

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO MARK 7

Ver. 1. *Then came together unto him the Pharisees*, etc..] Having heard of his miracles, and that he was come into the land of Gennesaret; they consulted with one another, and came together to Jesus, to watch and observe what was said and done by him, and take what advantage they could against him. These were not of that country, but were of Jerusalem, as were their companions the Scribes:

and certain of the Scribes, which were of Jerusalem; for the fame of Christ had reached the metropolis of the nation; and these men being the more artful and cunning of the whole sect, either came of themselves, or were sent by the sanhedrim, to make their observations upon his doctrine and conduct; (see Gill on ~~“^{405B}Matthew 15:1”~~”).

Ver. 2. *And when they saw some of his disciples*, etc..] An opportunity soon offered of giving them an handle against him: for observing some of his disciples to sit down to meat, they took notice that they

eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, and *they found fault*; with them, and charged them with the breach of the traditions of the elders, and took an occasion from hence of quarrelling with Christ. The Jews use the same phrase the evangelist here does, and interpret it in just the same manner: so, speaking of things eaten, *twbawm ydyb*, “with defiled hands”; that is, says the commentator^{f129}, it is all one as if it was said, *ydy t l yj n al b*, “without washing of hands”; which was esteemed a very great crime, and especially if done in a contemptuous way: for they say^{f130},

“he that despiseth washing of hands, shall be rooted out of the world; for in it is the secret of the decalogue:”

and particularly to eat with unwashed hands, was unpardonable in a disciple of a wise man; for they looked upon this to be the characteristic of one of the vulgar people, a common and illiterate man: for they ask^{f131},

“who is one of the people of the earth, or a plebeian? he that does not eat his common food with purity.”

By this also they distinguished a Jew from a Gentile; if he washed his hands, and blessed, he was known to be an Israelite, but if not, a Gentile ^{f132}; (see Gill on “~~405D~~ Matthew 15:2”).

Ver. 3. *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews*, etc..] The far greater part of them; all, excepting the Sadducees; and especially the Pharisees, were very tenacious of this tradition of washing hands before eating: hence Pharisees are described as such, **hrhj b hyl w yl kwa**, “that eat their common food with cleanness” ^{f133}, i.e. of hands: these,

except they wash their hands oft, eat not; or except they wash very cautiously, with great care, diligence, and exactness, as the Syriac version suggests; and about which there are various rules given, to be observed with great strictness ^{f134}. Some render the words, “they wash their hands to the elbow”; and this is a rule with the Jews, which is closely to be abode by, that the washing of hands is to be, **qr d**, “to the joint”, which joins the hand and arm together ^{f135}: particularly it is observed ^{f136}, that

“washing of the hands for the eating of the offering, is unto the elbow, and for common food, to the joints of the fingers: he that eats with an ancient man, and does not wash his hands to the elbow, he may not eat with him.”

Well may it be added,

holding the tradition of the elders; nor do the Jews pretend the authority of the Scriptures as obliging them to such rules; for, they say, the command concerning washing of hands is, **yrrw yrbdm**, “from the words of the Scribes” ^{f137}; and is **ymk twm**, “a command of the wise men” ^{f138}. The tradition is this:

“they wash hands for common food, but for the tithe, and for the first offering, and for that which is holy, they dip them, and for the sin offering; for if the hands are defiled; the body is defiled ^{f139}.”

And this tradition of the elders, the Scribes, and Pharisees, strictly observed.

Ver. 4. *And when they come from the market*, etc..] In Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, it is read as we supply, "when they come": wherefore this respects not things bought in the market, a sense favoured by all the Oriental versions, for many of them could not be washed; but the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, who when they came from market, or from any court of judicature, immersed themselves all over in water, according to the true sense of the word βαπτίζω, here used: for,

"if the Pharisees touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled, all one as if they had touched a profluvius person, ηl ybj κyρω, "and needed immersion";"

and were obliged to it ^{f140}: hence, when they walked the streets, they walked on the sides of the way, that they might not be defiled by touching the common people ^{f141}:

wherefore, except they wash, they eat not, or immerse themselves in water, as well as used, ydy t l ybj , "immersion of the hands", or washing of the hands by immersion; and which, if only intended, is sufficient to support the primary sense of the word, "baptizo":

and, many other things there be which they have received to hold; by tradition from their elders;

as the washing of cups and pots, brazen, vessels, and of tables: and here the word βαπτισμος, "baptism", is rightly used in its proper and primary signification; for all these things were, according to the traditions of the elders, washed by immersion:

"in a laver, (they say ^{f142}) which holds forty seahs of water, which are not drawn, every defiled man dips himself, except a profluvius man; and in it yamj h yl kh l k ta yl ybj m, "they dip all unclean vessels";"

"as cups, pots, and brazen vessels": very particularly brazen vessels are mentioned, because earthen ones that were unclean, were to be broken ^{f143}; which were all washed before eaten in, even on a sabbath day, and that by dipping ^{f144}:

"dishes", in which they eat at evening, (i.e. of the sabbath,) they wash them, to eat in the morning; in the morning they wash them, to eat in at noon; at noon they wash them, to eat in at the

“minchah”; and from the “minchah”, and forward, they do not wash again: but “cups”, and “jugs”, and “pots” they wash, and it goes through all the day; for there is no fixed time for drinking.”

All such vessels, whether had of a Gentile, or an Israelite, or even a wise man, were to be immersed before used^{f145}.

“He that buys a vessel for the use of a feast, of Gentiles, whether molten vessels, or glass vessels — **l ybj m**, “they dip them”, in the waters of the laver; and after that they may eat and drink in them: and such as they use for cold things, as “cups”, and “pots”, and “jugs”, they wash them, **l ybj mw**, “and dip them”, and they are free for use: and such as they use for hot things, as “cauldrons” and “kettles”, (“brazen vessels”,) they heat them with hot water, and scour them, **l ybj mw**, “and immerse them”, and they are fit to be used: and things which they use at the fire, as spits and gridirons, they heat them in the fire till the crust (the covering of rust, or dirt) falls off, **l ybj mw**, “and dip them”, and they may be lawfully made use of. This is the immersion with which they immerse vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; and after that they are free for eating and drinking; for the business of uncleanness and purification is only from the words of the Scribes — and none are obliged to this immersion, but molten vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; but if he borrows of Gentiles, or a Gentile leaves in pawn molten vessels, (made of cast brass, or iron,) he washes, or boils, or heats in the fire, but need not immerse them; and so if he buys vessels of wood, or vessels of stone, he washes, or boils them, but need not dip them; and so earthen vessels need not be immersed; but those that are covered with lead, are as molten vessels, **hl ybj ykyrw**, “and need immersion”.”

