

MARK

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MARK

This is the title of the book, the subject of which is the Gospel; a joyful account of the ministry, miracles, actions, and sufferings of Christ: the writer of it was not one of the twelve apostles, but an evangelist; the same with John Mark, or John, whose surname was Mark: John was his Hebrew name, and Mark his Gentile name, (^{<44212>}Acts 12:12,25), and was Barnabas's sister's son, (^{<5040>}Colossians 4:10), his mother's name was Mary, (^{<44212>}Acts 12:12). The Apostle Peter calls him his son, (^{<41513>}1 Peter 5:13), if he is the same; and he is thought to have wrote his Gospel from him ^{f1}, and by his order, and which was afterwards examined and approved by him ^{f2} it is said to have been wrote originally in Latin, or in the Roman tongue: so say the Arabic and Persic versions at the beginning of it, and the Syriac version says the same at the end: but of this there is no evidence, any more, nor so much, as of Matthew's writing his Gospel in Hebrew. The old Latin copy of this, is a version from the Greek; it is most likely that it was originally written in Greek, as the rest of the New Testament.

Ver. 1. *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, etc..] Not that the Gospel first began to be preached at this time, for it was preached by Isaiah, and other prophets before; and long before that, was preached unto Abraham; yea, it was preached as early as the times of our first parents, in Eden's garden; and is indeed that mystery, which was hid in God before the creation of the world; and was ordained before that was, to the glory of the saints: but the sense is, that this narrative Mark was about to write, began with the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; which was a Gospel one, and was the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the legal one: the law and the prophets were until John, and they ceased and ended in him; when the **abh I w**, “the world to come”, the kingdom of God, or Gospel state, took place. The design of this evangelist, is not to give an account of the genealogy of Christ, of his conception and birth, of what befell him in his infancy, or of any actions and sayings of his from thence, to his appearance in Israel; but to give an account of his ministry and miracles, sufferings and death: which is introduced with the preaching

and baptism of John his forerunner, and which he chiefly intends by “the beginning of the Gospel”: he first points out Christ, who is the author and substance, as well as the great preacher of the Gospel; the sum of which is, that he is Jesus, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; the Christ, the Messiah, that was to come; the Mediator between God and man, the prophet that has declared the whole mind and will of God; the great high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice for his people, made peace, procured pardon, brought in everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption, and now lives to make intercession for them; and King of saints, who reigns over them, protects and defends them, and is no other than

the Son of God; equal with his Father; of the same nature with him, possessed of the same perfections, and enjoying the same glory; and which is a grand article of the Gospel, and without which he could not be an able Saviour, nor the true Messiah. Mark begins his account of the Gospel, and which he calls the beginning of it, with the same article of the divine sonship of Christ, as the Apostle Paul began his ministry with, (~~400~~ Acts 9:20). Matthew began his Gospel with the humanity, Mark with the divinity of Christ: the one calls him the son of David, the other the Son of God, both true: Christ is the son of David according to his human nature, the Son of God according to his divine nature; so a testimony is bore to the truth of both his natures, which are united in one person.

Ver. 2. *As it is written in the prophets*, etc.] Malachi and Isaiah; for passages out of both follow; though the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, “as it is written in the prophet Isaias”; and so it is in some Greek copies: but the former seems to be the better reading, since two prophets are cited, and Isaiah is the last; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and the greater number of Greek copies. The following citations are made to show, that according to the writings of the Old Testament, John the Baptist was to be the harbinger of Christ, to come before him, and prepare his way; and also the propriety of the method the evangelist takes, in beginning his Gospel with the account of John's ministry and baptism: the first testimony stands in (~~300~~ Malachi 3:1), and the words are the words of the Father to the son, concerning John, pointing out his character and his work:

behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. John the Baptist is here called a messenger, and the message

he was sent and came with, was of the greatest moment and importance, and required the closest attention to it; wherefore this passage is introduced with a “behold!” signifying that something momentous, and what should be strictly regarded, was about to be delivered: and indeed, the work of this messenger was no other, than to declare that the long expected Messiah was born; that he would quickly make his public appearance in Israel; that the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of the Messiah, was at hand; and that it became the Jews to repent of their sins, and believe in Christ: he is called the messenger of God, “my messenger”; because he was sent, and sanctified by him; he was called unto, and qualified for his work by him; (see ^{<4006>}John 1:6,7), his father Zechariah says, he should be called the prophet of the Highest, (^{<4076>}Luke 1:76). The reason of his being called the messenger of God, may be observed in the text itself, “behold, I send”: the words in Malachi are by us rendered, “behold, I will send”, (^{<3001>}Malachi 3:1): because this was at the time of the prophet's writing a thing future, but in the times of the evangelist a thing done: and indeed, it is a more literal version of the Hebrew text, to render it “I send”, or “am sending”; and it is so expressed, to denote the certainty of it, and because in a little time it would be done: the words “before thy face”, are not in the original text of Malachi, nor in the Septuagint version, but are inserted by the evangelist; who might do it with authority, since Christ had done it before him, (^{<4010>}Matthew 11:10), and which, as Surenhusius ^{f3} observes, is for the greater elucidation of the matter. The prophet does not say before whom he should be sent, though it is implied in the next clause, but here it is expressed: besides, this messenger had now appeared before the face of Christ, had prepared his way in the wilderness, and had baptized him in Jordan; all which is designed in the following words, “which shall prepare thy way before thee”, by his doctrine and baptism: in the text in Malachi it is, “before me”, (^{<3001>}Malachi 3:1); which has made it a difficulty with the interpreters, whether the words in the prophet, are the words of Christ concerning himself, or of his Father concerning him. But sending this messenger before Christ, may be called by the Father sending him before himself, and to prepare the way before him; because Christ is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and is the angel of his presence, or face; besides, Jehovah the Father was greatly concerned, and the glory of his perfections, in the work the Messiah was to do, whose way John came to prepare. That the prophecy in Malachi here cited, is a prophecy of the Messiah, is owned by several Jewish writers ^{f4}; who expressly say, that those words which follow,

