

# CHAPTER 9

## INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 9

**Ver. 1.** *And he entered into a ship*, etc.] Or “the ship”, the selfsame ship he came over in, with his disciples. The Gergesenes, or Gadarenes, or both, having desired him to depart their coasts, showing an unwillingness to receive him, and an uneasiness at his company, he immediately turned his back upon them, as an ungrateful people, being no better than their swine; and who, by their conduct, judged themselves unworthy of his presence, ministry, and miracles: he returned to the sea side, took shipping, and *passed over* the sea of Tiberias again,

*and came into his own city*; not Bethlehem, where he was born, nor Nazareth, as Jerom thought, where he was educated, but Capernaum, as is clear from (~~4000~~ Mark 2:1) where he much dwelt, frequently conversed, and his disciples: here he paid tribute as an inhabitant, or citizen of the place, which he was entitled to by only dwelling in it twelve months, according to the Jewish canons; where it is asked <sup>f538</sup>,

“how long shall a man be in a city ere he is as the men of the city?  
It is answered, “twelve months”; but if he purchases a dwelling house, he is as the men of the city immediately;”

that is, he is a citizen, and obliged to all charges and offices, as they are: though they seem to make a distinction between an inhabitant and a citizen <sup>f539</sup>.

“A man is not reckoned *ry[h yn]bk*, “as the children of the city”, or as one of the citizens, in less than twelve months, but he may be called, or accounted, *ry[h ybçw]ym*, “as one of the inhabitants” of the city, if he stays there thirty days.”

One or other of these Christ had done, which denominated this city to be his, and he to be either an inhabitant, or a citizen of it.

**Ver. 2.** *And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, etc.]*

That is, some of the inhabitants of Capernaum, four men of that city particularly; for Mark says, (<sup><411B></sup>Mark 2:3) he “was borne of four”: these brought him to Jesus,

*lying on a bed*, or couch, he being so enfeebled by the disease upon him, his nerves so weak, and the members of his body in such a tremor, that he was not able to walk himself, nor even to be carried by others in any other way than this.

*And Jesus seeing their faith*; the faith of the bearers of him, his friends, who brought out a man to be healed, who was otherwise incurable; and though they could not, for the multitude, bring him directly to Christ, they were not discouraged, but took the pains to carry him to the top of the house, and there let him down through the roof, or tiling; as both Mark and Luke say; and then set him down before him, believing he was able to cure him: moreover, Christ took notice not only of their faith, but of the sick man’s too, who suffered himself to be brought out in this condition, and was contented to go through so much fatigue and trouble, to get at him; when he

*said unto the sick of the palsy, son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* He calls him son, either meaning by it no more than “man”; (see <sup><411M></sup>Luke 5:20) or using it as a kind, tender, and endearing appellation; or as considering him in the grace of adoption, as one that God had put among the children, had given to him as such, and whom he should bring to glory. He bids him “be of good cheer”, whose animal spirits were fainting through the disease that was upon him, and the fatigue he had underwent in being brought to him; and his soul more distressed and dejected, under a sense of his sins and transgressions; which Jesus knowing, very pertinently says, “thy sins be forgiven thee”; than which, nothing could be more cheering and reviving to him: or Christ says this to show, that sin was the cause of the disease and affliction that were upon him, for <sup>^w</sup>[ al b ^yrwsy ^ya, “there are no chastisements without sin”, as the Jews say <sup>f540</sup>; and that the cause being removed, the effects would cease; of both which he might be assured, and therefore had good reason to cheer up, and be of good heart. This was a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ, to bestow a blessing unasked, and that of the greatest moment and importance.

**Ver. 3.** *And behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves,* etc.] And of the Pharisees also, as Luke says; for there were at this time Pharisees and doctors of the law, who were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and out of Jerusalem, sitting and hearing him teach, and observing what he said, and did; who upon hearing him pronounce the sentence of pardon, upon this “paralytic” man, reasoned and concluded in their own minds, though they did not care to speak it out, that

*this man blasphemeth:* the reason was, because they thought he ascribed that to himself, which was peculiar to God: and so he did, and yet did not blaspheme; because he himself was God, of which he quickly gave convincing proofs.

**Ver. 4.** *And Jesus knowing their thoughts,* etc.] Which was a clear evidence, and full demonstration of his deity; for none knows the thoughts of the heart but God; and since he knew the thoughts of men’s hearts, it could be no blasphemy in him to take that to himself which belonged to God, even to forgive sins. And this, one would think, would have been sufficient to have approved himself to them as the true Messiah; since this is one of the ways of knowing the Messiah, according to the Jews, and which they made use of to discover a false one.

“Bar Coziba, (they say <sup>f541</sup>),) reigned two years and a half: he said to the Rabbins, I am the Messiah; they replied to him, it is written of the Messiah, that he is “of quick understanding, and judges”, (referring to (<sup>2910B</sup>Isaiah 11:3)) let us see whether this man is of quick understanding, and can make judgment, i.e. whether a man is wicked, or not, without any external proof; and when they saw he was not of quick understanding, and could not judge in this manner, they slew him.”

But now Christ needed not any testimony of men; he knew what was in the hearts of men, of which this instance is a glaring proof: hence he said,

*wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?* it was no evil in them to think that God only could forgive sin; but the evil was, that they thought Christ was a mere man, and ought not to have took so much upon him; and that, for so doing, he was a wicked man, and a blasphemer.

**Ver. 5.** *For whether is easier to say,* etc.]. Christ proceeds to clear himself of the charge of blasphemy, and to prove his power to forgive sins, by

putting a case to them, of which he makes themselves Judges, and is this: which is easiest to be said,

*thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, arise and walk?* Neither of them were easy to a mere creature, but both of them easy to God; and he that could say the one with power and efficacy going along with his word, could say the other as effectually: and whereas it was a plain case, and out of all question, that he could bid this “paralytic” man, though in this weak condition, arise from his bed, stand upon his feet, and go home of himself; and since he had already healed many that were sick of the palsy, and particularly the “centurion’s” servant, by a word speaking, he must have equal power to forgive sin. For to heal the diseases of the body in such a wonderful manner, was a very sensible proof of his power to heal the maladies of the soul; and though these are greater than those of the body, yet since both require divine power, he that is able to do the one, is able to do the other. And that it might appear he did not say this in a boasting manner, he adds,

**Ver. 6.** *But that ye may know that the son of man,* etc.] That they might have a visible proof, an ocular demonstration, that though he was the son of man, truly and really man, yet not a mere man; but also as truly and properly God, God and man in one person, and so

*hath power on earth to forgive sins:* not only ability as God, but even authority to do it as mediator, even whilst he was on earth, in a state of humiliation, in fashion as a man, in the form of a servant, conversing with sinful mortals.

*Then saith he to the sick of the palsy;* turning himself from the Scribes, unto him, and without putting up any prayer to God, but by a mere word of command, says to him,

*arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house:* he ordered him to “arise” from his bed, on which he was carried by four men, and “take up his bed”, and carry it himself; which would be not only an evidence that the disease had left him, but that he was in full strength, and perfect health; and to “go” to his own “house”, not only that the multitude might see that he could walk home himself, whom they had seen brought by others; but that those in the house, who had been eyewitnesses of his great disorder and weakness, might be also of his cure.

**Ver. 7.** *And he arose, and departed to his house.*] Immediately, at the command of Christ, believing he was able to heal him by a word speaking; and, upon his attempt to arise, found himself perfectly healed of his disease, and endued with such strength, that he could, not only with the greatest ease, arise from his bed, stand upon his feet, and walk alone, without any help; but, as the other evangelists declare, took up his bed, on which he lay, carried it home on his shoulders, in the sight of all the people, praising, and giving glory to God for this wonderful cure, which he had received.

