

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 15

Ver. 1. *I am the true vine*, etc.] The fruit of which he had been just speaking of at supper with his disciples; and then informs them, that he himself is the vine from whence that fruit must be expected, which should be partook of by them in his Father's kingdom; for though Christ may be compared to a vine for its tenderness, weakness, and being subject to cuttings and prunings; all which may express his outward meanness in his birth, parentage, and education, Which exposed him to the contempt of men; the weakness of the human nature in itself, his being encompassed with the infirmities of his people, and his sufferings and death for their sakes; yet he is rather called so with respect to his fruitfulness: for as the vine is a fruitful tree, brings forth and bears fruit in clusters, so Christ, as man and Mediator, is full of grace and truth, of all spiritual blessings, and exceeding great and precious promises; from him come the wine of divine love, of Gospel truths and Gospel ordinances, the various blessings of grace, and the joys of heaven, which are the best wine reserved by him till last: Christ is the "true" vine; not that he is really and literally so, without a figure; but he is, as the Syriac renders it, **arrçd atpn**, "the vine of truth". Just as Israel is called a noble vine, wholly a right seed, **tma [rz**, "a seed of truth", (^{<3402>}Jeremiah 2:21); right genuine seed; or, as the Septuagint render it, "a vine", bringing forth fruit, **πασαν ἀληψινην**, "wholly true"; to which the allusion may be here. Christ is the noble vine, the most excellent of vines, wholly a right seed, in opposition to, and distinction from, the wild and unfruitful, or degenerate plant of a strange vine: to him agree all the properties of a right and real vine; he really and truly communicates life, sap, juice, nourishment, and fruitfulness to the several branches which are in him. The metaphor Christ makes use of was well known to the Jews; for not only the Jewish church is often compared to a vine, but the Messiah too, according to them: thus the Targumist explains the phrase in (^{<3805>}Psalm 80:15), "the branch thou madest strong for thyself", of the King Messiah: and indeed, by comparing it with (^{<3807>}Psalm 80:17) it seems to be the true sense of the passage ^{f610}. The

Cabalistic doctors say ^{f611}, that the Shekinah is called, ׀pg, “a vine”; (see ~~<0401>~~ Genesis 49:11); where the Jews observe ^{f612}, the King Messiah is so called. The Jews ^{f613} say, there was a golden vine that stood over the gate of the temple, and it was set upon props; and whoever offered a leaf, or a grape, or a cluster, (that is, a piece of gold to the temple, in the form of either of these,) bought it, and hung it upon it. And of this vine also Josephus ^{f614} makes mention, as being in Herod’s temple; of which he says, that it was over the doors (of the temple), under the edges of the wall, having clusters hanging down from it on high, which filled spectators with wonder as for the size of it, so for the art with which it was made. And elsewhere he says ^{f615}, the inward door in the porch was all covered with gold, and the whole wall about it; and it had over it golden vines, from whence hung clusters as big as the stature of a man: now whether our Lord may refer to this, being near the temple, and in view of it, and point to it, and call himself the true vine, in distinction from it, which was only the representation of one; or whether he might take occasion, from the sight of a real vine, to compare himself to one, may be considered; since it was usual with Christ, upon sight or mention of natural things, to take the opportunity of treating of spiritual ones: though it may be rather this discourse of the vine and branches might be occasioned by his speaking of the fruit of the vine, at the time he ate the passover, and instituted the ordinance of the supper.

And my Father is the husbandman; or vinedresser. So God is called by Philo the Jew ^{f616}, γεωργος αγαπος, “a good husbandman”; and the same the Targumist says of the word of the Lord ^{f617},

“and my word shall be unto them, abj arkak, “as a good husbandman”.”

Now Christ says this of his Father, both with respect to himself the vine, and with respect to the branches that were in him: he was the husbandman to him; he planted the vine of his human nature, and filled it with all the graces of the Spirit; he supported it, upheld it, and made it strong for himself, for the purposes of his grace, and for his own glory; and took infinite delight in it, being to him a pleasant plant, a plant of renown. The concern this husbandman has with the branches, is expressed in the following verse.

Ver. 2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit,* etc.] There are two sorts of branches in Christ the vine; the one sort are such who have only an historical faith in him, believe but for a time, and are removed; they are such who only profess to believe in him, as Simon Magus did; are in him by profession only; they submit to outward ordinances, become church members, and so are reckoned to be in Christ, being in a church state, as the churches of Judea and Thessalonica, and others, are said, in general, to be in Christ; though it is not to be thought that every individual person in these churches were truly and savingly in him. These branches are unfruitful ones; what fruit they seemed to have, withers away, and proves not to be genuine fruit; what fruit they bring forth is to themselves, and not to the glory of God, being none of the fruits of his Spirit and grace: and such branches the husbandman

