

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 18

Ver. 1. *When Jesus had spoken these words*, etc.] Referring either to his discourses in (^{<4940>}John 14:1-16:33), in which he acquaints his disciples with his approaching death; comforts them under the sorrowful apprehension of his departure from them; gives them many excellent promises for their relief, and very wholesome advice how to conduct themselves; lets them know what should befall them, and that things, however distressing for the present, would have a joyful issue: or else to his prayer in the preceding chapter, in which he had been very importunate with his Father, both for himself and his disciples; or to both of these, which is highly probable:

he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron; the same with “Kidron” in (^{<4052>}2 Samuel 15:23); and elsewhere: it had its name, not from cedars, for not cedars but olives chiefly grew upon the mount, which was near it; and besides the name is not Greek, but Hebrew, though the Arabic version renders it, “the brook” *zra l a*, “of Cedar”: it had its name either from the darkness of the valley in which it ran, being between high mountains, and having gardens in it, and set with trees; or from the blackness of the water through the soil that ran into it, being a kind of a common sewer, into which the Jews cast everything that was unclean and defiling; (see ^{<4096>}2 Chronicles 29:16 30:14). Particularly there was a canal which led from the altar in the temple to it, by which the blood and soil of the sacrifices were carried into it ^{f642}. This brook was but about three feet over from bank to bank, and in the summer time was quite dry, and might be walked over dry shod; and is therefore by Josephus sometimes called the brook of Kidron ^{f643}, and sometimes the valley of Kidron ^{f644}: in this valley were corn fields; for hither the sanhedrim sent their messengers to reap the sheaf of the firstfruits, which always was to be brought from a place near to Jerusalem ^{f645}; and it is very likely that willows grew by the brook, from whence they might fetch their willow branches at the feast of tabernacles; for the Jews say ^{f646}, there is a place below Jerusalem called Motza, (in the Gemara it is said to be Klamia or Colonia,) whither they went down and gathered willow branches; it seems to be the valley of

Kidron, which lay on the east of Jerusalem, between that and the Mount of Olives ^{f647}; it had fields and gardens adjoining to it; (see ~~1234~~ 2 Kings 23:4). So we read of a garden here, into which Christ immediately went, when he passed over this brook. The blood, the filth and soil of it, which so discoloured the water, as to give it the name of the Black Brook, used to be sold to the gardeners to dung their gardens with ^{f648}. It was an emblem of this world, and the darkness and filthiness of it, and of the exercises and troubles of the people of God in it, which lie in the way to the heavenly paradise and Mount of Zion, through which Christ himself went, drinking “of the brook in the way”, (~~1817~~ Psalm 110:7); and through which also all his disciples and followers enter into the kingdom of heaven: it may also be a figure of the dark valley of the shadow of death, through which Christ and all his members pass to the heavenly glory. And I see not why this black and unclean brook may not be a representation of the pollutions and defilements of sin; which being laid on Christ when he passed over it, made him so heavy and sore amazed in the human nature, as to desire the cup might pass from him. Once more let it be observed, that it was the brook David passed over when he fled from his son Absalom; in this David was a type of Christ, as in other things: Absalom represented the people of the Jews, who rejected the Messiah, and rebelled against him; Ahithophel, Judas, who betrayed him; and the people that went with David over it, the disciples of our Lord; only there was this difference; there was a father fleeing from a son, here a son going to meet his father’s wrath; David and his people wept when they went over this brook, but so did not Christ and his disciples; the sorrowful scene to them both began afterwards in the garden. This black brook and dark valley, and it being very late at night when it was passed over, all add to that dark dispensation, that hour of darkness, which now came upon our Lord; yet he went forth over it of his own accord, willingly and cheerfully; not being forced or compelled by any; and his disciples with him, not to be partners of his sufferings, but to be witnesses of them, and to receive some knowledge and instruction from what they should see and hear:

where was a garden into which he entered; and his disciples: there were no orchards nor gardens within the city of Jerusalem, but rose gardens, which were from the times of the prophets ^{f649}; all others were without; and this was a very proper place for gardens, where so much dung was near at hand. Whether this garden belonged to one of Christ’s friends, is not certain; but since he often resorted hither, no doubt it was with the leave,

and by the consent of the proprietor of it. However, so it was, that as the first Adam's disobedience was committed in a garden, the second. Adam's obedience to death for sin, began here; and as the sentence of death, on account of sin, was passed in a garden, it began to be executed in one.

Ver. 2. *And Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place*, etc.] This character is given of Judas, to distinguish him from another disciple of the same name; and though as yet he had not betrayed him, yet it was determined he should, and Christ knew it, and he was now about to do it: and it is observed, that Judas was as well acquainted with the place of Christ's resort, and knew the garden he frequently retired to, as the rest of the disciples; to show that Christ did not go there to hide and secure himself from him, but to meet him, and that he might have an opportunity of finding him with the greater ease:

for Jesus often times resorted thither with his disciples; when at Jerusalem at any of the feasts, and at this festival; partly for refreshment and rest after he had been preaching in the temple, and partly for prayer, and also for private conversation with his disciples.

Ver. 3. *Judas then having received a band of men*, etc.] From the captain of this band, who in (^{<6182>}John 18:12); is called a "Chiliarch", that is, a commander of a thousand men, one might conclude there were so many in this band; but it seems, that such an officer might have two bands under his command; and if this was, the case, there were at least five hundred men in this company; a large number indeed, to take an unarmed person; and yet, as if this was not sufficient, it is added,

and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees; servants that belong to each of these, and who seem to be a considerable number also; for these are said to be "a great multitude"; (^{<4187>}Matthew 26:47); nay, not only so, but the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders of the people, were themselves among them, (^{<4223>}Luke 22:52); to see that the men did their work, and did not return without him; as these officers, when sent by them once before, did:

cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons: **snp**, which is no other than the Greek word here used for a lantern, the Jews tell us ^{f650}, was an earthen vessel, in which a candle was put and covered, that the wind might not put it out, and it had holes in the sides of it, through which light was let out; their **dyp**, or "lamp", here rendered "torch", they say ^{f651},

was also an earthen vessel in the form of a reed, at the top of which was a proper receptacle, in which they burnt old rags dipped in oil: now though it was full moon, being the time of the passover, they brought these along with them to discover him by the light of, and find him out with them, if he should hide himself among the trees, or in any of the more shady places in the garden; and they took warlike instruments, as swords, spears, and staves, as if they had a thief or a murderer to apprehend, or a little army of men to encounter with; whereas there were only Christ, and his eleven disciples; and these in no condition, nor had any design, to defend themselves in an hostile manner.

Ver. 4. *Jesus therefore knowing all things*, etc.] As being the omniscient God, so his knowledge reaches to all persons and things, without any limitation, and restriction; though here it has a regard to all the things,

that should come upon him; even all the sufferings he should endure, which were all determined by God; agreed to by him, in the covenant of grace; predicted in the Old Testament, and foretold by himself: he knew all the circumstances that would attend his sufferings, as that he should be betrayed by Judas; be forsaken by the rest of his disciples; that the Jews would give him gall and vinegar in his thirst; and the soldiers part his garments among them: he knew the time of his sufferings; and that it was now at hand; and that Judas and his company were not far off: and therefore, went forth out of the garden, or at least from that part of it where he was, and his disciples with him: this was done to show his willingness to suffer; he

went forth of his own accord; he did not hide himself in the garden, as the first Adam did: he did not stay till those that sought his life came up to him: he went forth, not to make his escape from them, but to meet them, and make himself known unto them;

and said unto them; whom seek ye? this question was put, not out of ignorance; for he knew full well who they were seeking after: nor with a design to deceive them, and make his escape; but to show that he was not afraid of them, and that they could not have known him, nor have taken him, had he not made himself known; and offered himself to them; and which makes it appear, that he was willingly apprehended by them, and voluntarily suffered.

