

# CHAPTER 8

## INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 8

**Ver. 1.** *Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.*] Which lay eastward of Jerusalem, about a mile from it; hither Christ went on the evening of the last day of the feast of tabernacles; partly to decline the danger, and avoid the snares the Jews might lay for him in the night season; having been disappointed and confounded in the daytime; and it may be for the sake of recreation and diversion, to sup with his dear friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, who lived at Bethany, not far from this mount; and chiefly for private prayer to God, on account of himself as man, and for his disciples, and for the spread of his Gospel, and for the enlargement of his interest; this being his common and usual method, (~~40157~~Luke 21:37).

**Ver. 2.** *And early in the morning he came again into the temple,* etc.] Which shows his diligence, constancy, and assiduity, in his ministerial work, as well as his courage and intrepidity; being fearless of his enemies, though careful to give them no advantage against him, before his time:

*and all the people came unto him;* which also commends the industry and diligence of his hearers, who were forward to hear him, and were early at the temple for that purpose, and that in great numbers:

*and he sat down and taught them;* he sat, as his manner was; (see Gill on ~~40101~~Matthew 5:1"); and taught them as one having authority, and such doctrine, and in such a manner, as never man did; with all plainness, boldness, and freedom.

**Ver. 3.** *And the Scribes and Pharisees,* etc.] The members of the sanhedrim, who had been so miserably disappointed the day before, were no less diligent and industrious in their wicked way, seeking all opportunities, and taking all advantages against Christ; and fancying they had got something whereby to ensnare him, and bring him into disgrace or danger, they pursue it; and

*brought unto him a woman taken in adultery;* who, as some conjecture, might have been taken in it the day before, in one of their booths; being

drawn into it through intemperance and carnal mirth, which at this feast they greatly indulged themselves in; which shows, that they were far from drawing the Holy Ghost at this time upon them; that on the contrary, they fell into the hands, and under the power of the unclean spirit: who this woman was, is not material to know; what is pretended to be taken out of the annals of the Spanish Jews, is no doubt a fable; that she was the wife of one Manasseh of Jerusalem, an old man, whose name was Susanna <sup>f362</sup>:

*and when they had set her in the midst*; of the company, as the Persic version reads, to be seen by all the people. This history of the woman taken in adultery, is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in other ancient copies; nor is it in Nonnus, Chrysostom, and Theophylact; nor in any of the editions of the Syriac version, until it was restored by Deuteronomy Dieu, from a copy of Archbishop Usher's; but was in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Harmonies of Tatian and Ammonius; the former of which lived about the year 160, and so within 60 years, or thereabouts, of the death of the Evangelist John, and the other about the year 230; it was also in Stephens's sixteen ancient Greek copies, and in all Beza's seventeen, excepting one; nor need the authenticness of it be doubted of; Eusebius <sup>f363</sup> says, it is in the Gospel according to the Hebrews; nor should its authority be called in question.

**Ver. 4.** *They say unto him, Master*, etc.] They applied to him in a handsome and respectful manner, the better to cover their ill design:

*this woman was taken in adultery*; by two persons at least, who could be witnesses of it; otherwise the accusation was not legal; (see <sup><6915></sup>Deuteronomy 19:15); though in the case of a wife suspected of adultery, they admitted a single witness as valid <sup>f364</sup>:

*in the very act*; or "in the theft itself", for adultery is a theft; it is an unlawful use of another's property; see this word used in the same sense, in Heliodor, l. 1. sect. 11.

**Ver. 5.** *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should, be stoned*, etc.] Not in (<sup><6910></sup>Leviticus 20:10); for though according to the law there, an adulteress, one that was a married woman, and so an adulterer, that was a married man, were to be put to death; yet the death was not stoning, but strangling; for it is a rule with the Jews <sup>f365</sup>, that where death is simply mentioned (without restraining it to any particular kind) strangling is intended, and which rule they apply to this law: and accordingly in their

Misna, or oral law, one that lies with another man's wife, is reckoned among those that are to be strangled<sup>f366</sup>. Kimchi indeed says<sup>f367</sup>, that adulteresses, according to the law, are to be stoned with stones; but then this must be understood of such as are betrothed, but not married; and such a person, Moses has commanded in the law, to be stoned, (<sup>f368</sup>Deuteronomy 22:23,24). And with this agree the traditions of the Jews<sup>f368</sup>,

“a daughter of Israel must be stoned, who is **hawçn al w hswra**,  
“betrothed, but not married”.”

And such an one we must believe this woman was; she was betrothed to a man, but not married to him, and therefore to be stoned: the Jews<sup>f369</sup> have also a saying, that

“if all adulterers were punished with stoning, according to the law, the stones would be consumed; but they would not be consumed;”

adultery was so common with that people:

*but what sayest thou?* dost thou agree with Moses, or not?

**Ver. 6.** *This they said, tempting him*, etc.] For they brought this woman, and exposed her in this manner, not because of their abhorrence and detestation of the sin; nor did they put the above question to Christ, out of their great respect to the law of Moses; which in many instances, and so in this, they in a great measure made void, by their traditions; for they say, that for such an offence as adultery, they did not put to death, nor beat, unless there was a previous admonition; the use of which was, to distinguish between presumptuous sins, and wilful ones<sup>f370</sup>; but if there was no admonition, and the woman, even a married woman, if she confessed the crime, all her punishment was to have her dowry taken from her, or to go away without it<sup>f371</sup>: now these masters say nothing about the admonition, nor do they put the question, whether this woman was to be dealt with according to their traditions, or according to the law of Moses? but what was the sense of Christ, whether Moses's law was to be attended to, or whether he would propose another rule to go by? and their view in this was,

*that they might have to accuse him*; that should he agree with Moses, then they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for taking upon him to condemn a person to death, which belonged to him to do; or they would

charge him with severity, and acting inconsistently with himself, who received such sort of sinners, and ate with them; and had declared, that publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom of heaven, when the Scribes and Pharisees would not; and if he should disagree with Moses, then they would traduce him among the people, as an enemy to Moses and his law, and as a patron of the most scandalous enormities:

*but Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground*; some think <sup>f372</sup> he wrote in legible characters the sins of the woman's accusers; and the learned Wagenseil <sup>f373</sup> makes mention of an ancient Greek manuscript he had seen, in which were the following words, "the sins of everyone of them": Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that this action of Christ tallies with, and has some reference to, the action of the priest at the trial of the suspected wife; who took of the dust of the floor of the tabernacle, and infused it in the bitter waters for her to drink; but it is most likely, that Christ on purpose put himself into this posture, as if he was busy about something else, and did not attend to what they said; and hereby cast some contempt upon them, as if they and their question were unworthy of his notice: and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

*[as though he heard them not]*; though this clause is not in many copies, nor in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions, but is in five of Beza's copies, and in the Complutensian edition.

**Ver. 7.** *So when they continued asking him*, etc.] For observing that he put himself in such a posture, they concluded that they had puzzled and perplexed him, and that he knew not what to say; and therefore they were more urgent for a speedy answer, hoping they should get an advantage of him; and that they should be able to expose him, and that his confusion would appear to all the people:

*he lift up himself and said unto them*; having raised up himself, he looked wistly at them, and returned them this wise answer to, their confusion:

*he that is without sin among you*; meaning, not that was entirely free from sin, in heart, in lip, and life; for there is no such person; the most holy man in life is not, in such sense, free from sin; but that was without any notorious sin, or was not guilty of some scandalous sin, and particularly this of adultery; which was in this age a prevailing sin, and even among their doctors; hence our Lord calls that generation an adulterous one, (<sup>(4129)</sup> Matthew 12:39); and which was literally true of them; with this

compare ( ~~<f122>~~ Romans 2:22). Adultery increased to such a degree in this age, that they were obliged to leave off the trial of suspected wives, because their husbands were generally guilty this way; and the waters would have no effect, if the husband was criminal also: so the Jews say <sup>f374</sup>,

“when adulterers increased, the bitter waters ceased; and Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai (who was now living) caused them to cease.”

In vindication of which, he cited the passage in ( ~~<2044>~~ Hosea 4:14); and this agrees with their own account of the times of the Messiah, and the signs thereof, among which stands this <sup>f375</sup>;

“in the age in which the son of David comes, the house of assembly (the gloss interprets it the place where the disciples of the wise men meet to learn the law) shall become, **twnwzl** , “a brothel house”.”

And that this sin so greatly prevailed, our Lord well knew; and perhaps none of those Scribes and Pharisees were free from it, in one shape or another; and therefore bids him that was,

*let him first cast a stone at her*; alluding to the law in ( ~~<6570>~~ Deuteronomy 17:7), which required the hands of the witnesses to be upon a person first, to put him to death; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, referring to their own sense and opinion, in trying a wife suspected of adultery; that if the husband was guilty the same way, the waters would have no effect: by this answer of our Lord, he at once wrought himself out of the dilemma, they thought to distress him with; for though he passed no sentence upon the woman, and so took not upon him the judiciary power, with which they could accuse him to the Roman governor, yet he manifestly appeared to agree with Moses, that such an one deserved to be stoned; wherefore they could not charge him with being contrary to Moses; and by putting him that was without sin, to cast the first stone at her, he showed himself merciful to the woman, and to them, to be the searcher of hearts.

**Ver. 8.** *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*] As before, having said enough to confound them; and yet unwilling to pursue the matter any further, or publicly expose them in any other way; and that they might have an opportunity of withdrawing themselves without any further notice of his, he took this method.

**Ver. 9.** *And they which heard it*, etc.] Not all, not the disciples of Christ, nor the multitude, but the Scribes and Pharisees:

*being convicted by their own conscience*; that they were not without sin, nor free from this; they had a beam in their own eye, who were so forward to observe the mote in another's; and oftentimes so it is, that those who are most forward to reprove, and bear hardest on others for their sins, are as culpable in another way, if not in the same; when sin lies at the door, and conscience is awakened and open, it is as good as a thousand witnesses; and lets in, and owns the sin which lies heavy, and makes sad work; and fills with anguish, confusion, and shame, as it did these men: who

*went out one by one*; from the temple, in as private a manner, and as unobserved as they could:

*beginning at the eldest*: who might have been most culpable, or however soonest took the hint; being more wise and sagacious:

*unto the last*; this is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, and in two of Beza's copies, and the Basil edition:

*and Jesus was left alone*; not by his disciples, nor the multitude, but his antagonists, who came to tempt and ensnare him: for it follows,

*and the woman standing in the midst*; that is, of the company as before.

