

ACTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

This book, in some copies, is called, “The Acts of the holy Apostles”. It contains an history of the ministry and miracles of the apostles of Christ, and is a sort of a journal of their actions, from whence it takes its name. It begins at the ascension of Christ, and reaches to the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul at Rome; and is a history of upwards of thirty years: it gives an account of the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, and of the progress of the Gospel there, and in Judea, by the means of all the apostles, and particularly Peter, the minister of the circumcision, and who also first opened the door of faith to the Gentiles: it shows how the Gospel went forth from Jerusalem, and was spread in the Gentile world, especially by the Apostle Paul, whose companion Luke was, that was the writer of this book; for that it was written by him is very evident from the beginning of it, it being dedicated to the same person his Gospel is, and of which he makes mention; and in the Complutensian edition the book is called, “The Acts of the Apostles of Saint Luke the Evangelist”; and so the title of it in the Syriac version is, “the Book of the Acts: that is, the history of the blessed apostles, which my Lord Luke the Evangelist collected for the saints”. It was by him written in the Greek language; and we are told^{f1}, that there was a version of it into the Hebrew language, and which was laid up in the library of the Jews at Tiberias; and is cited by R. Azarias^{f2} under the name of **twl w[ph**, “the Acts”: of the authority of this book there has been no doubt, among the ancients, only Cerinthus the heretic endeavoured to discredit it; and it was not received by another sort of heretics called Severiani, from Severus, a disciple of Tatian^{f3}. It is a most excellent and useful work, showing the first planting of Christianity, and of Christian churches, both among the Jews and Gentiles; the spread and progress of the Gospel in several parts of the world; what sufferings the apostles endured for the sake of it; and with what patience and courage they bore them; and what success attended them; and is a standing proof and confirmation of the Christian religion.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 1

Ver. 1. *The former treatise have I made*, etc.] Meaning the Gospel written by him the Evangelist Luke, for from that he makes a transition to this, beginning here where he there left off; namely, at the ascension of Christ; (see ~~251~~ Luke 24:51).

O Theophilus; (See Gill on "~~200B~~ Luke 1:3")

of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. This is a summary of his former treatise, his Gospel, which gave an account of what Christ began to do, and did; not of the common and private actions of his life; or of what was done, either in public, or private, throughout the whole of his life; for excepting that of his disputing with the doctors at twelve years of age, no account is given by him of what he did, till he was about thirty years of age; but of his extraordinary actions, of the miracles he wrought; and these not all, and everyone of them; but many of them, and which were sufficient to prove him the Messiah; and particularly of all things he did relating to the salvation of his people; of the whole of his obedience; of his compliance with the ceremonial law; of his submission to baptism; of his holy life and conversation, and entire conformity to the law; of his sufferings and death, how that thereby he made full atonement for sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption for his people: and not only Luke, in his Gospel, gave an account of these his actions, but also of many of his excellent discourses, his parables, and his sermons, whether delivered to the people in common, or to his own disciples: and now, as this was the subject of his former book, he intended in this latter to treat, as he does, of what the apostles of Christ began to do and teach.

Ver. 2. *Until the day in which he was taken up*, etc.] That is, into heaven. The historian suggests, that his former treatise took in the main and principal things Jesus did and taught, until such time that he ascended to heaven:

after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen: our Lord having chosen twelve of his own

free grace and goodness, and not according to their worth and merit, to be his apostles, a little before his ascension to heaven, gave them more express and explicit commands and orders where they should go, into all the world, to all nations; and what they should preach, the whole Gospel, salvation by faith in him, and particularly repentance and remission of sins; and what ordinances they should require believers to attend to; and how they themselves should conduct and behave in their work: the phrase, “through the Holy Ghost”, may either be read in connection with “had given commandments”, as the Vulgate and Arabic versions read, and as we do; and the sense be, that these commands which Christ gave to his apostles, were not merely his orders, as man, but were what the Holy Ghost was equally concerned in with him, and were from him as God, and so carried a divine authority with them; and at the same time that he gave them to them, he breathed into them the Holy Ghost, whereby they had a more clear view of his doctrines and ordinances, and were more qualified to minister them; and besides, had an intimation given them, that they might expect still greater gifts of the Holy Ghost: or it may be read with the latter clause, “whom he had chosen”; as in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; and then the meaning is, that just before his being taken up to heaven, he gave some special orders and directions to his apostles, whom he had chosen to that office through the Holy Ghost, and not through human affection in him, or according to any desert of theirs; but as under the influence of the Holy Spirit, with which, as man, he was anointed without measure; and whose gifts and graces he communicated to his disciples, to fit them for the service to which they were appointed: or with the apostles; they being sent by the Holy Ghost, as well as by Christ.

Ver. 3. *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion*, etc.] That is, after his sufferings and death; for that he suffered many things, and at last death itself, is certain from the acknowledgment of the Jews themselves, who own, that they put him to death on the passover eve ^{f4}; as well as from the accounts of the evangelists; and from the soldiers not breaking his legs, when the rest that were crucified with him were broken, because he was already dead; and from his “ricardium” being pierced with a spear, from whence blood and water sprung, after which it was impossible he should be alive; and from the testimony of the centurion who watched him, to whom Pilate sent to know if he was dead, and how long he had been dead; and from his being buried, and lying in the grave so long as he did: and yet after, and not withstanding this, “he showed himself

alive”; he raised himself from the dead, and hereby declared himself to be the Son of God with power, which cannot be said of others; there were others that were alive after death, but not by their own power; as the widow of Sarepta’s son, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and the widow of Nain’s son; but these did not “show themselves alive”, as Christ did, who appeared often to his apostles: for after he had first appeared to Mary Magdalene, he showed himself to the two disciples going to Emmaus; then to ten of them, Thomas being absent; after that to them all, Thomas being present, when he convinced him of the truth of his resurrection; after that he appeared to seven of the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and then to all the apostles; and to five hundred brethren at once on a mountain in Galilee; and once to James alone, and to them all again when he was parted from them and went up to heaven; and so they must be proper and sufficient witnesses of his resurrection: and this evidence of his being alive, he gave to them, by many infallible proofs; or by many signs and tokens, and which were most sure and unquestionable arguments of his being alive; as his eating and drinking with them, walking and talking with them in a free and familiar manner, showing them his hands and his feet, and side, that they might see the scars which the nails and spear had made; and which were not only a proof that he was risen again, but risen again in the same body in which he suffered; and that they might feel and handle him, and know that he was not a spirit, a phantom, a mere apparition, but was really risen and alive: being seen of them forty days; not that he was seen by them for forty days together continually, but at certain times, within the space of forty days; for between his first and last appearance, many others intervening, such a length of time run out; so that it was not a single and sudden appearance that surprised them; but there were many of them, and a distance between them, and this for a considerable term of time; hence they had opportunity of reflecting upon these appearances, and of satisfying themselves of the truth of things. This number of “forty days” is a remarkable one in Scripture. The flood was forty days upon the earth; and so long Moses was in the mount with God; such a number of days the spies were searching the land of Canaan; so many days Goliath presented himself to the armies of Israel; and so long a time Elijah went in the strength of the meat the angel provided for him; and for such a length of time the prophet Ezekiel was to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; and such a term of time was given out by Jonah for the destruction of Nineveh; and so many days Christ fasted, and was tempted in the wilderness. The Jews pretend^{f5}, that forty days before Jesus was put to death he was led forth, and a crier

went before him, declaring, that whoever would, had liberty to testify to his innocence if they could, but no man appeared for him: but this is false; the truth of the matter is, that for forty days after his resurrection he showed himself to his disciples, and by proving the truth of his resurrection, he proved his own innocence and uprightness. If the testimony of Rabbenu Hakadosh, as cited by Galatinus, could be depended on, the Jews had a notion of this forty days' conversation of the Messiah with his disciples, after his resurrection; who say ^{f6},

“the Messiah, after his resurrection, shall converse with the righteous, and they shall hear his precepts “forty days”, answerable to those forty days in which he shall be in the wilderness to afflict his soul, before they shall kill him; and these being finished, he shall ascend to heaven, and sit at the right hand of God, as it is said, (~~1301~~ Psalm 110:1).”