Ver. 5. *They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth,* etc.] Their answer is not, “thee”; for they knew him not, their eyes were holden, or struck with dimness, or blindness, as the men of Sodom were; or they that answered might be such, who never personally knew him: nor do they say “Christ”, for they rejected and denied him as the Messiah; nor do they call him that deceiver, or seditious person, as they sometimes did, being willing to cover their malicious views and intentions; but Jesus of Nazareth, a name by which he was commonly known, being taken from his education and conversation in that place; though this was sometimes given him in a contemptuous way:

Jesus saith unto them, I am [he]; or “I am”, respecting his name Jehovah, averring himself to be the Christ, and owning himself under the name they were pleased to call him by; which shows how willing he was to be taken by them, and may teach us not to be ashamed of him, or of any nickname we may bear for his sake:

and Judas also which betrayed him stood with them; this circumstance is recorded to show, that Judas at first did not know him any more than the rest; so that he might easily have passed them if he had pleased; and that Judas did not stand with them as an idle spectator; he came with them to betray him, and was looking out for him; though when he spake he knew him not: it also expresses the different company Judas was in; a little while ago, he was at supper with Christ, and the other disciples, and now he is at the head of a band of soldiers, and others, to betray him; and also his continuance in his iniquity and wicked resolutions and agreement; as yet he had no remorse of conscience, or sense of his sin: and it seems to be mentioned also with this view, to inform us, that he fell to the ground with the rest; which is related in (^{<4816>}John 18:6). The Jew ^{f652} asserts, that there is a disagreement between the Evangelist John and the rest of the evangelists in this account: he observes, that when Judas came with his armed men to take Jesus, Jesus went out to meet them, and asked them, saying, whom Seek ye? they say Jesus of Nazareth; to whom he replies, I am he; and then Judas, that betrayed him, stood with them: but Matthew, in his Gospel, (^{<4157>}Matthew 26:47), and Mark, (^{<4148>}Mark 14:43); and Luke, (^{<4227>}Luke 22:47); relate, that Judas gave a sign to the soldiers, when they came to take Jesus, saying, him whom I shall kiss, lay hold on, and they did so. But here is no contradiction, John does not deny that Judas gave a sign to the soldiers; though he omits it, it being so particularly observed by the other evangelists, and only relates what is not taken notice of by them, and

which no way contradicts what they have asserted: the force of the objection seems to lie here; that, according to the other evangelists, Judas, as soon as he came into the garden, made up to Christ, and gave the signal by which he might be known, whereas he is here said to stand with the soldiers and officers; and that seeing such a signal was given, he must be, and was known by it, whereas he is here represented as if he was not known by them until he had made himself known to them; and that as soon as Judas had given the sign, they immediately seized him, whereas, according to this account, they did not, until some words had passed between Christ and them, and they first fell to the ground. In answer to which it may be said, that admitting that Judas did make up to Christ as soon as he entered the garden, and gave the signal to the soldiers, he might upon that immediately retire, and place himself among the multitude; either to give further directions and instructions to them, or that they might defend him from Jesus, should there be any occasion for it: and though it should be allowed that the signal was given by Judas before this, it might not be discerned by the soldiers, either not being near enough to observe it; or, as some think, being stricken with blindness, for a time, as the Sodomites were; or even supposing it was seen, and they knew by it which was Jesus, it is still a fuller proof of the courage and intrepidity of Christ to go forth, and present himself to them, and put the questions he did, and confirm unto them the truth of it, that he was Jesus whom they sought: to which may be added, that it does not appear that Christ was immediately seized by the soldiers, upon the signal given them by Judas, without some intervening words and actions; for though the signal and the seizure lie very near together in the accounts of Matthew and Mark; yet Luke relates many things between them, as the question of the disciples, whether they should smite with the sword; Peter's cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant; Christ's rebuking him, and touching the servant's ear, and healing it; and some discourse which passed between him, and the chief priests, captains, and elders. All which agree with the account the Evangelist John here gives.

Ver. 6. *As soon then as he had said unto them I am he,* etc.] Immediately upon his speaking these words, which were delivered with so much majesty and authority, and were attended with such a divine power:

they went backward, and fell to the ground; they were confounded, surprised, and intimidated, and seemed as if they would have chose rather to have fled from him, than to have apprehended him; and as they retired

and went backward, they fainted away, as it were, either at the majesty of his looks, or at the power of his words, or both, so that they became like ad men, falling to the ground. Sometimes the majesty of a man's person, or his fame for some remarkable things done by him, or the innocence and uprightness of his cause, have had such an influence upon his enemies, that they have not been able to execute upon him what they intended. It is reported of Caius Maxius that being reduced to the utmost misery, and shut up in a private house at Minturnae, (a town in Italy,) an executioner was sent to kill him; and though he was an old man, and unarmed, and in the most miserable condition, yet the executioner having drawn his sword, could not attempt to use it; but, as the historian ^{f653} says, being struck with blindness at the glory of the man, ran away astonished and trembling. Now, besides the above things, in their highest perfection, there was in our Lord something more than human; he was God as well as man, and he displayed his divine majesty, glory, and power. This was done, not to make his escape from them; but to give proof of his deity, and a specimen of his power at the great day; and to let them know, that if he had not thought fit to have surrendered himself voluntarily to them, though he was an unarmed person, they, with all their men and arms, could never have laid hold on him; and to show them, that he could as easily have struck them dead, as to cause them to fall to the ground: and sometimes striking a person dead immediately, is expressed by this phrase of striking to the ground; and is ascribed to God, who does it by the ministry of angels: says R. Simeon ben Shetach ^{f654}, to some persons at variance,

“let the master of thoughts come, (i.e. the blessed God,) and take vengeance on you; immediately Gabriel came, [qrqb ^j bhw,
“and smote them to the ground”; and they died immediately.”

The like is elsewhere said ^{f655},

“if thou transgresseth thy father's command, immediately comes Gabriel, and “smites to the ground”.”

Ver. 7. *Then asked he them again, whom seek ye?* etc.] This supposes them to be risen up again and on their feet; no hurt being done to them; for Christ always did good, and not hurt, to the bodies of men; he never disabled any, or took away life, or limb: he only did this to show his power, and not to do them any real damage; and the same divine person that struck them down, suffered them to rise, and gave them power and

strength to get up; which showed his great clemency and goodness: but they, on the contrary, persisted in their wicked intentions, and were still seeking after him; a plain proof of that judicial hardness of heart, under which they were; and that even miracles wrought will not bring hardened sinners to repentance without powerful and efficacious grace. When Christ, as fearless of them, and to show that this action he had no design to make his escape them, though he could easily have done it, and that he was willing to be apprehended by them, puts the question a second time, and asks them who they were seeking for. Something like this Josephus^{f656} reports concerning Elisha the prophet, though not repeated as here, nor attended with the like effect: he relates that Elisha having requested of God that he would smite his enemies with blindness, and that being granted he went into the midst of them, and asked them, *τινα επιζητουντες ηλψον*, “whom do ye come to seek?” they say Elisha the prophet: he promised them to deliver him to them, if they would follow him into the city, where he was; and so they being blinded by God, both in their sight and in their mind, followed the prophet.

They said Jesus of Nazareth; having recovered their spirits, and being hardened in desperate malice and wickedness, impudently make this reply to him; nor would they, notwithstanding this instance of his power, own him to be the Messiah; but still contemptuously style him Jesus of Nazareth.

Ver. 8. *Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he*, etc.] This he said, upbraiding them with their stupidity; signifying he was ready to deliver himself up into their hands; and which he did with intrepidity and calmness, only on this condition, with this proviso for his disciples;

if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: Christ was about to suffer for them, and therefore it was not just that they should suffer too; nor was it proper that they should suffer with him, lest their sufferings should be thought to be a part of the price of redemption. Besides, their suffering time was not come, and they had other work to do: this shows the love of Christ to his disciples, and his care of them, and also his power, and that he could have saved himself as well as them. Moreover, these words may be considered as an emblem and pledge of the acquittance and discharge of God’s elect, through the suretyship engagements, and performances of Christ, who drew near to God on their account, substituted himself in their room, and undertook for them in the council and covenant of peace, and

laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, to satisfy for their sins, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to keep and preserve them in this world, and to make them happy in another. Accordingly, in the fulness of time he was made under the law, and stood in their place and stead, and was taken, suffered, died, and rose again. Now, as there was a discharge and acquittance of them from eternity, a non-imputation of sin to them, and a secret letting of them go upon the suretyship engagements of Christ, and in virtue thereof, a passing by, and over, the sins of the Old Testament saints so there was an open acquittance and discharge of them all upon the apprehension, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ; complete deliverance from wrath and condemnation being obtained, and a full title to eternal glory made. Moreover, these words may be considered not only and merely as spoken to the Jews, but as addressed to the law and justice of God; or however, as having some respect to them, while directed to the others; for justice finding the sins of all the elect upon Christ, on whom the Father had laid them, and Christ had took them upon himself, was seeking for, and about to demand satisfaction of him for them; and he being under the law, and coming into the world to fulfil it, in the room and stead of his people, was about to bear the curse of it; wherefore seeing this was the case, he insists upon it, that they who were convicted of the law as transgressors, and held under it as condemned criminals and malefactors, and who were liable, as considered in themselves, to be seized upon by the justice of God, and to have the sentence of condemnation and death executed upon them, might be discharged and let go; and accordingly, upon the satisfaction made by Christ, this is the case: Christ's people are no longer under the law, as a ministration of condemnation and death, nor liable to suffer the vindictive wrath of God; they are become free from the curses of a righteous law, and are let go by divine justice, and will never suffer the strokes of it, neither in this world nor in that to come; there is no demand to be made upon them, either by the law or justice of God; there is no wrath or punishment will be inflicted on them, either here or hereafter; and they may, and shall go their way into everlasting life, when time shall be no more with them, neither law nor justice having anything to say to the contrary.

