

**The healing of diseases, a character of the Messiah. Being the anniversary sermon preached before the Royal College of Physicians, London; on September 20, 1750 / [William Stukeley].**

**Contributors**

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THE HEALING OF HERBARD'S CHARACTER  
OF THE MESSIAH.

LX.

Dr. *STUKELER*'s

S E R M O N

BEFORE THE

COLLEGE *of* PHYSICIANS.

By *WILLIAM STUKELER, M.D.*

MDCCCL.

IX.

Dr. STUCKELEY'S

S E R M O N

BEFORE THE

COLLEGE of Physicians

MDCCL



THE HEALING OF DISEASES, A CHARACTER  
OF THE MESSIAH,

---

Being the ANNIVERSARY

S E R M O N

Preached before the

ROYAL COLLEGE of PHYSICIANS,  
LONDON;

On SEPTEMBER 20, 1750.

In the Church of

St. MARY LE-BOW:

According to the Institution of Dr. CROUNE.

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*Num dubitas, quin Specimen naturæ capi deceat ex optima quaque natura?  
quæ est igitur melior in hominum genere natura, quàm eorum qui se natos ad  
homines juvandos, tutandos, conservandos arbitrantur? Cicero Tusc. Quæst.*

---

By WILLIAM STUKELEY, M. D.

Rector of St. George's Queen-square, Fellow of the College of Physicians,  
and Royal Society.

---

L O N D O N:

Printed for C. Corbet over-against St. Dunstan's-Church in Fleetstreet.

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MDCCCL.

THE HEALING OF DISEASES, A CHARACTER  
OF THE MESSIAH.

Being the Anniversary

S E R M O N

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LONDON;

On SEPTEMBER 20, 1750.

In the Church of

St. MARTIN LE-BOW.

According to the Institution of Dr. CROON.

From whence, with Specimens Nature's self directs to select in various nature's  
the fit signs which in human frame attend, and which are the signs of  
human nature, nature's self directs to select in various nature's

By WILLIAM STUKELY, M.D.  
Fellow of St. George's Hospital, Fellow of the College of Physicians,  
and Royal Society.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. Coote over-against St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street.





T O

Dr. WILLIAM WASEY, President.

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A N D T O

The rest of the FELLOWS of  
THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, London,

This DISCOURSE, printed by their command,  
is humbly addressed,

by their respectful Colleague,

and most obedient Servant,

Sept. 21, 1750.

WILLIAM STUKELEY.



DR. WILLIAM WASEY, President.

DR. GIDEON HARVEY,  
SR. EDWARD HULSB, Baronet,  
SR. WILLIAM BROWNE, Knight,  
DR. ROBERT NEBBIT,  
DR. ABRAHAM HALL,  
DR. ABRAHAM DAWSON,  
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DR. WILLIAM BATTIE,  
DR. WILLIAM HEBDEN,  
DR. SAMUEL HORSMAN, Treasurer,  
DR. THOMAS LAWRENCE, Registrar.

AND TO  
The rest of the Fellows of  
The College of Physicians, London,  
This Decree, printed by their command,  
is humbly addressed,  
by their respectful College,  
and most obedient servant,

WILLIAM STURLEY.



A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE  
S. MATTHEW XI. 5.

*The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up: and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

THESE are the words of our blessed Savior; and belong to a history remarkable enough, and not less important. It was in the beginning of the exercise of his ministry: John Baptist being then put into prison.

Now it was, that our Savior took upon himself the character, the office destin'd him from the beginning, the Messiahship: and *that* in the most open, and public manner. After Passover, he ordains his twelve disciples; preaches that famous Ordination Sermon, the *magna charta* of christianity, commonly called, of the mount. And then by a most prodigious profusion of miracles, alarms the whole world about him. Whence the Romans in Judea, the Greeks, Phœnicians, Idumeans, Syrians, all flock to him in immense crouds; to hear his preaching, to be heal'd of their diseases, and to see so very extraordinary a person.