But this seems rather to be the pious fraud of some Christian, than the words of a Jew: however, they do say ^{f7}, that

“the days of the Messiah are “forty days”, as it is said, (~~1950~~ Psalm 95:10) “forty years long was I grieved”; or, as they interpret it, “shall I be grieved with this generation”?”

intimating, that the generation of the Messiah, and of the wilderness, would be much alike, and equally grieving to God, and reckoning a day for a year, as the Lord did with that generation, (~~0443~~ Numbers 14:33,34). These forty days Christ was with his disciples, may be an emblem of the forty years which were to run out from his death, to his coming again to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; for so long time was there from thence to the destruction of Jerusalem. And Christ was not only seen of the disciples at certain seasons during this space of time, but he was also heard by them: for it follows,

and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation; concerning the doctrines of the Gospel they were to preach, and the ordinances of it they were to administer; concerning the church of God, the nature, order, and officers of it, and the laws and rules by which it should be governed; concerning the kingdom of grace, what it consists of, and wherein it lies; and of the kingdom of glory, of meetness for it, his own grace, and of the right unto it, his own justifying righteousness: some of these things they might have

before but very little knowledge of; and may be these are the things he had to say to them, and which, till now, they could not bear; and being no more to be with them in person, he instructs them in them.

Ver. 4. *And being assembled together with them*, etc.] At their last meeting at Bethany, or Mount Olivet, which was by appointment: some render the words, as the Vulgate Latin, “and eating with them”; which was one of the proofs he gave of his being alive; and so the Syriac version renders it, “and when he had ate bread with them”, and the Ethiopic version, “and dining with them”, which he might do more than once; (see ^{<4212>}John 21:12,15) this was the last time, when he

commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem; which does not necessarily infer, that they were then at Jerusalem; for they might be, and they seem rather to be at Bethany, or on the Mount of Olives, from whence they afterwards returned to Jerusalem; and from thence they had orders not to depart, where the blood of Christ had been shed, and where were his greatest enemies, and where the disciples might have no inclination to have gone, and much less to abide, but so it must be, partly for the glorifying of Christ by the effusion of his Spirit on the apostles in the place where he had suffered the most reproach; and partly because the Gospel, the word of the Lord, was to go out of this place, according to the prophecy in (^{<2128>}Isaiah 2:3) as also because a Gospel church was to be fixed there, and a very large number of souls to be converted, and added to it: wherefore they were bid to go thither, and not stir from thence,

but wait for the promise of the Father; that is, the pouring forth of the Spirit, which God the Father of Christ; and of his people, had promised should be in the last days, (^{<2128>}Joel 2:28) and which Christ had promised his disciples from the Father, (^{<6146>}John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7).

which, saith he, ye have heard of me; or “by”, or “out of my mouth”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and Beza’s most ancient copy read; referring to the above passages, or to what follows: and which he the rather mentions, to assure them of its accomplishment, since it was both a promise of the Father, all whose promises are yea and amen; and he had also told them of it, neither of whose words could possibly fall to the ground.

Ver. 5. *For John truly baptized with water*, etc.] Or “in water”, as he himself says, (^{<4011>}Matthew 3:11) John’s baptism was water baptism, an

immersion of persons in water: he was the first administrator of it, and therefore is here mentioned by name; and his, and the baptism of the Spirit, are opposed; for there were others, as the disciples of Christ, that baptized in water as well as John: and these words are not to be understood of the words of the Lord, by the mouth of John, which the disciples heard, for they were not then called when John spoke the words in (^{<40B1>}Matthew 3:11) nor indeed are they the same with these; but these are the words of Christ himself, and which the apostles heard from his own mouth, as is clear from (^{<4116>}Acts 11:16) though they are not recorded by any of the evangelists; and these are not the only words which Luke repeats, that the evangelists are silent about; (see ^{<40B>}Acts 20:35)

but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; that is, by himself; for it is Christ's prerogative to baptize with the Spirit, as John foretold of him, and it designs such an extraordinary and plentiful donation of the gifts of the Spirit, as may be expressed by a baptism; in which the apostles, on the day of "Pentecost", were, as it were, to be immersed, and with them covered; as Cyril of Jerusalem ^{f8} observes,

"as he, **ο ενδυνων εν τοις υδασι**, "who is plunged in water, and baptized", is encompassed by the water on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit."

Not many days hence; within ten days, for this was on the fortieth day from his death, which was at the passover, these words were said; and on the fiftieth day from thence was the feast of Pentecost, when this had its fulfilment.

Ver. 6. *When they therefore were come together*, etc.] That is, Christ, and his eleven apostles; for not the hundred and twenty disciples hereafter mentioned, nor the five hundred brethren Christ appeared to at once, are here intended, but the apostles, as appears from (^{<40C>}Acts 1:2-4)

they asked of him, saying, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? The kingdom had been for some time taken away from the Jews, Judea was reduced to a Roman province, and was now actually under the power of a Roman governor. And the nation in general was in great expectation, that upon the Messiah's coming they should be delivered from the yoke of the Romans, and that the son of David would be king over them. The disciples of Christ had imbibed the same notions, and were in the same expectation of a temporal kingdom to be set up by their master,

as is evident from (ⲁⲓⲓⲓ Matthew 20:21) and though his sufferings and death had greatly damped their spirits, and almost destroyed their hopes, (see ⲁⲓⲓⲓ Luke 24:21) yet his resurrection from the dead, and his discoursing with them about the kingdom of God, and ordering them to wait at Jerusalem, the metropolis of that nation, for some thing extraordinary, revived their hopes, and emboldened them to put this question to him: and this general expectation of the Jews is expressed by them in the same language as here;

“the days of the Messiah will be the time when **l arçyl twkl mh bwçtç**, “the kingdom shall return”, or “be restored to Israel”; and they shall return to the land of Israel, and that king shall be exceeding great, and the house of his kingdom shall be in Zion, and his name shall be magnified, and his fame shall fill the Gentiles more than King Solomon; all nations shall be at peace with him, and all lands shall serve him, because of his great righteousness, and the wonderful things which shall be done by him; and whoever rises up against him God will destroy, and he shall deliver him into his hands; and all the passages of Scripture testify of his and our prosperity with him; and there shall be no difference in anything from what it is now, only “the kingdom shall return to Israel”^{f9}.”