Ver. 9. *That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake*, etc.] (^{<8172>}John 17:12);

of them which thou gavest me have I lost none; which though it has a peculiar respect to the apostles, is true of all the elect of God; who are

given to Christ, and shall none of them be lost, neither their souls nor bodies; for Christ's charge of them reaches to both: both were given to him, both are redeemed by him, and both shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation: he saves their souls from an eternal death, and will raise their bodies from a corporeal one; wherefore that his care of his disciples, with respect to their bodies as well as souls, with respect to their temporal lives as well as eternal happiness, might be seen; he made this agreement with the Jews that came to take him, or rather laid this injunction on them, to dismiss them; and which it is very remarkable they did; they laid hands on none of them, even though Peter drew his sword and struck off the ear of one of them: and which is a very considerable instance of the power which Christ had over the spirits of these men, to restrain them; and so a proof of his proper deity, as well as of the care of Christ for the preservation of his apostles, whilst he was here on earth; for to that time only the words cited have a respect; in which Christ speaks of his keeping them whilst he was with them, and uses this as an argument with his Father to keep them, now he was removing from them: wherefore their losing their lives afterwards for his sake, as they all did excepting the Apostle John, is no contradiction to this expression of his; and besides, they were preserved by the power of God so long, until they had done the work which was appointed them to do, and for which they were given him, and chosen by him to be his apostles, and for which they were better furnished after his resurrection and ascension; for had they been, apprehended by the Jews at this time, in all probability, according to an human view of things, such was their weakness, they would have fallen most foully and shamefully, as the instance of Peter, the strongest of them, shows; and therefore to prevent such a temptation and to preserve them, our Lord took this method to deliver them out of the hands of the Jews; the saving clause, "but the son of perdition", is here left out, because Judas, who is designed by that character, was now openly declared to be what he was; he was no longer among the disciples; he was separated from them, and had betrayed his master, and was not of the number of those Christ insisted upon might be let go.

Ver. 10. *Then Simon Peter having a sword,* etc.] Girt about him, which he either wore in common, or particularly at the feast, as the Galilaeans are said to do, to preserve them from thieves and wild beasts by the way; or was one of the two the disciples had with them in the garden; or what Peter

purposely furnished himself with to defend his master, taking a hint from what was said by him, (^{<0276>}Luke 22:36);

drew it; before Christ could give an answer to the question put by his disciples, whether they should smite or not, (^{<0279>}Luke 22:49); being encouraged thereunto by what Christ said, (^{<0278>}Luke 22:38); or by what he had just done in, striking the man to the ground; and being provoked by that servant's going to lay hold on Christ, and who it is probable was more forward and busy than any of the rest; for it appears from the other evangelists, that Peter did this, though he is not mentioned by name by any of the rest, just as they were seizing and apprehending Christ:

and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear; he doubtless struck at his head, and intended to have cleaved him down, but missed his aim, and took off his ear: the person is particularly described, that he was a servant, and the servant of the high priest, and he is mentioned also by name;

and the servant's name was Malchus; that if the truth of this relation was called in question, it might easily be looked into and examined, when it would appear that it was perfectly right. All the evangelists give an account of this action of Peter's, but none of them mention his name but this evangelist; perhaps the reason might be, that Peter was alive when the other evangelists wrote, and therefore it was not safe to say who it was that did it, lest he who was the minister of the circumcision, and dwelt among the Jews, should be persecuted for it, or their minds should be prejudiced against him on that account; but John writing his Gospel many years after his death, the reason for the concealment of his name no longer subsisted: nor indeed is the name of the high priest's servant mentioned by any other of the evangelists: John had, or however he writes, a more exact and particular account of this matter. This was a name frequent with the Syrians, Phoenicians, and Hebrews. Jerom^{f657} wrote the life of one Malchus, a monk or Eremite, who was by nation a Syrian; and Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, who was by birth a Tyrian, his original name was Malchus, as was his father's; and "which", in the Syrian, and his country dialect, as he himself^{f658} and others^{f659} say, signifies a "king". Josephus^{f660} speaks of one Cleodemus, whose name was Malchus, that wrote a history of the Hebrews. And some Jewish Rabbins were of this name; hence we read of *Æwl m br*, "R. Maluc"^{f661}, and of *wykl m br*, "R. Malcio"^{f662}; the name is the same with Malluch, (^{<0280>}Nehemiah 10:4).

Ver. 11. *Then said Jesus unto Peter*, etc.] By way of rebuke, and to prevent his repeating the blow, and that further mischief might not ensue; for such a bold imprudent action risked the lives of all the disciples, who, in all probability, would have fallen a sacrifice to the fury and resentment of these men, had not Christ interposed in this prudent manner; who, also, Luke says, touched the servant's ear and healed him, (~~22:51~~ Luke 22:51), which no doubt tended greatly to conciliate their minds, and make them easy:

put up thy sword into the sheath: Peter was not a proper person to bear the sword, and use it; it was a very daring attack, and a dangerous one, and was very unnecessary; since Christ could have defended himself, had he thought fit, without Peter's drawing his sword; and besides, for a word speaking, he could have had of his Father more than twelve legions of angels; and it was also contrary to the nature of his kingdom, which was not of this world, nor to be supported and defended in any such manner; and was, moreover, as much as in Peter lay, an hinderance of his sufferings, and of the execution of his Father's will and decree; wherefore he adds,

the cup which my Father hath given me: by the cup is meant, the wrath of God, and punishment due to sin, endured by Christ in his sufferings, and is said to be given him by his Father; because he called him to these sufferings, they were appointed and determined by him; yea, he was even ordered, and commanded by his Father, to drink of this cup; justice mixed it up, and put it into his hands; and he took it as coming from his Father, who delighted in seeing him drink it up, as the stately of his people; and a dreadful one it was, a cup of trembling and astonishment, of curse, and not of blessing, of wrath and fury: the allusion seems to be to the master of the family, who appointed, and gave to everyone their cup:

shall I not drink it? which expresses his, willingness to do it, his eager desire after it, his delight in it, and displeasure at Peter's attempt to hinder him; he being now perfectly reconciled in his human nature to drink it, though it was so bitter a potion: he found it was impossible, considering the decree of God, his own agreement, and the salvation of his people, that it should be otherwise; and besides, it was his Father's will and pleasure, he considered it as coming from him; and therefore cheerfully accepted it, and was, resolved to drink it up, and that nothing should hinder him. The Persic version reads it, "I will not give it to another to drink"; Peter, by this rash action, seeming as if he would have the cup out of Christ's hands, and have

drank it himself; which, as it could not be, nor would Christ suffer it, so if he had, it would have been of no advantage to the salvation of his people.

Ver. 12. *Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews,* etc.] Which Judas received, and which came along with him, (~~John~~ John 18:3). When Jesus had rebuked Peter, and healed the servant's ear, and showed such a willingness to surrender himself to them;

they took Jesus and bound him. This they did, partly for safety and security, he having several times escaped from them; and partly for contempt, and by way of reproach, using him as they would do the vilest of malefactors: and this was submitted to by Christ, that his people might be loosed from the cords of sin, be delivered from the captivity of Satan, and be freed from the bondage of the law; hereby the types of him were fulfilled, as the binding of Isaac, when his father was going to offer him up, and the binding of the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar: who that has read the ceremonies of the sheaf of the firstfruits, but must call them to mind, upon reading this account of the apprehension and binding of Christ, and leading him to the high priest? This sheaf was fetched from places the nearest to Jerusalem, particularly from the fields of Kidron: the manner was this ^{f663}:

“the messengers of the sanhedrim went out (from Jerusalem) on the evening of the feast day (the sixteenth of Nisan, and over the brook Kidron to the adjacent fields), and bound the standing corn in bundles, that it might be the easier reaped; and all the neighbouring cities gathered together there, that it might be reaped in great pomp; and when it was dark, one (of the reapers) says to them, is the sun set? they say, yes; and again, is the sun set? they say, yes: with this sickle (shall I reap?) they say, yes; again, with this sickle (shall I reap?) they say, yes; in this basket (shall I put it?) they say, yes; again, in this basket (shall I put it?) they say, yes; if on the sabbath day he says to them, is this sabbath day? they say, yes; again, is this sabbath day? they say, yes; (it was sabbath day this year;) Shall I reap? they say to him reap, shall I reap? they say to him reap; three times upon everything; then they reap it, and put it into the baskets, and, bring it to the court, where they dry it at the fire.”

Whoever reads this, will easily observe a likeness: the messengers of the great sanhedrim go to the fields of Kidron, in the evening, with their sickles

and baskets; bind the standing corn; questions and answers pass between them and the people before they reap; and when they have done, they bring the sheaf in their basket to the court, to be dried at the fire. So the officers of the high priest, with others, pass over the brook Kidron, with lanterns, torches, and weapons; in the night go into a garden; there apprehend Jesus; questions and answers pass between them there; then they lay hold on him, bind him, and bring him to the high, priest.