**Ver. 8.** *But when the multitude saw it,* etc.] The miracle that was wrought; when they saw the man take up his bed, and carry it home, which was done by Christ, as a proof of his having power to forgive sin,

*they marvelled, and glorified God:* they were struck with amazement and astonishment at the sight, it being what was strange and unusual; the like to which they had never seen before, nor heard of: and concluding it to be more than human; they ascribed it to God; they praised, and adored the divine goodness,

*which had given such power unto men;* of working miracles, healing diseases, and delivering miserable mortals from such maladies, as were otherwise incurable; still looking upon Christ as a mere man, by whom God did these things; not knowing yet the mystery of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

**Ver. 9.** *And as Jesus passed forth from thence,* etc.] That is, from Capernaum to the sea side; where, as Mark says, the multitude resorted, and he taught them;

*he saw a man named Matthew;* the writer of this Gospel. The other evangelists call him Levi, who was the son of Alphaeus: he went by two names; Mark and Luke call him by the name, which perhaps was the more honourable, or the least known, on purpose to conceal the former life of the apostle, which might expose him to the contempt of some; but he himself chooses to mention the name by which he was most known, as an apostle, and that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in his calling and conversion. The Jews say<sup>f542</sup>, that one of Christ's disciples was called *yatm*, Matthew, which, as Levi, is an Hebrew name; for though he was a publican, yet a Jew; for it was common with the Jews either to be

employed by the Roman officers in collecting the toll or tribute, or to farm it of them.

*Sitting at the receipt of custom*, or “at the custom house”, or “toll booth”; which both the Syriac version, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, call **skm**, or **askwm tyb**, the “publican’s house”. In the <sup>f543</sup> Talmud mention is made of it, in the following parable, upon citing (<sup>2318</sup> Isaiah 61:8)

“it is like, (say the doctors,) to a king of flesh and blood, who passing by **skmh tyb**, “the toll booth”, or “publican’s house”, says to his servants, give “toll to the publicans”: they reply to him, is not all the toll thine? he says to them, all that pass by the ways will learn of me, and will not avoid the toll; so says the holy blessed God, etc.”

The publicans had houses, or booths built for them, at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea shore, where they took toll of passengers that went to and fro: hence we read <sup>f544</sup> of bridges being made to take toll at, and of publicans being at the water side <sup>f545</sup>, and of **skwm yrçyq** <sup>f546</sup>, “the tickets”, or “seals of the publicans”; which, when a man had paid toll on one side of a river, were given him by the publican, to show to him that sat on the other side, that it might appear he had paid: in which were written two great letters, bigger than those in common use <sup>f547</sup>. Thus Matthew was sitting in a toll booth, near the seashore, to receive the toll of passengers that came, or went in ships or boats.

*And he saith unto him, follow me*; notwithstanding the infamous employment he was in, as accounted by the Jews: this was no bar in the way of his call to be a disciple of Christ; and shows, that there was no merit and motive in him, which was the reason of this high honour bestowed upon him; but was entirely owing to the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of Christ, and which was powerful and efficacious: for without telling him what work he must do, or how he must live, and without his consulting with flesh and blood, at once, immediately

*he arose, and followed him*: such a power went along with the call, that he directly left his employment, how profitable soever it might be to him, and became a disciple of Christ.

**Ver. 10.** *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house*, etc.] That is, as the Arabic version reads it, in the house of Matthew, not in the toll

house, but in his own house; for he immediately quitted the toll booth, and his office there, and followed Christ, and had him to his own house, where he made a great feast for him, as Luke says, to testify the sense he had of the wondrous grace which was bestowed on him; and also, that other publicans and sinners might have an opportunity of hearing Christ, and conversing with him, whom he invited to this feast; his bowels yearning towards them, and sincerely desiring their conversion, which is the nature of true grace: for, when a soul is made a partaker of the grace of God, it is earnestly desirous that this might be the case of others, especially its sinful relations, friends, or companions; and it takes every opportunity of using, or bringing them under the means; so did Matthew: hence it is said,

*behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples*; not of their own accord, but by the invitation of Matthew, and with the good will, and full consent of Christ, who was far from being displeased with their company and freedom; but gladly embraced every opportunity of doing good to the souls of the worst of men; for such as these he came to call and save.

**Ver. 11.** *And when the Pharisees saw it*, etc.] The feast Matthew made, the guests that were invited, and particularly that Christ sat down to meat with such vile and wicked company; they and the Scribes, as Mark and Luke add, who generally were together, of the same complexion, equally enemies to Christ, and watchful observers of his conduct, and pretending to a more strict and religious way of life, were offended at all this;

*and said to his disciples*, which they chose to do, rather than to Christ himself; partly, because they were afraid to engage in a dispute with him, who had just given them a full proof of his omniscience, that he knew the very thoughts and reasonings of their minds, and had so confounded them already, both by his arguments and miracles; and partly, because they might think themselves a match for the disciples, and might hope to stumble and ensnare them, and prevail upon them to quit their profession, and leave following him, whom they would suggest could not be a good man, that was guilty of so evil an action; which, with them, was very unlawful and abhorrent, as that for which they accuse and reprove him,

*why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?* The “publicans”, or gatherers of the Roman tax, toll, or tribute of any sort, whether Jews or Gentiles, were persons of a very infamous character; and, as here, so often, in Jewish writings, are ranked with “sinners”, and those of the worst sort:

so false swearing was allowed to be made  $\hat{y}skwml\ w\ \hat{y}mrj\ l\ w\ \mu ygrwhl$  , “to murderers, and to robbers, and to publicans”<sup>f548</sup>; and so “publicans and thieves” are joined together by Maimonides<sup>f549</sup> , and a publican is said by him to be as a thief. And indeed this was not only the sense of the Jews, but also of other people, according to those words of Zeno the poet,  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \tau\epsilon\lambda\omega\nu\alpha\iota\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\nu\ \alpha\rho\pi\alpha\gamma\epsilon\varsigma$ <sup>f550</sup> , “all publicans are all of them robbers”: though this was not originally their character; for formerly the best of the Roman gentry were employed in this office, till by malpractices it became scandalous, when the meaner sort of people, yea, even vassals, were put into it<sup>f551</sup> . Now, with such sort of men as these the Pharisees held it unlawful to have any sort of conversation; they expelled such their society, would not dwell with them in the same house, nor eat or drink with them; concerning which, their rules and methods are these;

“a companion, or friend, who becomes the king’s collector, or a “publican”, or the like, they drive him from society with them: if he abstains from his evil works, then he is as any other man<sup>f552</sup> .”

Again,

“when the king’s collectors enter into a house to dwell, all that are in the house are defiled<sup>f553</sup> .”

Moreover, it is<sup>f554</sup> said, that

“the former saints ate their common food with purity, i.e. with their hands washed, and took care of all defilements every day; and these were called Pharisees; and this sect was exceedingly holy, and was the way of piety; for such a man was separated, and he abstained from the rest of the people, and he did not touch them,  $\mu\eta\mu[\text{ht}\epsilon\gamma\omega\ l\ kay\ al\ w,$  “nor did he eat and drink with them”.”

It was a general rule with them, that a clean person ought not to eat with an unclean, as they judged the common people to be; nay, that a Pharisee, who was unclean himself, might not eat with another person that was so, and which they boast of, as a great degree of holiness.

“Come and see, (say they<sup>f555</sup> ,) to what a pitch purity has arrived in Israel; for they not only teach, that a pure person may not eat with one that is defiled, but that one that has a “gonorrhoea” may not eat with another that has one, lest he should be used to transgress this



way; and a Pharisee that has a “gonorrhoea” may not eat with a common person that has one, lest he should be used to do so.”

Hence they looked upon Christ and his disciples as such, and would insinuate that they were evil men, who had no regard to purity of life and conversation.