Ver. 7. *And he said unto them,* etc.] To his disciples,

it is not for you to know the times or the seasons; meaning, not the times that are past from Adam to Christ; as how long the world stood; when the flood came; when Sodom and Gomorrha were burned to ashes; when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and the law was given to them; when the kingdom of Israel began, and when the Jews were carried captive, and when they returned; when the sceptre departed from Judah, and Daniel’s weeks had an end: or the particular seasons of the year, and the times for planting, ploughing, sowing, reaping, etc. but when should be the time, the day, and hour of the coming of the son of man, when he shall set up his kingdom in a more glorious manner, and the kingdoms of this world shall become his; or when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel. This, by the Jews, is said to be one of the seven things hid from men^{f10}:

“seven things are hid from the children of men, and these are they; the day of death, and the day of consolation, and the depth of judgment, and a man knows not what is in the heart of his neighbour, nor with what he shall be rewarded, and “when the

kingdom of the house of David shall return”, and when the kingdom of Persia shall fall.”

Which the Father hath put in his own power; and not in the power of a creature, no, not of the angels; (see ^{<4B6>}Matthew 24:36) wherefore it is vain and sinful, as well as fruitless, to indulge a curious inquiry into these things, or into the times and seasons of what is future; as of the time of a man’s death, of the end of the world, of the second coming of Christ; only those things should be looked into which God has revealed, and put into the power of man to know by diligent search and inquiry. Says R. Simeon ^{f11},

“flesh and blood, (i.e. man), which knows not wy[grw wyt], “its times and its moments”, (and so the Vulgate Latin renders the words here), ought to add a void space to the blessed God, who knows the times and moments.”

Ver. 8. *But ye shall receive power*, etc.] From on high, with which they were to be endured, (^{<249>}Luke 24:49) meaning the power of the Holy Ghost, strength from him to preach the Gospel, and work miracles in confirmation of it, and courage and greatness of mind, amidst all reproaches and persecutions, to face and oppose their enemies, profess the name of Christ, abide by his truths and ordinances, make their way through all opposition and difficulties, and spread the Gospel all over the world; for intend of enjoying worldly ease, honour, wealth, and riches, they were looking for, our Lord gives them to understand that they must expect labour, service, afflictions, and trials, which would require power and strength, and which they should have:

after that the Holy Ghost shall come upon you; from above, from heaven, as he did, and sat upon them in the form of cloven tongues, and of fire; upon which they were filled with knowledge and zeal, with strength and courage, and with all gifts and abilities necessary for their work:

and ye shall be witnesses unto me; of the person of Christ, of his deity and sonship, of his incarnation, his ministry, and his miracles, of his suffering and death, of his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven. This was to be their work, and what belong to them, and not to enquire about a temporal kingdom, and the setting up of that, and the times and seasons of it; their business was to testify of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed, and to preach a crucified Jesus, as the only Saviour of lost sinners: and this

both in Jerusalem, the “metropolis” of the nation, and there, in the first place, where such dwelt who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, many of whom were to be called by grace, and converted through their ministry:

and in all Judea; that part of the land of Israel which was distinct from Samaria and Galilee, and from beyond Jordan; where churches were to be planted, as afterwards they were; (see ~~448B~~ Acts 9:31).

And in Samaria; where Christ had before forbid his disciples to go; but now their commission is enlarged, and they are sent there; and here Philip went upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, and preached Christ with great success, to the conversion of many; and hither Peter and John went to lay their hands on them, and confirm them; (see ~~448B~~ Acts 8:5,14)

and unto the uttermost part of the earth; throughout the whole world, whither the sound of the apostles, and their words went, (~~450B~~ Romans 10:18).

Ver. 9. *And when he had spoken these things*, etc.] That the times and seasons were not to be known by them, but to be kept a secret by the Father: that they should tarry at Jerusalem, and in a few days be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and receive such power, abilities, strength, and courage thereby, as to bear a noble testimony for Christ, not only there, but in all the world; and when he had given them a fresh commission, and told them where they should go, what they should preach, and what miracles they should perform, and blessed them.

While they be held; all the Oriental versions, add, “him”; that is Christ, while they looked wistly at him, being attentive to what he said to them, so that they were not asleep; nor did Christ become invisible to them, or disappear before his ascension, but was visible to them in it; hence they were eyewitnesses of it:

he was taken up. Luke in his Gospel says, “carried up”: very likely by angels, since these not only attended him in his ascension, but are the chariots of the Lord, in which he went up to heaven; (see ~~4987B~~ Psalm 68:17,18) nor is this at all inconsistent with his proper deity, or that divine power he had of elevating himself, which he could do without the assistance of others; but this makes for the glory of his majesty.

And a cloud received him out of their sight; which was done partly for the same purpose, to add to the grandeur and magnificence of Christ's ascension; and partly to check the curiosity of the disciples, and prevent their gazing any more at him: and it may be that this, cloud was no other than a number of angels that appeared in this form; just as Elijah was taken up to heaven by angels, who appeared in the form of horses and chariots of fire; and the rather this may be the sense here, since it is certain, that there was a large number of angels which attended Christ at his ascension; and by whom he was then seen, (^{<19817>}Psalm 68:17,18, ^{<4015>}John 1:51, ^{<5016>}1 Timothy 3:16) whereas, if these are not intended by the cloud, no more than two are here taken notice of, and these not as going along with Christ, but staying behind to converse with his disciples; to which may be added, that Christ was "received" by this cloud which descended to meet him, and joining him, escorted him to heaven: at least it may be thought, if it was a real cloud, that there was a multitude of angels in it, which accompanied him to the heavenly regions; for it can hardly be thought that a multitude of the heavenly host should descend at his birth, and sing glory to God upon his coming into this world; and not as large a number attend him with shouts and acclamations, at his going out of it, when he had done his work he came about, and was ascending to his God and Father, to take his place at his right hand on his throne; (see ^{<19475>}Psalm 47:5). The Ethiopic version adds, "and he ascended to heaven".

Ver. 10. *And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven*, etc.] For though he was taken out of their sight by the cloud, they kept looking upwards, and after him, if they could see him again, or any more of him:

as he went up; they looked up to heaven after him, as he went up from the earth, before the cloud took him out of their sight; and still they continued looking, as the cloud carried him up, until it was out of the reach of their sight, being willing to see the last of him in this way:

behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; that is, two angels in the form of men; it being usual with them to appear in human form: these on a sudden appeared and stood on the earth just by them; though the Ethiopic version renders it, "they stood above them", as if they were in the air over their heads; and they appeared in white apparel, as the angel at the sepulchre in (^{<4181>}Matthew 28:2,3) which was a symbol both of their purity and holiness, and of their lustre and glory. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they were clothed with lightning"; they appeared in such a dazzling form,

that it looked as if they were covered with lightning; as the angel that appeared at Christ's resurrection, his countenance is said to be as lightning; which must at once fix the attention of the disciples to them, and strike them with surprise: hence a "behold" is prefixed to this: and hereby they knew that they were not common and ordinary men, or mere men, but angels in such a form.

Ver. 11. *Which also said, ye men of Galilee,* etc.] And which was said by them, not to reproach them with their country, but partly to let them know that they knew them, who they were, and from whence they came; and partly to observe the rich and distinguishing grace of God in choosing such mean and contemptible persons to be the apostles of Christ, and eyewitnesses of his majesty:

why stand ye gazing up into heaven? reproving them for their curiosity in looking after Christ with their bodily eyes, who was no more in common to be seen this way, but with an eye of faith; and for their desire after his corporeal presence, which they were not to look for; and as if they expected he would return again immediately, whereas his return will not be till the end of the world: and besides, they were not to remain on that spot, or stand gazing there; they were to go to Jerusalem, and abide there, as Christ had ordered, till they should receive the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary way; and then they were to preach a crucified Christ, and declare that he was risen from the dead, and was gone to heaven, and was ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead.

