

8040 - MEDITATION 33

8040: Meditation 33⁶¹

Mt 7:1-5

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Mt 7:1: Do not judge and you will not be judged;

v. 2: because the judgments you give are the judgments you will get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given.

v. 3: Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own?

v. 4: How dare you say to your brother, Let me take the splinter out of your eye, when all the lime there is a plank in your own.

v. 5: Hypocrite! take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brothers eye.

8041: Mt 7:1: Do not judge, and you will not be judged.

What then? Ought we not to blame them that sin? Because Paul also said this self-same thing, or rather, there, too, it is Christ, speaking by Paul, and saying: Rm 14:10: Why do you judge your brother? And you, why do you set at naught you brother? and, v. 4: It is not for you to condemn someone else's servant. And again, Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come. 1 Co 4:5.

How, then, does He say elsewhere, 2 Tm 4:2: Reprove, rebuke, exhort, and 1 Tm 5:20: them that sin, rebuke before all. And Christ, too, to Peter: Mt 18:15: Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. And if he listens, you have gained a brother. v. 16: And if he does not listen, add to yourself one or two others also...v. 17: And if he does not listen to them, declare it to the Church likewise. And how has He set over us so many to reprove; and not only to reprove, but also to punish?

8042: For him that hearkens to none of these, He has commanded to be as a heathen and a publican [cf. Mt 18:17]. And how did He give them the keys also? since if they are not to judge, they will be without authority in any matter, and in vain have they received the power to bind and loose. And besides, if this were to obtain, all would be lost alike, whether in churches, or in states, or in houses. For except the master judge the servant, and the mistress the maid, and the father the son, and friends one another, there will be an increase of all wickedness. And why, I say, friends? unless we judge our enemies, we shall never be able to put an end to our enmity, but all things will be turned upside down.

8043: What, then, can the saying be? Let us carefully attend, lest the medicines of salvation and the laws of peace, be accounted by any man laws of overthrow and confusion. First of all, then, even by what follows, He has pointed out to them that they have understanding the excellency of this law, saying,

⁶¹ Fr. Bertoni's Meditation 33 is based on Chrysostom's Homily XXIII.

Why do you behold the mote that is in your brother's eye, but consider not the beam that is in your own eye? But if to many of the less attentive, it seem yet rather obscure, I will endeavor to explain it from the beginning.

8044: In this place, then, as it seems at least to me, He does not simply command us not to judge any of men's sins, neither does He simply forbid the doing of such a thing, but to them that are full of innumerable ills, and are tramping upon other men for trifles. And I think that certain Jews, too, are here hinted at, for that while they were bitter accusing their neighbors for small faults, and such as came to nothing, they were themselves insensibly committing deadly sins. Herewith, towards the end also He was upbraiding them, when He said, Mt 23:4: You bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, but you will not move them with your finger. And, v. 23: You pay tithe of mint and arise, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.

8045: Well, I think that the Jews are comprehended in His invective; that He is checking them beforehand as to those things, wherein they were hereafter to accuse His disciples. For although His disciples had been guilty of no such sin, yet in them were supposed to be offenses; as, for instance, not keeping the Sabbath, eating with unwashen hands, sitting at meat with publicans; of which He said also in another place, You who strain the gnat, and swallow the camel, Mt 22:24. But yet it is also a general law that He is laying down on these matters. And the Corinthians, too, Paul, 1 Co 4:3, ff., did not absolutely command not to judge. His command was not to judge their own superiors, and upon grounds that are not acknowledged; not absolutely to refrain correction them that sin

8046: Neither indeed was He then rebuking all without distinction, but disciples doing so to their teachers are the object of His reproof; and they who, being guilty of innumerable sins, bring an evil report upon the guiltless. This, then, is the sort of thing which Christ also in this place intimated; not intimated merely, but guarded it too with a great terror, and the punishment from which no prayers can deliver:

Mt 7:2; For with what judgment you judge, He said, you shall be judged.

That is, it is not the other, Christ said, that you condemn, but yourself, and you are making the judgment-seat dreadful to yourself, and the account strict. As then in the forgiveness of our sins the beginnings are from us, so also in this judgment, it is by ourselves that the measures of our condemnation are laid down.

8047: You see, we ought not to upbraid, nor trample upon them, but to admonish; not to revile, but to advise; not to assail with pride, but to correct with tenderness. [What will judge the judge?]

For not him, but yourself, do you give over to extreme vengeance, by not sparing him, when it may be needful to give sentence on his offenses.

Do you see how these two commandments are both easy, fraught with great blessings to the obedient, even as of evils on the other hand, to the regardless? For both he that forgives his neighbor, has freed himself first of the two from the grounds of complaint, and that without any labor; and he that with tenderness and indulgence

inquires into other men's offenses, great is the allowance of pardon, which he has by his judgment laid up beforehand for himself.

8048: - What, then, one might say, if one commit fornication, may I not say that fornication is a bad thing, nor at all correct him that is playing the wanton?

- No, correct him, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines. For neither Christ did say, Stay not him that is sinning, but, judge not; that is, be not bitter in pronouncing sentence. And besides it is not of great things, as I have already observed, nor of things prohibited, that this is said, but of those which are not even counted offenses. Wherefore He said also:

Mt 7:3: Why do you behold the mote that is in your brother's eye, and you do not see the beam in your own?

8049: Yes, for many now do this; if they see but a monk wearing an unnecessary garment, they produce against him the law of our Lord, while they themselves are extorting without end, and defrauding men every day. If they see him but partaking rather largely of food, they become bitter accusers, while they themselves are daily drinking to excess and surfeiting: not knowing that besides their own sins, they do hereby gather up for themselves a greater flame, and deprive themselves of every plea. For on this point, that your own doings must be strictly inquired into, you yourself has first made the law, by thus sentencing those of your neighbor. Account it not then to be a grievous thing, if you are also yourself to undergo the same kind of trial.

8050: Mt 7:5: You hypocrite! First cast out the beam from your own eye!

