

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 10

Ver. 1. *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, etc.] To the Scribes and Pharisees, who had taken it ill that they should be thought to be blind; and who had cast out the man that Christ had cured of blindness, for speaking in favour of him; and who had traduced Christ as an impostor, and a deceiver, and set up themselves to be the shepherds of the flock, and the guides and rulers of the people; all which occasion the following parable; the design of which is to show, that Christ is the true and only shepherd, who was appointed, called, and sent of God, whose the sheep are, whose voice they hear, and know, and whom they follow; and that they, the Scribes and Pharisees, were thieves and robbers, and not shepherds of the flock; who were not sent of God, nor did they come in at the right door, but in another way, and usurped a domination, which did not belong to them.

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold: the sheepfold, with the Jews, was called **ryd**; and this, as their writers say ^{f449}, was an enclosure sometimes in the manner of a building, and made of stone, and sometimes was fenced with reeds, and in it was a large door, at which the shepherd went in and out, when he led in, or brought out the sheep. At tithing, which was done in the sheepfold, they made a little door, so that two lambs could not come out together; and to this enclosure is the allusion here; and by the “sheepfold” is meant the church of God; (see ~~6106~~ John 10:16); and a good fold it is, (~~6144~~ Ezekiel 34:14). The church may be compared to a sheepfold, because it is separated from the world: it is where the people of God, and sheep of Christ are gathered together; where there is a strict union between them; have society with each other; keep one another warm and comfortable; and where they are fed and nourished, and are preserved; and where they lie down and have rest; and which, like a sheepfold, will be taken down, and not always continue in the form it now is: and by “the door” into it, is meant Christ himself, as appears from (~~6107~~ John 10:7,9); faith in him, a profession of him, and authority from him. Now he that does not come into the church of God, whether as a member of it, or officer in it, at this door,

but climbeth up some other way; by hypocrisy and deceit: or, like the prophets of old, who ran and were not sent; prophesied when they were not spoken to, but took their place and post by usurpation:

the same is a thief and a robber; steals into the church, or into an office in it, and robs God or Christ of their power and authority; and such were the Scribes and Pharisees: the Persic version renders the words, “whoever does not introduce the sheep through the door of the sheepfold, know that that man is a thief and a robber”; which these men were so far from doing, that they would not suffer those that were entering to go in, (^{<42313>}Matthew 23:13). The difference between a thief and a robber, with the Jews, was, that the former took away a man’s property privately, and the latter openly

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Ver. 2. *But he that entereth in by the door*, etc.] With a divine commission, and by a divine authority, who comes not of himself, but is sent; does not take the honour to himself, or thrust in himself, and assume an office to himself, but is called unto it, and invested in it, he

is the shepherd of the sheep; by whom Christ means himself, as is evident from (^{<6011>}John 10:11,14), whose the sheep are, and who takes care of them, and feeds them, as a shepherd does his flock; and which holds true of any under shepherd, having his mission and commission, and deriving his authority from Christ.

Ver. 3. *To him the porter openeth*, etc.] There is nothing in the explanation of this parable given by Christ, that directs to the sense of this clause; the allusion cannot be, as some have thought, to great men, who have porters at their gates, to open them, and let in persons that come and knock; since the parable is concerning the sheepfold, and the shepherd, and the sheep that go into it; and therefore must refer to one that at least, at certain times, stood by the door of the sheepfold, and had the care of it, and opened it upon proper occasions: by whom is designed not Michael the Archangel, nor the Virgin Mary, nor Peter, the supposed doorkeeper of heaven, as say the Papists, nor Moses, as others, who wrote of Christ; nor does it seem so well to understand it of the ministers of the Gospel, who preach Jesus Christ, and open the door of faith, or set open the door of the Gospel, whereby Christ comes into the souls of men, and they come to him; though this is a sense not to be despised; but rather this intends God the Father, from whom Christ, as man and Mediator, derives his authority, and by whom he is let into, and invested with his office, as the shepherd of the

sheep; or else the Holy Spirit, who opens the everlasting floors of the hearts of men, of Christ's sheep, and lets him in unto them.

And the sheep hear his voice; not the porter's; though they do hear the voice of Christ's ministers, and of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost; but the shepherd's, even the voice of Christ; and which is no other than the Gospel, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; which proclaims peace, pardon, liberty, life, righteousness, and salvation; and which is a soul quickening, alluring, delighting, refreshing, and comforting voice: this the people of Christ are made to hear, not only externally, but internally; so as to understand it, delight in it, and distinguish it from another: and these are called "sheep", and that before conversion; not because they have the agreeable properties of sheep; nor because predisposed unto, and unprejudiced against the Gospel of Christ, for they are the reverse of these; nor can some things be said of them before, as after conversion, as that they hear the voice of Christ, and follow him; nor merely by anticipation, but by reason of electing grace, and because given to Christ the great shepherd, under this character, to be kept and fed by him. And they are so called after conversion, because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to the malice, cruelty, and butchery of men; and are meek and patient under sufferings; and are clean, social, and profitable.

And he calleth his own sheep by name; the Ethiopic version adds, "and loves them". These are Christ's own, by the Father's gift of them to him, by the purchase of his own blood, and by the power of his grace upon them; who looks them up, and finds them out, and brings them home, and takes care of them as his own, and feeds them as a shepherd his flock: these he may be said to "call by name", in allusion to the eastern shepherds, who gave names to their sheep, as the Europeans do to their horses, and other creatures, and who could sit and call them by their names: this is expressive not only of Christ's call of his people by powerful and special grace, but of the exact and distinct knowledge he has of them, and the notice he takes of them, as well as of the affection he has for them; (see ³⁴⁰Isaiah 43:1,2 ³⁴¹2 Timothy 2:19).

And leadeth them out; from the world's goats, among whom they lay, and from the folds of sin, and the barren pastures of Mount Sinai, and their own righteousness, on which they were feeding, and out of themselves, and from off all dependence on anything of their own; and he leads unto

himself, and the fulness of his grace, and to his blood and righteousness, and into his Father's presence and communion with him, and in the way of righteousness and truth, and into the green pastures of the word and ordinances, beside the still waters of his sovereign love and grace.

Ver. 4. *And when he putteth forth his own sheep*, etc.] The Ethiopic version reads, "when he leads them all out"; in order to bring them into proper pastures:

he goeth before them; in allusion to the eastern shepherds, who when they put out their flocks, did not, as ours do, drive them before them, and follow after them, at least not always, but went before them: so Christ, the great shepherd, goes before his flock, not only to provide for them, but by way of example to them; in many instances he is an ensample to the flock, as under shepherds, according to the measure of grace received, should be: he has left them an example in many respects, that they should tread in his steps:

and the sheep follow him; in the exercise of the graces of humility, love, patience, self-denial, and resignation of will to the will of God; and in the discharge of duty, walking, in some measure, as he walked.

For they know his voice; in the Gospel, which directs and encourages them to exercise grace in him, and to walk in the path of duty: this they know by the majesty and authority of it; and by the power with which it comes to their souls; and by its speaking of him, and leading to him; and by the evenness, harmony, and consistency of it. The Persic version renders the whole thus; "when he calls and leads out the sheep, they go before him, and their lambs after them, for they know his voice".