This same Jesus; and not another; the same in person, in body and soul:

which is taken up from you into heaven; who was taken up in a cloud out of their sight, and received into heaven, where he will be till the times of the restitution of all things; and which might be matter of grief to them, because of the loss of his bodily presence; though it should have been rather joyful to them, since he was gone to the Father, and as their forerunner, to prepare a place, and make intercession for them:

shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven; he shall come in the same flesh, in the same human nature; he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and shall be attended with his mighty angels, as he now was; he shall descend himself in person, as he now ascended in person; and as he went up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet, (see ¹⁹⁴⁵ Psalm 47:5) so he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and

the trump of God; and, it may be, he shall descend upon the very spot from whence he ascended; (see ^{<384b>}Zechariah 14:4) and it is a notion of the Jews, that the resurrection of the Israelites will be there: they say ^{f12}, that

“when the dead shall live, the Mount of Olives shall be cleaved asunder, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from under it; yea, even the righteous which die in captivity shall pass through a subterranean cavern, and come out from under the Mount of Olives.”

Ver. 12. *Then returned they unto Jerusalem*, etc.] With great joy, after the angels had told them that he should come again in like manner:

from the mount called Olivet; which was on the east side of Jerusalem, a mountain Christ much frequented, and from whence he ascended to heaven. This is the hill which in (^{<411b>}1 Kings 11:7) is said to be “before Jerusalem”; and accordingly Jarchi interprets it of the Mount of Olives; and in (^{<384b>}Zechariah 14:4) it is expressly said to be “before Jerusalem on the east”; hence, when our Lord sat upon it, he is said to be over against the temple, (^{<411b>}Mark 13:3). It has its name from the multitude of olive trees which grew upon it: it is by the Jewish writers sometimes called **pytyzh rh**, “the Mount of Olives” ^{f13}, as in (^{<384b>}Zechariah 14:4) and sometimes **hj ̇mh rh** ^{f14}, and **aj ̇m rwj** ^{f15}, “the Mount of Oil”; i.e. of olive oil, which was made out of the olives that grew upon it. It is said, that in an old edition of the Latin version of this text it is called “the Mountain of Three Lights”; and this reason is given for it, because on the west side it was enlightened in the night by the continual fire of the altar in the temple; and on the east side it had the first beams of the sun before the city was enlightened with them; and it produced plenty of olives, by which the light is maintained in the lamps. Josephus ^{f16} relates, that in the earthquake in the times of Uzziah, half part of this mountain, which was to the west, was divided from it, and was rolled four furlongs to the eastern part of it, so that the ways and king’s gardens were stopped up.

Which, is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. The Syriac version renders it, “about seven furlongs”, or near a mile; though Josephus ^{f17} writes, that the Mount of Olives was but five furlongs from Jerusalem: perhaps this may be a mistake in the present copies of Josephus, since Chrysostom on this place cites this passage of Josephus, and reads seven furlongs; which exactly agrees with the Syriac version. A sabbath day’s

a journey, and it is dark, and he knows a tree, or a hedge, and says, let my sabbath (or sabbatical seat) be under it, he says nothing; but if he says, let my sabbath be at the root of it, then he may go from the place of his feet, and to the root of it, two thousand cubits, and from the root of it to his house two thousand cubits; by which means he may go four thousand cubits after it is dark. But if he does not know (any), and is not expert in walking, and says, let my sabbath be in my place, (i.e. in which he stands,) then from his place he has two thousand cubits on every side.”

Hence, in some copies it is here inserted, “such being the distance that the Jews could walk”; that is, were allowed to walk by their canons. They call two thousand cubits a mile ^{f24}; and if the Mount of Olives was seven furlongs from Jerusalem, it was pretty near a mile; but if but five furlongs, it was little more than half a mile: perhaps the true distance might be six furlongs, since Josephus says ^{f25}, the tenth legion was ordered to encamp six furlongs from Jerusalem, at the Mount of Olives, which was over against the city to the east; agreeably to which Epiphanius ^{f26}, who had been a Jew, and was born in Palestine, says,

“it was not lawful to go on the sabbath day beyond six furlongs,”

which were three quarters of a mile.

Ver. 13. *And when they were come in*, etc.] “Into it”, as the Arabic version reads; that is, into the city of Jerusalem, and into some house in that city; but what house it was is needless to inquire, since it cannot be known. Some think it was the house of John the Evangelist, whither he had taken Mary the mother of our Lord, (~~4197~~ John 19:27) which is not improbable: others, that it was the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples met for prayer when Peter was put into prison, (~~4121~~ Acts 12:12) others, that it was the house of Simon the leper; but his house was not at Jerusalem, but in Bethany, (~~4106~~ Matthew 26:6). Some have thought it was the house of Nicodemus, or of Joseph of Arimathea; but after all it seems most likely, that it was not any private house, but the temple into which the disciples immediately went, and where they continued; (see ~~4262~~ Luke 24:52,53) and (~~4126~~ Acts 2:46).

they went up into an upper room; which, if in a private house, they might choose for retirement and secrecy; and might be the same in which they had eaten the passover; and so a Syriac scholiast, in manuscript, on the

place, says it was the same. It was usual to meet in upper rooms for devotion and religious conversation; (See Gill on “~~4004~~ Mark 2:4”) though this upper room might be one of the chambers in the temple; for not only from the scriptural account of the temple, there were chambers round about it, and upper chambers; (see ~~1006~~ 1 Kings 6:5, ~~1381~~ 1 Chronicles 28:11, ~~489~~ 2 Chronicles 3:9) and one of these is called the chamber of Gemariah, in which Baruch read the prophecies of Jeremiah, (~~2830~~ Jeremiah 36:10) but also from the Jewish writings, in which frequent mention is made of the chamber Palhedrin, where the high priest was brought seven days before the day of atonement ^{f27}; and the chamber of the counsellors ^{f28}; and the chamber Gazith, where the sanhedrim sat; and the chamber of the house of Abtines ^{f29}; and the chamber of wood; and the chamber of the lepers; and the chamber of the house of oil ^{f30}; and the chamber of salt; and the chamber of Parvah; and the chamber of them that wash, besides others ^{f31}. And into a chamber, or upper room in the temple they might be let by Joses Barnabas, a Levite, one of their own company, (~~4006~~ Acts 4:36) who might have the care of it, for they are said to be continually in the temple, (~~4253~~ Luke 24:53).

Where abode both Peter, and James, and John. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “Peter, and John, and James”; and so the Alexandrian copy. These were the three favourite disciples of Christ, and are often mentioned together, as here first;

and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions put Matthew before Bartholomew.

James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas, the brother of James; all the Oriental versions read, “Judas the son of James”: of the names of the apostles, (see Gill on “~~4002~~ Matthew 10:2”), (see Gill on “~~4003~~ Matthew 10:3”), (see Gill on “~~4004~~ Matthew 10:4”). They are all here mentioned but Judas the betrayer, who was dead, to show, that though one had disbelieved the resurrection of Christ, another had denied him, and all of them had forsook him, and fled; yet they were got together again, and were firm and steadfast in the faith of Christ, waiting for the pouring forth of the Spirit.

