.

Verse 11. After three months] Supposing that they had reached Malta about the end of *October*, as we have already seen, then it appears that they left it about the end of *January*, or the beginning of *February*; and, though in the depth of winter, not the worst time for sailing, even in those seas, the wind being then generally more *steady*; and, on the whole, the passage more safe.

Whose sign was Castor and Pollux.] These were two fabulous semi-deities, reported to be the sons of *Jupiter* and *Leda*, who were afterwards translated to the heavens, and made the constellation called *Gemini*, or the *Twins*. This constellation was deemed propitious to mariners; and, as it was customary to have the images of their gods both on the head and stern of their ships, we may suppose that this Alexandrian ship had these on either her *pro*w or *stern*, and that these gave name to the ship. We, who profess to be a *Christian* people, follow the same heathen custom: we have our ships called the *Castor*, the *Jupiter*, the *Minerva*, the *Leda*, (the mother of Castor and Pollux,) with a multitude of other demon gods and goddesses; so that, were ancient *Romans* or *Grecians* to visit our navy, they would be led to suppose that, after the lapse of more than 2000 years, their old religion had continued unaltered!

Virgil speaks of a vessel called the *Tiger*. *Æneid*, x. ver. 166:-

Massicus ærata princeps secat æquora TIGRI.

“*Massicus, chief, cuts the waves in the brazen-beaked TIGER.*”

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

Ingentemque Gyas ingenti mole CHIMÆRAM.

“*Gyas the vast Chimera’s bulk commands.*”

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

—————*CENTAURO invehitur magna.*

“*Sergestus, in the great Centaur, took the leading place.*”

Besides these names, they had their *tutelary gods* in the ship, from whom they expected succour; and sometimes they had their images on the stern; and when they got safely to the end of their voyage, they were accustomed to crown these images with garlands: thus Virgil, *Geor.* i. ver. 304:-

PUPPIBUS et læti naute imposuere CORONAS.

“*The joyous sailors place garlands on their sterns.*”

Several ancient fables appear to have arisen out of the names of ships. Jupiter is fabled to have carried off *Europa*, across the sea, in the shape of a bull; and to have carried away Ganymede, in the shape of an *eagle*. That is, these persons were carried away, one in a ship called *Taurus*, or *Bull*; and the other in one denominated *Aquila*, the *Eagle*. Why not *Taurus*, as

well as *Tigris*? and why not *Aquila*, as well as *Chimera*?-which names did belong to ships, as we find from the above quotations.

Verse 12. Landing at Syracuse] In order to go to *Rome* from *Malta*, their readiest course was to keep pretty close to the eastern coast of Sicily, in order to pass through the straits of *Rhegium* and get into the *Tyrrhenian* Sea.

Syracuse is one of the most famous cities of antiquity: it is the capital of the island of Sicily, and was built about 730 years before the Christian era. It lies 72 miles S. by E. of Messina, and about 112 of Palermo. Long. 15°. 30'. W., lat. 37°. 17'. N. In its ancient state, it was about 22 English miles in circumference; and was highly celebrated for the martial spirit of its inhabitants. This was the birthplace of the illustrious *Archimedes*; who, when the city was besieged by the Romans, under Marcellus, about 212 years before Christ, defended the place with his powerful engines against all the valour and power of the assailants. He beat their galleys to pieces by huge stones projected from his machines; and by hooks, chains, and levers, from the walls, weighed the ships out of the water, and, whirling them round, dashed them in pieces against each other, or sunk them to the bottom: several also, he is said to have destroyed by his burning glasses. When the city was taken by treachery, Archimedes was found intensely engaged in the demonstration of a problem. A Roman soldier coming up, and presenting his dagger to his throat, he cried, "Stop, soldier, or thou wilt spoil my diagram!" The brute was unmoved, and murdered him on the spot.

This city was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1693: its present population amounts to but about 18,000. Christianity, in some form or other, has existed here ever since St. Paul spent the *three days* in it, mentioned in the text.

Verse 13. We fetched a compass] ὅθεν περιελθόντες, *Whence we coasted about*. This will appear evident, when the coast of Sicily is viewed on any correct map, of a tolerably large scale.