Ver. 5. *And a stranger will they not follow*, etc.] One that knows not Christ, is not sent by him, and who does not preach him:

but will flee from him; shun him and his ministry, as not only disagreeable, but dangerous:

for they know not the voice of strangers: they do not approve of their doctrine, nor take any delight in it, or receive any profit from it. The Persic version, as before, reads, "neither will the lambs ever go after strange sheep, and if they see [them], they will flee [from them]".

Ver. 6. *This parable spake Jesus unto them*, etc.] To the Pharisees, who were with him, (^{<BBB>}John 9:40);

but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them; the things spoken by him being delivered in a parabolical way, though in lively figures, and in terms plain and easy to be understood; yet what through the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, and their prejudices in favour of themselves, and against Christ, they did not understand what were meant by them; (see ^{<BBB>}Matthew 13:13-15).

Ver. 7. *Then said Jesus unto them again*, etc.] By way of explanation of the above parable, since they did not understand it:

verily, verily, I say unto you; this is certainly truth, and what may be depended on as such, whether it will be believed or not:

I am the door of the sheep; and of none but them; not of goats, dogs, or swine; none but sheep enter at this door; and all the sheep do sooner or later: Christ is the door to them, by which they enter into a visible church state, and are let into a participation of the ordinances of it, as baptism and the Lord's supper: no man comes into a church, at the right door, or in a right way, or has a right to partake of Gospel ordinances, but he that truly believes in Christ, and makes a profession of faith in him: Christ is the door of the under shepherds of the sheep; none are fit to be pastors of churches, but who first enter into a Gospel church at this door, and are qualified, and called, and sent forth by Christ: he is the door of the sheep, by which they are let into the presence of his Father, and have communion with him, and partake of all the blessings of grace; it is through him that sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are conveyed unto them, and they brought into the enjoyment of them; it is through him they have all their peace, joy, and comfort, and deliverance from, and victory over all their enemies; through him they have heirship, and a right unto eternal life, and that itself; for he is the door into heaven itself, through which they shall have an abundant entrance into it: and he is the only door into each of these; there is no coming to God the Father but by, and through him; nor to a participation of the blessings of the covenant, nor rightly into a Gospel church state, and to the ordinances of it, nor into heaven at last, but in at this door: and this is a door of faith and hope, and an open one, for all sensible sinners, for all the sheep of Christ, to enter in at; though it is a strait gate, the number being few that enter in at it; and those that do,

though they are certainly, yet but scarcely saved; for it is through many tribulations and afflictions that they enter.

Ver. 8. *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers*, etc.] This must be understood with some restrictions, not of every individual person, nor of every individual prophet or shepherd; not of Moses, nor of the prophets of the Lord, nor of John the Baptist, who came immediately before Christ, was his harbinger, and prepared his way; but of those prophets who came, and were not sent of God, and so did not come in by the door; of the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and not the flock, but lorded it over God's heritage; and of such, as Theudas, and Judas the Galilean, who boasted that they were some great persons, but were only thieves and robbers; and particularly of the three shepherds cut off in one month, (~~3108~~ Zechariah 11:8), supposed to be the three sects among the Jews, and the leaders of them, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, especially the former; who were wolves in sheep's clothing, usurped a power that did not belong to them, robbed God of his authority, and glory; and, in a literal sense, plundered men of their substance, and devoured widows' houses, as well as destroyed their souls. The phrase, "before me", is wanting in seven of Beza's exemplars, and in several others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions:

but the sheep did not hear them; the elect of God, some of which there were in all ages, though their number is comparatively few, did not attend to the false prophets, and false teachers, and idol shepherds; did not receive their doctrines, nor follow their practices; for it is not possible that these should be finally and totally deceived, or carried away with the error of the wicked.

Ver. 9. *I am the door*, etc.] Of the sheep, as before, (see ~~3107~~ John 10:7). The Ethiopic version reads, "I am the true door of the sheep"; which is repeated for further confirmation, and for the sake of introducing what follows:

by me if any man enter in; into the sheepfold, the church,

he shall be saved; not that being in a church, and having submitted to ordinances, will save any, but entering into these, at the right door, or through faith in Christ, such will be saved, according to (~~3106~~ Mark 16:16); such shall be saved from sin, the dominion of it, the guilt and condemning power of it, and at last from the being of it; and from the law, its curse and

condemnation, and from wrath to come, and from every evil, and every enemy; such are, and for ever shall be, in a safe state, being in Christ, and in his hands, out of which none can pluck them:

and shall go in and out; in allusion to the sheep going in and out of the fold: not that those who come in at the right door, shall go out of the church, or from among the saints again; but this phrase rather denotes the exercises of faith in going unto Christ, and acting upon him, and in coming forth in the outward confession of him, and the performance of good works; or in going unto him, and dealing with his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and coming out of themselves, and all dependence on their own righteousness; or it may regard the conversation of the saints in the church, their attendance on ordinances, their safety there, their free and open communion one with another, and with Christ, in whose name and strength they do all they do, coming in and out at this door:

and find pasture; green and good pasture; pasture for their souls; the words of faith, and good doctrine; the wholesome words of Christ Jesus; the ordinances, the breasts of consolation; yea, Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: the Persic version renders it, “and shall a pastor”, or “shepherd”; (see ²⁴¹⁵Jeremiah 3:15).

Ver. 10. *The thief cometh not but for to steal*, etc.] That is his first and principal view; to steal, is to invade, seize, and carry away another’s property. Such teachers that come not in by the right door, or with a divine commission, seek to deceive, and carry away the sheep of Christ from him, though they are not able to do it; and to steal away their hearts from him, as Absalom stole the hearts of the people from their rightful lord and sovereign, David his father; and to subject them to themselves, that they might lord it over them, and make a property of them, as the Pharisees did, who, under a pretence of long prayers, devoured widows’ houses.

And to kill and to destroy; either the souls of men by their false doctrines, which eat as doth a cancer, and poison the minds of men, and slay the souls that should not die, subverting the faith of nominal professors, though they cannot destroy any of the true sheep of Christ; or the bodies of the saints, by their oppression, tyranny, and persecution, who are killed all the day long for the sake of Christ, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, by these men, they thinking that by so doing they do God good service.

I am come that they might have life; that the sheep might have life, or the elect of God might have life, both spiritual and eternal; who, as the rest of mankind, are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and liable in themselves to an eternal death: Christ came into this world in human nature, to give his flesh, his body, his whole human nature, soul and body, for the life of these persons, or that they might live spiritually here, and eternally hereafter; and so the Arabic version renders it, “that they might have eternal life”; Nonnus calls it, “a life to come”; which is in Christ, and the gift of God through him; and which he gives to all his sheep, and has a power to give to as many as the Father has given him:

and that they might have [it] more abundantly; or, as the Syriac version reads, “something more abundant”; that is, than life; meaning not merely than the life of wicked men, whose blessings are curses to them; or than their own life, only in the present state of things; or than long life promised under the law to the observers of it; but even than the life Adam had in innocence, which was but a natural and moral, not a spiritual life, or that life which is hid with Christ in God; and also than that which angels live in heaven, which is the life of servants, and not of sons: or else the sense is, that Christ came that his people might have eternal life, with more abundant evidence of it than was under the former dispensation, and have stronger faith in it, and a more lively hope of it: or, as the words may be rendered, “and that they might have an abundance”: besides life, might have an abundance of grace from Christ, all spiritual blessings in him now, and all fulness of joy, glory, and happiness hereafter.