“the Lord whom ye seek”, are to be understood of the king Messiah: and though they are divided among themselves, who should be meant by this messenger, (see Gill on “^{<4110>}Matthew 11:10”), yet some of them are of opinion, that Elias is intended, even Abarbinel himself: for though in his commentary he interprets the words of the prophet Malachi himself, yet elsewhere ^{f5} he allows Elias may be intended: indeed he, and so most that go this way, mean Elijah the prophet, the Tishbite; who they suppose will come in person, before the Messiah appears: yet not he, but one in his Spirit and power is designed; and is no: other than John the Baptist, in whom the passage has had its full accomplishment.

Ver. 3. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness*, etc..] This is the other testimony in proof of the same, and may be read in (^{<234B>}Isaiah 40:3). (See Gill on “^{<411B>}Matthew 3:3”).

Ver. 4. *John did baptize in the wilderness*, etc..] Of Judea, (^{<411B>}Matthew 3:1), where he first appeared as a preacher; and is the same wilderness Isaiah has respect to in the above prophecy, (^{<234B>}Isaiah 40:3). The words are best rendered in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; “John was in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins”: according to which, the account of the Baptist begins with his name, John; describes the place where he was where he made his first appearance, and continued in, the wilderness; which was not a wild uninhabited place and without people, but had many cities, towns, and villages in it; and also declares his work and ministry there, which was preaching and baptizing: for though baptizing is here put before preaching, yet certain it is, that he first came preaching in these parts; and there baptized such, to whom his preaching was made useful. Baptism is here called, the

baptism of repentance: because John required repentance antecedent to it, and administered it upon profession of repentance, and as an open testification of it; and this

for, or unto the remission of sins: not for the obtaining the remission of sins, as if either repentance, or baptism, were the causes of pardon of sin; but the sense is, that John preached that men should repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, who was to come; and upon their repentance and faith, be baptized; in which ordinance, they might be led to a fresh view of the free and full forgiveness of their sins, through Christ; whose blood was to be shed for many, to obtain it: (see ^{<412B>}Acts 2:38).

Ver. 5. *And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, etc..]* The people of the land, a great number of them:

and they of Jerusalem; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, hearing of this new preacher, the new doctrine that he taught, and the new ordinance that he administered:

and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins; that is, as many of them as were brought to a sight and sense of their sins, and made a confession of them, these he baptized, or immersed, in the river Jordan; for certain it is, that there were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came, whom he rejected; (see Gill on “^{<4006>}Matthew 3:5-7”),

Ver. 6. *And John was clothed with camel's hair, etc..]* This is a description of John by his clothes; (see Gill on “^{<4006>}Matthew 3:4”), to which may be added, that it was usual for penitents, and men of austere lives, and of the first class for holiness and religion, to live in deserts, to fare hard, and wear coarse apparel. Mention is made of one man, who is called, *atywd tn*^{f6}, because he had on a garment of goat's hair, which cut his flesh, that so it might atone for him, for he was a penitent:

and with a girdle or skin about his loins; a leathern one, as in (^{<4004>}Matthew 3:4), not a golden one, such as the high priest wore, though the ^{f7} Jews call John an high priest: he was indeed of the priestly race: his father was a priest, but he did not wear a priestly girdle, nor any of the priest's garments;

and he ate locusts and wild honey. The Ethiopic version renders it, “honey of earth bees”: in Ethiopia was a sort of bees, little bigger than flies, and without a sting, which had their hives in the earth, where they produced honey of a white colour, very pleasant and wholesome; and this is thought, by the Ethiopians, to be the honey which John ate^{f8}; but then there must have been the same in Judea, which does not appear. Moreover, in the land of Judea, there was *yrmt l bd*, “the honey of palm trees”; and it is said^{f9}, that it is the best honey; and therefore the Scripture calls, honey of the palm trees, honey; and the palm trees which grow in the plains and valleys, abound most with it; wherefore there was much of this about Jericho, the city of palm trees: there was also *ynyat l bd*, “honey of figs”; which in some places was in great plenty:

“R. Jacob ben Dosthai says^{f10}, it is three miles from Lud to Ono (see ^{<4523>}Ezra 2:33)) one time I walked before break of day, and I went up to my ankles in honey of figs.”

Dr. Lightfoot thinks, this was the honey the evangelist speaks of, and John ate of. I have observed on (^{<4084>}Matthew 3:4) that with the Jews, the honey of bees was lawful to eat^{f11} though the bees themselves were not. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases, (^{<6112>}Leviticus 11:20), they being reckoned among reptiles that fly: and it may be further observed, that according to them, the honey of wasps and hornets was lawful to be eaten, as well as the honey of bees^{f12} and this may be truly called, as here, wild honey; for which they give these reasons^{f13}, because it is not of the substance of their bodies, but they

“Let the species of bees be an abomination to you, but the honey of bees may be eaten;”

gather it from herbs; and because in the same manner as bees, they take it into their bodies, but do not produce it from them; though some of the doctors dissent, and think it not lawful^{f14}.