**Ver. 10.** *When Jesus had lift himself up*, etc.] From the earth, towards which he stooped, and on which he had been writing:

*and saw none but the woman*; that is, none of those that had brought her there, and had accused her to him:

*he said unto her, woman, where are those thine accusers?* the Syriac and Arabic versions read only, "where are these?" these men, that brought thee here, and charged thee with this crime:

*hath no man condemned thee?* has no one offered to do unto thee what I proposed? what, not one that could take up a stone, and cast at thee? was there not one of them free from this sin? could no man take upon him to execute this sentence?

**Ver. 11.** *She saith, no man, Lord*, etc.] No man said a word to me, or lift up his hand against me, or moved a stone at me:

*and Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee*; Christ came not into the world to act the part of a civil magistrate, and therefore refused to arbitrate a case, or be concerned in dividing an inheritance between two

brethren, (<sup><Q213></sup>Luke 12:13,14). Nor did he come into the world to condemn it, but that the world, through him, might be saved, (<sup><R17></sup>John 3:17); nor would he pass any other sentence on this woman, than what he had done; nor would he inflict any punishment on her himself; but suitably and agreeably to his office; as a prophet, he declares against her sin, calls her to repentance, and bids her

*go and sin no more*; lest as he said to the man he cured at Bethesda's pool, a worse thing should come unto her. Wherefore the Jew <sup>f376</sup> has no reason to object to this conduct of Christ, as if he acted contrary to the law, in (<sup><R15></sup>Deuteronomy 13:5). "Thou shalt put the evil away from the midst of thee"; and also to the sanctions of all civil laws among men, which order the removal of evil, by putting delinquents to death; and he observes, that those that believe in him, do not follow him in this, but put adulterers and adulteresses to death; and that indeed, should his example and instructions take place, all courts of judicature must cease, and order be subverted among men: but it should be observed, that our Lord manifested a regard, even to the law of Moses, when he bid this woman's accusers that were without sin, to cast the first stone at her; though as for the law in (<sup><R15></sup>Deuteronomy 13:5), that respects a false prophet, and not an adulterer or an adulteress; nor do the civil laws of all nations require death in the case of adultery; and did they, Christ here, neither by his words nor actions, contradicts and sets aside any such laws of God or man; he left this fact to be inquired into, examined, and judged, and sentence passed by proper persons, whose business it was: as for himself, his office was not that of a civil magistrate, but of a Saviour and Redeemer; and suitably to that he acted in this case; he did not connive at the sin, he reprov'd for it; nor did he deny that she ought to suffer according to the law of Moses, but rather suggests she ought; but as this was not his province, he did not take upon him to pronounce any sentence of condemnation on her; but called her to repentance, and, as the merciful and compassionate Saviour, gave her reason to hope pardon and eternal life.

**Ver. 12.** *Then spake Jesus again unto them*, etc.] Syriac fragment of Bishop Usher's, published by Deuteronomy Dieu, prefaces this verse thus, "when they were gathered together", Jesus said, etc. that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who went out and returned again; or some others of them, who came after this, to whom Christ addressed himself thus:

*I am the light of the world*; which he might say, on occasion of the rising sun, which was now up, and might shine brightly in their faces; (see <sup><400></sup>John 8:2); which is  $\mu\lambda\ \omega[\text{h}\ \text{rwa}$ , “the light of the world”, as Aben Ezra in (<sup><400></sup>Psalm 19:8) rightly calls it: thus on occasion of the water in Jacob’s well, he discoursed of living water; and upon the Jews at Capernaum mentioning the manna, he treated at large concerning himself as the bread of life: and he might also make use of this character, and apply it to himself, with a view to some passages in the Old Testament, which speak of him under the metaphor of the sun, as (<sup><400></sup>Psalm 84:11 <sup><400></sup>Malachi 4:2), and represent him as the light; and the Jews <sup>f377</sup> themselves say, that light is one of the names of the Messiah; and God himself is called by them, the light of the world <sup>f378</sup>: and likewise he may have regard to those pompous titles and characters, which the Jewish doctors assumed arrogantly to themselves, and oppose himself to them; for they not only called Moses their master,  $\mu\lambda\ \omega[\text{h}\ \text{rwa}$ , “the light of the world” <sup>f379</sup>, and also the law of Moses <sup>f380</sup>, but their Rabbins and doctors; (see Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Matthew 5:14”). By the world here is meant, not the whole world, and all the individuals of it; for though Christ, as the Creator of all things, is the light of men, and does lighten every individual man with the light of nature and reason, yet not in a spiritual and saving manner, as is here intended; nor the whole body of the elect of God, though they are sometimes called the world, being the better part of it, and are made light in the Lord, in a special sense; nor the Jews only, and the chosen of God, among them, though Christ was a great light to many of them, that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death; but the Gentiles are here designed, who were usually called by the Jews, the world; (see Gill on “<sup><400></sup>John 3:16”). And these were in gross darkness before the coming of Christ, about the Divine Being, concerning the object, nature, and manner of worship; the Scriptures, the law, and Gospel; the Messiah, and his office and work; the Spirit of God, and his operations of grace; the resurrection of the dead, and a future state; now Christ came to be a light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel: our Lord seems to have respect to the prophecy of him, in (<sup><400></sup>Isaiah 42:6), as well as alludes to the sun in the firmament; whose light is diffused to all the nations of the earth, and not confined to one spot of land only: but since Christ was the minister of the circumcision, and was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it may be asked, how could he be the light of the Gentiles? to which it may be replied, that he was so by his apostles, who were sent by him with the light of the Gospel, into all the world; and by his Spirit, who enlightens the minds of men, who



were darkness itself, with the light of Christ: for he is not only the author and giver of the light of nature to all men, but also of the light of grace to all his chosen ones, Gentiles as well as Jews; who, in his light, see light; see themselves lost and undone, and him to be the only willing, able, suitable, and complete Saviour; and behold wondrous things in the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and he is likewise the author of all the light of glory the saints enjoy in the other world; the Lamb is the light of that state; he is their everlasting light, and their glory; and happy are they who are his followers now:

*he that followeth me*; not corporeally, but spiritually, by faith; for as believing is expressed by coming to Christ, so by following after him: compare with this, (<sup><41246></sup>John 12:46); and with love and affection to him, the desires of the soul being unto him, and to the remembrance of him; and in the exercise of every grace and discharge of every duty, in imitation of him; and through a variety of sufferings and tribulations, pressing after him as the guide, captain, and forerunner: and such

*shall not walk in darkness*; in the darkness of unregeneracy, not knowing what they are, and where they are, and whither they are going; for such know they are in the light; and though they were blind, now they see; they know in whom they have believed, and that they are in Christ, in the covenant of grace, and in the love of God, and are going to heaven and eternal happiness; such shall not walk in the darkness of unbelief; but walk by faith on Christ; nor in the darkness of error, but in the truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it; and though they may sometimes walk without the light of God's countenance, yet light shall arise to them; and such "shall not go into darkness", as the Ethiopic version renders the words, into outer darkness, or the darkness of eternal death:

*but shall have the light of life*; the grace of God abiding in them now; which as it is a well of living water, springing up to eternal life, so it is a shining light, which increases to the perfect day: as darkness and death, so light and life go together; grace, which is enlightening, is also quickening and comforting, and issues in eternal light and life; a light that will never be extinguished, and a life that will continue for ever, with never fading joys and pleasures; (see <sup><48330></sup>Job 33:30).

**Ver. 13.** *The Pharisees therefore said unto him*, etc.] On account of his declaring himself the light of the world: these were either the same who went out of the temple, filled with remorse of conscience, and were now

returned, and bearing him a grudge, came to take some advantage against him, if they could; or they were others of the same complexion, sent by them, to make their observations on him:

*thou bearest record of thyself.* The Ethiopic version renders it, “dost thou thyself?” which does not seem so decent and comely; (see <sup><ARB></sup>Proverbs 27:2); though it does not follow, that what a man says of himself is not truth, as these suggest:

*thy record is not true;* for John testified of himself, that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; but the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and this testimony he bore of himself, at the importunity of the Jews themselves, (<sup><ARB></sup>John 1:19-23); and his testimony was true; so was that which Christ bore of himself; but their sense rather seems to be, that it was not firm and authentic, and would not pass in any court of judicature, since no man can be a witness in his own cause.

**Ver. 14.** *Jesus answered and said unto them,* etc.] In vindication of himself, and his testimony:

*though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true;* which seems contradictory to what he says, in (<sup><ARB></sup>John 5:31), and may be reconciled thus; there he speaks of himself as man, and in the opinion of the Jews, who took him to be a mere man; and also as alone, and separate from his Father, as the context shows; therefore his single testimony, and especially concerning himself, could not be admitted as authentic among men; but here he speaks of himself as a divine person, and in conjunction with his Father, with whom he was equal; and therefore his testimony ought to be looked upon, and received as firm and good, giving this as a reason for it:

*for I know whence I came, and whither I go;* that he was truly the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, and had his mission and commission from him into this world; and which, as he knew himself, he was able to make known, and make appear to others, by his credentials, the doctrines taught, and the miracles wrought by him; which proved him to be what he said he was, the light of the world; and he knew that when he had done his work he came about, he should go to his God and Father, and take his place at his right hand:

*but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go;* they took him to be the son of Joseph, and that he came out of Galilee; in which they were mistaken; and when he talked of going away, they did not understand him,

nor know whither he was going; they ask if he was going to the dispersed among the Gentiles, to teach them? and at another time, whether he would kill himself? they knew not, that through a train of sufferings and death, he must, and would enter into his glory: the Persic version inserts another clause without any foundation; “but ye know not from whence ye come, and whither ye go”, and then follows the former; there might be a truth in this, they did not know their true original, that they were from beneath; nor whither they were going, to what dismal abode, when they expected to enter, and enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

**Ver. 15.** *Ye judge after the flesh*, etc.] According to their carnal affections and prejudices; taking the Messiah to be a temporal prince, and his kingdom to be of this world, they judged that Jesus could not be he; they looked upon him as a mere man, and seeing him in much outward meanness, in his human nature, they judged of him according to this outward appearance: or “ye” that are “after the flesh judge”; to which sense the Persic version agrees, “for ye are carnal”; and so judged as carnal men, who are very improper persons to judge of spiritual things:

*I judge no man*; in the same way, after the flesh, or in a carnal manner, nor according to outward appearances, according to the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears: Christ did not take upon him to judge and determine in civil affairs, or in things pertaining to a court of judicature among men; this was not his province; an instance of this there is in the context, in not condemning the woman brought to him; nor did he judge the persons and states of men, or proceed to pass any sentence of condemnation on them; he came not to condemn, but save the world; this was not his business now; otherwise, all judgment is committed to him, and which he will exercise another day.

