

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 7

Ver. 1. *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee,* etc.] That is, after he had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, near Bethsaida; and had had that long discourse with the Jews at Capernaum, concerning himself, as the bread of life, and about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and had been up to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, said to be nigh, when he went over the sea of Galilee, (~~see~~ John 6:4); otherwise the above places were in Galilee: but the case seems to be this, that after he had been at Capernaum, he went to Jerusalem, to keep the passover; and finding that the Jews still sought to take away his life, he returned to Galilee, and “walked” there; he did not sit still, or lie at home, and live an inactive indolent life, but went about from place to place, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases; he walked, and walked about; but not as the enemy of souls, seeking to do all mischief, but to do all good, to the bodies and souls of men:

for he would not walk in Jewry; in the land of Judea, where he had been, and tarried, and made disciples; but being rejected and ill treated, he left them; which was a prelude of the Gospel being taken from them, and carried to another people; which afterwards took place, in the times of the apostles: his reason for it was,

because the Jews sought to kill him; for healing a man on the sabbath day, and for asserting his equality with God: not that he was afraid to die, but his time was not come; and he had work to do for the glory of God, and the good of men; and therefore it was both just and prudent to withdraw and preserve his life; for like reasons he advised his disciples, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another: and very lawful and advisable it is for good men, when their lives are in danger, to make use of proper means to preserve them, for further usefulness in the cause of God, and for the benefit of men.

Ver. 2. *Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand.*] Which began on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, which answers to part of our

September; when the Jews erected tents or booths, in which they dwelt, and ate their meals during this festival; and which was done, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths in the wilderness; and was typical of Christ's tabernacling in human nature; and an emblem of the saints dwelling in the earthly houses and tabernacles of their bodies, in this their wilderness and pilgrimage state. Some assign other reasons of this feast, as that it was appointed in commemoration of the divine command, for building the tabernacle; and others, that it was instituted in memory of the protection of the people of Israel under the cloud, as they travelled through the wilderness; by which they were preserved, as in a tent or booth; and to this inclines the Targum of Onkelos, on (^{<R243>}Leviticus 23:43), which paraphrases the words thus, "That your generations may know, that in the shadow of the clouds, I caused the children of Israel to dwell, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt": and one of the Jewish commentators ^{f287} suggests, that the reason why the first place the Israelites pitched at, when they came out of Egypt, was called Succoth, which signifies "tents", or "tabernacles", is, because there they were covered with the clouds of glory: but the true reason of this feast is that which is first given, as is clear from (^{<R243>}Leviticus 23:43), and because they were obliged to dwell in tents, as soon as they came out of Egypt, therefore the first place they encamped at, was called "Succoth", or tabernacles, (^{<D127>}Exodus 12:37 ^{<Q815>}Numbers 33:5). This feast was not kept at the time of year the people came out of Egypt; for that was at the time of the passover; but was put off, as it seems, to a colder season of the year; and which was not so convenient for dwelling in booths; lest it should be thought they observed this feast for the sake of pleasure and recreation, under the shade of these bowers; which, as appears from (^{<J4815>}Nehemiah 8:15,16), were made of olive, pine, myrtle, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees; and were fixed, some on the roofs of their houses, others in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; and others in the streets: an account of the sacrifices offered at this feast, is given in (^{<Q813>}Numbers 29:13-38), in which may be observed, that on the first day thirteen young bullocks were offered; on the second, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth, nine; on the sixth, eight; and on the seventh, seven; and on the eighth, but one. The Jews, in their Misna, have a treatise called "Succa", or the "Tabernacle", in which they treat of this feast; and which contains various traditions, concerning their booths, their manner of living in them, and other rites and usages observed by them, during this festival: they are very particular about the measure and form, and covering of their booths; a

booth might not be higher than twenty cubits, nor lower than ten hands' breadth; and its breadth might not be less than seven hands' breadth by seven; but it might be carried out as wide as they pleased ^{f288}, provided it had three sides: they might not cover their booths with anything, but what grew out of the earth, or was rooted up from thence; nor with anything that received uncleanness, or was of an ill smell, or anything that was fallen and faded ^{f289}: into these booths they brought their best goods, their best bedding, and all their drinking vessels, etc. and left their houses empty; for here was their fixed dwelling; they only occasionally went into their houses ^{f290}; for here they were obliged to dwell day and night, and eat all their meals, during the seven days of the feast; and however, it was reckoned praiseworthy, and he was accounted the most religious, who ate nothing out of his booth ^{f291}; they were indeed excused when it was rainy weather, but as soon as the rain was over, they were obliged to return again ^{f292} and besides, their dwelling and sleeping, and eating and drinking, in their booths, there were various other rites which were performed by them; as particularly, the carrying of palm tree branches in their hands, or what they call the "Lulab"; which was made up of branches of palm tree, myrtle, and willow, bound up together in a bundle, which was carried in the right hand, and a pome citron in the left; and as they carried them, they waved them three times towards the several quarters of the world; and every day they went about the altar once, with these in their hands, saying the words in (^{f285}Psalm 118:25): "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity": and on the seventh day, they went about the altar seven times ^{f293}: also there were great illuminations in the temple; at the going out of the first day of the feast, they went down to the court of the women; they made a great preparation (i.e. as Bartenora explains it, they set benches round it, and set the women above, and the men below); and there were golden candlesticks there, and at the head of them four golden basins, and four ladders to every candlestick; and four young priests had four pitchers of oil, that held a hundred and twenty logs, which they put into each basin; and of the old breeches and girdles of the priests, they made wicks, and with them lighted them; and there was not a court in Jerusalem, which was not lighted with that light; and religious men, and men of good works, danced before them, with lighted torches in their hands, singing songs and hymns of praise ^{f294}; and this continued the six nights following ^{f295}: there was also, on everyone of these days, another custom observed; which was that of fetching water from the pool of Siloah, and pouring it with wine upon the altar, which was attended with

great rejoicing; of which, *see Gill* “^{<B37>}*John 7:37*”: to which may be added, the music that was used during the performance of these rites; at the illumination in the court of the women, there were harps, psalteries, cymbals, and other instruments of music, playing all the while; and two priests with trumpets, who sounded, when they had the signal; and on every day, as they brought water from Siloah to the altar, they sounded with trumpets, and shouted; the great “Hallel”, or hymn, was sung all the eight days, and the pipe was blown, sometimes five days, and sometimes six ^{f296}; and even on all the eight days; and the whole was a feast of rejoicing, according to (^{<B30>}Leviticus 23:40).

Ver. 3. *His brethren therefore said unto him*, etc.] That is, the brethren of Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; who were not James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, the sons of Alphaeus, the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, so called, (^{<B35>}Matthew 13:55), for some of these were of the number of the twelve; and all of them believers in Christ; whereas these his brethren were not. The Jew ^{f297} therefore is mistaken, who supposed the above persons are here intended; and objects this their unbelief to Jesus, as if they knew him too well to give him any credit; whereas they did believe in him, and abode by him to the last; and some of them, if not all, suffered death for his sake. They therefore are to be understood of some distant relations of Mary or Joseph, that dwelt at Nazareth, or Capernaum, or in some of those parts; and the feast of tabernacles being at hand, they put him upon going up to it, being willing to be rid of him: saying,

depart hence: which is the language of carnal men, who desire not the company of Christ, nor the knowledge of his ways; and like the Gergesenes, who preferred their swine to Christ, and desired him to depart out of their coasts:

and go into Judea; among his most inveterate enemies, who sought to take away his life; and which doubtless they knew; which showed a quite different regard to him, from that of his true disciples, (^{<B10>}John 11:7,8), for which they give some plausible reasons:

that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest: meaning not his twelve disciples, who were now with him, but the disciples he had made, and baptized in Judea, (^{<B10>}John 4:1,2). Or his disciples in the several parts of the land, who would all be at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles; and

so, should he go, would have an opportunity of seeing his miracles, and thereby be the more confirmed in the faith of him,

Ver. 4. *For there is no man that doeth anything in secret*, etc.] For so they reckoned his doing miracles in such a corner of the land, and in so obscure a place as Galilee:

and he himself seeketh to be known openly; suggesting hereby, that Christ was an ambitious person, and sought popular applause, and honour and glory from men, when nothing was more foreign from him; (see ~~John~~ John 5:41 8:50).