taketh away; removes them from that sort of being which they had in Christ. By some means or another he discovers them to the saints to be what they are; sometimes he suffers persecution to arise because of the word, and these men are quickly offended, and depart of their own accord; or they fall into erroneous principles, and set up for themselves, and separate from the churches of Christ; or they become guilty of scandalous enormities, and so are removed from their fellowship by excommunication; or if neither of these should be the case, but these tares should grow together with the wheat till the harvest, the angels will be sent forth, who will gather out of the kingdom of God all that offend and do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire, as branches withered, and fit to be burnt.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. These are the other sort of branches, who are truly and savingly in Christ; such as are rooted in him; to whom he is the green fir tree, from whom all their fruit is found; who are filled by him with all the fruits of his Spirit, grace, and righteousness. These are purged or pruned, chiefly by afflictions and temptations, which are as needful for their growth and fruitfulness, as the pruning and cutting of the vines are for theirs; and though these are sometimes sharp, and never joyous, but grievous, yet they are attended with the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and so the end of bringing forth more fruit is answered; for it is not enough that a believer exercise grace, and perform good works for the present, but these must remain; or he must be constant herein, and still bring forth fruit, and add one virtue to another, that it may appear he is not barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ, in whom he is implanted. These different acts of

the vinedresser “taking away” some branches, and “purging” others, are expressed by the Misnic doctors ^{f618} by *hl wšyp*, and *hdwryz*. The former, the commentators ^{f619} say, signifies to cut off the branches that are withered and perished, and are good for nothing; and the latter signifies the pruning of the vine when it has a superfluity of branches, or these extend themselves too far; when some are left, and others taken off.

Ver. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*] These words being inserted in the discourse concerning the vine and branches, and the pruning and purging them to make them fruitful, are thought, by the learned Dr. Lightfoot, to be an allusion to the law in (~~f623~~ Leviticus 19:23); by which the fruit of trees, for the first three years, were accounted uncircumcised or unclean, and in the fourth year fit for use; concerning which the Talmudists have a whole tract, called *hl r [*, “Orla”; the apostles having enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and been his disciples about such a time. Though the “now” seems to refer to the removal and taking away of that withered and unfruitful branch, Judas. Christ, in (~~f630~~ John 13:10), had told his disciples, that they “were clean, but not all”, because the betrayer was among them; but he being discovered by Christ, and ordered by him to be gone, went out from among them about his wicked design; and now Christ could say of them all, that they were clean: which may be understood of their regeneration and sanctification, in which their hearts were sprinkled with clean water; were washed with the washing of regeneration; had their hearts purified by faith in the blood of Christ, and had pure principles of grace formed in their souls; of all which the Gospel of Christ was the instrumental means: or of their justification by the righteousness of Christ, by which they were justified from all sin; and were all fair, and without spot; which was through the Gospel of Christ revealing his righteousness to them, or through the sentence of justification he, by his Spirit, passed upon their consciences.

Ver. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you,* etc.] The former of these is an exhortation to continue in the exercise of faith and love upon Christ, holding to him the head, cleaving to him with full purpose of heart, and so deriving life, grace, strength, and nourishment from him; the latter is a promise encouraging to the former; for as Christ is formed in the hearts of his people, he continues there as the living principle of all grace. And so,

as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; which strongly expresses the necessity

of abiding in Christ by fresh repeated acts of faith: and it is easy to observe, that when believers depart from Christ, though it be but partially, and for a time, for they cannot finally and totally depart from him, in what a poor, withered, fruitless condition they are, both in their frames and duties.

Ver. 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches*, etc.] Christ here repeats what he said of himself, “the vine”, for the sake of the application of “the branches” to his disciples: which expresses their sameness of nature with Christ; their strict and close union to him; and the communication of life and grace, holiness and fruitfulness, of support and strength, and of perseverance in grace and holiness to the end from him:

he that abideth in me, and I in him; which is the case of all that are once in Christ, and he in them:

the same bringeth forth much fruit; in the exercise of grace, and performance of good works; and continues to do so as long as he lives, not by virtue of his own free will, power, and strength, but by grace continually received from Christ:

for without me ye can do nothing; nothing that is spiritually good; no, not anything at all, be it little or great, easy or difficult to be performed; cannot think a good thought, speak a good word, or do a good action; can neither begin one, nor, when it is begun, perfect it. Nothing is to be done “without Christ”; without his Spirit, grace, strength, and presence; or as “separate from” him. Were it possible for the branches that are truly in him, to be removed from him, they could bring forth no fruits of good works, any more than a branch separated from the vine can bring forth grapes; so that all the fruitfulness of a believer is to be ascribed to Christ, and his grace, and not to the free will and power of man.