**Ver. 16.** *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true*, etc.] Because he saw not as man did, nor looked unto, and judged according to the outward appearance of things; but looked into the heart, and knew what was in it, being the searcher and trier of it; to whom all things are naked and open, and therefore cannot be deceived or imposed upon; his judgment must be sure and infallible:

*for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me*; he was not separate from the Father, or at a distance from him, when he was here on earth; he was in his bosom, and in heaven, as the Son of God, when as the son of man, he was below; nor was he alone in his testimony and judgment, the

Father joined with him therein: and which is a further proof of the truth of his testimony, and the certainty of his judgment.

**Ver. 17.** *It is also written in your law*, etc.] The law of Moses, which was given unto them, and they boasted of; the passage referred to is in (<sup><61915></sup>Deuteronomy 19:15); see also (<sup><61706></sup>Deuteronomy 17:6); where though what follows is not to be found in so many words, yet the sense is there expressed:

*that the testimony of two men is true*: concerning which the Jewish writers say <sup>f381</sup>,

“they used not to determine any judiciary matter by the mouth of one witness, neither pecuniary causes, nor causes of life and death, as it is said, (<sup><61706></sup>Deuteronomy 17:6). It is asked <sup>f382</sup> in their oral law, if the testimony of two men stand, why does the Scripture particularly mention three? (for no other reason) but to compare or equal three with two, that as three convict two of a falsehood, two may also convict three.”

On which one of their commentators <sup>f383</sup> has this observation, taking notice of (<sup><61918></sup>Deuteronomy 19:18), which speaks of a single witness;

“Mar (a doctor) says, wherever it is said a “witness”, it is to be understood of two, unless the Scripture particularly specifies one.”

In the case of a wife suspected of adultery, and in the business of striking off the neck of the heifer in case of murder, they admitted of one witness <sup>f384</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *I am one that bear witness of myself*, etc.] As he does of his sonship, in (<sup><61807></sup>1 John 5:7).

*And the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me*; as he did, by the descent of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, and by a voice from heaven, both at that time, and at his transfiguration, and by the miracles which he wrought; and particularly he bore testimony of him, long before, in prophecy, that he was the light of the world he now said he was, (<sup><3406></sup>Isaiah 42:6); so that here were two testifiers, his Father and himself; which show them to be two distinct divine persons, and equal to each other: and now if the testimony of two men is true, firm, and authentic, and to be depended

upon and received, then much more the testimony of two divine persons; (see ~~1~~ John 5:9).

**Ver. 19.** *Then said they unto him, where is thy Father?* etc.] The Persic version adds, “show [him] unto us”: produce this witness boasted of, let us see him; this they said in a sneering, taunting, and insulting manner; where is thy Father? what! he is in Galilee; fetch him from thence; it is Joseph the carpenter you mean; a goodly witness indeed!

*Jesus answered, ye neither know me nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also;* they did not know the divine original of Christ, that he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father; they greatly boasted of their knowledge of God, but they knew him not; their ignorance of Christ showed it: the knowledge of both go together, and which is life eternal; nor can any truly know the one, without the other: and where the one is known, the other will be also; Christ is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person: so that he that has seen the one, must know the other; and indeed, no one can know the Father, but he to whom the Son reveals him: this was a severe mortification to these men of knowledge.

**Ver. 20.** *These words spake Jesus in the treasury,* etc.] The place where the thirteen chests stood, into which the people put their voluntary contributions for the sacrifices, and service of the temple: the Ethiopic version renders it, “at the alms chest”; (see Gill on “~~12~~ Mark 12:41”). The design of this observation of the evangelist, is to suggest to us, that it was in a very public place, in the temple, openly, that Christ delivered the above words:

*as he taught in the temple;* where the Jews resorted, where his ministry was public, and he spake freely, and without reserve; in a very bold manner, with intrepidity, and without fear of man:

*and no man laid hands on him;* though they had sought to do it the day before; had sent officers to take him; and they themselves had a good will to it; and yet they were so awed and over ruled by one means, or one account or another, that no man did it; the reason was,

*for his hour was not yet come;* the time appointed for his sufferings and death.

**Ver. 21.** *Then said Jesus again unto them,* etc.] It may be, immediately after he had said the above words; or rather some time after, it may be on the same day:

*I go my way*; meaning, the way of all flesh, or that he should die: the way of speaking shows, that his death was certain, a determined thing; which must be, and yet was voluntary: he was not driven, nor forced, but went freely; this being the path, the way, through which he must enter into his kingdom and glory:

*and ye shall seek me*; that is, shall seek the Messiah, as their deliverer and Saviour, when in distress; and whom he calls himself, because he was the true Messiah, and the only Saviour and Redeemer of his people, in a spiritual sense; otherwise they would not, nor did they seek Jesus of Nazareth:

*and shall die in your sins*; or “in your sin”; so it is in the Greek text, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Persic versions: meaning, in their sin of unbelief, and rejection of him the true Messiah: the sense is, that in the midst of their calamities, which should come upon them, for their sin against him, they should in vain seek for the Messiah, as a temporal deliverer of them; for their nation, city, and temple, and they therein should utterly perish, for their iniquity; and their ruin would not only be temporal, but eternal: since it follows,

*whither I, go ye cannot come*, signifying, that whereas he was going to his Father, to heaven and glory; to enjoy eternal happiness at his Father’s right hand, in the human nature; they should never come there, but whilst many sat down in the kingdom of heaven, with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who should come from afar, they would be shut out, and not suffered to enter in.

**Ver. 22.** *Then said the Jews, will he kill himself?* etc.] Which was not only a wicked, but a foolish consequence, drawn from his words: for it by no means followed, because he was going away, and whither they could not come, that therefore he must destroy himself; this seems to be what they would have been glad he would have done, and suggested the thought that he might do it, in which they imitated Satan, (~~4016~~ Matthew 4:6), under whose influence they now apparently were, and hoped that he would, which would at once extricate them out of their difficulties on his account:

*because he sayeth, whither I go ye cannot come:* this is no reason at all; for had Christ's meaning been, as they blasphemously intimate, they might have destroyed themselves too, and have gone after him.

**Ver. 23.** *And he said unto them,* etc.] Upon this wicked remark of theirs, and query on his words:

*ye are from beneath:* not only of the earth, earthy, and so spoke of the earth, and as carnal men; but even of hell, they were the children of the devil; they breathed his Spirit, spoke his language, and did his lusts, as in (~~4084~~ John 8:44).

*I am from above;* not with respect to his human body, which he did not bring with him from heaven, that was formed below, in the Virgin's womb; otherwise he would not have been the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, David, and Mary: but either with regard to his divine nature and person, he was of God, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, who then lay in his bosom, and was in heaven above at that time; or to his mission, which was from heaven.

*Ye are of this world;* they were, as they were born into the world, sinful, carnal, and corrupt; they were in it, and belonged to it, had never been chosen, or called out of it; they had their conversation according to the course of it, and conformed to its evil customs and manners; they were under the influence of the God of the world, and were taken with the sinful and sensual lusts thereof; they were men of worldly spirits; they minded earth, and earthly things, and had their portion in this world, and might be truly called the men of it.

*I am not of this world;* he was in it, but not of it; he was come into it to save the chief of sinners, but he did not belong to it, nor did he conform to it; for though he conversed with sinners, ate with them, and received them, being called to repentance by him; yet he was separate from them, and did not as they did: nor did he pursue the pleasures, honours, and riches of this world, being all his days a man of sorrows, and despised of men; and though Lord of all, had not where to lay his head.

**Ver. 24.** *I said therefore unto you,* etc.] Because they were from beneath, and of the world, and discovered an earthly, worldly, carnal, yea, devilish disposition, in their conduct towards him:

*that ye shall die in your sins*; this he had said in (~~1621~~ John 8:21), and now repeats it, and confirms it by the following reason:

*for if believe not that I am he*; the everlasting and unchangeable I am, the true God, God over all, blessed for ever; the eternal Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, really made flesh, and become incarnate; the true Messiah, the only Saviour of sinners; the one and only Mediator between God and man; the Head of the church, prophet, priest, and King, and the Judge of quick and dead; as also the light of the world he had declared himself to be: these are things that are necessary to be believed concerning Christ; indeed, carnal and unregenerate men may believe all these things; the devils themselves do, and tremble at them; but then they, and so unconverted men, have no faith in them, with an application of them to themselves: true faith in Christ deals not with him in a general way, but in a special regard to a man's self; it is a seeing of Christ for a man's self; it is not an implicit faith, or a believing him to be what he is, merely upon report, but upon sight; it is a going out of the soul to Christ, a renouncing its own righteousness, and a trusting in him alone for life and salvation; it is with the heart, and from it, and is unfeigned; it works by love to Christ, and his people, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness, and a cheerful obedience to the commands and ordinances of Christ. Though perhaps no more than a general faith is here intended, for want of which, and their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah, the Jews suffered temporal ruin; and had they but believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and true Messiah, they had been saved from that temporal destruction which came upon their nation, city, and temple; but not believing this in a general and notional way, they perished, as is here threatened:

*ye shall die in your sins*; in which they were, being defiled with them, guilty before God for them, under the power of them, and liable to punishment for them; and so they remained, and did remain, and were yet in their sins, even until death, when they died in them, and for them, not only a corporeal, but an eternal death: for dying in their sins, these would be found upon them, and they would be charged with them, and must be answerable for them, and consequently endure the punishment of them, which is the second death. Dying in sin, and dying in Christ, are two widely different things. They that die in faith, die in Christ: they that die in unbelief, die in sin; and this is a dreadful dying; (see ~~1621~~ Joshua 22:20),



where the Targum paraphrases it, “and he, one man”, (or alone,) *hybwj b twm al* , “did not die in his sins”.

