

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 2

Ver. 1. *And the third day there was a marriage*, etc.] Either from the second testimony bore by John the Baptist concerning Christ, and from the call of Simon Peter, which seem to be of the same date; (see ^{<BIB>}John 1:35,36,42,43), or from Christ's coming into Galilee; or from the conversation he had with Nathanael; from either of which the date is taken, it matters not; the first is as agreeable and plain, as any. There is much dispute, and many rules with the Jews about the times, and days of marriage:

“a virgin, (they say ^{f70}), marries on the fourth day (of the week), and a widow on the fifth, because the sanhedrim sit in the cities twice in the week, on the second, and on the fifth days; so that if there is any dispute about virginity, he (the husband) may come betimes to the sanhedrim.”

This was a law that obtained since the times of Ezra; for it is said ^{f71},

“before the order of Ezra, a woman might be married on any day;”

but in after times, feast days, and sabbath days, were particularly excepted. One of their canons is ^{f72}

“they do not marry women on a feast day, neither virgins, nor widows:”

The reason of it was, that they might not mix one joy with another; and lest a man should leave the joy of the feast, for the joy of his wife. The account Maimonides ^{f73} gives of these several things is this;

“it is lawful to espouse on any common day, even on the ninth of Ab, whether in the day, or in the night; but they do not marry wives neither on the evening of the sabbath, nor on the first of the week: the decree is, lest the sabbath should be profaned by preparing the feast; for the bridegroom is employed about the feast: and there is no need to say, that it is unlawful to marry a wife on the sabbath

day; and even on the common day of a feast they do not marry wives, as we have explained; because they do not mix one joy with another, as it is said in (⁴⁰²⁷Genesis 29:27), “fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also”: but on the rest of the days it is lawful to marry a wife, any day a man pleases; for he must be employed in the marriage feast three days before the marriage. A place in which the sanhedrim do not sit, but on the second and fifth days only, a virgin is married on the fourth day; that if there is any objection to her virginity, he (her husband) may come betimes to the sanhedrim: and it is a custom of the wise men, that he that marries one that has been married, he may marry her on the fifth day, that so he may rejoice with her on the fifth day, and on the evening of the sabbath, (i.e. the sixth,) and on the sabbath day, and may go forth to his work on the first day.”

But elsewhere it is said ^{f74}, that

“now they are used to marry on the “sixth day of the week”.”

Yea ^{f75}, that

“it is lawful to marry, and to make the feast on the sabbath day.”

But whether this marriage was of a virgin, or a widow, cannot be known; nor with certainty can it be said on what day of the week it was: if that day was a sabbath day on which the disciples abode with Christ, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, then it must be on the first day that Christ went into Galilee, and found Philip, and conversed with Nathanael; and if this third day is reckoned from John’s second testimony, it must be on a Tuesday, the third day of the week; but if from Christ’s going into Galilee, then it must be on a Wednesday, the fourth day of the week, the day fixed by the Jewish canon for the marriage of a virgin. This marriage was

in Cana of Galilee. The Syriac and Persic versions, read, in “Kotne, a city of Galilee”; and which, in the Jewish map, is called **l yl gb anj q**, “Katna” in “Galilee”, and is placed in the tribe of Zebulun, which was in Galilee, and not far from Nazareth; and bids fair to be the same place with this; though it is more generally thought ^{f76}, that Cana, in the tribe of Asher, mentioned in (⁴⁶⁹⁸Joshua 19:28), which was also in Galilee, is here meant; and is so called to distinguish it from another Kanah, in the tribe of Ephraim, (⁴⁶⁹⁸Joshua 16:8 17:9). Josephus ^{f77} speaks of a town, or village,

of Galilee, called Cana, which was a day's march from it to Tiberias, and seems to be the same place: and another Jewish writer^{f78} says,

“to me it appears that Cepher Chanania, is Copher Cana; or the village of Cans, as is clear in Misna Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1. for there is the beginning of lower, Galilee,”

which also accords with this. Now in the case of marriage, there was some difference between Judea and Galilee, and certain rules were laid down relating thereunto: and it is said^{f79},

“there are three countries, for the celebration of marriages; Judea, the country beyond Jordan, and Galilee;”

that is, that were obliged to marry among themselves; so that if any one married a wife out of any of these countries, she was not obliged to go along with him from one country to another^{f80}: hence it follows,

“they do not bring them out from city to city, (i.e. oblige them to go with them from city to city,) nor from town to town; but in the same country they bring them out from city to city, and from town to town.”

And it is elsewhere observed^{f81}, that

“in Judea, at first, they joined the bridegroom and bride together an hour before they went into the bride chamber, that so his heart might be lifted up in her; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, they appointed for them two companions, one for him, and another for her, that they might minister to, or wait on the bridegroom, and bride, when they went into the bride chamber; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, the companions slept in the house where the bridegroom and bride slept; but in Galilee they did not do so.”

Next we have an account of the persons that were present at this marriage:

and the mother of Jesus was there; who seems to have been a principal person at this wedding, and was very officious; when wine was wanted, she signified it to her son, and ordered the servants to do whatever he bid them: and since she, and Jesus, and his brethren, were all here, it looks as if it was a relation of hers that was now married: and since these brethren were the kinsmen of Christ, Simon, Judas, and Joses, the sons of Cleophas

or Alphaeus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord; and since one of them, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, is called Simon the Canaanite, or an inhabitant of Cana, as some have thought; hence it is conjectured by Dr. Lightfoot, that Alphaeus had an house in Cana, and that his family dwelt there, and that it was for one of his family that this marriage feast was made; (see ~~John~~ John 2:2,3,5,12 19:25 ~~Matthew~~ Matthew 13:55 10:4). Joseph, the husband of Mary, perhaps, was now dead, since no mention is made of him here, nor any where else, as alive, after Christ had entered on his public ministry.