If thou do these things; for they question whether the miracles he wrought were real; and suspected that they were deceptions of the sight, and delusions; or at least they questioned their being done by him; and rather thought that they were done by diabolical influence, by Beelzebub the prince of devils: but if they were real ones, they advise him, saying,

shew thyself to the world; or do these openly, and in the presence of the great men of the world; the princes of it, the rulers of the people, the chief priests and sanhedrim; and before all the males of Israel; who at this feast would come up from all parts of the land, and are for their multitude called the world: the reason of this their advice was, that if his miracles were real, and he was the person he would be thought to be, the doing of them before such, would gain him great credit and esteem; and if not, he might be detected by such numbers, and by men of such penetration as were among them.

Ver. 5. *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*] At first they might take to him, and embrace him as the Messiah, and expect he would set up a temporal kingdom; in which they might hope, on account of their relation to him, according to the flesh to enjoy great honours and privileges; but finding that he was not inclined to anything of that nature, and talked in a quite different way, they grew sick of him, and rejected him, as the Messiah; so, little regard is to be had, or confidence placed, in carnal descent from, or alliance to the best of men; as to Abraham, or any other true believer, if they have not the same grace, or the same faith as such have; and which comes not by blood, or natural generation, but by the free favour of God; for it matters not, if men have known Christ, or have been allied to him after the flesh, unless they are new creatures in him; they may be the one, and not the other; even the carnal brethren of Christ, and yet

not believers in him; and it is only such who are so in a spiritual sense, that are regarded by him, (~~4124~~Matthew 12:49,50).

Ver. 6. *Then Jesus said unto them,* etc.] In answer to their solicitations and arguments used with him, to go up to the feast:

my time is not yet come; meaning, not the time of his death, or of his exaltation and glorification, or of the showing of himself forth unto the world; though all this was true; but of his going up to this feast; as appears from (~~4128~~John 7:8);

but your time is always ready; intimating, they might go at any time; their lives were not in any danger, as his was, and had nothing to consult about the preservation of them; it was all one to them when they went up, whether before the feast, that they might be ready for it, or at the beginning, middle, or end of it, as to any notice that would be taken of them, unless they should be guilty of an omission of their duty; but not on any other account; which was not his case.

Ver. 7. *The world cannot hate you,* etc.] Because they were of the world, belonged to it; they were like unto it, and every like loves its like; and they were the world's own, and therefore instead of being hated, were loved by it; and they walked according to the course of it; and wicked men not only take pleasure in sin, but in them that do it:

but me it hateth; though without a cause; that is, without a just cause, or reason; a cause there was, and it follows:

because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil; even those works of it, which were reckoned good works; Christ bore his testimony of these, that they were evil; being done either not according to the command of God, but the traditions of the elders; or not from a right principle, as of faith and love, nor to a right end, as the glory of God; but only to be seen of men: and very severely did he inveigh against the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy, and uncleanness of the Scribes and Pharisees: and so he continued to do, and this drew upon him their hatred and ill will.

Ver. 8. *Go we up unto this feast,* etc.] Suggesting, that he would not have them stay for him, or hinder themselves on his account: he encourages them to go up, and observe this festival; for the ceremonial law was not yet abolished; and though they were carnal men, and did not understand what it typified: and so unregenerate persons ought to attend on the outward

means, as the hearing of the word, etc. though they do not understand it; it may be God may make use of it, for the enlightening of their minds; and blessed are they that wait at Wisdom's gates, and there find Christ, and life and salvation by him:

I go not up yet unto this feast; this clause, in one of Beza's copies, is wholly left out; and in some, the word "this" is not read; and in others it is read, "I go not up unto this feast"; leaving out the word "yet"; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the Persic version only, "I do not go up"; which occasioned Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, to reproach Christ, as guilty of inconstancy, or of an untruth, since he afterwards did go up: but in almost all the ancient copies the word is read; and so it is by Chrysostom and Nonnus; and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "I do not go up now to this feast"; that is, just at that very time, that very day or hour: which is entirely consistent with what is afterwards said,

for my time is not yet full come; not to die, or to be glorified, but to go up to the feast.

Ver. 9. *When he had said these words unto them*, etc.] Had exhorted them to go up to the feast, and told them that he should not go yet, and the reason of it:

he abode [still] in Galilee; and went not up with his brethren, nor at all at present; showing hereby a firmness and resolution of mind, not using lightness of speech; and his words being not yea, and nay, but all of a piece, and by which he abode.

Ver. 10. *But when his brethren were gone up*, etc.] To the feast, as all the Oriental versions read, from the next clause:

then went he also up unto the feast; the Ethiopic version reads, "he went up that day"; which is very likely, and no ways contrary to what is said, in (~~John~~ John 7:14); for though he did not go up to the temple to teach, till the middle of the feast, he might be up at the feast sooner: and according to the law, it was necessary that he should be there on the first and second days, and keep the Chagigah, and make his appearance in the court; though there was a provision made for such that failed, the canon runs thus ^{f298};

"he that does not make his festival sacrifice, on the first good day of the feast, may make it throughout the whole feast, and on the

last good day of the feast; and if the feast passes, and he has not made the festival sacrifice, he is not obliged to a compensation; and of this it is said, (^{<2015>}Ecclesiastes 1:15): “That which is crooked cannot be made straight”; etc.”

But however, whatever day he went on, he went up

not openly, but as it were in secret: as he was made under the law, and came to fulfil all righteousness, it was necessary that he should observe every precept, and fulfil the whole law: and therefore he went up to this feast; yet in the most private manner, that he might escape those who would lie in wait for him, and sought to kill him: and this he did, not through fear of death, but because his hour was not yet come; this was not the feast he was to suffer at, but the passover following; which when near at hand, he went up to it, and entered Jerusalem in the most public manner.

Ver. 11. *Then the Jews sought him at the feast*, etc.] Some to take him and kill him, and others to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: for all expected him at the feast, knowing it was always his custom, as it was his duty, as an Israelite, to attend at it:

and said, where is he? not naming his name; either through contempt, which might be the case of the far greater part; or through fear of the Jews; or because that he was so well known.

Ver. 12. *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him*, etc.] There was a general whisper, and a private controversy and contention among the people about him, upon inquiry being made after him:

for some said he is a good man; a man of a good principle, of a good life and conversation; and who is good, kind, and beneficent, both to the bodies and souls of men; preaches good doctrine, and does many good things:

others said: nay, or denied him to be a good man:

but he deceiveth the people; drawing them off from the law of Moses, teaching them to break the sabbath, setting himself up for the Messiah, and asserting himself to be the son of God.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit, no man spoke openly of him*, etc.] So loud as to be overheard, at least by many, but in a secret and whispering way; or did not

speak with freedom, or all their mind, what they really thought of him, nor with courage and boldness:

for fear the Jews; for fear of being mobbed by them, or up and prosecuted, or turned out of the synagogue; for a law was made, that whoever confessed him, should be so used; and this deterred persons from expressing the true sentiments of their minds about him.

Ver. 14. *Now about the midst of the feast*, etc.] About the fourth day of it, for it lasted eight days; this might be on the sabbath day, which sometimes was **gj h Æwtb**, “in the middle of the feast”^{f299}; and the rather, since it follows,

Jesus went up into the temple; as the Lord and proprietor of it, and as was his usual method; he had for some reasons kept himself retired till now, and now he appeared publicly:

and taught the people his doctrine; he expounded the Scriptures, gave the true sense of them, and instructed the people out of them.

Ver. 15. *And the Jews marvelled*, etc.] Both at the matter, and manner of his doctrine; it was such, as never man spake; his words were so gracious, and there were such truth and evidence in them, and they were delivered with such power and authority, that they were astonished at them:

saying, how knoweth this man letters? or “the Scriptures”, as the Arabic and Persic versions render it; which are called “holy letters”, (^{<4085>}2 Timothy 3:15); according to which, the sense is, that they were surprised at his knowledge of the Scriptures, that he should be conversant with them, and be able to interpret them, and give the sense and meaning of them, in so full and clear a manner, as he did: or else the sense is, how came this man to be such a learned man? whence has he this wisdom, and all this learning which he shows? as in (^{<4085>}Matthew 13:54). So a learned man is in (^{<2391>}Isaiah 29:11), said to be one that **rps̄h [dwy, επισταμενος γραμματα**, “knows letters”, as the Septuagint there translate the Hebrew text; but how Christ should know them, or be a learned man,

having never learned, was surprising to them: that is, he had not had a liberal education, but was brought up to a trade; he was not trained up at the feet of any of their Rabbins, in any of their universities, or schools of learning; and in which they were certainly right. Modern Jews pretend to say he had a master, whom they sometimes call Elchanan^{f300}, but most

commonly they make him to be R. Joshua ben Perachiah ^{f301}: with whom they say, he fled into Alexandria in Egypt, for fear of Jannai the king: and one of their writers ^{f302}, on this account, charges the evangelist with a falsehood: but who are we to believe, the Jews who lived at the same time with Jesus, and knew his education and manner of life, or those that have lived ages since?