Ver. 14. *These all continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication,* etc.] For the promise of the Spirit Christ had given them reason to expect; and that they might be preserved from their enemies, and kept faithful to their Lord; and be abundantly qualified for the preaching of the Gospel,

and succeeded in it; and that their hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love: and they were unanimous in their requests, and so were under the promise of being heard; and in this work they were constant, and assiduous, and followed it with importunity. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, “and supplication”; and so likewise the Alexandrian copy: “with the women”; that followed Christ from Galilee, and were at his cross, and at his grave; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some render the words, “with their wives”; the wives of the apostles; and as many as had wives, no doubt but they were with them; and it was necessary they should be, that they might be strengthened and confirmed in the faith of Christ. Beza’s most ancient copy adds, “and children”;

and Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the last we hear of her; how long she lived after this, is not certain: her continuance with the apostles of Christ shows her religion and piety, and was both for the increase of her faith, and spiritual comfort:

and with his brethren; (See Gill on “~~4155~~ Matthew 13:55”).

Ver. 15. *And in those days Peter stood up*, etc.] That is, in one of the days after Christ’s ascension, and before the day of Pentecost, whilst the disciples were waiting for the promise of the Spirit. The Ethiopic version reads, “on that day”; as if it was the same day they came first into Jerusalem, and went into the upper room; and which is likely enough; for no time was to be lost in choosing one in the room of Judas; when Peter, not only as a forward person, and who had been used to be the first mover and actor in any affair; but as willing to show his zeal for Christ, whom he had so lately denied, and as being the senior man in company, as well as the minister of the circumcision, rises, and stands up, as persons used to do, when about to make an oration, and in respect and reverence to the persons addressed:

in the midst of the disciples; not only the other ten, but the whole hundred and twenty. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “in the midst of the brethren”, and so reads the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic version, “in the midst of his own brethren”;

and he said what is expressed in the following verses, which before the historian relates, he inserts in a parenthesis this clause,

the number of the names; that is, of persons; (see ^{<66113>}Revelation 11:13). Some copies read, “of the men”, and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; who

together, all put together in one sum, or as meeting together in one and the same place, or as agreeing in the same faith and judgment, so the Arabic version, “and there was there a company whose names and wills agreed in this same opinion”; they were all in one place, and of the same mind; and the sum of them

were about an hundred and twenty; among whom were the eleven apostles, and seventy disciples, which made eighty one; so that there were thirty nine persons more in this company: not that it is to be thought that these were all that were in Jerusalem that believed in Christ; but these were the number of the persons that met and embodied together in a church state, and who not only gave themselves to the Lord, but to one another, by the will of God; and their names being taken and registered, the historian calls the account of them, the number of the names, and not persons; though he means persons. This was a number pretty famous among the Jews; the sanhedrim of Ezra, called the men of the great synagogue, consisted of an “hundred and twenty elders”; the last of which was Simeon the just, and he comprehended the hundred and twenty ^{f32}. And such a number was requisite for a sanhedrim in any place; it is asked,

“how many must there be in a city, that it may be fit for a sanhedrim? “an hundred and twenty”; R. Nehemiah says two hundred and thirty ^{f33}.”

but the decision is according to the former: hence they say ^{f34}, that

“they fix in every city in Israel, where there is an “hundred and twenty”, or more, a lesser sanhedrim. — -A city in which there is not an hundred and twenty, they place three judges, for there is no sanhedrim less than three.”

Ver. 16. *Men and brethren*, etc.] Which is said not so much by Peter to express his modesty, and humility, and his brotherly love; or on account of the spiritual relation that subsisted between him and the persons he speaks to, as it was a common form used in addresses; (see ^{<4012>}Acts 7:2, 15:7, 22:1, 23:1) it should seem, that the women, were not reckoned into the number of the hundred and twenty here addressed; and the Syriac version

calls that number, “the number of men”, unless they are supposed to be included in them:

this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled; or “must needs be fulfilled”: referring either to (^{<3940>}Psalm 41:9) or rather to the passages after cited out of (^{<3925>}Psalm 69:25, 109:8). There was a necessity of the fulfilling of it, consistent with the prescience of God, his counsel, and decree, and the veracity of the Scripture; which necessity does not at all excuse the sin of Judas, who acted freely from the wickedness of his own heart, and not from any force that this laid upon him: and the apostle might observe this also, to make the minds of the disciples easy, under this awful providence, since it was no other than what was predicted: and

which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before; even many hundreds of years before the event; and which shows the omniscience, and so the deity of the Holy Ghost, and the divine authority of David’s Psalms; as well as the honour that was put upon him to be the instrument by which the Holy Ghost speaks, and to be his amanuensis: the particular referred to, is, “concerning” Judas; who is sometimes called Iscariot, to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name; and what is hereafter said sufficiently does that; or

concerning that Judas, as the Syriac version renders it:

which was a guide to them that took Jesus; to the band of soldiers and officers, who came with swords and staves, as to take a thief, or a robber; before these Judas went and showed them, not only the place where he was, but gave them a sign by which they should know him, and also advice to take him and hold him fast, and lead him away safely; so that he was not only a guide as to the way, but was a director, and conductor, and manager of the whole affair. And it may be observed, that though Peter did not conceal, but declares the sin of Judas; yet not in a rough manner, aggravating it, but with much softness and tenderness; though with no design to lessen it, as appears by what follows, and which may be instructive to us in speaking of other men’s sins.

Ver. 17. *For he was numbered with us*, etc.] He was chosen an apostle with: the rest, and was ordained into that office when they were, and was always reckoned one of the twelve, and stands in the catalogue when they are mentioned:

and had obtained part of this ministry; by lot, as the word signifies; the providence of God so ordering it, according to his eternal purpose and decree, that he was not only called an apostle, and enrolled among them, but he really had a part in that ministry; he preached, and baptized, and wrought miracles; and besides all this, carried the bag, was the treasurer, and a sort of a steward in Christ's family, and provided for it.

Ver. 18. *Now this man purchased a field*, etc.] This verse, with the following, seem to be the words of Luke the historian, which should be read in a parenthesis; for there was no need to have acquainted the disciples with the manner of Judas's death, which was so well known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; nor would Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, be mentioned with that propriety by Peter, when he, and those he spoke of, were upon the spot; nor could there be any necessity of his explaining a word in their own tongue, which they understood, and that in a language unknown unto them; nor does it seem likely, that in so short a time as five or six weeks, the field should have obtained the name of "Aceldama", and be commonly known by it. The Ethiopic version calls this field, "a vineyard"; and so it might be, and yet the potter's field too. It is somewhat difficult, that Judas should be said to purchase it, when Matthew says the chief priests bought it, (⁴²⁷⁰Matthew 27:7). Both are true; Judas having received his money of the chief priests two days ago, might not only intend to purchase, but might really strike a bargain with the potter for his field; but repenting of his sin, instead of carrying the money to make good the agreement, went and threw it to the chief priests, and then hanged himself; when they, by a secret providence, might be directed to make a purchase of the same field with his money; or he may be said to purchase it, because it was purchased with his money. The Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "he possessed" it; not in person, unless he was buried there, as he might be; and so all that he got by his wretched bargain, was only so much ground as to be buried in; or the sense may be, "he caused it to be possessed"; by returning the money which the chief priests used this way;