Ver. 2. *And both Jesus was called*, etc.] Or invited, as being a relation, according to the flesh:

and his disciples, to the marriage; who were bidden, on his account; and they seem to be these, Andrew, and the other disciple, that followed Jesus, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, who was of this place; and accordingly they all went to it. Christ, and his five disciples, made six of the ten, which were always necessary to be present at, the benediction of bridegrooms: for so runs the canon ^{f82};

“they do not bless the blessing of bridegrooms, but with ten principal and free men; and the bridegroom may be one of the number.”

To attend a wedding, was reckoned, with the Jews, an act of beneficence and kindness ^{f83}. Our Lord, being at this wedding, was acting like himself, and his general character, of being free, affable, and courteous; who accepted of every invitation, and refused not to be at any entertainment, made by who it would, or on whatever occasion: and particularly in this instance, it shows his humility in not disdaining his poor relations, but giving them his company at such a time; as also it was bearing a testimony to the institution of marriage, as honourable; and teaches us to rejoice with them that rejoice: and as this was, at the first of Christ’s ministry and miracles, it is likely it might give the occasion of that calumny cast on him in (~~Matthew~~ Matthew 11:19). The disciples of Christ followed the example of their master. According to the Jewish cations ^{f84}, a disciple of a wise man might not partake of any feast, but what was according to the commandment, as the feast of espousals, and of marriage; and such a feast was this, which Christ and his disciples were at; and so not to be condemned for it, according to their own maxims.

Ver. 3. *And when they wanted wine*, etc.] Or wine was wanting; not through the intemperance of the guests, rather through the poverty of the family, who were not able to provide very largely; and it may be by reason of a larger number of guests than were expected; however, so it was ordered by Divine Providence, that there might be an opportunity for Christ to manifest forth his glory:

the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine; being concerned for the family, lest they should be put to shame and disgrace, and the entertainment should not proceed with becoming credit and honour; and knowing the power of Christ to help in this time of necessity, she modestly moves it to him, perhaps by a whisper, sitting next him; or, it may be, might call him out, and just drop the hint; being well persuaded of his power, as she might; not from any miracles wrought by him in her family for the support of it, when in distress; for as Christ wrought no miracle, in the time of his public ministry, for the support of himself, or his disciples, but for others, it is not likely he should do it for his family in private life; but from the wonderful things told her by the angel that brought the news of her conception, and by the shepherds, and by Simeon and Anna, which she had laid up in her heart; and from his being the Messiah, who, according to the general belief of the nation, was to work miracles; and particularly from the last words of the preceding chapter; (see Gill on “~~<4015>~~John 1:50”): for she might be present at the delivery of them; and therefore might hope that as this was the first opportunity that offered after, that he would display his power in supplying the family with wine in this time of exigence.

Ver. 4. *Jesus saith unto her, woman*, etc.] Calling her “woman”, as it was no ways contrary to her being a virgin, (~~<4004>~~Galatians 4:4), so it was no mark of disrespect; it being an usual way of speaking with the Jews, when they showed the greatest respect to the person spoken to; and was used by our Lord when he addressed his mother with the greatest tenderness, and strongest affection, (~~<4326>~~John 19:26). The Jews frequently object this passage to us Christians: one of their writers his objection in this manner ^{f85}:

“they (the Christians) say, the mother of Jesus is never called a woman their law; but here her son himself calls her a man.”

Another puts it thus ^{f86}:

“it is their (the Christians) belief, that Mary, even after she brought forth Jesus, was a virgin; but if she was, as they say, why does not her son call her by the name of virgin? but he calls her a woman, which signifies one known by man, as appears from (^{<RB>}John 2:4 8:10).”

To which may be replied, that the mother of Jesus is never called a woman in the New Testament, is not said by us Christians: it is certain she is so called, both here, and elsewhere; but then this is no contradiction to her being a virgin; one, and the same person, may be a virgin, and a woman: the Abraham’s servant was sent to take for wife for his son Isaac, is called a woman, though a virgin that had never known any man, (^{<RB>}Genesis 24:5,8,14,16,43,44). Besides, we do not think ourselves obliged to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord; it is enough that she was a virgin when she conceived, and when she brought forth her firstborn: and as the Jews endeavour to take an advantage of this against the character of Mary, the Papists are very solicitous about the manner in which these words are said, lest they should be thought to contain a reproof, which they cannot bear she should be judged worthy of; or suggest any thing to her dishonour, whom they magnify as equal to her son: but certain it is, that the following words,

what have I to do with thee? show resentment and reproof. Some render the words, “what is it to thee and me?” and give this as the sense; what concern is this of ours? what business have we with it? let them look to it, who are the principal in the feast, and have the management of it. The Jew ^{f87} objects to this sense of the words, but gives a very weak reason for it:

“but I say, (says he,) who should be concerned but the master of the feast? and he was the master of the feast:”

whereas it is a clear case that he was one of the guests, one that was invited, (^{<RB>}John 2:2), and that there was a governor or ruler of the feast, who might be more properly called the master of it than Jesus, (^{<RB>}John 2:8,10). However, since Christ afterwards did concern himself in it, it looks as if this was not his meaning. Others render it to the sense we do, “what have I with thee?” as the Ethiopic version; or “what business hast thou with me?” as the Persic version; and is the same with, *Æl w yl hm*, “what have I to do with thee?” used in (^{<RB>}1 Kings 17:18 ^{<RB>}2 Kings 3:13), where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and such a way of speaking is common with Jewish writers ^{f88}: hereby signifying, that though,

as man, and a son of hers, he had been subject to her, in which he had set an example of obedience to parents; yet, as God, he had a Father in heaven, whose business he came to do; and in that, and in his office, as Mediator, she had nothing to do with him; nor was he to be directed by her in that work; or to be told, or the least hint given when a miracle should be wrought, by him in confirmation of his mission and doctrine. Moreover, he adds,

mine hour is not yet come: meaning not the hour of his sufferings and death, in which sense he sometimes uses this phrase; as if the hint was, that it was not proper for him to work miracles as yet, lest it should provoke his enemies to seek his life before his time; but rather the time of his public ministry and miracles, which were to go together, and the one to be a proof of the other; though it seems to have a particular regard to the following miracle, the time of doing that was not yet come; the proper juncture, when all fit circumstances meeting together, it would be both the more useful, and the more illustrious: or his meaning is, that his time of doing miracles in public was not yet; and therefore, though he was willing to do this miracle, yet he chose to do it in the most private manner; so that only a few, and not the principal persons at the feast should know it: wherefore the reproof was not so much on the account of the motion itself, as the unseasonableness of it; and so his mother took it.