**Ver. 25.** *Then said they unto him, who art thou?* etc.] That talks at this rate, and threatens with death, in case of unbelief; this they said with an haughty air, and in a scornful manner:

*and Jesus saith unto them, even [the same] that I said unto you from the beginning;* meaning, either of this discourse, as that he was the light of the world, and which he continued to assert; or of his being had before the sanhedrim, when he affirmed that God was his Father, and by many strong arguments proved his divine sonship; or of his ministry, when by miracles, as well as doctrines, he made it to appear that he was he that was to come, the true Messiah; or who spake from the beginning to Moses, saying, I am that I am, hath sent thee, and to the church, and Jewish fathers in the wilderness; and who is that word that was from the beginning with God; and who is called the beginning, the first cause of all things, and of the creation of God; and some think this is intended here.

**Ver. 26.** *I have many things to say, and to judge of you,* etc.] Being God omniscient, he knew their persons and actions, their lives and conversations, and all their sins and transgressions, which he could justly have complained of, and charged them with, and proved against them, and judged and condemned them for; but this was not his present business, he came not to judge and condemn, but to save: wherefore he waved these things, and took no notice of them, leaving them to his Father, who would call them to an account, and punish them for them:

*but he that sent me is true;* as to his promises concerning the mission of his Son, to be the Saviour of sinners; so to his threatenings, to bring down vengeance on those that disbelieve him, and reject him:

*and I speak to the world,* or “in the world”,

*those things which I have heard of him;* as concerning his love, grace, and mercy to those that should believe in him, so of the destruction of the despisers and rejecters of him; which things he spoke not in secret, in a corner, but publicly and openly, before all the world, to Jews and Gentiles, and to as many as were in the treasury, in the temple at this time; (see ~~688~~ John 18:20).

**Ver. 27.** *They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.*] That sent him, and who was true and faithful to all he had said, whether in a way of promise, or threatening; such was their stupidity, that they did not know that he meant God the Father by him that sent him, so deriving his mission and doctrine from him; their hearts were made fat, and hardened, and their eyes were blinded. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “they did not know that he said, God was his Father”; and so Beza’s most ancient copy, and another exemplar of his.

**Ver. 28.** *Then said Jesus unto them,* etc.] Upbraiding them with their ignorance, and giving them a sign, as well as pointing out the time when they either, by good or sad experience, should have knowledge of him:

*when ye have lift up the son of man;* meaning himself, who was to be lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was upon the pole, in the wilderness; and which signified the manner of death he should die, the death of the cross; and suggested, that what the Jews designed for his reproach, shame, and abasement, would be the way and means of his rise and exaltation; and this lifting him up, or crucifying him, he ascribes to them, because they would deliver him to Pontius Pilate to be condemned, and stir up the people to ask, and be importunate themselves for his crucifixion:

*then shall ye know that I am [he];* the Son of God, and true Messiah, as the centurion, and those that were with him, did, when they observed the earthquake; and the things that were done at his death; and after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the pouring forth of his Spirit, many of the Jews had not only a notional, but a true and spiritual knowledge of Jesus, as the Messiah; and upon the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, and their disappointment by false Christs, they doubtless many of them must, and did know, that the true Messiah was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he:

*and that I do nothing of myself;* (see Gill on “~~RB~~ John 5:19”);

*but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things;* this he says not as lessening himself, or making himself inferior to the Father, but to show the excellency of his doctrine, and to assert the original, authority, and divinity of it; suggesting that it was not an human doctrine, or a device of man’s, or his own, as man, but was divine, and from God; (see ~~RB~~ John 7:16).

**Ver. 29.** *And he that sent me is with me,* etc.] By virtue of that near union there is between them, they being one in nature, essence, power, and glory,

and by the gracious, powerful, comfortable, assisting, and strengthening presence of his Father, which he vouchsafed to him as man, and Mediator;

*the Father hath not left me alone*; Christ, as the word, was with the Father from all eternity, and, as the Son of God, was in heaven, and in the bosom of the Father, when he, as the son of man, was here on earth; for though he came forth from the Father into this world, by assumption of the human nature, yet the Father was always with him, and he with the Father, through the unity of the divine nature; nor did he withhold his supporting and assisting presence from him as man; nor did he withdraw, at least he had not yet withdrawn his gracious and comfortable presence from him, though he afterwards did, when upon the cross: compare with this (~~John~~ John 16:32);

*for I do always those things that please him*; by submitting to Gospel ordinances, as to baptism, at which the Father declared his well pleasedness in him; and by complying with the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were typical of him; and by perfectly obeying the precepts of the moral law, and bearing the penalty of it; or by suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people; all which were the will of God, and well pleasing to him.

**Ver. 30.** *As he spake these words*, etc.] Concerning his being lifted up, or his crucifixion, and the knowledge the Jews should then have of him; of the excellency and divinity of his doctrine, of his mission from the Father, and of the Father's presence with him, and of his always doing the things that are pleasing in his sight; which were spoken by him with majesty and authority, and came with power:

*many believed on him*: as the Son of God, and true Messiah: faith came by hearing; Christ's hearers were of different sorts; some understood him not, and disbelieved, and rejected him; others had their eyes, and their hearts opened, and received him, and his words.

**Ver. 31.** *Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him*, etc.] For he knew instantly who they were, and when they believed on him; and therefore he immediately turned himself to them, and thus addressed them;

*if ye continue in my word*; meaning the Gospel, called his, because he was both the author, and preacher, and sum, and substance of it: and to continue in it, is having cordially received it, to abide by it, and hold it fast, and not to be moved from it, by the temptations of Satan; the cunning of

those that lie in wait to deceive; nor by the revilings and persecutions, the frowns and flatteries of men: and when men continue thus steadfast in it, and faithful to it, it is an evidence that it has come with power, and has a place in their hearts, and that they are the true followers of Christ:

*then are ye my disciples indeed*; there are two sorts of disciples of Christ; some are only nominal, and merely in profession such; and these sometimes draw back from him, discontinue in his word, and go out from among his people; which shows that they never were of them, nor are the true disciples of Jesus; for the genuine disciples of Christ continue in his Gospel, hold fast to him, the head, and remain with his people; which to do to the end, is an evidence, of their being disciples indeed.

**Ver. 32.** *And ye shall know the truth*, etc.] Either the truth of the Gospel, the truth as it is in Jesus; meaning, that they should have a larger knowledge of it, while others are ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; but the spirit of truth should lead them into all truth, and cause them to grow and increase in Gospel light and knowledge; or Jesus himself, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the sense is, that they should know more of him, of the dignity of his person, of the nature and usefulness of his offices; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the fulness of his grace, and that for themselves:

*and the truth shall make you free*; from ignorance and error, and the prejudices of education, under which the whole nation laboured, and from the thralldom of the law.

**Ver. 33.** *They answered him*, etc.] Not the believing Jews, whom he peculiarly addressed, but the unbelieving Jews, who were present, and heard these things:

*we be Abraham's seed*; this the Jews always valued themselves upon, and reckoned themselves, on this account, upon a level with the nobles and the princes of the earth.

“Says R. Akiba <sup>f385</sup>, even the poor of Israel are to be considered as if they were *yrwj ynb*, “noblemen”, that are fallen from their substance, because they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;”

*and were never in bondage to any man*; which is a very great falsehood, for it was declared to Abraham himself, that his seed should serve in a land not theirs, and be afflicted four hundred years, as they were; and as the preface to the law which the Jews gloried in shows, which says, that the Lord their God brought them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; and they were frequently overcome by their neighbours, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, and reduced to servitude under them, until delivered by one judge, or another: and not to take notice of their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, they were at this very time under the Roman yoke, and paid tribute to Caesar; and yet such was the pride of their hearts, they would not be thought to be in bondage; and therefore, with an haughty air, add,

*how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?* when they thought themselves, and would fain have been thought by others, to have been free already, and so to stand in no need of being made free.

**Ver. 34.** *Jesus answered them, verily verily I say unto you*, etc.] Taking no notice of their civil liberty, to which he could easily have replied to their confusion and silence, he observes to them their moral servitude and bondage, and in the strongest manner affirms, that

*whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*; which must be understood, not of one that commits a single act of sin, though ever so gross, as did Noah, Lot, David, Peter, and others, who yet were not the servants of sin; or of such who sin through ignorance, weakness of the flesh, and the power of Satan's temptations, and especially who commit sin with reluctance, the spirit lusting against it; nor indeed of any regenerate persons, though they are not without sin; nor do they live without the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed; and though they fall into it, they do not continue and live in it, but rise up out of it, through the grace of God, and by true repentance; and so are not to be reckoned the servants of sin, or to be of the devil. But this is to be understood of such whose bias and bent of their minds are to sin; who give up themselves unto it, and sell themselves to work wickedness; who make sin their trade, business, and employment, and are properly workers of it, and take delight and pleasure in it: these, whatever liberty, they promise themselves, are the servants of corruption; they are under the government of sin, that has dominion over them; and they obey it in the lusts thereof, and are drudges and slaves unto

it, and will have no other wages at last but death, even eternal death, if grace prevent not; (see <sup>f166</sup>Romans 6:16 <sup>f19</sup>2 Peter 2:19).