Ver. 7. *And preached, saying, there cometh one mightier than I after me,* etc..] From whence it appears, that John was a preacher of Jesus Christ; of the dignity of his person, the excellency of his office, and the nature and importance of his work:

the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose; expressing the great veneration he had for him, and the great sense he had of his own unworthiness, to be concerned in the lowest and meanest service of life for him; and that he was far from being worthy of the high honour done him, to be his messenger and forerunner; (see Gill on ^{<4011>}Matthew 3:11”).

Ver. 8. *I indeed have baptized you with water,* etc..] This was spoken to the baptized persons, partly to take off their dependence upon him and his baptism; and partly to direct their views to Christ, from whom the gifts and graces of the Spirit are alone to be had:

but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost; (see Gill on ^{<4011>}Matthew 3:11”). One copy adds, “and with fire”, as there: a Jewish writer says, the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand^{f15}.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in those days*, etc..] Whilst John was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, and had large crowds of people flocking to him, to see his person, hear his doctrine, and to be baptized by him; some for one thing, and some another;

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee; the place where he had been brought up, and lived, and dwelt in from his infancy, to this time:

and was baptized of John in Jordan; which was the reason of his coming from Nazareth to him; (see ^{<4183>}Matthew 3:13), where this is observed; and in some verses following, an account is given of what passed between Christ and John, on this occasion.

Ver. 10. *And straightway coming up out of the water*, etc..] Not John, as many think; though it was true of him, that he came up out of the water, as the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to Christ, but Christ himself; who having descended into the water, the river of Jordan, and being baptized by immersion in it by John, came up out of it; not from the river side, and up the declivity to it, but out of the river itself: when

he saw the heavens opened; or “cloven”, or “rent”; this may be understood, either of John, who was the spectator of all this, which was done for the manifestation of the Messiah to him, and the confirmation of his faith in him, and that he might bear record of him; and so the Persic version reads, “John saw”, etc.. (see ^{<4183>}John 1:30,33), or of Jesus Christ himself, who came up out of the water; and when he did, saw the heavens part,

and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. The position of these words here, is a little different from that in (^{<4183>}Matthew 3:16), there it is, “the Spirit of God descending like a dove”; which seems rather to point out the manner of his descent, than the form in which he descended: here it is put, “the Spirit like a dove descending on him”; which seems rather to incline to such a sense, that the Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, as well as descended like one; and both may be designed, and indeed the latter follows upon the former: if it was the form of a dove the Spirit of God descended in, it was a very suitable one: the dove is a very proper emblem of the Spirit of God: “the voice of the turtle”, in (^{<2112>}Song of Solomon 2:12), is by the Targum interpreted, the voice of the holy Spirit: he may be likened to a dove, for its simplicity and sincerity; he guides into all truth as it is in Jesus, and teaches to speak the word in all plainness, openness, and sincerity, and preserves the saints in the simplicity of the Gospel; and for its

mildness and meekness; one of the fruits of the Spirit of God is meekness, (Gal 5:23). And this it produces in converted persons, making them meek; humble, and gentle: and also for its harmlessness and innocence; and which appears, or at least should, in those who mind the things of the Spirit: hence that advice of Christ, “be harmless as doves”, (^{<4006>}Matthew 10:16). Likewise for its purity and cleanness; the Spirit of God is a Spirit of holiness, he is the author of sanctification; such as are washed, sanctified, and justified, are so in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, (^{<4411>}1 Corinthians 6:11). The dove is a mournful and bemoaning creature; and the Spirit of God makes intercession for the saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered, (^{<4035>}Romans 8:26). To which may be added, that Noah's dove bringing the olive leaf in its mouth, as a sign, of peace and reconciliation, fitly resembled the holy Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace, (^{<4452>}Galatians 5:22), and which he produces, by leading to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, whereby peace is made, and reconciliation obtained: and his descending upon Christ here, points him out as the peacemaker, through whom was come peace on earth, good will towards men, and glory to God. Christ, on whom he lighted, is comparable to a dove; he is said to have doves' eyes, (^{<2152>}Song of Solomon 5:12), and he has all the fruits and graces of the dove like Spirit of God, which rested on him; like the dove, he is humble, meek, and lowly; in which characters, he is to be followed and imitated by his people: and as that creature is a very loving one to its mate, so is Christ to his church; whom he has so loved, as to give himself for her: and as that is a lovely beautiful creature, so is Christ; he is altogether lovely; and especially his eyes of love, as they are set and fixed upon his church and people. With this descent of the Spirit as a dove on Christ, compare (^{<2312>}Isaiah 11:2 61:1); (see Gill on “^{<4186>}Matthew 3:16”).

Ver. 11. *And there came a voice from heaven*, etc..] What the Jews call “Bath Kol”, saying,

thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: it is in Matthew, “this is my beloved Son”, (^{<4187>}Matthew 3:17); as if the words were spoken to others, to John, the administrator of baptism to him, and to those that were spectators; directing them to Christ, on whom the Spirit now descended, and testifying to them how great a person he was, how nearly related to God; how much he was the object of his love, and what a pleasure and delight he took in him; but here they are delivered as an immediate address to Christ himself, “thou art my beloved Son”. Christ, as

he was the only begotten Son of God from eternity, so his filiation was owned and declared to him as early, (^{<401B>}Psalm 2:7). This therefore was not the first time, nor was it only for his sake that this was said unto him, but also for the sake of those that stood by: but it may be observed, that he is not only called his Son, but his “beloved Son”; which might be necessary to be said to him in his state of humiliation, whilst he was yielding obedience to the will of God, and fulfilling all righteousness; and when he was about to be, as he quickly after this was, tempted by Satan in the wilderness, by whom his sonship was called in question. Now these words being directed to Christ, show that the former are spoken of him, and are applicable to him, as well as to John; (see Gill on “^{<401B>}Matthew 3:17”).