Ver. 16. *Jesus answered them and said*, etc.] Having heard them express their surprise, and state their objection:

my doctrine is not mine: it was his, as he was God; as such, he was the author of it, it was from him, by the revelation of him; and it was of him, or he was the subject of it, as Mediator; it respected his person as God-man, his offices, as prophet, priest, and King, and his grace, righteousness; and salvation; and it was his, as preached by him as man; it came by him, and first began to be spoken by him; and was so spoken by him, as it never was before, or since: but it was not human; it was not acquired by him, as man; he did not learn it of man; he needed no human teachings; he increased in wisdom without them, from his infancy: they said right, in saying he had never learned; the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rested on high, and the treasures of them were hid in him; nor was it a device or invention of his, as man; it was not from himself as such, but it was from heaven, from his Father: wherefore he adds,

but his that sent me; thereby intimating, that it was of God, and was communicated to him by his Father; from whom he received it, and from whom he had a commission to preach it; so that his doctrine was that wisdom which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable, divine and heavenly, and ought to be received by men.

Ver. 17. *If any man will do his will*, etc.] Meaning, not one that perfectly fulfils the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for there is no man that does this, or can do it; nor is it so said here, “if any man do his will”, but “if any man will do” it; that is, is desirous of doing it; who has it wrought in him both to will and do, of the good pleasure of God, by his grace and Spirit; with whom to will is present, though, he has not power to perform, and so is a spiritual man; and who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is one branch of the will of God; and who depends upon the Spirit and grace of God, and acts from a principle of love to God, and in the exercise of faith on Christ:

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself; not a man of mere natural knowledge and learning, or a man of theory and speculation, is a judge of doctrine; but he that leans not to his own understanding, and implores the assistance of the Divine Spirit, and who is for reducing doctrine into practice: he knows by the efficacy of the doctrine upon his heart, and the influence it has on his life and conversation; by its coming not in word only, but in power; and by its working effectually in him, whether it is divine or human, of God or of man.

Ver. 18. *He that speaketh of himself*, etc.]. What he himself has devised, and is a scheme of his own; for which he has no divine warrant and commission:

seeketh his own glory; honour and applause from men; as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, the traditions of the elders, their own glosses upon the law, and their own decisions and determinations: and as did the false teachers, who had nothing else in view but themselves, their worldly interest, or vain glory; these suited their doctrines to the minds and lusts of men, in order to gain their point:

but he that seeketh his glory that sent him; that gave him in commission what he should say and speak, and his only; as did Christ, and so his apostles after him:

the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him; he is an upright and faithful man, and what he says is truth; he brings true doctrine along with him, and there is no fraud or imposture in him; nor any insincerity “in his heart”, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; nor any dishonesty in his conduct; he is no cheat or deceiver; was he, he would seek his own glory and interest; but as he appears to be a man of no design, his doctrine is to be depended on and received; and such was Christ.

Ver. 19. *Did not Moses give you the law*, etc.] After Christ had vindicated himself and his doctrine, he proceeds to reprove the Jews for their breaking the law, which contained the will of God: by which it appeared, that they were no proper judges of his doctrine, though they cavilled at it: the question he puts could not be denied by them; for though, properly speaking, God was the lawgiver, yet inasmuch as it was delivered by Moses, it is ascribed to him, and said to come by him; and it was put into

his hands, to be delivered by him, peculiarly to the people of Israel; and being given to the Jewish fathers, not only for themselves, but for their posterity in ages to come, is said to be given to the then present generation; and may be understood, either of the whole system of laws, moral, ceremonial, and, judicial, belonging to that people; or else of the particular law, concerning the keeping of the sabbath, which was a peculiar law of Moses, and proper to the children of Israel only:

and [yet] none of you keepeth the law; though they boasted of it as a singular privilege, and rested in it, and their obedience to it for life and salvation, yet daily broke it in various instances, in thought, word, or deed; yea, those that sat in Moses's chair, and taught it, did not observe and do what they taught; nor could the most holy and righteous man among them perfectly keep it: and many of them, who were most forward to censure others, for the violation of it, paid the least regard to it; and particularly to the law of the sabbath, which both priests and people transgressed, in one point or another, every sabbath day: wherefore our Lord reasons with them,

why go ye about to kill me? an harmless and innocent man, who never injured you in your persons and properties; and which is a proof of their not keeping that body of laws Moses gave them, since "thou shalt not kill" is one of them: though rather this may refer to the law of the sabbath, and the sense he, that since Moses had given them the law of the sabbath, and they did not keep it themselves, why should they seek to take away his life, for what they pretended was a breach of it? for our Lord here, as appears by what follows, refers to what they sought to do, above a year and a half ago, and still continued to seek after; namely, to kill him, because he had healed a man on the sabbath day, (⁴⁵⁶John 5:16,18 7:1).

Ver. 20. *The people answered and said,* etc.] These seem to be the country people, who came from Galilee and other parts, who knew nothing of the designs of the Jerusalem Jews upon him; nor were they his downright enemies at least, but rather seemed to favour him, and were on his side, though greatly provoked to hear him talk after this manner:

thou hast a devil; or art possessed with one; thou talkest like one of the demoniacs, like a madman, one beside thyself; whom the devil has so much power over, and has so deprived of thy senses, that thou knowest not what thou sayest:

who goeth about to kill thee? no man; for they could not believe that any man, or body of men, would be so wicked, as to attempt to take away the life of so harmless a person, and who did so much good both to the bodies and souls of men.

Ver. 21. *Jesus answered and said unto them,* etc.] Taking no notice of their passion, reproach, and blasphemy; but proceeding upon the thing he had in view, and which he was determined to reassume, and vindicate himself in;

I have done one work; that is, on the sabbath day; meaning, his cure of the man that had had a disorder eight and thirty years, who lay at Bethesda's pool; which single action, they charged with being a breach of the sabbath, he mentions with a view to their many, and daily violations of it:

and ye all marvel; at it, as a thing unheard of, as a most shocking piece of iniquity, as an intolerable evil; wondering that any man should have the front, to bid another take up his bed and walk, on the sabbath day: they did not marvel at the miracle that was wrought; but were amazed, offended, and disturbed, at its being done on the sabbath day.

Ver. 22. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision,* etc.] The command of circumcision, which he renewed and established, (^(12:3)Leviticus 12:3);

(not because, or that it is of Moses; originally, or that he was the first giver of it, for it was enjoined before his time; this is a correction of what is before said, giving a more accurate account of the rise of circumcision:

but of the fathers); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom it was enjoined by God, and who practised it before the times of Moses; so that this command was in force before him, and obligatory upon the descendants of Abraham, before he delivered it; and would have been, if he had never mentioned it; though the Jews say ^{f303},

“we do not circumcise because Abraham our father, on whom be peace, circumcised himself and his household, but because the holy blessed God commanded us by Moses, that we should be circumcised, as Abraham our father was circumcised.”

But no doubt it would have been binding on them, if Moses had said nothing about it; the command to Abraham is so express, for the circumcision of his male offspring, (^(17:10)Genesis 17:10-12); however, it

being both of Moses and of the fathers, laid a very great obligation on the Jews to observe it:

and ye on the sabbath day, circumcise a man; a male child, as they did, when the eighth day fell on a sabbath day; for the law of circumcision was before the law of the sabbath, and therefore was not to be made void by it, nor was it made void by it; and so much is intimated by our Lord's observing, that it was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and this is the reason which the Karaite Jews give for circumcision on the sabbath day: for^{f304}

“say they, because it is a former command, from the time of Abraham our father, on whom be peace, before the giving of the law of the sabbath, **tbçb µyl m wyh**, “they circumcise on the sabbath day”, and when the command of the sabbath afterwards took place, it was not possible it should disannul circumcision on the sabbath day; and for the same reason, they also allow the sacrifice of the passover to be done on the sabbath day, because it is a command which went before the command of the sabbath.”

And this was also the sense and practice of the other Jews: thus citing the law of Moses in (^{<OR1B>}Leviticus 12:3). “And in the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised”, by way of gloss upon it add, **tbçb wl y paw**, “and even on the sabbath day”^{f305}; and on the same text another writer observes^{f306}, that by Gematry, every day is fit for circumcision. R. Jose says^{f307},

“they do all things necessary to circumcision, on the sabbath day.”