John Baptist himself was surpriz'd at it, whilst in prison. He sends two of his disciples to our Savior, to inquire, whether in reality he was the Messiah, the *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*; or whether they should expect another? He knew, that he himself was a forerunner of Messiah. Still he could not tell, but IESVS might be another harbinger of heaven, to introduce the great prince. He apprehended, that IESVS was to be the sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world. But probably, he had still a notion (which all the Jews were tinctur'd withal) of a glorious, a potent, and triumphant king; who was to redeem 'em from the Roman power, and conquer the universe. This seems to be the cause of the Baptist's hesitation. Besides, the profusion of  
our



## 2 A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE

our Savior's miracles astonish'd him. He himself did none. John x. 41. This it was, that made John's disciples to doubt too. Therefore he thought it prudent, to ask the master himself.

IESVS answers them in the words of our text. S. Luke relating this piece of history judiciously premises this note. *And in that same hour, he cured many of their infirmities, and of plagues, and of evil spirits: and unto many that were blind, he gave sight.* \*

Our Savior was in the midst of the croud of his patients, when John's disciples came to him. To his miraculous cures he refers them, for his answer; and for his credentials. *Go, and shew John these things.* And on a serious reflection, he will be able to satisfy himself, and you. Which is a better conviction, than when a man bears testimony of himself. John v. 31, 32.

I beg leave from the words of our text, to discourse to you on the following topics.

I. To inquire, how healing of diseases becomes one character of Messiah.

II. I shall consider the nature and manner of our Savior's cures.

III. I shall make some application, and address, on occasion of the present solemnity.

I. We are to inquire, how the healing of diseases becomes one great character of the Messiah.

The divine art of healing diseases, may well be pronounc'd the greatest gift, the most consummate blessing that God can bestow on us mortals: either as redounding to our

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\* Nor is it impossible to assign the very day of this transaction. By the course of the evangelical history, which I composed 20 years ago from a correct harmony of the gospels, wherein I have assigned above 100 particular days of our Savior's transactions; I find it was the day after our Savior rais'd the widow's son at Nain: viz. wednesday 31 May, in the vulgar year of Christ 30: but in the 34th year of his true age.



own emolument; or as in common, a benefit to mankind. For what are all the advantages and acquirements of mind, body, or fortune, without health? Propose any of the pleasures, or profits, or honors of this life, to a man under the raging pains of the gout, or the fire of a fever: he will turn a deaf ear. Tell him of celestial happiness, in a glorious futurity. The most cogent argument you can use, would be to release him of his present pain. We open an agreeable and a ready way to the inmost recesses of a man's heart and affections, whilst we administer to his bodily health. And *that* doctrine will then be seasonable, will be relished, which enables him to relish all the other felicities and blessings of life.

This was our Savior's method, as it were of opening his commission, of calling the crouds to the welcome news of the gospel; the glad tidings from heaven; the last revelation of God's will to mankind; the assurance of a happy immortality to those that embrace it. Before this, he had the testimony of John Baptist: but he says, *I have greater witness than that of John. For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* John v. 36.

But the authority of the Baptist, proclaiming the divinity of Christ's person and office; the dry lectures of morality; or the sublime doctrines of the gospel, meekness, chastity, sobriety, patience, forgiveness of injuries, returning good for evil; even the reverfionary promises of future happiness: all these would not have brought so numerous an attendance; without the allurements of an immediate relief from corporal disorders.

He added therefore to his preaching, the healing of diseases. Both did act separately, and conjointly, to carry on his beneficent purpose. He could not otherwise have so insinuated himself into their favor, as to be able successfully



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to introduce his heavenly doctrine. The Samaritans, a nation beyond measure at enmity with the Jews, after he had staid two days with them, tho' he did no miracle among them; yet they say, *Now we have heard him ourselves, we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.* John iv. 42. And thus with his divine eloquence, and his healing hand, he captivated the world around him.

*And IESUS went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people.*

*And his fame went through all Syria. And they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments; and all those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them.* Matth. iv. 24.

*And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan, and from Idumea, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon.* Mark iii. 8.

This was the state of that part of the world at the beginning of the gospel, called *the beginning of the kingdom of heaven.* Luke xvi. 16. xix. 11. *the gospel of the kingdom;* when John Baptist sent this message to our Savior. He made use of this method of healing diseases, not only as agreeable to the reason of things, and the best means of attaining the proposed end; but it was pointed out, in innumerable prophecies, as one of the primary characters of the Messiah.