Here His will is to signify the great wrath, which He has against them that do such things. For so, wheresoever He would indicate that the sin is great, and the punishment and wrath in store for it grievous, He begins with a reproach. As then unto him that was exacting the hundred pence, He said in his deep displeasure, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, Mt 18:12. Even so here, You hypocrite! For not of protecting care comes such a judgment, but of ill will to man; and while a man puts forward a mask of benevolence, he is doing a work of the utmost wickedness, causing reproaches without ground, and accusations, to cleave unto his neighbor's, and usurping a teacher's rank, when he is not worthy to be so much as a disciple. On account of this He called him 'hypocrite.' For you, who in other men's doings art so bitter, as to see even the little things; how have you become so remiss in your own, as that even the great things are hurried over by you?

8051: First cast the beam of out your own eye. Mt 7:5.

Do you see, that He forbids not judging, but commands to cast out first the beam from your eye, and then to set right the doings of the rest of the world? For indeed each one knows his own things better than those of others; and sees the greater rather than the less; and loves himself more than his neighbor. Wherefore, if you do it out of guardian care, I bid you care for yourself first, in whose case the sin is both more certain and greater. But, if you neglect yourself, it is quite evident that neither do you judge your brother in care for him, but in hatred, and wishing to expose him. For what if he ought to be judged? it should be by one who commits no such sin, not by you.

8052: Thus, because He had introduced great and high doctrines of self denial, lest any man should say, it is easy to practice it in words; He willing to signify His entire confidence, and that He was not chargeable with any of the things that had been mentioned, but had only fulfilled all, spoke this parable. And that, because He, too, was afterwards to judge, saying, Mt 23:14: Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Yet, was not he chargeable with what has been mentioned; for neither did He pull out a mote, nor had He a beam on His eyes, but being clean from all these, He so corrected the faults of all For it is not at all meet, He said, to judge others when one is chargeable with the same things.

8053: And why marvel at his establishing this law, when even the very thief knew it upon the cross, saying to the other thief, Lk 23:40: Do you not fear God, seeing we are in the same condemnation, expressing the same sentiments with Christ? But you, so far from casting out your own beam, do not even see it, but another's mote you not only see, but also judge, and try to cast it out; as if any one seized with a grievous dropsy, or indeed with any other incurable disease, were to neglect this, and find fault with another who was neglecting a slight swelling. And if it be an evil not to see one's own sins, it is a two-fold and threefold evil to be even sitting in judgment on others, while men themselves, as if past feeling, are bearing about beams in their own eyes: since no beam is so heavy as sin.

8054: His injunction, therefore, in these words is as follows, that he who is chargeable with countless evil deeds, should not be a bitter censor of other men;s offenses, and especially when these are trifling. He is not overthrowing reproof nor correction, but forbidding men to neglect their own faults, and exult over those of other men. For indeed this was a cause of men's going into great vice, bringing in a twofold wickedness. For he, whose practice it had been to slight his own faults, great as they were, and to search bitterly into those of others, being slight and of no account, was spoiling himself two ways: first, by thinking lightly of his own faults; next, by incurring enmities and feuds with all men, and faults, and training himself every day to extreme fierceness, and want of feeling for others...⁶².

+
+++
+

⁶² Fr. Bertoni ends abruptly his Meditation 33, with still many pages left to Chrysostom's Homily XXIII, which will supply the material for Fr. Bertoni's last interventions in this series, Meditations 34 & 35.

8055 - MEDITATION 34

8055: Meditation 34

Mt 7: 6-12

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Mt 7:6: Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.

v. 7: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.

v. 8: For the one who asks, always receives; the one who searches, always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.

v. 9: Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread?

v. 10: Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish?

v. 11: If you, then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

v. 12: So, always treat others as you like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and prophets.

8056: Mt 7:6: Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not through your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and the turn on you and tear you to pieces.

- Yet, further on , it will be said, He commanded, Mt 10:27: What you have heard in the ear, that preach upon the housetops.

- But, this is in no wise contrary to the former. For neither in that place did He simply command to tell all men, but to whom it should be spoken, to them He bade speak with freedom.

And 'by dogs': here He figuratively described them that are living in incurable ungodliness, and affording no hope of change for the better.

8057: And by "swine": He means them that abide continually in an unchaste life, all of whom He has pronounced unworthy of hearing such thing. Paul also, it may be observed, declared this when he said, 1 Co 2:14: But a natural man receives not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him. And in many other places, too, He said that corruption of life is the cause of men's not receiving the more perfect doctrines, cf. Ph 3:4. Wherefore, He commands not to open the doors to them; for indeed they become more insolent after learning. For as to the well-disposed and intelligent, things appear venerable when revealed, so to the insensible, when they are unknown rather. Since then from their nature, they are not able to learn them, let the thing be hidden, He said, that at least for ignorance they may reverence them. For neither does the swine know at all what a pearl is. Therefore, since he knows not, neither let him see it, lest he trample under foot what he knows not. For nothing results, beyond greater mischief to them that are so disposed when they hear; for both the holy things are profaned by them, not knowing what they are; and they are the more lifted up and armed against us.

8058: For this is meant by: lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. No, surely, one said, they ought to be so strong as to remain equally impregnable after men's learning them, and not to yield to other people occasions against us. But it is not the things that yield it, but that these men are swine; even as when the pearl is trampled under foot, it is not so trampled, because it is really contemptible, but because it fell among you. And beautifully did He say: turn again and rend you; for they feign gentleness so as to be taught; then, after they have learned, quite changing from one sort to another, they jeer, mock, and deride us, as deceived persons. Therefore, Paul also said to Timothy, 2 Tm 4:15: Of whom be you wary also; for he has greatly withstood our words. And again, ibi 3:5: From such, turn away; and, Tt 3:10: A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.

8059: It is not, you see, that those truths furnish them with armor, but they become fools with this way of their own accord, being filled with this way of their own accord, being filled with more willfulness. On this account, it is no small gain for them to abide in ignorance, for so they are not such entire scorers. But if they learn, the mischief is twofold. For neither will they themselves be at all profited thereby, but rather the more damaged, and to you they will cause endless difficulties.