Ver. 12. *And immediately*, etc..] As soon as he was baptized, and this testimony had been given of his divine sonship, the very selfsame day,

the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness: into a more remote and desolate part of it; for it was in the wilderness John was baptizing and preaching, when Christ came to him, and had the ordinance of baptism administered by him; and it was the same Spirit that descended on him at his baptism, which remained with him; by whose impulse he was moved, though not against his will, to go into, this desert and forlorn place. For this was not the evil spirit Satan, by whom he was tempted; for Matthew expressly says, that he was “led up of the Spirit — to be tempted by the devil”, (^{<401B>}Matthew 4:1): where the devil that tempted him, is manifestly distinguished from the Spirit by whom he was led, and the same Spirit is meant here, as there. Moreover, in one of Beza's copies, and in his most ancient one, and in one of Stephens's, it is read, “the Holy Spirit driveth him”; (see Gill on “^{<401B>}Matthew 4:1”).

Ver. 13. *And he was there in the wilderness forty days*, etc..] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, “and forty nights”: for so long was he there,

tempted of Satan: the several temptations of Satan, and how they were overcome by Christ, are particularly related by the Evangelist Matthew, (^{<401B>}Matthew 4:3-11), which are here omitted; and what is not mentioned there, is here recorded:

and was with the wild beasts: which shows, that he was now in an uncultivated and uninhabited part of the desert by men, and where only the most fierce and most savage of creatures dwelt; and yet was as secure and

unhurt by them, being the Lord of them, as Adam in Eden's garden, or Daniel in the lions' den. This circumstance is only related by the Evangelist Mark, and is what adds to the uncomfortable situation Christ was in, when tempted by Satan; and his being not hurt by them, may declare, partly his innocence, as man, being as pure and holy as the first man was in his state of integrity, when all creatures were brought before him, to give them names; and partly the power of God, who shut up the mouths of these creatures, that they did him no hurt; and also may signify, the awe they stood in of him, who, as God, is Lord of all. These creatures were more gentle to Christ, and used him better than the wicked Jews, among whom he dwelt, who are compared to lions, dogs, and “bulls” of Bashan, (^{<492D>}Psalm 22:12,13,16,20,21).

And the angels ministered unto him; after the temptations were over, and Satan had left him, preparing for him, and bringing to him proper food, after so long a fast; and waiting upon him, and serving him as their great Lord and master; (see Gill on “^{<491E>}Matthew 4:11”).

Ver. 14. *Now after that John was put in prison*, etc..] In the castle of Macherus, by Herod, for reproving him for taking his brother Philip's wife:

Jesus came into Galilee: again, from whence he came to be baptized of John:

preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God: the good news and glad tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation; which lies not in worldly pomp and splendour, in outward observances, in legal rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy; in peace and pardon by the blood of Christ, in justification by his righteousness, and in free and full salvation by him.

Ver. 15. *And saying, the time is fulfilled*, etc..] Either that which was fixed for the end of the law and prophets, the legal and Mosaic dispensation, and the Jewish church state; or the fulness of time for the Messiah's appearance in the world; which was agreed upon between the Father and the Son, was predicted in various prophecies, and the people of the Jews were in a general expectation of:

and the kingdom of God is at hand: the same with the kingdom of heaven, in (^{<49E>}Matthew 3:2 4:17), see the notes.

repent ye, and believe the Gospel. He called them to repent, not only of their former sins and vicious course of life, but of their bad principles and tenets, concerning a temporal kingdom of the Messiah; concerning merit and free will, justification by the works of the law, and salvation by their obedience to the ceremonies of it, and the traditions of the elders: these he exhorts them to change their sentiments about, and to relinquish them, and give into the Gospel scheme; which proclaims liberty from the law, peace, pardon, and righteousness by Christ, and salvation and eternal life by the free grace of God.

Ver. 16. *Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee,* etc..] The same with the sea of Tiberias, (~~4001~~John 6:1),

he saw Simon: whose surname was Peter, the son of Jonas:

and Andrew his brother; the brother of Simon,

casting a net into the sea; of Galilee, in order to catch fish:

for they were fishers: by occupation, this was their trade and business, by which they got their livelihood; (see Gill on "~~4048~~Matthew 4:18").

Ver. 17. *And Jesus said unto them, come ye after me,* etc..] Leave your worldly employments, and become my disciples,

and I will make you to become fishers of men: which will be a much more excellent and honourable employment, as men, and the souls of men, are more excellent, and of more worth than fishes; (see Gill on "~~4049~~Matthew 4:19").

Ver. 18. *And straightway they forsook their nets,* etc..] Which perhaps were their all; (see ~~4057~~Matthew 19:27).

And followed him; both in a corporeal and spiritual sense; (see Gill on "~~4060~~Matthew 4:20").

Ver. 19. *And when he had gone a little further thence,* etc..] From the place where Simon and Andrew were casting their nets, though still by the sea side;

he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. The former was be whom afterwards Herod killed with the sword, and the latter the beloved disciple; these were also fishermen:

who also were in the ship mending their nets: as the other two disciples were on board the ship, casting their nets into the sea to catch fish; these were also in a ship, repairing their nets, in order to use them the same way, and for the same purpose; (see Gill on “~~402~~ Matthew 4:21”).