Ver. 5. *His mother said unto the servants*, etc.] She took the reproof in good part, and by the words he said, and the manner in which he spoke them, or by the looks he gave, and the gestures he might use, she hoped, and even believed, that the thing she moved for would be done; and therefore went immediately to the servants, and gave them the following instructions:

whatsoever he saith unto you, do [it]; punctually observe and obey his orders in every circumstance.

Ver. 6. *And there were set six water pots of stone*, etc.] To distinguish them from other vessels made of different matter: for the Jews had

“vessels made of dust, and the dung of beasts, *μυνβα yl κ*, “vessels of stone”, vessels of earth, vessels made of shells, vessels of nitre, vessels made of the bones and skins of fishes ^{f89}.”

And as these vessels were very likely for washing of hands, such were used for that purpose: their rule is ^{f90},

“they may put water for the hands in all sorts of vessels; in vessels of dung, in stone vessels, and in vessels of earth.”

At a wedding were set vessels of various sizes to wash hands and feet in; there was one vessel called *al kyçm*, which the gloss says was a large pitcher, or basin, out of which the whole company washed their hands and their feet; and there was another called *at l kyçm*, which was a lesser and beautiful basin, which was set alone for the more honourable persons, as for the bride, and for any gentlewoman ^{f91}; and such might be these six stone jars, or pots:

after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; or “for the purifying either Jews”, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; that is, for the washing of them, their hands and feet, and their vessels, pots, and cups, according to the traditions of the elders; (see ~~Mark~~ Mark 7:2,3,4);

containing two or three firkins apiece. The Ethiopic version reads, “some held two measures, and some three”; how large the “metreta”, or “measure” was, which we render a “firkin”, is not certain; it is most likely it answered to the “Hebrew bath”, which was a common measure of liquids with the Jews, and held four gallons and a half, or more; (see Gill on ~~Luke~~ Luke 16:6”); so that such of these vessels, that held two of these measures, contained nine gallons, and such as held three of them, thirteen gallons and a half; and six of these contained a large quantity of wine, one with another: and which makes the following miracle the greater; and shows the liberality of Christ the more, in providing for the following days of the feast, for a marriage was kept seven days ^{f92}; and for the family, some time after it was over.

Ver. 7. *Jesus saith unto them*, etc.] To the servants that waited at the feast,

fill the water pots with water. The Ethiopic version adds, “to their brims”, as they did. Christ chose the water pots, and not the vessel, or vessels, or bottles, now empty, out of which they had drank their wine; that it might not be said that there was any left therein, which gave colour and flavour to the water: and he ordered them to be filled with water by the servants, that they might take notice, and be witnesses, that that, and nothing else,

was put into them; and up to the brims, so that they could not be capable of having any other liquor infused into them:

and they filled them up to the brim; strictly observing the orders of Christ, and the instructions of his mother.

Ver. 8. *And he saith unto them, draw out now*, etc.] As soon as ever the vessels were filled with water, without any more delay, he ordered the servants to draw out of those larger, into lesser vessels; he does not say what, water or wine:

and bear unto the governor of the feast; who either had the ordering and management of the feast, and the command of the whole affair; hence the Ethiopic version calls him, “the master of the waiters”, or servants: or he was the chief guest, as the word seems to import, who sat, or rather lay, on the chief couch at the table; and so a proper person to begin with, and put the cup round: or else he might be doctor or chaplain: for such an one was necessary at a marriage; since there were six or seven benedictions to be pronounced; and particularly a blessing was said over the cup of wine; for if there was any wine, a cup of it was brought, and he blessed over it first, and ordered every thing concerning the cup: and this made up seven blessings at such a time¹⁹³; and therefore was a very fit person to bear the wine to first:

and they bore it; the servants having drawn out of the stone vessels, by cocks, into smaller ones, carried the liquor, as they were ordered, to the above person.

Ver. 9. *When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water*, etc.] The Persic version reads, “tasted of the wine”, and adds, what is not in the text, “it was of a very grateful savour”: but the sense is, he tasted of that which was before water, but now

was made wine; not in such sense as the Papists pretend that the bread and wine, in the Lord’s supper, are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, by the consecration of the priest; after which they appear to have the same properties of bread and wine as before; but this water, that was turned into wine, ceased to be what it was before, and became what it was not: it had no more the properties, the colour, and taste of water, but of wine; of which the whole company were judges:

and knew not whence it was; from whence it came, where it was had, nor any thing of the miracle that was wrought, and therefore was a proper person to have it put into his hands first; since it cannot be thought he should say what he does in the following verse, from any compact with Christ, or in favour of him.

But the servants which drew the water knew; they knew from whence they had it, out of the water pots; and they knew that they filled them with water; and that that liquor, which the ruler of the feast had in his hands, and commended as most excellent wine, was drawn out of them; and that there was no juggle, nor deceit in the case: and, upon tasting of it,

the governor of the feast called the bridegroom to him; out of the place where he sat, and which might not be far from him.