Let them hearken, who shamelessly associate with all, and make the awful things contemptible. For the mysteries we too, therefore celebrate with closed doors, and keep out the uninitiated, not for any weakness of which we have convicted our rites, but because the many are as yet imperfectly prepared for them. For this very reason, He Himself also discoursed much unto the Jews in parables, because they seeing, saw not. For this, Paul likewise commanded, to know how we ought to answer every man. Col 4:6.

8060: Mt 7:7: Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'

For inasmuch as He had enjoined things great and marvelous, and had commanded men to be superior to all their passions, and had led them up to Heaven itself, and had had enjoined them to strive after the resemblance, not of angels and archangels, but as far as was possible of the very Lord of all; and had bidden His disciples not only themselves duly to perform all this, but also to correct other, and to distinguish between the evil and them that are not such, the dogs and them that are not dogs, although there be much that is hidden in men: - that they might not say, these things are grievous and intolerable, for indeed in the sequel Peter did utter some such things: Who can be saved? Mt 19:25. And again, Mt 19:10: If the case of the man be so, it is not good to marry.

8061: In order, therefore, that they might not now likewise say so: as in the first place even by what had gone before He had proved it all to be easy, setting down many reasons one upon another, of power to persuade men; so after all, He adds also the pinnacle of all facility, devising as no ordinary relief to our toils, the assistance derived from persevering prayers. Thus, we are not ourselves, said He, to strive alone, but also to invoke the help from above: and it will surely come and be present with us, and

will aid us in our struggles, and make all easy. therefore, He both commanded us to ask, and pledged Himself to the giving. However, not simply to ask did He command us, but with much assiduity and earnestness.

8062: For this is the meaning of 'seek'. For so he that seeks, putting all things out of his mind, is taken up with that alone which is sought, and forms no idea of any of the persons present. And this which I am saying they know, as many as have lost either gold, or servants, and are seeking diligently after them. By 'seeking', then, He declared this; by 'knocking', that we approach with earnestness and a glowing mind. Despond not, therefore, O man, nor show less of zeal about virtue, than they do of desire for wealth. For things of that kind you have often sought and not found, but nevertheless, though you know this, that you are not sure to find them, you put in motion every mode of search; but here, although having a promise that you will surely receive, you do not show even the smallest part of that earnestness.

8063: And if you do not receive straightway, do not even thus despair. For to this end, He said, 'knock', to signify that even if He should not straightway open the door, we are to continue there. And if you doubt my affirmation, at any rate, believe His example.

Mt 7:9 : For what man is there of you, He said, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Because, as among men, if you keep on doing so, you are even accounted troublesome, and disgusting: so, with God, when you do not do, then you do more entirely provoke Him. And if you continue asking though you receive not at once, you surely will receive. For to this end was the door shut, that He may induce you to knock: to this end He does not straightway assent, that you may ask. Continue then to do these things, and you will surely receive.

8064: For that you might not say: What, then, if I should ask and not receive? He has blocked up your approach with that similitude, again framing arguments, and by those human things urging us to be confident on these matters; implying by them that we must not only ask, but ask what we ought.

For which of you is there, a father, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he give him a stone? Mt 7:9.

So that if you receive not, you asking as tone is the cause of your not receiving. For though you be a son, this suffices not for your receiving: rather, this very thing even hinders your receiving, that being a son, you ask what is not profitable. Do you also therefore, ask nothing worldly, but all things spiritual, and you will surely receive. For so Solomon, because he asked what he ought, behold how quickly he received. 3 K 3: 5, ff.

8065: Two things, now, you see, should be in him that prays, asking earnestly, and asking what he ought: since you, too, He said, though you be fathers, wait for your sons to ask: and if they should ask of you anything inexpedient, you refuse the gifts; just as if it be expedient, you consent and bestow it. Do you, too, considering these things not withdraw until you receive; until you have found, retire not; relax not your diligence, until the door be opened. For if you approach with this mind, and say,

Except I receive, I depart not; you will surely receive, provided you ask such things as are both suitable for Him of whom you ask to give and expedient for you, the petitioner.

- But what are these?

- To seek the things spiritual, all of them; to forgive them that have trespassed, and so to draw nigh asking forgiveness: to lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting. If we thus ask, we shall receive.

8066: As it is, surely our asking is a mockery, and the act of drunken rather than of sober men.

- What then, one might say, if I ask even spiritual things, and do not receive?

- You did not surely knock with earnestness; or, you made yourself unworthy to receive; or did quickly leave off.

- And, wherefore, it may be inquired, did He not say, what things we ought to ask?

- No, truly, He has mentioned them all in what precedes, and has signified for what things we ought to draw near. Say not, then, I draw near, and did not receive. For in no case is it owing to God that we receive not, God who loves us so much as to surpass even fathers, to surpass them as far as goodness does this evil nature.

Mt 7:11: For if you being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father.

8067: Now this He said not to bring an evil name on man's nature, nor to condemn our race as bad; but in contrast to His own goodness He calls paternal tenderness evil, so great is the excess of His love to man.

Do you see an argument unspeakable, of power to arouse to good hopes even him that has become utterly desperate? Now here indeed He signifies His goodness by means of our fathers, but in what precedes by the chief among His gifts, by the 'soul', by the body. And nowhere does He set down the chief of all good things, nor bring forward His own coming: - for He who thus made speed to give up His Son to the laughter, how shall He not freely give us all things?

8068: This had not yet come to pass. But Paul indeed sets it forth, thus saying, Rm 8:12: He that spares not His own Son, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? But His discourse with them is still from the things of men. After this, to indicate that we ought neither to feel confidence in prayer, while neglecting our own doings; nor, when taking pains, trust only to our own endeavors; but, both to seek after the help from above, and contribute withal our own part; Christ sets forth the one in connection with the other. For so after such exhortation, He taught also how to pray, and when he had taught how to pray, He proceeded again to His exhortation concerning what we are to do; then, from that again to the necessity of praying continually., saying, 'Ask', and then 'Seek', and 'Knock'. And thence again, to the necessity of being also diligent ourselves.