And not only such that were bought of Gentiles, but even that were made by Jews, and scholars too, were to be immersed in water.

“Vessels, (they say^{f146}), that are finished in purity, even though a disciple of a wise man makes them, care is to be taken about them, lo! these ought to be immersed:”

and also “tables”, at which they eat; and because their posture at them were lying, reclining, or leaning: hence the word **κλιων**, is used for them

here: these were capable of defilement in a ceremonial sense, according to the traditions of the Jews: one of their rules is this ^{f147};

“every vessel of wood, which is made for the use of vessels, and of men, as, **l wh**, a “table”, a bed, etc.. receive defilement.”

And there were several sorts of tables, which, by their laws, were unclean, or might be defiled by the touch of unclean persons, or things: so they say ^{f148},

“a table, and sideboard, which are made less, or covered with marble, if there is a space left, in which cups may be set, they may be defiled. R. Judah says, if a space is left, in which may be put pieces, i.e. of bread or flesh: a table of which the first of its feet is taken away is clean; if the second is taken away it is clean; if the third is taken away it may be defiled.”

Again ^{f149}, every vessel of wood, that is divided into two parts, is, clean, excepting a double table, etc., i.e. a table which consisted of various parts, and were folded together when it was removed: and these were washed by covering them in water; and very nice they were in washing them, that the water might reach every part, and that they might be covered all over; that there might be nothing which might separate between them and the water, and hinder its coming to them: as for instance, pitch being upon a table, whether within or without, divided between that and the water; and when this was the case, it was not rightly washed ^{f150}: but to washing tables by immersion, there is no objection; wherefore, to perplex this matter, and give further trouble, it is insisted on that the word should be rendered “beds”; and it must be owned that it is so rendered in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, (in the Arabic version the clause is omitted,) and in many modern translations: and we are contented it should be so rendered. And these beds design either the couches they lay, or leaned upon at meals; or the beds they slept in at nights: these were capable of being polluted, in a ceremonial sense; for of such pollution, and such washing, are we to understand these traditions: for those things regard not the bare washing of them when naturally unclean, when they ought to be washed; and it is the custom of all people to wash them when this is the case. A bed, and bedstead, are capable of such pollution as soon as they are shaved with a fish skin, or are completed without polishing ^{f151}; that is, as soon as they are finished; and there are several ways by which they are defiled. A bed is

defiled, **tm amj**, “by one that is defiled with the dead”^{f152}; that is, who has touched a dead body, and he sits upon the bed, or touches it, he defiles it. Again, a bed that is made to lie upon, is defiled, **rdm**, “by treading”^{f153}; that is, it is defiled if a man, or a woman, that has a “gonorrhoea”, or a menstruous woman, or one in childbirth, or a leper, should sit, stand; lie, hang, or lean upon it; yea, if any thing should touch it, which has been touched by any of these. Also, a bed which is not made for to lie upon, but to lay a dead body on, is defiled in the same way; and so are even the pillow and bolster^{f154}. Now these were to be washed when they had received any defilement, and that by immersion. Their canons run thus:

“**hj m**, “a bed”, that is wholly defiled, if **hl ybj h**, “he dips” it, part by part, it is pure^{f155};”

again^{f156},

“**hj mh ta wb l ybj h**, “if he dips the bed in it”, (the pool of water,) although its feet are plunged into the thick clay (at the bottom of the pool), it is clean.”

If it should be insisted upon, that it ought to be shown and proved, that the very bolsters and pillows on which they lay and leaned, were washed in this way, we are able to do it:

“**ytkhw rkh**, “a pillow”, or “a bolster” of skin, when a man lifts up the ends, or mouths of them, out of the water, the water which is within them will be drawn; what shall he do? **l ybj m**, “he must dip them”, and lift them up by their fringes^{f157}.”

In short, it is a rule with the Jews, that

“wheresoever, in the law, washing of the flesh, or of clothes, is mentioned, it means nothing else than the dipping of the whole body in water — for if any man wash himself all over, except the top of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness^{f158}.”

So that the evangelist uses the words **βαπτίζω** and **βαπτισμος**, most properly, without departing from their primary and literal sense; nor could he have used words more appropriate and fit. Various rules, concerning these things, may be seen in the treatises “Celim” and “Mikvaot”. Hence it appears, with what little show of reason, and to what a vain purpose this

passage is so often appealed to, to lessen the sense of the word βαπτίζω, “baptizo”; as if it did not signify to dip, but a sort of washing, short of dipping; though what that washing is, is not easy to say, since vessels and clothes are in common washed by putting them into water, and covering them with it: this passage therefore is of no service to those who plead for sprinkling, or pouring water in baptism, in opposition to immersion; nor of any disservice, but of real use to those who practise immersion, and must confirm them in it. Nor need they have recourse to a various reading, which one of the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library furnishes with, which is, unless they are sprinkled; which reading must be wrong, not only because, contrary to all other copies, but also to the usages of the Jews in the washing of themselves.

Ver. 5. *Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him*, etc..] Not the disciples, but Christ himself; for their chief view was to find fault, and quarrel with him:

why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashen hands? or “with common”, that is, defiled “hands”, as in (~~400B~~ Mark 7:2). So the words are read in Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's copies, and in the Vulgate Latin version. The word “common” is used for that which is unclean or unholy, (~~400A~~ Acts 10:14,28 ~~544A~~ Romans 14:14 ~~800B~~ Hebrews 10:29), and so signifies unwashen hands, as we read, and render it: besides, “common hands” may have some respect to the hands of the common people, the vulgar and illiterate, who showed no regard to this tradition, but ate their common food without washing their hands. Instead of “the tradition of the elders”, the Ethiopic version reads, “the constitution of the Scribes and Pharisees”; and which are sometimes by the Jews called, *yrw yrbd*, “the words”, or “sayings of the Scribes”^{f159}, and are preferred by them to the written law; and the same are commonly called *twkyl h*, “ways”, in which a man is to walk, and according to which he is to steer his course of life; and to which reference is here had in the word, “walk”, used by the Pharisees; who suggest, that these decisions, constitutions, and traditions of the elders, were the rule, according to which men ought to order their manner of life and conversation; blaming the disciples, that they did not conform to them, and particularly in the case of eating bread, which they did without washing their hands, which was strictly enjoined among these canons; and they wanted to know the sense of Christ upon it. Though they might have

known from the Scriptures, particularly from (³⁵¹⁸Ezekiel 20:18,19) that it was their duty, as well as the disciples of Christ, to walk, not in the, statutes of their fathers, nor observe their judgments, the laws and ordinances instituted by them; but to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, and do them: not the traditions of men, but the word of God, should be the rule of walk and conversation; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace will be upon them; but those that walk according to the commandments of men, justly deserve the character given of such by the prophet Isaiah, whose words our Lord produces in the following verses.