with the reward of his iniquity; that is, with the thirty pieces of silver, given him as a reward for that vile action of his betraying of his Lord and master: so the reward of divination, or what Balsam got by soothsaying, which was an iniquitous and wicked practice, is called, "the wages of unrighteousness", (⁶¹²¹⁵2 Peter 2:15)

and falling headlong he burst in the midst; either falling from the gallows, or tree on which he hanged himself, the rope breaking, upon a stone, or stump, his belly was broke, and burst; or falling from the air, whither he was violently snatched up by Satan, who was in him, and by whom he was thrown down to the earth, and who went out of him by a rupture made in his belly; or being in deep melancholy, he was strangled with the squinancy, and fell down on his face to the ground, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it,

and burst asunder: and all his bowels gushed out; through the rupture that was made. So we read of a man that fell from the roof of a house, **hynny[m qypnw hysrk hy[qp**, “and his belly burst, and his bowels came out”^{f35}. And this was the miserable end of Judas. The death of Arius, as related by Athanasius^{f36}, from Macarius the presbyter, who was present, was much after the same manner; who reports, that having swore to the orthodox faith, and being about to be introduced into the church at Constantinople, after the prayer of Alexander, the bishop of it, he went out to the seat, to ease nature; when he, on a sudden, fell down headlong, and burst in the middle, and immediately expired: and Epiphanius^{f37} compares his exit with this of Judas, who observes, that he went out in the night to the vault, as before related, and burst asunder, as Judas of old did; and came to his end in a filthy and unclean place. Ruffinus says^{f38}, that as he sat, his entrails, and all his bowels, came from him into the vault; and so he died in such a place, a death worthy of his blasphemous and corrupt mind. As to the seeming difference between the Evangelist Matthew and the Apostle Peter, it may be reconciled by either of the ways before mentioned; (See Gill on “⁴¹⁷⁶Matthew 27:5”) though it seems most likely, that Judas not being able to bear the torments of his mind, he hanged himself, as Achitophel did, and was not strangled by the devil, or by any disease; and that he fell down from the tree on which he hung, either the rope breaking, or the tree falling; and so the things happened to him which are recorded: or he might fall from hence, either through a violent strong wind which blew him down; or through the rushing of wild beasts against the gallows, on which he hung; or by the devil himself, who might throw him down from hence after he had dispatched himself, as some have conjectured: or, which seems best of all, he might be cast down from hence by men, either of themselves, or by the order of the civil magistrates, not enduring such a sight, that one that had destroyed himself should hang long there; and which, according to the law, was not to be admitted; and these not taking him down, in a gentle

manner, but using some violence, or cutting the rope, the body fell, and burst asunder, as is here said: and it should be observed, that the Evangelist Matthew speaks of the death of Judas, in which he himself was concerned; and the Apostle Peter reports what befell his carcass after his death, and in which others were concerned. The Vulgate Latin renders it, and being hanged, he burst in the middle; as if this happened to him upon the gallows, without falling.

Ver. 19. *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem*, etc.] As that he betrayed Jesus of Nazareth into the hands of the chief priests, for thirty pieces of silver; that this was the reward of his iniquity; and that with this a field was purchased for the burying of strangers in; and that he died in such a miserable way: there was scarce an inhabitant in Jerusalem but knew all this,

insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue; or “in their own dialect”, the “Jerusalem dialect”, Which was now Chaldee, or Syriac; and such is the word that follows, “Aceldama; that is to say, the field of blood”: because it was bought with the price of Christ’s blood: and if, as some say, Judas hanged him self here, or was thrown headlong here by Satan, and that this was the place where his bowels gushed out; then it may be likewise so called, because it was sprinkled with his blood. It is called in the Alexandrian copy “Acheldamach”; and often by Jerom^{f39} “Acheldemach”, but very wrongly; for not “Demach”, but “Dema”, in the Syriac and Chaldee dialect, signifies “blood”; which Peter calls the dialect of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, being now spoken by them, in distinction from the Galilean dialect used by him; which, it is plain, was different from the Jerusalem dialect by what is said, (^{<4140>}Mark 14:70). This field, as it is reported by some, was by the appointment of the Empress Helena compassed about with four walls, in the manner of a tower, upon the top of which are seven distinct doors, like windows, by which the dead bodies of Christians are let down into it; and that it is fifty feet wide, and seventy two long: it stands not far from the valley of Himom, and is upon the south side of Mount Zion, where, as Jerom says^{f40}, it was showed in his time. Masius^{f41} affirms, there was a very high mountain near Jerusalem, called Mount Aceldema, from the adjacent field, which was bought with the price of Christ’s blood, to bury strangers in.

Ver. 20. *For it is written in the book of Psalms, etc.*] In (³⁹²⁵Psalm 69:25). These are the words of Peter, citing the Scripture he had said must be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by David, had spoke concerning Judas:

let his habitation be desolate. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, “his city”; meaning, perhaps, the city of Jerusalem; and which afterwards did become desolate, and was utterly destroyed:

and let no man dwell therein; in his habitation. The psalm, out of which these words are cited, is a psalm concerning the Messiah, and there are many passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to him, or referred unto; (see ⁴³⁰⁷John 2:17 15:25 19:28 ⁴⁵¹³Romans 15:3) compared with (³⁹⁰⁴Psalm 69:4,9,21) and what the psalmist says of the enemies of the Messiah in general, is applied by the apostle to Judas in particular. In the Hebrew text, in (³⁹²⁵Psalm 69:25) the words are in the plural number, “let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents”; and refer to all the enemies of Christ, the chief priests, elders of the people, Scribes and Pharisees, who covenanted with Judas to give him so much money to betray Christ into their hands; and who delivered him to the Roman governor, by whom, at their instigation, he was crucified; and particularly may well be thought to include Judas, who betrayed him to them; and therefore are very fitly interpreted of him: though not to be understood to the exclusion of the others, whose house was to be left desolate, and was left desolate, as our Lord predicted, (⁴²³⁸Matthew 23:38). The first word in the Hebrew text rendered “habitation”, signifies a very magnificent dwelling; it is sometimes translated a “castle”, (⁰¹²¹⁶Genesis 25:16, ⁰⁶¹¹⁰Numbers 31:10, ¹³¹⁶⁴1 Chronicles 6:54) and sometimes a “palace”, Cant. 8:9, (³²⁵⁴Ezekiel 25:4) and it is interpreted by *ʿwmra*, “a palace”, here, by several Jewish writers ^{f42}; and so may intend the dwelling places of the richer sort of Christ’s enemies, as the palaces of the high priest, and of the prince, or president of the sanhedrim, and the stately houses of the members of it, of the chief priests and elders of the people, and of the Scribes and Pharisees; all which became desolate at the destruction of Jerusalem: the other word, rendered “tents”, may design the cottages of the meaner sort of people, who, with united voices, cried aloud for the crucifixion of Christ; and which also shared the same fate when Jerusalem was destroyed: now inasmuch as Judas was of the meaner sort, the apostle here makes use of a word which signifies but a poor and mean habitation, though it is sometimes used of grander ones, and which seems to answer to the latter; for as there are two words in the original text expressive of

habitation, he might choose which he would, and did choose that which was most pertinent in the application of the passage to Judas. However, a Jew has no reason to find fault with this version, since the Targum renders both words by “habitation”, thus;