**Ver. 35.** *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever*, etc.] The servant of God, and of Christ, does, but not the servant of sin: there may be servants of sin in the house or church of God here below; and such were these Jews Christ is speaking to; but such shall not abide there for ever: some that get into this house are quickly discerned, as Simon Magus was, and are soon removed; and others that may stay longer, are sometimes suffered to fall into some foul sin, or into some gross error and heresy, for which they are cast out of the house or church of God, according to the rules of God's word; others make parties, draw disciples after them, and separate themselves, and go out of their own accord, to serve their own purposes: and others, when persecution and tribulation arise because of the word, they are offended and gone; this is the fan with which Christ sometimes winnows his floor, and removes the chaff; and those that continue longest, even to the end of their days, or of the world, or the second coming of Christ, as the foolish virgins, will then be discerned and separated; for the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; they shall not enter into the house above, into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which is Christ's Father's house: none but sons are brought to glory; these are the only heirs of salvation; others will be bid to depart, as workers of iniquity, as the servants of sin; even such who have made a profession of religion, and have been, and have had a standing in the house of God below. The allusion is to the case of servants in common; and, in a literal sense, it is true both of good and bad servants: good servants do not always continue in their master's house; even an Hebrew servant, that loved his master, and would not go out free at the end of his servitude; and who, after having his ear bored, is said to serve him for ever, (<sup>f206</sup>Exodus 21:6); yet that "for ever" was but until the year of jubilee, whether near or remote, as the Jewish commentators <sup>f386</sup> in general explain it; nay, if his master died before that time, he went out free: he was not obliged to serve his son or heirs; and so say the Misnic doctors <sup>f387</sup>:

“one that is bored is obtained by boring, and he possesses himself (or becomes free) by the year of jubilee, and by the death of his master.”

And to this agrees what Maimonides <sup>f388</sup> says;

“he that has served six years, and will not go out, lo, this is bored, and he serves until the year of jubilee, or until his master dies; and although he leaves a son, he that is bored does not serve the son; which may be learned from the letter of the words, “he shall serve him”, not his son, “for ever”, until the jubilee: from whence it appears, that he that is bored does not possess himself (or is free) but by the jubilee, and by the death of his master.”

And one of their writers <sup>f389</sup> observes, that the word rendered, “shall serve him”, is by Gematry, and not his son. And among the Romans, good servants were oftentimes made free, and bad ones were turned out, and put into a work house, to grind corn in mills, a sort of bridewell; and such evil servants may more especially be respected, since Christ is speaking of servants of sin:

*but the Son abideth ever:* the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ will always continue as a Son in his own house, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and as an high priest over it, having an unchangeable priesthood; and as he that takes care of it, provides for it, and manages all the affairs thereof, the family in heaven and in earth being named of him. And as he, so all the adopted sons of God shall continue, being pillars in this house, that shall never go out: such are no more servants, nor foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and being sons, are heirs and shall never be cast out, as the bondwoman and her son have been: but these being the children of the free, shall for ever enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to; once sons, always so; the relation ever continues; they will ever remain in the family, and being entitled to the heavenly estate, shall ever possess it.

**Ver. 36.** *If the Son therefore shall make you free,* etc.] Alluding to the custom of adoption by the sons or brethren in the family, which obtained in Greece, called *αδελφοψεσια*, “the adoption of brethren”, as Grotius, and others have observed; or rather to a custom among the Romans, of a son’s making free after his Father’s death, such as were born slaves in his house. Such a case as this is supposed <sup>f390</sup>;

“a man having a son or a daughter by his maidservant, that which is born of her, since of a servant, is without doubt a servant: wherefore if he (the son) should say, this is my natural brother or my natural sister; for since my father had children by his maidservant, “whom he did not make free”; and he dying the law

has made me lord of these, *εγω τουτους ελευπερωσα*, “I have made these free”, because of their natural kindred.”

This is allowed to be a just and good reason of manumission. Now this answers very much to the case in hand. Men are home born slaves; the chosen people of God are such by nature; they are born in sin, and are the servants of it; Christ the Son makes them free; and then they are no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. This suggests, that true freedom is by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; (see ~~REF~~ Galatians 5:1). He it is that makes the saints free from sin; not from the being of it in this life, but from the bondage and servitude of it, from its power and dominion, and from its guilt and liableness to punishment for it, by procuring the pardon of their sins through his blood, and justifying their persons by his righteousness: he also makes them free, or delivers them from the captivity of Satan, by ransoming them out of his hands, taking the prey from the mighty, binding the strong man armed, and delivering them from him, and from the power of darkness, and putting them into his own kingdom; he does not indeed free them altogether from his temptations, but he preserves them by his power from being hurt and destroyed by him: he likewise makes his people free from the law, not only the ceremonial law, which is abolished by him, but from the moral law; not from obedience to it, as it is in his hands, and a rule of walk and conversation to them, but as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and from the rigorous exaction of it, and from seeking justification and life by it, and from its curse and condemnation: and he gives them freedom of access to God, as their Father, through his blood and by his Spirit; and admits them to all the privileges and immunities of the church below; and gives them a right to, faith in, and an expectation of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter; and such are truly Christ’s freemen:

*ye shall be free indeed*; this is true freedom; what the Jews boasted of, supposing what they said was right, was but a shadow of freedom in comparison of this; and that liberty which sinful men promise themselves in sin, is all deceit; there is no true, solid, substantial freedom but what is by Christ, the Son of God. Even that freedom which the children of God had under the legal dispensation, was a servitude, in comparison of that which the saints enjoy by Christ under the Gospel dispensation; though they were sons and heirs, yet being in bondage, differed nothing from servants, being under tutors and governors, in bondage under the elements of the world,



and under the influence of a spirit of bondage unto fear; (see <sup><800></sup>Galatians 4:1-3 <sup><815></sup>Romans 8:15); but such that have received the spirit of adoption from Christ, they are really free: they have not only the name of children, and of freemen, but they are truly such, and wholly so; perhaps there may be some reference had to such sort of persons among the Jews, who were partly servants, and partly free: so it is said <sup>f391</sup>,

“db[ wyxj ç ym, “he who is half a servant”, or partly a servant, and partly free, shall serve his master one day, and himself another.”

And such an one, as the commentators <sup>f392</sup> say, is one who is a servant of two partners, and is made free by one of them; or who has paid half his price to his master (for his freedom), but the other half is still due: and of one in such circumstances it is said <sup>f393</sup>, that

“he that is partly a servant, and partly free, may not eat of his master’s (lamb at the passover):”

but now those who are made free by Christ the Son of God, they are not in part only, but are wholly free, and have a right to all the privileges of his house, to the supper of the Lord, and to every other immunity.

**Ver. 37.** *I know that ye are Abraham’s seed*, etc.] In answer to the other part of the Jews’ objection to Christ, and in favour of themselves, Christ owns that they were the natural seed of Abraham; for truth must be allowed to an adversary. But then this hindered not but they might be, as they were, in moral bondage to sin, and a generation of vipers, as those of them who came to John’s baptism were; and might not be the sons of God, for not because they were the natural seed of Abraham, were they all the adopted sons of God; and might be cast out of the house of God, as Ishmael was cast out of Abraham’s, though he was his natural seed. And what follows proves them to be under the power, and in the servitude of sin, and that they were the seed of the serpent that was to bruise the heel of the woman’s seed, or put the Messiah to death, though they were the natural seed of Abraham:

*but ye seek to kill me*; which none but such who are under the governing power of sin, are slaves unto it, and the vassals of the devil, would ever do: the reason of which is,

*because my word hath no place in you*; their hearts were barred and bolted against it, with ignorance, enmity, and unbelief; it had no entrance into them; it did not come with power to their hearts, nor work effectually in them; it had no place at all in them, much less a dwelling; had it had one, it would have produced another effect in them, even love to Christ; which the doctrine of Christ, wherever it comes with power, and takes place in the soul, brings along with it; but where it does not, as here, hatred and indignation, envy and malice, more or less, show themselves. This clause is differently rendered, and so admits of different senses. The Vulgate Latin renders it, “my word does not take in you”; it did not take place in them, nor did it take with them; they could not receive it; in which sense the word is used in (<sup><4091></sup>Matthew 19:11); for the natural man cannot receive the doctrines of Christ; they are not suited to his taste: they are disagreeable to him. The Syriac version renders it, “ye are not sufficient for my word”, to take it in; they were not capable of it; they could not understand it; it requires divine illumination, and a spiritual discerning, which they had not: the Persic version is, “ye are not worthy of my words”; of having the Gospel preached to them, and continued with them; they contradicting and blaspheming it, and rejecting the author of it; (see <sup><4135></sup>Acts 13:45,46). The Ethiopic version renders it, “my word does not remain with you”; and to the same purpose the Arabic version, “my word is not firm in you”; as soon as it was heard by them, it was caught away from them by Satan, whose children they were; it made no lasting impressions on them, but was like water spilt upon the ground: it may be rendered, “my word does not enter into you”; it did not make its way and penetrate into their hearts; for though, when attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, it is quick and powerful, and sharper than a twoedged sword, and enters into the conscience, and penetrates to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and lays open the secret thoughts and intents of the heart; yet of itself is an insufficient means of conversion; it cannot make its own way; there must be an exertion of powerful and efficacious grace; which shows the hardness and obstinacy of the heart of man.

**Ver. 38.** *I speak that which I have seen with my Father*, etc.] This is an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, in seeking to kill Christ, on account of his doctrine, since it was not his own, but his Father’s; was not merely human, but divine; was what he the only begotten Son, that lay in the bosom of his Father, had seen in his heart, in his purposes, and decrees, in

his council, and covenant, and so was clear, complete, certain, and to be depended on:

*and ye do that which ye have seen with your father*; meaning the devil, whom, though they had not scan with their eyes, nor any of his personal actions; yet acted so much under his influence, and according to his will, as if they had close and intimate consultation with him, and took their plan of operation from him, and had him continually before them, as their example and pattern, to copy after. The Ethiopic version reads, “what ye have heard”; and so it is read in three of Beza’s copies, and in three of Stephens’s.