Ver. 6. *He answered and said unto them,* etc..] Matthew postpones the following citation and application of the prophecy of Isaiah, to the account of the command of God being broken by the tradition of Corban; which Mark makes the answer of Christ to begin with:

well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites; which in Matthew is read, “ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you”, (⁴¹⁵⁷Matthew 15:7); to the same sense as here: for the prophecy of Isaiah not only described the hypocrites of his time, but had respect chiefly to the Jews in succeeding ages, in the times of Christ, and both before and after; when they would, as they did, greatly degenerate, and lost the power and spirituality of religion, and had only the form of it; left the word of God for the traditions of men, and were given up to great stupidity, and to judicial blindness: hence the Apostle Paul refers to a passage in the same chapter, (²⁹¹⁰Isaiah 29:10), and applies it to the Jews in his time, (⁴⁵¹⁸Romans 11:8); (see Gill on “⁴¹⁵⁷Matthew 15:7”), saying,

as it is written in (²⁹¹³Isaiah 29:13),

this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In the Prophet Isaiah more is said than is here cited; and so in Matthew more is produced, and the whole is there expressed thus: “this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me”, (⁴¹⁵⁸Matthew 15:8): they presented their bodies before the Lord in the synagogues, or in the temple, and prayed to him with an air of devotion and fervency, and offered up their praises to him, for their external privileges and blessings; but, alas! this was all lip labour; there was no lifting up their hearts, with their hands, unto God; these were not united to fear his name, but were distracted in his worship, and carried away from him to other objects; (see Gill on “⁴¹⁵⁸Matthew 15:8”).

Ver. 7. *Howbeit, in vain do they worship me*, etc..] This is the continuation of the citation out of Isaiah, as is also what follows:

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. As all these traditions mentioned were such; as washing their hands before they ate bread, and their whole bodies, when they came from the market, or from any court of judicature, or concourse of men, where they had been touched by the common people, and the washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, or beds; these they taught the people, and enjoined them the observance of them: instead of instructing them in the doctrines of the Bible, respecting the Messiah, and salvation by him, the right fear, and true worship of God, his ordinances and statutes; wherefore their worship of him, though attended with a great show of sanctity and religion, was a vain thing, a mere empty thing, devoid of life, power, and spirituality, unacceptable to God, and of no real use, profit, and advantage to themselves: it neither issued in the glory of God, nor brought any true pleasure, or solid peace to themselves; and they would find, by sad experience, that their hope of being in the favour of God, and of enjoying eternal happiness on account of it, would prove a vain hope; (see Gill on “^{<415B>}Matthew 15:9”).

Ver. 8. *For laying aside the commandment of God*, etc..] Meaning not any particular commandment, but all the commandments of God, the whole written law; to which they preferred the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, and the decisions of their doctors. So the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, “the commandments of God”.

Ye hold the tradition of men: very significantly are the elders, whom the Jews revered, and whose traditions and constitutions they extolled above the Scriptures, called “men”, in distinction from “God”, whose commands they neglected; which exposes and aggravates their sin, that they should leave the one, which had the stamp of divine authority on them, and hold the other, which were only the devices of men's brains;

as the washing of pots and cups. The Arabic version adds, “and vessels”, from (^{<410B>}Mark 7:4), and the Ethiopic version, between “chalices” and “cups”, places “monies”; as if they also contracted uncleanness in some cases, and needed washing: and indeed, there is a tradition to this purpose

^{f160},

“**l n rnyd**, “a penny which is rejected” (that is, as the commentators say ^{f161}, which a kingdom or province has made void,

or which wants weight), if any one prepares it to hang about the neck of a child, it is “unclean”; and so a “sela” (which was the value of four pence) and it is prepared to weigh with it, is “unclean”.”

And many other such like things you do; so many, that it is almost endless to reckon up. The treatise “Celim”, or “of vessels”, in the Misna, is full of rules, concerning the cleanness and uncleanness, of almost all things in use with men; and so of what do, and what do not stand in need of washing. And these things they did, not according to the commandment of God, nor did they pretend to it; but according to the words of the Scribes, and traditions of the elders, which reached to all sorts of vessels: their rule is this ^{f162};

“vessels made of wood, and of skin, and of bone, and of glass, if they are plain, they are clean; but if they are hollow, (or made to hold things,) they are liable to pollution.”

Which Maimonides ^{f163} explains thus;

“vessels of wood, and of skin, and of bone, if hollow, receive defilement from the words of the law; but if they are plain, as tables, a seat, a skin on which they eat, they do not receive defilement, but, *yrrw yrbdm*, “from the words of the Scribes”.”

And this washing of vessels, not only concerned such as were for private use, but the vessels of the sanctuary: so it is said ^{f164};

“after a feast, at the close of a good day, or festival, “they dip all the vessels in the sanctuary”; because the “common people” have “touched” them at the feast, in the time of keeping it: wherefore they say, touch not the table (the showbread table), when they show it to them that come up to the feast, that it may not be defiled by touching it; and if after the feast, it is found (polluted), it must be dipped and all the vessels are obliged to immersion, excepting the golden altar, and the altar of brass.”

So that our Lord might well say, “and many such like things ye do”.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto them*, etc..] He continued his discourse, saying, *full well*, or “fairly”,

ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition: these words may be considered, as spoken ironically, thus; as pious and excellently good men, you in a very fair and handsome manner, reject and make void the commandments and laws of God; and it is very fit it should be so, in order to preserve your own traditions, that nothing may be wanting to keep up the honour of them, and a due regard to them. The Arabic version reads the words by way of interrogation, “is it fit that you should omit the commandments of God, and keep your own statutes?” and so the Ethiopic, “do ye rightly make void the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own commandment?” Which makes them come nearer to the passage in Matthew; (see Gill on “^{<405B>}Matthew 15:3”).

Ver. 10. *For Moses said,* etc..] That is, God by Moses; for the following precept was spoken by God, and written by him on one of the tables of stone, and delivered into the hands of Moses, to be given to the children of Israel:

honour thy father and thy mother, (^{<0212>}Exodus 20:12), the sanction of which law is,

and whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death, (^{<0217>}Exodus 21:17). As the former of these commands is to be understood, not only of honouring parents in thought, word, and deed, but also of providing for them, when in want and distress, through poverty and old age; so the latter is to be interpreted, not merely of wishing or imprecating the most dreadful things upon parents, which some may not be guilty of, and yet transgress this command; but likewise of every slight put upon them, and neglect of them, when in necessitous circumstances: and both these laws were broken by the Jews, through their tradition hereafter mentioned; (see Gill on “^{<4154>}Matthew 15:4”).

