

THE ARGVMENT OF THE ACTES OF THE APOSTLES.

The Ghospel hauing shewed, how the Iewes most impiouſly reiected Chriſt (as alſo Moyſes and the Prophetes had foretold of them:) and therefore deſerued to be reiected themſelues 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 deſerts, Chriſt of his mercy (as the Prophetes 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 perfecuting 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 knowen Apoſtles, vnto the Gentils, who neuer afore had heard of Chriſt, and were worſhippers of many Gods, to moue them alſo (for, that likewiſe the Prophetes had foretold) to faith and penance, and ſo by Baptiſme to make them of his Church: and how the incredulous Iewes euery where reſiſted the ſame Apoſtle and his preaching to the Gentils, perfecuting 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 Prophetes afore him, and Chriſt 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.

Fiſt, how Chriſt 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 all that Countrey, that is into all Iurie: yea and into Samaria also, yea into all Nations of the Gentils, be they neuer so farre off. *You shall receiue (faith he) the vertue of the Holy Ghost comming vpon you: and you shall be witnesses vnto me in Hierusalem, and in all Iurie, and Samaria, and euen to the vtmost of the earth. Chap. 1.*

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

Thirdly, the propagation of it consequently into all Iurie, and also to Samaria. *Cha. 8.*

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

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

Sixthly, of taking it away from Hierusalem it selfe, the head-citie of the Iewes, and sending it (as it were) to Rome the head-citie of the Gentils, and that, in their persecuting of Paul so farre, that he appealed to Cæsar, and so deliuering him after a sort vnto the Romanes: as they had before deliuered to them also Christ himselfe. Wheras S. Peters first comming thither, was vpon another occasion, as shall be said anone. Of which Romanes and Gentils therefore, the same S. Paul being now come to Rome (the *last Chap. of the Actes*) foretellethe the obstinate Iewes there, saying: *Et ipsi audient: You will not heare, but, they will heare.* That so the prediction of Christ aboue might be fulfilled: *And euen to the vtmost of the earth.* And there doth S. Luke end the booke, not caring to tel so much as the fulfilling of that which our Lord had foretold (*Act. 27, 24.*) to S. Paul: *Thou must appeare before Cæsar.* Because his purpose was no more but to shew the new Hierusalem of the Christians, where Christ would place the cheefe seat of his Church: as also indeed the Fathers, and all other Catholikes haue in all Ages looked thither, when they were in any great doubt: no lesse then the Iewes to Hierusalem, as they were appointed in the old Testament. *Deut. 17, 8.*

Act. 25, 11.

Luc. 23, 5.

Act. 28, 28.

And fo this Booke doth shew the true Church, as plainly, as the Ghospel doth shew the true Chrif, 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 Al Ifrael may be faued.* And then is come the end of the world.

Rom. 11, 25.

Mat. 24, 14.

For fo did Chrif moft plainly foretel vs: *This Ghospel of the Kingdō fhall be preached in the whole world, for a teftimonie to al Nations: and then fhall come the confumation.* For the conuerfion of which Nations and accomplifhing the fulnes of al 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 al other Heretikes doe nothing els but fubuert fuch as before were Chriftians.

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 al, 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 al, was elected of God, to incorporate them into the Church, as before he had done the Iewes.

Act. 15, 7.

Act. 15, 14.

God (faith he) among vs chofe, that by my mouth the Gentils fhould heare the word of the Ghospel, and beleue. 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, nor the other Eleuen preached to any Nation or citie of the Gentils? No, the meaning of the Holy Ghofte 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 Chrifte 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 Chrifte*. 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 comming 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 Chrifte 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.