Rhegium] A city and promontory in Calabria, in Italy, opposite to Sicily. It is now called *Reggio*. It had its name, ῥήγιον, *Rhegium*, from the Greek ῥήγνυμι, *to break off*; because it appears to have been *broken off* from Sicily.

The south wind blew] This was the fairest wind they could have from Syracuse, to reach the straits of Rhegium.

The next day to Puteoli] This place, now commonly called *Pozzuoli*, is an ancient town of Naples in the *Terra di Lavoro*; and is supposed to have been founded by the *Samians*, about 470 years before Christ. Within this city are several *warm baths*, very highly celebrated; and from these, and its springs in general, it seems to have had its ancient name *Puteoli*, from PUTEI, *wells* or *pits*; though some derive it from *putor*, a *stench*, or *bad smell*, because of the *sulphureous* exhalations from its warm waters. *Varro* gives both these etymologies, lib. iv. de *Ling. Lat.* cap. 5. It is famous for its temple of Jupiter Serapis, which is built, not according to the Grecian or Roman manner, but according to the *Asiatic*. Near this place are the remains of *Cicero's* villa, which are of great extent. The town contains, at present, about 10,000 inhabitants. Long. 14°. 40'. E., lat. 41°. 50'. N.

Verse 14. Where we found brethren] That is, *Christians*; for there had been many in Italy converted to the faith of Christ, some considerable time before this, as appears from St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, written some years before this voyage.

We went toward Rome.] One of the most celebrated cities in the universe, the capital of Italy, and once of the *whole world*; situated on the river Tiber, 410 miles SSE. of Vienna; 600 SE. of Paris; 730 E. by N. of Madrid; 760 W. of Constantinople; and 780 SE. of London. Long. 12°. 55'. E., lat. 41°. 54'. N. This famous city was founded by *Romulus*, at the end of the seventh Olympiad, A.M. 3251; of the flood, 1595; and 753 years before the Christian æra. The history of this city must be sought for in works written expressly on the subject, of which there are many. *Modern Rome* is greatly inferior to *ancient Rome* in every respect. Its population, taken in 1709, amounted to 138,569 souls only; among whom were 40 *bishops*, 2686 *priests*, 3359 *monks*, 1814 *nuns*, 893 *courtezans*, between 8 and 9000 *Jews*, and 14 *Moors*. This city, which once tyrannized over the world by its arms, and over the whole Christian world by its popes, is now reduced to a very low state among the governments of Europe, by whom it is supported, for it has no power sufficient for its own defence.

Verse 15. When the brethren heard of us] By *whom* the Gospel was planted at Rome is not known: it does not appear that any *apostle* was employed in this work. It was probably carried thither by some of those who were converted to God at the day of pentecost; for there were then at

Jerusalem, not only *devout men*, proselytes to the Jewish religion, *from every nation under heaven*, ^{<416>}Acts 2:5, but there were *strangers of Rome* also, ^{<420>}Acts 2:10. And it is most reasonable to believe, as we know of no other origin, that it was by these Christianity was planted at Rome.

As far as Appii Forum] About 52 miles from Rome; a long way to come on purpose to meet the apostle! The *Appii Forum*, or *Market of Appius*, was a town on the *Appian way*, a road paved from Rome to Campania, by the consul *Appius Claudius*. It was near the sea, and was a famous resort for sailors, peddlers, &c. Horace, lib. i. Satyr. 5, ver. 3, mentions this place on his journey from Rome to Brundisium:-

—————*Inde FORUM APPI*
Differtum nautis, cauponibus atque malignis.

*“To Forum Appii thence we steer, a place
Stuff’d with rank boatmen, and with vintners base.”*

This town is now called *Cæsarilla de S. Maria*.

And the Three Taverns] This was another place on the same road, and about 33 miles from Rome. Some of the Roman Christians had come as far as *Appii Forum*: others, to the *Three Taverns*. Bp. Pearce remarks, there are some ruins in that place which are now called *Tre Taverne*; and this place Cicero mentions in his epistles to Atticus, lib. ii. 11. *Ab Appi Foro hora quarta: dederam aliam paulo ante in Tribus Tabernis*. “Dated at ten in the morning, from *Appii Forum*. I sent off another (epistle) a little before, from the *Three Taverns*.”