Ver. 11. *But ye say,* etc..] Your elders, doctors, and wise men, in opposition to God and Moses:

if a man shall say to his father or his mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift; in the same manner is this word interpreted by Josephus, who speaking of some that call themselves Corban unto God, says ^{f165} in the Greek tongue, **δωρον δε τουτο σημαινει**, “this signifies a gift”: now, according to the traditions of the elders, whoever made use of that word to his father or his mother, signifying thereby, that what they might have

expected relief from at his hands, he had devoted it; or it was as if it was devoted to sacred uses; adding,

by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, [he shall be free]; and not under any obligation to regard and relieve his parents, let their case and circumstances be what they would. This is the form of a vow, which a man having made on purpose, to free himself from the charge of the maintenance of his parents, when reduced, repeats unto them; or which he makes upon their application to him: various forms of this kind of vows, are produced in the note “^{DEB}Matthew 15:5”, which see: this was not the form of an oath, or swearing by Corban, or the sacred treasury in the temple, mentioned in (^{DEB}Matthew 27:6), of which I do not remember any instance; nor was it a dedication of his substance to holy and religious uses; to the service of God and the temple; but it was a vow he made, that what he had, should be as Corban, as a gift devoted to sacred uses: that as that could not be appropriated to any other use, so his substance, after such a vow, could not be applied to the relief of his parents; though he was not obliged by it to give it for the use of the temple, but might keep it himself, or bestow it upon others. L. Capellus has wrote a very learned dissertation upon this vow, at the end of his Spicilegium on the New Testament; very and our learned countryman, Dr. Pocock, has said many excellent things upon it, in his miscellaneous notes on his Porta Mosis; both which ought to be read and consulted, by those who have learning and leisure.

Ver. 12. *And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father, or his mother.*] According to the Jewish canons^{f166}, if a man vowed a thing which is contrary to a command, he was obliged to keep his vow, and break the command: thus, if a man vowed that his father or his mother should never receive any benefit from what he had, but that his substance was as “Corban”, or as any thing devoted to divine service, he was obliged to keep his vow; nor was he allowed after this to do any thing for his father, or mother, however poor or helpless they might be; unless he applied to a wise man to revoke his vow, or to give him liberty to do it; for he could not do it of himself, as wicked as it was; and though he might heartily repent of it, and was ever so willing to make it null and void: and though a dissolution it by a wise man was allowed of, yet hereby they set up their own power and authority against God, and his law; they did not rescind the vow, because it was contrary to the command of God: for notwithstanding its being contrary to the command of God, it was to be observed, though to the breaking of that, unless loosed by a wise man, at the man's request;

whereby they established their magisterial power and authority, without any regard to the honour and glory of God; and therefore what follows, is justly observed by our Lord; (see Gill on “~~4056~~ Matthew 15:5”).

Ver. 13. *Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition,* etc.] Beza says, in his most ancient copy it is read, “your foolish tradition”; and such it was indeed, that a vow made rashly, and in a passion, or if ever so deliberately entered into, should be more binding upon a man than the law of God; that rather than break this, he should transgress a divine command; and that though he might see his folly, and repent of his sin in making such a wicked vow, he could not go back from it, without the permission of a wise man: should his poor distressed parents come to him for assistance, he was obliged to answer them, that he had bound himself by a vow, that they should receive no advantage from his substance; and should they remonstrate to him the command of God, to honour them and take care of them, and observe that that command is enforced by promises and threatenings; he had this to reply, and was instructed to do it, that it was the sense of the wise men and doctors, and agreeably to the traditions of the elders, to which he ought rather to attend, than to the words of the law, that he should keep and fulfil his vow, whatever command was neglected or broken by it.

Which ye have delivered: they received it from their ancestors, and delivered it to their disciples; and it is in this way, that all their traditions were delivered: they say^{f167}, that

“Moses received the law (the oral law) at Sinai, **hrmw**, “and delivered” it to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue; the last of which was Simeon the just; and Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Joezer, a man of Tzeredah, and Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem, received it from Antigonus; and Joshua ben Perachiah (said to be the master of Jesus Christ), and Nitthai the Arbelite, received it from them; and Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach, received it from them; and Shemaiah and Abtalion received it from them; and from them Hillell and Shammai.”

Who were now the heads of the two grand schools of the Jews; these received, and delivered out these traditions to the Scribes and Pharisees, and they to their disciples:

and many such like things do ye; meaning, that there were many other traditions besides this now mentioned; whereby, instead of preserving the written law, which, they pretended, these were an hedge unto ^{f168}, they, in a great many instances, made it void.

Ver. 14. *And when he, had called all the people unto him*, etc..] The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of “all”, read again, and so do some copies: having said what was sufficient to stop the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees, about their unwarrantable traditions; he turns himself to the common people, who stood at some distance, because of these venerable doctors, and called to them to come nearer to him:

he said unto them, hearken to me every one of you, and understand; signifying, he had something of moment to say to them, which they would do well to attend unto, and what they should be desirous of understanding aright, it being what concerned every one of them; (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁵⁰Matthew 15:10”).

Ver. 15. *There is nothing from without a man*, etc..] As any sort of food and drink, whether it be received, with, or without washing of the hands:

that entering into him can defile him; in a moral sense, or render him loathsome and unacceptable in the sight of God:

but the things which come out of him; the Arabic: version reads, “out of the mouth of man”, as in (⁴⁰⁵¹Matthew 15:11), for the things are, all sinful words which proceed from the imaginations and lusts of the heart; as all idle, unchaste, blasphemous, and wrathful words and expressions: and may include evil thoughts, words, and actions; which actions first in thought, take their rise from the corrupt heart of man; and in word, come out of the mouth; and in action, are performed by some one or other of the members of the body: these are

they that defile the man: his mind and conscience, the faculties of his soul, and the members of his body; and render him abominable in the sight of God, and expose him to his wrath and displeasure; (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁵¹Matthew 15:11”). The sense of the whole is, that not what a man eats and drinks, and in whatsoever way he does either, though he may eat and drink with unwashen hands, or out of cups, pots, and platters, not properly washed, according to the traditions of the elders, renders him a polluted sinful man, in the sight of God; or such as one, whose company and conversation are to be, avoided by good men; but that it is sin in the heart,

and what proceeds from it; as all evil thoughts, wicked words, and impure actions; which denominate a man filthy and unclean, and expose him to the abhorrence of God, and of his people: the words may be rendered, “there is nothing from without a man, can make him common”; that is, as a plebeian, a vulgar common man, a sinful wicked man, as the common people were, or at least were so esteemed by the Pharisees; nothing that he took into his body, by eating or drinking, could put him into the class of such persons: “but the things which come out of him”; out of his heart, by his lips: “those are they that make a man common”; or a vulgar wicked man. The Ethiopic version renders it, “it is not what enters from without into the mouth of man, which can defile him; but only what goes out of the heart man, this defiles the man”: the Persic version adds, “and is the sin of death”; or sin unto death, a deadly, mortal sin.