Ver. 20. *And straightway he called them,* etc..] As soon as he saw them; for he was looking out for them, having appointed them long before to the service he now called them to;

and they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants, and went after him. It might seem unnatural, had they left their father alone in the ship, to have taken the care and management of it, and therefore it is added, “with the hired servants”; who were hired for that purpose, to assist in mending the nets, and casting them, and managing the ship, and conducting it from place to place, and therefore were not to be charged with want of humanity; and such was the power that went along with Christ's call, that notwithstanding natural affection to their parents, and the gain they might get by these servants and their trade, they cheerfully quitted all, and followed Christ; (see Gill on “~~402~~ Matthew 4:22”).

Ver. 21. *And they went into Capernaum,* etc..] Jesus and his four disciples he had just called, Simon and Andrew, James and John; though the Arabic and Persic versions read, “he went”; that is, Christ; and so Beza says it was read in a certain copy:

and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught; that is, immediately, as soon as he entered the, city, it being then sabbath day; or, as soon as the sabbath day came, he went to the synagogue at Capernaum, and his disciples with him; where the people used to meet weekly to hear the law read, and to be instructed in divine things; which opportunity Christ laid hold on to preach the Gospel to them, and teach them things concerning the kingdom of God.

Ver. 22. *And they were astonished at his doctrine,* etc..] The nature and importance of it, it being what they had not been used to hear; only at best the doctrine of the law, and sometimes only the traditions of the elders, or an allegorical and traditional sense of the Scriptures, and things very trifling and unedifying: and also they were amazed at the manner of his preaching, which was with so much gracefulness, gravity, and majesty, and was attended with so much evidence and power:

for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes; or “their Scribes”, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read. He did not go about to establish what he said by the authority of the Rabbins, as the Scribes did; saying, Hillell says so, or Shammai says thus, or such a doctor says thus and thus; but he spoke as from himself, as one sent of God, that had an authority from him, and was independent of man; and this was what they had not observed in others, and wonder at it; (See Gill on ~~“⁴⁰⁷⁸Matthew 7:28-29”~~)

Ver. 23. *And there was in their synagogue*, etc..] In the synagogue of the Capernautes, at the same time that Jesus was teaching there,

a man with an unclean spirit: not with an unclean heart, for there were doubtless many such there, but that had a devil; for in (~~“⁴⁰⁸³Luke 4:33~~), it is said, “he had a spirit of an unclean devil”: so called, because he is impure in himself, and the cause of uncleanness in men, in which he delights: and such spirits sometimes are where religious persons meet, but with no good design; either to disturb the preacher, or to divert the hearer, that the word may be unfruitful and unprofitable:

and he cried out: either the man, or rather the unclean spirit in him, who had possessed his body, and made use of the organs of it: he cried out through dread of the majesty of Christ, whose presence he could not bear; and through grief and envy at the success of his ministration, and the influence it had upon the minds of men; and through fear of being dispossessed of the man, in whom he was.

Ver. 24. *Saying, let us alone*, etc..] Meaning with himself, the rest of the unclean spirits, that had possessed the bodies of men in Galilee, and in all Judea; knowing that Christ had power to dislodge them, and fearing he would, entreats him he would let them alone, quietly to dwell in their beloved habitations:

what have we to do with thee? They had nothing to do with Christ, as a Saviour; they had no interest in him, nor in his redemption, but he had something to do with them, to show his power over them, and to deliver men out of their hands:

thou Jesus of Nazareth: calling him so, from the place where he was educated, and had lived the greatest part of his life, though he knew he was born at Bethlehem; but this he said, according to the common notion of the people, and it being the usual appellation of him:

art thou come to destroy us? not to annihilate them, but either to turn them out of the bodies of men, which to them was a sort of a destruction of them, and was really a destroying that power, which they had for some time exercised over men; or to shut them up in the prison of hell, and inflict that full punishment on them, which is in reserve for them:

I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God: he whom God had called his Holy One, (^{<1960>}Psalm 16:10), and who is so, both in his divine nature, as the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel; and as the Son of man, being the holy thing born of the virgin, and is without the least stain of original sin, or blemish of actual transgression; and also as the mediator, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, the true Messiah; and all this the devil knew from his wonderful incarnation, by the voice from heaven at his baptism, from the conquest over him in the wilderness, and by the miracles he had already wrought: in the high priest's mitre was written, *hwyl dwq*, which may be rendered, “the Holy One of the Lord”: the high priest was an eminent type of him.

Ver. 25. *And Jesus rebuked him,* etc..] Checking his insolence, despising his flattery, and refusing to receive a testimony from him; and which he wanted not, lest it should be thought he had a familiarity and confederacy with him:

saying, hold thy peace; stop thy mouth, I need no such witness as thine, nor thy praises; I am not to be soothed by thy flattery, nor is my mouth to be stopped, or power restrained, by such methods: wherefore he adds,

and come out of him: I will not let thee alone, thy encomiums of me shall not prevail upon me to leave thee in the quiet possession of the man; I will give a testimony of who I am, by the dispossessing of thee out of this man. In imitation of this authoritative power of Christ, the Jewish exorcists, in their pretensions to cast out devils, use a like form: so they tell us ^{f16}, that R. Simeon ben Jochai, cast a devil out of Caesar's daughter, saying, “Ben Talmion” (which was the name of the devil) א, “come out, Ben Talmion come out”; and he came out of her; (see Gill on “^{<1027>}Matthew 12:27”).