**Ver. 12.** *But when Jesus heard that*, etc.] The charge the Pharisees brought against him, and the insinuations they had made of him to his disciples; which he either overheard himself, or his disciples related to him,

*he said unto them*; the Pharisees, with an audible voice, not only to confute and convince them, but chiefly to establish his disciples, they were endeavouring to draw away from him:

*they that be whole need not a physician*; by which he would signify that he was a “physician”: and so he is in a spiritual sense, and that a very skilful one: he knows the nature of all the diseases of the soul, without being told them by the patient; what are the true causes of them; what is proper to apply; when is the best time, and what the best manner: he is an universal one, with regard both to diseases and to persons, that apply to him; he heals all sorts of persons, and all sorts of diseases; such as are blind from their birth, are as deaf as the deaf adder, the halt, and the lame, such as have broken hearts, yea the plague in their hearts, and have stony ones, and all the relapses of his people; which he does by his stripes and wounds, by the application of his blood, by his word and Gospel, through sinners looking to him, and touching him: he is an infallible one, none ever went from him without a cure; none ever perished under his hands; the disease he heals never returns more to prevail, so as to bring on death and destruction; and he does all freely, without money, and without price. So Philo the Jew calls the Logos, or word, **ιατρον κακων**, “an healer of diseases”<sup>f556</sup>, and God our legislator, **των της θυχης πασω ν αριστος ιατρος**, “the best physician of the diseases of the soul”<sup>f557</sup>. Now Christ argues from this his character, in vindication of himself; as that he was with these persons, not as a companion of their’s, but as a physician to them; and as it is not unlawful, but highly proper and commendable, that a physician should be with the sick; so it was very lawful, fit, and proper, yea praiseworthy in him, to be among these publicans and sinners, for their spiritual good. He suggests indeed, that “they that be whole”, in perfect health and strength, as the Pharisees thought themselves to be, even free from all the maladies and diseases of sin, were strong, robust, and able to

do anything, and everything of themselves; these truly stood in no “need of” him, as a physician, in their own apprehension; they saw no need of him; in principle they had no need of him, and in practice did not make use of him; and therefore it was to no purpose to attend them, but converse with others, who had need of him:

*but they that are sick*; who are not only diseased and disordered in all the powers and faculties of their souls, as all Adam’s posterity are, whether sensible of it or not; but who know themselves to be so, these see their need of Christ as a physician, apply to him as such, and to them he is exceeding precious, a physician of value; and such were these “publicans” and sinners. These words seem to be a proverbial expression, and there is something like it in the <sup>f558</sup> Talmud, *aysa ybl l yza abyak hyl byakd*, “he that is afflicted with any pain goes”, or “let him go to the physician’s house”; that is, he that is attended with any sickness, or disease, does, or he ought to, consult a physician.

**Ver. 13.** *But go ye and learn what that meaneth*, etc.] *dml w ax*, “go and learn”, is a phrase used by the Jews <sup>f559</sup>, when they are about to explain a passage of Scripture, and fetch an argument from the connection of the text. So the phrase *τι εστιν*, “what that is”, or “what that meaneth”, is Talmudic, as, *yhm*, “what is it?” *bytkd yam*, “what is that which is written?” *arq yam*, “what is the Scripture?” that is, what is the meaning of it? Our Lord speaks in their own dialect, and tacitly reproves their ignorance of the Scriptures; and instead of finding fault with him, and his conduct, he intimates, it would better become them to endeavour to find out the meaning of that passage in (<sup><306></sup>Hosea 6:6) “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice”; which, if rightly understood, was sufficient to silence all their cavils and objections: and which words are to be taken, not in an absolute and unlimited sense; for sacrifices even of slain beasts, which were offered up in the faith of Christ’s sacrifice, and were attended with other acts of religion and piety, were acceptable to God, being his own institutions and appointments; but in a comparative sense, as the following clause in the prophet shows; “and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings”; and so the sense is given in the “Chaldee paraphrase”, after this manner: “for in those that exercise mercy is my good will and pleasure”, or “delight”, *j bdm*, “more than in sacrifice”: and the meaning is, that God takes more delight and pleasure, either in showing mercy himself to poor miserable sinners; or in acts of mercy, compassion, and beneficence done

by men, to fallen creatures in distress, whether for the good of their bodies, or more especially for the welfare of their souls, than he does even in sacrifices, and in any of the rituals of the ceremonial law, though of his own appointing: and therefore must be supposed to have a less regard to sacrifices, which were offered, neither in a right manner, nor from a right principle, nor to a right end; and still less to human traditions, and customs, which were put upon a level, and even preferred to his institutions; such as these the Pharisees were so zealous of. The force of our Lord's reasoning is, that since his conversation, with publicans and sinners, was an act of mercy and compassion to their souls, and designed for their spiritual good; it must be much more pleasing to God, than had he attended to the traditions of the elders, they charge him with the breach of: besides, what he was now doing was the end of his coming into this world, and which was answered hereby;

*for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.* The phrase, "to repentance", is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, nor in the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persic versions; but is in the Arabic, and in the ancient Greek copies, and is very justly retained. The "repentance" here designed, is not a legal, but an evangelical one: which is attended with faith in Christ, with views, at least hopes of pardon through his blood, and springs from a discovery and sense of his love: it lies in a true sense of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, by the light of the Spirit of God; in a godly sorrow for it, and hearty loathing of it; in real shame and blushing for it, ingenuous confession of it, and departing from it; all which is brought on, influenced, heightened, and increased, by displays of the love of God through Christ. The persons called to this are not the "righteous"; meaning either such who are really so, because these are already called to it, though, whilst in a state of imperfection, daily need the exercise of this grace; or rather such who are so in their own opinion, and in the sight of men only, not in the sight of God, which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees, and very few of these were called and brought to repentance; but "sinners", even the worst, and chief of sinners, who, as they stand in need of this grace, and when thoroughly convinced, see they do; so Christ came into this world as prophet and minister of the word to "call" them to it: which call of his does not suppose that they had a power to repent of themselves; for this man has not, he is naturally blind, and do not see his sin; his heart is hard and obdurate, and till his eyes are opened, and his stony heart taken away by a superior power to his own, he will

never repent; though he may have space, yet if he has not grace given him, he will remain impenitent. No means will bring him to it of themselves, neither the most severe judgments, nor the greatest kindnesses, nor the most powerful ministry; repentance is entirely a free grace gift: nor does the call of Christ imply the contrary; which may be considered either as external, as a preacher of the word, and as such was not always attended to, and effectual, but often slighted and rejected: or as internal, being by the power of his grace effectual; for he who called to repentance, as a minister of the word, as a prince and a saviour, was able to give it, and which none but a divine person is able to do. The Jews have a saying<sup>f560</sup> of

“shepherds, collectors of taxes and “publicans”, **hçq ^tbwçt**,  
“that their repentance is difficult”.”

Now, since this was the end of his coming into the world, his conduct in conversing with publicans and sinners was in all respects highly to be justified.

**Ver. 14.** *Then came to him the disciples of John*, etc.] Of John the Baptist, to whom they had addicted themselves, and by whom they abode: though their master was in prison, and the Messiah was known to be come, yet still they were attached to John, and particularly imitated him in the austerities of his life. These, either hearing of the great entertainment made at Matthew’s house for Christ, and his disciples, at which they were offended; or else being moved, and set on by the Pharisees, with whom they were agreed in the business of fasting, came to Christ where he was, and put this question to him,

*saying, why do we, and the Pharisees, fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?*