Zosimus, lib. 2, mentions *τρια καπηλεια*, the *three taverns*, or *virtualling houses*, where the Emperor *Severus* was strangled by the treason of *Maximinus Hercules*, and his son *Maxentius*. See *Lightfoot*.

The word *taberna*, from *trabs*, a beam, signifies any building formed of *timber*; such as those we call *booths*, *sheds*, &c., which are formed of *beams*, *planks*, *boards*, and the like; and therefore we may consider it as implying, either a *temporary residence*, or some *mean building*, such as a *cottage*, &c. And in this sense Horace evidently uses it, Carm. lib. i. Od. iv. ver. 13:-

*Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.*

*“With equal pace, impartial Fate
Knocks at the palace as the cottage gate.”*

FRANCIS.

This place, at first, was probably a place for *booths* or *sheds*, three of which were remarkable; other houses became associated with them in process of time, and the whole place denominated *Tres Tabernæ*, from the *three* first remarkable booths set up there. It appears to have been a large town in the fourth century, as *Optatus* mentions *Felix a Tribus Tabernis*, Felix of the Three Taverns, as one of the Christian bishops.

Thanked God, and took courage.] He had longed to see Rome; (see ~~5010~~ **Romans 1:9-15**;) and, finding himself brought through so many calamities, and now so near the place that he was met by a part of that Church to which, some years before, he had written an epistle, *he gave thanks to God*, who had preserved him, and *took fresh courage*, in the prospect of bearing there a testimony for his Lord and Master.

Verse 16. The captain of the guard] στρατοπεδάρχῃ. This word properly means the *commander of a camp*; but it signifies the *prefect*, or *commander of the pretorian cohorts*, or *emperor's guards*.

Tacitus (Annal. lib. iv. cap. 2) informs us that, in the reign of Tiberius, *Sejanus*, who was then *prefect of these troops*, did, in order to accomplish his ambitious designs, cause them to be assembled from their quarters in the city, and stationed in a *fortified camp* near it; so that their commander is with peculiar propriety styled by St. Luke στρατοπεδάρχῃς, the *commander of the camp*. For the arrival of St. Paul at Rome was in the seventh year of Nero; and it is certain, from *Suetonius*, (in Tiber. cap. 37,) that the custom of keeping the pretorian soldiers in a *camp*, near the city, was retained by the emperors succeeding Tiberius; for the historian observes that Claudius, at his accession to the empire, was received into the camp, *in castra delatus est*, namely, of the pretorian cohorts; and so *Tacitus* says of *Nero*, An. lib. xii. cap. 69, that on the same occasions *illatus castris*, he was brought into the *camp*. Dr. *Doddridge* observes that it was customary for prisoners who were brought to Rome to be delivered to this officer, who had the charge of the state prisoners, as appears from the instance of *Agrippa*, who was taken into custody by *Macro*, the pretorian prefect, who succeeded *Sejanus*; (*Joseph. Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 7. sec. 6*;) and from *Trajan's* order to *Pliny*, when *two* were in commission, Plin. lib. x. ep. 65. *Vinctus mitti ad præfectos prætorii mei debet*: he should

be sent bound to the prefects of my guards. The person who now had that office was the noted Afranius Burrhus; but both before and after him it was held by two: Tacit. An. lib. xii. sec. 42; lib. xiv. sec. 51. See *Parkhurst*.

Burrhus was a principal instrument in raising Nero to the throne; and had considerable influence in repressing many of the vicious inclinations of that bad prince. With many others, he was put to death by the inhuman Nero. Burrhus is praised by the historians for moderation and love of justice. His treatment of St. Paul is no mean proof of this. *Calmet*.

With a soldier that kept him.] That is, the soldier to whom he was chained, as has been related before, ^{<4118>}**Acts 12:6**.

Verse 17. Paul called the chief of the Jews together] We have already seen, in ^{<418D>}**Acts 18:2**, that *Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome*; see the note there: but it seems they were permitted to return very soon; and, from this verse, it appears that there were then *chiefs*, probably of *synagogues*, dwelling at Rome.

I have committed nothing] Lest they should have heard and received malicious reports against him, he thought it best to state his own case.