I shall exhibit an easy proof of it only from that most noble and eloquent writer, Isaiah, deservedly stiled the evangelical prophet; who paints the whole life, doctrine, and death of our blessed Savior, in such lively colors, that one would take it for a history. In loftiness of stile, beyond  
all



all controversy, the sacred Writings are the first. In the historical, Moses is superlatively eminent: in the poetical, David. But Isaiah has united them both in the prophetic. And the force of language cannot go further.

Isaiah xxxv. 4. *Behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*

*Then shall the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.* And so on to the end of the chapter. A plain description of the time we are now speaking of, concerning John Baptist, and our Savior beginning to preach.

Again xxix. 18. *In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book; and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and darkness.*

*And the meek shall joy in Jehovah, and the poor rejoice in the holy one of Israel.*

Again xlii. A graphical description of our Savior, *to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners, and them that sit in darkness.*

16. *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. I will make darkness light before them.*

18. *Hear ye deaf; and look ye blind, that ye may see.* Again xliii. 8. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18.

And thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness; and this in the most extensive manner possible, by preaching, and by that godlike and most excellent charity, of restoring the greatest of blessings, health; the use of our organs, limbs, and faculties! Nay he went further, he snatched the living from the captivity of the Devil, and the dead from the horrors of the grave. And this brings us

II. To consider the nature and the manner of our Savior's cures.



## 6 A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE

In general we must premise, they were all confessedly miraculous; and yet sometimes he seemed to use natural means, as it were to take off the surprize. John ix. He made a liniment of a little clay and spittle, with which he anointed the man's eyes; and after that, he sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam, upon which he was restored.

Another time, he was graciously pleased to heal a man, waiting for a long time to wash in the pool of Bethesda, John v. 4. where an Angel occasionally imparted a medicinal virtue to the water. From which history we may thus remark, as it is of particular use to what follows in our discourse.

Just before our Savior's advent, the Spirit of God, which had long been silent in his supernatural agency with the Jewish church, began by little and little to exert himself in a miraculous manifestation, to prepare for the great approach. An Angel appeared to Zacharias in the Temple \*; to the Virgin Mary †; to Joseph ‡: Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, Luke i. 41. Zacharias the like, ver. 67. Simeon, Luke ii. 25. Anna, ver. 36. Caiaphas the Highpriest, John xi. So Angels appeared to the shepherds in the field of Bethlehem, Luke ii. 9. to the Magi a miraculous star, and an Angel, Matth. ii. 12.

But to return to the manner of our Savior's cures. Mark viii. 22. he twice touched a man's eyes with his spittle. He that formed the wondrous texture of the eye, could render it an infallible *collyrium*. Blind Bartimeus, and his companion, he restored, by the ceremony of touching their eyes, Matth. xx. 34. So he healed Malchus's ear by touching it, Luke xxii. 51. He healed a leprous person by touching him, Matth. viii. 2. Mark i. 40. iii. 10. Luke v. 12. vi. 19. He touched the man whom every one

\* Luke i. 11. † Luke i. 26. ‡ Matth. i. 20. ii. 13, 19, 22.



## THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS. 7

one else avoided; to show, that infection could not reach him: the man was clean in the act of touching. It was easy for such a one to make his way through the croud. He kneels down and modestly says, *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Our divine physician answers him, but touches him first, *I will, be thou clean.* He prevents his hope, tho' not his faith: He touched a clean body, says Origen, upon this occasion.

Luke xvii. 11. He sent some lepers to show themselves to the high priest. They went with eager haste, thinking the sight of the pontiff was to cure them, but the true pontiff surpris'd them on the road; they found themselves whole.

Mark vii. 31. A deaf and dumb man: he put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue with spittle.

Luke xiii. 11. He heals the woman bowed together, by laying his hands on her.

He healed many only by the touch of his garment. Mark iii. 10. Luke vi. 19. Matt. ix. 20.

A man with a withered hand, he bids him stretch it forth; which was the cure. Matt. xii. 10.