Not that they wanted to know the reason why they and the Pharisees fasted; that they could account for themselves, but why Christ’s disciples did not: and this is said not so much by way of inquiry, as reproof; and their sense is; that Christ’s disciples ought to fast, as well as they and the Pharisees, and not eat, and drink, and feast in the manner they did. The fastings here referred to are not the public fasts enjoined by the law of Moses, or in any writings of the Old Testament; but private fasts, which were enjoined by John to his disciples, and by the Pharisees to their’s; or which were, according to the traditions of the elders, or of their own appointing, and which were very “often” indeed: for besides their fasting twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, (<sup>CR12</sup>Luke 18:12) they had a

multitude of fasts upon divers occasions, particularly for rain <sup>f561</sup>. If the 17th of Marchesvan, or October, came, and there was no rain, private persons kept three days of fasting, viz. Monday, Thursday, and Monday again: and if the month of Cisleu, or November, came, and there was no rain, then the sanhedrim appointed three fast days, which were on the same days as before, for the congregation; and if still there was no rain came, they added three more; and if yet there were none, they enjoined seven more, in all thirteen, which R. Acha and R. Barachiah kept themselves <sup>f562</sup>. Fasts were kept also on account of many other evils, as pestilence, famine, war, sieges, inundations, or any other calamity; sometimes for trifling things, as for dreams <sup>f563</sup>, that they might have good ones, or know how to interpret them, or avoid any ill omen by them; and it is almost incredible what frequent fastings some of the Rabbins exercised themselves with, on very insignificant occasions. They <sup>f564</sup> say,

“R. Jose  $\hat{y}mw\acute{x} \ yymt\ \mu x$ , “fasted fourscore fasts” to see R. Chiyah Rubba; at last he saw, and his hands trembled, and his eyes grew dim: — R. Simeon Ben Lakish  $\hat{y}mw\acute{x} \ \hat{w}wam\ t\ l\ t\ \mu x$ , “fasted three hundred fastings” to see R. Chiyah Rubba, and did not see him.”

Elsewhere it is said, that R. Ase fasted “thirty days” to see the same person, and saw him not <sup>f565</sup>. Again <sup>f566</sup>,

“R. Jonathan fasted every eve of the new year, R. Abin fasted every eve of the feast of tabernacles, R. Zeura fasted “three hundred fasts”, and there are that say “nine hundred fasts”.”

This may serve to illustrate and prove the frequency of the Jewish fastings. Luke represents this question as put by the Pharisees, which is here put by the disciples of John: it was doubtless put by both agreeing in this matter; and which shows that John’s disciples were instigated to it by the Pharisees, who sought to sow discord between them, and to bring Christ and his disciples into contempt with them.

**Ver. 15.** *And Jesus said unto them*, etc.] To the disciples of John, the Pharisees being present, who both have here a full answer; though it seems to be especially directed to the former:

*can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom, is with them?* By the “bridegroom” Christ means himself, who stands in

such a relation to his church, and to all, believers; whom he secretly betrothed to himself from all eternity, in the covenant of grace; and openly espouses in the effectual calling; and will still do it in a more public manner at the last day John, the master of those men, who put the question to Christ, had acknowledged him under this character, (~~ERR~~ John 3:29) and therefore they ought to own it as belonging to him; so that the argument upon it came with the greater force to them. By “the children of the bride chamber” are meant the disciples, who were the friends of the bridegroom, as John also says he was; and therefore rejoiced at hearing his voice, as these did, and ought to do; their present situation, having the presence of Christ the bridegroom with them, required mirth and not mourning, John, their master, being witness. The allusion is to a nuptial solemnity, which is a time of joy and feasting, and not of sorrow and fasting; when both bride and bridegroom have their friends attending them, who used to be called **hpwj h ynb**, “the children of the bride chamber”. The bride had her maidens waiting on her; and it is said <sup>f567</sup>,

“she did not go into the bridechamber but with them; and these are called, **atpwj ynb**, “the children of the bride chamber”.”

So the young men that were the friends of the bridegroom, which attended him, were called by the same name; and, according to the Jewish canons, were free from many things they were otherwise obliged to: thus it is said <sup>f568</sup>.

“the bridegroom, his friends, and all **hpwj h ynb**, “the children of the bride chamber”, are free from the booth all the seven days;”

that is, from dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, which was too strait a place for such festival solemnities. And again,

“the bridegroom, his friends, and all **hpwj h ynb**, “the children of the bride chamber”, are free from prayer and the phylacteries;”

that is, from observing the stated times of attending to these things, and much more then were they excused from fasting and mourning; so that the Pharisees had an answer sufficient to silence them, agreeably to their own traditions. Give me leave to transcribe one passage more, for the illustration of this text <sup>f569</sup>.

“When R. Lazar ben Arach opened, in the business of Mercava, (the visions in the beginning of Ezekiel,) Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai alighted from his ass; for he said it is not fit I should hear the glory of my Creator, and ride upon an ass: they went, and sat under a certain tree, and fire came down from heaven and surrounded them; and the ministering angels leaped before them, **hpwj ynbk**, “as the children of the bride chamber” rejoice before the bridegroom.”

The time of Christ’s being with his disciples, between his entrance on his public ministry, and his death, is the time here referred to, during which the disciples had very little care and trouble: this was their rejoicing time, and there was a great deal of reason for it; they had no occasion to fast and mourn; and indeed the Jews themselves say <sup>f570</sup>, that

“all fasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah; and there shall be no more but good days, and days of joy and rejoicing, as it is said, (~~388~~ Zechariah 8:19).”

*But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them*; in a forcible manner, and put to death, as he was;

*and then shall they fast* and mourn, and be in great distress, as John’s disciples now were, on account of their master being in prison.

**Ver. 16.** *No man putteth a piece of new cloth*, etc.] These words are, by (~~488~~ Luke 5:36) called a “parable”, as are those in the following verse; and both are commonly interpreted of the unreasonableness and danger of putting young disciples upon severe exercises of religion, as fasting, etc.: and it is true, that young converts are to be tenderly dealt with, as they are by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the disciples were by Christ, and the first Christians were by the apostles: and some things in these parables may seem to agree; as that these austerities should be represented as “new”, and as burdensome and troublesome, and the disciples as weak, and easily staggered: but then there are others that will not bear; as that the disciples should be compared to “old garments, and old bottles”; when they were “young” converts, and men “renewed” by the Spirit and grace of God, and had on the beautiful robe of Christ’s righteousness; and that such severe exercises, under the notion of religion, should be signified by “new wine”, which generally designs something pleasant and agreeable: nor were the disciples unable to bear such severities, who very probably had been

trained up in them, and been used to them before their conversion; and could now as well have bore them as John's disciples, or the Pharisees, had they been proper and necessary; but the true reason why they were not required of them, was not their weakness, or danger of falling off, and perishing, of which there were none; but because it was unsuitable to their present situation, the bridegroom being with them. But our Lord, in this parable of putting "a piece of new", or "undressed cloth", such as has never passed through the fuller's hands, and so unfit to mend with,

*unto an old garment*, refers not only to the fastings of the Pharisees, but to their other traditions of the elders, which they held; as such that respected their eating, drinking, and conversing with other persons mentioned in the context, and which observances they joined with their moral performances; on account of which, they looked upon themselves as very righteous persons, and all others as sinners: and to expose their folly, Christ delivers this parable. Wherefore, by "the old garment", I apprehend, is meant their moral and legal righteousness, or their obedience to the moral and ceremonial laws, which was very imperfect, as well as impure, and might be rightly called "filthy rags"; or be compared to an old worn out garment, filthy and loathsome, torn, and full of holes, which cannot keep a person warm, nor screen him from the weather, and so old that it cannot be mended. And by the "piece of new cloth", or "garment", put unto it, or sewed upon it, are intended the traditions of the elders, these men were so fond of, concerning eating, and drinking, and fasting, and hundreds of other things, very idle and trifling, and which were new and upstart notions. Now, by putting, or sewing the new cloth to their old garment, is designed, their joining their observance of these traditions to their other duties of religion, to make up a justifying righteousness before God; but in vain, and to no purpose. Their old garment of their own works, in obedience to the laws of God, moral and ceremonial, was full bad enough of itself; but became abundantly worse, by joining this new piece of men's own devising to it;

*for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse*: their new obedience to the traditions of men, making void the law of God, instead of mending, marred their righteousness, and left them in a worse condition than it found them: and besides, as it is in Luke, "the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old"; there being no more likeness between the observance of the commandments of men, and obedience to the laws of God, than there is between a piece of



new undressed cloth, that has never been washed and worn, and an old worn out garment. Much such a foolish part do those men under the Gospel dispensation act, who join the righteousness of Christ, or a part of it, with their own, in order to make up a justifying righteousness before God; for Christ's righteousness is the only justifying righteousness; it is whole and perfect, and needs nothing to be added to it, nor can it be parted, any more than his seamless coat was; nor a piece taken out of it: nor is there any justification by works, either in whole or in part; the old garment of man's righteousness must be thrown away, in point of justification; it cannot be mended in such a manner; and if any attempts are made in this way, the rent becomes worse: such persons, instead of being justified, are in a worse condition; for they not only set up, and exalt their own righteousness, which is criminal, but disparage the righteousness of Christ as imperfect, by joining it to their's; and whilst they fancy themselves in a good state, are in a most miserable one; harlots and publicans being nearer the kingdom of heaven than these, and enter into it before them; self-righteous persons are more hardly, and with greater difficulty convinced, than such sinners. Moreover, nothing is more disagreeable than such a patch work; Christ's righteousness and a man's own bear no likeness to one another; and such a patched garment must ill become the character and dignity of a saint, a child of God, an heir of heaven.