let their habitation be desolate, and in their habitations let no one dwell: where Judas’s habitation was is not certain; but that he might have one as well as the Apostle John, is not at all improbable, and from hence seems evident:

and his bishopric let another take; which passage stands in (^{<1940B>}Psalm 109:8) and is fitly applied to Judas, and was verified in him, who not only died a violent and infamous death, by which he was in consequence stripped of his office, as a bishop, or overseer; but another was to be put into it, invested with it, and exercise it; and therefore very pertinently does Peter produce it, his intention being to move the disciples to choose another in his room. These words are produced by the apostle, as if they were to be found in the same place with the preceding; whereas they stand in another psalm, as has been observed: and this is no unusual thing with the writers of the New Testament, to put several passages of Scripture together, as if they were in one place, when they are to be sought for in different places; an instance of this, among many, that might be mentioned, is in (^{<1940>}Romans 3:10-18) and this is a very common way of citing Scripture with the Jews. Surenhusius ^{f43} has given a variety of instances, in proof of this, out of their writings, as in the margin ^{f44}, which the learned reader may consult and compare at leisure. The psalm, out of which this passage is cited, is not to be understood of David literally, and of what he met with from his enemies, and of his imprecations upon them, either Doeg the Edomite, as Kimchi interprets it, or Ahithophel, as others, but of the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; against whom the mouth of the wicked Jews, and particularly of the deceitful Pharisees, were opened; and against whom the false witnesses spoke with lying tongues; and who, all of them, compassed him with words of hatred to take away his life, and acted a most ungenerous and ungrateful part; opposed him without a cause, and became his enemies for his love showed to them, both to soul and body, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases, (^{<1940B>}Psalm 109:2-5). The poverty and distress he submitted to; the griefs and sorrows which he bore; the fatigues he underwent at his examination; and the weakness of body he was then reduced to, as well as the reproach cast upon him on the cross, when his enemies shook their heads at him, are in a very lively manner

described, (¹⁹⁴⁹²Psalm 109:22-25) and whereas one of his enemies particularly is singled out from the rest, what is said concerning him, by way of imprecation, suits with Judas, and had its accomplishment in him, (¹⁹⁴⁹⁶Psalm 109:6-8) who had a wicked man set over him, as over the rest of the Jews, Pilate, the Roman governor, a very wicked man; and at whose right hand Satan stood, as one of his council, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and put it into his heart to betray his master, and prompted him to it, and then accused him of it, and brought him to black despair for it; and who, when this affair was brought home to his own conscience, and there arraigned for it, was convicted and self-condemned, as he also will be at the general judgment; and as he found no place of mercy then, whatever prayers or entreaties he might make, so neither will he hereafter: his days were but few, being cut off in the prime of them, as may be concluded from the many years which some of his fellow apostles lived after him; and his bishopric, or office, as an apostle, was taken by another, even by Matthias, who was chosen in his room, of which we have an account in the following part of this chapter; for this is to be understood neither of his money, nor of his wife, nor of his own soul committed to his trust, as some of the Jewish writers ^{f45} explain it; but of his apostleship, with which he was invested by Christ. The word signifies an oversight, care, or charge; and so the Hebrew word **hdwqp** is rendered in (⁴⁰⁸²Numbers 3:32, 36) and designs any office, as the office of the priests and Levites in the house of God; (see ⁴⁰⁴⁶Numbers 4:16). Jarchi interprets it here by **wtl wdg**, “his greatness”, or “dignity”; and explains it by the Spanish word “provostia”, an office of honour and authority, as this of being an apostle of Christ was; than which, a greater external dignity could not be enjoyed in the church of God, in which he has set first apostles, (⁴¹²⁸1 Corinthians 12:28). That this psalm refers to Judas Iscariot, and to his affair, was so clear a point with the ancients, that they used to call it the Iscariotic Psalm. I lay no stress upon the observation some have made, that thirty curses are contained in it, the number of the pieces of silver for which he betrayed his master, since this may be thought to be too curious.

Ver. 21. *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us*, etc.] Seeing there was such an imprecation, which carried in it the nature of a prophecy, that another should take the bishopric of Judas, or be made an apostle in his room, it was absolutely necessary that one should be immediately chosen to that office; and this is the force of the illative particle, wherefore; and it was highly proper that this choice should be of

one among the men, and not the women; whom it did not become to bear any office, and exercise any authority in the church; hence it is said, “of these men”, to the exclusion of women: and it was exceeding right, and a very good notion, that the choice should be of one from among themselves, and who was known unto them; with whose abilities, integrity, wisdom, and holy conversation, they were acquainted: and therefore it is added, “which have companied with us”; one of our own company, and not a stranger; with whom we have familiarly conversed, and whose character is well known to us: a rule which ought to be attended to, in the choice of inferior officers, as pastors and deacons; who ought to be of the body and community, among whom they are chosen to an office; and their qualifications for it be well known, and that for some time past, as follows:

all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us; that is, ever since Christ called them to be his disciples and followers; and conversed with them, and discharged his office among them, governed, directed, taught, and instructed them; for it was not proper that a novice, a new plant, or one that was lately become a disciple, should be put into such an office; and the same holds good in proportion in other offices; men called to office should be of some standing, as well as of superior gifts.

Ver. 22. *Beginning from the baptism of John*, etc.] Not from the time that John first administered the ordinance of baptism; for Christ was not so soon made known, or had followers; but from the time of the administration of it by John, to Christ, when he was made known to Israel; and quickly upon this, he called his disciples, and entered on his public ministry: now Peter moves, that one who had been so early a follower of Christ, who had heard his excellent discourses, and seen his miracles, and who had steadfastly and constantly adhered to him, might be chosen in the room of Judas; one whose faith in Christ, love to him, and firmness of mind to abide by him, had been sufficiently tried and proved; who had continued with Christ and his apostles, from the beginning of his ministry, to that time: or as Peter adds,

unto the same day that he was taken up from us; by angels, and received by a cloud, and carried up to heaven; or “he ascended from us”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or “lifted up himself from us”, as the Arabic version; for as he raised himself from the dead by his own power, by the same he could raise himself up from earth to heaven; the sense is, to the

time of his ascension to heaven, whether by himself, or by the ministry of angels:

must one be ordained; there was a necessity of this, partly on the account of the above prophecy, and partly to keep up the number of the twelve apostles, Christ had thought fit to pitch upon; answering to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to the twelve gates, and twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem: and this choice or ordination was moved to be made, and was made, not by the other eleven apostles, but by the whole company of an hundred and twenty; for these are the persons addressed by the apostle, and to whom he said, as the Arabic version renders it, “one of these men ye must choose”: and if the choice and ordination of such an extraordinary officer was made by the whole community, then much more ought the choice and ordination of inferior officers be by them: the end of this choice was,

to be a witness with us of his resurrection; the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which supposes his incarnation and life, and so his obedience, ministry, and miracles in it; and also his sufferings and death, with all the benefits and advantages thereof; and is particularly mentioned, because it not only supposes and includes the above things, but is the principal article, basis, and foundation of the Christian religion; and the sign which Christ gave to the Jews, of the truth of his being the Messiah; and was what the disciples were chosen to be witnesses of; and a principal part of their ministry was to testify it to men: and since this was their work and business, it was necessary that one should be chosen, and joined with them, who had been with them, and with Jesus, from the beginning, to the time of his ascension; and who was an eyewitness of his resurrection, that he might join with the apostles in their testimony.