Most commonly he heals his patients by a word, when present; sometimes when absent: as the nobleman's son at Capernaum. Luke vii. They found that the fever left him, just at the time that he spoke. The like of the Roman centurion's servant. Matt. viii. 5. our Savior offer'd to go to his house, but so sensible was the polite soldier of his all-powerful word, that he only desired him to *speak* the cure. The like of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter, who was demoniac. Matt. xv. 28.

And this leads us to that famous controversy among the learned; the case of demoniacism: which it is necessary for us to consider. 'Tis degrading the dignity of Christ's divine mission, in a high degree, to spirit away the real, historical fact; in thinking it was only a disease. If

we



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we admit the evangelical history to be just and true, we must hold it to be literally understood. And if we give it the same fair usage, which any other history demands, the evidence both internal, and external, is unexceptionable.

To state the case, and set it in as plain a light as our time will admit of.

1. I observe, in regard to the external evidence. The question commonly agitated about this matter, is whether it was a real distemper, or a possession by an evil spirit? in answer, I say it was both. But the question I propose to discuss is this, whether it was a natural distemper only; but call'd demoniacism, in the sense that the ancient physicians meant, when they call'd a disease by the name of sacred, or divine; in regard to the portentous nature, and symptoms discernible therein? and here I hold in the negative.

I must needs understand the scripture literally, and historically. There is as much evidence for it, as of Cæsar's commentaries, Tacitus, or any other writer: nay I may say more. Because we have the four evangelists compiling the same history; agreeable in their testimony, of undoubted veracity, not writing in concert: and this, concerning matters notorious, done before millions of people, in a learned age, and in a country full of strangers, from all nations of the world.

Those that deny our Savior's cures to be supernatural, are to be pronounc'd incurable. Against such we pretend not to argue; but as to demoniacism, that it was real, we can scarce desire a better proof than the confession of enemies; and of those that lived at, or near the time, when such cures were perform'd. We have the acknowledgment of Julian the emperor, than whom there could not be a bitterer adversary: one too learned, too subtle, too solicitous not to be deceiv'd, or dubious in such a matter. Thus quoted by S. Cyril L. vi. Julian says, "Jesus indeed has been celebrated  
" by



“ by a few ordinary people, for about these 300 years. He did  
 “ nothing extraordinary during the whole course of his life,  
 “ except that he cured a few lame, and blind folks; and  
 “ exorcised some demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida, and  
 “ Bethany.” Here we see Julian fairly owns, not only demoniacism in general, but likewise the distinction between that and the natural disease.

We have likewise the confession of the Jews, as great enemies as Julian: they accused him of performing it by the help of magic. We may add the confession of the devils themselves, who believed and trembled at our Savior’s power; both whilst he was on earth, and for some ages after: they acknowledging and fearing his name. As is fully evident from the authority of Tertullian, Minutius, Cyprian, Theophilus, and others, which may largely be quoted.

2. As to the reason of the thing, I argue, if we allow Providence to act agreeably to reason, it must needs appear a prudent measure, worthy of the wisdom of God, in order to compass the proposed end; more particularly about that age of the world, which was to be honor’d with the great advent. We observed before, that the holy spirit had began to make a preparative advance; that he might not come as it were, abruptly into the world. And now it became Providence to permit the evil Agent, ever alert and ready for mischief, to wreck his malice upon these wicked, unhappy people; on purpose that our blessed Savior’s power might become more conspicuous. That he might triumph not only over distempers, by his divine word, but what is infinitely of more service to us, over the devil and his infernal agents. John ix. 2. This argument is strongly inforc’d by our Savior himself.

3. Let us consider the internal evidence; what plainly arises from the cases themselves. The holy penmen evidently distinguish them from common diseases, over and over.



over. We cited a note which St. Luke premises to the history referr'd to, in the words of our text. vii. 21.

*And in that same time he cured many of their infirmities, and of their plagues, and of evil spirits.*

St. Matt. iv. 24. *They brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them,*

Again viii. 16. *They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.*

Mark i. 32. *They brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils.*

Luke iv. 40. *All they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many.*

Luke vi. 17. *They came to be healed of their diseases: And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.* vii. 21.