Ver. 13. *And led him away to Annas first*, etc.] Who is elsewhere mentioned with Caiaphas as an high priest also, (^{<ARB>}Luke 3:2 ^{<ARB>}Acts 4:6). He was the “sagan” of the high priest; he and Caiaphas seem to have had the high priesthood alternately; and either now, because his house lay first in the way, or rather, because he was a man of age, learning, and experience, as these men usually were, that they might supply the deficiencies of the high priests, who were sometimes very weak and unlearned men^{f664}; therefore they first lead him to him, to have his advice how to proceed, and to take him along with them to his son-in-law, where the great council was convened, and that he might use his interest and authority, in taking proper measures, in order to put Jesus to death; and especially they led him to him, for the reason here assigned;

for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas; so that he was, it is very probable, the older man: and being related to him, had an interest in him; and to whom such a sight was equally pleasing as to the high priest himself, or any of the council:

which was the high priest that same year; for the high priesthood was not for life, but was often changed, being bought and sold for money; (see Gill on “^{<ARB>}Luke 3:2”); so that this clause is very properly added, though Caiaphas held it longer, or, at least, had it more years than one; for Caiaphas was high priest when John began to preach, (^{<ARB>}Luke 3:2); but he now succeeded Simeon ben Camhith, who was priest the year before; as was Eleazar the son of Ananus, the year before that; and before him Ishmael ben Phabi, who were all three successively put into the priesthood by Valerius Gratus, the Roman governor; as was also Caiaphas this year, and whose name was Joseph.

Ver. 14. *Now Caiaphas was he which gave council to the Jews*, etc.] The chief priests and Pharisees, who met in council about Jesus, (^{<ARB>}John 11:47-52), the counsel he gave was,

that it was expedient that one man should die for the people; and which advice was given out of ill will and malice to Christ, and to prevent, as he thought, the people of the Jews being destroyed by the Romans; though the words have a very good sense which he did not understand. The people Christ was to die for, was not all the, people of the world, nor only the people of the Jews, nor all of them; but all the elect of God, whom God has chosen for his special and peculiar people, and has given to Christ as such: these Christ were to die for, and did, not merely as a martyr, to confirm his doctrine to them, or as an example to teach them meekness, patience, and courage, but in the room and stead of them, as a surety for them; and it was expedient that he should, in such sense, die for them, because of his suretyship engagements, that he might make satisfaction to the law and justice of God, and procure the salvation of his people, and send forth the Spirit to make application of it to them.

Ver. 15. *And Simon Peter followed Jesus*, etc.] It is certain, he first fled with the rest, and forsook him, as they all did, notwithstanding his resolution to abide by him; however, he was very desirous to know what would become of Jesus, and what would be the issue of things; with this view he followed him, and not to deny him; though that was the consequence. Other evangelists say he followed him afar off, at a distance, (~~418B~~ Matthew 26:58 ~~414B~~ Mark 14:54 ~~425B~~ Luke 22:54); which showed some fear; and yet to follow him at all discovered love and zeal. To follow Christ is a property of his sheep, and is highly commendable, especially to follow him in sufferings; a greater character a person cannot well have, than to be a follower of Jesus, in the exercise of grace, in the discharge of duty, and in bearing the cross; and yet it does not appear that Peter did well in following Christ now; for Christ had cautioned him of his over confidence, had hinted to him that he should deny him, and had dismissed him, and took his leave of him, and the rest, on whose discharge he insisted, when he was apprehended, (~~418B~~ John 18:8);

And so did another disciple, and that disciple was known unto the high priest. This is thought to be the Apostle John, because he frequently speaks of himself, without mentioning his name; and these two, Peter and John, were generally together; and certain it is, that John was present at the cross at the time of Christ's crucifixion; and who is supposed to be known to the high priest, by carrying fish to his house, and selling it to him; so Nonnus says, he was known from his fishing trade: but it is not probable that he was known, or could be known by the high priest, so as to have any

intimacy with him; nor is it likely that he, being a Galilaean, would venture in; he was discoverable by his speech, and would have been in equal danger with Peter; rather it was some one of the disciples of Christ, who had not openly professed him; one of the chief rulers that believed in him, but, for fear of the Pharisees, had not confessed him; it may be Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or the man at whose house Christ had eaten the passover. In the Syriac version he is called one of the other disciples; not of the twelve, but others. However, through his knowledge of the high priest, he

went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest; not Annas, but Caiaphas; for Christ was now brought from Annas's house to Caiaphas's, where the Scribes and elders were assembled together.

Ver. 16. *But Peter stood at the door without,* etc.] It being difficult to get in; and perhaps he might be fearful too of going in, lest he should be known; however, he waited, if he could hear or see anything, and for a proper opportunity of entrance: it would have been well if he had took the hint of providence, access not being easy, and have gone his way; for he was now at the door of temptation: it would have been best for him, if he had kept without; and indeed at a greater distance; but his curiosity had led him thus far, and he hoped for an opportunity of getting nearer, which offered in the following manner:

then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest; seeing Peter through the window, by the light of the moon, for it was full moon; and knowing him, who he was, concluded he had a mind to come in, and hear and see what he could, steps out,

and spake unto her that kept the door; which might be thought more properly the business of menservants; but these being employed in apprehending and guarding Jesus, the maid, servants might be obliged to take this post. The Ethiopic version, in the next verse, calls her the doorkeeper's daughter; her father might be the porter, and he being busy, she supplied his place. Though there is no need of these conjectures, since it was usual with other nations, and it might be with the Jews, for women to be doorkeepers, as Pignorius^{f665} has shown out of Plautus, Petronius, Pausanias, and others. However, the other disciple, who was a man of figure and authority, and was known by the servants of the family, ordered her to open the door, and let Peter in; who accordingly did:

and brought in Peter; into the hall, where Jesus was, under the examination of the high priest.

Ver. 17. *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter*, etc.] She being relieved, either by her father, if porter, or by a fellow servant, had the opportunity of coming into the hall, where Peter was, and was curious to observe him, who he should be, that that person of note should order him to be admitted, when an affair of so much privacy and importance was transacting; and either by Peter's language, or the trouble that appeared in his countenance, or fancying: she had seen him in the temple, or in some part of the city in company With Jesus, addresses him after this manner:

art not thou also one of this man's disciples? She speaks of Christ in the vulgar dialect of the Jews, calling him "this man"; not only esteeming him a mere man, but a worthless man; and knowing he had disciples, challenges him as one of them; when he, all in flight and surprise, not expecting such a question to be put to him, without any further thought, rashly and suddenly

he saith I am not: he never denied that Christ was God or the Son of God, or that he was come in the flesh, or that he was the Messiah and Saviour of sinners; but either that he did not know what the maid said, or the person she spoke of; or, as here, that he was one of his disciples; which was a very great untruth: and many are the aggravations of his fall; which came to pass as soon as ever he was entered almost; and that by the means of a maid, a servant maid, a very inferior one; and at first perhaps they were alone; and the question put to him might not be in a virulent way, nor proceed from malice, but commiseration of him; and yet he had not resolution enough to own himself a disciple of Jesus; which he might have done, and in all likelihood might have gone safe off directly: but he that had so much confidence as to say, though all men deny thee, yet will not I; and had so much courage, as, in the face of a band of soldiers, to draw his sword, and smite one of the high priest's servants, but a few hours before, has not spirit enough in him to own his master before a servant maid!

Ver. 18. *And the servants and officers stood there*, etc.] In a certain part of the hall, the middle of it; the Vulgate Latin reads, "by the coals": it follows,

who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; though it was the passover, and harvest near. Dr. Lightfoot has observed from our countryman Biddulph, who was at Jerusalem at this time of the year, that though in the

daytime it was as hot as with us at Midsummer, yet such very great dews fell as made it very cold, especially in the night; and from one of the Jewish canons ^{f666}, that the year was not intercalated, (which when done was chiefly on account of the passover,) neither for snow nor frost; which, as he justly remarks, supposes there might be frost and snow at the time of the passover. The same is observed in the Talmud ^{f667}, where the gloss upon it is,

“that they might not desist, on that account, from coming to the passover.”