Ver. 6. *If a man abide not in me*, etc.] Christ does not say, “if ye abide not in me”; he would not suppose this of his true disciples; Judas now being removed, to whom he may have some respect in this verse; though it may be applied to anyone who has made a profession of Christ, and denies the truths of the Gospel, neglects the ordinances of it, or walks unworthy of his profession: of whom the following things may be truly said,

he is cast forth as a branch; that is unfruitful, and is therefore taken away from the vine, and cast forth out of the vineyard. This signifies the ejection of worthless and fruitless professors out of the churches; for such who are either unsound in their principles, or are remiss and negligent in their

attendance on the worship of God, with the church, or are loose and vain in their lives and conversations, are to be removed from communion with the people of God.

And is withered. Some versions, as the Arabic, Syriac, and Persic, read this as an epithet of the word “branch”, thus; “the branch that is withered”; expressing the condition the branch is in before it is cast forth out of the vineyard, and the reason of its being cast forth: but others read it as a new and distinct predicate of the branch, showing the case it is in, immediately upon its being cast forth: it may be cut off, and cast out with its leaves upon it, though without fruit; but as soon as ever it is ejected, it withers away. So mere external professors of religion, when they are cast out, of the communion of the church, presently the leaf of profession, which once seemed green, decays, loses its verdure, and that seeming fruit which grew upon them shrinks to nothing, and they become “trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit”, (⁶¹¹²Jude 1:12): their show of life, zeal, religion, and holiness, disappears, and all their external gifts, light, knowledge, and understanding, even in a speculative way, vanish:

and men gather them; or, as some copies have it, *αυτο*, “it”, which best agrees with the word “branch”. This was a common thing, when branches were thrown out of a vineyard, for men to come and gather them up for an use hereafter mentioned. So when unworthy members are put out of a church of Christ, the men of the world gather them into their society: or they are taken into the congregations of false teachers, who being sensual, and without the Spirit, separate themselves; or it may be read impersonally, “they are gathered”, or “it is gathered”: so wicked men, and Christless professors, will be gathered by the angels at the last day, and severed by them from the righteous, whom they will place at Christ’s left hand to receive their awful doom:

and cast them, or “it”,

into the fire, and they are burned, or “it is burned”; for nothing else is such a branch good for; (see ⁶¹⁵⁰Ezekiel 15:2-5). This may respect either the gnawings of conscience, that distress of mind, if not despair, that fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which attend apostates in this life; or their being cast into the everlasting burnings of hell fire by angels at the last day, as will be the case of every unfruitful tree, of the chaff and tares.

Ver. 7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,* etc.] Abiding in Christ is here explained by his words or doctrines abiding in his disciples; by which are meant his Gospel, and the truths of it. This abides when it comes in power, and becomes the engrafted word; and may be said to do so, when such, in whose hearts it has a place, and has taken deep root, continue to have a relish and savour of it, a true and hearty affection for it, esteeming it above their necessary food; when they hold fast the profession of it, stand fast in it, steadfastly abide by it, and constantly attend on it; all which is a considerable evidence that they do, yea, there is a promise that they “shall continue in the Son and in the Father”, (⁴¹²³1 John 2:24); The blessing and privilege that such shall enjoy is,

ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you; or, as some copies read it, “it shall be given you”: but this must be understood not of temporal things, as riches, honours, profits, pleasures, or whatever even the carnal mind of a believer himself may sometimes desire; but of things spiritual, and with such limitations and restrictions as these; whatever is according to the will of God, for the Spirit of God himself asks for no other for the saints; whatever is for the glory of God, and for their own spiritual profit and edification; and whatever is agreeably to the words and doctrines of Christ, which abide in them. Every thing of this kind they ask in faith, and with a submission to the divine will, they may expect to receive.

Ver. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified,* etc.] This does not so much refer to what goes before, concerning the disciples abiding in Christ, and he and his words abiding in them, and doing for them whatever they ask, though by all this God is glorified; as to what follows, the fruitfulness of the disciples:

that ye bear much fruit; of doctrine, grace, and good works, which show them to be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, and the work of his hands; wherein the glory of his power, grace, and mercy, is greatly displayed. All the fruits of righteousness, with which they were filled by Christ, were by him to the praise and glory of God; yea, by the fruitfulness of grace, and of life and conversation, by the lively exercise of grace, and conscientious discharge of duty, as well by light of doctrine, and usefulness in the ministration of the Gospel, the disciples and servants of Christ not only glorify God themselves, but are the means of others glorifying him. It follows,

so shall ye be my disciples; or “disciples to me”; to my honour and glory also, as well as to my Father’s; not that their fruitfulness made them the

disciples of Christ, but made them appear to be so, or made them honourable ones. Just as good fruit does not make the tree good; the tree is first good, and therefore it brings forth good fruit; but shows it to be good: as by continuing in his word, abiding by his Gospel they appeared to be “disciples indeed”, (~~John~~ John 8:31), really and truly such; and as by loving one another, so by other fruits of righteousness, other men, all men know that they are the disciples of Christ.