Luke viii. 2. *Certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities.* And this distinction between demoniacism and the distemper, is sufficient answer to all that Mr. Joseph Mede says on this head: for the very words of his text show it. John x. 20. *He hath a devil, and is mad.* They meant, the man was demoniac, with symptoms of lunacy rais'd by the devil. Matt. iv. 24. *All those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy.* καὶ δαιμονιζομένους καὶ σεληνιαζομένους, καὶ παραλυτικούς, καὶ ἐξερράπειυσεν αὐτούς. 'Tis apparent, beyond any possible contradiction, that lunacy, and palsy, and demoniacism are distinct diseases; yet lunacy or palsy may be join'd to demoniacism, or caused by it.

Moreover



Moreover our Savior himself distinguishes them from common diseases, in his commission to the apostles, after he had ordained them. Mark ii. 15. he gives them *power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils*. Matt. x. 1. he gave them *power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease*.

Ver. 8. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils*. Luke ix. 1.

In consequence of this commission, Mark. vi, 13. *They cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them*.

Acts viii. 7. After our Savior's ascension the apostles did the like; *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed*.

So after our Savior's time, Irenæus writes, II. 56, 57, "the christians truly cast out devils, and heal the sick by imposition of hands."

Origen contra Celsum I. writes, "they cast out devils, and heal many diseases." Tertullian *ad Scap.* 4. says, "how many honest men have by us been healed, and freed from devils?"

Innumerable passages of like nature to be quoted from the primitive writers. There is a constant distinction made between simple diseases and demoniacism. At length, by degrees, as the purpose of these miraculous powers ceased, they ceased.

4. Therefore, according to my first assumption, we must reasonably affirm, that these were real distempers; and at the same time the effect of diabolical possession. *i. e.* They were diseases raised by evil spirits. For what was the purpose of these hellish agents? it was not for the good of the unhappy persons into whom they were entred; it was not to give them pleasure; but to anticipate their loved labor



of tormenting. How could they do this effectually but by causing a disease? and to do that still more effectually, a nervous disease, the cruellest of all: torturing without killing. This was wrecking malice infernal; agitating the animal spirits into the depth of horror, despair, melancholy, frenzy, hypochondriacism, hysterics, affrighted imagination, epilepsy, convulsions, lunacy; crowding all mortal miseries into one. These cases, in their ordinary, their separate, their common state, are deplorable indeed; but what are they when urged by a spiritual being, whose cruelty is equal to his nature, and his power!

A stoppage of insensible perspiration, of any wonted evacuation, errors in the nonnaturals, too free use of spirituous liquors, riotous living, violent exercise, affections of the mind, passion, grief, immoderate joy, will accelerate the pulse, cause a fever and inflammations: these will fall upon the nervous system, so as to excite those dire appearances we have just mentioned. Is it nor easy for a spiritual agent to affect the blood and animal juices, of one abandon'd by providence, so as to produce all this? and this was the case of demoniacism in the gospel. Sometimes they appeared with noisy, furious, and raving symptoms; sometimes with sorrow; moping, and silent; rendring the poor creatures both deaf and dumb, through a relaxation of their nerves. Sometimes they contracted their limbs through convulsions, as in the woman who had been bowed together eighteen years. Luke xiii. 11.

It requires no great knowledge in philosophy or physick, to understand so plain a matter; it requires no more faith than any common history, related by an honest writer of reasonable capacity: The devils actuated the limbs, blood and organs of the miserable wretches.

'Tis childish to say, because we don't see a supernatural agency in the conduct of providence now-a-days, therefore,  
there



there never was such. To those with whom nought but miracles will pass for arguments, I will point out a plain and obvious one, which they may behold every day of their lives, I mean the nation of the Jews. They and the Arabians are the only two ancient nations upon earth, that can be traced out to their original stem, the immediate descendants of faithful Abraham; who believed in the Messiah as many years before his advent, as we do now after. But the Jews in particular, are plainly a standing miracle, a perpetual monument of the veracity of the holy scriptures, both of the old and new testament; too great for time itself to deface.

5. Another argument may very fairly be deduced from this consideration, that some of the Jews themselves did eject devils at that time. Mark ix. 38. John the apostle says to our Lord, *Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us.* Matt. vii. 22. Luke ix. 49.