The sense is, that whereas sometimes snow fell about the time of the passover; which might be thought to be an hinderance to some from coming to it; this never was a reason that came into consideration with the sanhedrim, or prevailed upon them to intercalate a month, that so the passover might not fall at a time of year when there was usually snow. The passover was always in the spring of the year, when nights are commonly cold, as they are generally observed to be at the vernal equinox: this night might be remarkably cold; which seems to be suggested by the Persic version, which reads, “for it was cold that night”; and the Ethiopic version, “for the cold of that night was great”; and adds what is neither in the text, nor true, “for the country was cold”. The Arabic version, as it should seem, very wrongly renders it, “for it was winter”; since the passover was never kept in the winter season, but always in the spring, in the month Nisan: the winter season, with the Jews, were half the month of Chisleu, all Tebeth, and half Shebet ^{f668}; though this is to be observed in favour of that version, that the Jews distinguish their winter into two parts; the one they call **Prwj**, which, as the gloss says, is the strength of winter, the coldest part of it, and which lasts the time before mentioned; and the other they call **rWQ**, which is the end of winter, and when the cold is not so strong; and half Nisan is taken into this; for they say that half Shebat, all Adar, and half Nisan, are reckoned to this part of winter: so that, according to this account, the fourteenth of Nisan, which was the day on which the passover was killed; or at least the fifteenth, which was now begun, was the last day of winter, and so just secures the credit of the above version.

And they warmed themselves, and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself: he was cold both inwardly and outwardly; and being so, he gets into bad company; and it may be with a view that he might not be suspected, but be taken for one of their own sort, as one who had the same

ill opinion of Jesus they had; and by the light of the fire he is again discovered and challenged, which makes way for a second denial.

Ver. 19. *The high priest then asked Jesus*, etc.] Being now brought from Annas to Caiaphas, who was the high priest and mouth of the sanhedrim, and to whom it appertained to hear and try a cause relating to doctrine. And what he did was by putting questions to him, instead of opening the charge against him, and calling for witnesses to support it. The person he interrogated was a greater high priest than himself; was that prophet Moses spoke of, to whom the Jews were to hearken, and no other than the Son of God, and King of Israel; who, when at twelve years of age, asked the doctors questions, and answered theirs, to their great astonishment. He first inquires

of his disciples, not so much who they were, and what they were, and how many they were, and where they were now, as for what purpose he gathered them together; whether it was not with some seditious views to overturn the present government, and set up himself as a temporal prince; and this he did, that he might be able to send him, with a charge against him, to the Roman governor: he did not ask for his disciples to come and speak on his behalf, if they had anything to say for him, which, by their canons ^{f669}, was allowed and encouraged:

“if any of the disciples (of the person accused) says, I have a crime to lay to his charge, they silence him; but if one of the disciples says, I have something to say in his favour, they bring him up, and place him between them; nor does he go down from thence all the day; and if there is anything in what he says, $\omega\lambda\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\ \mu\omega\varsigma$, “they hearken to him”.”

The Jews indeed pretend ^{f670} that after Jesus was found guilty, a herald went before him forty days declaring his crime, and signifying, that if anyone knew anything worthy in him, to come and declare it; but none were found: but this is all lies and falsehood, to cover their wickedness; no disciple of his was allowed to speak for him. The high priest next asked Jesus

of his doctrine; not for the sake of information and instruction, nor to see whether it was according to the Scriptures; but if it was a new doctrine, and his own, and whether it tended to idolatry or blasphemy, and whether it was factious and seditious, that so they might have wherewith to accuse

him; for though they had got his person, they were at a loss for an accusation; and yet this self-same man that put these questions, and was fishing for something against him, had before given counsel to put him to death, right or wrong: all this was doing, and these questions were put to Jesus, whilst Peter was denying him.

Ver. 20. *Jesus answered him*, etc.] Not to the first of these questions, concerning his disciples; not because they had all now forsaken him, and one was denying him; nor because he would not betray them; nor because he would suffer alone; but because if his doctrine was good; it could not be blameworthy to have disciples, and to teach them: and the charge of sedition, blasphemy, and idolatry, they wanted to fasten on him, would sufficiently appear to be groundless by the doctrine he preached; and as to that he answers not directly what he taught, but declares the manner in which he delivered it, and which was such, that they that heard him could not be strangers to it.

I spake openly to the world; with all plainness, freedom, and boldness, without any reserve or ambiguity; and that not to a few persons only, to his own particular disciples, but to all the people of the Jews, who crowded in great numbers to hear him; insomuch that it was said by his enemies, that the world was gone after him.

I ever taught in the synagogue; the Arabic, “the synagogues”; the places of public worship in all parts of the nation, where the Jews met to pray, and read, and hear the word:

and in the temple; at Jerusalem, whenever he was in that city;

whither the Jews always resort; for prayer, and to offer sacrifice, and particularly at the three grand festivals of the year, the passover, Pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, when all the males from all parts appeared before the Lord. Accordingly, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “whither all the Jews resort”; and so read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions.

And in secret have I said nothing; not but that our Lord taught in other places than what are here mentioned, as on mountains, in deserts, by the sea shore, and in private houses, yet generally to great multitudes; and though he sometimes conversed alone, and in secret with his disciples, yet what he taught them was either an explanation of what he had said in public, or was perfectly agreeable to it.

Ver. 21. *Why askest thou me?* etc.] He seems surprised at the high priest's conduct, that he should put such questions to him, who stood bound before him; was brought there as a criminal, and was the defendant, and not obliged to accuse himself; nor could it be thought, that whatever evidence or testimony he should give, would have much weight with the persons before whom he stood.

Ask them which heard me, what I said unto them; he appeals to his hearers, many of whom were then present; and these his enemies, even his worst enemies, so clear was his case, so free was his doctrine from sedition and blasphemy, so innocent was he in the whole of his deportment and conduct, that he even submits to have his case issued and determined by what his hearers should say of him; and these not his friends, but his enemies; (see ²⁸¹⁸Isaiah 50:8);

behold, they, or these,

know what I have said; pointing at some persons present, perhaps the very officers who had been sent to take him before, but returned without him, declaring that never man spake like him.

Ver. 22. *And when he had thus spoken,* etc.] What was so right and reasonable, in so becoming a manner, without heat or passion:

one of the officers which stood by; it may be one of those who had been sent to him and had been a hearer of him, whom Jesus might look wistfully at, or point unto, when he said the above words, at which he might be provoked: and therefore

stroke Jesus with the palm of his hand; or gave him a rap with a rod, or smote him with a staff, as some think, is the sense of the phrase; though the Syriac, agreeably to our version, reads it, he smote him, *yhw[wl l [*, "upon his cheek"; gave him, what we commonly call, a slap on the face; and which is always esteemed a very great affront, and was a piece of rudeness and insolence to the last degree in this man:

saying, answerest thou the high priest so? This he said, as well as gave the blow, either out of flattery to the high priest, or to clear himself from being a favourer of Christ; which, by what had been said, he might think would be suspected: some have thought this was Malchus, whose ear Christ had healed; if so, he was guilty of great ingratitude.

Ver. 23. *Jesus answered him*, etc.] For the high priest took no notice of him, nor any of the sanhedrim, though the action was so insolent and indecent, both as to the manner in which it was done, and the person, an officer, by whom it was done; and considering the circumstances of it, in the palace of the high priest, in his presence, and before so grand a council, and whilst a cause was trying; and it was a barbarous, as well as an impious action, considering the person to whom it was done. Wherefore Jesus replies to him, without making use of his divine power as the Son of God, or discovering any warmth of spirit, and heat of passion, as a man, mildly and rationally argues with him;

if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: meaning, either if he had, to his knowledge, delivered any wicked doctrine in the course of his ministry, or had at that time said any evil thing of the high priest, or any other person, he desires that he would make it to appear, and give proper proof and evidence of it:

but if well, why smitest thou me? If he had said nothing contrary to truth, reason, and good manners, then he ought not to be used and treated in such an injurious way. And moreover, the officer ought to have been corrected by the Council, and have been made to pay the two hundred “zuzim”, or pence, the fine for such an affront, according to the Jewish canon, or more, according to the dignity of the person abused^{f671}.

Ver. 24. *Now Annas had sent him bound*, etc.] As he found him, when the captain, band, and officers brought him to him; who having pleased himself with so agreeable a sight, and had asked him some few questions, and perhaps insulted him, sent him away in this manner,

unto Caiaphas the high priest: his son-in-law, as the more proper person to be examined before; and especially as the grand council was sitting at his house. This was done before Peter’s first denial of Christ; which, it is plain, was in the palace of the high priest, and not in Annas’s house; though there seems no reason on this account to place these words at the end of the 13th verse, as they are by some, since they manifestly refer to time past, and do not at all obscure or hinder the true order of the history, as standing here.

Ver. 25. *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself*, etc.] This is repeated from (~~4888~~ John 18:18) to connect the history, and carry on the thread of the account of Peter’s denial of Christ, which is interrupted by

inserting the examination of Christ before the high priest, which was made at the same time. Peter stood among, and continued with the servants and officers of the high priest, warming himself by a fire they had made, it being a cold night; and this proved of bad consequence to him. The company and conversation of wicked men should be abstained from; no good is got thereby; continuance among such is very dangerous; men are too often more concerned for their bodies than their souls; Satan baits his temptations for the fleshly and sensitive part; and that which is thought to be for good, is the occasion of hurt.