Ver. 16. *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*] (See Gill on “⁴⁰¹¹⁵Matthew 11:15”).

Ver. 17. *And when he was entered into the house,* etc..] Very probably at Capernaum, and it may be the house of Simon and Andrew, where he used to be when there:

from the people; being separated from them, having dismissed and left them, when he and his disciples were by themselves alone:

his disciples asked him concerning the parable; that saying of his to the people, which was somewhat dark and intricate to them; that nothing without a man going into him defiled him, but what comes out of him: this was asked by Peter, in the name of the rest; (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹⁵⁵Matthew 15:15”).

Ver. 18. *And he saith unto them,* etc..] With some warmth of spirit and resentment, at their stupidity:

are ye so without understanding also? As well as others, and to such a degree; and “yet”, as Matthew expresses it, (“⁴⁰¹⁵⁶Matthew 15:16”), so wretchedly stupid, and so long, and as much, as others:

do ye not perceive? common sense will tell you,

that whatsoever thing from, without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹⁵⁶Matthew 15:16”).

Ver. 19. *Because it entereth not into his heart*, etc..] Which is the seat and fountain of all moral pollution; and if that is not defiled, no other part can be; and that that is not defiled by eating and drinking, unless in case of intemperance, is clear; because food and drink do not go into it:

but into the belly; it is taken in at the mouth, goes down the throat, and is received into the stomach, and from thence it passes through the bowels:

and goeth into the draught; **akh tyb**, “the private house”, as the Jews call it, without going into the heart at all:

purging all meats; that which it leaves behind, is pure and nourishing; and whatever is gross and impure, is carried with it into the draught, so that nothing remains in the man that is defiling.

Ver. 20. *And he said*, etc..] Continued to say in his discourse; though this is left but in the Syriac version;

that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man; meaning, not his excrements, which were unclean by the law, (^{<4523>}Deuteronomy 23:13) but what comes out of his heart, by his mouth; or is expressed in action, as appears by what follows; (see Gill on ^{<4058>}Matthew 15:18”).

Ver. 21. *For from within, out of the heart of man*, etc..] The inside of man is very bad, his inward part is not only wicked, but wickedness itself, yea, very wickedness, (^{<4080>}Psalm 5:9), in him dwells no good thing naturally, his heart is wicked, and desperately so; it is full of evil; and out of the abundance of it, proceed the evil things hereafter mentioned; all its powers and faculties are vitiated, there is no place clean; the understanding and judgment are dreadfully corrupted; the mind and conscience are defiled; the affections are inordinate; not only the thought, but every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, and that continually: what good thing therefore, can come out of such a Nazareth as this? Nothing, but what follows: for from hence

proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders; which several things are related in Mt. 15:19 see the note on ^{<4059>}Matthew 15:19”; only the order here is a little different; “murders”, which are here mentioned last, are there put after “evil thoughts”.

Ver. 22. *Thefts*, etc..] These also are mentioned in Matthew, but Mark omits “false witnesses”, and adds the following; which, excepting “blasphemy”, are not taken notice of by the other evangelists;

covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; (see Gill on “^{<4059>}Matthew 15:19”).

Ver. 23. *All these evil things come from within*, etc..] All evil thoughts, words, and actions, take their rise from the inward parts of man; from his heart; which is sadly corrupted, and is the fountain from whence all these impure streams flow. And if these come from within, then not from without; they are not by imitation or are the mere effects of example in others: example may indeed, and often does, draw out the evil that is within; but it does not produce it there; if it was not there before, it could not draw it out from thence: and if all these evils come from within, then the inward part of man must be sinful and polluted, previous to the commission of these evil things; and from whence springs then that inward pollution? It is the fruit of original sin, of Adam's transgression; the consequence of which is, a corrupt nature, which is derived to all his posterity: for his nature being corrupted by sinning, and he having all human nature in him, the individuals of it could not be propagated by ordinary generation, without the pollution of sin cleaving to them; “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one”, (^{<1844>}Job 14:4). Nor has there ever been any instance to the contrary, but the man Christ Jesus; whose human nature was holy, it not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; otherwise, all men, as David was, are “shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin”, (^{<3515>}Psalms 51:5), and this is the source and spring of all sinful action, internal and external.

And defile the man; both soul and body; all the powers and faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; or “make a man common”: these show him to be one of the common people, a very sinful man; as such were reckoned, and therefore are called emphatically, “sinners”: and are joined with “publicans”, who were esteemed the worst of sinners: from all which it appears, that sin in thought, word, and deed, is the defiling thing, and is what ought to be carefully avoided; and not meats, and the manner of eating them, provided moderation is used.

Ver 24. *And from thence he arose*, etc..] From the land of Gennesaret, or from Capernaum, which was in it:

and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon; two cities of Phoenicia: not into them, but into the borders of them; into those parts of Galilee, which bordered on Phoenicia; (see Gill on “^{<4052>}Matthew 15:21”).

And entered into an house; in some one of the towns, or cities, in those parts; which house might be, for the entertainment and lodging of strangers:

and would have no man know it; took all proper precaution as man, that nobody should know who, and where he was; that the, Gentiles, on whose borders he was, might not flock to him, which would create envy and disgust in the Jews:

but he could not be hid; he had wrought so many miracles in Galilee, and his fame was so much spread, and he had been seen, and was known by so many persons, that, humanly speaking, it was next to impossible, that he should be long unknown in such a place.

Ver. 25. *For a certain woman*, etc..] One way and means by which he came to be more openly discovered who he was, was this; a woman in those parts,

whose young daughter had an unclean spirit; a devil, with which she was possessed; hearing of some miracles he had wrought in healing the sick, and casting out devils;

heard of him, and came; and understanding that he was in such a place made all haste to him;

and fell at his feet; and with great respect and reverence to so venerable a person, threw herself at his feet, and earnestly entreated mercy for her child; believing he had power to cast the devil out of her, though at a distance from her.

Ver. 26. *The woman was a Greek*, etc..] Or Gentile, an Heathen woman, which made her faith the more remarkable. So the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions call her; which she might be, and was, though she was a woman of Canaan, as she is said to be in (^{<4052>}Matthew 15:22), for though the land of Israel in general, was called the land of Canaan, yet there was a particular part, which was at first inhabited by Canaan himself, which bore this name; and is the same with Phoenicia, of which this woman was an inhabitant, and therefore she is afterwards called a Syrophenician; (see

Gill on “^{<4152>}Matthew 15:22”). And this place was now inhabited by Gentiles; hence the Jews often distinguish between an Hebrew and a Canaanitish servant; of which take an ^{f169} instance or two;

“an Hebrew servant is obtained by money, and by writing, a Canaanitish servant is obtained by money, and by writing, and by possession.”