Matt. xii. 27. *Jesus saith, If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?*

And that both Jews and other nations had a true notion of men being possessed with devils, may be proved from the plain testimonies of Josephus, Irenæus, who lived but a century after Christ; Justin martyr, Suidas, Origen, and others: from whence it may be incontestably shown, that this power remained in the church, till about Constantine's time; then the reason and necessity of it ceasing, the gift ceased. The argument equally shows it to have been necessary till then.

We may observe why God Almighty was pleased, in the time of our blessed Savior, to give this extraordinary licence to the wicked spirits, to apprize mankind of their malice and subtilty; and because our Savior was sufficiently able to oppose their power, and subdue them.

So in the time of Moses, when he wrought his great and fearful miracles before Pharoah and all his court; God was



then pleased too to permit the magicians to do great feats by the help of the devil, and only less works than Moses did. Thus we read, Exod. vii. 11. The magicians cast down their rods as well as Moses, and they became serpents; but Moses's serpent eat them up. When Moses turn'd the water into blood, the magicians did the same. But when Moses made lice out of dust, the assistance of the devil fail'd in so contemptible an animal: 'twas a sarcasm upon them.

Then the magicians said to Pharoah, *This is the finger of God!* All this permission tended but to magnify God's power.

This same reasoning, by a true analogy, fully opens to us God's purpose, in regard to demoniacs in the gospel: the power of the devil oppos'd to our Savior's miracles. It is agreeable to the philosophy in the natural world, where attraction and repulsion, action and reaction, are the great springs that conserve the mighty frame of the universe.

In the acts of the apostles, and in the times succeeding the earliest ages of the church; whilst the Holy Ghost thought fit to continue the gift of miracles; so long we find a concomitant licence to the devil to oppose them, in a visible manner.

And is not the reason conspicuous enough, why now his hands are tyed up; that we are secure from his open insult? This whole affair, when maturely considered, is a wise, a good, and a beautiful ordination of divine providence.

6. We may again argue very pertinently from this circumstance: That the evil spirits, who had powers and faculties superior to mere man, knew our Savior; knew his person, office, and dignity: when it is not reasonable to suppose, that the unfortunate possessed could know him. Luke iv. 41. *And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered'em not to speak, for they knew that he was the Messiah.*

Mark



Mark. i. 23. *There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.* Luke v. 33.

Mark i. 32. *They brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils; and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.*

Mark iii. 11. *And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.*

Nothing can be a more unexceptionable proof of this point, than the famous history of the possessed, in the country of the Gadarenes, where our Savior was an absolute stranger. The country was not inhabited by Jews, who might be supposed to be tinctur'd with a popular notion of possessions. Both city and country were Heathens, Syrians, Arabians, Greeks, and Romans. Gadara was a decapollitan city, and metropolis, rebuilt some time before by Pompey, in the year of Rome 690, the same year Pompey attacked Jerusalem. Josephus informs us about it. Many old coins are extant of this city, in cardinal Norris's excellent book *de epochis Syromacedonum*: in Vaillant; and in Patin. This was just 10 years before Julius Cæsar invaded Britain.

Matth. viii. 29. *The evil spirits ran to him at a distance, cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God: art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* The Devils knew him, tho' the poor men could not possibly know him. They had been long separated from human conversation, had lived in the tombs and desarts. 'Tis impossible to invalidate the force of this argument.



7. If we reflect on the general circumstances of these histories of the Demoniacs, we cannot want any reasonable conviction of the distemper's being the effect of evil Spirits, not simple diseases. Such as our Savior's holding converse with the Devils, asking them, What is thy name? they answer, *legion*; his reproving them, commanding them *to hold their peace*, Mark iii. 11. *to go out of the men*; that they should not make him known; that they should enter no more into them, Mark v. 8. ix. 25. their expostulating with him, begging he would not *destroy them, torment them*, Luke iv. 33. viii. 28. S. Mark expresses it, *all the devils besought him, that he would not send them out of the country*: their crying, Mark ix. 26. his casting seven Devils out of Mary Magdalen. Luke viii. 2. *one that had been tormented with devils a long time*. Luke viii. 27. *one for eighteen years space*.