8069: Mt 7: 12: For all things, he said, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.

Summing up all in brief, and signifying, that virtue is compendious, and easy, and readily known of all men. And He did not merely say: All things whatsoever you would, but, Therefore, all things. For this word, 'therefore', He did not add without purpose, but with a concealed meaning: if you desire, He said, to be heard, together with what I have said, do these things also.

- What then, are these?

- Whatsoever you would that men should do unto you. Do you see how He has hereby also signified that together with prayer we need exact conversation?

8070: And He did not say: Whatsoever things you would to be done unto you of God, those do unto your neighbor; lest you should say, but how is it possible? He is God, and I am man; but, whatsoever you would to be done unto you of your fellow servant, these things do you also yourself show forth toward your neighbor. What is less burdensome than this? what fairer? Then the praise also, before the rewards is exceeding great: For this is the law and the prophets, 7:12. Whence, it is evident that virtue is according to our nature; that we all, of ourselves, know our duties; and that is not possible for us ever to find refuge in ignorance....⁶³ .

+

+++

+

⁶³ Fr. Bertoni ends his Meditation 34 right here, about one third of the way through Chrysostom's Homily XXIII. Fr. Bertoni then continues in the next paragraph with his Meditation 35, the last in the series from Matthew's Gospel.

8071 - MEDITATION 35

8071: Meditation 35

Mt 7:13-20

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Mt 7:13: Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it;

v. 14: but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

v. 15: Beware of false prophets, who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves.

v. 16: You will be able to tell them by their fruits. Can people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?

v. 17: In the same way, a sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit.

v. 18: A sound tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a rotten tree good fruit.

v. 19: Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire.

v. 20: I repeat, you will be able to tell them by their fruits.

8072: Mt 7:13: Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; v.14: but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- And yet, after this, He said: My yoke is easy and my burden is light, Mt 11:30. And in what He has lately said also, He intimated the same: how then does He here say it is strait and confined?

- In the first place, if you attend, even here He points to it as very light, and easy, and accessible.

- And how, it may be said, is the narrow and confined way easy?

- Because it is a way and a gate; even as also the other, though it be wide, though spacious, is also a way and a gate. And of these there is nothing permanent, but all things are passing away, both the pains and the good things of life.

8073: And not only herein is the part of virtue easy, but also by the end again it becomes yet easier. For not the passing away of our labors and toils, but also their issuing in a good end, for they end in life, is enough to console those in conflict. So that both the temporary nature of our labors, and the perpetuity of our crowns, and the fact that the labors come first, and the crowns after, must prove a very great relief in our toils. Wherefore, Paul also called their affliction 'light'; not from the nature of the events, but because of the mind of the combatants, and the hope of the future. 2 Co 4:17: For our light affliction, he said, works an eternal weight of glory, v. 18: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

8074: For if to sailors the waves and the seas, to soldiers their slaughters and wounds, to husbandmen the winters and the frosts, to boxers, the sharp blows, be light and tolerable things, all of them, for the hope of those rewards which are temporary

and perishing; much more when heaven is set forth, and the unspeakable blessings, and the eternal rewards will no one feel any of the present hardships. Or, if any account it, even thus, to be toilsome, the suspicion comes of nothing but their own remissness. See, at any rate how He on another side also makes it easy, commanding not to hold intercourse with the dogs, nor to give one's self over to the swine, and to beware of the false prophets; thus on all accounts causing men to feel as if in real conflict.

8075; And the very fact, too, of calling it narrow contributed very greatly towards making it easy; for it wrought on them to be vigilant. As Paul then, when he said, Ep 6:12: We wrestle not against flesh and blood, does so not to cast down, but to rouse up the spirits of the soldiers: even so He also, to shake the travelers out of their sleep, called the way rough. And not in this way only did He work upon men to be vigilant, but also by adding that it contains likewise many to supplant them; and, what is yet more grievous, they do not even attack openly, but hiding themselves; for such is the race of the false prophets. 7:13: But look not to this, He said, that it is rough and narrow but where it ends; nor that the opposite is wide and spacious, but where it issues.

8076: And all these things He said, thoroughly to awaken our alacrity; even as elsewhere also He said, Mt 11:12: Violent men take it by force. For whoever is in conflict, when he actually sees the judge of the lists marveling at the painfulness of his efforts, is the more inspirited. Let it not, then, bewilder us, when many things spring up hence, that turn to our vexation. For the way is strait, and the gate narrow, but not the city. Therefore, must one neither look for rest here, nor there expect any more aught that is painful. Now in saying, Few there be that find it, here again he both declared the carelessness of the generality, and instructed His hearers not to regard the felicities of the many, but the labors of the few.

For the more part, He said, so far from walking this way, do not so much as make it their choice: a thing of most extreme criminality. But we should not regard the many, but emulate the few; and by all means equipping ourselves, should so walk therein. For besides that it is strait, there are also many to overthrow us in the way that leads thither. [Wherefore, He also added;]

8077: Mt 7:15: Beware of false prophets, for they will come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

Behold, together with the dogs and swine another kind of ambush and conspiracy, far more grievous than that. For those are acknowledged and open, but these are shaded over. For which cause also, while from those He commanded to hold off, these He charged to watch with exact care, as though it were not possible to see them at the first approach. Wherefore He also said, 'beware'; making us more exact to discern them. Then, lest when they had heard that it was narrow and strait, and that they must walk on a way opposite to the many and must keep themselves from swine and dogs, and together with these from another more wicked kind, even this of wolves; lest, I say, they should sink down at this multitude of vexations, having both to go a way contrary to most men, and therewith again to have such anxiety

about these things: He reminded them of what took place in the days of their fathers, by using the term, 'false prophets', for then also no less did such things happen.

8078: Lk 21:9: Be not now, I pray you, troubled, so He speaks, for nothing new nor strange is to befall you. Since for all truth the devil is always secretly substituting its appropriate deceit. And by the figure of false prophets here, I think, He shadows out not the heretics, but them that are of a corrupt life, yet wear a mask of virtue; whom the generality are wont to call by the name of impostors. Wherefore, He also said further:

Mt 7:16: By their fruits you shall know them.