Ver. 11. *I am the good shepherd*, etc.] A shepherd of his Father’s appointing, calling, and sending, to whom the care of all his sheep, or chosen ones, was committed; who was set up as a shepherd over them by him, and was entrusted with them; and who being called, undertook to feed them; and being promised, was sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and under the character of a shepherd, died for them, and rose again, and is accountable to his Father for everyone of them; the shepherd, the great and chief shepherd, the famous one, so often spoken and prophesied of, (⁰⁴²⁴Genesis 49:24 ²³⁰¹Isaiah 40:11) (³⁵²³Ezekiel 34:23). And discharging his office aright, he is the good shepherd; as appears in his providing good pasture, and a good fold for his sheep; in protecting them from their enemies; in healing all their diseases; in restoring their souls when strayed from him; in watching over them in the night seasons, lest any hurt them; in searching for them, when they have been driven, or

scattered in the dark and cloudy day; in caring for them, so that he lose none of them; and in nothing more than in what follows,

the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep: not only exposes it to danger, as David did his, for the sake of his father's flock, but gives it away freely and voluntarily, for the sake of the sheep; in their room and stead, as a ransom for them, that they may be delivered from death, and might have eternal life: the Ethiopic version renders it, "the good shepherd gives his life for the redemption of his sheep"; so Nonnus paraphrases it, the "ransom price of his own sheep": this belongs to Christ's priestly office, and with the Jews priests were sometimes shepherds hence we read ^{f451} of **μῦνηκ μῦ[wr**, "shepherds that were priests". Philo the Jew speaks ^{f452} of God as a shepherd and king; and of his setting his word, his firstborn Son, over the holy flock, to take care of it: and a good shepherd is thus described by the ^{f453} Jews;

"as **bwj h[wr**, "a good shepherd", delivers the flock from the wolf, and from the lions, ((see ^{<B102>}John 10:12)) so he that leads Israel, if he is good, delivers them from the idolatrous nations, and from judgment below and above, and leads them to the life of the world to come, or eternal life; ((see ^{<B100>}John 10:10))."

Which description agrees with Christ, the good shepherd; and so the Lord is said to be **bwj h[wr**, "the good shepherd", and merciful, and there is none like him ^{f454}.

Ver. 12. *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd*, etc.] That is, who is not the owner of the sheep, though he keeps them, yet only for reward: by whom are meant, not the faithful ministers of the word, who live upon the Gospel, as Christ has ordained, and who are worthy of their reward, and are not to be called hirelings by way of reproach; since they teach not for hire and reward, but for the good of souls, and the interest of the Redeemer; but such who seek only their gain, from their quarter, and mind their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ:

whose own the sheep are not; who have neither a propriety in them, nor an hearty affection for them, and so care not what becomes of them: such an one "seeth the wolf coming"; by whom may be meant, either Satan; so the Jews compare Israel to a flock of sheep, and Satan, they say, **bazh awh**, "he is the wolf" ^{f455}; or any false prophet, or teacher, who are ravenous

wolves; though sometimes in sheep's clothing; or any tyrant, oppressor, or persecutor of the saints:

and leaveth the sheep; as the idol shepherd, against whom a woe is pronounced, (^{<38117>}Zechariah 11:17).

And fleeth; not being willing to bear any reproach or persecution, for the sake of Christ; not such a keeper of the flock as David, who went after the lion and the bear, and when they rose up against him, did not flee, but caught them by the beard and slew them; nor like the Apostle Paul, who fought with beasts at Ephesus, and would turn his back on none, nor give place, no, not for an hour, that truth might continue;

and the wolf catcheth them; some of them:

and scattereth the sheep; the rest; so are the sheep of Christ and his churches sometimes scattered, by persecution raised against them; (see ^{<481>}Acts 8:1,4). The Jews have a rule concerning such an hireling shepherd ^{f456}, which is this;

“a shepherd that feeds his flock, and leaves it, and goes to the city, and a wolf comes and ravines, and the lion comes and tears in pieces, he is free; but if he leaves by it his staff and his scrip, he is guilty.”

Which Maimonides thus ^{f457} expresses and explains;

“a shepherd who can deliver that which is torn, and that which is carried captive, with other shepherds, and with staves, and does not call the other shepherds, nor bring the staves to deliver them, he is guilty: one that keeps freely, and one that keeps for hire; he that keeps freely, calls the shepherds, and brings the staves freely; and if he does not find them, he is not guilty; but he that keeps for hire, is obliged to hire shepherds and staves, in order to deliver them.”

Ver. 13. *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling*, etc.] And has no propriety in the sheep; had he, he would abide by them, and defend them; but because he has not, he will not expose himself to any danger, but leaves them:

and careth not for the sheep; what becomes of them, providing only for his own safety. Abarbinel ^{f458} has a note on (^{<2301>}Isaiah 40:11) which may serve to illustrate this passage:

““he shall feed his flock like a shepherd”; not as he that feeds the flock of others, for the hire they give him, but as a shepherd that feeds his own flock; who has compassion more abundantly on it, because it is his own flock; and therefore he saith, “behold his reward is with him”, for he does not seek a reward from another; “and his work is before him”; for he feeds what is his own, and therefore his eyes and his heart are there.”

Which is not the case of the hireling; he does not care for them, he has not their good at heart; but the good shepherd has, such an one as Christ is.

Ver. 14. *I am the good shepherd*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~801~~John 10:11”).

And know my [sheep]; so as to call them all by their names: Christ has an universal, special, distinct, and exact knowledge of all his sheep, as they are the choice of his Father, as his Father’s gift to him; and as his own purchase; he bears an affectionate love to them, and takes special care of them; indulges them with intimate communion with himself; and owns and acknowledges them as his, both here and hereafter:

and I am known of mine; not in a general way, as devils and external professors may know him, but with a special, spiritual, and saving knowledge: Christ’s own approve of him, as their shepherd and their Saviour, and desire no other; they love him above all, in the sincerity of their souls, and with a love as strong as death; they trust in him as their shepherd, believing they shall not want; and appropriate him to themselves, as their own; and care for him, his cause and interest, his Gospel, ordinances, and ministers; and are not ashamed to own him as theirs, in the most public manner.

Ver. 15. *As the Father knoweth me*, etc.] These words, with what follow, are in connection with (~~804~~John 10:14); and the sense is, that the mutual knowledge of Christ, and his sheep, is like that which his Father and he have of each other. The Father knows Christ as his own Son, and loves him as such, in the most strong and affectionate manner; and has entrusted him with the persons, grace, and glory, of all his people:

even so know I the Father; or rather, “and I know the Father”; as he needs must, since he lay in his bosom, and still does, and knows his nature, perfections, purposes, and his whole mind and will; and loves him most ardently, which he has shown by his coming down from heaven, to do his

will; and trusts in him for the accomplishment of everything he promised unto him:

and I lay down my life for the sheep; which proves him to be the good shepherd, (^{<BIB>}John 10:11). The Vulgate Latin version reads, “for my sheep”; which were his, by the Father’s gift, and for no other has he laid down his life. The Ethiopic version, as before, renders it, or rather explains it, “I lay down my life for the redemption of my sheep”.