Ver. 23. *And they appointed two*, etc.] The motion made by Peter was attended to by the whole company; they approved of it, and accordingly proposed two persons by name; one of which was to be chosen, not by the apostles, but by the whole assembly. The Arabic version reads, “he appointed two”, as if Peter singly did this: contrary to all copies, and other versions, and to the context; which shows, that the whole body of the people were concerned in this affair, who prayed and gave forth their lots and suffrages: the persons nominated were,

Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. The former of these has three names; in one ancient copy of Beza’s he is called

Joses; and by some thought to be the same with Joses, surnamed Barnabas, in (^{<4085>}Acts 4:36) partly because in one copy, and in the Syriac version there, that Joses is called Joseph; and partly, because of the nearness in sound between Barsabas and Barnabas: hence the Ethiopic version here reads, “Joseph, who was called Barnabas”, and so Beza’s most ancient copy; but though Joses is here meant for Jose, or Joses is, with the Jews, an abbreviation of Joseph; yet not Joses the Levite, who was of the country of Cyprus, but Joses of Galilee, the son of Alphaeus and Mary; and who had two brothers, James and Jude, already apostles; (see ^{<0135>}Matthew 13:55, ^{<4150>}Mark 15:40). Moreover, though the two names, Barnabas and Barsabas, differ little in sound, yet much in sense: the former is interpreted “the son of consolation”, (^{<4085>}Acts 4:36) but the latter signifies much the same with Bathsbeba; as that may be interpreted “the daughter”, this “the son of an oath”; or as others, “a son of wisdom”; and by others, “the son of fulness”; I should choose to take it to be the same name with *abs rb*, and interpret it, “the son of an old man”; as Alphaeus might be, when Joses, or Joseph was born, and he be the younger brother of James and Jude; as for his surname Justus, this was a name not only in use among the Grecians and Romans, especially the latter, but among the Jews: hence we often read of Rabbi *aj swy*, “Justa”, and sometimes, *yj swy*, “Justi”, and at other times, *yaj swy* “Justai”^{f46} whether he had this surname from his being a very just man, as Aristides was called Aristides the just; and so Simeon the high priest, the last of Ezra’s great synagogue, was called Simeon the just^{f47}; and so James the brother of this Joseph, or Joses, was called by the Jews^{f48}; and it may be, that he himself might have his name from the patriarch Joseph, who used to be called by them, Joseph, *qydxh*, “the just”^{f49}: for Matthias, his name is Jewish, and he was no doubt a Jew; hence we read *aytm ybr*, “Rabbi Matthia ben Charash”^{f50}; his name signifying the same as Nathanael does, namely, the gift of God, made Dr. Lightfoot conjecture they might be the same; but this agrees not with another conjecture that learned man, who elsewhere thinks, that Bartholomew and Nathanael were the same; and if so, he must have been an apostle already; Clemens of Alexandria was of opinion, that this Matthias was Zacchaeus^{f51}.

Ver. 24. *And they prayed and said*, etc.] Having proposed the above two persons, and not well knowing which to pitch upon, they being both very agreeable and fit for such service; they chose not to determine the affair

without seeking to God for direction; a method to be taken in all cases, and especially in matters of importance: and the substance of their petition, though perhaps not in just the same words, was,

thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men; which is a character peculiar to the one only living, and true God; for none knows the hearts of men, but God, who is the Maker of them; and he knows all the thoughts, counsels, and purposes of them, and the good or bad that is in them:

shew whether of these two thou hast chosen; being desirous of having their choice directed by the choice God had made, in his eternal mind; and which they desired might be signified and pointed out to them, in some way or another, that they might be certain of the mind and will of God, and act according to it.

Ver. 25. *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship*, etc.] Of the ministry of the apostles, or of the apostolical ministration; which lay in preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, planting churches, and working miracles; and which part, lot, or inheritance, Judas had; (see ^{<4017>}Acts 1:17).

And from which Judas by transgression fell; by betraying his Lord, whose apostle he was, he was turned out of his office, and had no longer part in the apostolical ministry:

that he might go to his own place; which may be understood of Judas, and of his going to hell, as the just punishment of his sin; which is commonly so called by the Jews, who often explain this phrase, “his place”, by hell; as when it is said of Laban, (^{<0135>}Genesis 31:55) that he “returned to his place”, it intimates, say they ^{f52}, that he returned to his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and so likewise when it is said of Balaam, (^{<0125>}Numbers 24:25) that he “returned to his place”, they observe ^{f53}, that

“he did not return from his evil way, but returned to his place; and so intimates by saying, to his place, that which was prepared for him in hell, as the Rabbins of blessed memory say ^{f54}; “they came everyone from his own place”, (^{<0121>}Job 2:11) a man from his house, a man from his country it is not written, but a man from his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and because they came to show mercy to Job, they were delivered from hell, and became worthy of the world to come; and so here, and “he

the majority upon casting them up, when taken out, was declared the person chosen; or “they cast their lots”; that is, into an urn, or vessel; which lots had the names of the two persons on them; and into another vessel, as is thought, were put two other lots; the one had the name of “apostle” upon it, and the other nothing; and these being taken out by persons appointed for that purpose, the lot with Matthias’s name on it, was taken out against that which had the name of apostle on it, upon which he was declared to be the apostle: it may be that this was done in the same manner, as the goats on the day of atonement had lots cast on them, (^(R16)Leviticus 16:8) which the Jews say was thus performed: there was a vessel which they call “Kalphi”, set in the court, into which two lots, which were made of wood, or stone, or metal, were put; the one had written on it, for Jehovah, and on the other was written, “for the scapegoat”; the two goats being, the one at the right hand of the priest, and the other at the left; the priest shook the vessel, and with his two hands took out the two lots, and laid the lots on the two goats; the right on that which was at his right hand, and the left on that which was at his left ^{f57}; and so the goat which had the lot put upon him, on which was written, “for the Lord”, was killed; and that which had the other lot, on which was written, for the scapegoat, was presented alive; so the lot here is said to fall upon Matthias: or the lots being cast into the vessel, as above related, these two drew them out themselves; and Matthias taking out that which had the word apostle on it, the lot fell on him: the manner of Moses’s choosing the seventy elders, is said to be this ^{f58}:

“Moses took seventy two papers, and on seventy of them he wrote, $\hat{q}z$, “an elder”; and upon two, $q|j$, “a part”; and he chose six out of every tribe, and there were seventy two; he said unto them, take your papers out of the vessel; he into whose hand came up “an elder” (i.e. the paper on which it was so written) he was sanctified (or set apart to the office); and he, in whose hand came up “a part” (the paper that had that on it), to him he said, the Lord does not delight in thee.”

And the lot fell upon Matthias; that is, either he had the largest number for him, their minds being so disposed by the providence of God; and it may be, contrary to the first thoughts and general sense of the body; since Joseph is mentioned first, and was a man of great character, and of many names and titles; but God, who knows the hearts: of men, and can turn them as he pleases, and to whom they sought for direction, inclined their

minds to vote for the latter; or it was so ordered by divine providence, that in the casting or drawing the lots, the lot of the apostleship should fall on him:

and he was numbered with the eleven apostles; either chosen by the common suffrages of the people, as the word used signifies; or rather, he took his place among the apostles; he was registered among them, and ever after was reckoned one of them; Beza's ancient copy reads, "with the twelve apostles", their number being now complete.