Ver. 10. *And saith unto him*, etc.] The following words; expressing the common custom used at feasts:

every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; that is, it is usual with men, when they make entertainments, first to give the guests the best, the most generous, and strongest bodied wine; as being most suitable for them, and they being then better able to bear it, and it being most for the credit of the maker of the feast:

and when men have well drank; not to excess, but freely, so as that they are exhilarated; and their spirits cheerful, but their brains not intoxicated: so the word, as answering to the Hebrew word is רִכְּז , used by the Septuagint in (~~CH3~~ Genesis 43:34 ~~2RD~~ Song of Solomon 5:1),

then that which is worse; not bad wine, but τον ελασσω , “that which is lesser”; a weaker bodied wine, that is lowered, and of less strength, and not so intoxicating, and which is fittest for the guests. So Martial ^{f94} advises Sextilianus, after he had drank the tenth cup, not to drink the best wine, but to ask his host for wine of Laletania, which was a weaker and lower sort of wine.

[But] thou hast kept the good wine until now; which shows he knew nothing of the miracle wrought. And as the bridegroom here did, in the apprehension of the ruler of the feast, at this his marriage, so does the Lord, the husband of the church, in the marriage feast of the Gospel; and so he will do at the marriage supper of the lamb. The Gospel, which may be compared to wine for its purity, pleasant taste, and generous effects in

reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds, as also for its antiquity, was published before the coming of Christ, in the times of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, but in a lower and weaker way; at sundry times, here a little, and there a little, by piecemeals, as it were; and in divers manners, by promises, prophecies, types, shadows, and sacrifices; and was attended with much darkness and bondage: but under the Gospel dispensation, which is compared to a marriage feast, it is more fully dispensed, more clearly published, and more freely ministered. The whole of it is delivered, and with open face beheld; and saints are made free by it; it is set in the strongest and clearest light; the best wine is reserved till now; God has provided some better thing for us, (^{<small>814</small>}Hebrews 11:40). And so with respect to the future state of the saints, their best things are kept for them till last. They have many good things now; as the Gospel, Gospel ordinances, the blessings, and promises of grace, the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, presence of God, and communion with Christ, at least at times; all which are better than wine: but then there is an alloy to these; they are lowered by other things, as the corruptions of the heart, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions; but they shall have their good and best things hereafter, and drink new wine in Christ's Father's kingdom, without any thing to lower and weaken it: they will have full joys, and never fading pleasures, and shall be without sin and sorrow; no more deserted, nor afflicted, and shall be out of the reach of Satan's temptations, and with Christ for evermore. Happy are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Ver. 11. *This beginning of miracles*, etc.] This miracle of turning water into wine, was the first miracle Christ ever wrought, either in public or private; for as for what miracles he is said to do in his infancy, there is no reason to give credit to them: and this he

did in Cana of Galilee; not that this was only the first he did in that place; he afterwards working another there, namely, the cure of a nobleman's son, (^{<small>815</small>}John 4:46,54), but the first he did any where, and it was in this place; and which the Syriac and Persic versions again call Kotne of Galilee; (see Gill on "^{<small>816</small>}John 2:1");

and manifested forth his glory; the glory of his deity and divine sonship, which was hid by his assumption of human nature, but broke forth and showed itself in his miraculous operations, and particularly in this:

and his disciples believed on him; the above five disciples; (see <R1D> John 2:2); whom he had called, and who were with him at this marriage, and were made acquainted with this miracle: and though they believed in him before, and had declared, and professed him to be the Messiah, Moses and the prophets spoke of, and the Son of God, and King of Israel; yet they were, by this miracle, more and more confirmed in the faith of these things: besides, others might be made his disciples at this time, and be hereby brought to believe in him.

Ver. 12. *After this he went down to Capernaum*, etc.] After he had been at Cana, and at the wedding there: after he had wrought the miracle of turning water into wine; and after he had manifested forth the glory of his deity thereby, and had confirmed the faith of his disciples, he departed from thence, and went lower into the country of Galilee, to Capernaum, a city near the sea of Tiberias; and which, from henceforward, he made the more usual place of his residence, and whither he frequently resorted, and therefore it is called his city, (<A1D> Matthew 9:1). This refers not to the same journey recorded in (<A1D> Matthew 4:12,13), for that was after John was cast into prison, whereas this was before; (see <R1D> John 3:24); the company that went with him, are as follow,

he, and his mother; who had been with him at Cana, and was a principal person at the wedding: and she now returning home, he accompanies her, to see her to her own habitation; or to settle her in Capernaum, whilst he went about discharging his public ministry.

And his brethren; or near kinsmen, according to the flesh, the sons of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, and Mary, sister to the mother of our Lord; whose names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, three of which afterwards became his apostles:

and his disciples: as many as he had yet called, which were Andrew, and the disciple that followed Jesus with him, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael,

and they continued there not many days; not because of the impenitence, unbelief, and wickedness of the place, but for the reason following.

Ver. 13. *And the Jews' passover was at hand*, etc.] That feast which was kept on the fourteenth day of Nisan, in commemoration of the Lord's passing over, and by the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the firstborn in Egypt: and it is called the Jews' passover, because they only were

obliged to keep it: nor was it obligatory upon the Gentiles; and, besides, was now abolished when John wrote this Gospel, though still retained by the Jews. And moreover, John was now among the Gentiles, and for whose sake he penned this Gospel; and therefore so distinguishes this feast, which was typical of the Christian passover, or of Christ our passover that is sacrificed for us. This was the first “passover” after Christ’s baptism, which is generally thought to have been about half a year before; though so much time cannot be made out from the scriptural account; for from his baptism, to his return out of the wilderness to John, were forty days; and from thence, to his coming to Cana, four or, five days more; and perhaps he might be seven days in Cana; for so long a wedding was usually kept; and his stay at Capernaum was but a few days; all which do not amount to above eight or nine weeks at most: the second passover after this, is, by some, thought to be the feast mentioned in (~~REF~~ John 5:1), and the third in (~~REF~~ John 6:4), and the fourth and last, at which he suffered, in (~~REF~~ John 18:28). The Evangelist John is the only writer that gives an account of the passovers after Christ entered on his public ministry; by which is known the duration of it, which is generally thought to be about three years and a half. “Three years and a half”, the Jews say ^{f95}, the Shekinah sat upon the Mount of Olives, expecting that the Israelites would repent, but they did not; and this seems to be the term of time for disciples to learn of their masters: it is said ^{f96}, one came from Athens to Jerusalem, and he served “three years and a half” to learn the doctrine of wisdom, and he learned it not.