Verse 20. For the hope of Israel I am bound, &c.] As if he had said: This, and this alone, is the cause of my being delivered into the hands of the Romans; I have proclaimed *Jesus* as the *Messiah*; have maintained that though he was crucified by the Jews, yet he rose again from the dead; and, through him, I have preached the general resurrection of mankind: this all Israel professes to hope for; and yet it is on this account that the Jews persecute *me*. Both the *Messiah* and the *resurrection* might be said to be the hope of Israel; and it is hard to tell which of them is here meant: see ^{<4136>}**Acts 13:6; 24:15, 21; 26:6**. It is certain that, although the Jews believed in the *general resurrection*, yet they did not credit it in the *manner* in which Paul preached it; for he laid the foundation of the *general resurrection* on the *resurrection of Christ*.

Verse 21. We neither received letters, &c.] This is very strange, and shows us that the Jews knew their cause to be *hopeless*, and therefore did not send it forward to Rome. They wished for an opportunity to kill Paul: and, when they were frustrated by his appeal to the emperor, they permitted the business to drop. *Calmet* supposes they had not *time* to send; but this supposition does not appear to be sufficiently solid: they might

have sent long before Paul sailed; and they might have written officially by the vessel in which the centurion and the prisoners were embarked. But their case was hopeless; and they could not augur any good to themselves from making a formal complaint against the apostle at the emperor's throne.

Verse 22. For as concerning this sect] See Clarke's note on "~~4014~~ Acts 24:14". A saying of *Justin Martyr* casts some light on this saying of the Jews: he asserts that the Jews not only *cursed them* in their synagogues, but they *sent out chosen men* from Jerusalem, to *acquaint the world*, and particularly the *Jews* everywhere, that the *Christians* were an atheistical and wicked sect, which should be, detested and abhorred by all mankind. *Justin Martyr*, Dial. p. 234.

Verse 23. To whom he expounded-the kingdom of God] To whom he showed that the reign of the Messiah was to be a spiritual reign; and that *Jesus*, whom the Jewish rulers had lately crucified, was the *true Messiah*, who should rule in this spiritual kingdom. These two points were probably those on which he expatiated from morning to evening, proving both *out of the law* and *out of the prophets*. How easily *Jesus*, as the Messiah, and his spiritual kingdom, might be proved from the *law of Moses*, any person may be satisfied, by consulting the notes written on those books. As to the *prophets*, their predictions are so clear, and their prophecies so obviously fulfilled in the person, preaching, miracles, passion, and death of *Jesus Christ*, that it is utterly impossible, with any show of reason, to apply them to any other.

Verse 24. Some believed, &c.] His message was there treated as his Gospel is to the present day: some believe, and are converted; others continue in obstinate unbelief, and perish. Could the Jews then have credited the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom, they would have found little difficulty to receive *Jesus Christ* as the MESSIAH.

Multitudes of those now called Christians can more easily credit *Jesus* as the Messiah than believe the *spiritual* nature of his kingdom. The *cross* is the great stumbling block: millions expect *Jesus* and his kingdom who cannot be persuaded that the *cross* is the way to the *crown*.

Verse 25. Agreed not among themselves] It seems that a controversy arose between the *Jews* themselves, in consequence of some *believing*, and others *disbelieving*; and the two parties contested together; and, in respect

to the *unbelieving* party, the apostle quoted the following passage from ^{<2310>}**Isaiah 6:9**.

Verse 26. Hearing ye shall hear, &c.] See the notes on ^{<40314>}**Matthew 13:14**, and ^{<41239>}**John 12:39, 40**.

Verse 28. The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles] St. Paul had spoken to this effect twice before, ^{<441346>}**Acts 13:46**, and ^{<441806>}**Acts 18:6**, where see the notes; but here he uses a firmer tone, being out of the Jewish territories, and under the protection of the emperor. By *the salvation of God*, all the blessings of the kingdom of Christ are intended. This salvation God could have sent unto the Gentiles, independently of the Jewish *disobedience*; but He waited till *they* had rejected it, and then *reprobated* them, and *elected* the Gentiles. Thus the *elect* became *reprobate*, and the *reprobate* elect.

They will hear it.] That is, they will *obey it*; for **ακουειν** signifies, not only *to hear*, but also *to obey*.

Verse 29. And had great reasoning among themselves.] The believers contending with the unbelievers; and thus we may suppose that the cause of truth gained ground. For contentions about the truth and authenticity of the religion of Christ infallibly end in the triumph and extension of that religion.