For among heretics one may often find actual goodness, but among those whom I was mentioning, by no means.

8079: - What, then, it may be said, if in these things, too, they counterfeit?

- No, they will be easily detected; for such is the nature of this way, in which I commanded men to walk, painful and irksome; but the hypocrite would not choose to take pains, but to make a show only; wherefore also he is easily convicted. thus, inasmuch as He had said, there be few that find it, He dears them out again from among those, who find it not, yet feign so to do, by commanding us not to look to them that wear masks only, but to them who in reality pursue it.

8080: - But wherefore, one may say, did He not make them manifest, but set us on the search for them?

- That we might watch and be ever prepared for conflict, guarding against our disguised as well as against our open enemies: which kind indeed Paul also was intimating, when he said that, Rm 16:18: By their good words they deceive the hearts of the simple. Let us not be troubled, therefore, when we see many such even now. No, for this too, Christ foretold from the beginning. And see His gentleness: how He said not, 'Punish them', but Be not hurt by them. Do not fall among them unguarded.

8081: Then you might not say, it is impossible to distinguish that sort of men, again He states an argument from a human example, thus saying:

Mt 7:16: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? v. 17: even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. v. 18: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Now, that which He said is like this: they have nothing gentle nor sweet; it is the sheep only so far as the skin; wherefore also it is easy to discern them. And lest you should have any least doubt, He compares it to certain natural necessities, in matters which admit of no result but one.

8082: In which sense, Paul also said, Rm 8:6: The carnal mind is death; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. And if He states the same thing twice, it is not tautology. But, lest any one should say, Though the evil tree bear evil fruit, it bears also good, and makes the distinction difficult, the crop being twofold: this

is not so, He said, for it bears evil fruit only, and never can bear good: as indeed in the contrary case also.

8083: - What, then? Is there no such thing as a good man becoming wicked? And the contrary again takes place, and life abounds with many such examples.

- But Christ did not say this, that for the wicked there is no way to change, ora that the good cannot fall away, but that so long as he is living in wickedness, he will not be able to bear good fruit. For he may indeed change to virtue, being evil; but while continuing in wickedness, he will not bear good fruit.

- What, then? did not David, being good, bear evil fruit?

- Not continuing good, but being changed; since undoubtedly, had he remained always what he wasm he would not have brought forth such fruit. For not surely while abiding in the habit of virtue, did he commit what he commanded.

8084: Now by these words He was also stopping the mouths of those who speak evil at random, and putting a bridle on the lips of all calumniators. I mean, whereas many suspect the good by reason of the bad, He by this saying has deprived them of all excuse. For you cannot say, I am deceived and beguiled; since I have given you exactly this way of distinguishing them by their works, having added the injunction to go to their actions, and not to confound all at random. Then, forasmuch as He had not commanded to punish, but only to beware of them. He, at once, both to comfort those whom they vex, and to alarm and change them, set up as a bulwark against them, the punishment they should receive at His hands, saying:

8085: Mt 7:19: Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Then, to make the saying less grievous, He added:

Mt 7:20: Wherefore, by their fruits, you shall know them.

That He might not seem to introduce the threatening as His leading topic, but to be stirring up their mind in the way of admonition. Here He seems to me to be hinting at the Jews aslo, who were exhibiting such fruits...⁶⁴

+
+++
+

⁶⁴ Fr. Bertoni ends his Meditation 35 abruptly here in Chrysostom's Homily XXIII [cf. Baronet translation, p. 164, a.].

8096 - MEDITATION 36

8096: Meditation 36

Mt 7:21-23⁶⁵

Mt 7:21: Not everyone that say to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

v. 22: Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and cast out devils in Your name, and done many miracles in Your name?

v. 23: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from he, you that work iniquity.

8087: Mt 7:21: Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

- Why did He not say: but he that does My will?

- Because for the time it was a great gain for them to receive even this first; yes, it was very great, considering their weakness. And moreover He intimated the one also by the other. And withal this may be mentioned, that in fact there is no other will of the Son besides that of the Father

8088: And here He seems to be censuring the Jews chiefly, laying as they did the whole stress upon the doctrines and taking no care of practice. For which Paul also blames them saying, Rm 2:17: But, if you are called a Jew and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, v. 18: And know His will, and approve the more profitable things, being instructed by the law..., but you are nothing advantaged thereby, so long as the manifestation by life and by works is not there. But He Himself stayed not at this, but said also what was much more, that is:

Mt 7:22: Many will say to Me in the day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name?

8089: For not only, He said, is he that has faith, if his life be neglected, cast out of heaven, but though, besides his faith, he has wrought many signs, yet if he has done nothing good, even this man is equally shut out from that sacred porch.

For many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? 7:22.

Do you see how He secretly brings in Himself also here and afterwards, having now finished His whole exhortation? how He implies Himself to be judge? For that punishment awaits such as sin, He that signified in what precedes; and now who it is that punishes, He here proceeds to unfold. And He said not openly, I am He, but Many will say unto Me, making out again the same thing.

⁶⁵ These remaining Meditations 36-41 were bound at the beginning Volume V of the Manoscritti Bertoni, pp. 2007-2023.

8090: Since were He not the judge, how could He have told them:

Mt 7:23: And then will I profess unto them, depart from me, I never knew you? Depart from Me, all you who work iniquity.

Not only in the time of judgment, but not even then, when you were working miracles, He said.. Therefore, He said also to His disciples, Lk 10:20: rejoice not, that the devils are subject to you but because your names are written in Heaven.. And everywhere He bids us practice great care of our way of life. For it is not possible for one living rightly, and freed from all the passions, ever to be overlooked; but though he chance to be in error, God will quickly draw him over to the truth. But there are some who say, they made this assertion falsely; and this is their account why such men are not saved. Nay, then it follows that His conclusion is the contrary of what He intends.