**Ver. 39.** *They answered and said unto him*, etc.] On account of his making mention of a father, whose works they did, and whom they imitated:

*Abraham is our father*; meaning their only one, nor had they any other:

*Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham*; for who should children imitate but their parents?

Abraham was a merciful, charitable, and hospitable man, as well as a man of strict justice and integrity; he feared God, believed in him, and was ready to receive every message and revelation which came from him; and they are his genuine children and offspring, who walk in the steps of his faith, charity, justice, and piety: and this is a rule which the Jews themselves give<sup>f394</sup>, whereby the seed of Abraham may be known:

“whoever is merciful to the creature (man), it is evident that he is of the seed of Abraham, our father; but whoever has not mercy on the creature, it is a clear case that he is not of the seed of Abraham our father.”

And if this is a sure rule of judging, these men could not be the seed of Abraham, who were a merciless, barbarous, and cruel generation. Another of their writers<sup>f395</sup> has this observation, agreeably to the way of reasoning Christ uses;

“a disciple is to be judged of according to his manners; he that walks in the ways of the Lord, he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father, seeing he is used to his manners, and learns of his works; but the disciple who is corrupt in his manners, though he is of the children of Israel, lo, he is not of the “disciples of Abraham”, seeing he is not accustomed to his manners.”

Whence it appears, that they say these things not to distinguish themselves from other people who claimed a descent from Abraham, as the Ishmaelites or Saracens did; as did also the Spartans or Lacedemonians; for so writes Areus their king, to Onias the high priest of the Jews,

“it is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham,” (1 Maccab. 12:20,21)

But to distinguish those who were religious and virtuous among the Jews themselves, from those that were not; and so our Lord means not to deny, that the Jews, though they were evil men, were the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; but that they were not so in a spiritual sense, they did not tread in his steps, or do the works he did. The Persic version reads in the singular number, “ye would do the work of Abraham”; and if any particular work is designed, it is most likely to be the work of faith, since it was that which Abraham was famous for; and the doing of which denominated men, even Gentiles, the children of Abraham, and which the Jews were wanting in, they disbelieving and rejecting the Messiah.

**Ver. 40.** *But now ye seek to kill me*, etc.] A temper and disposition very foreign from that of Abraham’s:

*a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God*; to seek to kill a man is a very great crime, and punishable with death; to kill an innocent one, that had done no sin, who was pure, holy, harmless, and inoffensive to God and man, was an aggravation of the iniquity; and to kill a prophet, and one more than a prophet, who brought a revelation from God himself, and declared the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly that of his divine, eternal sonship, which incensed them against him, and put them upon seeking to take away his life, still increased the sin.

*This did not Abraham*: the sense is not, that Abraham did not tell the truth he had heard of God; for he did instruct, and command his children after him, to walk in the ways of the Lord, which he had learned from him; but that Abraham did not reject any truth that was revealed unto him, and much less seek to take away the life of any person that brought it to him; and indeed not the life of any man that deserved not to die: and our Lord suggests, that if he had been on the spot now, he would not have done as these his posterity did, since he saw his day by faith, and rejoiced in the

foresight of it, (<sup><B386></sup>John 8:56). The Jew <sup>f396</sup> makes an objection from these words against the deity of Christ;

“you see (says he) that Jesus declares concerning himself that he is not God, but man; and so says Paul concerning him, (<sup><B15></sup>Romans 5:15); and so Jesus, in many places, calls himself the son of man: for do we find in any place that he calls himself God, as the Nazarenes believe.”

To which may be replied, that Jesus does not declare in these words, nor in any other place, that he is not God; he says no such thing; he only observes, that he was a man, as he really was: nor is his being man any contradiction to his being God; for he is both God and man; and so those that believe in him affirm: and though Christ does not in express terms call himself God, yet he owned himself to be the Son of God, (<sup><B14></sup>Mark 14:61), and said such things of himself, as manifestly declared him to be God; and upon account of which the Jews concluded, that he not only made himself equal with God, but that he made himself God, (<sup><B17></sup>John 5:17,18 10:33). Besides, he suffered himself to be called God by a disciple of his, which he would never have done, had he not been really and truly God, (<sup><B3></sup>John 20:28); yea, he seems to call himself so, when being tempted by Satan, he observed to him what is written, “thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God”, (<sup><B7></sup>Matthew 4:7). The reason why he so often calls himself the son of man is, because it was more suitable to him in his state of humiliation; and indeed, there was no need for him to assert his deity in express words, since his works and miracles most clearly proved that he was God: and as for the Apostle Paul, though he sometimes speaks of him as a man, he also says of him, that he is God over all, blessed for ever; and calls him the great God, and our Saviour, and God manifest in the flesh, (<sup><B5></sup>Romans 9:5 <sup><B3></sup>Titus 2:13 <sup><B16></sup>1 Timothy 3:16).

**Ver. 41.** *Ye do the deeds of your father*, etc.] Not Abraham, but the devil.

*Then said they unto him, we be not born of fornication*: meaning either literally, that they were not a brood of bastards, children of whoredom, illegitimately begotten in unlawful copulation, or wedlock; or figuratively, that they were not the children of idolaters, idolatry being called fornication in Scripture; but that they were the holy seed of Israel, and children of the prophets, who had retained the pure word, and the true worship of God, though in all this they might have been contradicted and refuted; to which they add,

*we have one Father, [even] God*; Israel being called by God his Son, and firstborn to them belonged the adoption, in a national sense, and of this they boasted; though few of them were the children of God by special adoption, or God their Father by regenerating grace.

**Ver. 42.** *Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father*, etc.] By adoption; and this was discovered by the grace of regeneration; or in other words, if they had been born of God,

*ye would love me*; for in regeneration love to Christ is always implanted: it is a fruit of the Spirit, which always comes along with the superabounding grace of God in conversion; whoever are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, love an unseen Jesus; and where there is no love to Christ, there can be no regeneration: such persons are not born again; nor is God their Father, at least manifestatively:

*for I proceeded forth; and came from God*; the former of these phrases is observed by many learned men to be used by the Septuagint, of a proper natural birth, as in (<sup>GEN</sup>Genesis 15:4 35:11); and here designs the eternal generation of Christ, as the Son of God, being the only begotten of the Father, and the Son of the Father in truth and love; and the other is to be understood of his mission from him, as Mediator:

*neither came I of myself*; or did not take the office to himself, without being called unto it, and invested with it, by his Father:

*but he sent me*; not by force, or against the will of Christ, or by change of place, but by assumption of nature; he sent him at the time agreed upon, in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption for his people: and upon both these accounts Christ is to be loved by all regenerate persons, or who have God for their Father; both on account of his being the Son of God, of the same nature and essence with him, (see <sup>JOH</sup>1 John 5:1); and on account of his mission into this world, as Mediator, since he was sent, and came to be the Saviour of lost sinners.

**Ver. 43.** *Why do ye not understand my speech?* etc.] Language, idiom, dialect, and form of speaking, in a figurative way; for they did not know what he meant by liberty, and bondage, and by having another father than Abraham, or by his own procession and coming forth from God:

*[even] because ye cannot hear my word*; as they had no spiritual discerning and understanding of the doctrine of Christ, which showed them to be

carnal, and natural men, and not regenerate ones, and the children of God; so they had an aversion to it, and could not bear to hear it.

**Ver. 44.** *Ye are of your father the devil*, etc.] Not of his substance, but by imitation and example; and as being under his authority and influence, his instructions and directions, and ready to follow after him, and obey his commands; the word “your” is rightly supplied, and is in some copies:

*and the lusts of your father ye will do*; the Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, “the lust”, or “desire of your father”; by which may be particularly meant, his eager desire after the death of Christ, which he showed at different times; he instigated Herod to seek to destroy his life in his infancy, and when he was just entering on his public ministry, he tempted him to destroy himself; and often stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees, to stone him or kill him, some other way; and at last put it into the heart of one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, to betray him: this looks as if though the devil had a notion of the salvation of men by Christ, yet that he thought, as some erroneous men have also done, that it was only by his doctrine and example, and therefore he was in haste to get him out of the world, that he might not be useful, or any more so that way; and not by the shedding of his blood, the sacrifice of himself, or by his sufferings and death, in the room of sinners; or otherwise it is scarcely credible, that he would have sought his death so earnestly: now this selfsame lust and insatiable desire after the death of Christ prevailed in the Jews; and they were resolute and bent upon fulfilling it at any rate, nor could anything divert them from it; this is the thing Christ is speaking of in the context, and is what fully proved the devil to be their father, and them to be his children:

*he was a murderer from the beginning*; he was not only spoken of from the beginning, as he that should bruise the Messiah’s heel, or should compass his death, but he was actually a murderer of Adam and Eve, and of all their posterity, by tempting them to sin, which brought death and ruin upon them; and who quickly after that instigated Cain to slay his brother; and has had, more or less, a concern in all murders committed since; and has been in all ages, and still is, a murderer of the souls of men; and therefore is rightly called Abaddon, and Apollyon, which signify the destroyer: the phrase, “from the beginning”, does not intend the beginning of his own creation; for he was created a holy creature, was in the truth, though he abode not in it; and was in an happy state, though he lost it: nor strictly the

beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, which were some days at least before the fall of man, when the devil commenced a murderer; but it being very near it, therefore this phrase is made use of: the Syriac version renders it, “from Bereshith”, which is the first word in the Hebrew Bible, and is frequently used by the Jewish Rabbins for the six days of the creation; and if Adam fell, as some think, the same day he was created, it might be properly said that the devil was a murderer from thence. Philo<sup>f397</sup> speaks of Eve’s serpent, as *ανψρωπου φονωντα*, “a murderer of man”; applying to this purpose the text before referred to, (<sup><0015></sup>Genesis 3:15);

*and abode not in the truth*; neither in the integrity, innocence, and holiness, in which he was created; nor in veracity, or as a creature of veracity, but spake lies, and formed one, by which he deceived Eve, saying, “ye shall not surely die”, (<sup><0014></sup>Genesis 3:4), when God had said they should, (<sup><0017></sup>Genesis 2:17); nor in the truth of the Gospel, which was at least in part made known unto him; particularly that the Son of God should become man, and in that nature be the head of angels and men: this he and his associates, in the pride of their hearts, not bearing that the human nature should be exalted above that of theirs, left their first estate, broke off their allegiance to God, and turned rebels against him:

*because there is no truth in him*; not that this is a reason why he continued not in the truth, for there was originally truth in him; though he abode not in it; but a reason, showing there was none in him now, since he was fallen from it, and abode not in it; there is no truth in him, that is natural and genuine, and essential to him; and if at any time he speaks it, it is not from his heart, but because he is forced to it, or has an evil design in it:

*when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own*; that is genuine and natural, of his own devising, willing, and approving:

*for he is a liar, and the father of it*; he was a liar, as early as he was a murderer, or rather earlier; it was with a lie he deceived, and so murdered our first parents, and he has continued so ever since; he was the first author of a lie; the first lie that ever was told, was told by him; he was the first inventor of one; he was the first of that trade; in this sense the word “father” is used, (<sup><0021></sup>Genesis 4:20,21); so the serpent is by the Cabalistic Jews<sup>f398</sup> called, the lip of lie, or the lying lip.