Again ^{f170},

“he that does injury to an Hebrew servant, is bound to all these (i.e. to make compensation for loss, pain, healing, cessation from business, and reproach), excepting cessation from business — but he that hurts a Canaanitish servant, that belongs to others, is bound to them all.”

And by a Canaanitish servant, they understand any one that is not an Israelite; for an Hebrew and a Canaanite, are manifestly opposed to one another. This woman being of Phoenicia, as appears by what follows, which was sometimes called Canaan, might be said to be a woman of Canaan, and also a Gentile.

A Syrophenician by nation; or extract. The Syriac and Persic versions say she was “of Phoenicia of Syria”; and the latter, by way of explanation, “of Emisa”. The Arabic version adds, “her extraction was of Ghaur”; and the Ethiopic version says, she was “the wife of a Syrophenician man”; (see Gill on “^{<4152>}Matthew 15:22”).

And she besought him, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter; which she was persuaded, by what she had heard of him, he was able to do, by a word speaking, though her daughter was not present.

Ver. 27. *But Jesus said unto her*, etc..] Not directly and immediately, upon her first request; for he answered not a word to that; but after his, disciples had desired she might be sent away, her cries being so troublesome to them; and after she had renewed her request to him; (see ^{<4153>}Matthew 15:23-25).

Let the children first be filled: according to this method, our Lord directed his apostles, and they proceeded: as he himself was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he ordered his disciples to go to them, and preach the Gospel to them, and work miracles among them; and not go in the way of

the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans; but when they had gone through the cities of Judea, he ordered them, after his resurrection, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: and this order they observed in other places, where there were Jews; they first preached to them, and then to the Gentiles; knowing that it was necessary, that the word of God should be first spoken to them; and it was the power of God to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile: and the expression here used, though it gives the preference to the Jew, does not exclude the Gentile; nay, it supposes, that after the Jews had had the doctrines of Christ, confirmed by his miracles, sufficiently ministered unto them, for the gathering in the chosen ones among them, and to leave the rest inexcusable; and so long as until they should despise it, and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of it; that then the Gentiles should have plenty of Gospel provisions set before them, and should eat of them, and be filled; and should have a large number of miracles wrought among them, and a fulness of the blessings of grace bestowed on them. The Jews are meant, who were the children of God by national adoption; who were first to be filled with the doctrines and miracles of Christ, before the Gentiles were to have them among them; as they were, even to a loathing and contempt of them:

for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs: as by “the children” are meant the Israelites, who were not only the children of Abraham by natural descent, but the children of God, to whom pertained the adoption, by virtue of the national covenant made with them; so by “the dogs”, are meant the Gentiles, who were reckoned as such by the Jews; and by the “bread”, which it was not fit and proper should be taken from the one for the present, and cast to the other, is designed the ministry of the Gospel; which is as bread, solid, substantial, wholesome, and nourishing; and the miraculous cures wrought on the bodies of men, which accompanied it: now it was not meet and convenient as yet, that these things should be taken away from the Jewish nation, until they had answered the ends for which they were designed, and the Jews should express their loathing and abhorrence of them: which when they did, they were taken away from them, and were ministered to the nations of the world, they contemptuously called dogs; (see Gill on “~~4156~~ Matthew 15:26”).

Ver. 28. *And she answered and said unto him, yes, Lord,* etc..] Agreeing to, and acquiescing in, what he said; which she seemed to have understood, though delivered in a proverbial way; and very appropriately replies,

yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs; which they leave, or let fall: signifying that she did not envy the blessings of the Jews, or desire any thing might be done injurious to them; only that this favour might be granted her, which she owned she was unworthy of, that her daughter might be healed. She tacitly owns, that the character of dogs belonged to the Gentiles, and to her and hers among the rest; that they were vile and base in themselves, inferior to the Jews, as to privileges, like dogs under the table; that the provisions with which the table of the Gospel ministry was furnished, was not for them; at least, that they were quite undeserving of them: but however, whereas dogs were allowed to eat crumbs, which now and then fell from the table, or out of the children's hands and laps; so such unworthy Gentiles as she, might be allowed a small benefit or favour by the bye, when it did not take from, and was no disadvantage to the Jews; (see Gill on "~~15:27~~ Matthew 15:27").

Ver. 29. *And he said unto her, for this saying,* etc..] Or word of faith; in which she expressed such great faith in him: the Persic version reads it, "go thy way; for with the blessing of this word, the devil is gone out of thy daughter": as if this saying referred to the word Christ, and the divine power that went along with it, to the ejection of the devil; when it refers to the saying of the woman, and not to the words of Christ, which follow,

go thy way; in peace, thy request is granted; it is as thou wouldst have it:

the devil is gone out of thy daughter. Christ, who as God is every where, and whose divine power reaches to all places, persons, and things had, in a secret and powerful manner, cast the devil out of this woman's daughter; without going to her, or speaking to him, his power had wrought the miracle effectually.

Ver. 30. *And when she was come to her house,* etc..] For with those words of Christ; she was abundantly satisfied, and went away with as great a faith, and as strong a persuasion of the dispossession, as that she came with, that Christ was able to effect it: and accordingly

she found the devil gone out; of her daughter; that she was entirely dispossessed of him, and no more vexed and tormented with him, but in perfect ease, and at rest:

and her daughter laid upon the bed; without any violent motions, convulsions, and tossings to and fro, as before; but composed and still, taking some rest, having been for some time greatly fatigued with the possession. The Ethiopic version reads, “she found her daughter clothed, and sat upon the bed”: for persons in these possessions, would often put off their clothes, and tear them in pieces; and were seldom composed, and rarely sat long in a place or posture; but now it was otherwise with her.

Ver. 31. *And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon*, etc..] The Vulgate Latin version reads, “and coming out again from the borders of Tyre, he came through Sidon”; and so two of Beza's copies; the Arabic version, which Deuteronomy Dieu made use of reads “to Sidon”; as he must needs come to it, if he came through it; though the version in the Polyglot Bible of Walton's reads, *ym*, “from Sidon”: but the greater number of copies, and the Syriac and Persic versions read as we do, and which is rightest; since it does not appear, that Christ went out of the land of Israel, into any Heathen cities: and besides, Sidon was further from Galilee than Tyre, and so did not lie in his way to it; and therefore it is not likely he should pass through that city, in order to go to it. The Ethiopic version reads, “and coming out again from Tyre, he went through Sidon”: both these places were in Phoenicia, and it is probable that the woman before mentioned might belong to one or other of them. According to this version, she may be thought to be of Tyre, and that it was there, where the above discourse passed between Christ and her; though some Dutch pictures, Dr. Lightfoot^{f171} takes notice of, represent her as praying for her daughter, at the gate of Sidon; and Borchard the monk, as he relates from him, says, that before the gate of Sidon eastward, there is a chapel built in the place, where the Canaanitish woman prayed to our Saviour for her daughter. But Christ, for the reason before given, could be in neither of these places, being out of the land of Israel; besides, the text is express, that it was to the borders of this country he came, and from thence he went; and to, or from, or through any of these places.