They said therefore unto him; the servants and officers, among whom he stood warming himself, having observed what the maid had said to him:

art thou not also one of his disciples? suspecting that he was, though he had denied it, and therefore press him to give a direct answer: they might observe his countenance to fall, when the maid put the question to him; there might be something in his dress, and especially in his speech, which increased the suspicion:

but he denied it, and said, I am not; a second time. This denial of his being a disciple of Christ, as before, did not arise from a sense of his unworthiness to be one; nor from diffidence and distrust of a right to such a character; but from the fear of men; and being ashamed of Christ, he denies that which was his great mercy, privilege, and glory.

Ver. 26. *One of the servants of the high priest,* etc.] Hearing him so stiffly deny that he was a disciple of Jesus, when he had great reason to believe he was:

being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off; a near relation of Malchus, to whom Peter had done this injury; and who was present at the same time, and no doubt took particular notice of him; and the more, because of what he had done to his kinsman:

saith unto him, did not I see thee in the garden with him? as if he should have said, I saw thee with my own eyes along with Jesus, this very night in the garden, beyond Kidron, where he was apprehended, how canst thou deny it? and wilt thou stand in it so confidently, that thou art not one of his disciples?

Ver. 27. *Peter then denied again,* etc.] A third time, as the Ethiopic version renders it; and that, according to other evangelists, with cursing

and swearing; for now he was more affrighted than before, lest should he be taken up, and it be proved upon him, that he was the person that cut off Malchus's ear, he should be sentenced to a fine, or it may be some capital punishment. The fine for plucking a man's ears, and which some understand of plucking them off, was four hundred "zuzim"^{f672}, or, pence; which, as they answer to Roman pence, amount to twelve pounds ten shillings; a sum of money Peter perhaps could not have raised, without great difficulty: and therefore, that it might be believed he was not a disciple of Christ, so not the man; he swears in a profane manner, and imprecates the judgments of God upon him:

and immediately the cock crew; the second time; which was a signal by which he might call to remembrance, what Christ had said to him; that before the cock crowed twice, he should deny him thrice, (^{<4142>}Mark 14:72). It was now early in the morning, about three o'clock, or somewhat after.

Ver. 28. *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas*, etc.] When Peter had denied him, one of the officers had smote him, the high priest had examined him, and they thought they had enough, out of his own mouth, to condemn him; they, the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and the whole multitude, led him bound as he was, from Caiaphas's house,

unto the hall of judgment; or the "praetorium"; the place where the Roman governor, who was now Pontius Pilate, used to hear and try causes in; the Romans now having matters and causes relating to life and death, in their hands:

and it was early; the morning indeed was come; but it was as soon as it was day; they had been all night in taking and examining Jesus, and consulting what to do with him; and as soon as they could expect the governor to be up, they hurry him away to him, eagerly thirsting after his blood, and fearing lest he should be rescued out of their hands:

and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; that is, the Jews, only the band of Roman soldiers went in; the reason of this was, because it was the house of a Gentile, and with them, μyamj μwk[h twrwdm, "the dwelling houses of Gentiles", or idolaters, "are unclean"^{f673}; yea, if they were the houses of Israelites, and Gentiles were admitted to dwell in them, they were defiled, and all that were in them; for so they say^{f674},

“if the collectors for the government enter into a house to dwell in, all in the house are defiled.”

They did not think it lawful to rent out a house in Judea to an Heathen ^{f675}, or to assist in building a Basilica for them; which they explain to be a palace, in which judges sit to judge men ^{f676}: hence the reason of their caution, and which they were the more observant of,

that they might eat the passover; pure and undefiled; not the passover lamb, for that they had eaten the night before; but the “Chagigah”, or feast on the fifteenth day of the month. Many Christian writers, both ancient and modern, have concluded from hence, that Christ did not keep his last passover, at the same time the Jews did; and many things are said to illustrate this matter, and justify our Lord in it: some observe the distinction of a sacrificial, and commemorative passover; the sacrificial passover is that, in which the lamb was slain, and was fixed to a certain time and place, and there was no altering it; the commemorative passover is that, in which no lamb is slain and eaten, only a commemoration made of the deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt; such as is now kept by the Jews, being out of their own land, where sacrifice with them is not lawful; and this it is supposed our Lord kept, and not the former: but it does not appear that there was such a commemorative passover kept by the Jews, in our Lord’s time, and whilst the temple stood: and supposing there was such an one allowed, and appointed for those that were at a distance from Jerusalem, and could not come up thither, (which was not the case of Christ and his disciples,) it is reasonable to conclude, that it was to be kept, and was kept at the time the sacrificial passover was, in the room of which it was substituted, as it is by the Jews to this day; so that this will by no means clear the matter, nor solve the difficulty; besides it is very manifest, that the passover our Lord kept was sacrificial; and such an one the disciples proposed to get ready for him, and did, of which he and they are said to eat: “and the first day of unleavened bread, when they KILLED the passover, his disciples said to him, where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest EAT the passover?” (^{<4142>}Mark 14:12) and again, “then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover MUST be KILLED”, (^{<4217>}Luke 22:7). “They made ready the passover”, (^{<4213>}Luke 22:13) “and he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him”, (^{<4214>}Luke 22:14) “and he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover”, (^{<4215>}Luke 22:15). Others suggest, that this difference of observing the passover by Christ and the Jews arose from fixing the

beginning of the month, and so accordingly the feasts in it, by the φασις, or appearance of the moon; and that our Lord went according to the true appearance of it, and the Jews according to a false account: but of this, as a fact, there is no proof; besides, though the feasts were regulated and fixed according to the appearance of the moon, yet this was not left to the arbitrary will, pleasure, and judgment of particular persons, to determine as they should think proper; but the sanhedrim, or chief council of the nation sat, at a proper time, to hear and examine witnesses about the appearance of the moon; and accordingly determined, and none might fix but them ^{f677}; and as this was doubtless the case at this time, it is not very reasonable to think, that Christ would differ from them: besides, it was either a clear case, or a doubtful one; if the former, then there would be no room nor reason to keep another day; and if it was the latter, then two days were observed, that they might be sure they were right ^{f678}; but then both were kept by all the Jews: and that the time of this passover was well known, is clear from various circumstances; such and such facts were done, so many days before it; six days before it, Jesus came to Bethany, (~~and~~ John 12:1) and two days before it, he was in the same place, (~~and~~ Matthew 26:2,6) and says to his disciples, “ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover”, etc. Others taking it for granted, that Christ kept the passover a day before the usual and precise time, defend it, by observing the despotic and legislative power of Christ, who had a right to dispense with the time of this feast, and could at his pleasure anticipate it, because the betraying of him and his death were so near at hand: that he had such a power will not be disputed; but that he should use it in this way, does not seem necessary, on account of his death, seeing none but the living were obliged to it; nor so consistent with his wisdom, since hereby the mouths of his enemies would be opened against him, for acting not agreeably to the law of God: moreover, when it is considered that the passover, according to the Jews, was always kept wd [wmb], “in its set time” ^{f679}, and was not put off on the account of the sabbath, or anything else, to another day; and that though when it was put off for particular persons, on account of uncleanness, to another month, yet still it was to be kept on the fourteenth day at even, in that month, (~~and~~ Numbers 9:10,11) it will not easily be received that Christ observed it a day before the time: besides, the passover lamb was not killed in a private house, but in the temple, in the court of it, and that always on the fourteenth of Nisan, after noon: so says Maimonides ^{f680},

“it is an affirmative command to slay the passover on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, after the middle of the day. The passover is not slain but in the court, as the rest of the holy things; even in the time that altars were lawful, they did not offer the passover on a private altar; and whoever offers the passover on a private altar, is to be beaten; as it is said, “thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee”, (^{<1516>}Deuteronomy 16:5).”