And Jesus went up to Jerusalem; not alone, but his disciples with him, as appears from (~~REF~~ John 2:17), to keep the passover as he had been wont to do, and as the law required; and he being under the law, as a son of Abraham, and the surety of his people, it became him to fulfil all righteousness, ceremonial, as well as moral, and which he strictly observed. He is said to go up to Jerusalem, because that stood on higher ground than the low lands of Galilee, and was the only place where the passover might be kept; (see ~~REF~~ Deuteronomy 16:2).

Ver. 14. *And found in the temple*, etc.] Not in the holy place itself, nor in the court of the priests, where the sacrifices were offered, nor in the court of the women, nor in the court of the Israelites, where the people worshipped; but in the court of the Gentiles, or the outward court, even all that space of ground which was between the wall which divided the whole from common ground, and the buildings of the temple, and which was open to the air; for the whole sacred enclosure, or all within the wall, went

by the name of the temple. Into this all strangers might come; and the passover now being at hand, here were

those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves: the oxen, or bullocks, were for the Chagigah, or feast kept on the second day of the passover; (see Gill on “~~4183~~ John 18:28”); and the sheep, or lambs, as the Persic version reads, for the passover supper; and the doves were for the offerings of the poorer sort of new mothers: with these they were supplied from the Mount of Olives. It is said^{f97},

“there were two cedar trees on the Mount of Olives, and under one of them were four shops of them that sold things for purification; and out of one of them they brought forty bushels of young doves every month: and out of them the Israelites had enough for the nests, or the offerings of turtle doves;”

(see Gill on “~~4212~~ Matthew 21:12”);

and the changers of money sitting: who changed foreign money into the current coin of the Jews, strangers coming, at this feast, from several parts of the world; and sometimes there was need of changing shekels into half shekels, which, at certain times, were paid for the ransom of Israelites; see the note on the place above mentioned.

Ver. 15. *And when he had made a scourge of small cords*, etc.] That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it. This scourge might be made either of thongs cut out of the hides of beasts slain in sacrifice; or of the cords, with which the owners of the cattle had brought them to this place; or with which they had fastened them in it. And it seems to be made, and used, not so much for force and terror, as to intimate, that these persons, the violators of the holy place, deserved the scourge of divine wrath and punishment; as well as to show the miraculous power of Christ in driving such a number of men before him, with so small and insignificant a weapon; for the phrase is diminutive. The reason given by Dr. Lightfoot, and others, why Christ made use of a whip, or scourge, rather than a staff, is, because it was contrary to a Jewish canon^{f98} to go into the mountain of the house, or temple, with a staff in the hand; and yet the man of the mountain of the house, or the master of it, who used to go about every ward with torches burning before him, if he found a Levite asleep in his ward^{f99}, struck him **wl qmb**, with his staff, and had power to burn his clothes.

He drove them all out of the temple; that is, he drove out “the men”, as the Persic version reads; the merchants, the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers: “and the sheep, and the oxen” likewise; the Persic version adds, “doves”; but these are after mentioned:

and poured out the changers money; off of the tables, or out of the boxes, or dishes, or drawers, or purses, in which it was put:

and overthrew the tables; at which they sat, and on which they told their money.

Ver. 16. *And said unto them that sold doves*, etc.] For as these were kept in coups, or cages, they could not be drove, as the sheep and oxen, nor could they be let out, and fly, without the loss of the owners: and therefore Christ said to them,

take these things hence; not only the doves, but the pens, coups, or cages, in which they were, and both together:

make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise; so he calls the temple, which was built as an house for God, and where he took up his residence; where were the symbols of his presence; where his worship was kept, and sacrifices offered to him: and he asserts God, whose house this was, to be his Father, and himself to be his son, as none of the prophets that went before him did; and in such sense as neither men nor angels are; and which carries in it a reason why he was so much concerned for the honour of God, and so much resented the profanation of his house, because he was his Father. A like action with this, done by Christ at another time, is recorded in (^{4P12}Matthew 21:12,13). This was at the beginning of his ministry, that at the close of it, in which he expressed himself with more warmth and severity than here: here he only charges them with making his Father’s house an house of merchandise, but there with making it a den of thieves; since they had not only slighted, and despised his first reproof, but had returned to their evil ways, and might grow more wicked and audacious. This instance of Christ now coming into the temple as a public minister, and which was the first time of his entrance into it, after he had taken this character, was a further accomplishment of (^{30B1}Malachi 3:1), for he now went into it, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and which this action of his in driving out the merchants, with their cattle, shows; and was a surprising instance of his divine power; and is equal to other miracles of his, that a single person, a stranger, one of no power and

authority in the government, unassisted and unarmed, with only a scourge of small cords, should carry such awe and majesty with him, and inject such terror into, and drive such a number of men before him, who were selling things for religious uses, and were supported in it by the priests and sanhedrim of the nation.