Ver. 16. *And other sheep I have*, etc.] Not distinct from those for whom he laid down his life, but from those who were under the Old Testament dispensation, and who heard not the thieves and robbers that were before Christ, (^{<BIB>}John 10:8); others besides the lost sheep of the house of Israel, or the elect among the Jews, to whom Christ was sent; and by whom are meant the chosen of God among the Gentiles, who were sheep, though not called and folded, for the reasons given: (see Gill on “^{<BIB>}John 10:3”). These, though uncalled, belonged to Christ; he had an interest in them, they were given him by his Father; he had them in his hands, and upon his heart; his eye was upon them, and they were under his notice, inspection, and care:

which are not of this fold, of the Jewish nation and church, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; were as sheep going astray, and were scattered about in the several parts of the world; and were to be redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation:

them also I must bring; out of the wilderness of the world, from among the men of it, their former sinful compassions, from the folds of sin and Satan, and the pastures of their own righteousness; to himself, and into his Father’s presence, to his house and ordinances, to a good fold and green pastures, and at last to his heavenly kingdom and glory: and there was a necessity of doing all this, partly on account of his Father’s will and pleasure, his purposes and decrees, who had resolved upon it; and partly on account of his own engagements, who had obliged himself to do it; as well as because of the case and condition of these sheep, who otherwise must have eternally perished:

and they shall hear my voice; in the Gospel, not only externally, but internally; which is owing to his powerful and efficacious grace, who quickens them, and causes them to hear and live; unstops their deaf ears,

and gives them ears to hear; and opens their hearts, to attend to his word, and gives them an understanding of it. The Arabic version reads this in connection with the preceding clause, thus, “and I must bring them also to hear my voice”; as well as the rest of the sheep among the Jews, and therefore the Gospel was sent among them:

and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd; one church state, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles; the middle wall of partition being broke down, these two coalesce in one, become one new man, and members of one and the same body; for though there may be several visible Gospel churches, yet there is but one kind of church state, and one general assembly and church of the firstborn, one family to which they all belong; for what reasons a church is comparable to a fold, (see Gill on “³¹⁰John 10:1”). And over this fold, or flock, there is but one shepherd, Jesus Christ; who is the rightful proprietor, and whose own the sheep are; and who knows how to feed them, and does take care of them; though there are many under shepherds, whom he employs in feeding them; in the original text the copulative “and” is wanting, and the words stand thus, “one fold, one shepherd”; which not only expresses a peculiar elegance, but answers the proverb delivered in the same form; and to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, which render them, “and there”, or “they shall be one fold of one shepherd”; or one flock which belongs to one shepherd only; (see ³¹²Ezekiel 34:23 37:24).

Ver. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me*, etc.] Christ was the object of his Father’s love from all eternity, and was loved by him on various accounts; first and chiefly, as his own Son, of the same nature with him, equal to him; and also as Mediator, engaging for, and on the behalf of his chosen people; and likewise as he was clothed with their nature, and even in his state of humiliation; and not only as subject to his ordinances, and obedient to his will, and doing what was pleasing in his sight, but likewise as suffering in their room and stead, and he loved him on this account; the bruising of him was a pleasure to him, not for the sake of that itself, but because hereby his counsels and decrees were accomplished, his covenant fulfilled, and the salvation of his people obtained: hence it follows here,

because I lay down my life; that is, for the sheep; to ransom them from sin and Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from death and hell, wrath, ruin and destruction: and the laying down his life on this account,

was not only well pleasing to his Father, but likewise was done, with the following view; or at least this was the event of it,

that I might take it again; as he did, by raising himself from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God; and to have made full satisfaction to divine justice, for the sins of his people, and therefore rose again for their, justification; and to be the victorious conqueror over death, having now abolished it, and having in his hands the keys of it, the power over that, and the grave: and which life he took up again, by his divine power, and as the surety of his people, to use it for their good; by ascending to his God and theirs, entering into heaven as their forerunner, appearing in the presence of God for them, as their advocate, and ever living to make intercession for them.

Ver. 18. *No man taketh it from me*, etc.] It was indeed taken away at the instigation of the Jews, and by the order of Pilate, and by means of the Roman soldiers, who crucified him; and the former of these are often charged with slaying him, and killing him, the Prince of life; and it is expressly said, “his life is taken from the earth”, (~~483~~ Acts 8:33); and yet no man could, nor did take it away, without his Father’s will, and determinate counsel and knowledge, by which he was delivered up into the hands of the above persons, and by which they did to him what they did, or otherwise they could have had no power over him; nor could any man, nor did any man, take away his life from him, without his own consent; he voluntarily surrendered himself, or he could never have been taken; he went freely to the cross, or he could never have been led there; he suffered himself to be nailed to the accursed tree, and when he hung on it, he could easily have disengaged himself, and come down; and when they had him there, they could not have taken away his life, had he not of himself given up the ghost, and breathed out his life and soul:

but I lay it down of myself; of my own will, or of my own accord, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; which was done with the greatest patience and meekness, resolution, courage and magnanimity; and with a full will, and with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity; and that as a ransom for his people, and that they might live through him:

I have power to lay it down; this was not his life as God, but as man; and was so his own, as it was not his Father’s, and was entirely at his own dispose; for it was the life of that individual human nature, which was united to his divine person; and so in a sense his, as it was not either the

Father's or the Spirit's; and was so his own, as ours are not, which are from God, and dependent on him, and entirely to be disposed of by him, and not by ourselves: but Christ, the Prince of life, had a power of laying down his life of his own accord, as a ransom price for his sheep:

and I have power to take it again; as he was the Son of God, and truly God, and as the surety of his people; having satisfied law and justice, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and for the ends mentioned in note, (see Gill on "⁴⁸⁰⁷John 10:17"):

this commandment have I received of my Father; which may respect both branches of his power, but is not the foundation of it, but the reason of its exercising it; because it was so agreeable to his Father's will, which is the same with his own, as he is the Son of God, and one with his Father, and equal to him; and what he delights in as Mediator, in which capacity he is considered as a servant; and in which he cheerfully became obedient, even unto death, to his Father's command, or in compliance with his will: the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "because this commandment have I received of my Father": this is a reason why he so readily exerted his power, both in laying down his life, and taking it again, because it was his Father's command and will, and which he received from him, with the utmost pleasure; his and his Father's love, good will, gracious ends and views towards the elect, herein being the same.

Ver. 19. *There was a division therefore again among the Jews,* etc.] As there had been before; (see ⁴⁸⁷²John 7:12 9:16).

For these sayings; concerning his being the good shepherd, and laying down his life for the sheep, and having both a power to lay it down, and take it up again.

Ver. 20. *And many of them said, he hath a devil, and is mad,* etc.] It was a notion of the Jews, that madness or distraction was from the devil, and therefore these two are here joined together, having a devil, and being mad: there is a spirit which they call Tazazith, and which, they say ^{f459}, is an evil spirit that takes away the understanding of men; and under the influence of such a "demon", the Jews thought Christ to be: and therefore say,

why hear ye him? he is a lunatic, he is distracted, he is a madman; how can you bear to hear such ranting blasphemous stuff, which no man in his senses would ever utter? nor is anything he says to be regarded, since he is

not in his right mind; but is under the power and influence of some evil spirit, which instills these wild and frantic notions into him, and puts him upon venting them; but surely no sober man will ever heed to them.

