

THE ARGUMENT OF THE ACTES OF THE APOSTLES.

The Ghospel hauing shewed, how the Iewes most impioufully reiected Chrif (as also Moyfes and the Prophetes had foretold of them:) and therefore deserued to be reiected themfelues also of him: now followeth this booke of *the Actes of the Apostles* written by S. Luke in Rome the fourth yeare of Nero, An. Dom. 61.) and sheweth, how notwithstanding their deferts, Chrif of his mercy (as the Prophets also had foretold of him) offered himselfe vnto that vnworthy people, yea after that they had Crucified him, sending vnto them his twelue Apostles to moue them to penance, and so by Baptisme to make them of his Church: and whiles al the Twelue were so occupied about the Iewes; how of a persecuting Iewe he made an extraordinarie Apostle (who was Saint Paul) and to auoid the scandal of the Iewes (to whom only himselfe likewise for the same cause had preached) sent him, and not any of his Twelue by and by, who were his knowne Apostles, vnto the Gentils, who neuer afore had heard of Chrif, and were worshippers of many Gods, to moue them also (for, that likewise the Prophets had foretold) to faith and penance, and so by Baptisme to make them of his Church: and how the incredulous Iewes euery where refuted the same Apostle and his preaching to the Gentils, persecuting him and seeking his death, and neuer ceasing vntil he fel into the handes of the Gentils: that so (as not only he euery where, but also the Prophets afore him, and Chrif had foretold) the Ghospel might be taken away from them, and giuen to the Gentils: euen from Hierusalem (whose reprobation also by name had been often foretold) the head-citie of the Iewes, where it began, translated to Rome the head-citie of the Gentils. Al this wil be euident by the partes of the booke: which may be these fixe.

*Act. 13, 46.*  
*18, 6. 19, 9.*  
*28, 18.*  
*Esa. 1.*  
*Mat. 21, 23.*  
*Luc. 13, 33.*

Firft, how Chrif Ascending in the sight of his Disciples, promised vnto them the Holy Ghost, foretelling that of him they should receiue strength, and so begin his Church in Hierusalem: and from thence dilate it into al

that Countrie, that is into al Iurie: yea and into Samaria alfo, yea into al Nations of the Gentils, be they neuer fo farre off. *You fhall receiue (faith he) the vertue of the Holy Ghofl comming vpon you: and you fhall be witneffes vnto me in Hierufalem, and in al Iurie, and Samaria, and euen to the vtmoft of the earth. Chap. 1.*

Secondly, the beginning of the Church in Hierufalem, accordingly. *Chap. 2.*

Thirdly, the propagation of it confequently into al Iurie, and alfo to Samaria. *Cha. 8.*

Fourthly, the propagation of it to the Gentils alfo. *Chap. 10.*

Fifthly, the taking of it away from the obftinate Iewes, and giuing of it to the Gentils, by the minifterie of S. Paul and S. Barnabee. *Chap. 13.*

Sixthly, of taking it away from Hierufalem it felfe, the head-citie of the Iewes, and fending it (as it were) to Rome the head-citie of the Gentils, and that, in their perfecuting of Paul fo farre, that he appealed to Cæfar, and fo deliuering him after a fort vnto the Romanes: as they had before deliuered to them alfo Chrift himfelfe. *Act. 25, 11.* Whereas S. Peters firft comming thither, was vpon another occafion, as fhall be faid anone. Of which Romanes and Gentils therefore, the fame S. Paul being now come to Rome (the *laft Chap. of the Actes*) foretelleth the obftinate Iewes there, faying: *Et ipfi audient: You wil not heare, but, they wil heare.* That fo the prediction of Chrift aboue might be fulfilled: *And euen to the vtmoft of the earth.* And there doth S. Luke end the booke, not caring to tel fo much as the fulfilling of that which our Lord had foretold (*Act. 27, 24.*) to S. Paul: *Thou muft appeare before Cæfar.* Becaufe his purpofe was no more but to shew the new Hierufalem of the Chriftians, where Chrift would place the cheefe feat of his Church: as alfo indeed the Fathers, and al other Catholikes haue in al Ages looked thither, when they were in any great doubt: no leffe then the Iewes to Hierufalem, as they were appointed in the old Teftament. *Deut. 17, 8.*