Ver. 17. *And his disciples remembered that it was written*, etc.] In (^{390B}Psalm 69:9), which Psalm belongs to the Messiah, as is manifest from the citations out of it in the New Testament, and the application of them to Christ, as in (^{415C}John 15:25 19:28 ^{415B}Romans 15:3), compared with (^{390B}Psalm 69:4,9,21). Christ is represented in it, as suffering for the sins of his people; for he himself was innocent; and was hated without a cause; but having the sins of his people imputed to him, he made satisfaction for them, and so restored what he took not away. His sufferings are spoken of in it as very great; and from it we learn, that they are fitly called, by himself, a baptism, which he desired to be baptized with, (^{412D}Luke 12:50), since the waters are said to come into his soul, and he to be in deep waters, where the floods overflowed him; so that he was as one immersed in them: it is not only prophesied of him in it, that he should be the object of the scorn and contempt of the Jewish nation, and be rejected by them, and treated with the utmost indignity, and loaded with reproaches; but it foretold, that they should give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, which were literally fulfilled in him: and even the Jews themselves seem to be under some conviction, that the Psalm has respect to him; for Aben Ezra, a noted commentator of theirs, on the last words of the Psalm, has this note;

“the sense is, they and their children shall inherit it in the days of David, or in the days of the Messiah.”

It appears from hence, that the disciples of Christ were acquainted with the sacred writings, and had diligently read them, and searched into them, and had made them their study; and upon this wonderful action of Christ, called to mind, and reflected upon the following passage of Scripture, which they judged very proper and pertinent to him:

the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. This passage, so far as it is cited, agrees exactly, word for word, with the original text in (^{390B}Psalm 69:9), wherefore it is very strange that Surenhusius ^{f100} should remark a difference, and give himself a good deal of trouble to reconcile it: he observes, that in the Hebrew text, it is read, **hwly tanq**, “the zeal of the

Lord”, in the third person; whereas it is there, *Ætyb tanq*, “the zeal of thine house”, as here, in the second person: indeed, the word *yk*, “for”, is left out, as he remarks, there being no need of it in the citation; the evangelist only historically relating the accommodation of it to Christ, by the disciples; whereas in the original text, the words contain a reason of the reproach and shame which Christ endured, and was put to by the Jews on account of his zeal for the house, honour, and worship of God; and the latter part of the text is not produced at all, being not for the present purpose, though very applicable to Christ; and is cited, and applied to him by the apostle, in (~~SEB~~Romans 15:3). Such was Christ’s regard to his Father’s house, and which was typical of the church of God; and such his concern for his honour, ordinances, and worship, that when he saw the merchandise that was carried on in the temple, his zeal, which was a true and hearty affection for God, and was according to knowledge, was stirred up in him, and to such a degree, that it was like a consuming fire within him, that ate up his spirits; so that he could not forbear giving it vent, and expressing it in the manner he did, by driving those traders out of it. Phinehas and Elias were in their zeal, as well as other things, types of Christ; and in the Spirit and power of the latter he came; and Christ not only expressed a zeal for the house of God, the place of religious worship, but for the church and people of God, whose salvation he most earnestly desired, and most zealously pursued: he showed his strong, and affectionate regard to it, by his suretyship engagements for them, by his assumption of their nature, by his ardent desire to accomplish it, and by his voluntary and cheerful submission to death on account of it. And such was his zeal for it, that it eat him up, it inflamed his Spirit and affections, consumed his time and strength, and, at last, his life: and he also showed a zeal for the discipline of God’s house, by his severe reflections on human traditions; by asserting the spirituality of worship; by commanding a strict regard to divine institutions; and by sharply inveighing against the sins of professors of religion: and he discovered a warm zeal for the truths of the Gospel, by a lively and powerful preaching of them; by his constancy and assiduity in it; by the many fatiguing journeys he took for that purpose; by the dangers he exposed himself to by it; and by the care he took to free the Gospel from prejudice and calumnies: and it becomes us, in imitation of our great master, to be zealous for his truths and ordinances, and for the discipline of his house, and not bear with either the erroneous principles, or the bad practices of wicked men.

Ver. 18. *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him,* etc.] They did not lay hands on him, or offer any violence to him; they did not, as the inhabitants of Nazareth did, thrust him out, and lead him to a precipice, to cast him down headlong; nor did they take up stones to stone him, as they afterwards did, when he asserted his deity: and it is surprising, that they did not rise up and destroy him at once, a single man, unarmed, and without assistance, having so highly provoked them; the restraint upon them must be his almighty power: nor do they deny what he suggested, that they had made his Father's house an house of merchandise; nor do they offer to vindicate their profanation of the temple, or object to the purging of it; only demand a proof of his right to do it: and which demand was made, not by the common people, or by the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers, who were drove out, and had not spirit to rally again; but by the chief priests and elders, the sanhedrim of the nation, who had the care and government of the temple, and under whose authority the above persons acted; and whose gain and worldly interest were promoted hereby, as a like demand was afterwards made by the same persons; (see ^{<4123>}Matthew 21:23);

what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things? they argued, that either he did these things of himself, by his own authority, and then they must be deemed rash and unjustifiable; or he did it by the authority of others: they knew it was not by theirs, who were the great council of the nation, from whom he should have had his instructions and orders, if he acted by human authority; and if he pretended to a divine authority, as they supposed he did, then they insisted upon a sign or miracle to be wrought, to prove that God was his Father, as he suggested; and that he was the proprietor and owner of the temple, and had a right to purge it, as he had done; (see ^{<4122>}1 Corinthians 1:22).

Ver. 19. *Jesus answered and said unto them,* etc.] In a dark and enigmatical way, though very properly and pertinently; since it was with respect to the temple, and his power over it, and right to purge it, that a sign was required of him:

destroy this temple; pointing, as it were, with his finger to his body; for of that he spake, as appears from (^{<4121>}John 2:21), the dissolution of which, by death he means, the separation of his soul from his body, though not of either from his divine person: and it is to be understood, not as a command, or a grant, or as an exhortation, and advice to them, to kill his body; but

rather as a prophecy of what they would do; or as putting the case, that should they, as he knew they would, destroy his body, then says he, as a sign of having a power to do what I have done,

in three days I will raise it again; by which he would appear to be the Son of God, with power, that had power of laying down his life, and taking it up again; and is the very sign, namely, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, he gives the Jews, when they sought one of him at another time, and upon another occasion.