8091: For surely His intention is to make out that faith is of no avail without works. Then, enhancing it, He added miracles also, declaring that not only faith, but the exhibiting even of miracles, avails nothing for him who works such wonders without virtue. Now, if they had not wrought them, how could this point have been made out here? And besides, they would not have dared, when the judgment was come, to say these things to His face: and the very reply, too, and their speaking in the way of question, implies their having wrought them: I mean, that they, having seen the end contrary to their expectation, and after they had been here admired among all for their miracles, beholding themselves there with nothing but punishment awaiting them; - as amazed and marveling they say:

'Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name? 7:22. - how then do You turn from us now?

8092: What means this strange and unlooked - for end? But, though they marvel because they are punished after working such miracles, yet do not you marvel. For all the grace was of the free gift of Him that gave it, but they contributed nothing on their part; wherefore, they are justly punished, as having been ungrateful and without feeling towards Him that had so honored them as to bestow His grace upon them though unworthy.

For what Christ took pains to point out is this, that neither faith nor miracles avail where practice is not: to which effect Paul also said, 1 Co 13:1... Though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing. Many of them that believed received gifts such as He that was casting out devils, Mk 9:37, ff., and was not with Him; such as Judas; for even he, too, wicked as he was, had a gift.

8093: And in the Old Testament also this may be found, in that grace has oftentimes wrought upon unworthy persons, that it might do good to others. That is, since all men were not meet for all things, but some were of a pure life, not having so great faith, and others just the contrary; by these sayings, while He urges the one to show forth much faith, the others, too, He was summoning by this His unspeakable gift to become better men. Wherefore also with great abundance did He bestow that grace.

For we wrought, it is said, many mighty works. But, then will I profess unto them, I knew you not, 7:23. For now indeed they suppose they are My friends; but then shall they know that not as to friends did I give to them.

8094: And why marvel is He has bestowed gifts on men that have believed on Him, though without life suitable to their faith, when even on those who have fallen from both these. He is unquestionably found working? For so Balaam was an alien both from faith and from a truly good life; nevertheless grace wrought on him for the service of other men. Nb 22:1, ff. And Pharaoh, too, was of the same sort: yet, for all that even to Him He signified the things to come. Gn 41:25, ff. And Nebuchadnezzar was very full of iniquity; yet to him again He revealed what was to follow after many generations. Dn 2: 1, ff. And again, to the son of this last, though surpassing his father in iniquity, he signified the things to come, ordering a marvelous and great dispensation.. Dn 5: 13, ff..

8095: Accordingly because then also the beginnings of the gospel were taking place, and it was requisite that the manifestation of its power should be abundant, many even of the unworthy used to receive gifts. Howbeit, from those miracles no gain accrued to them; rather, they are the more punished. Wherefore unto them did He utter even that fearful saying, I never knew you! - there being many for whom His hatred begins already even here; whom He turns away from, even before the judgment. Let us fear, therefore, beloved; and let us take great heed to our life, neither let us account ourselves worse off, in that we do not work miracles now. For that will never be any advantage t us, as neither any disadvantage in our not working them, if we take heed to all virtue. Because for the miracles we ourselves are debtors, but for our life and our doings, we have God as our debtor.

+
+++

+

8096 - MEDITATION 37

8096: Meditation 37
Mt 7:28-8:4

Mt 7:28: And it came to pass when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration of his doctrine.

v. 29: For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees.

8:1: And when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

v. 2: And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if you will, you can make my clean.

v. 3: And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be made clean. And forthwith, his leprosy was cleansed.

v. 4: And Jesus said to him: See that you tell no man; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

8097: Yet, it was rather natural for them to grieve at the unpleasantness of His sayings, and to shudder at the loftiness of His injunctions; but now so great was the power of the Teacher, that many of them were even caught thereby, and thrown into very great admiration, and persuaded by reason of the sweetness of His sayings, not even when He ceased to speak, to depart from Him at all afterwards. For neither did the hearers depart, He having come down from the mountain, but even then the whole auditory followed Him; so great a love for His sayings had He instilled into them. But they were astonished most of all at His authority. For not with reference to another, like the prophet and Moses, did He say what He said; but everywhere indicating Himself to be the person that had the power of deciding. For so, when setting forth His laws, He still kept adding, But I say unto you. And in reminding them of that day, He declared Himself to be the judge both by the punishments, and by the honors.

8098: And yet it was likely that this, too, would disturb them. For if, when they saw Him by His works showing forth His authority, the scribes were for stoning and persecuting Him; while there were words only to prove this, how was it other than likely for them to be offended? and especially when at first setting out these things were said, and before He had given proof of His own power? But, however, they felt nothing of this; for when the heart and mind is candid, it is easily persuaded by the words of the truth. And this is just why one sort even when the miracles were proclaiming His power, were offended; while the other on hearing mere words were persuaded and followed Him.

8099: This, I would add, the evangelist, too, is intimating, when he said:

Great multitudes followed Him [Mt 8:1].

Not any of the rulers, nor of the scribes, but as many as were free from vice, and had their judgment uncorrupted. And throughout the whole gospel you see that such cleaved unto Him. For both while He spoke, they used to listen in silence, not

making any intrusion, not breaking in upon the connection of His sayings, nor tempting Him, and desiring to find a handle like the Pharisees; and after His exhortation, they followed Him again, marveling. But do mark, I pray you, the Lord's consideration, how He varies the mode of profiting His hearers, after miracles entering on words, and again from the instruction by His words passing to miracles. Thus, both before they went up into the mountain, He healed many, Mt 4:23, preparing the way for His sayings; and after finishing that long discourse to the people, He comes again to miracles, confirming what had been said by what was done.

8100: And so, because He was teaching as one having authority, lest His so teaching should be thought boasting and arrogant, He does the very same in His works also, as having authority to heal; that they might not more be perplexed at seeing Him teach in this way, when He was working His miracles also in the same.

Mt 8:1: For when He was come down from the mountain, there came a leper, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.

Great was the understanding and the faith of him who so drew near. For he did not interrupt the teaching, nor break through the auditory, but awaited the proper time, and approaches Him, when He is come down.