And seeing therefore a passover lamb was not to be killed at home, but in the court of the priests, in the temple, it does not seem probable, that a single lamb should be suffered to be killed there, for Christ and his disciples, on a day not observed by the Jews, contrary to the sense of the sanhedrim, and of the whole nation: add to this, that the sacred text is express for it, that it was at the exact time of this feast, when it was come according to general computation, that the disciples moved to Christ to prepare the passover for him, and did, and they with him kept it: the account Matthew gives is very full; “now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread”; that is, when that was come in its proper time and course, “the disciples came to Jesus”; saying unto him, where wilt “thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?” He bids them go to the city to such a man, and say, “I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples, and the disciples did as Jesus had appointed, and they made ready the passover; now when the even was come”, the time of eating the passover, according to the law of God, “he sat down with the twelve, and as they did eat”, etc. (^{<1157>}Matthew 26:17-20) and Mark is still more particular, who says, “and the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover”; that is, when the Jews killed the passover, on the very day the lamb was slain, and eaten by them; and then follows much the same account as before, (^{<1142>}Mark 14:12-18) and Luke yet more clearly expresses it, “then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed”; according to the law of God, and the common usage of the people of the Jews; yea, he not only observes, that Christ kept the usual day, but the very hour, the precise time of eating it; for he says, “and when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him”, (^{<1217>}Luke 22:7-14). Nor is there anything in this text, that is an objection to Christ and the Jews keeping the passover at the same time; since by the passover here is meant, the “Chagigah”, or feast kept on the fifteenth day of the month, as it is sometimes called: in (^{<1516>}Deuteronomy 16:2) it is said,

“thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd”: now the passover of the herd, can never mean the passover lamb, but the passover “Chagigah”; and so the Jewish commentators explain it; “of the herd”, says Jarchi, thou shalt sacrifice for the “Chagigah”; and says Aben Ezra, for the peace offerings; so Josiah the king is said to give for the passovers three thousand bullocks, and the priests three hundred oxen, and the Levites five hundred oxen, (^{480E}2 Chronicles 35:7-9) which Jarchi interprets of the peace offerings of the “Chagigah”, there called passovers; and so in 1 Esdres 1:7-9 mention is made of three thousand calves, besides lambs, that Josias gave for the passover; and three hundred by some other persons, and seven hundred by others: the passage in Deuteronomy, is explained of the “Chagigah”, in both Talmuds ^{f681}, and in other writings ^{f682}; so besides the passover lamb, we read of sacrifices slain, **j sp mwcl**, “in the name of” the passover, or on account of it ^{f683}; and particularly of the calf and the young bullock, slain for the sake of the passover ^{f684}: and now this is the passover which these men were to eat that day, and therefore were careful not to defile themselves, that so they might not be unfit for it; otherwise had it been the passover lamb in the evening, they might have washed themselves in the evening, according to the rules of **mwj l wbj**, or “the daily washing”, and been clean enough to have eat it: besides, it may be observed, that all the seven days were called the passover; and he that ate the unleavened bread, is said by eating that, to eat the passover; and thus they invite their guests daily to eat the bread, saying ^{f685},

“everyone that is hungry, let him come and eat all that he needs,
j spyw, “and keep the passover”.”

It is easy to observe the consciences of these men, who were always wont to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; they scruple going into the judgment hall, which belonged to an Heathen governor, and where was a large number of Heathen soldiers; but they could go along with these into the garden to apprehend Christ, and spend a whole night in consulting to shed innocent blood: no wonder that God should be weary of their sacrifices and ceremonious performances, when, trusting to these, they had no regard to moral precepts: however, this may be teaching to us, in what manner we should keep the feast, and eat of the true passover, Christ; not with malice and wickedness, as these Jews ate theirs, but with sincerity and truth: besides, a sanhedrim, when they had condemned anyone to death,

were forbidden to eat anything all that day^{f686}; and so whilst scrupling one thing, they broke through another.

Ver. 29. *Pilate then went out unto them*, etc.] Either into the street, or rather into the place called the pavement, and in Hebrew Gabbatha; (see ~~4913~~ John 19:13) the place where the Jewish sanhedrim used to sit; wherefore in complaisance to them, since they would not come into his court of judicature, he condescends to go into one of theirs, which showed great civility and humanity in him:

and said, what accusation bring ye against this man? meaning, what offence had he committed? what crime had they to charge him with? what did they accuse him of? and what proof had they to support their charge? His view was, to have the matter stated, the cause opened, and evidence given; that the accused being face to face with the accusers, might answer for himself; and he, as a judge, be capable of judging between them: all which were very commendable in him, and agreeably to the Roman laws; and have an appearance of equity, justice, and impartiality.

Ver. 30. *They answered and said unto him*, etc.] Offended at the question put to them, and filled with indignation that they should be so interrogated, with an air of haughtiness and insolence reply to him:

if he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee; insinuating, that he was guilty of some very wicked action; not merely of a breach of some of their laws peculiar to them; for then they would have tried and judged him according to them, and not have brought him before him; but they suggest, that he was guilty of some crimes recognizable by Caesar's court; and which they did not care to mention expressly, lest they should not succeed, not having it may be as yet, their witnesses ready; and hoped he would have took their own word for it, without any further proof, they being men of such rank and dignity, and of so much knowledge, learning, and religion; and therefore took it ill of him, that he should ask such persons as they were, so famous for their prudence, integrity, and sanctity, such a question: however, they own themselves to be the betrayers and deliverers up of our Lord, which Christ had before foretold, and which Stephen afterwards charged them with.

Ver. 31. *Then said Pilate unto them*, etc.] Either ironically, knowing that they did not, or it was not in their power, to judge in capital causes; or seriously, and with some indignation, abhorring such a method of

procedure they would have had him gone into, to condemn a man without knowing his crime, and having evidence of it:

take ye him, and judge him according to your law; this he said, as choosing to understand them in no other sense, than that he had broken some peculiar law of theirs, though they had otherwise suggested; and as giving them liberty to take him away to one of their courts, and proceed against him as their law directed, and inflict some lesser punishment on him than death, such as scourging, etc. which they still had a power to do, and did make use of:

the Jews therefore said unto him, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death; thereby insinuating, that he was guilty of a crime, which deserved death, and which they could not inflict; not that they were of such tender consciences, that they could not put him to death, or that they had no law to punish him with death, provided he was guilty; but because judgments in capital cases had ceased among them; nor did they try causes relating to life and death, the date of which they often make to be forty years before the destruction of the temple ^{f687}; and which was much about, or a little before the time these words were spoken: not that this power was taken away wholly from them by the Romans; though since their subjection to the empire, they had not that full and free exercise of it as before; but through the great increase of iniquity, particularly murder, which caused such frequent executions, that they were weary of them ^{f688}; and through the negligence and indolence of the Jewish sanhedrim, and their removal from the room Gazith, where they only judged capital causes ^{f689}: as for the stoning of Stephen, and the putting of some to death against whom Saul gave his voice, these were the outrages of the zealots, and were not according to a formal process in any court of judicature. Two executions are mentioned in their Talmud; the one is of a priest's daughter that was burnt for a harlot ^{f690}, and the other of the stoning of Ben Stada in Lydda ^{f691}; the one, according to them, seems to be before, the other after the destruction of the temple; but these dates are not certain, nor to be depended upon: for since the destruction of their city and temple, and their being carried captive into other lands, it is certain that the power of life and death has been wholly taken from them; by which it appears, that the sceptre is removed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet; and this they own almost in the same words as here expressed; for they say ^{f692} of a certain man worthy of death,

“why dost thou scourge him? he replies, because he lay with a beast; they say to him, hast thou any witnesses? he answers, yes; Elijah came in the form of a man, and witnessed; they say, if it be so, he deserves to die; to which he answers, “from the day we have been carried captive out of our land, *l j qml atwcr ^l tyl*, we have no power to put to death”.”

But at this time, their power was not entirely gone; but the true reason of their saying these words is, that they might wholly give up Christ to the Roman power, and throw off the reproach of his death from themselves; and particularly they were desirous he should die the reproachful and painful death of the cross, which was a Roman punishment: had they took him and judged him according to their law, which must have been as a false prophet, or for blasphemy or idolatry, the death they must have condemned him to, would have been stoning; but it was crucifixion they were set upon; and therefore deliver him up as a traitor, and a seditious person, in order thereunto.

Ver. 32. *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled*, etc.] That he should be delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles, to crucify him; and that he should be lifted up from the earth, and as the serpent upon the pole:

which he spake, signifying what death he should die; (⁴¹⁰Matthew 20:19, ⁴¹²John 12:32,33, 3:14) and which was brought about this way, by the providence of God conducting this whole affair; and was cheerfully submitted to by Christ, in great love to his people, to redeem them from the curse of the law, being hereby made a curse for them.

Ver. 33. *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again*, etc.] Where he went at first, but the Jews refusing to come in thither to him, he came out to them; and now they speaking out more plainly, that he was guilty of a crime deserving of death; as that he set up himself as a king, in opposition to Caesar, and taught the people not to pay tribute to him; he goes into the “praetorium” again, and called Jesus; beckoned, or sent for him; or ordered him to come in thither to him, that he might alone, and the more freely, converse with him; which Jesus did, paying no regard to the superstitious observances of the Jews:

and said unto him, art thou the king of the Jews? This he might say, from a rumour that was generally spread, that there was such a person to come, and was born; and by many it was thought, that Jesus was he; and

particularly from the charge of the Jews against him, which though not here expressed, is elsewhere; (see ^{<23>}Luke 23:2). Wherefore Pilate was the more solicitous about the matter, on account of Caesar, and lest he should be charged with dilatoriness and negligence in this affair: some read these words not by way of question, but affirmation, “thou art the king of the Jews”; which method he might make use of, the more easily to get it out of him, whether he was or not: and to this reading, Christ’s answer in the next verse seems best to agree.