And fo this Booke doth shew the true Church, as plainely, as the Ghofpel doth shew the true Chrift, vnto

al that doe not wilfully shut their owne eyes. To wit, this to be the true Church, which beginning vifibly at Hierufalem, was taken from the Iewes, and tranflated to the Gentils (and namely to Rome) continuing vifibly, and vifibly to continue hereafter alfo, *Vntil the fulnes of the Gentils fhall be come in: that then alfo All Ifrael may be faued.* And then is come the end of the world. For fo did Chrifft moft plainely foretel vs: *This Ghofpel of the Kingdō fhall be preached in the whole world, for a teftimonie to all Nations: and then fhall come the confummation.* For the conuerfion of which Nations and accomplifhing the fulnes of all Gentils, the forefaid Church Catholike, being mindful of her office, *to be Chriftes witnes euen to the vtmoft of the earth,* doth at this prefent (as alwaies) fend preachers to conuert and make them alfo Chriftians: whereas the Proteftants and all other Heretikes doe nothing els but fubuert fuch as before were Chriftians.

*Rom. 11, 25.*

*Mat. 24, 14.*

*Tertul. de præf.*

And this being the Summe and fcope of this Booke, thus to giue vs hiftorically a iuft fight of the fulfilling of the Prophets & Chriftes prediction about the Church: it is not to be maruelled at, why it telleth not of S. Peters comming to Rome: confidering that his firft comming thither was not, as S. Paules was, by the Iewes deliuerie of him, working fo to their owne reprobation, but vpon another occafion, to wit, to confound Simon Magus. *Euf. Hift. li. 2. c. 12. 13.* For who alfo feeth not, that it maketh no mention of his preaching to any Gentils at all, thofe few only *Act. 10.* excepted, who were the firft, and therefore (left the Gentils should feeme leffe cared for of God, then the Iewes) Peter being the Head of all, was elected of God, to incorporate them into the Church, as before he had done the Iewes. *God (faith he) among vs chofe, that by my mouth the Gentils fhould heare the word of the Ghofpel, and beleue.*

*Act. 15, 7.*

*Act. 15, 14.* And S. Iames thereupon: *Simon hath told how God firft vifited to take of the Gentils a people to his name.* But otherwife (I fay) here is no mention of Peters preaching to any Gentils: no nor of the other eleuen Apoftles. Wil any man therefore inferre, that neither Peter, not

the other Eleuen preached to any Nation or citie of the Gentils? No, the meaning of the Holy Ghoft was not to write al the Actes of al the Apoftles, no nor the preaching of Peter and his, to the Gentils, but only to the Iewes: therby to fet out vnto the world, the great mercy of Chrift toward thofe vnworthy Iewes, and confequently their moft worthy reprobation for contemning fuch grace and mercy. As alfo on the other fide to shew, how readily the Gentils in fo many Nations, were conuerted by one Apoftle only, who *From Hierufalem euen to Illyricum replenifhed the Ghofpel of Chrift.* And this parting of the worke fo made by S. Peter with the reft doth S. Paul himfelfe touch: *That we vnto the Gentils, and they vnto the Circumcifion.* Neuer theleffe before his coming to Rome, not only was the Church come to Rome (as is euident *Act. the laft chap.*) there planted by Saint Peter and others (as likewife by Saint Peter it was planted in the firft Gentils, before that S. Paul began the taking of it away from the multitude of the Iewes, and the tranflating of it to the multitude of the Gentils) but alfo fo notable was the fame Church of Rome, that S. Paul writing his Epiftle to the Romanes, before he came thither, faith: *Your faith is renowned in the whole world.* And therefore they with the reft of the Gentils, be that Nation whereof Chrift told the Iewes, faying: *The Kingdom of God fhall be taken away from you, and fhall be giuen to a Nation yealding the fruits thereof.*

*Gal. 2, 9.*

*Rom. 1, 8.*

*Mat. 21, 43.*