He came unto the sea of Galilee; or Tiberias, the same with the lake of Gennesaret: he came to those parts of Galilee, which lay by it, where he had been, before he went the borders of Tyre and Sidon:

through the midst the coasts of Decapolis; of this place, (see Gill on “~~ADDS~~ Matthew 4:25”). It was a country which consisted of ten cities, from whence it had its name: now not through the middle of these cities, or of

this country, as the Ethiopic version reads; but through the midst of the borders of it Christ passed, which lay in his way from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, to the sea of Galilee. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, “unto the borders of Decapolis, or the ten cities”; and the Arabic version, “unto the middle of the coasts of the ten cities”; (see Gill on ^{<4159>}Matthew 15:29”).

Ver. 32. *And they bring unto him one that was deaf*, etc.] There were two sorts of persons that were called deaf among the Jews; one that could neither hear nor speak; such were they who were born deaf; and so having never heard any thing, it was impossible they should ever speak: the other sort were they that could speak, but not hear; who lost their hearing by some disaster or another, but retained their speech ^{f172}: of this sort seems to be this man, who though he had some difficulty in speaking, yet could speak a little,

and had an impediment in his speech; or could “scarcely speak”, as the word signifies; though it is sometimes used by the Septuagint, for one that was entirely dumb, as in (^{<2386>}Isaiah 35:6) and so it is here rendered “dumb”, by the Vulgate Latin, and other versions; yet it seems to design one that stammered, and could not speak plainly, and without great difficulty: he was tongue tied, as it should seem from (^{<4075>}Mark 7:35). This man, the inhabitants of the parts where Christ now was, his relations or friends, bring to him, having heard of his fame, and perhaps they had seen miracles performed by him:

and they beseech him to put his hand upon him; firmly believing, that upon his so doing, the man's hearing would come to him, and he would speak without difficulty: very likely they had seen cures performed by Christ in this way, or at least heard, that by laying his hands on persons disordered, they had been restored to the right use of their senses, or limbs; wherefore they most earnestly entreated, he would be pleased to do the same favour to this poor man. The case of this man much resembles that of a sinner in a state of nature, who is deaf to the voice, both of law and Gospel: he does not hearken to the commanding voice of the law, or attend to its precepts, nor can he be subject to it; nor does he hear its menaces and curses, nor is he at all affected and disturbed with these things; and, like the deaf adder, he stops his ear to the charming voice of the Gospel; he despises it, and has it in the utmost abhorrence: he is deaf to all the instructions, directions, cautions, and exhortations, of the ministers of the word; and even of his

best friends, relations, and acquaintance nor can he speak the language of Canaan; it is a strange language to him; he can neither talk it himself, nor understand it in others; for as he has no experience of the grace of God in him, he must be dumb, and cannot speak of what he has no knowledge: and indeed, it may be observed of such who are under the first workings of the spirit of God upon the soul, that they are often as it were tongue tied, and through fear or bashfulness, or the temptations of Satan, care not to speak; or with great difficulty are brought to speak of what God has done for them; and at first, it is but in a lisping, stammering way, they do speak of these things and as the friends and relations of this man, having a great opinion of Christ, and a persuasion of his ability to relieve and cure him, bring him unto him, that he might put his hands upon him; so do such who know Christ themselves, and have felt the power of his grace upon their own souls, bring their deaf and dumb, their relations in a state of nature, under the means of grace; being very desirous that Christ would make bare, and put forth his mighty arm of grace, and lay hold upon them, and work a good work in them, and give them ears to hear his voice, and a tongue to speak his praise.

Ver. 33. *And he took him aside from the multitude*, etc..] To shun all appearance of ostentation and vain glory:

and put his fingers into his ears; the finger of his right hand into his left ear, and the finger of his left hand into his right ear:

and he spit and touched his tongue; that is, either he spit upon his tongue, for so the Vulgate Latin renders it, “spitting he touched his tongue”; and the Persic version thus, “he cast his spittle on his tongue”; or rather, he spit on his finger, and touched his tongue with it. These actions were not done as means of healing, or as having any natural virtue, or tendency in them, to effect a cure; but to show the power of Christ, that by the mere touch of his finger, and by the spittle of his mouth, as well as by laying on of hands, as was desired, and by a word speaking, he could at once remove this, or any such disorder. The taking this man aside from the multitude, is an emblem of the Lord's separating his people from the rest of the world, when he calls them by his grace; for as they are distinguished from others, in the choice of them in Christ, and in redemption by him; so in the effectual calling, they are bid to come out from among them, and by the power of divine grace, they are brought out from among them, and give up themselves to Christ, and to his churches: and Christ's putting his fingers

into the ears of this man, represents the exertion of his power, and his removing by the finger of his Spirit, the obstructions of spiritual hearing; or rather, the planting of the spiritual ear, or forming a principle of spiritual hearing in the soul: and his touching his tongue with the spittle of his mouth, may lead us to observe the application of his word, through the efficacy of his grace, as a means of loosing his tongue and opening his lips to show forth his praise.

Ver. 34. *And looking up to heaven*, etc..] To his Father there, by whom he was sent, and from whom, as man, he received his authority and power; though this was not for assistance in the working of this miracle, which he had power to do of himself; nor do we find that he put up any request to his Father: but he seems to have made use of this motion, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the man: to teach him, that every good gift, blessing, mercy, and favour, and so this he was about to partake of, was from above:

he sighed; not as unequal to the work of healing the man, or as despairing of doing it; but as commiserating the case of the poor man, and reflecting with concern upon his sin, that had been the occasion of it. These actions of looking up to heaven and sighing, as they may be understood in a spiritual sense, or with relation to the spiritual healing of a sinner, may show that such a blessing comes from above: it is received from heaven; it is God that gives the hearing ear, as well as the seeing eye; and that in a spiritual, as well as in a natural sense: and therefore this directs to apply to God for it, whether for a man's self, or for others; and when enjoyed, to look up again to heaven, and return thanks for it: and also that such a favour flows from divine mercy and compassion, Christ pitying the case of persons in such a condition; and he being an high priest that can have compassion on those that are in distress, and having ability to help them, makes use of it, and expresses both his pity and his power, as in the following manner.