**Ver. 17.** *Neither do men put new wine into old bottles*, etc.] As in the former parable, our Lord exposes the folly of the Scribes and Pharisees, in their zealous attachment to the traditions of the elders; so in this, he gives a reason why he did not call these persons by his Gospel, who were settled upon the old principle of self-righteousness, but sinners, whom he renews by his Spirit and grace: for by "old bottles" are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees. The allusion is to bottles, made of the skins of beasts, which in time decayed, waxed old, and became unfit for use: such were the wine bottles, old and rent, the Gibeonites brought with them, and showed to Joshua, (<sup><0004></sup>Joshua 9:4,13) and to which the Psalmist compares himself, (<sup><0083></sup>Psalm 119:83) and which the Misnic doctors call **twtmj**, and their commentators<sup>f571</sup> say, were **rw[ l ç tdwn**, "bottles made of skin", or "leather", and so might be rent. Of the use of new and old bottles, take the following hint out of the "Talmud"<sup>f572</sup>.

“The bottles of the Gentiles, if scraped and  $\mu\upsilon\zeta\delta\jmath$  , “new”, they are free for use; if  $\mu\upsilon\eta\zeta\upsilon$ , “old”, they are forbidden.”

Now the Scribes and Pharisees may be signified by these old bottles, being natural men, no other than as they were born; having never been regenerated, and renewed in the spirit of their minds; in whom the old man was predominant, were mere formal professors of religion, and self-righteous persons: and by “new wine” is meant, either the love and favour of God compared to wine, that is neat and clean, because free from hypocrisy in him, or motives in the creature; to generous wine, for its cheering and reviving effects; and to new wine, not but that it is very ancient, even from everlasting, but, because newly manifested, in the effectual calling and conversion: or the Gospel is signified by wine, for its purity, good flavour, and pleasant taste; for its generous effects, in reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds; and by new wine, not that it is a new doctrine, an upstart notion, for it is an ancient Gospel, but because newly and more clearly revealed by Christ and his apostles: or the blessings of grace which spring from the love of God, and are manifested in the Gospel, such as pardon of sin, reconciliation and atonement, justifying and sanctifying grace, spiritual joy and peace, and the like. Now as the new wine is not put into old bottles,

*else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish:* so the love of God, the Gospel of the grace of God, and the blessings of it, are not received and retained, nor can they be, by natural men, by self-righteous persons: they do not suit and agree with their old carnal hearts and principles; they slight and reject them, and let them run out, which proves their greater condemnation.

*But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.* By “new bottles” are meant sinners, whom Christ calls by his grace, and the Spirit regenerates and renews, who are made new creatures in Christ; who have new hearts, and new spirits, and new principles of light, life, love, faith, and holiness, implanted in them; who have new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk with, to and in Christ, new hands to work and handle with, and who live a new life and conversation. Now to such as these, the love of God is manifested and shed abroad in their hearts; by these, the Gospel of Christ is truly received and valued, and these enjoy the spiritual blessings of it; and so both the doctrine of the Gospel, and the

grace of God, are preserved entire, and these persons saved in the day of Christ.

**Ver. 18.** *While he spake these things unto them*, etc.] To the Scribes and Pharisees, and to John's disciples, concerning, and in vindication of his, and his disciples, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, and their not fasting as others did; and while he spake these parables, to expose the folly of self-righteous persons, and justify his own conduct, in calling sinners to repentance,

*behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him.* This man, as both Mark and Luke say, was named Jairus; and was a ruler, not of the sanhedrim, or lesser consistory, but of the synagogue that was at Capernaum; and whom the Jews call, **tsnkh çar**, “the head of the synagogue”. Mark says, he was “one of the rulers”: not that there were more rulers than one, in one synagogue<sup>f573</sup>: but as in great cities, so it is likely in Capernaum there were more synagogues than one, of which he was one of the rulers: so we read of **twysnk yçar**<sup>f574</sup>, “heads”, or “rulers of synagogues”. As this is one mistake, so it is another to say, that Dr. Lightfoot speaks of this ruler, as the same with the “minister” of the congregation; when both here, and in the place referred to, he manifestly distinguishes them; as do the Jews: for, by this ruler, as their commentators<sup>f575</sup> say,

“the necessary affairs of the synagogue were determined, as who should dismiss with a prophet, who should divide the “shema”, and who should go before the ark.”

Whereas the business of **tj nkh ^zj**, “the minister of the synagogue”, was to bring in and out the ark, or chest, in which was the book of the law; and particularly, when the high priest read, or pronounced the blessings, “he” took the book, and gave it to “the ruler of the synagogue”; and the ruler of the synagogue gave it to the “sagan”, and the “sagan” to the high priest<sup>f576</sup>. The doctor makes indeed **rwbxh j yl ç**, “the messenger of the congregation”, to be the same with “the minister of the synagogue”, and which is his mistake; for these were two different officers<sup>f577</sup>: the former was the lecturer, or preacher; and the latter, a sort of a sexton to keep the synagogue clean, open and shut the doors, and do other things before mentioned. This Jairus was a man of great power and significance; who in

such a very humble manner prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus, and expressed such strong faith in him:

*saying, my daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thine hand upon her, and she shall live.* Luke says, she was “his only daughter”: and Mark calls her his “little daughter”: though both he and Luke say, she was about “twelve” years of age, and that with strict propriety, according to the Jewish canons, which <sup>f578</sup> say; that

“a daughter, from the day of her birth until she is twelve years complete, is called **hnj q**, “a little one” and when she is twelve years of age, and one day and upwards, she is called **hr [n**, “a young woman”.”

Her case seems to be differently represented; Mark says, she was “at the point of death”, or “in the last extremity”; and Luke, that she “lay dying”: but Matthew here says, that she was “even now dead”, which may be easily reconciled: for not to observe, that **απτι** signifies “near”, and the phrase may be rendered, “she is near dead”, or just expiring, the case was this; when Jairus left his house, his daughter was in the agony of death, just ready to give up the ghost; so, that he concluded, by the time he was with Jesus, she had made her exit; as it appears she had, by a messenger, who brought the account of her death, before they could get to the house. The ruler’s address to Christ on this occasion, is a very considerable, though not so great an instance of faith as some others; that he, who was a ruler of a synagogue, should apply to Christ, which sort of men were generally most averse to him; that he should fall down and worship him, if not as God, since as yet he might be ignorant of his deity, yet behaved with the profoundest respect to him, as a great man, and a prophet; that he should come to him when his child was past all hope of recovery; yea, when he had reason to believe she was actually dead, as she was; that even then, he should believe in hope against hope; he affirms, that he really believed, that if Christ would but come to his house, and lay his hand upon her, an action often used in grave and serious matters, as in blessing persons, in prayer, and in healing diseases, she would certainly be restored to life again.