These are circumstances, predicaments, that must be understood of realities, not phantoms. Can we suppose our divine physician talk'd only to a disease, or to the distemper'd fancies of the patients? or only humor'd the mistaken notions of the Jews, and other people that were not Jews? All this is infinitely below his character. Nor can an honest and grave historian relate it as fact, throughout his whole work. Nor can S. Luke, a physician himself, a person of exquisite learning, be led away, as the other Evangelists might, with a popular error.

When the Devils parly with our Savior, and beg *he would permit them to go into the swine*. Matth. viii. 31. Must we think the mere patient begg'd this favor? When the swine were agitated with the same Demoniacism as the two men, was it a mere distemper? Was it ever known that any infectious illness should take a herd of 2000 animals instantaneously, and all at once?

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When Devils are said to throw the poor people down, *and tear them*; when our Savior speaks of ejected *spirits wandring about in dry places*; of taking seven other Spirits more wicked than themselves, and reentring possession, Luke xi. 24. these are historical personalities, not notional. If they are not so understood, so intended to be understood, then we must abandon common sense, common language, and conclude there is no logic, no such thing as historical narration, no faith, no truth in any thing we say or do.

But this affair does not rest only on the evangelical writers. In after-times, Justin Martyr, in his address to the Roman Senate, stakes the whole credit of the Christian faith upon this faculty of ejecting Devils, in the most public manner. Tertullian the same, in his apology.

After all, what is the reason of this scepticism, as to this particular of real Demoniacism? when 'tis impossible to deny the cure to be miraculous, tho' we grant the disease to be purely natural. Is it more difficult, by a supernatural power, to eject a Devil, than to cure a disease? Therefore the foundation of this doubt is as weak, as it is unmeaning; and could a victory be obtained, the triumph is vain. 'Tis as the Jews quarrelling with our Savior for pretending to forgive sins: at the same instant as he was confessedly healing a man by a miracle, before their eyes.

III. We are to make some application of what has been said, and address, on occasion of the present solemnity.

1. The first and most obvious proof is this, that I E S V S is the Messiah. The prophets most glaringly predicted his healing diseases in a supernatural manner. He most notoriously fulfilled their predictions.

2. 'Tis of no mean consequence to mankind to know, that our Savior, in his human capacity, was able to cope with  
with



with the Devil's unrestrained malice. 'Tis an encouragement to us to withstand his more impotent suggestions and infebled power.

3. Of all the learned arts, none can deserve the public esteem more, than that of the physician: For *of the most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honor of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, and in the sight of great men shall he be in admiration*, says the son of Sirach. Julian the emperor writes, the art of medicin was deservedly, by the philosophers, said to have descended from Heaven.

It cannot receive a higher sanction, than that it was one primary character of the Messiah. And of this, even in heathen antiquity, we find there was notice; which must have been derived from some prophetic reports deliver'd down from the former ages of the world. Hence it was they form'd their deity Apollo, the son of Jupiter, the father of medicin. In Apollo are very many notorious characters of Messiah, which our present subject requires us not to enlarge upon.

Tho' we cannot cure diseases by the same method as our Savior did, yet 'tis glorious enough for us, that he has given us the natural means, the herbs and drugs of such wonderful qualities and virtues, as will do it in most deplorable, morbid circumstances. *The Lord hath created medicins out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them.* Our sin and folly is generally the cause of diseases. Let us repent, and amend of them, and then *call in the aid of the physician, for the Lord hath created him. There is a time when in their hands there is good success; for they shall also pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that which they give for ease, and remedy to prolong life.*

Here, my beloved brethren, we see the duty of the patient, and of the physician, set in its just light. And 'tis evident



evident how much a religious physician may do, toward healing the moral diseases of his patient, as well as the natural. A truly glorious imitation of our blessed Savior's example! And we see how much it behoves a physician to merit a blessing upon his endeavours, as well for the patient's sake, as his own, by his attachment to the duties of religion.