8101: And not at random, but with much earnestness, and at His knees, he beseeches Him, as another evangelist said, Mk 1:10, and with the genuine faith and right opinion about him. For neither did he say, If You request it of God, nor, If You pray, but, If You Will, You can make me clean. Nor did he say, Lord, cleanse me, but leaves all to Him, and makes His recovery depend on him, and testifies that all the authority is His.

- What, then, says one, if the leper's opinion was mistaken?

- It were meet to do away with it, and to reprove, and set it right.

- Did He then so do?

- By no means; but quite on the contrary, He establishes and confirms what had been said. For this cause, you see, neither did He say, Be cleansed, but:

8102: Mt 8:3: I will, be made clean; that the doctrine might no longer be a thing of the other's surmising, but of His own approval. But the apostles not so: rather in what way? The whole people being in amazement, they said, Ac 3:12: Why give heed to us, as though by our own power, or authority we had made him to walk? But the Lord, though he spoke oftentimes many things modestly, and beneath His own glory, what He said here, to establish the doctrine of them that were amazed at Him for His authority? I will, be made clean! Although in the many and great signs which he wrought, He nowhere appears to have uttered this word.

8103: Here, however, to confirm the surmise both of all the people and of the leper touching His authority, He purposely added, I will! And it was not that He said this, but did it not; but the work also followed immediately. Whereas, if he had not spoken well, but the saying had been a blasphemy, the work ought to have been interrupted. But now nature herself gave way at His command, and that speedily, as was meet, even more speedily than the evangelist has said. For the word, 'immediately', falls far short of the quickness that there was in the work. But He did not merely say, I will, be made

clean! - but He also put forth His hand, and touched him, a thing especially worthy of inquiry.

8104: - For wherefore, when cleansing him by will and word, did He add also the touch of His hand?

- It seems to me, for no other end, but that He might signify by this also, that He is not subject to the law, but is set over it; and that to the clean, henceforth, nothing is unclean. For this cause, we see, Elisha did not so much as see Naaman, but though he perceived that he was offended at his not coming out and touching him, observing the strictness of the law, he abides at home, and sends him to Jordan to wash. Whereas the Lord, to signify that He heals not as a servant, but as absolute master, does also touch. For His hand became not unclean from the leprosy, but the leprous body was rendered clean by his holy hand. Because, as we know, He came not to heal bodies only, but also to heal the soul unto self-command.

8105: As therefore He from that time forward no more forbade to eat with unwashed hands, introducing that excellent law, which relates to the indifference of meats; just so in this case also, to instruct us for the future, that the soul must be our care: - that leaving the outward purifications, we must wipe that clean, and dread the leprosy thereof alone, which is sin [for to be a leper is no hindrance to virtue]: - He Himself first touches the leper, and no man finds fault. For the tribunal was not corrupt, neither were the spectators under the power of envy. Therefore, so far from blaming, they were on the contrary astonished at the miracle, and yielded thereto: and both for what He said, and for what He did, they adored His uncontrollable power.

8106: Mt 8:4: Having therefore healed his body, He bids him: Tell no man! teaching us to avoid boasting and vainglory. And yet, He well knew that the other would not obey, but would proclaim his benefactor; nevertheless, he does His own part..

- You might ask, how then elsewhere does He bid them to tell of it?

- Not as jostling with, or opposing Himself, but as teaching men to be grateful. For neither in that place did He give command to proclaim Himself, Lk 17:18, but to give glory to God; training us to be clear of pride and vainglory, by the other to be thankful and grateful; and instructing on every occasion to offer to the Lord the praise of all things that befall us.

8107: That is, because men for the most part remember God in sickness, but grow slacker after recovery; He bids them continually both in sickness and in health to give heed to the Lord in these words: Give glory to God.

- But wherefore did He command him also to show himself to the priest, and to offer a gift?

- To fulfill the law again Mt 8:4:1. For neither did He in every instance set it aside, nor in every instance keep it, but sometimes He did the one, sometimes the other; by the one making way for the high rule of life that was to come, by the other checking for a while the insolent speech of the Jews, and condescending to their infirmity.

And why marvel, if just at the beginning He Himself did this, when even the very apostles, after they were commanded to depart unto the Gentiles, after the doors

were opened for their teaching throughout the world, and the law shut up, and the commandments made new, and all the ancient things had ceased, are found sometimes observing the law, sometimes neglecting it?

8108: - But what, it may be said, does this saying, Show yourself to the priest, contribute to the keeping of the law?

- No little. Because it was an ancient law, Lv 14:1, ff., that the leper when cleansed should not entrust to himself the judgment of his cleansing, but should show himself to the priest, and present the demonstration thereof to his eyes, and by that sentence be numbered among the clean. For if the priest said not, The leper is cleansed, he remained still with the unclean without the camp.

Wherefore He said:

Show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded. 8>4.

He did not say, which I command, but for a time remits him to the law, by every means stopping their mouths. Thus, lest they should say, He had seized upon the priests' honor; though He performed the work Himself, yet the approving it He entrusted to them, and made them sit as judges of His own miracles. Why, I am so far, He said, from striving either with Moses or with the priests that I guide the objects of my favor to submit themselves unto them

-But, what is: for a testimony unto them?

- For reproof, for demonstration, for accusation, if they be unthankful.

8109: For since they said, as a deceiver and impostor we persecute Him, as an adversary of God, and a transgressor of the law; You shall bear me witness, He said, at that time, that I am not a transgressor of the law. Nay, for having healed you, I remit you to the law, and to the approval of the priests; which was the act of one honoring the law, and admiring Moses, and not setting himself in opposition to the ancient doctrines. And if they were not in fact to be the better, hereby most of all one may perceive His respect for the law, that although He foreknew they would reap no benefit, He fulfilled all His part. For this very thing, he did indeed foreknow, and foretold it; not saying, for their correction, neither, for their instruction, but, for a testimony unto them, that is, for accusation, and for reproof, and for a witness that all has been done on my part.