R. Abika says^{f308},

“all work that can be done on the evening of the sabbath, does not drive away the sabbath; but circumcision, which cannot be done on the evening of the sabbath, drives away the sabbath: they do all things necessary to circumcision; they circumcise, and make bare, and suck, and put (on the wound) a plaster and cummin; and which, if not bruised on the evening of the sabbath, they may chew with their teeth.”

Also it is allowed of^{f309}, to

“wash the infant on the third day of circumcision, which happens to be on the sabbath.”

Moreover, a case is put after this manner^{f310};

“if a man has two infants, one to be circumcised after the sabbath, and the other to be “circumcised on the sabbath”, and forgets, and circumcises that, that was to be after the sabbath, on the sabbath, he is guilty of sin; if one is to be circumcised in the evening of the sabbath, and the other on the sabbath, and he forgets, and circumcises that which should be on the evening of the sabbath, on the sabbath, R. Eliezer pronounces him guilty, but R. Joshua absolves him.”

And we have an instance^{f311} of

“R. Sheshana, the son of R. Samuel bar Abdimo, that when he was to be circumcised, it was the sabbath day, and they forgot the razor; and they inquired of R. Meni and R. Isaac ben Eleazar, and it was drove off to another day.”

From all which it appears, that circumcision on the sabbath day, was a common practice, and which confirms the assertion of Christ.

Ver. 23. *If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision*, etc.] As it was certain in many instances he did:

that the law of Moses might not be broken; either the law concerning circumcision, which confirmed the law given to Abraham, and required it should be on the eighth day, let it fall when it would, even on a sabbath day; and therefore on that day, male children received circumcision, that that law might be kept, and not be broken: or else the law concerning the sabbath; and the sense be, if circumcision was administered on the sabbath day, “without breaking the law of Moses”, as some render the words, which commanded the observation of the sabbath,

are ye angry at me; and pursue me with so much wrath and bitterness,

because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? or “a man that was whole, sound on the sabbath day”; who was wholly, or all over disordered, every limb of whom shook with the palsy: or as some think the sense is, he was made every whit whole, both in soul and body; and then the argument is, if it was, no breach of the sabbath to make a

wound, and lay a plaster on it, as in circumcision; it would be no violation of it, nor ought any to be offended with it, that Christ should heal a diseased man, who was so in every part of his body, and restore health to his soul likewise and nothing is more common with the Jews than to say, the danger of life, and **çpn j wqyp**, “the preservation of the soul”, or life, drive away the sabbath ^{f312}.

Ver. 24. *Judge not according to the appearance*, etc.] Or through respect of persons, and so as to please men, the Scribes and Pharisees; who had condemned the action of Christ, in curing the diseased man on the sabbath day, and sought to kill him for it:

but judge righteous judgment; give your sense and judgment of things, according to the truth and evidence of them; and do not find fault with that, which you yourselves allow of, and which Moses and his law, and your own practices, justify.

Ver. 25. *Then said some of them of Jerusalem*, etc.] Who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, and so are distinguished from the people, (~~John~~ John 7:20), who came up out of the country to the feast; so Jose ben Jochanan is called **μυλ çwry çya**, “a man of Jerusalem” ^{f313}; that is, an inhabitant of it: now these men living in the city, knew more of the temper and disposition, the designs and attempts, of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to take away the life of Christ; and therefore say,

is not this he whom they seek to kill? they knew that they had formed a design to kill him, ever since the passover before the last; when he wrought the miracle referred to in the text, and that they had been ever since plotting against his life, and were now at this feast seeking an opportunity to lay hold on him and kill him.

Ver. 26. *But lo, he speaketh boldly*, etc.] And with great freedom, and openly and publicly in the temple, as if he had a licence from the chief priests for so doing:

and they say nothing to him; do not contradict him, or forbid him speaking; he goes on without control; though he takes great liberty in charging the Jews with an intention to kill him, in arguing from their practices in vindication of himself, and in suggesting that they judged in favour of men, and not according to the truth of things.

Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? have they changed their minds concerning him, and so their conduct towards him? are they convinced, and do they know by plain demonstrations, and full proof, that he is really the Messiah that has been promised of old, and long expected?

Ver. 27. *Howbeit, we know this man whence he is,* etc.] They signify, that if the rulers had altered their minds, and had gone into the belief of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, they should not follow them in it, for this reason; because they knew from whence he came; meaning not so much the place of his birth, which they supposed was Galilee, and Nazareth in Galilee, in which they were mistaken, as the manner of his birth, which they could account for: they pretended to know his extract, that he was the son of Joseph and Mary, that he was begotten in wedlock, and was born as other persons are; there was no difficulty with them in accounting for his coming into the world, no more than any other ordinary person; his descent from Joseph and Mary was well known to them, and to be accounted for in a rational way, and therefore concluded he could not be the Messiah:

but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is; they knew the place from whence he was to come; so the chief priests and Scribes did, (^{<0104>}Matthew 2:4,5); and so did these Jews, (^{<0104>}John 7:42). They knew he would come from Bethlehem, and they knew that he would come out of the seed of David; but then he was to be born of a virgin, according to (^{<2074>}Isaiah 7:14), and such a coming into the world was not to be known, reasoned upon, and accounted for: wherefore since Jesus, according to the notion of these men, came into the world in the common and ordinary way, they thought they had an invincible argument against his being the Messiah; and therefore, let their rulers do what they would, for their parts, they were determined to reject him: and because it could not be known from whence the Messiah should come; hence the ancient Jews used to call him the seed which comes from another place; not from the place from whence seed ordinarily comes, from the loins of men, but from some other place they knew not where: their words are very remarkable on that passage in (^{<0025>}Genesis 4:25): “and she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed”, etc. This observation is made by R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel ^{f314}; says he,

“she has respect to that seed, which is he that comes, *rha μwqmm*, “from another place”, and what is this? this is the King Messiah.”

And elsewhere ^{f315}, the same Rabbi observes on those words in (~~0192~~ Genesis 19:32): “that we may preserve seed of our father”: it is not written, “that we may preserve a son of our father”, but “that we may preserve seed of our father”; that seed which is he that comes from “another place”; and what is this? this is the King Messiah. The modern Jews ^{f316} endeavour to explain away the sense of this phrase, “another seed”, as if it regarded strange seed; and that the sense of the expression is only, that the Messiah should spring from the family of Moab, and from Ruth the Moabitess: nor is their sense what Aquinas ^{f317} attributes to the Jewish Rabbins,

“that the more noble part of that mass, of which Adam was made, remained untouched (by sin), and was afterwards transfused into Seth; and so through all descending from him, unto Joakim, or Eliakim, or Heli, the father of the virgin, out of which the body of the blessed Virgin was made:”

which is no other than a Popish device, fathered upon the Jews, and made for the sake of the, Virgin Mary, rather than for the sake of Christ. But their meaning is, that Christ should not be gotten of man, or come into the world in the ordinary way of generation, but should be born of a virgin; and so it could not be known, and accounted for from whence he was, or from whence that seed was of which he was made. The angel gives the best account of this in (~~0135~~ Luke 1:35): a body was prepared for Christ by the Lord; it was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; his birth of a virgin was miraculous; it is beyond the comprehension of men, and cannot explained by any mortal; from whence he is it cannot be said; no man can be pointed to as his father; all that can be said is, he was made of a woman, a virgin.

Ver. 28. *Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught*, etc.] Overhearing the reasonings of these men, however, knowing what they said; so the Persic version adds, “having secretly known this”; exalted his voice as he was teaching in the temple, and in the midst of his discourse, publicly before all the people, in the temple, spoke out with a loud voice, that all might hear:

saying, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; some, as the Ethiopic version, read these words by way of interrogation, “do ye both know me, and do ye know from whence I am?” no; you do not. Or they may be considered as an ironical concession; yes, you know me, and you know whence I am; you know me to be Jesus of Nazareth, but you are wrong, I am not of Nazareth; you suppose I come, from Galilee, but that is your

ignorance; you take me to be the real son of Joseph, to be begotten by him on Mary, but that is your mistake: such is your knowledge of me: you know me indeed who I am, and from whence I come.

And I am not come of myself; into this world, by incarnation, or the assumption of human nature, to work out the salvation of men; the Father called him to it, and he agreeing to do it, was in the fulness of time sent about it; this was not a device of his own, or an honour he took to himself; he was not alone in it; it was a mutual agreement between him and his Father, in consequence of which he was sent and came.

But he that sent me is true; to the covenant he made with Christ, and to the promises he made to the fathers of the Old Testament, concerning the mission of his Son; and he is true to be believed, in the testimonies he gave of him, particularly by a voice from heaven, declaring him his beloved Son.