Verse 30. Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house] As a state prisoner, he might have had an apartment in the common prison; but peculiar favour was showed him, and he was permitted to dwell alone, with the soldier that guarded him, ^{<442816>}**Acts 28:16**. Finding now an opportunity of preaching the Gospel, he hired a house for the purpose, and paid for it, St. Chrysostom observes, by the fruits of his own labour. Here he received all that came unto him, and preached the Gospel with glorious success; so that his *bonds* became the means of spreading the truth, and he became celebrated even in the palace of Nero, ^{<30112>}**Philippians 1:12, 13**; and we find that there were several *saints*, even in *Cæsar's household*, ^{<3002>}**Philippians 4:22**, which were, no doubt, the fruits of the apostle's ministry. It is said that during his two years' residence here he became acquainted with Seneca, the philosopher, between whom and the apostle an epistolary correspondence took place. In an ancient MS. of Seneca's epistles in my own possession, these letters are extant, and are in number fourteen and have a prologue to them written by St. Jerome. That they are

very *ancient* cannot be doubted; but learned men have long ago agreed that they are neither worthy of *Paul* nor of *Seneca*.

While he was in captivity, the Church at Philippi, to which he was exceedingly dear, sent him some pecuniary assistance by the hands of their minister, Epaphroditus, who, it appears, risked his life in the service of the apostle, and was taken with a dangerous malady. When he got well, he returned to Philippi, and, it is supposed, carried with him that epistle which is still extant; and from it we learn that *Timothy* was then at Rome with Paul, and that he had the prospect of being shortly delivered from his captivity. See ^{<3012>}**Philippians 1:12, 13; 2:25; 4:15, 16, 18, &c.**

Verse 31. Preaching the kingdom of God] Showing the spiritual nature of the true Church, under the reign of the **Messiah**. For an explanation of this phrase, see **Clarke's note on "^{<4012>}Matthew 3:2"**.

Those things which concern the Lord] The Redeemer of the world was to be represented as the LORD; as JESUS; and as the CHRIST. As the *Lord*, **ο κυριος**, the *sole potentate*, upholding all things by the word of his power; governing the world and the Church; having all things under his control, and all his enemies under his feet; in short, the *maker* and *upholder* of all things, and the judge of all men. As *Jesus-the Saviour*; he who saves, delivers, and preserves; and especially he who saves his people from their sins. For the explanation of the word JESUS, see the note on ^{<4017>}**John 1:17**. As *Christ-the same as Messiah*; both signifying the ANOINTED: he who was *appointed* by the Lord to this great and glorious work; who had the Spirit without measure, and who *anoints*, communicates the *gifts* and *graces* of that Spirit to all true believers. St. Paul taught *the things which concerned or belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ*. He proved him to be the *Messiah* foretold by the prophets, and expected by the Jews; he spoke of what he does as the *Lord*, what he does as *Jesus*, and what he does as *Christ*. These contain the sum and substance of all that is called the *Gospel of Christ*. Yet, *the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*, necessarily include the whole account of his *incarnation, preaching in Judea, miracles, persecutions, passion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession*, and his sending down the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. These were the *subjects* on which the apostle preached for *two whole years*, during his imprisonment at Rome.

With all confidence] **παρρησιας**, *Liberty of speech*; perfect freedom to say *all* he pleased, and *when* he pleased. He had the fullest toleration from

the Roman government to preach *as* he pleased, and *what* he pleased; and the unbelieving Jews had no power to prevent him.

It is supposed that it was during this residence at Rome that he converted *Onesimus*, and sent him back to his master *Philemon*, with the epistle which is still extant. And it is from ^{<50123>}**Philemon 1:23, 24**, of that epistle, that we learn that Paul had then with him *Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke*.

Here St. Luke's account of Paul's travels and sufferings ends; and it is probable that this history was written soon after the end of the *two years* mentioned in ^{<4281>}**Acts 28:30**.

That the apostle visited many places after this, suffered much in the great cause of Christianity, and preached the Gospel of Jesus with amazing success, is generally believed. How he came to be liberated we are not told; but it is likely that, having been kept in this sort of confinement for about *two years*, and none appearing against him, he was released by the imperial order.