Ver. 26. *And when the unclean spirit had torn him,* etc..] Not that he had torn any limb from him, or had made any wound in any part of his body; for Luke says, (^{<405>}Luke 4:35), that he “hurt him not”, but he shook him; and as Luke there says, “threw him in the midst”, of the people, or synagogue; and so the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read here, “he

cast him”, or “threw him to the ground”: he threw him into convulsions, and laid him prostrate on the floor:

and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him; though sorely, against his will, as his loud cry showed, and being obliged to it by a superior power.

Ver. 27. *And they were all amazed*, etc..] The people that were in the synagogue, who were met together for divine worship, were astonished, not only at his doctrine, as before, but at this miracle and power of his in casting out devils:

insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, what thing is this? They spake among themselves, as Luke says, (^{<4179>}Luke 4:36); they inquired of one another; they conferred together, talked over the point, and disputed among themselves, concerning both the doctrine and power of Christ, what, and how wonderful they were:

what new doctrine is this? This they said, not as fixing a brand of novelty upon it, as the Athenians did on Paul's doctrine, (^{<4179>}Acts 17:19), but as admiring it; being what was rare and unusual, and which they had never heard of from their Rabbins and Scribes, and which was confirmed by miracles;

for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him: they not only observed the authority with which he delivered his doctrine, but the authority with which he cast out devils, by a word speaking; he not only commanded them to come out, but they immediately came out; their exorcists took authority upon them to command, but could not oblige the devils to obey; but these men took notice, that such was the authority of Christ in commanding, that the unclean spirits were obliged to obey, and did.

Ver. 28. *And immediately his fame spread abroad*, etc..] Not only in the city of Capernaum, where these things were done, and where his fame was first spread, but also

throughout all the region round about Galilee: and not only throughout Galilee, but throughout all the country that was bordering upon it, and adjacent to it; (see ^{<4123>}Matthew 4:23,25). The Persic version reads, “through all the provinces”.

Ver. 29. *And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, etc..]* Christ having wrought this miracle, and finished his sermon, and the whole synagogue service being over, when it was usual for every one to repair to their own houses, or their friends, for refreshment; he, and they that were with him, departed from it, and directly, being not far from it,

they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew; who being brethren, dwelt together in a house at Capernaum, where it seems they were now inhabitants, though their native place was Bethsaida, (~~4044~~ John 1:44),

with James and John; whom they took along with them, being fellow disciples of Christ.

Ver. 30. *But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, etc..]* “A great fever”, Luke says, (~~4088~~ Luke 4:38); a very violent one, which threatened with death, and must be very dangerous to an old person; (see Gill on “~~4084~~ Matthew 8:14”),

And anon they tell him or her; for it seems, that not as soon as he came into the house, but some time after, when he had sat awhile, and rested himself after his fatigue in preaching; they acquainted him with her case, and beseeched him to look upon her, and restore her: this was done, either by Simon and Andrew, or by some others of their friends that were in the house; who having either seen, or heard of his dispossessing the unclean spirit, might rightly conclude he had power to remove a fever.

Ver. 31. *And he came and took her by the hand, etc..]* He went into the room where she lay, and took hold of her hand; not to feel her pulse, and thereby judge of the nature and strength of her disorder, as physicians do; nor merely in a friendly manner, as is customary, but in order to restore her:

and lift her up; to sit upright in the bed, who before was laid along upon it, so weak as not to be able to turn herself, much less to sit erect by any assistance whatever:

and immediately the fever left her: and there was not the least symptom of it, nor none of the effects which it usually leaves; such was the virtue that went forth from Christ by touching her, and such his great power:

and she ministered unto them; she immediately arose from the bed, and put on her clothes, being at once in perfect health and strength; and, in

gratitude to her Saviour and physician, she assisted in preparing food for him and his disciples, and served at table to them.

Ver. 32. *And at even, when the sun did set,* etc..] At which time the Jews' sabbath was ended; (see Gill on "^{<4086>}Matthew 8:16"), for this was a sabbath day, (^{<4021>}Mark 1:21), when according to them, it was not lawful to heal; nor did they offer to bring their sick to him on that day; but the last of the two evening days being come, and the sun set, the sabbath was over; and therefore being under no restraint on account of that,

they brought unto him all that were diseased; with any sort of disease whatever, even all that were in their city;

and them that were possessed with devils. The Persic version renders it "epileptics", such as were troubled with the falling sickness, as many of those were, whose bodies the devils possessed.

Ver. 33. *And all the city was gathered together at the door.*] That is, the inhabitants of the city of Capernaum, a very great number of them at least, who having either heard of, or seen the dispossession of the unclean spirit in the synagogue in the daytime; and being willing to see what miraculous cures might be wrought by Christ upon the diseased and possessed that were brought to him, got together in great crowds about the door of the house of Simon and Andrew where Jesus now was.

Ver. 34. *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases,* etc..] Not that there were some, who had some sorts of diseases, whom he did not heal; but he healed all that came, or were brought to him, which were many, of every sort of disease, which were divers, with which they were afflicted:

and cast many devils; even as many as were brought to him, or were possessed with any:

and he suffered not the devils to speak; either for him, or against him; which shows his great power over them:

because they knew him, or "that they knew him": he would not suffer them to say a word about him, because he knew that they knew that he was the Christ, the Son of God, or he would not permit them to say who he was; because he had others to bear witness of him, and better testimonies than

theirs, and lest his enemies should reproach him with an agreement and familiarity with them.