**Ver. 19.** *And Jesus arose and followed him*, etc.] Immediately, without delay, or any more ado: he did not upbraid him with the treatment he and his followers met with, from men of his profession; who cast out of their synagogues such, who confessed him to be the Messiah: nor does he take

notice of any weakness in his faith; as that he thought it necessary he should go with him to his house, when he could as well have restored his daughter to life, absent, as present; and that he should prescribe a form of doing it, by laying his hands upon her. These things he overlooked, and at once got up from Matthew's table, and went along with him,

*and so did his disciples*, to be witnesses of the miracle; and according to the other evangelists, a large multitude of people besides; even a throng of them, led by curiosity to see this wondrous performance.

**Ver. 20.** *And behold a woman which was diseased.* etc.] This affair happened in the streets of Capernaum, as Christ was going from the house of Matthew the publican, to the house of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, which were both in this city. This poor woman's case was a very distressed one; she had been attended

*with an issue of blood twelve years*; it was an uncommon flux of a long standing, was inveterate, and become incurable; though she had not been negligent of herself, but had made use of means, applied herself to regular physicians, had took many a disagreeable medicine, and had spent all her substance in this way; but instead of being better, was worse, and was now given up by them, as past all cure. This woman might be truly called **hl wdg hbz**, <sup>f579</sup> “the greater profluvius woman”, in the language of the doctors; for if one that had a flux but three days was called so, much more one that had had it twelve years. She having heard of Jesus, and his miraculous cures, had faith given her to believe, that she also should receive one from him; wherefore she

*came behind him*, through modesty, being ashamed to come before him, and tell him her case, especially before so many people; and fearing lest if her case was known, she should be thrust away, if not by Christ, yet by the company; she being according to the law an unclean person, and unfit for society:

*and touched the hem of his garment*; which was the **txyx**, or “fringes”, the Jews were obliged to wear upon the borders of their garments, and on it a ribband of blue; (see <sup><41538></sup>Numbers 15:38; <sup><42212></sup>Deuteronomy 22:12) in both which places Onkelos uses the word **ˆydpwrk**, the same with **κραπεδον**, used here, and in (<sup><4066></sup>Mark 6:56) and rendered “hem”. The Jews placed much sanctity in the wear and use of these fringes; and the Pharisees, who pretended to more holiness than others, enlarged them

beyond their common size; but it was not on account of any peculiar holiness in this part of Christ's garment, that induced this poor woman to touch it; but this being behind him, and more easy to be come at, she therefore laid hold on it; for it was his garment, any part of it she concluded, if she could but touch, she should have a cure. However, we learn from hence, that Christ complied with the rites of the ceremonial law in apparel, as well as in other things.

**Ver. 21.** *For she said within herself,* etc.] That is, she thought within herself, she reasoned the matter in her mind, she concluded upon it, and firmly believed it; being strongly impressed and influenced by the Spirit of God, and encouraged by instances of cures she had heard were performed by persons only touching him; see (~~4169~~ Luke 6:19)

*if I may but touch his garment.* The Arabic version reads it, "the hem of his garment", as before; but is not supported by any copy, nor by any other version: her faith was, that if she might be allowed, or if she could by any means come at him, to touch any part of his garment, she should have a cure:

*I shall be whole,* or "I shall be saved"; that is, from her disease, from which she could have no deliverance, by the advice and prescriptions of all her former physicians, and by all the means she had made use of.

**Ver. 22.** *But Jesus turned him about,* etc.] Knowing what was done behind him, that virtue was gone out of him, that the woman had touched him, and was healed; which is a clear proof of his omniscience, and so of his deity: not that he was angry with her for touching him, though she was an impure woman; for though men and garments were defiled by the touch of a profluous <sup>f580</sup> person; yet such was the power and holiness of Christ, that as he could not be defiled by any such means, so hereby, at once, this woman's impurity was also removed: but Christ turned about to observe and point out the woman, and her cure, to the company; not for the sake of his own honour, but for the glory of God, the commendation of the woman's faith, and chiefly for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, with whom he was going to raise his daughter from the dead:

*and when he saw her.* The other evangelists, Mark and Luke, record, that Jesus inquired who touched him, and what answer Peter and the disciples made to him; and how he looked around, and very likely fastened his eyes upon the woman; when she perceiving that she could not go off

undiscovered, came trembling to him, fell down before him, and told him the whole matter; and then

*he said, daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.* He addressed her in a kind and tender manner, calling her “daughter”; an affable, courteous way of speaking, used by the Jewish doctors <sup>f581</sup>, when speaking to women: which showed his affection, and bespoke his relation; and bidding her take heart and be of good cheer, since he meant not to blame her for what she had done, but to commend her faith in him, whereby she had received a cure: meaning, not that there was such virtue in her faith as to effect such a cure; but that he, the object of her faith, had performed it for her:

*and the woman was made whole from that hour;* her disease immediately left her, and from that time forward, was no more troubled with it: the cure was so effectual, and so perfect, that the disorder never returned more.

**Ver. 23.** *And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house,* etc.] Both Mark and Luke relate, how that before this, whilst they were in the way, and just as Christ had done speaking to the poor woman, that news was brought to the ruler, that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore need not give Jesus any further trouble; when Christ encouraged him not to be cast down at the tidings, but believe, and she should be restored again; and that he suffered none to follow him, but Peter, James, and John: and

*saw the minstrels,* or “pipers”; how many there were, is not known: it is certain there were more than one; and it was a rule with the <sup>f582</sup> Jews that

“the poorest man in Israel (when his wife died) had not less  
 מַלְיָא יְלֵי יְנֻמָּ, “than two pipes”, and one mourning woman.”

And since this was a daughter of a ruler of the synagogue that was dead, there might be several of them. These instruments were made use of, not to remove the melancholy of surviving friends, or allay the grief of the afflicted family; but, on the contrary, to excite it: for the Jewish writers say <sup>f583</sup>, these pipes were hollow instruments, with which they made a known sound, *לְבַחַּהּ הַיְכָבֵה רַרְוּ* [ל], “to stir up lamentation and mourning”: and for the same purpose, they had their mourning women, who answered to the pipe; and by their dishevelled hair, and doleful tones, moved upon the affections, and drew tears from others; and very likely are the persons, that Mark says, “wept and wailed greatly”. Sometimes trumpets were made

use of on these mournful occasions<sup>f584</sup>; but whether these were used only for persons more advanced in years, and pipes for younger ones, as by the Heathens<sup>f585</sup>, at least, at some times, is not certain.

*And the people making a noise*; the people of the house, the relations of the deceased, the neighbours, who came in on this occasion; and others, in a sort of tumult and uproar, hurrying and running about; some speaking in the praise of the dead, others lamenting her death, and others preparing things proper for the funeral; all which shew, that she was really dead: among these also, might be the mourners that made a noise for the dead;

“for since mourning was for the honour of the dead, therefore they obliged the heirs to hire mourning men, and mourning women, to mourn for the same<sup>f586</sup>.”

**Ver. 24.** *And he said unto them, give place*, etc.] Depart, be gone; for he put them out of the room, and suffered none to be with him, when he raised her from the dead, but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child, who were witnesses enough of this miracle.

*For the maid is not dead, but sleepeth*: not but that she was really dead; and Christ signifies as much, when he says, she “sleepeth”; a phrase that is often used in<sup>f587</sup> Talmudic writings, for one that is dead: but Christ’s meaning is, that she was not so dead as the company thought; as always to remain in the state of the dead, and not to be restored to life again: whereas our Lord signifies, it would be seen in a very little time, that she should be raised again, just as a person is awaked out of sleep; so that there was no occasion to make such funeral preparations as they did. The Jews say<sup>f588</sup> of some of their dead, that they are asleep, and not dead: it is said, (<sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 26:19) “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust”.

“These, say they, are they that sleep and die not; and such are they that sleep in Hebron, for they *^ykymd al a ^ytm wal*, “do not die, but sleep”, — the four couples in Hebron (Adam and Eve, etc.) they “sleep, but are not dead”.”