Ver. 9. *As the Father hath loved me*, etc.] As his own Son, and as Mediator, from everlasting; and in time, in his state of humiliation, throughout the course of his obedience, and under all his sufferings; which he testified more than once by a voice from heaven; which he showed by concealing nothing from him as Mediator, by giving all things into his hands, by showing him all that he himself did, by appointing him the Saviour of the body, and making him the head of the church, by exalting him at his right hand, and ordaining him to be judge of quick and dead.

So have I loved you: Christ loves his as his spouse and bride, as his dear children, as members of his body, as branches in him the vine, as believers in him, and followers of him; which he has shown by espousing both their persons and cause, by assuming their nature, by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and making all suitable provision for them, both for time and eternity. And there is a likeness between the Father’s love to him, and his love to his disciples and followers: as his Father loved him from everlasting, so did he love them; as his Father loved him with a love of complacency and delight, so did he, and so does he love them; and as his Father loved him with a special and peculiar affection, with an unchangeable, invariable, constant love, which will last for ever, in like manner does Christ love his people; and with this he enforces the following exhortation.

Continue ye in my love: meaning either in his love to them, which, as he always continues in it without any variableness or shadow of turning, so he would have them continue in believing their interest in it, prizing and valuing it, in imitating and remembering it; or else in their love to him, to his person, to his people, to his Gospel, to his ordinances, ways, and worship, which he knew was liable to wax cold, though it could not be lost.

Ver. 10. *If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love*, etc.] Not that their continuance in the heart’s love and affection of Christ depended

upon their observation of his commands; for as the keeping of them is not the cause or reason of the saints having an interest in the love of Christ, so it is not the cause or reason of their abiding in it; but to such that observe the commandments of Christ he will continue to make further discoveries of his love, and let them see more clearly and largely what a value he has for them, and how much he loves them: or the sense is, that by keeping the commandments of Christ, his disciples and followers show that they love him, and continue in their affection to him:

even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

The commandments of the Father kept by Christ were not only the precepts of the moral law, and the rites of the ceremonial one, which he strictly observed; but the preaching of the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it, doing of miracles, and laying down his life for his people; in performing which, as his Father testified his approbation of them, and how strongly he was affected to him, what an abiding he had in his love; so Christ hereby showed his constant and continued love to his Father; and which was done by him, that the world, as well as his disciples, might know how much he loved him; (see ~~414~~ John 14:31).

Ver. 11. *These things have I spoken unto you,* etc.] Concerning the vine and branches, his abiding in them, and they in him, their fruitfulness from him, and perseverance in him, his love to them, and theirs to him:

that my joy might remain in you; meaning either that joy with which he joyed in and over them, as united to him, and which is of the same nature as the joy of the bridegroom over the bride, and which will always remain and continue the same; or rather that joy which he is the author, object, ground, and matter of, for there is always reason to rejoice in him, even in the most afflictive circumstances of life:

and that your joy might be full; that grace of joy which is implanted in the soul, by the Spirit of God in regeneration, and arises from, and is increased by discoveries of the person, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and is “full of glory”, (~~408~~ 1 Peter 1:8); upon a clear sight of him in this life, and will be entirely full, completely perfected in the other world, when he will be seen as he is,

Ver. 12. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another,* etc.] Christ had been before speaking of his commandments; and he mentions this as the principal one, and to which all the rest may be reduced; for as the

precepts of the second table of the moral law may be briefly comprehended in this one duty, love to our neighbour, so all the duties of Christianity, relative to one another, are reducible to this, by love to serve each other. This was the commandment which lay uppermost on Christ's heart, and which he knew, if attended to, the rest could not fail of being observed. The argument by which, and the manner in which, he presses it, is as before:

as I have loved you; than which nothing can be more strong and forcible; (see ~~4134~~ John 13:34).

Ver. 13. *Greater love hath no man than this*, etc.] By these words our Lord shows, how far love to another should extend, even to the laying down of our lives for the brethren; which is the highest instance of love among men;

that a man lay down his life for his friends; and in which believers, should not come short of them; and also his great love to his people, and explains what he had just said, "as I have loved you", (~~4134~~ John 13:34 15:12); which in a little time would be seen, by his laying down his life for them: for he not only came down from heaven, and laid aside his glory and royal majesty, but he laid down his life; not his gold and silver, and the riches of this world, which were all his, but his life; than which, nothing is dearer to a man, is himself, his all: and besides, Christ's life was not a common one, it was not the life of an innocent person only, or the life of a mere man, but of a man in union with the Son of God; it was the Lord of glory and Prince of life, who was crucified, and slain; a life that was entirely at his own dispose; it had never been forfeited by sin, nor could it have been forced away from him by men or devils; it was laid down of and by himself, freely and voluntarily; and that "for", in the room, and instead of his people, as a ransom for them; he being their surety and substitute, and standing in their legal place and stead, he took their sins upon him, bore the curse of the law, sustained his Father's wrath, and all the punishment due to sin; and so suffered death, the death of the cross; the just, in the room and stead of the unjust; the persons for whom he laid down his life, are described as "his friends"; not that they were originally so; being enemies and enmity itself to God, when he laid down his life for them, and reconciled them; they were not such as had carried themselves friendly, or had shown any love and affection to him, but all the reverse: but they are so called, because he had chosen them for his friends; he had pitched upon them, and resolved to