Concerning the time, place, and manner of his death, we have little *certainty*. It is commonly believed that, when a general persecution was raised against the Christians by Nero, about A.D. 64, under pretence that they had set Rome on fire, both St. Paul and St. Peter then sealed the truth with their blood; the latter being crucified with his head downward; the former being beheaded, either in A.D. 64 or 65, and buried in the *Via Ostiensis*. EUSEBIUS, *Hist, Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. 25, intimates that the tombs of these two apostles, with their inscriptions, were extant in his time; and quotes as his authority a holy man of the name of Caius, who wrote against the sect of the *Cataphrygians*, who has asserted this, as from his personal knowledge. See Eusebius, by *Reading*, vol. i. p. 83; and see Dr. *Lardner*, in his life of this apostle, who examines this account with his usual perspicuity and candour. Other writers have been more *particular* concerning his death: they say that it was *not* by the command of Nero that he was martyred, but by that of the *prefects* of the city, Nero being then absent; that he was beheaded at *Aquæ Salviæ*, about three miles from Rome, on Feb. 22; that he could not be *crucified*, as Peter was, because he was a freeman of the city of Rome. But there is great uncertainty on these subjects, so that we cannot positively rely on any account that even the *ancients* have transmitted to us concerning the death of this apostle; and much less on the accounts given by the *moderns*; and least of all on those

which are to be found in the *Martyrologists*. Whether Paul ever returned after this to Rome has not yet been satisfactorily proved. It is probable that he did, and suffered death there, as stated above; but still we have no *certainty*.

THERE are several subscriptions to this book in different *manuscripts*: these are the principal: -The Acts of the Apostles-*The Acts of the holy Apostles-The end of the Acts of the holy Apostles, written by Luke the Evangelist, and fellow traveller of the illustrious Apostle Paul-By the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, &c. &c.*

The *versions* are not less various in their subscriptions.

The end of the Acts, that is, the History of the holy Apostles.-SYRIAC.

Under the auspices and help of God, the book of the Acts of the pure Apostles is finished; whom we humbly supplicate to obtain us mercy by all their prayers. Amen. And may praise be ascribed to God, the Lord of the universe!-ARABIC.

This (book) of the Acts of the Apostles, which has been by many translated into the Roman tongue, is translated from the Roman and Greek tongue into the Æthiopic.-ÆTHIOPIC.

On the nature and importance of the *Acts of the Apostles*, see what is said in the preface to this book. To which may be added the following observations, taken from the conclusion of Dr. Dodd's Commentary.

“The plainness and simplicity of the narration are strong circumstances in its favour; the writer appears to have been very honest and impartial, and to have set down, very fairly, the objections which were made to Christianity, both by Jews and heathens, and the reflections which enemies cast upon it, and upon the first preachers of it. He has likewise, with a just and honest freedom, mentioned the weaknesses, faults, and prejudices, both of the apostles and their converts. There is a great and remarkable harmony between the occasional hints dispersed up and down in St. Paul's epistles, and the facts recorded in this history; insomuch as that it is generally acknowledged that the history of the Acts is the best clue to guide us in the studying of the epistles written by that apostle. The other parts of the New Testament do likewise agree with this history, and give great confirmation to it; for the doctrines

and principles are every where uniformly the same; the conclusions of the gospels contain a brief account of those things which are more particularly related in the beginning of the Acts. And there are frequent intimations, in other parts of the gospels, that such an effusion of the Spirit was expected; and that with a view to the very design which the apostles and primitive Christians are said to have carried on, by virtue of that extraordinary effusion which Christ poured out upon his disciples after his ascension; and, finally, the epistles of the other apostles, as well as those of St. Paul, plainly suppose such things to have happened as are related in the Acts of the Apostles; so that the history of the Acts is one of the most important parts of the sacred history, for neither the gospels nor epistles could have been so clearly understood without it; but by the help of it the whole scheme of the Christian revelation is set before us in an easy and manifest view.