Whom ye know not; so that notwithstanding all their boasted knowledge of him, they knew not his Father, from whence he came, and by whom he was sent; and notwithstanding also their boasted knowledge of the one, only, true, and living God, (see [Romans 2:17](#)); yet they knew him not in a spiritual sense; they knew him not in Christ, nor as the Father of Christ; they knew neither the Father nor the Son: and this their ignorance of both was the reason of their hatred of Christ, and of his followers, ([John 15:21 16:3](#)).

Ver. 29. *But I know him*, etc.] His nature and perfections, his purposes and promises, his council and covenant, his mind and will; and indeed none knows him but he, and those to whom he pleases to reveal him; and there is good reason why he should have intimate and perfect knowledge of him:

for I am from him; being the only begotten of him, and as such lay in his bosom, and knew him, and his whole heart, and was privy to all of him, and that that is within him;

and he hath sent me; in an office capacity to redeem his people. This is the original descent of Christ, which the Jews knew not, though they pretended to know him, and whence he was.

Ver. 30. *Then they sought to take him*, etc.] By force, and carry him before the sanhedrim, in order to be tried and condemned as a blasphemer, being enraged to hear him claim a descent from God, whom they took to be a mere man, the son of Joseph the carpenter:

but no man laid hands on him; though they had a good will to it, they had no power to do it, being restrained by the, secret providence of God from it, and awed by the majesty of Christ, which showed itself in his looks and words; and perhaps also they might be afraid of the people, lest they should rise in his favour; and so every man being fearful of being the first that should seize him, no man did: however, so it was ordered by divine providence, that he should not be apprehended at, this time,

because his hour was not yet come; to suffer and die, to depart out of this world, and go to the Father: there was a precise time fixed for this in the council and covenant of God, by mutual compact, called “due time”; as his coming into the world is called “the fulness of time”; nor could he die before that time, and therefore no man was suffered to lay hands on him, whatever good will he had to it. And there is a time for every man’s death, nor can any man die before that time, or live beyond it; (see ^{<2MRD>} Ecclesiastes 3:2 ^{<844B>} Job 14:5); and this is the sense of the ancient Jews; for they say ^{f318},

“a man before his years, or his time, does not die;”

that is, before he comes to the years appointed for him: and they ask ^{f319},

“who is there that goes before his time? i.e. dies before his time?”

And it is said ^{f320} of a certain person who was in his house, and **hynmz aj m**, “his time was come”; and he died without sickness: though it must be owned some of them were otherwise minded, and say ^{f321}, that death, by the hand of heaven, or God, shortens a man’s years; and that there are some reasons for which righteous men depart out of this world before their time is come; and particularly of Enoch they say, God took him before his time was come ^{f322}.

Ver. 31. *And many of the people believed on him*, etc.] Whilst some were displeased at his doctrine, others were induced by his miracles to believe on him, as an extraordinary person, if not the Messiah; and these were the common people, especially those that came out of the country; for the city Jews, and above all the rulers, were very averse to him: and it is easy to observe, that faith in Christ, and true religion, spread and flourish most among the meaner sort of people.

And said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this [man] hath done? referring not so much to the miracles many of them might have seen done by him in other parts of Judea, and in Galilee; nor

only to those he had done in the preceding feasts at Jerusalem, but to those that were done by him now, though not recorded by the evangelist. The Jews expected many miracles to be wrought by the Messiah when he came, and they had good reason for it from (^{<2385>}Isaiah 35:5,6). To these Christ sends John the Baptist, and the Jews, for proofs of his being the Messiah, (^{<4104>}Matthew 11:4 ^{<3057>}John 10:37,38); and by these he was approved of God as such, (^{<4423>}Acts 2:23). And it is certain that the ancient Jews expected miracles in the days of the Messiah.

“Says R. Simeon to Eleazar his son, Eleazar, at the time that the King Messiah is raised up, how many “signs and other wonders” will be done in the world? a little after, from that day all the signs, and “wonders”, and “mighty works”, which the holy blessed God did in Egypt, he will do to the Israelites, as it is said, (^{<3075>}Micah 7:15), “according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him marvellous things”^{f323}.”

So the Targumist on (^{<2338>}Isaiah 53:8) paraphrases thus,

“from afflictions and punishment he will deliver our captivity, and “the wonderful things” which shall be done for us in his days, who can tell?”

It is true indeed that the modern Jews have laid aside such expectations, and pretend they were not looked for formerly. Maimonides says^{f324},

“let it not enter into thy heart, that the King Messiah hath need to do signs and wonders (as that he shall renew things in the world, or raise the dead, and the like; these are things which fools speak of); the thing is not so.”

And he instances in Ben Coziba, who set up for the Messiah, of whom R. Akiba, and the rest of the wise men of that age, did not require a sign or miracle: yet this same writer elsewhere says^{f325}, that

“all nations shall make peace with the Messiah, and serve him, because of his great righteousness, and the miracles which shall be done by him.”

Ver. 32. *The Pharisees heard that the people murmured*, etc.] Or whispered, privately talked among themselves:

such things concerning him; as that surely he must be the Messiah, since such wonderful things were done by him, and might also express some uneasiness and surprise, that the rulers did not receive him as such:

and the Pharisees, and the chief priests, sent officers to take him: and bring him before the sanhedrim, by them to be condemned, and so a stop be put to the people's receiving him, and believing in him as the Messiah; fearing, that should things go on at this rate, their principles and practices would be rejected, and their persons and authority be brought into contempt.

Ver. 33. *Then said Jesus unto them*, etc.] To the officers that were sent to take him, and other unbelieving Jews that were about him:

yet a little while am I with you; no longer than till the next passover, which was but about half a year at most: this he might say, partly to quicken the attention of the people to him, to make the best use and improvement of his ministry whilst they had it, since in a little time he would be removed from them; and partly to suggest to the officers that were sent to take him, that they, and their masters, need not have given themselves that trouble, for in a short time he should be gone from them, and till that time he should continue in spite of them.

And [then] I go unto him that sent me; still confirming his mission from God, expressing his death by going, and as being voluntary, and signifying his glory and happiness after it.

Ver. 34. *Ye shall seek me*, etc.] That is, the Messiah, who he was; meaning, that after his departure they should be in great distress, and be very much on the inquiry after, and solicitous for the coming of the Messiah, to be a Redeemer and Deliverer of them out of their troubles:

and shall not find [me]; no Messiah will appear, no Saviour will be sent, no Redeemer will come to relieve them; they shall inquire, and look for one in vain, as they did.

And where I am, [thither] ye cannot come; intimating hereby, that not only their temporal estate and condition would be very distressed and miserable, but also their eternal estate; since they should not be able to come where he would be in his human nature, and where he now was as a divine person, namely, in heaven.

Ver. 35. *Then said the Jews among themselves*, etc.] That is, the unbelieving, scoffing Jews; it may be the officers, at least some of them, that were sent to take him:

whither will he go that we shall not find him? what distant, or obscure part of the world will he betake himself to, and there hide himself, that so he cannot be found?

will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles? or Greeks; and so may design the Jews, who were scattered abroad in the times of the Grecian monarchy, under the successors of Alexander, and particularly Antiochus, in distinction from the Babylonish dispersion; or the strangers scattered through Pontus Galatia, etc. to whom Peter writes, (⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Peter 1:1). The Arabic version renders it, “the sect of the Greeks” by which the Hellenistic Jews seem to be meant: or the Jews in general, wherever, and by whomsoever scattered, who might be thought to be more ignorant than the Jews in Judea, and therefore more easily to be imposed upon: hence, in a flouting manner, they inquire, whether he will go to those when he is rejected by them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “will he go into the countries, or country of the Gentiles”; into Heathen countries, not to the Jews there, but to the Gentiles themselves:

and teach the Gentiles? suggesting, that he was more fit to be a teacher of them, than of the Jews, and might meet with more encouragement and success among them, who would not be able to detect him.

Ver. 36. *What [manner] of saying is this that he said*, etc.] It is not easy to be understood; and if that is not meant, which is suggested, what should he mean by saying,

ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come? repeating the words of Christ just now expressed by him.