Ver. 21. *Others said, these are not the words of him that hath a devil,* etc.] No madman or demoniac, one possessed of a devil, and under the influence of Satan, would ever talk in so divine a manner, and speak such words of truth and soberness: these were, some of the wiser sort, and were well disposed to Christ, who reasoned thus, and they were but few: whereas those that charged him with madness and distraction were many, as in the preceding verse;

can a devil open the eyes of the blind? referring to the late instance, of Christ's curing a man that was blind from his birth; if it was in the power of a devil to do such an action, which it is not, yet it is not in his nature, it is not usual with him to do any good; but to do all the hurt he can, both to the bodies and souls of men: in one of Beza's copies it is read, "can one that has a devil open the eyes of the blind?" so the Persic version, can a "demoniac", etc.? which reading suits best with what is before said; and then the sense is, can a madman, one that is a lunatic, one possessed with the devil, either talk in the manner this man does, or do such wonderful actions as he has done, particularly cure a man that was born blind?

Ver. 22. *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication,* etc.] That is, of the temple; not as built by Solomon, as Nonnus in his paraphrase suggests; or as rebuilt by Zerubabel, for there were no annual feasts appointed in commemoration of either of these; and besides, they were neither of them in the winter time; the dedication of Solomon's temple was in autumn, at the feast of tabernacles, about September, (^{<1000>}1 Kings 8:2,65,66); and the dedication of the house in Zorobabel's time, was in the spring, about February, (^{<1065>}Ezra 6:15,16); but this was the feast of dedication, appointed by Judas Maccabaeus and his brethren, on account of the purging the temple, and renewing the altar, after the profanation of them by Antiochus; which feast lasted eight days, and began on the twenty fifth of the month Cisleu, which answers to part of our December; see the Apocrypha:

"52 Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, 56 And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness,

and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. 59 Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.” (1 Maccabees 4)

“5 Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu. 8 They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.” (2 Maccabees 10:8)

with which the Jewish writers agree ^{f460}: the account Maimonides gives ^{f461} of it is this;

“when the Israelites prevailed over their enemies and destroyed them, it was on the twenty fifth of the month Chisleu; and they went into the temple and could not find any pure oil in the sanctuary, but one vial; and it was not enough to light but one day only, and they lighted lamps of it for eight days, until the olives were squeezed, and they brought forth pure oil: wherefore the wise men of that generation ordered, that those eight days beginning at the twenty fifth of Chisleu, should be days of rejoicing and praise, and they lighted lamps at the doors of their houses; every night of these eight nights, to show and make known the miracle; and these days are called חקני “the dedication”; and they are forbidden mourning and fasting, as the days of “purim”; and the lighting of the lamps on them, is a commandment from the Scribes, as is the reading of the book of Esther. How many lamps do they light at the feast of the dedication? the order is, that every house should light one lamp, whether the men of the house be many, or whether there is but one man in it; but he that honours the command, lights up lamps according to the number of the men of the house, a lamp for everyone, whether men or women; and he that honours it more, lights up a lamp for every man the first night, and adds as he goes, every night a lamp; for instance, if there be ten men in the house, the first night he lights up ten lamps, and on the second night

twenty, and on the third night thirty; until he comes to the eighth night, when he lights up fourscore lamps.”

Wherefore, as Josephus says ^{f462}, this feast was called φωτα, “lights”; though he seems to assign another reason of its name, because that prosperity and happiness appeared to them beyond hope, and unexpected: and though this was only an order of Judas and his brethren, and the congregation of Israel, yet the Jews observe it as religiously, as if it was the appointment of God himself, and they do not spare to call it so; for in the service of this feast, they have these words ^{f463};

“blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his commandments, and hath “commanded” us to light the lamp of the dedication; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who did wonders for our fathers on those days, at this time; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who has kept us alive, and preserved us, and brought us to this time; these lamps we light, because of the wonders and marvellous things, and salvations, and wars, thou hast wrought for our fathers on those days at this time, by the hand of thine holy priests. — These lamps are holy, we have no power to use them, but only to behold them, so as to confess and praise thy great name, for thy miracles, and for thy wonders, and for thy salvations.”

And though this feast is said to be at Jerusalem, yet it was not confined there, as were the other feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, for this might be kept in any part of the land: mention is made of the feast of dedication at Lydda ^{f464}, and in other countries; Maimonides ^{f465} says

“it is a common custom in all our cities in Spain, that all the men of the house light up a lamp the first night, and add as they go along, a lamp every night, till he lights up on the eighth night eight lamps, whether the men of the house be many, or there be but one man.”

Some have been of opinion, that this feast of dedication was on the account of the victory Judith gained over Holophernes, by cutting off his head; or however, that the commemoration of that victory was a part of this festival: in the Vulgate Latin edition of Judith 16:31 it is said,

“the day of the festivity of this victory is received by the Hebrews into the number of holy days; and is kept by the Jews from that time, to the present day.”

And Sigonius^{f466} asserts, that it is celebrated by the Jews on the twenty fifth day of the month Chisleu; which is the same day the feast began, that was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus, on the above account; and certain it is, that the Jews do make mention of that fact of hers, in the service for the first sabbath of this feast^{f467}; and some of their writers would have this fact to be in the times of the Maccabees, though as one of their chronologers^{f468} observes, it appears from the history of Judith, to have been in the times of Nebuchadnezzar; and there are some that say it was in the times of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, king of Persia, and was two or three hundred years before the miracle of the dedication: but he serves, that the wise men of that age agreed to comprehend the memorial of that wonderful event, with the miracle of the dedication: and so R. Leo Modena^{f469} says,

“they have a tradition, that in ordaining this feast to be kept, they had an eve also upon that famous exploit performed by Judith upon Holophernes; although many are of opinion, that this happened not at this time of the year; and that they make a commemoration of that piece of gallantry of hers now, because she was of the stock of the Maccabees.”

But that cannot be, since she must be some hundreds of years before them; wherefore others make mention of another Judith, a daughter of one of the Maccabees, who performed a like exploit upon Nicanor, a general of Demetrius’s army: to which R. Gedaliah has respect, when he says^{f470},

“the wise men agreed to comprehend together in the joy of the feast of dedication, the affair of Judith, seeing there was another Judith, from her that killed Holophernes, a daughter of the Maccabees.”

But it is not clear that there was any such woman, nor that Nicanor was slain by one; and besides, he was killed on the thirteenth of Adar, and that day was ordained to be kept yearly on that account, in the Apocrypha:

“43 So the thirteenth day of the month Adar the hosts joined battle: but Nicanor’s host was discomfited, and he himself was first slain in the battle. 49 Moreover they ordained to keep yearly this day, being the thirteenth of Adar.” (1 Maccabees 7)

“And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus’ day.” (2 Maccabees 15:36)

and the month of Adar answers to part of February.