“Even the incidental things mentioned by St. Luke are so exactly agreeable to all the accounts which remain of the best ancient historians, among the Jews and heathens, that no person who had forged such a history, in later ages, could have had that external confirmation, but would have betrayed himself by alluding to some customs or opinions since sprung up; or by misrepresenting some circumstance, or using some phrase or expression not then in use. The plea of forgery, therefore, in later ages, cannot be allowed; and for a man to have published a history of such things so early as St. Luke wrote; (that is, while some of the apostles and many other persons were alive who were concerned in the transactions which he has recorded;) if his account had not been punctually true, could have been only to have exposed himself to an easy confutation and certain infamy.

“As, therefore, the Acts of the Apostles are in themselves consistent and uniform, the incidental things agreeable to the best ancient historians which have come down to us, and the main facts supported and confirmed by the other books of the New Testament, and by the unanimous testimony of so many of the ancient fathers, we may, I think, very fairly, and with great justness, conclude that, if any history of former times deserves credit, the Acts of the Apostles ought to be received and credited; and, if the history of the Acts of the Apostles be true, Christianity cannot be

false: for a doctrine so good in itself, and attended with so many miraculous and Divine testimonies, has an the possible masks of a true revelation.”

On St. PAUL'S *character* and *conduct*, see the observations at the end of ~~409~~ **Acts 9:43**, where the subject is particularly considered.

The book of the ACTS is not only a *history of the Church*, the most *ancient* and most *impartial*, as it is the most *authentic* extant, but it is also a history of God's *grace* and *providence*, The manner in which he has exerted himself in favour of Christianity, and of the persons who were originally employed to disseminate its doctrines, shows us the highest marks of the Divine approbation. Had not that cause been of God, could he have so signally interposed in its behalf? Would he have wrought such a series of miracles for its propagation and support? And would all its genuine professors have submitted to sustain the *loss of all things*, had not his own Spirit, by its consolations in their hearts, given them to feel that his favour was better than life?

That the *hardships* suffered by the primitive apostles and Christians were great, the facts themselves related in this book sufficiently declare: that their *consolation* and happiness were abundant, the cheerful manner in which they met and sustained those hardships demonstrates. He who cordially embraced Christianity found himself no loser by it; if he lost *earthly good* in consequence, it was infinitely overbalanced by the *spiritual good* which he received. Paul himself, who suffered most, had this compensated by superabounding happiness. Wherever the Gospel comes, it finds nothing but *darkness*, *sin*, and *misery*; wherever it is received, it communicates *light*, *holiness*, and *felicity*. Reader, magnify thy God and Saviour, who hath called thee to such a *state* of salvation. Should thou *neglect* it, how grievous must thy punishment be! Not only receive its doctrines, as a system of *wisdom* and *goodness*, but receive them as *motives* of conduct, and as a *rule* of life; and show thy conscientious belief of them, by holding the truth *in righteousness*, and thus adorn these doctrines of God thy Saviour in all things.-*Amen*.

I have often with pleasure, and with great advantage to my subject, quoted Dr. Lardner, whose elaborate works in defense of Divine revelation are really beyond all praise. The conclusion of his *Credibility of the Gospel History* is peculiarly appropriate; and the introduction of it here can need no apology. I hope, with him, I may also say:-

“I have now performed what I undertook, and have shown that the account given by the sacred writers of persons and things is confirmed by other ancient authors of the best note. There is nothing in the books of the New Testament unsuitable to the age in which they are supposed to have been written. There appears in these writers a knowledge of the affairs of those times, not to be found in authors of later ages. We are hereby assured that the books of the New Testament are genuine, and that they were written by persons who lived at or near the time of those events of which they have given the history.

“Any one may be sensible how hard it is for the most learned, acute, and cautious man, to write a book in the character of some person of an earlier age; and not betray his own time by some mistake about the affairs of the age in which he pretends to place himself; or by allusions to customs or principles since sprung up; or by some phrase or expression not then in use. It is no easy thing to escape all these dangers in the smallest performance, though it be a treatise of theory or speculation: these hazards are greatly increased when the work is of any length; and especially if it be historical, and be concerned with characters and customs. It is yet more difficult to carry on such a design in a work consisting of several pieces, written, to all appearance, by several persons. Many indeed are desirous to deceive, but all hate to be deceived; and therefore, though attempts have been made to impose upon the world in this way, they have never, or very rarely, succeeded; but have been detected and exposed by the skill and vigilance of those who have been concerned for the truth.