Ver. 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast*, etc.] That is, of tabernacles, as appears from (⁴⁰⁰⁰John 7:2), which was usually called **gj**, “the feast”, in distinction from the passover and Pentecost ^{f326}; and the eighth day of it was called **^wrj ah l grh**, “the last day of the feast” ^{f327}, as here: and it was a “great day”, being, as is said in (⁴⁰²³⁶Leviticus 23:36), an holy convocation, a solemn assembly, in which no servile work was done, and in which an offering was made by fire unto the Lord. According to the traditions of the Jews, fewer sacrifices were offered on this day than

on the rest; for on the first day they offered thirteen bullocks, and lessened one every day; so that on the seventh, day, there was but seven offered, and on the eighth day but one, when the priests returned to their lots, as at other feasts ^{f328}; but notwithstanding the Jews make out this to be the greater day for them, since the seventy bullocks offered on the other seven days, were for the seventy nations of the world; but the one bullock, on the eighth day, was peculiarly for the people of Israel ^{f329}: and besides, they observe, that there were several things peculiar on this day, as different from the rest; as the casting of lots, the benediction by itself, a feast by itself, an offering by itself, a song by itself, and a blessing by itself ^{f330}: and on this day they had also the ceremony of drawing and pouring water, attended with the usual rejoicings as on other days; the account of which is this ^{f331}:

“the pouring out of water was after this manner; a golden pot, which held three logs, was tilled out of Siloah, and when they came to the water gate, they blew (their trumpets) and shouted, and blew; (then a priest) went up by the ascent of the altar, and turned to the left hand, (where) were two silver basins — that on the west side was filled with water, and that on the east with wine; he poured the basin of water into that of wine, and that of wine into that of water.”

At which time there were great rejoicing, piping, and dancing, by the most religious and sober people among the Jews; insomuch that it is said ^{f332}, that

“he that never saw the rejoicing of the place of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life.”

And this ceremony, they say ^{f333}, is a tradition of Moses from Mount Sinai, and refers to some secret and mysterious things; yea, they plainly say, that it has respect to the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost ^{f334}.

“Says R. Joshua ben Levi, why is its name called the place of drawing water? because, from thence **çdwqh j wr µybawç**, “they draw the Holy Ghost”, as it is said, “and ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation”, (~~2308~~ Isaiah 12:3).”

Moreover, it was on this day they prayed for the rains for the year ensuing: it is asked ^{f335},

“from what time do they make mention of the powers of the rains (which descend by the power of God)? R. Eliezer says, from the first good day of the feast (of tabernacles); R. Joshua says, from the last good day of the feast. — They do not pray for the rains, but near the rains;”

that is, the time of rains; and which, one of their commentators says ^{f336}, is the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles; for from the feast of tabernacles, thenceforward is the time of rains. The Jews have a notion, that at this feast the rains of the ensuing year were fixed: hence they say ^{f337}, that

“at the feast of tabernacles judgment is made concerning the waters;”

or a decree or determination is made concerning them by God. Upon which the Gemara ^{f338} has these words,

“wherefore does the law say pour out water on the feast of tabernacles? Says the holy blessed God, pour out water before me, that the rains of the year may be blessed unto you.”

Now when all these things are considered, it will easily be seen with what pertinency our Lord expresses himself on this day, with respect to the effusion of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as follows:

Jesus stood and cried; he now stood up, whereas at other times he used to sit, and spoke with a loud voice, both to show his fervour and earnestness, and that all might hear:

saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. This is to be understood not of a natural thirst, though the allusion is to it, which is very painful and distressing; as the instances of the Israelites in the wilderness, Samson after he had slain the Philistines, and our Lord upon the cross, show; much less a sinful thirst, a thirst after the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life; but a spiritual thirst, or a thirst after spiritual things, after salvation by Christ, and a view of interest in it, free and full pardon of sin through him, justification by his righteousness, a greater degree of knowledge of him, more communion with him, and conformity to him, and after the sincere milk of the word, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances: and such that thirst after these things, and eagerly desire them, and are in pain and uneasiness without them, as a man is, who has a violent thirst upon him, are such as are regenerated and quickened by the Spirit of God,

and are made sensible of themselves, and of their state and condition by nature. Now these Christ invites to come unto him, not to Moses and his law, moral or ceremonial, and to obedience to them, and works of righteousness done by them, to any creature, or creature acts; for these are cisterns without water, where no true peace, joy, righteousness, and salvation are to be had; but to himself, who is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, and who is as rivers of water in a dry land, to thirsty souls: and when come to him, which is by believing in him, they are encouraged to drink; that is, to take of the water of life freely, or to take of his grace freely; salvation by him is of free grace, and the pardon of sin is according to the riches of grace, and justification is freely by his grace, and so all other blessings; and of this they may drink abundantly, or they may partake of it largely: there is a fulness of grace in Christ, and there is an abundance of it communicated to his people; it is exceeding abundant; it flows, and overflows, and may be drank of to satisfaction, till their souls are as a watered garden, and they are satisfied with the goodness of the Lord.

Ver. 38. *He that believeth on me*, etc.] Which explains what is meant by coming to Christ, and drinking; for these acts are no other than for a man to go out of himself to Christ, and live by faith on him, and his grace. To which what follows is a great encouragement;

as the Scripture hath said: some refer these words to the preceding clause concerning believing in Christ, which the writings of the Old Testament speak of, as in (^{<6815>}Deuteronomy 18:15 ^{<2316>}Isaiah 28:16 ^{<3114>}Habakkuk 2:4), and the sense is, that he that believes on Christ, the object of faith the Scripture points at, and in him, as that directs and requires; that believes in him as the mighty God, and as the prophet, priest, and King, and as the only foundation of the church, and lives by faith upon him, as just men do, then

out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, though rather they belong to what follows; and do not design any particular place of Scripture; for no such one is to be found, where the following passage is expressed in so many words; but all those Scriptures which speak of grace, under the metaphors of water, and abundance of water, as rivers and floods of water, and of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, under such figurative expressions, such as (^{<2417>}Isaiah 41:17,18 43:20 44:3 58:11 ^{<2128>}Joel 2:28). Hence the Syriac version reads in the plural number, “as the Scriptures hath said”;

referring to more than one: “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”; the grace of the Spirit of God is signified by water, because it is of a cleansing and purifying nature, as faith and hope are, having to do with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; and because it fructifies and causes the saints, as trees of righteousness, to grow, and bring forth fruit; and especially because it is cooling to those who are scorched with the heat of a fiery law, and very refreshing to thirsty souls: and it is called “living” water, because by it dead sinners are quickened, drooping saints are revived, and comforted; spiritual life in them is maintained and supported, and it springs up to, and issues in eternal life: and it is expressed by “rivers” of living water, because of the abundance of it in regeneration, justification, and pardon; it is grace for grace, abundance of grace believers receive from Christ; and from him, in whom those large measures of grace are, they “flow out” again, even “out of his belly”: from within him, out of his heart, the seat of it, by his lips, both in prayer to God, and in conversation with the saints, to whom he communicates his rich experiences of grace, to their comfort, and the glory of God: for grace is of a diffusive and communicative nature; out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh: and also it flows out by his life and conversation, which is sober, righteous, and godly; and this the grace of God teaches and influences: and this grace, as it is permanent and lasting itself, even perpetual, and always abiding; so it continues to flow, and to show itself in its acts and effects, in one way or another. The Jews ought not to find fault with Christ’s using such expressions, mystically understood, since they, comparing Moses and the Messiah together, say,

“as the first Redeemer caused a well to spring up, so the last Redeemer shall cause waters to spring up, according to (^{208B}Joel 3:18)^{f339}.”

Ver. 39. *But this spake he of the Spirit*, etc.] These are the words of the evangelist, explaining the figurative expressions of Christ; showing, that by rivers of living water, he meant the Spirit in his gifts and graces; and which is the plain sense of the passages referred to by him, particularly (^{244B}Isaiah 44:3 ^{202B}Joel 2:28), and which, as before observed, the Jews supposed were intimated by their drawing and pouring water at the feast of tabernacles.

Which they that believe on him should receive; the apostles, and others, that had believed in Christ, and had received the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of illumination and conversion;

as a spirit of faith and adoption; but on the day of Pentecost they were to receive a larger, even an extraordinary measure of his gifts and grace, to qualify them for greater work and service:

for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; the word “given” is not in the original text; but is very properly supplied, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions. The Arabic version renders it, “for the Holy Ghost was not yet come”; he was; he was in being as a divine person, equal with the Father and Son, so he was from everlasting; and he had been bestowed in his grace upon the Old Testament saints, and rested in his gifts upon the prophets of that dispensation; but, as the Jews themselves confess^{f340},

“after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost removed from Israel.”

And they expressly say, he was not there in the time of the second temple. Maimonides says^{f341},

“they made the Urim and Thummim in the second temple, to complete the eight garments (of the priests) though they did not inquire by them; and why did they not inquire by them? because the Holy Ghost was not there; and every priest that does not speak by the Holy Ghost, and the Shekinah, does not dwell upon him, they do not inquire by him.”