**Ver. 45.** *And because I tell you the truth*, etc.] And no lie, the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly the truth of his divine sonship:



*ye believe me not*; to such an infatuation and judicial blindness were they give up, to disbelieve him, because he told the truth, and to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which showed them to be the children of the devil, and under his power and influence.

**Ver. 46.** *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* etc.] Of any immorality in life, or of any imposture, corruption, or deceit in doctrine. There were many of them that were forward enough to charge him with both scandalous sins, and false doctrines; but none of them all could prove anything against him, so as to convict him according to law: they called him a wine bibber, and a glutton; gave out they knew he was a sinner; charged him with blasphemy and sedition; sought to bring proof of it, but failed in their attempt:

*and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* since as no sin in life, so no corruption in doctrine, could be proved against him, what he said must be truth; and therefore it was a most unreasonable thing in them, and showed invincible obstinacy, not to believe him.

**Ver. 47.** *He that is of God*, etc.] Who is born, not of blood, by carnal descent from any person, or of the carnal will, or by the power of freewill, or of the will of the best man in the world; but of God, according to his abundant mercy, of his own will, by the power of his grace; and so has God to be his Father: such an one

*heareth God's words*; the doctrines of the Gospel, which have God for their author, being of his ordaining, sending, and publishing; and his grace for the matter of them, displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal salvation, and his glory for the end: now a regenerate man has eyes to see into the glory, loveliness, excellency, suitableness, and usefulness of these things; and he has ears to hear, and a heart to understand them, which others have not; and therefore hears them with pleasure, receives them in the love of them, cordially embraces them by faith, and distinguishes them from the words of man; and puts such of them in practice, as requires it:

*ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God*; because God was not their Father, or they were not born of him, as they boasted; therefore they had not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to understand: and it may as fairly be inferred, that because they did not hear the words of God, therefore they were not of God; for these two necessarily imply each other;

it looks very dark on such persons, who neither hear the doctrines of the Gospel externally nor internally.

**Ver. 48.** *Then answered the Jews, and said unto him,* etc.] Being incensed to the last degree, that he should say they were of their father the devil, and not of God; and that he spoke the truth, and no one could convince him of sin:

*say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan?* it seems they had said so before, though it is not recorded; and now they thought themselves justified in it, since he treated them, the true sons of Abraham, in such a manner; and the rather, since he had been lately among the Samaritans, and had in a parable spoken in favour of a Samaritan: they meant by this expression, that he was an irreligious man, and one that had no regard to the law of Moses; or at least played fast and loose with religion and the law, and was for any thing, as times served: the Jews had a very ill opinion of the Samaritans, on these accounts and to call a man a Samaritan, was all one as to call him an heretic, an idolater, or an excommunicated person; for such were the Samaritans with the Jews; they charged them with corrupting the Scriptures, and with worshipping idols, which were hid in Mount Gerizim; and they give us a dreadful account of their being anathematized by Ezra, Zorobabel, and Joshua; who, they say <sup>f399</sup>,

“gathered the whole congregation into the temple, and brought in three hundred priests, and three hundred children, and three hundred trumpets, and three hundred books of the law, in their hands; they blew the trumpets, and the Levites sung, and they anathematized the Samaritans, by the inexplicable name of God, and by the writing on tables, and with the anathema of the house of judgment, above and below; (saying,) let not any Israelite for ever eat of the fruit, or of the least morsel of a Samaritan; hence they say, whoso eateth the flesh of a Samaritan, it is all one as if he ate swine’s flesh; also let not a Samaritan be made a proselyte, nor have a part in the resurrection of the dead; as it is said, “You have nothing to do with to build an house unto our God”, (<sup>104B</sup>Ezra 4:3), neither in this world, nor in the world to come: moreover, also let him have no part in Jerusalem; as it is said, “But you have no portion, nor, right, nor memorial in Jerusalem”, (<sup>102D</sup>Nehemiah 2:20); and they sent this anathema to the Israelites that were in Babylon, and they added thereunto, curse upon curse moreover,

king Cyrus added an everlasting anathema to it, as it is said, “And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy”, etc. (<sup>f400</sup>Ezra 6:12).”

And hence, because the Samaritans were had in such abhorrence by the Jews, they would not ask a blessing over food in company with them <sup>f400</sup>, nor say Amen after they had asked one <sup>f401</sup>; nor indeed, after the better sort of them had asked, unless the whole blessing was distinctly heard <sup>f402</sup>, that so they might be sure there was no heresy in it; by all which it appears, how opprobrious this name was, and what a sad character was fixed upon a man that bore it; *see Gill* “<sup>f400</sup>John 4:9”; and as Christ was called by the Jews a Samaritan, they having no name more hateful and reproachful to call him by, so the Christians are still in their writings called Cuthites, or Samaritans; and it is indeed with them a general name for all Gentiles and idolaters, or whom they esteem such:

*and hast a devil*; familiarity and converse with one; by which means they imagined he knew their thoughts, and their actions, and by his assistance performed his miracles; or they took him for a lunatic, or a madman; whose lunacy and madness proceeded from the devil, with whom he was possessed: and this rather seems to be the sense, since in (<sup>f402</sup>John 8:52) the Jews say they knew he had a devil, which they concluded from his saying, that such that observed his words, and kept them, should never die; which they considered as the words of a man out of his senses, seeing all men, even the best of men die, they not understanding his meaning; whereas they could not gather from hence, that he dealt with familiar spirits; and what still confirms this sense is, that these two are joined together in (<sup>f400</sup>John 10:20), “he hath a devil, and is mad”, and such as were demoniacs, men possessed with devils, were either mad, or lunatic, and melancholy; (see <sup>f403</sup>Matthew 8:28 <sup>f404</sup>Mark 5:2-5 <sup>f405</sup>Matthew 17:15), compared with (<sup>f407</sup>Mark 9:17,25). To which may be added, that it was a prevailing notion with the Jews, that madness and melancholy were owing to evil spirits, which had the predominancy over men: and seeing Christ was thought to be besides himself by his friends and relations, (<sup>f401</sup>Mark 3:21), it need not be wondered at, that his enemies should fix such a character on him; nor was this an unusual one to be given to good men; the prophets and spiritual men of the Old Testament were accounted madmen, (<sup>f406</sup>2 Kings 9:11 <sup>f407</sup>Hosea 9:7). And since our Lord was used in this abusive manner, it need not seem strange, that his followers should be

treated in the same way; as the Apostle Paul and his companions in the ministry were, (~~4034~~ Acts 26:24 ~~4035~~ 2 Corinthians 5:13); (see ~~4036~~ John 10:20).

**Ver. 49.** *Jesus answered, I have not a devil,* etc.] He takes no notice of the first charge and scandalous character, that he was a Samaritan; it being so notorious to all the Jews, that he was not; but was, as they supposed, a Galilean, and of Nazareth; and besides, this was a term of reproach, which they gave to any man, that they had no good opinion of; just as we call a man a Turk, or a Jew; not meaning that he is in fact such an one, but behaves like one: to the other Christ replies, that he had not a devil, had no conversation with one, nor was he possessed or assisted by him, or was mad, and acted the part of a madman: in proof of which he observes,

*but I honour my Father;* by ascribing his doctrine and miracles to him, by doing his will, seeking his glory, and speaking well of him; all which he would not, had he been in confederacy with the devil; for no man can be familiar with him, or be assisted by him, and honour God; nor could a man out of his senses do all this:

*and ye do dishonour me:* by such wicked charges, and scandalous imputations: and Jews, who deny Jesus to be the Messiah, and treat him in this opprobrious manner, are not the only persons that dishonour Christ; there are many that are called by his name, who greatly dishonour him; some by their bad principles, and others by their evil practices: such highly reflect upon him, who deny his proper deity, and eternal sonship; who assert, that he is only God by office, and did not exist before his incarnation; who despise and reject his righteousness, submit not to it, but establish their own; who account his blood as common and useless, and speak disrespectfully of his sacrifice and satisfaction; and who consider his sufferings and death only as an example to men, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, but not as in the room and stead of his people, to answer and satisfy divine justice for them: and others they dishonour him, though they talk much of him, and pretend to faith in him, and love to him, and hope of eternal life by him, through their scandalous lives and conversations; dishonour his name and Gospel; give the enemy an occasion to reproach and blaspheme, and by reason of them, the ways and truths of Christ are evil spoken of.

**Ver. 50.** *I seek not mine own glory,* etc.] In his doctrine, or in his miracles; which showed that he was no impostor, but a true, faithful, and upright person; and though he was so very much reproached and abused, he was

not over solicitous of his own character, and of retrieving his honour, and of securing glory from man; he knew that Wisdom was justified of her children, and he committed himself to God that judgeth righteously, who would take care of his glory, and vindicate him from all the unjust charges and insults of men:

*there is one that seeketh and judgeth*; meaning God his Father, who had his glory at heart; who had glorified him on the mount, and would glorify him again, when he should raise him from the dead, and spread his Gospel in all the world; and when he would judge the nation of the Jews, and bring wrath upon them, upon their nation, city and temple, for their contempt and rejection of him.