Ver. 20. *Then said the Jews*, etc.] Unto him, as read the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

forty and six years was this temple in building; which cannot be understood of the temple as built by Solomon, for that was but seven years in building, (^{<1067>}1 Kings 6:37,38). But rather of the temple, as built by Zorobabel, commonly called the second temple, and might be more properly said to be “this temple”; the calculations of this made by learned men, are various and endless to recite. Daniel’s seven weeks, or forty nine days, which are so many years, can have nothing to do with this account; since they regard not the building of the temple, but the city of Jerusalem; though from the second year of Cyrus, in which the temple began to be built, to the thirty second of Darius exclusive, were just forty six years; Cyrus reigning three years, Artaxerxes Ahasuerus fourteen years, and Artaxerxes Darius thirty two; but their account is more likely, which begins at the first of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned forty years, and ends in the sixth year of Darius, his successor, in which year the temple was finished, (^{<1665>}Ezra 6:15). But to me it seems rather, that Herod’s temple, or the temple as rebuilt, or repaired by Herod, is here meant; and which the Jews call, *swdwrwh`yynb*, “the building of Herod”^{f101}; and say of it, that

“he who has not seen Herod’s building, never saw a beautiful building.”

And this, according to Josephus^{f102}, was begun in the “eighteenth” year of his reign, in the “thirty fifth” of which Christ was born, who was now “thirty” years of age: so that reckoning either the eighteenth year of Herod, or the thirtieth of Christ, the present year exclusively, just forty six years had run out, since the rebuilding or reparations were first begun; and which were not yet finished; for some years after this, the above writer observes^{f103}, the temple was finished, even in the times of Nero and Agrippa: and

agreeably to this, the words may be rendered, “forty six years has this temple been building”; and which still adds more force to the following reasoning of the Jews:

and wilt thou rear it up in three days? the thing is impossible and impracticable; it is madness to the last degree, to talk at this rate: thus from the length of time which had run out from Herod’s first beginning to repair and beautify the temple, till now, and yet not finished, they argue the absurdity of his pretending to raise up such a fabric, should it be demolished, in three days time; they understanding him either ignorantly or wilfully, to speak of the material temple, when his sense was otherwise, as appears from the words of the evangelist, in the next verse. The Jew ^{f104} objects to this account, of the temple being forty six years in building; he observes, that

“according to the sense of the Nazarenes, this was the building of king Herod, that was in the time of Jesus; and the whole time of his reign were but seven and thirty years, as is manifest from the book of Joseph ben Gorion, c. 65. Besides, that which Herod built, was built in eight years, as is evident from the same author, c. 55, wherefore the number of forty six years, in the words of the writer, (the evangelist,) is, a palpable error.”

To which may be replied, that admitting there is an error in this number, it is not the error of the evangelist, but of the Jews, whose words the evangelist relates; and supposing this was a mistake of theirs, either ignorantly or wilfully made, to aggravate the absurdity and impossibility of Christ’s rebuilding the temple; and that even the evangelist knew it to be a mistake; yet he acts the most faithful and upright part, in repeating the words of the Jews, as they delivered them; and it lies upon the Jew to prove, that these words were not said by them, or that it is not credible that they should: that this was the building of Herod which is here referred to; and that he reigned but thirty seven years, will be granted; but this is no objection to its being forty six years in building, since in this account it is not said that it was forty six years in building by Herod; the sense is only, that such a number of years had passed, since it first began to be built by him: as for what Joseph ben Gorion says, of its being built by him in the space of eight years, it is not to be depended upon, since he is not the true Josephus, that wrote the history of the Jews, and is to be corrected by the genuine historian; and from what has been before observed, from the time

which, according to the true Josephus, this building was begun, to this present year of Christ, when this discourse was had, were just forty six years; and admitting, that the main of the building was finished in eight years time, yet additions were continually made to it, so that it was not finished entirely, until many years after.

Ver. 21. *But he spoke of the temple of his body.*] Which was the antitype of the material temple; and might well be called so, since the bodies of the saints are called temples, (~~4186~~ 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 6:19) (~~4166~~ 2 Corinthians 6:16); and the human nature of Christ is called a tabernacle, (~~3882~~ Hebrews 8:2); and he himself, in prophecy, is said to be **ꝥdqm̄l** , “for a sanctuary”, or temple, (~~2384~~ Isaiah 8:14), and that because the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, the train of the divine perfections filled the temple of his human nature, (~~5100~~ Colossians 2:9 ~~2001~~ Isaiah 6:1). And because here, as in the temple, God grants his presence, and communes with his saints, accepts of their prayers and praises, and all their spiritual sacrifices through him; and who is the oracle, the true “Urim” and “Thummim”, by whom he delivers his whole mind and will to his people.

Ver. 22. *When therefore he was risen from the dead,* etc.] Which was three years after this:

his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; either to the Jews, or to them the disciples; though the phrase “to them”, is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions. The disciples themselves were very dull of understanding the doctrine of Christ’s resurrection; and so they continued, notwithstanding he gave them afterwards very full hints of it, until that he was actually risen; and then they called to mind these words of his, with others that dropped from him upon the same subject:

and they believed the Scripture; that spoke of his resurrection, (~~3960~~ Psalm 16:10), and on the third day, (~~2882~~ Hosea 6:2).

And the word which Jesus had said; concerning his rising again the third day at this time, and at others, as in (~~4062~~ Matthew 16:21 17:23 20:19); and they believed his word equally with the Scripture, it agreeing to it, and being founded on it.