And saith unto him; in the Syriac language, which he then spoke, **tta**,

Ethphatha, or “Ephphatha”;

that is, being interpreted,

be opened, both ears and mouth. And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, of a deaf man being restored to hearing, as of a blind man's being restored to sight; of which, take the following instance ^{f173};

“a minor that receives (i.e. a divorce), and afterwards becomes adult, or a deaf man, **qt̄nw**, “and is opened” (i.e. his ears are opened, or his hearing is restored), or a blind man, **t̄tnw**, “and is opened” (has his sight again), or a fool, and he is restored to his reason, or a Gentile, and he becomes a proselyte, is unfit or unlawful (to carry a divorce from a man to his wife), but **q**, “one that is open”, and afterwards becomes deaf, and then again “opened”; **w̄t̄**, or “open”, and afterwards become blind, and again “opened”; or a fool, and is restored to his senses, and again becomes a fool, he is right or fit”

(for the above purpose). It is common with them to call one that hears well, in distinction from a deaf man, “one that is open” ^{f174}. This is an instance of the power of Christ in curing disorders, merely by a word speaking, without the use of means; for what he did before, were not as means of healing, but significative of his power; which now went along with his word, and which was expressed with great majesty and authority: and such a power attends the word of his grace, to the opening of the heart, to give heed to the things which are spoken; and to the opening of the ear to discipline, and sealing instruction to it; land to the opening of the mouth and lips, in praise and thankfulness.

Ver. 35. *And straightway his ears were opened*, etc..] It is in the Greek text, “his hearings”; the instruments of his hearing, and so rightly rendered, “his ears”: the Persic version reads, “both his ears”; but the word “both” is unnecessary, since the word, “ears”, takes in both. Such a power went along with the words of Christ, when he said, “be opened”; that immediately, as soon as ever the words were pronounced, the man's hearing came to him, and he heard as quick as ever he did before he lost it, or, as any other man:

and the string of his tongue; which caused it to cleave to his jaws, or the roof of his mouth, and hindered him from speaking plainly,

was loosed, and he spake plain; **tyaqy**, “easily”, as the Syriac version renders it; without any difficulty to himself, and so as to be readily

understood by others. Thus those whose ears are opened, and whose tongues are loosed in a spiritual manner by Christ, speak plainly of what they have heard and seen, and felt; they can give a plain and clear account of the work of God upon their souls; how they have been convinced of the impurity of their nature, the corruptions of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart, lip, and life; how they have seen Christ to be an all sufficient and suitable Saviour, and have been directed, and encouraged, to go to him, for healing, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting salvation; they can tell what promises have been applied to them, and what comforts they have enjoyed; how busy Satan has been with them; and what temptations of his they have been delivered out of, and by what means: in a word, they can speak plainly of the love of God to them; of the glories and excellencies of Christ; of their faith and hope in him, and love to him; and of the operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts; and of the glories of the world to come, they are in the expectation of, so far as they are taught of God.

Ver. 36. *And he charged them,* etc..] The man that had his hearing and speech restored to him, and those that brought him, and as many as were witnesses of the miracle:

that they should tell no man; of the cure that was wrought, being not desirous of the applause of men; and knowing it would bring upon him the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees; and be a means of putting the common people upon setting him up as a temporal king, such as they expected the Messiah would be:

but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published [it]; or “spake of him”, as the Ethiopic version reads it; for they looked upon his charge merely to proceed from modesty, and that made them the more forward to speak of his greatness and in his praise, to publish his mighty works, and spread the fame of his miracles far and near. So, such who have received the grace of God, are become acquainted with Christ, and have a real experience of divine things, cannot but speak of them; they are like new wine which hath no vent; and are ready to burst like new bottles; to forbear speaking is a pain, and weariness to them; nay, they think, should they hold their peace, the stones in the walls would cry out. Wherefore, partly for the glory of God, the magnifying of the riches of his grace, and the honour of Christ, and the blessed Spirit; and partly to show their own sense of things, the gratitude of their minds, and the

thankfulness of their hearts, as well as for the use, comfort, edification, and instruction of others, they must speak, and cannot be silent, whatever restraints are laid upon them.

Ver. 37. *And were beyond measure astonished*, etc.] The man that was cured, the men that brought him, and the whole multitude were exceedingly, beyond all expression, amazed at what was done, in this case, and many others; for there were other miracles also wrought at this time; (see ⁴¹⁵⁰ Matthew 15:30,31). The grace of God, in opening the ears and heart of a sinner, and causing the tongue of the dumb to sing his praise, is very astonishing, to men and angels; to the persons themselves that partake of it; and to all the saints that hear of it; it is amazing that such grace should be bestowed at all; and it is more, that it should be communicated to such unworthy persons it is; as also that it should produce such effects it does; that it should make such a surprising change, and be attended with such blessed consequences:

saying, he hath done all things well; not by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, as said the Scribes and Pharisees; nor in any ostentatious manner, for the sake of the honour and applause of men, as they plainly saw; but for the good of mankind, and for the glory of God: and as all the miraculous works, which Christ did, were well done by him, so all other works of his: all that he did in eternity before the world was, he did well; what he did in the council and covenant of grace, in espousing the persons and cause of his people, and in all his federal transactions and suretyship engagements for them: he drew nigh to God on their account; he cheerfully agreed to what his Father proposed; he entered into a covenant with him, and took the care and charge of all his people, and of all promises and blessings of grace for them: and whatsoever he has done in time is well done; as his assumption of human nature; taking a nature, and not a person, this of a virgin, and an holy nature, though subject to sinless infirmities, and this in due and proper time; also his subjection to the law, moral, civil, and ceremonial, as it became him to fulfil all righteousness; and his preaching the Gospel, which he did with authority, and which he spake as never man did, and which he confirmed by his miracles; but especially the great work of redemption he came about, was well done by him: this he has thoroughly done; he has redeemed his people from the law, its curse, and condemnation; he has ransomed them out of the hands of Satan; he has saved them from all their sins; he has procured the remission of them, made reconciliation for them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness: he has

done this work to the satisfaction of all parties; to the glory of all the divine perfections, of justice, as well as of grace and mercy; to the contentment and pleasure of all the divine persons; his Father, himself, and the blessed Spirit: and to the joy of angels and men: and all that he has done, or is now doing in heaven, as an advocate and intercessor, is done well; and we may be assured, that all that he will do hereafter, as the judge of quick and dead, will be done in like manner.

He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb, or those that could not speak, at least without a great deal of difficulty,

to speak; an instance of both which there was in this single man's case.