4. As the physicians have the honor to be followers of our Savior in the practice of the medicinal art, it behoves us to take notice of one of his customs in that particular. To the Jews, God almighty was pleased upon the *Exodus* to republish the sanctity of the Sabbath, with the rest of the moral laws of the Decalogue, in the terrific pomp of mount Sinai. The Sabbath is the essence, the foundation, the soul of all the rest. He was pleased to give a further sanction to it, when for 40 years together, during their abode in the wilderness, they were supply'd with bread from Heaven. John vi. 31. On the Sabbath they had not so much as the trouble of gathering it, that they might be less hindered from attending on the duty of the day. When the Jews were possessed of the land of Canaan, their beneficent leader gave them the standing miracle of the Sabbath year: wherein they were to use no works of agriculture; having a superabundant crop given them the preceding year.

Notwithstanding this wonderful favor of Heaven, the Jews, toward the end of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, became scandalously negligent of their duty in both particulars. On the Sabbath-day they would drive their carts to market, and traffic; and on the Sabbath year they would plow their ground, and sow.

To punish them for this shameful and stupid breach of duty, God was pleased to deliver the whole Nation over into a most miserable captivity, under the Babylonian monarch. And this lasted for 70 years, till the time was com-

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pleted:



pleted: the aggregate of all the Sabbaths and Sabbatic years which they had so foolishly, as well as wickedly, defecrated. That they who would not attend on the delightful duty of paying their adoration to so kind a Proveditor, might, by an exact retribution, spend that same time in the most abject thralldom.

After they had been thus severely disciplined, upon their return (so difficult is it to preserve the golden medium) they ran into a contrary extreme. So scrupulously and injudiciously exact were they become in keeping the Sabbath, that they would not suffer a physician to perform the duties of his function on that day. Luke xiv. 3.

Hence it is so often, in the evangelical history, we find them cavilling at our Savior on this account. His custom was never to omit the Sabbatical service at the Synagogue, wherever he was. Matth. iv. 24. ix. 35. Mark vi. 2. Luke iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10. and very many other places.

Matt. xii. 10. Mark iii. 2. Luke vi. 6. A man appeared before him there with a wither'd hand; the Jews watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day. Tho' he knew their malice, yet he cured the man, and gives them the *rationale* of the practice. As likewise John vii. 22. John v. 8. Another instance. Our Savior having withdrawn himself, they fell upon his patient, *It is the sabbath day, it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.* ver. 16. *They sought to slay I E S U S because he had healed him on the sabbath day.* Luke xiv. 1. An hydropic thus cured. John xix. 14. A man born blind. Luke xiii. 14. xiv. 1. A diabolic spirit, which had bowed a woman double, and others.

Our Savior seems studiously to obviate this wretched notion of the Jews: to join mercy, and sacrifice; to heal in the very temple, and in the synagogues. And the apostles afterward imitated his example. Acts iii. And thus it becomes a christian physician to perform his duty of visiting the sick on sabbath days; and as much as all possible convenience



venience will admit, not to leave the other duty undone; that of making his approaches to God's holy temple.

5. Imitate then, my beloved brethren, the great founder of our religion. Pursue the steps of St. Luke the beloved physician. Remember we the founder of our royal College, the good Linacre: as remarkable for his love of religion, as of his profession, and his zeal for the perpetual stability of the faculty. He completed his illustrious character by entering into holy orders; and dy'd a dignitary of the church. Adopt the sentiments of the celebrated author of *religio medici*. Reflect upon the memory of the excellent Willis, who frequented the public morning prayers before he went forth to visit his patients: and left a fund to support that service, in St. Martin's church.

And with particular gratitude we commemorate the piety of the author of this day's solemnity, Dr. Croune, whose religious designation was completed by his widow and executrix Lady Sadleir \*. Proceed in the path of these, and others our illustrious predecessors: and by your art preserve even remote posterity to follow your examples: That as the perfection of physick is justly to be attributed to our own time, and country; we may not fail to render the character consummate, in that of the truly christian physician.

To almighty God the giver of all good things; to our blessed Savior the divine physician; to the most holy Spirit, the illuminator, be ascribed, as is justly due, all possible adoration, thanksgiving, power, and glory, now, and for ever. Amen.

\* He was of the ancient family of the Crounes which came in with William the conqueror; and were seated at Freeston by Boston. They founded the priory there, subjected to the great abby of Croyland. I gave their genealogy in *Itinerarium Curiosum*, p. 23.