*And they laughed him to scorn*; they mocked at his words, and had him in the utmost contempt, as a very weak silly man; taking him either to be a madman, or a fool; knowing that she was really dead, of which they had all the evidence they could have; and having no faith at all in him, and in his power to raise her from the dead.



**Ver. 25.** *But when the people were put forth*, etc.] Either out of the house or room, by Christ, or, at least, by his orders: which was done, partly because he was desirous it might be kept a secret, as much as possible, and to shew, that he did not affect popular applause; and partly, because they were unworthy to be admitted spectators of such a wondrous action, who had treated him with so much scorn and contempt:

*he went in*; not alone, but with his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were taken in to be witnesses of this resurrection, and the parents of the child; who were so very solicitous for its life, under whose power she was, and to whom she was to be restored:

*and took her by the hand*; just as one would do to awake another out of sleep; and, perhaps, in compliance with her father's request, to lay his hand upon her: and though the touch of a dead body, according to the law, (<sup>401916</sup>Numbers 19:16) was defiling; yet this did not defile him, any more than his touching the leper, or the profluvius woman's touching his clothes; for these actions produced supernatural effects, which came not under the cognizance of the law. His taking her by the hand, was not all that he did, but he called, as to a person asleep, and said unto her these words, "Talitha cumi", as recorded by Mark, and are also in Munster's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew; and which, in the Syriac language, signify, "maiden, arise"; and immediately, directly, as soon as ever he had thus said,

*the maid arose*, as out of sleep; she revived, her soul came to her again, and she got off of the bed, and walked about house, and food was ordered to be given to her. All which most fully demonstrated that she was really restored to life, which was as clear a case, as that before she was really dead.

**Ver. 26.** *And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.*] For though he strictly charged the parents, as the other evangelists say, that they should tell no man what was done, he not affecting the applause of men; yet it was not possible the thing should be entirely concealed; since there was such a number of people, not only relations, but neighbours, who full well knew, and were assured she had been dead: when these saw her alive, walk about, eat and drink, and converse with them, they must be persuaded of the miracle, and relate it wherever they came; so that the fame of it could not but be spread all over the country in which Capernaum was.

**Ver. 27.** *And when Jesus departed thence*, etc.] From the house of Jairus, to another in the same city;

*two blind men followed him*: very closely, by the direction of others, having heard of the miracle just now performed by him; and from thence concluded he was able to restore them to their sight;

*crying and saying*, with great faith and fervour, with much importunity, and frequently repeating the following words,

*thou son of David, have mercy on us*. Whence it appears, that they firmly believed, and were fully persuaded, that he was the true Messiah; for “the son of David” was a known character of the Messiah among the Jews: nothing was more common than to call him by this title, without any other additional epithet, *see Gill* “<sup>ADOC</sup>*Matthew 1:1*”, and since it had been prophesied of the Messiah, that he should “open the eyes of the blind”, (<sup>2385</sup>Isaiah 35:5,42:7) they might be greatly encouraged to hope and believe they should obtain mercy from him in this respect.

**Ver. 28.** *And when he was come into the house*, etc.] In which he dwelt, whilst at Capernaum: for he took no notice of them by the way; but though they followed him close, and cried vehemently, he did not stop to speak to them, or give them a cure: according to their request, but went on his way; which he did, partly to avoid the populace, and that he might not be seen by men, in what he did, and partly to try their faith, and the constancy of it.

*The blind men came to him*; being directed by others, into what house he went, and where he was, and very probably with the leave of Christ:

*and Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this?* That is, to have mercy on them, as they requested, by curing them of their blindness; which, though not expressed, is implied, and is the thing designed: this question is put, not as being ignorant of, or as doubting their faith in him, which they had expressed, in calling him the son of David; and had shown the firmness and constancy of it, by following him, though he took no notice of them; but partly, for the further trial of their faith, and to bring them to a more open profession of it, as to this particular, his power to cure them of their blindness; and partly, for the sake of those, that were in the house:

*they said unto him, yea, Lord*. They firmly believed he had power to do it, they had not the least doubt and hesitation in their minds about it; for

though their bodily eyes were at present dark, the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see and know Jesus to be the true Messiah, David's Son, and Lord.

**Ver. 29.** *Then touched he their eyes*, etc.] Not but that he could have restored sight to them, without touching their eyes, by a word speaking, or by the secret communication of his power; but he might do this as a sign of his favour and kindness to them, and of his will to cure them; as also in compliance with their weakness, who might expect some manual operation upon them;

*saying, according to your faith be it unto you*: not that faith in his person and power, was the cause or condition of this cure, or the rule and measure according to which Christ proceeded; but the sense is, that as they had believed he was able to heal them, accordingly a cure should be effected; which, upon his so saying, they immediately found performed in them.

**Ver. 30.** *And their eyes were opened*, etc.] Some copies read, "immediately"; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: and this was certainly the true and real matter of fact, that as soon as Christ had touched their eyes, and said the above words, their sight was perfectly restored to them; and they had a clear, full, and true sight of objects, as men have, whose vision faculty is in its full strength and rigour, and their eyes open:

*and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, see that no man know it*. This was a very strict charge, and according to the signification of the word here used, it was given with great austerity of countenance, and severity of expression, in a very rough and threatening manner; which Christ might be the rather induced to, because he had given such like orders already, and they had not been observed: the reasons for concealing the miracle are not very obvious; it seems likely, that with the same view he took no notice of these blind men in the street, but went into an house, and cured them; which seems to be, to shun all appearance of vain glory, or seeking popular applause, that he gave these orders; or it may be, he did not choose to be made more known by this miracle, or at this time, or by these men; he might foresee that it would be attended with ill consequences; either the more to irritate the resentments of some persons against him; or to put others on doing things which were disagreeable to him; as setting him up for a temporal prince among them, being David's son.

**Ver. 31.** *But they, when they were departed,* etc.] That is, out of the house where they received their cure, and out of the city; for it appears, by what follows, they went into other parts, where it is probable they might originally belong; they

*spread abroad his fame in all that country.* This they did, not in contempt of Christ and his orders; but rather out of gratitude to their benefactor, and through an honest zeal to spread his honour and glory: though they are not to be commended for disregarding the command of Christ; for, not our affection, but Christ's will, is to be the rule of our actions.

**Ver. 32.** *As they went out,* etc.] The Syriac version reads it, "when Jesus went out"; to which agrees the Arabic, against all the copies: for not he, but the men who had been blind, and now had their sight restored, went out from the house where Jesus was; which circumstance is mentioned, and by it the following account is introduced, partly to show how busy Christ was, how he was continually employed in doing good, and that as soon as one work of mercy was over, another offered; and partly, to observe how closely and exactly the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled; in which, as it was foretold, that "the eyes of the blind" should "be opened"; so likewise, that "the tongue of the dumb" should "sing", (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 35:5,6).

*Behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.* The word signifies one that is deaf, as well as dumb; as does the Hebrew word **çrj**, often used by the Jewish writers for a deaf and dumb man; one, they say <sup>f589</sup>, that can neither hear nor speak, and is unfit for sacrifice, and excused many things: and indeed these two, deafness and dumbness, always go together in persons, who are deaf from their birth; for as they cannot hear, they cannot learn to speak: but this man seems to be dumb, not by nature, but through the possession of Satan, who had taken away, or restrained the use of his speech, out of pure malice and ill will, that he might not have the benefit of conversation with men, nor be able to say anything to the glory of God. This man did not come of himself to Christ, perhaps being unwilling, through the power and influence the devil had over him; but his friends, who were concerned for his welfare, and who were thoroughly persuaded of the power of Christ to heal him, by the miracles they had seen, or heard performed by him, brought him to him; and, no doubt, expressed their desire that he would cast out the devil, and cure him, which he did.