Ver. 35. *And in the morning, rising up a great white before day*, etc..] On the morrow after the sabbath, on the first day in the morning, notwithstanding the fatigue of the former day, through preaching and working miracles; yet he rose up very early while it was very much within the night, as the light and day were coming on, and before the day broke; though it might be broad day before he departed out of the house, as Luke suggests, (~~and~~ Luke 4:42),

he went out; out of the house of Simon and Andrew, and out of the city of Capernaum, leaving his disciples and friends behind him:

and departed into a solitary place, and there he prayed; as man, to his God and Father; it may be for his disciples he had lately chosen; for himself, as man, that he might be strengthened as such for service; and for success in his ministry, and that his Gospel might run and be glorified; he chose a desert, and solitary place, for the sake of retirement, from the crowd of people that attended at Peter's door; where he could not be alone, and in private, and as most suitable for the exercise of prayer. His early and private devotion may be an example to us.

Ver. 36. *And Simon, and they that were with him*, etc..] Peter, and his brother Andrew, together with James and John,

followed after him; some time after he was gone; for he privately withdrew from them, so that they might not be aware when he went, nor apprized of his departure, for some considerable time; which when they were, they set out, in diligent search, and eager pursuit after him, until they found him.

Ver. 37. *And when they had found him*, etc..] In the desert and solitary place, where he had been praying:

they said unto him; in order to engage him to go with them, and as the reason why they sought him with so much eagerness and diligence,

all men seek for thee; not all the men in the world, nor, it may be, all the inhabitants of Capernaum, but a large number of them, who were inquiring after him, some for one thing, some for another; some to see him, what manner of man he was, and some to hear him, what sort of doctrine he preached, and others to see his miracles, or to have themselves, or their

sick healed; and the disciples were loath that such an opportunity of doing good should be missed, and therefore sought for him, till they found him.

Ver. 38. *And he said unto them, let us go into the next towns,* etc..]

Instead of returning with his disciples to Capernaum, as they expected he would, and especially since there was such a concourse of people got together, he proposes to go to “the next towns”; or “village cities”; towns that were neither villages, nor cities, but between both, as the word signifies: hence the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions render it, “villages and cities”: and it designs such towns in which there were synagogues. The Jews distinguish between walled towns, villages, and large cities^{f17}. They ask,

“what is a large city? every one in which there are ten leisure men; if less than so, lo! it is a village.”

And

“every place in which there were ten Israelites, they were obliged to provide a house into which they might go to prayer, at every prayer time, and that place is called a synagogue^{f18}.”

These were the places Christ judged it advisable to go to; he had preached already at Capernaum, the day before, and had confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which was sufficient for the present, and therefore thought fit to go elsewhere, and orders his disciples to go likewise; for the Syriac version renders it, “go ye to the next cities”; and in the same way read the Arabic and Persic versions:

that I may preach there also; as well as at Capernaum, that so the Gospel may be spread, and have its usefulness in other parts as well as there: the Arabic version renders it, “that we may preach”; both I and you; but without any foundation; nor does the reason following suit such a version,

for therefore came I forth: meaning, not from Simon's house, nor from Capernaum, though there may be a truth in that; for Christ might come from thence, with that view, to preach the Gospel elsewhere; but from God his Father, from whom he came forth, and by whom he was sent to preach the Gospel to other cities also, both in Galilee and Judaea; even to all the inhabitants of that country, to all the lost sheep of the house of Israel; so that this was but answering the end of his coming, and acting according to the commission given him.

Ver. 39. *And he preached in their synagogues*, etc..] Which were in the next towns, in the village cities, and

throughout all Galilee: taking every town and city in his circuit, he continued preaching the Gospel of the kingdom in one place and another, until he had gone over the whole country:

and cast out devils; as out of the souls, so out of the bodies of men, whereby he confirmed the doctrine he preached.

Ver. 40. *And there came a leper to him*, etc..] After he was come down from a certain mountain, in Galilee, where he had been preaching to the people, (^{<ARB>}Matthew 8:1), and when he was in a certain city, (^{<ARB>}Luke 5:12), either Capernaum, or some other city of Galilee. This man was full of leprosy, as Luke says, and very probably deemed incurable; of the nature and symptoms of the leprosy, (see Gill on "^{<ARB>}Luke 5:12"),

beseeking him; to cure him of his leprosy:

and kneeling down to him; in token of submission, respect, and reverence, and to worship him:

and saying unto him, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean; (see Gill on "^{<ARB>}Matthew 8:2"). Mark omits the word "Lord".

Ver. 41. *And Jesus, moved with compassion*, etc..] At the sad and deplorable case the poor man was in, being a merciful high priest, and not with a desire of popular applause, and vain glory:

put forth his hand and touched him; though the leprosy was spread all over him, and there was no place clean, and touching him was forbidden by the law:

and saith unto him, I will be thou clean; (see Gill on "^{<ARB>}Matthew 8:3").

Ver. 42. *And as soon as he had spoken*, etc..] The above words,

immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed; from it, and which seems to be done not by touching him, but by the words spoken, which were accompanied with such power, as to effect the cure in an instant; (see Gill on "^{<ARB>}Matthew 8:3").