“The volume of the New Testament consists of several pieces: these are ascribed to eight several persons; and there are the strongest appearances that they were not all written by any one hand, but by as many persons as they are ascribed to. There are lesser differences in the relations of some facts, and such seeming contradictions as would never have happened if these books had been all the work of one person, or of several who wrote in concert. There are as many peculiarities of temper and style as there are names of writers; divers of which show no depth of genius nor compass of knowledge! Here are representations of titles, posts, behaviour of persons of higher and lower ranks in many parts of the

world; persons are introduced, and their characters are set in a full light; here is a history of things done in several cities and countries; and there are allusions to a vast variety of customs and tenets, of persons of several nations, sects, and religions. The whole is written without affectation, with the greatest simplicity and plainness, and is confirmed by other ancient writers of unquestionable authority. If it be difficult for a person of learning and experience to compose a small treatise concerning matters of speculation, with the characters of a more early age than that in which he writes, it is next to impossible that such a work of considerable length, consisting of several pieces, with a great variety of historical facts, representations of characters, principles, and customs of several nations, and distant countries, of persons of ranks and degrees, of many interests and parties, should be performed by eight several persons, the most of them unlearned, without any appearance of concert.

“I might perhaps call this argument a demonstration, if that term had not been often misapplied by men of warm imagination, and been bestowed upon reasonings that have but a small degree of probability. But though it should not be a strict demonstration that these writings are genuine, or though it be not absolutely impossible, in the nature of the thing, that the books of the New Testament should have been composed in a later age than that to which they are assigned, and of which they have innumerable characters, yet, I think, it is in the highest degree improbable, and altogether incredible.

“If the books of the New Testament were written by persons who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, if they were written at the time in which they are said to have been written, the things related in them are true. If they had not been matter of fact, they would not have been credited by any persons near that time, and in those parts of the world in which they are said to have been done, but would have been treated as the most notorious lies and falsehoods. Suppose three or four books should now appear amongst us, in the language most generally understood, giving an account of many remarkable and extraordinary events, which had happened in some kingdom of Europe, and in the most noted cities of the countries next adjoining to it; some of them said to have

happened between sixty and seventy years ago, others between twenty and thirty, others nearer our own time; would they not be looked upon as the most manifest and ridiculous forgeries and impostures that ever were contrived? Would great numbers of persons in those very places, change their religious principles and practices upon the credit of things reported to be publicly done, which no man ever heard of before? Or, rather, is it possible that such a design as this would be conceived by any sober and serious persons, or even the most wild and extravagant? If the history of the New Testament be credible, the Christian religion is true. If the things that were related to have been done by Jesus, and by his followers, by virtue of powers derived from him, do not prove a person to come from God, and that his doctrine is true and divine, nothing can. And as Jesus does here, in the circumstances of his birth, life, sufferings, and after exaltation, and in the success of his doctrine, answer the description of the great person promised and foretold in the Old Testament, he is at the same time showed to be the Messiah.

“From the agreement of the writers of the New Testament with other ancient writers, we are not only assured that these books are genuine, but also that they are come down to us pure and uncorrupted, without any considerable interpolations or alterations. If such had been made in them, there would have appeared some smaller differences at least between them and other ancient writings.

“There has been in all ages a wicked propensity in mankind to advance their own notions and fancies by deceits and forgeries: they have been practised by heathens, Jews, and Christians, in support of imaginary historical facts, religious schemes and practices, and political interests. With these views some whole books have been forged, and passages inserted into others of undoubted authority. Many of the Christian writers of the second and third centuries, and of the following ages, appear to have had false notions concerning the state of Judea between the nativity of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem; and concerning many other things occasionally mentioned in the New Testament. The consent of the best ancient writers with those of the New Testament is a proof that these books are still untouched, and that they have not

been new modelled and altered by Christians of later times, in conformity to their own peculiar sentiments.

“This may be reckoned an argument that the generality of Christians had a very high veneration for these books; or else that the several sects among them have had an eye upon each other, that no alterations might be made in those writings to which they have all appealed. It is also an argument that the Divine providence has all along watched over and guarded these books, (a very fit object of especial care,) which contain the best of principles, were apparently written with the best views, and have in them inimitable characters of truth and simplicity.”-See Dr. Lardner’s WORKS, vol. i. p. 419.

Let him answer these arguments who can.-A. C.