And it was winter; for the month Chisleu answers to our November and December; so that the twenty fifth of that month might be about the tenth of December, and the Jews reckon part of that month winter, and it must be the part in which this feast was; they say ^{f471},

“half Chisleu, Tebeth, and half Shebet, are **Prwj** , “winter”.”

so that the evangelist might with propriety say, according to the sense of the Jewish nation, that it was winter; though it was but just entered, even not more than ten days: the reason why this is observed, may be for what follows.

Ver. 23. *And Jesus walked in the temple*, etc.] To keep himself warm, and to secure him the better from the inclemency of the weather:

in Solomon’s porch; which was covered over, and the outside of it was enclosed with a wall, which made it very convenient for such a purpose: this was on the outside of the temple eastward, and was a very magnificent structure: the account Josephus ^{f472} gives of it is this;

“there was a porch without the temple, overlooking a deep valley, supported by walls of four hundred cubits, made of four square stone, very white; the length of each stone was twenty cubits, and the breadth six; the work of king Solomon, who first founded the whole temple.”

Now, though this was not the porch that was built by Solomon, yet as it was built on the same spot, and in imitation of it, it bore his name; mention is made of it in (~~481~~ Acts 3:11 5:12).

Ver. 24. *Then came the Jews round about him*, etc.] Who might be walking there on the same account, and seeing Jesus, took this opportunity, and got about him in great numbers, and hemmed him in; having a design upon him to ensnare him, if possible:

and said unto him, how long dost thou make us doubt? or as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions literally render it, “how long dost thou take away our soul?” that is, deprive us of the knowledge of thee; Nonnus renders it, “wherefore dost thou steal away our minds with words?” so Jacob when he went away privately, without the knowledge of Laban, is said to steal away the heart of Laban, as it is in the Hebrew text,

in (~~432~~Genesis 31:20,26)^{f473}. In like manner the Jews charge Christ with taking away their soul, or stealing away their heart, or hiding himself from them; not telling them plainly, who he was: therefore say they,

if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly; freely, boldly, openly, in express words; this they said, not as desirous of knowing who he was, or for the sake of information, but in order to ensnare him; that should he say he was not the Christ, as they might hope he would, for fear of them, now they had got him by himself, hemmed him in, it would then lessen his credit among the people; and should he say he was the Messiah, they would have whereof to accuse him to the Roman governor, as an enemy to Caesar, as one that set up for king of the Jews.

Ver. 25. *Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not*, etc.] He had often said, what amounted to it, in his ministry and doctrine; as that God was his Father, and he was the light of the world, and the good shepherd, and the like; but they gave no heed nor credit to his words, even though he told them, that unless they believed he was such a person, they should die in their sins:

the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; such as healing the sick, dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead to life; suggesting, that besides his words, his doctrine and ministry, they had his miracles before them, which plainly showed who he was; so that they need not have been in any doubt of mind, or suspense about him; nor had they any reason to complain of his hiding himself from them, or depriving them of the knowledge of him.

Ver. 26. *But ye believe not*, etc.] In me, as the Messiah:

because ye are not of my sheep; they were not among the sheep given him by his Father, were they, they would have come to him; that is, have believed in him, according to (~~437~~John 6:37), they were not the chosen of God, predestinated unto eternal life; for as many as are ordained of God to eternal happiness, do believe in God's own time, (~~438~~Acts 13:48); but these not being the elect of God, had not the faith of God's elect. Christ, as the omniscient God, knew this, that they were not the chosen of God; for he was present, when the names of God's elect were written in the book of life; had they been his sheep, he must have known them, for he knows all the sheep, and calls them by name; had they been given him by the Father,

he must have known it, and would have owned them as such; but so it was not, and therefore they were left to hardness and unbelief:

as I said unto you: which seems to refer to what follows, since he had said before, that the sheep bear the voice of the shepherd, and follow him, and that he knows them, (~~8104~~John 10:4,14). This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, and in Nonnus, but is in the Greek copies, and Oriental versions.

Ver. 27. *My sheep hear my voice*, etc.] The voice of Christ in his Gospel, both externally and internally; (see Gill on "~~8104~~John 10:4"), (see Gill on "~~8106~~John 10:16"); and since therefore these Jews did not, it was a plain case they were not of his sheep:

and I know them; (see Gill on "~~8104~~John 10:14"); but Christ knew not these as the elect of God, or as the Father's gift to him, and therefore they could not be his sheep:

and they follow me; both in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty, and whithersoever he the good shepherd leads them; (see Gill on "~~8106~~John 10:3"), (see Gill on "~~8104~~John 10:4"). But now, whereas these Jews did not follow Christ, but turned their backs on him, and rejected him, it was notorious that they were none of his sheep; but both happy and safe are those persons, that are the sheep of Christ, as appears from what is next said of them.

Ver. 28. *And I give unto them eternal life*, etc.] Christ gives eternal life to his sheep, or people now; he gives them a spiritual life, or a life of grace, which issues in eternal life; he gives them himself, who is the true God and eternal life, and whoever has him has life; he gives them the knowledge of himself, which is life eternal; and he gives them his righteousness, which is their justification of life, or what entitles them to eternal life; and he gives them the foretastes of it, in faith and hope, in the enjoyment of himself, and the discoveries of his love; he gives them the earnest and pledge of it, his own Spirit; and they have this life in him as their representative, and it is hid with him in God, and is safe and secure for them; and he will actually give it to them in their own persons, to be for ever enjoyed by them; and because of the certainty of it, he is said to do it now: this is a pure gift, it is of grace, and not of works; and it is in the gift of Christ as Mediator, who has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him:

and they shall never perish; though they were lost in Adam, and in a perishing condition in themselves, during their state of unregeneracy; in which condition they see themselves to be, when convinced by the Spirit of God; and come as persons ready to perish to Christ, as a Saviour, resolving, that if they perish, they will perish at his feet: and though after conversion, they are subject to many falls and spiritual declensions, and lose their peace, joy, and comfort, and imagine their strength and hope are perished, or at least fear they shall one day perish through one sin, or snare, or temptation or another, yet they shall never perish in such sense as the wicked will; they will not be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power:

neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; Christ's sheep are in his hands, being put there by God the Father, both as an instance of his love to Christ, and them; and this was done from all eternity, even when they were chosen in him; so that they were in the hands of Christ, before they were in the loins of Adam; and were preserved in him, notwithstanding Adam's fall, and through the ruins of it. To be in the hands of Christ, is to be high in his esteem and favour; the saints are a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God; they are a signet on his right hand that shall never be plucked off; they are engraven on the palms of his hands: to be in the hands of Christ, is to be in his possession, and at his dispose, as all the elect of God are; and to be under his guidance, care, and protection, as they be; they are fed according to the integrity of his heart, and guided by the skilfulness of his hands; they are always under his care and watchful eye, who protects them from all their enemies, and hides them in the hollow of his hand: hence, because they are so, they are called "the sheep of his hand", (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 95:7). And none shall ever pluck them from thence; no man can do it, not any false teacher can remove them from Christ, by all the art and cunning he is master of; nor any violent persecutor, by all the force and power he can use; nor can any sin, or snare, or temptation, draw them out of Christ's hands; nor any adversity whatever separate them from him: they must be safe, and always abide there, who are in the hands of Christ; for his hands have laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth, they grasp the whole universe, and hold all things together; and who then can pluck any out of these hands? Moreover, Christ, as Mediator, has all power in heaven and earth; and even as man, he is the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself.