**Ver. 33.** *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake*, etc.] The cause of his dumbness being removed, the effect ceased, and the man spake as he did before, and as other men do; and this was done, according to the Persic version, “as soon as Christ saw him”; the devil not being able to bear his presence, much less withstand his power: but as soon as Christ had set his eyes upon the man possessed by him, and had given him orders to be gone, he immediately went out, and the man was restored to his speech again;

*and the multitude marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel.* The vast crowds of people, who were alarmed with the former miracles of Christ, and came along with the friends of the dumb man, when they heard him speak so suddenly and plainly, and with so much freedom, nothing being said or done to him, were surprised; and declared very frankly, that though many wonderful things had been done in Israel, in times past, by Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and others, yet never were such things seen, or heard, or known of, as were done by Christ: referring not to this miracle only, but to all the rest he had just wrought; as curing the woman of her bloody issue, raising Jairus’s daughter from the dead, restoring sight to the two blind men, and now casting out a dumb devil.

**Ver. 34.** *But the Pharisees said*, etc.] Who were the sworn enemies of Christ, and were filled with envy at him, and malice against him: these men could not bear, that so much honour and glory should be given to Christ; and therefore said,

*he casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils:* they could not deny matter of fact, that he had cast out a devil; nor could they say he had done an ill thing in so doing; they could not but own that it was a preternatural action, more than human; nor could they contradict what the multitude said, that no such thing had been ever seen, or known, in Israel: but that Christ might not have the glory of the action, and to fix a mark of infamy upon him, foolishly impute it to a diabolical influence, as if one devil would eject another; and to Christ’s familiarity with, and the assistance he had from, not a common devil, but the prince of them. In Beza’s most ancient manuscript, and in some others, this whole verse is wanting; and were it not, for the general consent of copies, one should be tempted to think these words were not said at this time, because Christ returns no answer to them; and what is observed by (<sup><21115></sup>Luke 11:15) as following this miracle, is the selfsame as was spoken by Christ in

(<sup>f4124</sup>Matthew 12:24,25) and where this passage is more thoroughly considered.

**Ver. 35.** *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages*, etc.] He did not confine himself, and his acts of kindness and compassion, to his own city, Capernaum, but he took a circuit throughout all Galilee; and not only visited their larger and more principal cities and towns, but their villages also; doing good to the bodies and souls of men in every place, and of whatever state and condition.

*Teaching in their synagogues*; which were places of public worship, where prayer was made, the law and the prophets were read, and a word of exhortation given to the people; and which, it seems, were in villages, as well as in cities and towns: and indeed it is a rule with the Jews <sup>f590</sup>, that

“in what place soever there are ten Israelites, they ought to build a house, to which they may go to prayer, at all times of prayer; and such a place is called **tsnkh tyb**, “a synagogue”.”

And hence we often read of <sup>f591</sup> **պրքկ լ շ տսնխ տյբ**, “the synagogue of villages”, as distinct from the synagogues of cities and walled towns; which confutes a notion of the learned Dr. Lightfoot <sup>f592</sup>, who thought there were no synagogues in villages. Now, wherever Christ found any of these, he entered into them, and taught the people publicly,

*preaching the Gospel of the kingdom*; the good news and glad tidings of peace and pardon, reconciliation and salvation, by himself the Messiah; all things relating to the Gospel dispensation; the doctrines of grace, which concern both the kingdom of grace and glory; particularly the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of having a better righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; the one as a meetness, the other as a title to eternal happiness:

*and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people*. As he preached wholesome doctrine for the good of their souls; for their spiritual health, and the cure of their spiritual maladies; so he healed all sorts of diseases the bodies of men were incident to, that were brought unto him; and by his miracles confirmed, as well as recommended, the doctrines he preached.

**Ver. 36.** *But when he saw the multitudes*, etc.] As he took his circuit through the several cities, towns, and villages, he made his observations

upon the large numbers that flocked to his ministry, and seemed to be desirous of spiritual instructions, in what an unhappy and melancholy situation they were; and

*he was moved with compassion on them*: his bowels yearned for them, he was touched with a feeling of their infirmities, as the merciful high priest, the good shepherd, and faithful prophet; being heartily concerned for the souls of men, their comfort here, and everlasting happiness hereafter:

*because they fainted*; being fatigued and tired, not in their bodies, through journeying from place to place, to hear the word, but in their minds; being burdened and wearied with the various traditions and doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees:

*and were scattered abroad*; thrown and tossed about, and divided through the different sects of religion among them; no due care was taken of them, to gather and keep them together, and feed them with wholesome doctrine; but were as abjects, outcasts, that no man regarded, and in great danger of the loss and ruin of their immortal souls: being

*as sheep without a shepherd*; that was good for anything, or did the office and duty of a shepherd to them: the Scribes and Pharisees were shepherds indeed, such as they were, but very bad ones; like the shepherds of Israel of old, who fed themselves, and not the flock; who strengthened not the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up that which was broken; nor brought again that which was driven away, nor sought that which was lost: but on the contrary, caused them to go astray from mountain to hill; whereby they forgot their resting place, in the Messiah promised them, and who was now come.

**Ver. 37.** *Then saith he unto his disciples*, etc.] His heart being drawn out, and filled with pity to these poor people, upon observing the miserable and sad condition they were in; he turns himself to his disciples, whom he was about to call, and send forth in a more public manner to preach the Gospel, of which we read in the following chapter; and in order to quicken them to this service, and engage their hearts in it, says unto them,

*the harvest truly is plenteous*; meaning the large number of God's elect, which were in these cities, towns, and villages, and in other places: not that these were maturely prepared by anything in themselves, or done by them, for the grace of God; and much less ripe for the kingdom of glory, and therefore called an harvest: but as there are the appointed weeks of the

harvest, or a set time for the harvest to be gathered in, so there is a certain fixed time, settled in the counsel, and by the purpose of God, for the effectual calling and conversion of his elect; and this time being come, with respect to these in Galilee, and other parts, Christ calls them an “harvest”; and because of their number, a large, or “plenteous” one.

*But the labourers are few:* Gospel ministers; whose calling is a laborious one; whose business is to labour in the word and doctrine; to be constant in prayer; to give up themselves to meditation and reading; to study to show themselves workmen; to preach the word in season, and out of season; and diligently discharge the several duties of their office, to the glory of Christ, and the good of souls: but such painful and laborious ministers, who are willing to spend, and be spent for Christ and immortal souls, have been but few in all ages; generally speaking, there are more loiterers than labourers.

**Ver. 38.** *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,* etc.] By “the Lord of the harvest” is either meant God the Father, whose are all the elect, who has a hearty concern for them, and will have them all gathered in, not one of them shall be left; or the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has the care and charge of the whole election of grace; and who as he must, he will bring them all in; and who has power of sending forth labourers, as the following chapter shows; and so this is a proof of prayer being made to Christ;

*that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* This is the petition the disciples of Christ were put upon making to the Lord of the harvest, on consideration of the present condition multitudes of souls were in: they could not make, qualify, and send out ministers themselves; this is not man’s work, but God’s: he only is able to furnish with ministerial gifts, to work upon, and powerfully incline the hearts of men to this service, to call and send them forth into it, and to assist and succeed them in it. The persons desired to be sent are “labourers”; faithful, diligent, and industrious preachers of the Gospel; such as lay out themselves, their time, talents, and strength, in their master’s service; and do not indulge themselves in sloth and idleness: the place they are desired to be sent into is, “into the harvest”; into the field of the world, where God’s elect lie, and there labour in preaching the Gospel; hoping for a divine blessing, and an almighty power to attend their ministrations, for the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints. The request the disciples are directed to make, concerning these persons for this work, is, that the Lord of the harvest would “send”, or “thrust” them “forth”; implying power and efficacy, and



authority, on the part of the sender; and backwardness on the part of those that are sent, through modesty: a sense of the greatness of the work, and of their own unworthiness and unfitness for it. Very opportunely did our Lord move his disciples to put up this petition, and was done, no question, with a view to, and to prepare for, his mission of the twelve to preach the Gospel, of which there is an account in the next chapter.