They observe^{f342} there were five things in the first temple which were not in the second, and they are these,

“the ark with the mercy seat, and cherubim, the fire (from heaven), and the Shekinah, **çdwqh j wrw**, “and the Holy Ghost”, and the Urim and Thummim.”

Now, though he had removed, he was to return again; but as yet the time was not come, at least for the more plentiful donation of him: the reason of which was,

because that Jesus was not yet glorified; he had not as yet gone through his state of humiliation; he had not yet suffered, and died, and rose again, and ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God; for the Holy Spirit was to come upon his departure, and in consequence of his sufferings and death, and being made sin, and a curse for his people; and through his

mediation and intercession, and upon his exaltation at the Father's right hand; when being made, and declared Lord and Christ, this should be notified by the effusion of his Spirit; (see ^{<4123>}Acts 2:33,36).

Ver. 40. *Many of the people therefore*, etc.] Of the common people, and it may be chiefly those that came out of the country:

when they heard this saying; or discourse of Christ, on the last and great day of the feast, relating to the large measure of grace, and the effusion of the Spirit on him, that believed:

said, of a truth this is the prophet; spoken of in (^{<6815>}Deuteronomy 18:15), which some understood not of the Messiah, but of some extraordinary prophet distinct from him, who should come before him, or about the same time; or they imagined he was one of the old prophets raised from the dead, whom they also expected about the times of the Messiah: or their sense might only be, that he was a prophet, which was true, though not all the truth; they had some knowledge, though but small; and they spake of him, though but as children in understanding.

Ver. 41. *Others said, this is the Christ*, etc.] The true Messiah, which they concluded, not only from the miracles, (^{<4073>}John 7:31), but from his speaking of rivers of living water flowing from him that believes in him; for the same prophecy that speaks of miracles to be performed in the times of the Messiah, speaks also of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert, of the parched ground becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water, (^{<2385>}Isaiah 35:5-7).

But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? as they supposed Jesus did; and because he was educated at Nazareth, and Capernaum was his city, and he chiefly conversed, preached, and wrought his miracles in these parts, they concluded that he was born there; and therefore object this to his being the true Messiah. For if they did not mean this, according to their own accounts, the Messiah was to be in Galilee, and to be first revealed there; for they affirm ^{f343} this in so many words, that **l y l g d a [rab aj yçm akl m yl gty**, “the King Messiah shall be revealed in the land of Galilee”; accordingly Jesus, the true Messiah, as he was brought up in Galilee, though not born there, so he first preached there, and there wrought his first miracle; here he chiefly was, unless at the public feasts; and here he manifested himself to his disciples after his resurrection.

Ver. 42. *Hath not the Scripture said*, etc.] These objectors were those who were accounted the more wise and knowing; who were conversant with the Scriptures, and pretended at least to a large knowledge of them:

that Christ cometh out of the seed of David; that he should be a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots; that he should be one out of David's loins, and of the fruit of his body, referring to (~~2100~~ Isaiah 11:1 ~~4221~~ Psalm 132:11,17), which was very true, and what was commonly known, and expected among the Jews, that the Messiah should be David's son, as Jesus of Nazareth was, (~~4423~~ Acts 13:23);

and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was? where his parents lived, and he was born; and, according to Jerom ^{f344}, he was buried here. The account he gives of this city, where he himself for some time lived,

“is Bethlehem, the city of David, in the lot of the tribe of Judah, in which our Lord and Saviour was born, is six miles from Aelia, (i.e. Jerusalem) to the south, by the way which leads to Hebron, where also is showed the sepulchre of Jesse and David.”

In which may be observed likewise the exact distance of this place from Jerusalem; which, according to Josephus ^{f345}, at least as he is generally understood, was but twenty furlongs: and, according to Justin ^{f346}, thirty five: but that this is the true distance, is clear from the old Jerusalem Itinerary ^{f347}, and which agrees with Jerom about the sepulchre of David; for not far from it is the monument of Ezekiel, Asaph, Job, Jesse, David, and Solomon: however, it is certain that David was born here, and therefore it is called his city; and from hence the Messiah was to come; and here Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, and which the Jews themselves own; (see Gill on “~~4111~~ Matthew 2:1”), (see Gill on “~~4114~~ Luke 2:4”); and in vain it is for them to expect the Messiah from thence, where none of their nation live, nor have lived, for many hundreds of years; being particularly forbid by Adrian, after he had subdued them, living in or near Jerusalem, and also Bethlehem. Tertullian ^{f348} refers to this when he thus argues with them, and very justly, and strongly;

“if he is not yet born, who, it is said, shall come forth a ruler out of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, he must come (says he) out of the tribe of Judah and from Bethlehem; but we now observe, that no one of the stock of Israel remains in Bethlehem, because it is forbidden that anyone of the Jews should continue on the border of

that country — how shall the governor be born in Judea, come forth from Bethlehem, as the divine books of the Prophets declare, when there is none of Israel left there at this day, of whose lineage Christ can be born? — how shall he come out of Bethlehem, when there is none in Bethlehem of the stock of Israel?”

And the passage they had in view, is (^{<38FD>}Micah 5:2). Now these very things they object to Jesus being the Messiah, were what were fulfilled in him, and proved him to be the person; for his supposed father, and real mother Mary, were of the house and lineage of David; and though he was conceived at Nazareth, and brought up there, yet by a remarkable providence, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, he was born there, (^{<4004>}Luke 2:4-7).

Ver. 43. *So there was a division among the people concerning him.*]

Some, though they did not go so far as to believe him to be the Messiah, yet took him to be a prophet, and a very extraordinary one; others made no difficulty to assert him to be the Christ; and others objected to it on account of the country from whence he came, and so fulfilled the words of Christ, (^{<4025>}Luke 12:51).

Ver. 44. *And some of them would have taken him,* etc.] Some of the latter sort, who did not believe he was the Messiah; who were the most averse to him, and hot and furious against him; these were for seizing him at once in a violent manner, and for carrying him before the sanhedrim, as an impostor and blasphemer to be examined and tried, and judged by them, to whom it belonged to judge and determine concerning such persons:

but no man laid hands on him; though they had a good will to it, no man had power to do it; they were held back and restrained by the providence of God; and were diverted from it upon one consideration or another; either fearing the people, or being awed by the majesty of Christ’s countenance, or words; the true reason of which was, that which is before given, that his hour was not yet come.

Ver. 45. *Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees,* etc.]

Who were assembled together in council, as the great sanhedrim of the nation; who were sitting and expecting Jesus to be brought before them. The same officers they sent to take him, (^{<4072>}John 7:32), returned to them without him; for though they were sent on that errand which they intended to have performed, yet they were not on the side of those who were for

seizing him by force, nor of those who objected to his being the Messiah; but rather took part with those who affirmed he was the Messiah; or at least looked upon him to be some extraordinary prophet:

and they said unto them; that is, the chief priests and Pharisees said to the officers; the Syriac version reads, “the priests said unto them”:

why have ye not brought him? They mention not the name of Jesus by way of contempt, and knowing that the officers would easily understand them; though the Persic version expresses it, reading the words thus, “why have ye not brought Jesus?” seeing them returned without him, they were transported with rage and fury, and fell upon them in a fierce and furious manner, for disobeying their orders, who had sat there waiting some time: and hoping, and not doubting, but they should have him in their hands, whose blood they were thirsting after: wherefore it was a great disappointment to them, and much enraged them to see them come without him.

Ver. 46. *The officers answered*, etc.] Very honestly and uprightly, making use of no shifts and excuses; as that they could not find him, or could not come at him, because of the multitude about him, or that they were afraid of the people, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them, and rescue Jesus; which would have carried a show of probability, and have brought them off; but they tell the naked truth,

never man spake like this man; not Moses, the spokesman of the people of Israel; nor David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; nor Solomon, the wisest of men; nor that sublime and evangelical prophet Isaiah; nor any of the other prophets; nor John Baptist his forerunner, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: never man spoke words for matter like him; such gracious words, or words, and doctrines of grace, which so fully express the grace of God, and are so grateful to men; such as free justification by his righteousness, full pardon by his blood, peace and reconciliation by his sacrifice, the liberty captives from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and spiritual and eternal salvation by him: never man spoke such words of truth, as he who is full of truth, and truth itself did: or such words of wisdom, who is the wisdom of God, on whom the spirit of wisdom rested, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; nor such wholesome and salutary words, which nourish up unto eternal life. Nor did ever any speak words for form and manner, as he did; words so apt and pertinent, with such propriety, beauty,

and gracefulness, with such majesty and authority, and with such power and efficacy; which at once charmed the ear, affected the heart; carried evidence and conviction with them, enlightened the understanding, and fastened attention to them; which was the case with these men, so that they had not power to execute their commission. He delivered such excellent things, and in such a charming manner, they could not find in their hearts to use any violence towards him; or be the means of bringing him into any trouble or danger. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, “never man spake as this man speaks”.