Ver. 23. *Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover,* etc.] Whither he went, in order to keep it, that being at hand, and now come; (see ~~4123~~ John 2:13);

in the feast day; either on the day the Chagigah was eaten, which was sometimes emphatically called “the feast”, as in (⁴⁰²⁸¹⁶Numbers 28:16,17), “and in the fourteenth day of the first month, is the passover of the Lord; and in the fifteenth day of this month, [is] the feast”; the passover lamb was eaten on the fourteenth day of the month “Nisan”, and the “Chagigah” was on the fifteenth; in the former only a lamb was eaten, in the other, cattle out of the herds; hence mention is made, both of flocks and herds, for the keeping the passover, (⁴⁵¹⁴¹²Deuteronomy 16:2). Jarchi’s note upon the place is, that the herds were for the Chagigah, with which the Talmud ^{f105} agrees; and Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the words thus,

“and ye shall slay the passover before the Lord your God, between the evenings, and the sheep and oxen on the morrow, in that very day, for the joy of the feast;”

for it was observed with great joy and mirth: and the rather this is here meant, since the “Chagigah” is not only called “the feast”, but this here is distinguished from the passover, as that is in the passage above cited, (⁴⁰²⁸¹⁶Numbers 28:16,17). For the passover here, seems to be the general name for the whole seven days of the festival; and the feast to be the particular feast of the first day of it, which was the fifteenth; to which may be added, that on this day all the males made their appearance in court ^{f106}; and so was a very proper time for Christ to work his miracles in, when there were so many spectators: though it may design the whole time of the feast, all the seven days of unleavened bread; during which time Christ was at Jerusalem, and wrought miracles, which had the following effect:

many believed in his name; that he was some great prophet, or the prophet, or the Messiah; they gave an historical assent unto him as such, at least for that time:

when they saw the miracles which he did; for as miracles, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, were to be performed by the Messiah, such as giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, (²³⁸¹⁵Isaiah 35:5,6); so they were expected by the ancient Jews, that they would be wrought by him, when he came; wherefore these Jews, seeing such like wonderful things wrought by Jesus, they concluded he must be the Messiah: though the modern ones, in order to shift off the evidence of Jesus being the Messiah, from his miracles, deny that miracles are the characteristic of the Messiah, or will be performed by him; at least, that there is no necessity of them to prove him to be the

person. What miracles these were, which were now wrought by Christ, are not recorded by this, or any other evangelist; (see ~~CHR~~ John 20:30). However, being surprised at the marvellous things he did, and upon the evidence of these extraordinary works, there were many that concluded he must be come from God; among these it seems as if Nicodemus was one; (see ~~CHR~~ John 3:2); great part of these, at least some of them, were only nominal and temporary believers, who were not to be confided in as true disciples, and hearty followers of Christ; and who continued not long in the same mind and profession, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 24. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them*, etc.] The sense according to some of the ancients is, that he did not commit the whole of the Gospel to them; he did not make known to them all his mind and will; this he only did to the twelve apostles, his special disciples and friends; nor was the time come, that he would make known, or have made known, the things concerning his person, office, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead: but rather the meaning is, that he did not trust himself with these persons, who believed in him, on the basis of his miracles; he did not take them into the number of his associates; he did not admit them to intimacy with him; nor did he freely converse with them, or make any long stay among them; but soon withdrew himself from hence, and went into other parts of Judea, and into Galilee:

because he knew all men: good and bad: all openly profane sinners, and all their actions; not only their more public ones, but those that are done in the dark, and which are the most secretly devised, and levelled against the saints; and he so knew them, as to bring them into judgment: and all good men, true believers; he knows their persons, as they are his Father's choice, his gift of them to him, his own purchase, and as called by his grace; and so as to distinguish them at the last day, and give up the full account of every one of them to his Father: he knows the worst of them, the sin that dwells in them, their daily infirmities, their secret personal sins; their family sins, both of omission and commission; and their church sins, or which are committed in the house of God; and takes notice of them, so as to resent them, and chastise them for them; he knows the best of them, their graces, their faith, hope, love, patience, humility, self-denial, &c; he knows their good works, and all their weaknesses and their wants: and he knows all nominal professors, on what basis they take up their profession, and what trust they place in it; he can distinguish between grace and mere profession, and discern the secret lusts which such indulge, and the springs and

progress of their apostasy: he knew all these men, that upon seeing his miracles, professed at this time to believe in him; he knew the hypocrisy and dissimulation of some of them; and he knew the notions they had of a temporal Messiah, and the temporal views they had in believing in him; and their design to set him up as a temporal prince, as some afterwards would have done: knew the flashy affections of others, who were like John's hearers, that were pleased for a while; he knew what sort of faith it was they believed in him with, that it would not hold long, nor they continue with him; for he knew not only all persons, but $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$, "all things", as some copies read here; (see ^{<4217>}John 21:17).

Ver. 25. *And needed not that any should testify of man*, etc.] Of this or the other man, that he was a good or a bad man; he needed no proofs to be made, or testimonies bore, or evidence given of men's characters and actions; he was of quick understanding, and could distinguish at once between a wicked man and a good man; and so had the characteristic which the Jews require of the Messiah; for they rejected Bar Cozba from being the Messiah, and slew him, because he could not smell, referring to (^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:3), or discern a bad man from a good man ^{f107}; but this Jesus could do, without any external evidence:

for he knew what was in man; which none but the spirit of a man can know; his inward thoughts, the secrets of the heart; thus Christ knew the thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees, (^{<4004>}Matthew 9:4), being a discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart, (^{<5842>}Hebrews 4:12). This Apollonius Tyaneus, the ape of Christ, ascribed to himself ^{f108}; but is what is peculiar to God; and Christ being God, knows all that is in man; that there is no good in him naturally, nothing but what comes from his Father, is imparted by himself, or implanted by his Spirit; he knows the wickedness there is in man, that his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and full of all manner of iniquities; he knows in what condition all the faculties of the souls of men are; what their affections are set upon, on earthly or heavenly things; whether there is any light in their understandings, or not; whether their wills are subdued and resigned to the will of God, or not; whether their minds and consciences are defiled, or their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; in short, whether the internal good work of grace is begun upon their souls, or not; and he knows the secret springs of all actions, good and bad; all which prove his true and proper deity, and show him to be a suitable Saviour of sinners, and qualify him to be the Judge of the whole earth.