make them so; and by dying for them, reconciled them who were enemies; and in consequence of this, by his Spirit and grace, of enemies makes them friends; so that his love in dying for his people, is greater than any instance of love among men: he laid down his life for his enemies, without any sinister selfish views, and that freely and voluntarily; whereas among men, when one man has laid down his life for others, either they have been very deserving, or he has been forced to it, or it has been done with the view of popular applause and vain glory.

Ver. 14. *Ye are my friends*, etc.] This is an application of the foregoing passage, and more, clearly explains it. The character of “friends”, is applied to the disciples of Christ; and belongs, not only to his apostles, but to all that love him, believe in him, and obey him; to whom he has showed himself friendly, by laying down his life for them: for this clearly shows, that Christ had respect in the former words, to his own laying down his life for his people, in consequence of his great love to them; whereby he has made them friends, and who appear to be so by their cheerful obedience to him:

if ye do whatsoever I command you; not that their doing of the commandments of Christ interested them in his favour; or made them his friends; or was the reason and motive of his laying down his life for them, and showing himself in such a friendly manner to them: but the sense is, that by observing his commands from a principle of love, they would make it appear that they were his friends, being influenced by his grace, and constrained by a sense of his love in dying for them, to act such a part.

Ver. 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants*, etc.] As they and the rest of the people of God had been, under the legal dispensation; for though they were children, yet differed nothing from servants; and were very much influenced and impressed with a servile spirit, a spirit of bondage unto fear, being kept under tutors and governors by a severe discipline; but now Christ being come in the flesh, and being about to lay down his life, and make reconciliation for them, henceforward he would not use, treat, or account them as servants:

for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; designs to do, or is about to do; he is not made privy to all his counsels and purposes; these are only opened to him as necessity requires; which was pretty much the case of the Old Testament church, who, comparatively speaking, were used as

servants; and had not the knowledge of the mysteries of grace, and of the counsels of God, as they are now laid open under the Gospel dispensation:

but I have called you friends; that is, accounted, reckoned of them, used them as his friends and familiar acquaintance; whom he told all his mind unto, and would go on to treat them as such; by leading them more and more, as they were able to bear it, into the designs of his grace, and the doctrines of his Gospel: just as Abraham was called the friend of God, and proved to be so, by his not concealing from him the thing he was about to do:

for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you; not all that he knew as the omniscient God, for there was no necessity that all such things should be made known to them; but all things which he had delivered to him as man and Mediator, by his Father, respecting the salvation of men; all things which he himself was to do and suffer, in order to obtain eternal redemption; and the whole of the Gospel, as to the essential and substantial parts of it, they were to preach; for otherwise, there were some things which as yet they were not able to bear, and were reserved to another time, to be made known unto them by his Spirit.

Ver. 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, etc.] Not but that they had made choice of him as their Lord and Master, Saviour and Redeemer; but not first, he was before hand with them; he chose them, before they chose him; so that his choice of them was entirely free, did not arise from any character, motive, or condition in them: the allusion is to a custom of the Jews, the reverse of which Christ acted; with whom it was usual for disciples to choose their own masters, and not masters their disciples: hence that advice of R. Joshuah ben Perachiah, said ^{f620} to be the master of Jesus of Nazareth,

“*br Æl hç* [^{f621}, “make”, provide, or chose “thyself a master”, and get thyself a companion.”

Those words in (²¹¹⁶Song of Solomon 2:16); “my beloved is mine, and I am his”, are thus paraphrased by the Jews ^{f622};