Ver. 43. *And he straitly charged him*; etc..] Either with the sin which had been the cause of this leprosy, and to take care that he sinned that sin no

more, lest a worse evil should befall him; for sin was usually the cause of leprosy, as the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah show. It is said to come upon men for seven things. The seven abominations mentioned in (^{<2116>}Proverbs 6:16-19), are said, by the Jewish writers ^{f19}, to be the reasons of persons being stricken with leprosy: “a proud look”; as appears from the instance of the daughters of Zion, (^{<2186>}Isaiah 3:16-24), the crowns of whose heads were smitten with a scab, and who were attended with a stink, boldness, and burning. “A lying tongue”; as in the case of Miriam, who, with Aaron, spoke against Moses; upon which the cloud departed from the tabernacle, and Miriam became leprous, white as snow, (^{<4015>}Numbers 12:1,10). “And hands that shed innocent blood”; which is proved from Joab, on whose head the blood of Abner and Amasa returned; and on account of which a leper was not to fail from his house; (see ^{<1023>}1 Kings 2:31,32), compared with (^{<1029>}2 Samuel 3:29). “An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations”; which was fulfilled in Uzziah, who sought to bring the high priesthood into contempt, and therefore was smitten with leprosy, which arose in his forehead, while he had the censer in his hands, and was contending with the priests; and he continued a leper to his death, (^{<1438>}2 Chronicles 26:18-21). “Feet that be swift in running to mischief”; which was true of Gehazi, who ran after Naaman the Syrian, and took a gift of him which he should not; for which, the leprosy, Naaman was cured of, seized him, and cleaved unto him, (^{<1150>}2 Kings 5:20-27). “A false witness that speaketh lies”; of this no instance is given. “And him that soweth discord among brethren”; as Pharaoh between Abraham and Sarah; wherefore the Lord plagued Pharaoh, etc.. (^{<0127>}Genesis 12:17), which the Jews understand of the plague of leprosy. These seven things are, in another place ^{f20}, said to be an evil tongue, shedding of blood, a vain oath, uncleanness, a proud spirit, theft, and envy. Elsewhere it is said ^{f21}, that for eleven things leprosy cometh; for cursing God, for uncleanness, for murder, for saying of a neighbour a thing that there is nothing in it, for pride, for entering into a border which is not a man's own, for a lying tongue, for theft, for a false oath, for profaning the name of God, for idolatry: and R. Isaac says, for an evil eye; and the Rabbins also say, it comes upon him who despises the words of the law: the first is proved from Goliath, (^{<0175>}1 Samuel 17:26,46); the second from the daughters of Jerusalem, (^{<2186>}Isaiah 3:16-24); the third from Cain, (^{<0145>}Genesis 4:15) and from Joab, (^{<1029>}2 Samuel 3:29); the fourth from Moses, (^{<1045>}Exodus 4:5,6); the fifth from Naaman, (^{<1150>}2 Kings 5:1); the sixth from Uzziah, (^{<1438>}2 Chronicles 26:16-19); the seventh from Miriam, (^{<4020>}Numbers 12:10); the

eighth and ninth from (^{<38804>}Zechariah 5:4), compared with (^{<08445>}Leviticus 14:45); the tenth from Gehazi, (^{<11831>}2 Kings 5:20,27); the eleventh from the children of Israel when they made the calf, (^{<03275>}Exodus 32:25), compared with (^{<04812>}Numbers 5:2). But whether this man's sin was either of these, or what it was, is not certain: however, he was, by this cure, laid under an obligation, for the future, to avoid it, and all other sins: or rather the charge was to tell no man of his cure, before he came to the priest: nor to him, or any other, how he came by it, and by whom he was healed;

and forthwith sent him away; to the priest, in all haste; and it looks as if the man was unwilling to have gone from him, but chose rather to have continued with his kind benefactor: for the word signifies, he cast him out; he drove him from him; he obliged him to go without delay.

Ver. 44. *And saith unto him, see thou say nothing to any man*, etc..] By the way, till he came to the priest;

but go thy way, show thyself to the priest: the Syriac and Persic versions read, “to the priests”; and the Vulgate Latin renders it, “to the chief priest”; but any priest might judge of the cleansing of a leper;

and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them; (see Gill on “^{<41804>}Matthew 8:4”).

Ver. 45. *But he went out*, etc..] Either out of the synagogue; for in (^{<40139>}Mark 1:39), it is said, that Christ preached in their synagogues, etc.. and in (^{<40140>}Mark 1:40), “there came a leper to him”; and Luke very, plainly suggests, that he was in the city, (^{<40512>}Luke 5:12), and he might be in the synagogue: and this was allowed a leper, according to the Jewish canons, provided some rules were observed; which were these ^{f22}:

“if a leper enters into a synagogue, they make for him a partition ten hands high, and four cubits broad; he enters in first, and goes out last:”

or, it may be, he went out of the house where he was, into the city, and parts adjacent; for it seems as if the cure was done privately: and yet a leper was not allowed to enter into a house ^{f23};

“if he did, all the vessels which were there, i.e. all the goods in the house were defiled, even to the very beams. R. Simeon says, as far

as four cubits. R. Judah says, if he stayed so long as the lighting of a lamp.”

And began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter; contrary to the charge Christ gave him; though this might be done by him, not out of disobedience to Christ, but out of a transport of joy for the mercy received; and perhaps with a good intention to spread the fame and glory of his Saviour:

insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city; of Capernaum, or whatever city it was, where this cure was wrought, without a crowd of people about him, and danger from them, at least from his enemies, who envied his applause and glory.

But was without in desert places; devoid of inhabitants, where he spent his time in prayer:

and they came to him from every quarter; whenever the people could learn where he was: so agreeable was his doctrine to some; and so useful his miraculous work of healing to others.