Ver. 29. *My Father which gave [them] me*, etc.] So the sheep came to be Christ's, and to be in his hand; the Father gave them to him, put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge:

is greater than all; than all gods, than all beings, than all creatures, angels and men, and than all the enemies of his people; this must be allowed: the Vulgate Latin version, and so some of the ancients read, "what my Father gave to me, is greater than all"; meaning, that the church given to him, and built on him, is stronger than all its enemies:

and none is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand; so that these sheep have a double security; they are in the hands of Christ, and they are in the hands of the Father of Christ; wherefore could it be thought, which ought not to be, that they could be plucked out of Christ's hands, yet it can never be imagined, that any can pluck them out of the hands of God the Father; and there is no more reason to think that they can be plucked out of the hands of the one, than there is that they can be plucked out of the hands of the other, as is clear from what follows in (~~4130~~John 10:30); see the Apocrypha: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them." (Wisdom 3:1)

Ver. 30. *I and [my] Father are one*.] Not in person, for the Father must be a distinct person from the Son, and the Son a distinct person from the Father; and which is further manifest, from the use of the verb plural, "I and [my] Father", εσμεν, "we are one"; that is, in nature and essence, and perfections, particularly in power; since Christ is speaking of the impossibility of plucking any of the sheep, out of his own and his Father's hands; giving this as a reason for it, their unity of nature, and equality of power; so that it must be as impracticable to pluck them out of his hands, as out of his Father's, because he is equal with God the Father, and the one God with him. The Jew^{f474} objects, that

"if the sense of this expression is, that the Father and the Son are one, as the Nazarenes understand and believe it, it will be found that Jesus himself destroys this saying, as it is written in (~~4132~~Mark 13:32), for saith Jesus, "that day and that hour, there is knoweth, not the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only"; lo, these words show, that the Father and the Son are not one, since the Son does not know what the Father knows."

But it should be observed, that Christ is both the Son of God, and the son of man, as the Christians believe; as he is the Son of God, he lay in the bosom of his Father, and was privy to all his secrets, to all his thoughts, purposes, and designs; and as such, he knew the day and hour of judgment, being God omniscient; and in this respect is one with the Father, having the same perfections of power, knowledge, etc. but then as the son of man, he is not of the same nature, and has not the same knowledge; his knowledge of things was derived, communicated, and not infinite; and did not reach to all things at once, but was capable of being increased, as it was: and it is with regard to him as the son of man, that Jesus speaks of himself in (~~4132~~ Mark 13:32); whereas he is here treating of his divine sonship, and almighty power; wherefore considered in the relation of the Son of God, and as possessed of the same perfections with God, he and his Father are one; though as man, he is different from him, and knew not some things he did: so that there is no contradiction between the words of Christ in one place, and in the other; nor is he chargeable with any blasphemy against God, or any arrogance in himself, by assuming deity to himself; nor deserving of punishment, even to be deprived of human life, as the Jew suggests; nor is what he produces from a Socinian writer, of any moment, that these words do not necessarily suppose, that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; since it may be said of two men, that they are one, and yet are not the same man, but one is one man, and the other another; for we do not say they are one and the same person, which does not follow from their being of one and the same nature, but that they are one God, and two distinct persons.

Ver. 31. *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.*] As they had done before, (see Gill on "~~4132~~ John 8:59");

Ver. 32. *Jesus answered them, many good works,* etc.] Such as healing the sick, and all manner of diseases; dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, causing the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk; which were not only works of power, but of mercy and beneficence; and therefore are called good works, as well as they were great and miraculous ones:

have I showed you from my Father; which Christ did in the name, and by the command and authority of the Father; who gave him them to do, and did them by him; and which were evident and notorious, and were done so openly and publicly, that they could not be denied:

for which of these works do ye stone me? suggesting, that his public life had been a continued series of such kind actions to the sons of men, and it could be for nothing else surely, that they took up stones to stone him; wherefore the part they acted, was a most ungrateful, cruel, and barbarous one.

Ver. 33. *The Jews answered him, saying,* etc.] As follows;

for a good work we stone thee not: they could not deny, that he had done many good works; this was too barefaced to be contradicted; yet they cared not to own them; and though they industriously concealed their resentment at them, yet they were very much gruelled and made uneasy by them, but chose to give another reason for their stoning him:

but for blasphemy; which required death by stoning, according to ([Ⓜ]Leviticus 24:16), and according to the Jews' oral law ^{f475}:

and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God; which they concluded very rightly, from his saying, ([Ⓜ]John 10:30), that God was his Father, and that he and his Father were one; that is, in nature and essence, and therefore he must be God; but then this was no blasphemy, but a real truth, as is hereafter made to appear; nor is there any contradiction between his being man, and being God; he is truly and really man, but then he is not a mere man, as the Jews suggested; but is truly God, as well as man, and is both God and man in one person, the divine and human nature being united in him, of which they were ignorant: two mistakes they seem to be guilty of in this account; one that Christ was a mere man, the other that he made himself God, or assumed deity to himself, which did not belong to him, and therefore must be guilty of blasphemy; neither of which were true: the phrase is used by the Jews, of others who have taken upon them the name and title of God; as of Hiram king of Tyre, of whom they say, *hwl a wmx[hç[ç,* "that he made himself God" ^{f476}; the same they say of Nebuchadnezzar; and the modern Jews still continue the same charge against Jesus, as their ancestors did, and express it in the same language, and say of him, that he was a man, and set himself up for God ^{f477}.

Ver. 34. *Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law,* etc.] In the law which was given unto them, of which they boasted, and pretended to understand, and interpret, even in ([Ⓜ]Psalms 82:6); for the law includes not

only the Pentateuch, but all the books of the Old Testament: it is an observation of one of the Jewish doctors ^{f478}, that

“with the wise men of blessed memory, it is found in many places that the word law comprehends the Prophets and the Hagiographa.”

Among which last stands the book of Psalms; and this may be confirmed by a passage out of the Talmud ^{f479}; it is asked,

“from whence does the resurrection of the dead appear, *hrwth* *^m*, “out of the law?””

It is answered,

“as it is said in (^{f480}Psalm 84:4): “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will still praise thee, Selah; they do praise thee”, it is not said, but “they will praise thee”; from hence is a proof of the resurrection of the dead, “out of the law”.”