“he hath chosen me, and I have chosen him:”

which is not amiss, provided the latter choice is thought to be by virtue, and in consequence of the former; if not, our Lord directly opposes the words and sense. This may be understood both of election to salvation, and

of choice to the office of apostleship; in both which Christ was first, or chose them before they chose him, that good part, which shall never be taken away; for as they were chosen in him, so by him, before the foundation of the world; being as early loved by him, as by his Father; and in consequence thereof, were chosen by him, for his people and peculiar treasure; he first chose and called them to be his disciples and apostles, to follow him, preach his Gospel, and become fishers of men; and clothed them with full power and authority to exercise their high office:

and ordained you; which may design either ordination to eternal life, or apostleship, before the world began; as Jeremiah was ordained to be a prophet, before he was born; or else the investiture of them with that office, and with all gifts and graces necessary for the discharge of it; for when he called and sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, he is said to “ordain” them, (~~4084~~ Mark 3:14); and the rather this may be meant here, because the former is designed by his choosing them; or he set them, or planted them in himself, a fruitful soil, that they might shoot up and bear much fruit, as it follows:

that ye should go and bring forth fruit; go first into Judea, and then into all the world; and brings forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness in themselves, and be the happy means of the conversion, and so of bringing in a large harvest of souls to Jesus Christ:

and that your fruit should remain; as it has done; for they not only persevered themselves in faith and holiness, in preaching the Gospel, and living according to it, but the persons whose conversion they were instruments of, continued steadfastly in their doctrine, and in the fellowship of the saints; and the Gospel which was preached by them, has remained, though not always in the same place, yet in the world ever since:

that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. This is added, to encourage their perseverance in the work he chose and called them to, which would be attended with many difficulties and discouragements; wherefore as they would stand in need of divine assistance, they might assure themselves of it; for be it what it would they should ask of his Father, making mention of his name and righteousness; whether for a sufficiency of gifts and grace in the discharge of their duty; or for success in it; or for the confirmation of the truths delivered by them; or for liberty and boldness to speak in vindication of themselves, when called to it before kings and governors, it should be given them.

Ver. 17. *These things I command you*, etc.] The doctrines which Christ spake, as one having authority, concerning the vine and branches; his love to his disciples, in laying down his life for them, and in accounting and using them as friends, and not servants; in choosing, ordaining, and sending them forth, for the ends above mentioned; these were delivered by him with this view, to promote brotherly love among them: that ye love one another; this lay much upon his heart, he often mentions it; this is the third time it is expressed by him, in these his last discourses; and indeed, since he had declared such strong love and affection for them, it was but right and proper they should love one another; nor does anything more tend to increase mutual love among the saints, than the consideration of their common interest in the unchangeable love of their Lord.

Ver. 18. *If the world hate you*, etc.] After our Lord had signified how much he loved his disciples and what great things he had done for them, he faithfully acquaints them with the world's hatred of them, and what they must expect to meet with from that quarter, and says many things to fortify their minds against it; his words do not imply any doubt about it, but he rather takes it for granted, as a thing out of question; "if", or "seeing the world hate you"; they had had some experience of it already, and might look for more, when their master was gone from them: wherefore, he, in order to engage their patience under it, says,

ye know that it hated me before it hated you; which words are an appeal of Christ to his apostles, for the usage he had met with from the wicked and unbelieving world of the Jews; how they had expressed their hatred, not only by words, calling him a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a sinner, a Samaritan, a madman, one that had a devil, yea, Beelzebub himself, but by deeds; taking up stones to stone him more than once, leading him to the brow of an hill, in order to cast him down headlong, consulting by various means to take away his life, as Herod did in his very infancy; which was done, before they showed so much hatred to his disciples; and perhaps reference may be had to the original enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, mentioned (^{GENESIS} Genesis 3:15); as well as to these instances. Moreover, the words **πρωτον υμων**, rendered "before you", may be translated "the first" or "chief of you", your Lord and head; and denotes the dignity, excellency, and superiority of Christ; wherefore it is suggested, that if he, who was so much before them in personal worth and greatness, was hated by the world, they should not think it hard, or any strange thing, that this should be their case.

Ver. 19. *If ye were of the world*, etc.] Belonged to the world, were of the same spirit and principles with it, and pursued the same practices:

the world would love its own; for every like loves its like; the men of the world love each other's persons, company, and conversation:

but because ye are not of the world: once they were, being born into it, brought up in it, had their conversation among the men of it, were themselves men of carnal, worldly, principles and practices; but being called by Christ, and becoming his disciples, they were no more of it; and as he was not of the world, so they were not of it, though they were in it. The Jews distinguish the disciples of the wise men, from *aml [d yçnyā*, "the men of the world"^{f623}, pretending that they were not; but this is a character that only belongs to the disciples of Christ, in consequence of their being called by him out of it:

but I have chosen you out of the world: which designs not the eternal election of them, but the separation of them from the rest of the world in the effectual calling, and the designation of them to his work and service:

therefore the world hateth you; and since it was upon that account, they had no reason to be uneasy, but rather to rejoice; seeing this was an evidence of their not belonging to the world, and of being chosen and called by Christ out of it.

Ver. 20. *Remember the word that I said unto you*, etc.] For their further consolation under the hatred of the world, he puts them in mind of a saying of his, which he had lately used, (^{<431316>}John 13:16); to teach them humility, self-denial, and brotherly love, and elsewhere, as in (^{<4004>}Matthew 10:24); for the same purpose as here; namely, to engage them patiently to bear the hatred of men, and all indignities and insults from them, for his name's sake:

the servant is not greater than the Lord: nor so great, and consequently not more, nor so: much deserving of respect, or to be treated in a better manner; suggesting, that Christ was their Lord and master, as he was, and they were his servants; and therefore were not greater than him, but much inferior to him, and could not expect better usage from men than he had:

if they have persecuted me; as they did, both by words and deeds, as before observed:

they will persecute you; and so they did in like manner, and from place to place:

if they have kept my saying; which is either ironically spoken, or designs that insidious malicious observation of Christ's words, made by the Jews, with an intent to catch and lay hold on something to improve against him:

they will keep yours also; that is, either they will attend to your doctrines, or they will make the same spiteful remarks, and put the same evil constructions on your words as on mine.

Ver. 21. *But all these things will they do unto you*, etc.] Christ here signifies, that all the hatred and persecutions raised against his people by the world, would not be on their own account, for any evil actions done by them; they would not suffer as thieves, murderers, and evildoers, but as Christians; or as he says,

for my name's sake: because they were called by his name, and called upon his name; because they professed his name, and confessed him to be the Messiah and Redeemer; because they loved his name Jesus, a Saviour, believed in his name, and hoped in him for eternal life; and also preached him, and in his name salvation, and encouraged others to believe in him; and therefore they had no reason to be ashamed, but rather to rejoice; as they afterwards did, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name: besides, this malice and hatred of theirs arose from ignorance of the Father of Christ:

because they know not him that sent me; they did not know that Jesus was the Christ, and sent of God; they did not acknowledge him to be so, or the Father to be the sender of him; and because Christ and his disciples asserted this, therefore they were the objects of their hatred.

Ver. 22. *If I had not come and spoken unto them*, etc.] The ignorance of the Jews is represented as inexcusable, since Christ was come, and had preached unto them; if he had not come and told them that he was the Messiah, they might have pleaded an excuse for their ignorance of him, and his mission, and of the Father that sent him: but inasmuch as he was come in the flesh, and came to them his own; and came also a light into the world, carrying along with him evidence, conviction, and demonstration, of his being the Messiah; speaking such words as never man did; preaching with such authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not; declaring in plain terms he was the Christ of God, and that if they did not believe him to be

so, they would die in their sins; they could have no pretext to make for their ignorance and disbelief: if all this had not been done,

they had not had sin; or been guilty of the sin of unbelief, in the rejection of the Messiah; not that they would have been without sin in any sense, or without any kind of sin, but without this particular sin; at least they would have excused and wiped themselves clean, and would have looked like innocent and sinless persons, under all their ignorance and unbelief:

but now they have no cloak for their sin; they could not say, had he come to us, and told us that he was the Messiah, and given evidence of his being sent by the Father, we would have believed him, and received him as the Messiah; for he did do this, and so cut off all excuses and pretences from them.

Ver. 23. *He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.*] The hatred the world bears to the followers of Christ, is interpretatively hatred to Christ himself; and hatred to Christ himself, is no other than hatred to his Father; and indeed, all the hatred that is shown by the men of the world to Christ, to his Gospel, and to his faithful ministers and followers, originally arises from that enmity, that is naturally in the heart of every unregenerate man against God: now since not only Christ, but the Father also, is hated by the world, the children of God and disciples of Christ may sit easier under all the resentment, frowns, and malice of the world.

Ver. 24. *If I had not done among them the works*, etc.] This is another, and a new argument, evincing the inexcusableness of their ignorance, and infidelity, and sin, taken from the works that Christ did; such as healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, causing the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, cleansing lepers, and casting out devils; which were clear proofs, and full demonstrations of his deity, and of his being the true Messiah:

and which none other man did; in his own name, and by his own power; and which none of the men of God ever did; as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, or others; and particularly that of giving sight to one that was born blind: now if these works had not been done among them, openly, visibly, and publicly,

they had not had sin; or so much sin; or their sin of unbelief would not have been so great, or attended with such aggravating circumstances; or they would not have been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as many

of them were; who saw his works and miracles, and were convicted in their own consciences that he was the Messiah, and yet rejected him, against all the light and evidence which the Spirit of God gave by them, and by whom Christ wrought his miracles:

but now have they both seen; the works which were done, and the Messiah, whose mission from the Father they proved;

and hated both me and my Father; for their rejection of him as the Messiah, notwithstanding the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought, plainly arose from obstinacy, malice, and inveterate hatred against Christ, and against the Father that sent him.