Ver. 34. *Jesus answered him, sayest thou this thing of thyself*, etc.] That he was the king of the Jews: Christ’s meaning is, whether he asserted this from the sentiments of his own mind; or moved the question from anything he himself had observed, which might give him just ground to suspect that he had, or intended to set up himself as the king of that nation:

or did others tell it thee of me? Whether the Jews had not intimated some such thing to him, out of malice and ill will? not but that Christ full well knew where the truth of this lay; but he was desirous of convincing Pilate of his weakness, if he so judged of himself, and of his imprudence and hastiness, if he took up this from others; and also to expose the baseness and wickedness of the Jews, to charge him with this, when they themselves would have made him a temporal king, and he refused; and when he had not only paid tribute himself to Caesar, but had exhorted them to do the like.

Ver. 35. *Pilate answered, am I a Jew?* etc.] This he said, in a sort of derision and contempt; who was not a Jew, neither by birth, nor by religion, and so had never imbibed any notions of their King Messiah, nor read anything about him; and knew nothing of his distinguishing characters and properties, by which he was described, and might be known; and therefore it remained, that what he had said, though not expressed, was not of himself, of his own knowledge or observation, but arose from some intimations and suggestions the Jews had given him:

thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; that is, the men of his nation, his countrymen the Jews, who best understood their own laws and books of prophecy; and what expectations they had formed from thence, concerning their king, and his kingdom; and the principal of the priesthood, who were accounted men of the greatest learning, piety, and integrity, they had brought him bound before him; they had entered a

charge against him, and had delivered him up into his hands, as an enemy to Caesar, and a traitor to his government:

what hast thou done? as an occasion of such treatment, and as the foundation of such a charge; surely there must be something in it, or men of such character would never impeach a man altogether innocent, and one of their own country too!

Ver. 36. *Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world,* etc.] By saying which, he tacitly owns he was a king: as such he was set up, and anointed by his Father from everlasting; was prophesied of in the Old Testament; declared by the angel, both when he brought the news of his conception, and of his birth; was owned by many, who knew him to be so in the days of his flesh; and since his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, more manifestly appears to be one: he also hereby declares, that he had a kingdom; by which he means, not his natural and universal kingdom, as God, and the Creator and Governor of all things; but his mediatorial kingdom, administered both in the days of his flesh, and after his resurrection; which includes the whole Gospel dispensation, Christ's visible church state on earth, and the whole election of grace; it takes in that which will be at the close of time, in the latter day, which will be more spiritual, and in which Christ will reign before his ancients gloriously; and also the kingdom of God, or of heaven, even the ultimate glory: the whole of which is not of this world; the subjects of Christ's kingdom are not of the world, they are chosen and called out of it; the kingdom itself does not appear in worldly pomp and splendour, nor is it supported by worldly force, nor administered by worldly laws; nor does it so much regard the outward, as the inward estates of men; it promises no worldly emoluments, or temporal rewards. Christ does not say it is not "in" this world, but it is not of it; and therefore will not fail, when this world does, and the kingdoms thereof. Every thing that is carnal, sensual, and worldly, must be removed from our conceptions of Christ's kingdom, here or hereafter: and to this agrees what some Jewish writers say of the Messiah, and his affairs;

“the Messiah (they say ^{f693}) is separated from the world, because he is absolutely intellectual; but the world is corporeal; how then should the Messiah be in this world, when the world is corporeal, and *ymçg al yhl a awh j yçmh ^yn* [, “the business of the Messiah is divine, and not corporeal?””

And since this was the case, Caesar, or any civil government, had no reason to be uneasy on account of his being a king, and having a kingdom; since his kingdom and interests did not in the least break in upon, or injure any others: and that this was the nature of his kingdom, he proves by the following reason;

if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: if Christ's kingdom had been a worldly one, set up on worldly views, and governed with worldly policy, and was to answer some worldly ends, Christ would have had servants enough among the Jews, who would have declared for him, and took up arms in his favour against the Romans; his own disciples would not have suffered him to have been betrayed into the hands of the Jews by Judas; nor would he have hindered them from attempting his rescue, as he did Peter; nor would they suffer him now to be delivered by Pilate into their hands, to put him to death; since they had such a Prince at the head of them, who, was he to make use of his power, was able to drive all the Roman forces before them out of the nation, and oblige a general submission among the Jews, to the sceptre of his kingdom:

but now is my kingdom not from hence; it does not rise out of, nor proceed upon, nor is it supported by worldly principles, wherefore none of the above methods are made use of.

Ver. 37. *Pilate therefore said unto him,* etc.] Upon this free and full declaration of Christ, concerning his kingly office, and the nature of his kingdom:

art thou a king then? or thou art a king then: for, from his having a kingdom, it might be very justly inferred that he was a king:

Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a king; and which was very rightly said; and Christ by these words owns and confesses, that he was one: adding,

to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. The end of Christ's being born, which was of a virgin, in a very miraculous manner, and of his coming into the world, which was by the assumption of human nature, among many other things, was to bear testimony to truth in general; to the whole Gospel, the word of truth, and every branch of it, which he brought with him,

constantly preached in life, and confirmed by his death; and particularly to this truth, that he was a King, and had a kingdom in a spiritual sense:

everyone that is of the truth; that is of God, belongs to the sheep of Christ, knows the truth as it is in Jesus, and is on the side of truth, and stands by it:

heareth my voice; the voice of his Gospel; and that not only externally, but internally; so as to approve of it, rejoice at it, and distinguish it; and the voice of his commands, so as cheerfully to obey them from a principle of love to him.

Ver. 38. *Pilate saith unto him, what is truth?* etc.] That is, in general, or that which Christ then particularly spoke of: many things might be observed in answer to this question, as that there is the truth and faithfulness of God in his word and promises; the truth of grace in the hearts of his people; Jesus Christ himself is truth, he is true God, and true man; the truth of all covenant transactions, of all types, promises, and prophecies; whatever he said and taught was truth, and the truth of all doctrine comes from him. The Gospel is truth in general; it comes from the God of truth; lies in the Scriptures of truth; Christ, who is truth itself, is the substance of it; the Spirit of truth has an hand in it, leads into it, and makes it effectual; the whole of it is true, and every particular doctrine of it; as the manifestation of the Son of God in human nature, his coming into the world to save the chief of sinners, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, the resurrection of the dead, etc. The same question is put in the Talmud^{f694}, *tma hm*, “what is truth?” and it is answered, that he is the living God, and the King of the World: we do not find that our Lord gave any answer to this question, which might be put in a scornful, jeering way; nor did Pilate wait for one; for

when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews: as soon as he had put the question about truth, having no great inclination to hear what Christ would say to it; nor did he put it for information sake, or as having any opinion of Christ, and that he was able to answer it; he directly goes out of the judgment hall, taking Jesus along with him, and addresses the Jews after this manner:

and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all; and indeed how should he? there was no sin in his nature, nor guile in his lips, nor any iniquity in his life; the devil himself could find none in him. This confession is both to the shame of Pilate and the Jews; to the reproach of Pilate, that after this

he should condemn him; and of the Jews, that after such a fair and full declaration from the judge, they should insist upon his crucifixion; it shows, however, that he died not for any sin of his own, but for the sins of others.

Ver. 39. *But ye have a custom*, etc.] Not a law, either of God or man's, but a custom; and which was not originally observed at the feast of the passover, and perhaps was not of any long standing; but what the Roman governors, by the order of Caesar, or of their own pleasure, had introduced to ingratiate themselves into the affections of the people; and being repeated once and again, was now looked for:

that I should release unto you one at the passover; which was at this time; and more than one it seems it was not customary, to release:

will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? who they had said called himself so, and was so accounted by others, and which Pilate says, in a sneering, sarcastic way; though he was heartily willing to release him, and was in hopes they would have agreed to it, since nothing could be proved against him; however, he proposes it to them, and leaves it to their option.

Ver. 40. *Then cried they all again*, etc.] For it seems that Pilate had made this proposal once before, and that this was the second time, though not mentioned; yet some copies, and the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "again": they all, priests and people, in a very clamorous manner, cried out as one man, with one united voice, all at once;

saying, not this man, but Barabbas; now Barabbas was a robber; who was an emblem of God's elect in a state of nature, released and set free when Christ was condemned. These, as he, many of them at least, are notorious sinners, the chief of sinners, robbers and murderers; who have robbed God of his glory, and destroyed themselves; are prisoners, concluded in sin and unbelief, and shut up in the law, and in a pit, wherein is no water, in their natural state; and were, as this man, worthy of death, and by nature children of wrath; and yet children of God by adopting grace, as his name Bar Abba signifies, "the son of the father": these, though such criminals, and so deserving of punishment, were let go free, when Christ was taken, condemned, and died; and which was according to the wise and secret counsel of Jehovah, and is a large discovery of divine grace; and what lays

those who are released under the greatest obligations to live to him, who suffered for them, in their room and stead.