Ver. 47. *Then answered them the Pharisees, are ye also deceived?*] As well as the common people; you that have been so long in our service, and should know better; or who, at least, should have taken the sense of your superiors, and should have waited to have had their opinion and judgment of him, and been determined by that, and not so hastily have joined with a deluded set of people. It was the common character of Christ, and his apostles, and so of all his faithful ministers in all succeeding ages, that they were deceivers, and the people that followed them deceived, a parcel of poor deluded creatures, carried aside by their teachers; when, on the other hand, they are the deceived ones, who live in sin, and indulge themselves in it; or who trust in themselves that they are righteous; who think they are something, when they are nothing; who imagine, that touching the righteousness of the law, they are blameless, are free from sin, and need no repentance; who follow the traditions and commandments of men: whereas these cannot be deceived, who follow Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and his faithful ministers, who show unto men the way of salvation.

Ver. 48. *Have any of the rulers,* etc.] In the sanhedrim, or of the synagogues; or the civil magistrates, the noble, rich, and wealthy:

or of the Pharisees, believed on him; men famous for wisdom, learning, and holiness. It must be owned, there were but very few of this sort, and perhaps not an instance of this kind had as yet occurred to them; there was Nicodemus, who is mentioned in the context, who was both a ruler and a Pharisee; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich counsellor; but they neither of them openly showed themselves to be the disciples of Christ till his death: and besides these, there were some women, as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, Susanna, and some other women, who ministered to him of their substance; but the far greater part of his followers were poor and illiterate: and this has been the common case of those that have believed in

Jesus, for the most part, ever since, and therefore should not be a stumbling to any. God is pleased to hide the great things of the Gospel from the wise and prudent, the rich and noble, and preach and reveal them to the poor and foolish: nor is a doctrine a whit the truer for being espoused by the rich, and wise men of this world, but rather to be suspected on that account.

Ver. 49. *But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*] With great contempt they style the followers of Jesus “this people”; the common people, the dregs of them, the refuse of the earth; and whom they call, **ἡ ἡμῶν**, “the people of the earth”, in distinction from the wise men, and their disciples: and when they speak the best of them, their account is this ^{f349},

“one of the people of the earth is one that has moral excellencies, but not intellectual ones; that is, there is in him common civility, but the law is not in him;”

as here, “who knoweth not the law”: they always reckon them very ignorant. Says one ^{f350} of their writers,

“they that are without knowledge are the multitude.”

And elsewhere it is said ^{f351},

“the old men of the people of the earth, when they grow old their knowledge is disturbed (or is lost), as it is said, (~~<8121>~~Job 12:20), but so it is not with the old men of the law, when they grow old, their knowledge rests upon them, as it is said, (~~<8121>~~Job 12:12), “with the ancient is wisdom”.”

Upon which one of the commentators ^{f352} has this gloss;

“these are the disciples of the wise men; for the people of the earth, what wisdom is there in them?”

By the “law” here, is meant either the written law of Moses, which the Pharisees boasted of, and of their knowledge of it, as having the key of knowledge to open it; as understanding the true sense, and capable of giving a right interpretation of it, to the people; though they themselves were wretchedly ignorant of it, as appears by their false glosses on it, refuted by our Lord in (~~<4167>~~Matthew 5:17-48); or else the oral law is here intended, which they pretended was given by word of mouth to Moses, and

handed down to posterity from one to another; and this lay among the doctors: they tell us ^{f353}, that Moses received it at Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue (Ezra's), the last of which was Simeon the just: Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Joezer, and Jose ben Jochanan, received it from him; and Joshua ben Perachia, (whom they sometimes say was the master of Jesus of Nazareth,) and Nittai the Arbelite, received it from them; by whom it was delivered to Judah ben Tabia, and Simeon ben Shetach; and from them it was received by Shemaiah, and Abtalion, who delivered it to Hillell, and Shammai; who, or whose scholars, were, at this time, when these words were spoken, the present possessors of it, and taught it their disciples in their schools: and thus it was handed down from one to another, until the times of R. Judah, who collected the whole of the traditions of the elders together, and published it under the title of the Misna; and then, as Maimonides says ^{f354}, it was revealed to all Israel; whereas before it was but in a few hands, who instructed others in it; but as for the common people, they knew little of it, especially of the nice distinctions and decisions of it; and these people were always had in great contempt by the wise men: they would not receive a testimony from them, nor give one for them, nor deliver a secret to them, nor proclaim anything of theirs that was lost, nor walk with them in the way, nor make a guardian of any of them ^{f355}. The people of the earth were not reckoned holy or religious ^{f356}, but generally profane and wicked; that they were abandoned to sin, rejected of God, and to be cast off by men; yea, they will not allow that they shall rise again at the last day, unless it be for the sake of some wise men they are allied unto, or have done some service for. They say ^{f357}

“whoever ministers in the light of the law, the light of the law will quicken him; but whoever does not minister in the light of the law, the light of the law will not quicken him — though it is possible for such an one to cleave to the Shekinah — for everyone that marries his daughter to a scholar of a wise man, or makes merchandise for the disciples of the wise men, and they receive any advantage from his goods, this brings on him what is written, as if he cleaved to the Shekinah.”

Thus we see in what contempt the common people were with the learned doctors, and what an opinion these men had of the followers of Christ; though, in truth, they were not so ignorant of the law as themselves: they

knew the spirituality of it, that it reached to the thoughts of the heart, as well as to external actions; they knew what it required, and their own impotence to answer its demands; they knew the wrath, terror, and curses of it, and that Christ only was the fulfilling end of it, for righteousness to those that believed in him: and they were far from being cursed persons: they were blessed with all spiritual blessings: with the pardon of their sins, and the justification of their persons; with grace and peace in their souls, and would be introduced as the blessed of the Father into his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 50. *Nicodemus saith unto them*, etc.] To the Jewish sanhedrim, who were running down Christ, and his followers, in great wrath and fury:

he that came to Jesus by night; (see ^{<480>}John 3:1,2);

being one of them; a member of the sanhedrim.

Ver. 51. *Doth our law judge any man*, etc.] Or condemn any man; or can any man be lawfully condemned:

before it hear him: what he has to say for himself; is this the usual process in our courts? or is this a legal one to condemn a man unheard?

and know what he doth? what his crimes are. This he said, having a secret respect for Christ, though he had not courage enough openly to appear for him.

Ver. 52. *They answered and said unto him*, etc.] Being displeased with him, and as reproaching him, though they could not deny, or refute what he said:

art thou also of Galilee? a follower of Jesus of Galilee, whom, by way of contempt, they called the Galilean, and his followers Galilaeans, as Julian the apostate after them did; for otherwise they knew that Nicodemus was not of the country of Galilee;

search and look; into the histories of former times, and especially the Scriptures:

for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet; but this is false, for Jonah the prophet was of Gathhepher, which was in the tribe of Zebulun, which tribe was in Galilee; (see ^{<1245>}2 Kings 14:25 ^{<690>}Joshua 19:10,13,16). And the Jews ^{f358} themselves say, that Jonah, the son of Amittai, was, ^{^wl} ^{wbzm}, of

“Zebulun”, and that his father was of Zebulun, and his mother was of Asher^{f359}; both which tribes were in Galilee: and if no prophet had, as yet, arose from thence, it did not follow that no one should arise: besides, there is a prophecy in which it was foretold, that a prophet, and even the Messiah, the great light, should arise in Galilee; (see ^{<200>}Isaiah 9:1,2); and they themselves say, that the Messiah should be revealed in Galilee; (see Gill on “~~<404>~~John 7:41”).

Ver. 53. *And every man went unto his own house.*] The officers not bringing Jesus with them, and the sanhedrim being posed with Nicodemus, broke up without doing any business, and every member of it went home: this we may suppose was about the time of the evening sacrifice: for

“the great sanhedrim sat from the time of the morning daily sacrifice, to the time of the evening daily sacrifice^{f360}.”

and it is said^{f361}, that

“after the evening daily sacrifice, the sanhedrim went, **μtybl**, “to their own houses”;

as they now did, and not to their booths, the feast of tabernacles being now over.