The same question is again put, and then (^{f481}Isaiah 52:8) is cited, and the like observation made upon it. Moreover, this is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they introduce another citing a passage of Scripture thus ^{f480}, *µktrwtb bytk al h*, “is it not written in your law”,

(^{f480}Deuteronomy 4:9), “only take heed to thyself”, etc. so here the Scripture follows,

I said, ye are gods? which is spoken to civil magistrates, so called, because of their authority and power; and because they do, in some sort, represent the divine majesty, in the government of nations and kingdoms. Many of the Jewish writers, by “gods”, understand “the angels”. The Targum paraphrases the words thus:

“I said ye are accounted as angels, as the angels on high, all of you;”

and to this sense some of their commentators interpret it. Jarchi’s gloss is, ye are gods; that is, angels; for when I gave the law to you, it was on this account, that the angel of death might not any more rule over you: the note of Aben Ezra is, “and the children of the Most High”: as angels; and the sense is, your soul is as the soul of angels: hence the ^{f481}Jew charges Christ with seeking refuge in words, that will not profit, or be any help to him,

when he cites these words, showing that magistrates are called gods, when the sense is only, that they are like to the angels in respect of their souls: but let it be observed, that it is not said, “ye are as gods”, as in (^{<0085>}Genesis 3:5), but “ye are gods”; not like unto them only, but are in some sense gods; and besides, to say that they are like to angels, with respect to their souls, which come from above, is to say no more of the judges of the earth, than what may be said of every man: to which may be added, that this objector himself owns, that judges are called **pyhl a**, “gods”, as in (^{<0219>}Exodus 22:9); the cause of both parties shall come before **pyhl a**, “the judges”; and that even the word is used in this sense in this very psalm, from whence these words are cited, (^{<0821>}Psalm 82:1), “he judgeth among” **pyhl a**, “the gods”; and both Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret this text itself in the same way, and observe, that judges are called gods, when they judge truly and aright: all which is sufficient to justify our Lord in the citation of this passage, and the use he makes of it.

Ver. 35. *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, etc.*] The Syriac version reads, “because the word of God came to them”; either the divine “Logos”, the essential word, the Son of God, who appeared to Moses, and made him a God to Pharaoh, and who appointed rulers and magistrates among the Jews; and who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, from whom all receive their power and dominion: this sense is favoured by the Ethiopic version, which renders it, “if he called them gods to whom God appeared, the word of God was with them”: or else the commission from God, authorizing them to act in the capacity of rulers and governors, is here meant; or rather the word of God, which, in the passage of Scripture cited, calls them so, as it certainly does:

and the Scripture cannot be broken; or be made null and void; whatever that says is true, there is no contradicting it, or objecting to it: it is a Jewish way of speaking, much used in the Talmud^{f482}; when one doctor has produced an argument, or instance, in any point of debate, another says, **Ærpyml akya**, “it may be broken”; or objected to, in such and such a manner, and be refuted: but the Scripture cannot be broken, that is not to be objected to, there can be no confutation of that.

Ver. 36. *Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, etc.*] Not by making his human nature pure and holy, and free from all sin, and by bestowing the holy Spirit on him without measure, though both true; but

these were upon, or after his mission into the world; whereas sanctification here, designs something previous to that, and respects the eternal separation of him to his office, as Mediator, in the counsel, purposes, and decrees of God, and in the covenant of his grace, being pre-ordained thereunto, before the foundation of the world; which supposes his eternal existence as a divine person, and tacitly proves his true and proper deity:

and sent into the world; in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption and salvation his people: to save them from sin, Satan, the world, law, hell and death, which none but God could do:

thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God; for what he had said in (^{<B00B>}John 10:30) is equivalent to it; and in it he was rightly understood by the Jews, and what he here and afterwards says confirms it: the argument is what the Jews call *rmwj w l q*, “from the lesser to the greater”, and stands thus; that if mere frail mortal men, and some of them wicked men, being made rulers and judges in the earth are called gods, by God himself, to whom the word of God came in time, and constituted them gods, or governors, but for a time; and this is a fact stands recorded in Scripture, which cannot be denied or disproved, then surely it cannot be blasphemy in Christ, to assert himself to be the Son of God, who existed as a divine person from all eternity; and was so early set apart to the office of prophet, priest, and king; and in the fulness of time was sent into this world, to be the author of eternal salvation to the sons of men.

Ver. 37. *If I do not the works of my Father*, etc.] Not only what the Father had given him to finish, and which he wrought by him as man, but such as were as great as the Father had done, and were equal to them; and which could not be done by any, but by the Father, or by one that is equal with him:

believe me not: Christ appeals to his miracles as proofs of his deity, sonship, and Messiahship, and desires no other credit than what they demand; (see ^{<D00B>}Matthew 11:3-5 ^{<B56>}John 5:36).

Ver. 38. *But if I do*, etc.] Works, which none but God can do:

though ye believe not me; what Christ said in his doctrine and ministry, though they paid no regard to that, and did not receive his testimony, on the credit of him the testifier, as they ought to have done:

believe the works; not only that they are true and real, and not imaginary and delusory; but for the sake of them believe the above assertion, that Christ is the Son of God, he and his Father being one; or take such notice of these works and miracles, consider the nature, evidence, and importance of them, and the divine power that attends them,

that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him; or “in the Father”, as one of Beza’s exemplars; the Vulgate Latin, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, or “in my Father”, as read the Syriac and Arabic versions; that they are one in nature, distinct in person, equal in power, and have a mutual inhabitation and communion in the divine essence; all which is manifest, by doing the same works, and which are out of the reach and power of any mere creature.

Ver. 39. *Therefore they sought again to take him*, etc.] Not to take away his life by stoning him, as before, in the manner the furious zealots did, and was the part they were about to act just now; but to lay hold upon him and bring him before the sanhedrim, as they had done in (~~408~~ John 5:18): he being so far from clearing himself from the charge of blasphemy, they had brought against him, that in their opinion he had greatly strengthened it; and they thought they had now sufficient proof and evidence to convict him as a blasphemer, in their high court of judicature; and therefore attempted to lay hands on him, and bring him thither:

but he escaped out of their hands; either by withdrawing from them in some private way; or by open force, exerting his power, and obliging them on every side to fall back, and give way to him; or by rendering himself invisible to them; and this he did, not through fear of death, but because his time was not yet come, and he had other work to do, before he suffered and died.

Ver. 40. *And went away again beyond Jordan*, etc.] Where he had been before; and whither he went; not merely for the security of his person, much less to indulge himself in ease, but to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and bring many souls to believe on him, as did: and he went

into the place where John at first baptized; that is, Bethabara, where he baptized before he was at Aenon, near Salim, (~~408~~ John 1:28 3:23), and was the place where Christ himself was baptized, and where John bore such a testimony of him:

and there he abode; how long is not certain, perhaps till he went to Bethany, on account of raising Lazarus from the dead.

Ver. 41. *And many resorted to him*, etc.] From all the parts adjacent, having heard of his being there, and of the fame of him; and many of them doubtless personally knew him; these came to him, some very likely to be healed by him, others to see his person and miracles, and others to hear him preach:

and said, John did no miracle; though it was now three years ago, yet the name, ministry, and baptism of John, were fresh in the memory of men in those parts; and what they say one to another, was not to lessen the character of John, but to exalt Jesus Christ, and to give a reason why they should receive and embrace him; for if John, who did no miracle, who only taught and baptized, and directed men to the Messiah, was justly reckoned a very great person, and his doctrine was received, and his baptism was submitted to, then much more should this illustrious person be attended to; who, besides his divine doctrine, did such great and amazing miracles; to which they add, though John did no miracle to confirm his mission, ministry, and baptism,

but all things that John spake of this man, were true; as that he was greater than he, was the Lamb of God, yea, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and true Messiah, who should baptize men with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Ver. 42. *And many believed on him there.*], Through the doctrine he preached, the miracles he wrought, and through comparing these things with what John had said of him: this shows the reason of Christ's leaving Jerusalem, and coming into these parts; there were others that were to believe in his name: the word "there", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions.