

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 8

Ver. 1. *When he was come down from the mountain*, etc.] Into which he went up, and preached the sermon recorded in the “three” preceding chapters:

great multitudes followed him: which is mentioned, partly to shew, that the people which came from several parts, still continued with him, being affected with his discourses and miracles; and partly on account of the following miracle, of healing the leper, which was not done in a corner, but before great multitudes, who were witnesses of it: though some think this miracle was wrought more privately.

Ver. 2. *And behold there came a leper*, etc.] As soon as he came down from the mountain, and whilst he was in the way; though Luke says, (^{<4152>}Luke 5:12) “when he was in a certain city”; in one of the cities of Galilee; one of their large towns, or unwalled cities, into which a leper might come: he might not come into walled ^{f488} towns, at least they might turn him out, though without punishment: for the canon runs thus ^{f489},

“a leper that enters into Jerusalem is to be beaten; but if he enters into any of the other walled towns, though he has no right, as it is said, “he sitteth alone”, he is not to be beaten.”

Besides, this leper, as Luke says, was “full of leprosy”, (^{<4152>}Luke 5:12) see the note there; and he might be pronounced clean by the priest, though not healed, and so might go into any city or synagogue: the law concerning such an one, in (^{<8101>}Leviticus 13:1-13:59) is a very surprising one; that if only there were some risings and appearances of the leprosy here and there, the man was unclean; but if “the leprosy covered all his flesh”, then he was pronounced clean; and such was this man: he was a very lively emblem of a poor vile sinner, full of sin and iniquity, who is brought to see himself all over covered with sin, when he comes to Christ for pardon and cleansing; and is so considered by Christ the high priest, when he applies his justifying righteousness and sin purging blood to his conscience. A

leper, by the Jews ^{f490}, is called [ϙϙ, “a wicked” man; for they suppose leprosy comes upon him for evil speaking. This account is ushered in with a “behold”, as a note of admiration and attention, expressing the wonderfulness of the miracle wrought, and the seasonableness of it to confirm the doctrines Christ had been preaching to the multitude. This man came of his own accord, having heard of the fame of Christ;

and worshipped him in a civil and respectful way, showing great reverence to him as a man; which he did by falling down on his knees, and on his face; prostrating himself before him, in a very humble and submissive manner, as the other evangelists relate: for that he worshipped him as God, is not so manifest; though it is certain he had an high opinion of him, and great faith in him; which he very modestly expresses,

saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean: he was fully assured of his power, that he could make him clean, entirely rid him of his leprosy, which the priest could not do; who could only, according to the law, pronounce him clean, so that he might be admitted to company, but could not heal him of his disease: this the poor man was persuaded Christ could do for him, and humbly submits it to his will; of which, as yet, he had no intimation from him. And thus it is with poor sensible sinners under first awakenings; they can believe in the ability of Christ to justify them by his righteousness, cleanse them by his blood; and save them by his grace to the uttermost: but they stick at, and hesitate about his willingness, by reason of their own vileness and unworthiness.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,* etc.] This is a wonderful instance both of the grace, and goodness of Christ, in touching this loathsome creature; and of his unspotted purity and holiness, which could not be defiled by it; and of his mighty power in healing by a touch, and with a word of his mouth,

saying, I will, be thou clean: in which he expresses at once his willingness, “I will”, of which the leper before was not certain; and his power by a word of command, “be thou clean”; and in which also is shown the readiness of Christ to do it: he did not stand parleying with the man, or making any further trial of his faith, or objecting to him his uncleanness; but at once stretches out his hand, touches his filthy flesh, and commands off the disorder. A great encouragement this, for poor sensible sinners to betake themselves to Christ, under a sense of their guilt and filth; who

readily receives such, in no wise casts them out, but gives immediate discoveries of his power and grace unto them:

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed, or he was cleansed from it; he was not only pronounced clean, but was made so; he was thoroughly healed of the disease of leprosy. The Jews, themselves acknowledge this fact; for so they tell us in their wicked and blasphemous book^{f491}, that Jesus should say,

“bring me a leper, and I will heal him; and they brought him a leper, and he healed him also by Shemhamphorash,”

i.e. by the ineffable name Jehovah. Though they greatly misrepresent the matter; for this man was not brought by others, at the request of Christ, but came of his own accord; nor was he healed by the use of any name, as if it was done by a sort of magic, but by a touch of his hand, and the word of his mouth. Whether this was the same man with Simon the leper, (⁴⁰⁶Matthew 26:6) as some have thought, is not certain.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man*, etc.] Not that this fact could be concealed, if it was done publicly, before the multitude; nor was it Christ’s design that it should be; only it was his counsel to this man, that whilst he was on the road to Jerusalem, and when he was come there, that he would speak of it to no man, before he came to the priest, or priests: lest out of ill will to Christ, they should refuse to pronounce him clean:

but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. The man was now in one of the cities of Galilee; from hence Christ orders him to make the best of his way, directly to Jerusalem; and present himself to one of the priests, by him to be examined, whether he was free of his leprosy; and then offer what was ordered by the law of Moses in such cases: for as yet the ceremonial law was not abolished: and therefore, as Christ was subject to it himself, so he enjoins others the observance of it. There was a two fold offering, according to the law of Moses, on account of the cleansing of the leper; (⁸⁴⁰Leviticus 14:1-14:57) the one was on the first day of his cleansing, when he first showed himself to the priest, and consisted of two birds, alive and clean, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop; the other, and which was properly the offering on the eighth day, was, if the man was able, two he lambs and one ewe lamb, with a meat offering; but if poor, one lamb, with

a meat offering, and two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. The Jewish canons, concerning this matter, are as follow^{f492}:

“when a leper is healed of his leprosy, after they have cleansed him with cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and the two birds, and have shaved all his flesh, and bathed him; after all this he enters into Jerusalem, and numbers seven days; and on the seventh day he shaves a second time, as he shaved at first, and bathes — and on the morrow, or eighth day, he bathes a second time, and after that they offer his offerings — he bathes on the eighth day in the court of the women, in the chamber of the lepers, which is there — if it is delayed, and he shaves not on the seventh day, but he shaves on the eighth, or some days after, on the day that he shaves, he bathes, and his sun sets; and on the morrow he brings his offerings, after he hath bathed a second time, as we have declared: how do they do unto him? The leper stands without the court of Israel, over against the eastern gate, in the gate of Nicanor and his face to the west: and there stand all they that want atonement; and there they give the bitter waters to the suspected women: and the priest takes the leper’s trespass offering, while it is alive, and waves it with the log of oil, towards the east, according to the way of all wave offerings; and if he waves this by itself, and this by itself, it is right: after that he brings the leper’s trespass offering to the door, and he brings it in both his hands into the court, and layeth them upon it; they slay it immediately, and two priests receive its blood: the one receives it in a vessel, and sprinkles it upon the top of the altar; and the other, in his right hand, and pours it into his left hand, and sprinkles with his finger the right hand; and if he repeats it, and receives it in his left hand first, it is unlawful. The priest that receives some of the blood in a vessel, carries it, and sprinkles it upon the altar first; and after that comes the priest, who receives the blood in the palm of his hand, to the leper, the priest being within, and the leper without; and the leper puts in his head, and the priest puts of the blood that is in the palm of his hand, upon the tip of his right ear; after that he puts in his right hand, and he puts of it on the thumb of his hand; and after that he putteth in his right foot, and he puts of it upon the toe of his foot, and if he puts of it upon the left, it is not right; and after that he offers his sin offering, and his burnt offering: and after that he hath put the blood upon his thumb and toe, the priest takes

of the log of oil, and pours it into the left hand of his fellow priest; and if he pours it into his own hand, it will do: and he dips the finger of his right hand into the oil, which is in his hand, and sprinkles it seven times towards the most holy place: at every sprinkling there is a dipping of the finger in the oil; and if he sprinkles, and does not intend it, over against the holy place, it is right; and after that, he comes to the leper, and puts of the oil upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering, on the tip of the ear, and on the thumb of his hand, and toe of his foot; and that which is left of the oil, that is in his hand, he puts it on the head of him that is to be cleansed; and if he puts it not, atonement is not made; and the rest of the log is divided among the priests; and what remains of the log is not eaten, but in the Court, by the males of the priests, as the rest of the holy things; and it is forbidden to eat of the log of oil, until he has sprinkled it seven times, and has put of it upon the thumb and toe; and if he eats, he is to be beaten, as he that eats holy things before sprinkling.”

Now these were the things which, as the other evangelists say, this leper was ordered to offer for his cleansing, “for a testimony unto them”; meaning either to the priests; for the Syriac and Persic versions read the former clause, “show thyself to the priests”, in (~~4274~~Luke 17:14) that they being satisfied of the healing and cleansing of this man, and accordingly pronouncing him clean, and accepting his offerings, this might be either a convincing testimony to them, that Jesus was the Son of God, and true Messiah, and that he did not deny or oppose the law given by Moses; or might be a standing testimony against them, should they continue in unbelief; or else to the Jews, who saw the miracle, and heard the orders Christ gave to the man after he had healed him; or to the lepers that they were cleansed; or this law of Moses was for a testimony or statute to be always observed by them in such cases.

Ver. 5. *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum*, etc.] Was returned from his journey through Galilee, to the place where he before dwelt, and is called his own city, (~~4001~~Matthew 9:1)

there came unto him a centurion, a Roman officer, *ham rç*, “a commander of an hundred men”, as the Hebrew Gospel by Munster reads it: though the number of men under a “centurion” was more, according to some accounts.

“A band (it is said ^{f493}) made two centuries, each of which consisted of an hundred and twenty eight soldiers; for a doubled century made a band, whose governor was called an ordinary “centurion”.”

Such an one was Cornelius, a centurion of a band, (~~400~~ Acts 10:1). The other person that was healed was a Jew. The next instance of Christ’s power and goodness is the servant of a Gentile; he came to do good both to Jews and Gentiles;

beseeking him, not in person, but by his messengers; (see ~~400B~~ Luke 7:3) and the Jews ^{f494} say, *wtwmk pda l ç wj wl çç*, “that a man’s messenger is as himself”.

Ver. 6. *And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home*, etc.] It would be a difficulty whether it was a son or a servant he was so concerned for; since *παις*, the word here used, more commonly signifies a “son” or “child”; but that Luke, supposing it to be the same case he relates, expressly calls him *δουλος*, “a servant”, (~~400~~ Luke 7:2). The concern of the “centurion” for him, shows him to have been a good servant, faithful and obedient to his master; since he was so much affected with his case, and took so much care of him; and Luke says, he “was dear unto him”; in great esteem, highly valued, and much beloved: and also, that the centurion was a good master; he does not put his sick servant from him, but takes care of him at home, and seeks out for relief for him, being greatly desirous of his life. And as his keeping him at home discovered a tender regard to him; so his not bringing him forth, or ordering him to be brought out to Christ, which was sometimes done in such cases, shows his great faith in Christ, that he was as able to cure him lying at home, as if brought before him; absent, as well as present. It is in the original text, “is cast”; or, as it is rendered, (~~4084~~ Matthew 8:14) “laid in the house”, as if he was dead, speechless, and without motion; and Luke says, that he was “ready to die”, being as one laid out for dead. The phrase answers to *l j wm*, a word often used by the Rabbins; sometimes of sick persons, as when they say ^{f495} of anyone, that he is *hj mb l j wmw hl wj*, “sick, and laid upon the bed”; and sometimes of a person really dead, and laid out: and often this phrase is to be met with, *wynpl l j wm wtmç ym*, “he that hath his dead cast”, or “laid out before him” ^{f496}; concerning whom they dispute many things; as what he is free from, the reading of Shema, prayer, and the phylacteries; and where he

ought to eat and drink till such time his dead is buried out of his sight. But this man's servant was not dead, but lay as one dead;

sick of the palsy, his nerves all relaxed, and he stupid, senseless, motionless,

grievously tormented, or “punished”, or rather “afflicted”; as the Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew edition read it; for paralytic persons do not feel much pain and torment: but the meaning is, that he was in a miserable afflicted condition. The account of his disorder is given to move Christ's compassion, and recorded to show the greatness of the miracle.

Ver. 7. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*] This answer of Christ's, which is short and full, not only shows the readiness of Christ to do good, how soon and easily he complied with the centurion's request, it being a prayer of faith, and so effectual, and was heard as soon as delivered; but also contains an absolute promise that he would heal him. He does not say that he would come and see him, and what his case was, and do what he could for him, as ordinary physicians do; but he would come and heal him at once: and indeed it is a proposal of more than what was asked of him; his presence was not asked, and yet he offered it; though Luke says, that he besought him by the messengers to “come and heal his servant”; and so this is an answer to both parts of the request; the whole is granted. Christ cannot deny anything to faith, his presence or assistance.

Ver. 8. *The centurion answered, and said,* etc.] This, according to ([Ⓢ]Luke 7:6) was said by his friends in his name, when he understood that Christ had agreed to come to his house, with the elders of the Jews, he first sent to him; and after he was actually set out with them, and was in the way to his house; who, conscious of his own unworthiness, deputed some persons to him, to address him in this manner,

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. This is not said as rejecting and despising the presence and company of Christ; but is expressive of his great modesty and humility, and of his consciousness of his own vileness, and unworthiness of having so great a person in his house: it was too great a favour for him to enjoy. And if such a man was unworthy, having been an idolater, and lived a profane course of life, that Christ should come into his house, and be, though but for a short time, under his roof; how much more unworthy are poor sinful creatures (and sensible sinners see themselves to be so unworthy), that Christ should

come into their hearts, and dwell there by faith, as he does, in all true believers, however vile and sinful they have been?

But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. As the former expression declares his modesty and humility, and the mean apprehensions he had of himself; so this signifies his great faith in Christ, and the persuasion he had of his divine power: he does not say pray, and my servant shall be healed, as looking upon him barely as a man of God, a prophet, one that had great interest in God, and at the throne of grace; but speak, command, order it to be done, and it shall be done, which is ascribing omnipotence to him; such power as was put forth in creation, by the all commanding word of God; “he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast”, (~~1830~~ Psalm 33:9) yea, he signifies that if he would but speak a word, the least word whatever; or, as Luke has it, “say in a word”; let but a word come out of thy mouth, and it will be done.

Ver. 9. *For I am a man under authority*, etc.] Of Caesar the Roman emperor, and of superior officers under him, as a tribune, etc.

having soldiers under me; an hundred of them at least, for military service, and some of them were used by him as his domestics:

and I say unto this man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh: for there is no disputing the commands of officers, by soldiers, in anything, in exercises, marches, battles, etc.

and to my servant, that was more properly his domestic servant, who waited upon him, and did those things for him which every soldier under him was not employed in,

do this, and he doth it; immediately, without any more ado; as indeed a servant ought. The Jews ^{f497} have a saying, that

“a servant over whom his master *twçr `ya*, “hath no power”, is not called a servant.”

Now, these words are not a reason excusing Christ’s coming to his house, or showing how unworthy it was, and how unfit it would be for him to come thither, since he was a man that held soldiers under him, and his house was encumbered with them; for these were not with him, but quartered out elsewhere: but they are an argument, from the lesser to the greater, that seeing he was a man, and Christ was God, he was under the

authority of others. Christ was subject to none; and yet he had such power over his soldiers and servants, that if he bid one go, and another come, or ordered them to stand in such a place, and in such a posture, or do this and the other servile work, his orders were immediately obeyed: how much more easily then could Christ, who had all power in heaven and in earth, command off this distemper his servant was afflicted with? He suggests, that as his soldiers were under him, and at his command; so all bodily diseases were under Christ, and to be controlled by him, at his pleasure; and that, if he would but say to that servant of his, the palsy, remove, it would remove at once.

Ver. 10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,* etc.] Which must be understood of him as man; for as God, nothing could present itself unto him at unawares, unthought of, and not known before; and so could not raise admiration in him, and which cannot properly fall on a divine person: or he behaved, both by words and gesture, as persons do when they are astonished at anything; and this he might do, to raise the attention and wonder of those that were with him:

and said to them that followed. This agrees perfectly with the account that Luke gives, that Christ was set out, with the messengers the centurion sent unto him, in order to come to his house, and heal his servant, and these that followed him were his disciples, and so some copies read, and others that were following him thither to see the miracle.

Verily, I say unto you; a strong asseveration, and which Christ used, when he was about to deliver anything of considerable importance, and required attention:

I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel: that is, among the people of Israel: so the Arabic version reads it, “in any of Israel”; and the Persic, “among the children of Israel”; and is to be understood, not of the patriarchs and prophets, and other eminent believers, which were in Israel formerly; but of the men of the then present generation, his mother and his apostles being excepted: though it may be questioned, whether the apostles themselves as yet, had expressed such a strong faith in him, as this man: or it may have a particular respect to them in Israel, who had applied to him for healing, and had been healed by him; that he had not met with and observed any such expression of faith, in his divine power from them, as this centurion had delivered. And it was the more remarkable, that it came from a Gentile, and from a soldier too: but as great as it was, he did not

exceed it; he did not ascribe more to Christ than was proper, and which, by the way, is a clear proof of our Lord's divinity: for had he not been truly God, he would have rebuked, and not have commended this man's faith in him: who ascribed that power to him, which is peculiar to God: he is so far from finding fault with him, for thinking or speaking so highly of him, that he praises him for it, and prefers his faith in him, to any instance of it he had met with among the Israelites; who yet had far greater advantages of knowing him, and believing in him. There is a phrase in the Talmud^{f498} somewhat like this, only used of a person of a different character; where a certain Jew, observing another called by some of his neighbours Rabbi, thus expressed himself;

“If this be a Rabbi, *l arçyb wtwmk wbry l a*, “let there not be many such as he in Israel”.”

And it is said^{f499} of Nadab and Abihu,

“that two such were not found *l arçyb whytwwk*, “as they in Israel”.”

Ver. 11. *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west,* etc.] On occasion of the faith of the centurion, who was a Gentile, our Lord makes a short digression, concerning the call of the Gentiles; and suggests, that what was seen in that man now, would be fulfilled in great numbers of them in a little time: that many of them from the several parts of the world, from the rising of the sun to the setting of it, from the four points of the heaven, east, west, north, and south, as in (~~RRB~~ Luke 13:29) and from the four corners of the earth, should come and believe in him;

and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: signifying, that as the Gospel would be preached in a short time to all nations, many among them would believe in him, as Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs did; and so would partake of the same blessings of grace with them; such as, adoption, justification, pardon of sin, and the like; for “they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham”, (~~RRB~~ Galatians 3:9) now, under the Gospel dispensation, though Gentiles; and shall enjoy with him the same eternal glory and happiness he does, in the other world. Which shows, that the faith of Old and New Testament saints, Jews and Gentiles, is the same; their blessings the same, and so their eternal happiness; they have the same God and Father, the same Mediator and Redeemer, are actuated and influenced by the same Spirit, partake of the

same grace, and shall share the same glory. The allusion is to sitting, or rather lying along, which was the posture of the ancients at meals, and is here expressed, at a table, at a meal, or feast: and under the metaphor of a feast or plentiful table to set down to, are represented the blessings of the Gospel, and the joys of heaven; which are not restrained to any particular nation, or set of people; not to the Jews, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Our Lord here, goes directly contrary to the notions and practices of the Jews, who thought it a crime to sit down at table, and eat with the Gentiles; (see ^{<411B>}Acts 11:3) and yet Gentiles shall sit at table and eat with the principal men, the heads of their nation, in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves at the same time shut out.

Ver. 12. *But the children of the kingdom*, etc.] The Jews, who were subjects of the kingdom, and commonwealth of Israel, from which the Gentiles were aliens; and who were also in the church of God, which is his kingdom on earth; and besides, had the promise of the Gospel dispensation, sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, and by them, often the world to come; and were by their own profession, and in their apprehension and expectation, children, and heirs of the kingdom of glory. These phrases, *abh ꝑl w[h ʿb*, “a son of the world to come”, and *ytad aml [ynb*, “children of the world to come”^{f500}, are frequent in their writings: these, Christ says,

shall be cast out; out of the land of Israel, as they were in a few years after, and out of the church of God: these branches were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in, in their room; and will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, where they hoped to have a place,

and cast into outer darkness: into the Gentile world, and into judicial blindness, and darkness of mind, and into the blackness of darkness in hell,

where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Phrases expressive of the miserable state and condition of persons out of the kingdom of heaven; who are weeping for what they have lost, and gnashing their teeth with the pain of what they endure. The Jews say^{f501},

“he that studies not in the law in this world, but is defiled with the pollutions of the world, he is taken *hrbh wtwa wkyl çyw*, “and cast without”: this is hell itself, to which such are condemned, who do not study the law.”

The allusion in the text is, to the customs of the ancients at their feasts and entertainments; which were commonly made in the evening, when the hall or dining room, in which they sat down, was very much illuminated with lamps and torches; but without in the streets, were entire darkness: and where were heard nothing but the cries of the poor, for something to be given them, and of the persons that were turned out as unworthy guests; and the gnashing of their teeth, either with cold in winter nights, or with indignation at their being kept out. Christ may also be thought to speak in the language, and according to the notions of the Jews, who ascribe gnashing of teeth to the devils in hell; for they say ^{f502}, that

“for the flattery with which they flattered Korah, in the business of rioting, “the prince of hell **wynç qrj** , gnashed his teeth at them”.”

The whole of this may be what they call **ḡnhg zgw̄r** , “the indignation”, or “tumult of hell” ^{f503} .

Ver. 13. *And Jesus said unto the centurion*, etc.] Christ having finished the digression, returns an answer to the centurion, agreeably to his desire, saying to him,

go thy way; not as displeased with him, but as granting his request: for it follows,

and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. As he had faith to believe, that Christ could cure his servant by a word speaking, it was done accordingly. Christ by his almighty “fiat” said, let him be healed, and he was healed: just as God in the creation said, “let there be light, and there was light”. He does not say according to thy prayer, or according to thy righteousness, and goodness, but according to thy faith: and it is further to be observed, that this cure was wrought, not so much for the sake of the servant, as his master; and therefore Christ says, “be it done unto thee”; let him be healed for thy sake, and restored unto thee, to thy use, profit, and advantage.

And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour, at the very exact time, even in that moment. Some copies add, “and when the centurion returned to his house, in the selfsame hour he found his servant healed”; which the Ethiopic version has, and it agrees with (^{<4070>}Luke 7:10).

Ver. 14. *And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house*, etc.] And which was also Andrew’s, (^{<4012>}Mark 1:29) for these two brothers lived together,

and this was in Capernaum, as appears from the context. Though Andrew and Peter were originally of Bethsaida, a place not far from this, but had removed hither since their call by Christ, this being his city; though probably this house was Peter's wife's mother's, and only called their's, because they lodged there, whilst in this city: into this house Christ entered, with James and John, and others; when

he saw his (Peter's) wife's mother, laid, or "cast" on a bed, *See Gill* "^{4186}Matthew 8:6".

and sick of a fever: Luke says, (^{4188}Luke 4:38) that she "was taken", or rather held, or "detained with a great fever"; the distemper was very raging and furious, it had got to a very great height. The other evangelists say, that the persons in the house told him of her, and besought him for her, that he would heal her, having a very great affection for her, and desire of her life, which seemed to be in great danger. Hence it may be observed against the Papists, that ministers of the Gospel may lawfully marry; Peter, an apostle, and from whom they pretend to derive their succession of bishops, was a married man, had a wife, and that after he was called to be an apostle. His wife's mother is expressly mentioned, being the person labouring under a violent fever, and whom Christ cured in the following manner.

Ver. 15. *And he touched her hand*, etc.] Sometimes he healed by a word, as the centurion's servant; and sometimes by a touch, as here; and sometimes by both, as the leper. Luke says, that he "stood over her", reached over her to take her by the hand, and lift her up, "and rebuked the fever". Just as he did the winds and sea, having all diseases, as well as the elements, at his beck and control;

and the fever left her immediately, as the other evangelists say.

And she arose and ministered unto them: the former of these actions is a proof of her being restored to health and strength, in so much that she could rise and walk about of herself; whereas generally, persons after fevers continue very weak a considerable time; which shows what a miracle was wrought upon her by Christ: and the latter of them expresses her gratitude, for the mercy she had received; she rises and serves him and his friends, preparing proper and suitable provisions for them.

Ver. 16. *When the even was come*, etc.] The other evangelists say, when "the sun was set", or "setting"; which circumstances are observed, not as

some think, because the cool of the evening, and when the sun was set, it was more seasonable and convenient, in those hot countries, to bring out their sick, than in the heat of the day: nor are they remarked, as others think, because it was an unseasonable time to bring them to Christ, when he had been fatigued all day long, and yet he healed them; such was his goodness and compassion: but the true reason of the mention of them is, because it had been their sabbath day, as appears from (^{<402>}Mark 1:21 ^{<403>}Luke 4:31) and they could not, according to their canons, bring them sooner. Their sabbath began at sun setting; hence they say ^{f504}, that on the eve of the sabbath, that is, immediately preceding it, when the sabbath is about to begin, it is lawful to work *hmj h [qçtç d]*, “until the sun sets”; and so it ended at sun setting the next day, which they judged of by the appearance of three stars ^{f505}.

“R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Aba Bar Papa, says, if but one star appears, it is certainly day; if two, it is a doubt whether it is night or not; if three, it is certainly night. On the eve of the sabbath, if he sees one star and does any work, he is free; if two, he brings a trespass offering for a doubt; if three, he brings a sin offering; at the going out of the sabbath, if he sees one star, and does any work, he brings a sin offering; if two, he brings a trespass offering for a doubt; if three, he is free.”

So that till the sun was set, and three stars appeared as a proof of it, it was not lawful to do any sort of business; but as soon as it was out of doubt, that the sun was set, they might do anything: and this being the case,

they brought to him (Christ) many that were possessed with devils; whose bodies Satan had been suffered to enter into, and were acted, and governed, and thrown into strange disorders by him. Such possessions, through divine permission, were frequent; that Christ, who was come in the flesh, might have an opportunity of showing his power over Satan, and giving proof of his deity and Messiahship.

And he cast out the spirits with his word; only by speaking to them; who were obliged, at his command, and by his orders, to quit their tenements, though unwillingly enough.

And healed all that were sick; whoever they were, without any respect of persons, of whatsoever disease attended them: the most stubborn, inveterate, and otherwise incurable disorder, was not too hard for him,

which he cured without the help of medicine, and where that could be of no use, and either by speaking, or touching, or some such like means.

Ver. 17. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet*, etc.] In (^{f504}Isaiah 53:4) “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”, here rendered,

himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses: very agreeable to the Hebrew text, **awh**, “he himself”, not another; **açn**, “took up”, upon himself voluntarily, freely, as a man lifts up a burden, and takes it on his shoulders; **wyl j**, “our infirmities”, diseases, sicknesses, whether of body or soul, **µl bs wnybakmw**, “and bare”, or carried, as a man does a burden upon his back, “our sicknesses”, or diseases, which occasion pain and sorrow. And that these words are spoken of the Messiah, the Jews themselves own; for among the names they give to the Messiah, “a leper” is one; which they prove from this passage ^{f506}.

“The Rabbins say, “a leper” of the house of Rabbi is his name; as it is said, “surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted”. Says R. Nachman, if he is of the living, he is as I am, as it is said, (^{f505}Jeremiah 30:21) Says Rab, if of the living, he is as our Rabbi, the holy.”

Upon which last clause the gloss is,

“If the Messiah is of them that are alive, our Rabbi the holy is he, “because **µyawl j t l bwsd** he bears infirmities”.”

Elsewhere ^{f507} they say,

“There is one temple that is called the temple of the sons of afflictions; and when the Messiah comes into that temple, and reads all the afflictions, all the griefs, and all the chastisements of Israel, which come upon them, then all of them shall come upon him: and if there was any that would lighten them off of Israel, and take them upon himself, there is no son of man that can bear the chastisements of Israel, because of the punishments of the law; as it is said, “surely he hath borne our griefs”, etc.”

And in another ancient book ^{f508} of their’s, God is represented saying to the Messiah,

“*yrwçy l wbst*, “wilt thou bear chastisements”, in order to remove their iniquities? (the iniquities of the children of God,) as it is written, “surely he hath borne our griefs”: he replied, “I will bear them with joy.”

Hence it is manifest, that according to the mind of the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is rightly applied to him by the evangelist. But the difficulty is, how it had its accomplishment in Christ’s healing the bodily diseases of men; since Isaiah speaks not of his actions and miracles, but of his sufferings and death; and not of bearing the diseases of the body, as it should seem, but of the diseases of the mind, of sins, as the Apostle Peter interprets it, (~~1~~1 Peter 2:24). To remove which, let it be observed, that though the prophet chiefly designs to point out Christ taking upon him, and bearing the sins of his people, in order to make satisfaction for them, and to save them from them; yet so likewise, as to include his bearing, by way of sympathy, and taking away by his power, the bodily diseases of men, which arise from sin; and which was not only an emblem of his bearing and taking away sin, but a proof of his power and ability to do it: for since he could do the one, it was plain he could do the other.

Ver. 18. *Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him*, etc.] Who got together, partly out of novelty to see his person, of whom they had heard so much; and partly to see the miracles he wrought: some came to have their bodily diseases healed; few, if any, to hear the Gospel preached by him, and for the good of their immortal souls: the most part came with some sinister, selfish, and carnal views, wherefore

he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. Different were the reasons, which at certain times moved Christ to depart from the multitude; as that he might have an opportunity of private prayer, or to preach, to others, or to show he sought not popular applause, and to avoid seditions: his reasons here seem to be with respect to himself, that being wearied as man, with the work of the day, he might have an opportunity of refreshing himself with sleep; with respect to his disciples, that he might have a trial of their faith, when in danger at sea; and with respect to the multitude, because of their carnality, and sole concern for their temporal, and worldly good. The persons he gave commandment to, must be either the multitude, or the disciples; not the former, because he studiously avoided their company, and his concern was to be rid of them; but the latter, and so the

Vulgate Latin and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "he commanded his disciples". The place he would have them go to was, the other side of the lake of Tiberias, or Genesareth; not over the river Euphrates, as says the author of the old Nizzachon ^{f509}.

Ver. 19. *And a certain Scribe came*, etc.] "As they went in the way", (^{<4057>}Luke 9:57) to go to the sea side, in order to take shipping, and pass to the other shore;

and said unto him, Master, or Rabbi, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. One would have thought, that this man desired in good earnest to be a disciple of Christ, were it not for Christ's answer to him, who knew his heart: from whence it appears, that he, seeing the miracles which Christ wrought, and observing the fame of him among the people, began to think that he would be generally received as the Messiah; and by joining himself to him, promised himself much ease, honour, and wealth. These seem to be the motives, which prevailed upon him to take so sudden and hasty a step; for he did not wait to be called to follow Christ, as the other disciples were, but offers himself to be one; that is, to be one of his intimates, one of his apostles; and besides, he rashly promises to do that, which he knew nothing of, and which in some cases is impossible to be done.

Ver. 20. *And Jesus saith unto him*, etc.] Knowing his heart, and the carnal and worldly views with which he acted;

the foxes have holes in the earth, where they hide themselves from danger, take their rest, and secure their whelps;

and the birds of the air have nests, where they sit, lay, and hatch their eggs, and bring up their young;

but the son of man has not where to lay his head, when he is weary, and wants rest and sleep, as he did at this time. So that though he was Lord of all, as being the mighty God; yet as "the son of man", a phrase, expressive both of the truth and meanness of his human nature, the most despicable of creatures in the earth and air, were richer than he. This he said, to convince the Scribe of his mistake; who expected much worldly grandeur and wealth, by becoming his disciple. When Christ styles himself "the son of man", it is no contradiction to his being God; nor any objection to trust and confidence in him, as the Jew ^{f510} suggests; for he is truly and properly God, as well as really man, having two natures, human and divine, united in his person; so that he is, as was prophesied of him, Emmanuel, God with us, in

our nature, God manifested in the flesh: and since he is so, it cannot be unlawful to trust in him; which it would be indeed, was he a mere man. The Jews ought not to object to this name and title of the “Messiah, the son of man”: since he is so called, as their own writers and commentators acknowledge, in ^{f511} (~~<1807>~~ Psalm 80:17) and ^{f512} (~~<2073>~~ Daniel 7:13,14). And whereas it is further urged against these words of Christ, that if he was God, why does he complain of want of place? Is not the whole world his, according to (~~<1920>~~ Psalm 24:1)? It may be replied, that it is very true, that the whole world is his, nor could he be in want of anything, as God; but yet, as man, for our sakes he became “poor”, that we “might be rich”: nor should this be any difficulty with a Jew, when they themselves say, as some have thought, if he (the Messiah) should come, **hyb anbytyd atkwd yl**, “there’s no place in which he can sit down” ^{f513}. Unless it be understood of Nebuchadnezzar, as the gloss explains it; let the learned inspect the place, and judge: the coming of the Messiah is immediately spoken of.

Ver. 21. *And another of his disciples said unto him*, etc.] That is, one of his disciples; for this does not suppose, that the other, the Scribe before mentioned, was one. It is possible, he might be one of the twelve. The Persic version makes him one of the disciples, whom they call “Hawarion”, apostles; and, according to ancient tradition, it was ^{f514} Philip. And certain it is, that he was one, who was called to preach the Gospel; so that he was not a common ordinary disciple; nor could he be one of the seventy disciples, since it was after this, that they were called and sent forth; as appears from Luke’s account, (~~<1090>~~ Luke 9:60,10:1). But who he particularly was, cannot be certainly known, nor is it of any great importance to know it: his address to Christ is made with great respect and reverence, and in a very modest and humble manner,

Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father: for it seems, according to Luke, that Christ had bid him “follow” him: he had given him a call to be his disciple, and to go and preach the Gospel, which he did not refuse; but desires leave “first” to attend his father’s funeral, who was now dead; as his requests, and Christ’s answer, both suppose: though some conjecture, that he was only very aged, or was dangerously ill; and therefore it could not be thought he would live long: hence he was desirous of doing this last good office, before he entered on his public work; but these are conjectures, without any foundation: it is plain, his father was dead, and what he requested was, to go home, which perhaps might not be a great way off, and perform the funeral rites, and then return. This may seem very

reasonable, since burying the dead was reckoned by the Jews, not only an act of kindness and respect to the deceased, but an act of piety and religion; and in which, men are followers of God, and imitate him, who himself buried the body of Moses ^{f515}. And though this man was called to preach the Gospel, yet he might think he would be easily excused for the present, on this account; since, according to the Jewish canons, such whose dead lay before them, who were as yet unburied, were excused reading the Shema, they were free from performing the duty of prayer, and were not obliged to wear their phylacteries ^{f516}.

Ver. 22. *But Jesus said unto him, follow thou me*, etc.] Christ would not excuse him on this account, but insists on what he had before called him to; to attend upon him, and give himself up to the ministry of the word: which was done, partly to shew, that a greater regard ought to be had to him, than to the nearest relation and friend whatever; and partly, on account of the dignity of the Gospel ministry, which greatly exceeds any such services; as also to signify, of what little account were the traditions of the elders with him; wherefore he says,

let the dead bury the dead. Our Lord is not to be understood, as speaking against, or disrespectfully of burying the dead; his words suppose it ought to be done: only it was not proper, that this person should be concerned in it at this time, who was called to an higher employment; and therefore should leave this to be done by persons, whom it better became. And however strange and odd such a phrase may sound in the ears of some, of one dead man's burying another, it was easily understood by a Jew; with whom it is common to say, **tmk bwçj aj wj h**, "that a sinner is counted as ^{f517} dead, and that ungodly persons, even while they are alive", **µytm ^yywrq**, are "called dead" ^{f518}. And in this sense is the word used, in the former part of this phrase; and Christ's meaning is, let such who are dead in trespasses and sins, and to all that is spiritually good, bury those who are dead in a natural or corporal sense. It is likely the deceased was an unregenerate man; however, it is plainly suggested, that many of the relations were; and there were enough of them to take care of this service: and therefore, there was no need why he should neglect the ministry of the Gospel to attend that; but, ought to leave it to persons who were fitter for it.

Ver. 23. *And when he was entered into a ship*, etc.] Which was got ready by his disciples, or hired by them for his use, according to the directions he had given,

his disciples followed him into the ship, and they only; for as for the men hereafter mentioned, they were the men that belonged to the ship, and had the management of it: the multitude were dismissed, and in order to be clear of them, Christ took this method; and being desirous also of trying the faith of his disciples, he ordered it so, that they should be alone with him.

Ver. 24. *And behold, there arose a great tempest*, etc.] “A great concussion”, or “shaking” of the sea; the stormy wind moved the sea, and the waves thereof; and both wind and sea shook the ship, and the men that were in it. Luke calls this tempest a “storm wind”, (~~4083~~ Luke 8:23) and Mark says, it was “a great storm of wind”, (~~4057~~ Mark 4:37) and both use the word “loelaps”, which signifies a particular kind of wind, which is suddenly whirled about upwards and downwards; or rather, a conflict of many winds: it seems to be a whirlwind, or hurricane. It is said, that this tempest “arose”, not by chance, nor by the power of Satan, but by divine providence; for the trial of the faith of Christ’s disciples, and that he might have an opportunity of giving proof of his deity on the sea, as he had lately done in several instances on the dry land. Luke says, that this storm of wind “came down”; referring to the motion and course of the winds, which are exhalations from the earth, raised up into the middle region of the air, from whence they are expelled by a superior force to the lower region, and from thence move in an oblique, slanting manner, downwards. The place where this tempest arose, or into which this storm of wind came down, is here said to be

in the sea. Luke calls it a “lake”, and it was the lake of Genesareth. But both Matthew and Mark call it the sea, and is what is sometimes called the sea of Tiberias, and the sea of Galilee; (see ~~4811~~ John 6:1,21:1) agreeably to the language of the Jewish ^{f519} writers. To all this, the word “behold!” is prefixed; which is sometimes used, when anything extraordinary and preternatural is spoken of: and this storm seems to be more than an ordinary one; at least, it was very sudden and unexpected: when the disciples entered the ship, the air was serene, and the sea still and quiet; but as soon as they had set sail, at once, on a sudden, this storm came down, with great force into the sea, and lifted up its waves;

insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; it was just sinking to the bottom, so that they were in the utmost extremity: and what added to their distress was,

but he, Christ,

was asleep. Mark mentions the place where he was asleep, “in the hinder part of the ship”; that is in the stern: where he, as Lord and Master, should be, though to the great concern of his disciples, there asleep; and that in a deep sound sleep, as the word which Luke makes use of signifies; and as appears by the loud repeated call of his disciples to awake him: and though this sleep doubtless arose from natural causes, he being greatly fatigued with the business of the day past; yet was so ordered by the providence of God, to come upon him in such a manner at this time, for the trial of the faith of his disciples. Christ’s body needing sleep, and refreshment by it, shows that it was a real human body he assumed; subject to the same infirmities as our’s; excepting sin; and is no contradiction to the truth of his divinity, as the Jew^{f520} suggests. He slept as man, though, as God, he is Israel’s keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Ver. 25. *And his disciples came unto him*, etc.] From some other part of the ship, being in great consternation, and distress,

and awoke him; saying, Lord, save us, we perish. They awoke him by their loud cries, and repeated calls; for in Luke, the form of address is doubled, “Master, Master!” expressing their distress, importunity, and haste for deliverance saying, “save us, we perish”, or “we are lost”: which shows the apprehensions they had of their condition; not only that they were in danger of being lost, or were ready to be lost, but were lost: they saw no probability of escaping by any natural, rational methods: wherefore they apply to Christ, believing that he was able to save them, in this their extremity; as they had indeed a great deal of reason to conclude, from the miracles they had that day seen performed by him.

Ver. 26. *And he saith unto them, why are ye fearful?* etc.] Though they had some faith in him, yet there was a great deal of fear and unbelief, for which Christ blames them, saying,

O ye of little faith: (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁶⁰Matthew 6:30”). In Luke, the phrase is, “where is your faith?” what is become of it? You professed but just now to believe in me, is your faith gone already? In Mark it is, “how is it that ye have no faith?” That is, in exercise, their faith was very small, it could

hardly be discerned: some faith they had, as appears by their application to him, but it was very little. They had no faith in him, as sleeping, that he could deliver them; but had some little faith in him that he might, could he be awaked out of sleep; and for this Christ blames them; for he, as the eternal God, was as able to save them sleeping as waking.

Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm: being awaked by his disciples, he raises his head from his pillow, stands up, and with a majestic voice, in an authoritative manner, showing some kind of resentment at the wind and sea, as if they had exceeded their commission; and the one had blown, and the other raged too much and too long; he rebukes them in such language as this, “peace, be still”; **σιωπα** **πεφρωσο**, as it is in Mark, be silent, hold your peace, stop your mouth, put a bridle on it, as the words used signify; and go on no longer to threaten with shipwreck and loss of lives; upon which the wind ceased, the sea became calm, and the ship moved quietly on.

Ver. 27. *But the men marvelled*, etc.] Mark says, “they feared exceedingly”; and Luke, “they being afraid, wondered”: they were filled with astonishment and fear, or reverence: there was such a shine of majesty, such a lustre of divine power appeared in this affair. The other two evangelists seem to refer this to the disciples, which Matthew seems to ascribe to the men, the mariners that were in the ship; it is likely it had the same effect on both; and both were abundantly convinced of his deity and dignity, saying,

what manner of man, or person

is this? For the word “man”, is not in the text; of what qualities, perfections and powers, is he possessed? Surely he must be more than a mere man; he can be no other than the mighty God,

that even the winds and the sea obey him: which can be said of no other, than the most high God: never was such a thing heard of, that the winds and sea should be rebuked by a mere creature, and should obey. That man must be infidel to “revelation”, that can read this account, and deny the deity of Christ; to one or other of these he must be drove, either to deny the truth of the fact, and the circumstances of it, or believe that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, as the disciples and mariners did.

Ver. 28. *And when he was come to the other side*, etc.] Of the lake, or sea of Tiberias, right over against Galilee,

into the country of Gergesenes, the same with the Gergashites, (^{<0152>}Genesis 15:21 ^{<0800>}Deuteronomy 7:1 ^{<0800>}Joshua 3:10) whom Joshua drove out of the land of Canaan; and who, as a Jewish writer ^{f521} says, left their country to the Israelites, and went to a country, which is called to this day, ^{aj} *sygrwg*, “Gurgestan”, of which these people were some remains: both in (^{<0800>}Mark 5:1; ^{<0800>}Luke 8:26) it is called “the country of the Gadarenes”; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read it here; which is easily reconciled by observing, not that Gergesa and Gadara were one and the same city, called by different names; but that these two cities were near each other, in the same country, which was sometimes denominated from the one, and sometimes from the other. Origen ^{f522} has a remarkable passage, showing the different situations of Gadara and Gergesa; and that the latter cannot be Gerasa in Arabia; and also the signification of the name, for the sake of which, I shall transcribe it.

“Gerasa (says he) is a city of Arabia, having neither sea nor lake near it; wherefore the evangelists, who well knew the countries about Judea, would never have said so manifest an untruth: and as to what we find in some few copies, “into the country of the Gadarenes”, it must be said, that Gadara indeed was a city of Judea, about which were many famous baths; but there was no lake, or sea in it, adjacent with precipices; but Gergesa, from whence were the Gergasenes, is an ancient city about the lake; now called Tiberias; about which is a precipice adjacent to the lake, from whence is shown, that the swine were cast down by the devils. Gergesa is interpreted, *παροιικια εκβεβληκοτων*, “the habitation of those that cast out”; being called so perhaps prophetically, for what the inhabitants of those places did to the Saviour, beseeching him to depart out of their coasts.”

Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that this place might be so called, from *atçgrg*, which signifies “clay” or “dirt”, and mentions Lutetia for an example. But to pass this, as soon as Christ was got out of the ship, and come to land in this country,

there met him two possessed with devils. Both Mark and Luke mention but one, which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they do not say that there was only one; and perhaps the reason why they only take notice of him is, because he was the fiercest, had a legion of devils in him, and was the principal one, that spake to Christ, and with whom he was chiefly

concerned. This is to be understood, not of any natural disease of body, but of real possession by Satan. These possessed men met him, not purposely, or with design, but accidentally to them, and unawares to Satan too; for though he knows much, he is not omniscient: had he been aware of Christ's coming that way, and what he was about to do, he would have took care to have had the possessed out of the way; but so it was ordered by providence, that just as Christ landed, these should be

coming out of the tombs. Their coemeteria, or burying places, were at some distance from towns or cities; wherefore Luke says, the possessed met him "out of the city", a good way off from it; for the Jews^{f523} say, *ry[l ^ykwms twrbqh ytb wyh al ç*, "that the sepulchres were not near a city"; (see ~~4012~~ Luke 7:12) and these tombs were built so large, that persons might go into them, and sit and dwell in them, as these "demoniacs" did, and therefore are said to come out of them. The rules for making them are^{f524} these;

"He that sells ground to his neighbour to make a burying place, or that receives of his neighbour, to make him a burying place, must make the inside of the cave four cubits by six, and open in it eight graves; three here and three there, and two over against them; and the graves must be four cubits long, and seven high, and six broad. R. Simeon says, he must make the inside of the cave six cubits by eight, and open within thirteen graves, four here, and four there, and three over against them; and one on the right hand of the door, and one on the left: and he must make *rxj*, "a court", at the mouth of the cave, six by six, according to the measure of the bier, and those that bury; and he must open in it two caves, one here and another there: R. Simeon says, four at the four sides. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all is according to the nature of the rock."

Now in the court, at the mouth, or entrance of the cave, which was made for the bearers to put down the bier or coffin upon, before the interment, there was room for persons to enter and lodge, as these possessed with devils did: which places were chosen by the devils, either because of the solitude, gloominess, and filthiness of them; or as some think, to confirm that persuasion some men had, that the souls of men after death, are changed into devils; or rather, to establish a notion which prevailed among the Jews, that the souls of the deceased continue for a while to be about their bodies; which drew persons to necromancy, or consulting with the

dead. It is a notion that obtains among the Jews^{f525}, that the soul for twelve months after its separation from the body, is more or less with it, hovering about it; and hence, some have been induced to go and dwell among the tombs, and inquire of spirits: they tell us^{f526},

“it happened to a certain holy man, that he gave a penny to a poor man, on the “eve” of the new year; and his wife provoked him, and he went *twrbbqh tybb ^l w*, “and lodged among the tombs”, and heard two spirits talking with one another.”

Or the devil chose these places, to render the persons possessed the more uncomfortable and distressed; to make them wilder and fiercer, by living in such desolate places, and so do more mischief to others: which was the case of these, who were

exceeding fierce, wicked, malignant, mischievous, and troublesome, through the influence of the devils in them;

so that no man might pass that way, without being insulted or hurt by them.

Ver. 29. *And behold they cried out, saying*, etc.] This is an instance and proof, of the wonderful power of Christ over the devils; and has therefore the note of admiration, “behold!” prefixed to it, that the devils themselves who had took possession of these men, and made them so fierce and cruel, and outrageous, that there was no passing the way for them; yet upon the sight of Christ, and especially at hearing his orders to come out from them, not only say, but cry out, as being in great consternation, horror, and fear, and with the utmost subjection to him,

what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? They had nothing indeed to do with him; they had no interest in his grace, blood, righteousness, and salvation; he was no Saviour for them: but he had to do with them, and that was what they dreaded; and therefore mean, that he would let them alone, in the quiet possession of these men, and not disturb and dislodge them; for they knew that he was Jesus, the Saviour of sinful men, though none of their’s, the true Messiah; and that he was also “the Son of God”, a divine person, possessed of almighty power, and so an overmatch for them; at whose presence they trembled, and whose all commanding voice they were obliged to obey, though sorely against their wills.

Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? This question implies the apprehension the devils had of Christ as a judge, and their sense of his authority, and power, to punish them; as also that they deserved it, and expected it, nor do they say anything against it; only imagine that the time of their full torment was not yet come; which is generally referred unto the day of judgment, to which they were reserved by the appointment of God; which they had some notion of, and as at a distance; and therefore complain of Christ's coming to them now, and expostulate with him about it: though it may be understood of the time they had proposed to themselves, to abide in the men they had possessed, and which they concluded they had a permission for; and nothing could give more torment, pain, and uneasiness, than to be turned out, and remanded to their prison, and restrained from doing more mischief to the bodies and souls of men. Or whether this may not have some respect to the time of the preaching of the Gospel, and setting up the kingdom of Christ among the Gentiles, the devils might have some hint of, as not yet to be, I leave to be considered, with this observation; that there seems to be a considerable "emphasis" on the word "hither", meaning the country of the Gergesenes, an Heathen country, at least where many Gentiles inhabited: and it is as if they had said, is it not enough, that thou turnest us out of the land of Judea, and hast dispossessed us out of the bodies of men dwelling there; but thou pursuest us hither also, and will not let us have any rest, even in this Heathenish land; though the time is not yet come, for the dissolution of our empire and government in the Gentile world?

Ver. 30. *And there was a good way off from them,* etc.] "Nigh unto the mountains", as Mark says, or "on the mountain", as Luke, bordering on the sea shore; so that though it was at some distance, yet within sight. The Vulgate Latin, and the Hebrew edition of Munster read, "not far off"; and the Persic version, "near them": which agree with the accounts of Mark and Luke, who say, that there were "there", or hard by, "an herd of many swine feeding". Since swine's flesh was forbidden the Jews to eat, (^(~~RIII~~) Leviticus 11:7) it may be asked, how came it to pass, that there should be any number of these creatures, or that such a herd of them should be kept in the land of Israel? To which may be replied, that though the Jews might not eat swine's flesh, they were not forbid to bring them up; which they might do, in order to sell to the Gentiles, who dwelt among them; and particularly to the Romans, under whose government they now were, and with whom swine's flesh was in great esteem: but still a difficulty remains;

for it was not only forbidden by the law of God to eat swine's flesh, but, by the Jewish canons, to bring them up, and make any advantage of them in any shape: their law was this, **μωqm l kb μyryzj l arçy l dgy al**, "an Israelite might not bring up hogs in any place"^{f527}: the reasons of this canon were many, partly because of the uncleanness of these creatures; hence one of their writers^{f528} observing, that next to those words, they "are unclean unto you", are, "and the swine", says, that this is to teach us, that "it is forbidden to bring up hogs"; and partly, because of the damage which these creatures do to other men's fields: hence^{f529}

"the wise men say, cursed is he that brings up dogs and hogs, **hbwr m ^qyzhç ynpm**, "because they do much hurt"."

But the chief reason given by the Gemafists^{f530} for this prohibition, was the fact following:

"When the Hasmonean family, or Maccabees, were at war with one another, Hyrcanus was within (Jerusalem), and Aristobulus without, and every day they let down to them money in a box; and they sent up to them the daily sacrifices: there was one old man who understood the wisdom of the Greeks, and he said unto them, as long as they employ themselves in the service (of God), they will not be delivered into your hands: on the morrow they let down their money, and they sent them up a hog; and when it came to the middle of the wall, he fixed his hoofs in the wall, and the land of Israel shook, etc. at that time they said, cursed be the man **μyryzj l dgyç**, "that breeds hogs"; and cursed is the man that teaches his son the learning of the Grecians."

Before this time, it seems to have been lawful to bring them up, and trade with them: but now it was forbid, not only to breed them, but to receive any gain or profit by them; for this is another of their rules^{f531}.

"It is forbidden to bring up a hog, in order to get any profit by his skin, or by his lard, or fat, to anoint with, or to light (lamps) with; yea, though it may fall to him by inheritance."

And nothing was more infamous and reproachful among them, than a keeper of these creatures: when therefore they had a mind to cast contempt upon a man, they would call him **yryzj l dgm**^{f532}, "a breeder of hogs", or

ayrzej^{f533}, “a hog herd”. But after all, it was only an Israelite that was forbid this; a stranger might bring them up, for this is one of their canons^{f534}.

“A man may sell fetches to give to a stranger that breeds hogs, but to an Israelite it is forbidden to breed them.”

Yea, they say^{f535},

“If others breed them to anoint skins with their lard, or to sell them to an Israelite to anoint with them, it was lawful: all fat may be sold, which is not for eating.”

And so some cities are supposed to have hogs in them, concerning which they observe^{f536}, that

“a city that has hogs in it, is free from the “mezuzah”;

the schedules which were fastened to the posts of doors and gates: but now supposing this herd of swine belonged to Jews in these parts, it may easily be accounted for; for since they lived among Heathens, they might not have so great a regard to the directions of their Rabbins; and especially, since it was so much for their profit and advantage, they might make no scruple to break through these ordinances. Though this herd of swine may well enough be thought to belong to the Gentiles, that dwelt in this country; since Gadara was a Grecian city, and then inhabited more by Syrians, than by Jews, as Josephus relates^{f537}.

Ver. 31. *So the devils besought him, saying*, etc.] All the devils, the whole legion of them, who perceiving that they must be obliged to go out of these men, and after they had earnestly entreated they might not be sent out of the country where they had long been, and had made themselves masters of the tempers, dispositions, and circumstances of the inhabitants, and so capable of doing the more mischief, begged hard,

if thou cast us out of these men, or “from hence”, as the Vulgate Latin, the Ethiopic, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read, or “out of our place”, as the Persic; since we must depart, and cannot be allowed to enter into other men,

suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. This request shows the weakness of the infernal spirits, they are not able to do anything without leave, and the superior power of Christ over them, and their

acknowledgment of it; as well as the wretched malignity of their nature, who must be doing mischief, if not to the bodies and souls of men, yet to their property and goods; and if they cannot vent their malice on rational creatures, are desirous of doing it on irrational ones. Many reasons have been thought of, why the devils should desire to go into the herd of swine; as because of the filthiness of these creatures, these impure spirits delighting in what is impure; or out of pure hatred to the inhabitants of this country, who, because they could no longer hurt their persons, would destroy their goods; or that by so doing, they might set the people against Christ, and so prevent his usefulness among them; which last seems to be the truest reason, and which end was answered.

Ver. 32. *And he said unto them, go,* etc.]. He gave them leave, as God did to Satan, in the case of Job; for without divine permission, these evil spirits cannot do anything to the bodies, souls, or estates of men: they could not enter into the swine without leave, and much less do things of greater moment and consequence; and therefore are not to be feared, or dreaded by men, especially by the people of God. It may be asked, why did Christ suffer the devils to enter the herd of swine, and destroy them, which was a considerable loss to the proprietors? To which may be answered, that if the owners were Jews, and these creatures were brought up by them for food, it was a just punishment of their breach of the law of God; or if to be sold to others, for gain and filthy lucre's sake, it was a proper rebuke, both of the avarice and the contempt of the laws of their own country, which were made to be a hedge or fence for the law of God: or if they were Gentiles, this was suffered to show the malice of the evil spirits, under whose influence they were, and who would, if they had but leave, serve them as they did the swine; and to display the power of Christ over the devils, and his sovereign right to, and disposal of the goods and properties of men; and to evince the truth of the dispossession, and the greatness of the mercy the dispossessed shared in; and to spread the fame of the miracle the more.

And when they were come out of the men that had been possessed by them, *they went into the herd of swine;* which shows the real existence of these spirits, the truth of possessions and dispossessions; and that by these devils cannot be meant the sins and corruptions of men's hearts, such as pride, covetousness, uncleanness, envy, malice, cruelty, etc. for these could never be said to enter into a herd of swine, or be the authors of their destruction:

and behold, the whole herd of swine, and which was a very large one, consisting of about two thousand,

ran violently down a steep place; a precipice of one of the rocks, by the sea side,

into the sea of “Tiberias”, or lake of Genesareth, which were the same, and over which Christ had just now passed;

and perished in the waters of the sea, or lake, and not any other waters near Gadara, and afar off from hence.

Ver. 33. *And they that kept them fled*, etc.] The hog herds, men of very low life, and whose employment was very infamous and reproachful, as has been observed. These, amazed at what they had seen, distressed with the loss of the swine, and so of their employment, and frightened also lest they should incur the blame and displeasure of their masters, ran away in great haste, fear, and astonishment;

and went their way into the city; either of Gergesa, or Gadara. Mark and Luke say, they “went and told it in the city, and in the country”: in their fright and distress, some ran one way, and some another; some went into the city, others into the country, and so spread the affair far and near, and the fame of Christ, which was designed by this miracle;

and told everything they saw and heard; how the devils entered into the swine, and they ran headlong into the sea, and were drowned: this they told first, as being done last, and with which they were most affected, and what chiefly concerned their employers; and after they had told every circumstance of the affair, next they gave a narrative of

what was befallen to the possessed of the devils, and which was the occasion of the loss of their swine; how subject the devils, that were in them, were to Christ; how easily he dispossessed them by a word of command; how they entreated they might have leave to go into the herd of swine, which was granted; and how perfectly whole, and in health, both in body and mind, the men were.

Ver. 34. *And behold, the whole city*, etc.] The inhabitants of it, not every individual person, but the greater number of them, or, at least, a very great number of them. Luke says, “the whole multitude of the country of the

Gadarenes round about”: for as the news was carried both into the city and country, great numbers flocked from all parts,

and came out to meet Jesus: not out of any love and respect to him, and in order to invite him, and conduct him into their city, and there receive him kindly, and treat him with due honour and reverence; but either out of curiosity to see such an extraordinary person, which, doubtless, was the case of many; or, else being terrified at the report concerning him, and distressed with their present loss, which was the case of others, went out to prevent his coming any further, lest they should suffer something worse: accordingly,

when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts; which was done not as though they thought themselves unworthy the presence of so great a person, as did the “centurion”, in the former part of this “chapter”, or, as Peter, when he said, “depart from me, I am a sinful man”; but as fearing, lest some greater punishment should be inflicted on them for their sins, of which they were conscious; and therefore make no complaint of any injustice being done them by the loss of their swine; though these they preferred to the presence of Christ, and even to any cures wrought, or which might have been wrought, either upon the bodies, or souls of men.