Ver. 25. *But this cometh to pass*, etc.] This hatred against Christ, and which is pointed at his people for his sake, and reaches to the Father also on his account, is suffered to be, and therefore should be patiently borne:

that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law: either in (^{<1359>}Psalm 35:19), or rather in (^{<1360>}Psalm 69:4); which is a psalm of Christ, as appears by citations out of it in the New Testament, or references to it; (see ^{<1377>}John 2:17 19:28 ^{<1378>}Matthew 27:48). The whole Scripture is sometimes called the law, as here; for not the law of Moses is meant, or the five books of Moses, but the writings of the Old Testament; which the Jews had in their hands, to them being committed the oracles of God; and sometimes are so called, when the book of Psalms is particularly referred to as now; (see ^{<1304>}John 10:34 12:34); the words cited are,

they hated me without a cause; without any reason for it, Christ having given them no provocation, or just cause of offence, anger, or hatred. This sin of hating without a cause, is represented by the Jews as a very heinous one, and as the reason of the destruction of the second temple; under which they observe, that men studied in the law, and in the commandments, and in doing of good; and therefore ask why it was destroyed? the answer is, because there was under it, **μῆτις τὰν**, “hatred without a cause”: to teach us, that hatred without a cause is equal to the three (capital) transgressions, idolatry, adultery, and murder, for which they say the first temple was destroyed^{f624}. This is a tacit acknowledgment that the sin here mentioned was a reigning one, or that it much abounded in the time of Christ.

Ver. 26. *But when the Comforter is come*, etc.] Or advocate, the Spirit of God; who was to be, and has been an advocate for Christ, against the world, and for his people, against all their enemies; and who as he was to reprove, and did reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in favour of Christ, so he was to assist his people, and plead their cause, and help them, in vindication of themselves, before the princes of the earth, as he did: and who also was to act, and has acted the part of a “comforter” to them, under all the hatred and violence they have met with from the world; by taking and applying the things of Christ to them; by shedding the love of God in them; by applying the promises of the Gospel to them; by witnessing their adoption, and sealing them up to the day of redemption:

whom I will send unto you from the Father; visibly, as on the day of Pentecost, in cloven tongues as of fire; and invisibly into their hearts, by the secret influence of his light and grace; which mission, as it suggests no inferiority in the spirit, either to the Father or the Son; since the same spirit with the Father, was the sender of Christ; so it is expressive of the equal deity of Christ, and his joint power and authority with the Father:

even the Spirit of truth; who is the true Spirit, truth itself; yea, the true God, with the Father and Son; the Spirit of him who is truth; the dictator of the Scriptures of truth; who leads his people into all truth; and is the Spirit of truth, as he is a witness or testifier of Christ, hereafter promised:

which proceedeth from the Father; Christ is not content to describe him by his work and office, as, an, advocate and comforter, and as the Spirit of truth: and from his mission by him from the Father; all which shows his usefulness and authority; but also from his nature and essence, which is the same with the Father’s; and from his peculiar personal and distinctive character, expressed by his proceeding from the Father; and which is mentioned, as what is distinct from his mission by Christ, from the Father before spoken of; and designs no other, than the eternal, ineffable, and continued act of his procession, from the Father and the Son; in which he partakes of the same nature with them, and which personally distinguishes him from them. The ancient Jews ^{f625} spoke of him just in the same language; “the Spirit of God”, in (Gen^{1:2}); they say is the Holy Spirit, *myhl am qypnd*, “which proceedeth from God”: very pertinently does Christ take notice of this his character here, when he was about to speak of him as his testifier:

he shall testify of me: of his deity and sonship, of his incarnation, of his being the Messiah, of his sufferings and death, of his resurrection and ascension, of his exaltation at the right hand of God, and of his ordination to be the Judge of quick and dead; all which he bore testimony to, by the gifts bestowed upon the apostles, and the great grace that was upon them all; by the signs, wonders, and divers miracles, by which the Gospel of Christ was confirmed; and by the power, influence, and success, which attended the preaching of it every where. Thus he testified of Christ, against the blaspheming Jews, and persecuting Gentiles, to the reproof and confusion of them; and he testified of him to the apostles, and all true believers, to their great joy and comfort, and to the support of them, under all the malice and hatred of the world.

Ver. 27. *And ye shall also bear witness,* etc.] That is, of Christ; of all the things he did in Jerusalem, and in the land of the Jews; being eyewitnesses, and ministers, or servants of the word, who constantly attended upon him; of all the good he did to the bodies and souls of men; of the various miracles he wrought, and of the several doctrines which were taught by him: what they saw with their eyes, heard with their ears, and with their hands handled of the word of life, that they could declare, and did declare, and bore a faithful testimony to; they were to be, and were witnesses of his sufferings and death, of his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven; they were a company of select men, chosen before of God, for this purpose; they were the most proper to be concerned herein, having been for a considerable time his intimates and associates:

because ye have been with me from the beginning; from the beginning of his ministry; for as soon as he entered on his public work, he called them to be followers of him; and who continued with him to the end, and therefore were the most capable of bearing a testimony concerning his person, doctrines, and works; of all he did and suffered, from first to last.