**Ver. 51.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, etc.] This is truth, and may be depended upon, as coming from the “Amen”, and faithful witness:

*if a man keep my saying*; or doctrine, receives the Gospel in the love of it, obeys it from his heart, and cordially embraces and firmly believes it; and retains and holds it fast, having a spiritual and comfortable experience of the doctrines of Christ, and yielding a cheerful and ready obedience to his commands and ordinances, in faith and love:

*he shall never see death*; the second death, eternal death, which is an everlasting separation of a man, body and soul, from God: this death shall have no power on such a person, he shall never be hurt by it; and though he dies a corporeal death, that shall not be a curse, a penal evil to him; nor shall he always lie under the power of it, but shall rise again, and live in soul and body, for ever with the Lord: seeing and tasting death, as in (~~405~~ John 8:52), are Hebraisms expressive of dying.

**Ver. 52.** *Then said the Jews unto him*, etc.] Upon these last words that he spake, giving assurance, that whoever kept his saying, should not die:

*now we know that thou hast a devil*; they thought and said so before, but now they were assured, that he must be under diabolical influence, must be possessed with the devil, and mad, and out of his senses; for they thought no man in his senses would ever talk at this rate:

*Abraham is dead, and the prophets*; that is, they are dead also, as the Ethiopic version adds; (see ~~3005~~ Zechariah 1:5);

*and thou sayest, if a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death:* Abraham and the prophets were so far from pretending by their doctrine to communicate life and secure men from death, that they could not keep themselves from dying; and therefore it must be diabolical madness and frenzy to assert anything of this kind.

**Ver. 53.** *Art thou greater than our father Abraham?* etc.] So the woman of Samaria said, concerning Jacob, (<sup><4042></sup>John 4:12). The Jews had a mighty opinion of their ancestors, especially of Abraham; and yet they allow the Messiah to be greater than he, as Jesus truly was: so one of their ancient commentators <sup>f403</sup> on those words of (<sup><2503></sup>Isaiah 52:13) thus paraphrases them,

“Behold my servant shall deal prudently”, this is the King Messiah; “he shall be exalted” above Abraham, as it is written, (<sup><0142></sup>Genesis 14:22), “and extolled” above Moses, as it is written, (<sup><04112></sup>Numbers 11:12), and he shall be higher than the ministering angels, as it is written, (<sup><3026></sup>Ezekiel 1:26 <sup><3047></sup>Zechariah 4:7), for he shall be *twba* *ˆm l wdg*, “greater than the fathers”.”

They add here, of Abraham,

*which is dead;* he was a great and good man, and yet dead:

*and the prophets are dead;* though they truly kept, and faithfully delivered the word of God:

*whom makest thou thyself?* who art a poor carpenter’s son, a Galilean, a Nazarene, and yet makest thyself greater than Abraham, or any of the prophets; yea, makest thyself to be God, to promise security from death, and an everlasting continuance of life upon keeping thy word.

**Ver. 54.** *Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing,* etc.] It is empty and vain, and will not continue; (see <sup><4708></sup>2 Corinthians 10:18);

*it is my Father that honoureth me:* by a voice from heaven, both at his baptism, and transfiguration, declaring him to be his beloved Son, and by the works and miracles he did by him; as he afterwards also honoured him by raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, by pouring forth his Spirit on his disciples, and succeeding his Gospel in every place:

*of whom ye say that he is your God*; your covenant God and Father, being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of this the Jews boasted. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and all the Oriental versions read, “our God”.

**Ver. 55.** *Yet ye have not known him*, etc.] Not as the Father of Christ, nor as in Christ, whom to know is life eternal: they had no spiritual knowledge of him, nor communion with him; nor did they know truly his mind and will, nor how to worship and serve him as they ought:

*but I know him*; his nature and perfections, being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with him; and his whole mind and will lying in his bosom: nor did, or does any know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom he is pleased to reveal him:

*and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you*. Our Lord still intimates, that they were of their father the devil, and imitated him not only as a murderer, but as a liar: this is quite contrary to the character they give of themselves, for they say<sup>f404</sup>, that an Israelite will not tell a lie.

*But I know him, and keep his saying*: do his will, and always the things that please him, observe his law, preach his Gospel, fulfil all righteousness, and work out the salvation of men, which were the will and work of his Father he came to do.

**Ver. 56.** *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day*, etc.] Or “he was desirous to see my day”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions rightly render the word; or “very desirous”, as the Persic version: and indeed, this was what many kings and prophets, and righteous men, were desirous of, even of seeing the Messiah and his day: we often read of *j ycmh twmy*, “the days of the Messiah”: and the Jews, in their Talmud<sup>f405</sup>, dispute much about them, how long they will be; one says forty years, another seventy, another three ages: it is the opinion of some, that they shall be according to the number of the days of the year, three hundred and sixty five years; some say seven thousand years, and others as many as have been from the beginning of the world; and others, as many as from Noah; but we know the day of Christ better, and how long he was here on earth; and whose whole time here is called his day; this Abraham had a very great desire to see:

*and he saw [it] and was glad*; he saw it with an eye of faith, he saw it in the promise, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and when it was promised him he should have a son, which was the beginning of the fulfilment of the other, he laughed, and therefore his son was called Isaac, to which some reference is here made; he saw him in the birth of his son Isaac and rejoiced, and therefore called his name Isaac, that is, “laughter”: he saw also Christ and his day, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, in a figure; in the binding of Isaac, in the sacrifice of the ram, and in the receiving of Isaac, as from the dead; and he not only saw the Messiah in his type Melchizedek, and who some think was the Son of God himself, but he saw the second person, the promised Messiah, in an human form, (<sup>f406</sup>Genesis 18:2); and all this was matter of joy and gladness to him. This brings to mind what the Jews say at the rejoicing at the law, when the book of the law is brought out <sup>f406</sup>

“Abraham rejoiced with the rejoicing of the law, he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law; Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, rejoiced with the joy of the law; he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law.”

**Ver. 57.** *Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old*, etc.] One copy reads forty, but he was not that; no, not much more than thirty; not above two or three and thirty years old: the reason of their fixing on this age of fifty might be, because Christ might look like such an one, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, as well as of great gravity; or they might be free in allowing him as many years, as could be thought he should be of, and gain their point; for what were fifty years, when Abraham had been dead above two thousand? and therefore he could never see Abraham, nor Abraham see him; moreover, this age of fifty, is often spoken of by the Jews, and much observed; at the age of fifty, a man is fit to give counsel, they say <sup>f407</sup>; hence the Levites were dismissed from service at that age, it being more proper for them then to give advice, than to bear burdens; a Methurgeman, or an interpreter in a congregation, was not chosen under fifty years of age <sup>f408</sup>; and if a man died before he was fifty, this was called the death of cutting off <sup>f409</sup>; a violent death, a death inflicted by God, as a punishment; Christ lived not to that age, he was now many years short of it:



*and hast thou seen Abraham?* if he had not, Abraham had seen him, in the sense before given, and in which Christ asserted it, and it is to be understood.

**Ver. 58.** *Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you,* etc.] Whether it will be believed or not, it is certainly fact:

*before Abraham was, I am;* which is to be understood, not of his being in the purpose and decree of God, foreordained to sufferings, and to glory; for so all the elect of God may be said to be before Abraham, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world: or that Christ was man, before Abraham became the father of many nations; that is, before the calling of the Gentiles; for nothing is said in the text about his being the father of many nations; it is a bold and impudent addition to it: and besides, Abraham was made the father of many nations, as Ishmaelites, Israelites, Hagarenes, etc. long before the incarnation of Christ; yea, he was so from the very promise in (<sup>(117B)</sup>Genesis 17:5), which so runs, “a father of many nations have I made thee”; so that this appears a false sense of the text, which is to be understood of the deity, eternity, and immutability of Christ, and refers to the passage in (<sup>(117B)</sup>Exodus 3:14). “I am that I am — I am hath sent me unto you”, the true Jehovah; and so Christ was before Abraham was in being, the everlasting I am, the eternal God, which is, and was, and is to come: he appeared in an human form to our first parents before Abraham was, and was manifested as the Mediator, Saviour, and living Redeemer, to whom all the patriarchs before Abraham looked, and by whom they were saved: he was concerned in the creation of all things out of nothing, as the efficient cause thereof; he was set up from everlasting as Mediator; and the covenant of grace was made with him, and the blessings and promises of it were put into his hands before the world began; the eternal election of men to everlasting life was made in him before the foundation of the world; and he had a glory with his Father before the world was; yea, from all eternity he was the Son of God, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and his being of the same nature proves his eternity, as well as deity, that he is from everlasting to everlasting God; and is what he ever was, and will be what he now is: he is immutable, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; in his nature, love, grace, and fulness, he is the invariable and unchangeable I am.

**Ver. 59.** *Then they took up stones to cast at him,* etc.] Supposing that he had spoken blasphemy; for they well understood that he, by so saying,

made himself to be the eternal God, the unchangeable Jehovah. Should it be asked how they came by their stones in the temple? it may be replied, the temple was still building, (~~412~~ John 2:20), and stones, or pieces of stones, might lie about, with which they furnished themselves, in order to have destroyed Christ: and this they attempted, though it was on the sabbath day, as appears from (~~410~~ John 9:1,14); and with them, **tbcb hl yqs**, “stoning on the sabbath day”<sup>f410</sup> was allowed in some cases.

*But Jesus hid himself*, not in any corner of the temple, or behind a pillar; but he withdrew himself from them directly, and made himself invisible to them, by holding their eyes, or casting a mist before them, that they could not see him:

*and went out of the temple*; by one of the gates of it:

*going through the midst of them*; not of the persons that took up stones to stone him; but the rest of the people, who were there in great multitudes to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: and so passed by, and escaped out of their hands; the last words, going through the midst of them,

*and so passed by*, are not in Beza’s most ancient copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version.