8110: And though I foreknew they would continue incorrigible, not even so did I omit what ought to be done; only they continued keeping up to the end their own wickedness. This, we may observe, he said elsewhere, Mt 24:14: This gospel shall be preached in all the world for a testimony to all the nations, and then shall the end come; to the nations, to them that obey not, to them that believe not. Thus, lest any one should say, And wherefore preach to all, if all are not to believe? - it is that I may be found to have done all my own part, and that no man may hereafter be able to find fault, as though he had not heard. For the very preaching shall bear witness against them, and they will not be able hereafter to say, We heard not; for the word of godliness has gone out unto the ends of the world.

+

+++

+

8111 - MEDITATION 38

8111: Meditation 38
Mt 8:5-8

Mt 8:5: And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching him,

v. 6: And saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented.

v. 7: And Jesus said to him: I will come and heal him.

v. 8: And the centurion making answer, said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

8112: - The leper then came unto Him when he was come down from the mountain; but this centurion, when He was entered into Capharnaum. Wherefore then did neither the one nor the other go up into the mountain?

- Not out of remissness, for indeed the faith of them both was fervent; but in order not to interrupt His teaching.

But having come unto Him, he said:

Mt 8:6: Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented⁶⁶.

But I say, this is a sig of his having great faith, even much greater than theirs, who let one down through the roof. For because he knew for certain, that even a mere command was enough for the raising up of the patient, he thought it superfluous to bring him. What then does Jesus do? What He had in no case done before, here He does. For whereas, on every occasion He was used to follow the wish of His supplicants, here He rather springs toward it, and offers not only to heal him, but also to come to the house.

8113: And this He does that we might learn the virtue of the centurion; for if He had not made this offer, but had said, Go your way, let your servant be healed, we should have known none of these things. This at least He did, in an opposite way, in the case also of the Phoenician woman. For here, when not summoned to the house, of His own accord, He says He will come, that you might learn the centurion's faith and great humility; but in the case of the Phoenician woman, he both refuses the grant, and drives here, persevering therein, to great perplexity; for being a wise physician and full of resources, He knows how to bring about contraries the one by the other. And as here by His freely offered coming, so there by His peremptory putting off and denial, He unfolds the woman's faith. So likewise he does in Abraham's case, saying, Gn 18:17: I will by no means hide from Abraham my servant; to make you know that man's kindly affection, and his care for Sodom. And in the instance of Lot, they were sent refuse to enter into his house, to make you know the greatness of that righteous man's hospitality. Gnu 19:2.

⁶⁶ Fr. Bertoni omits a sentence found here in Homily XXVI of Chrysostom - cf. Baronet translation, p. 176 a.

8114: What then does the Centurion say?

Mt 8:8: I am not worthy that you should come under my roof..

Let us hearken, as many as are to receive Christ: for it is possible to receive Him even now. Let us hearken, and emulate, and receive Him with as great zeal; for indeed, when you receive a poor man who is hungry and naked, you have received and cherished him.

But say in a word only, and my servant shall be healed. 8:8.

See this man also, how, like the leper, he has the right opinion touching Him. For neither did this one say, entreat, nor did he say, pray, and beseech, but, command only.

8115: And then, from fear lest out of modesty, He refuse, he said:

Mt 8:9: For I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this man, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to my servant, do this, and he does it.

- And what of that, one might say, if the Centurion did suspect it to be son? For the question is, whether Christ affirmed and ratified as much.⁶⁷

So, far from blaming, He did even approve it, and did somewhat more than approve it. For neither has the evangelist said that He praised the saying only, but declaring a certain earnestness in His praise, that He even 'marvelled'; and neither did He simply marvel, but in the presence also of the whole people and set him as an example to the rest that they should emulate him.⁶⁸

8116: Mt 8:10: And marveling at him, Jesus said: I have not found so great faith, not, not in Israel.

Now to convince you of this by the opposite also; Martha having said nothing of this sort, but on the contrary, Jn 11:22: Whatsoever you will ask of God, He will give it to You - so, far from being praised, although an acquaintance, and dear to Him, and one of them that had shown great zeal toward Him, she was rather rebuked and corrected by Him, as not having spoken well; in that He said to her, Did I not say to you that if you would believe you should see the glory of God?, blaming her, as though she did not even yet believe. And again, because she had said, Whatsoever You will ask of God, He will give it to You; to lead her away from such a surmise, and to teach her that He needs not to receive from another, but is Himself the foundation of all good things, He said: I am the resurrection and the life, Jn 11:25, that is to say, wait to receive active power, but work all of myself.

8117: Wherefore at the Centurion He both marvels and prefers him to all the people, and honors him with the gift of the kingdom, and provokes the rest to the same zeal. And to show you that for this end, he so spoke, viz., for the instructing of the rest to believe in like manner, listen to the exactness of the evangelist, how he has intimated it. For,

⁶⁷ Fr. Bertoni omits about a paragraph here - cf. BAronet translation, p. 177 a

⁶⁸ Here Fr. Bertoni omits another paragraph or so - cf. ib., p. 177 a & b.

Jesus, He said, turned him about, and said to them that followed Him, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Mt 8:10.

It follows, that to have high imaginations concerning Him, this especially is of faith, and tends to procure the kingdom and His other blessings. For neither did His praise reach to words only, but He both restored the sick man whole, in recompence of his faith, and weaves for him a glorious crown, and promises great gifts, saing on this wise:

Mt 8:11: For I say to you that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down in the bosoms of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.

thus, since He had shown many miracles, He proceeds to talk with them more unreservedly. Then, that no one might suppose His words to come of flattery, but that all might be aware that such was the mind of the centurion, He said:

8118: Mt 8:13: Go your way; as you have believed, so be it done unto you.

And straightway the work followed, bearing witness to his character,
And his servant was healed from that hour/ 8:13.

Which was the result in the case of the Syrophenician woman also; for to her, too, He said, O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you will. And her daughter was made whole.⁶⁹

But, do not I pray you, merely inquire what was said by him, but add therefore to his rank also, and then you will see the man's excellency. Because in truth great is the pride of them that are in places of command, and not even in afflictions do they take lower ground. He, for example, who is set down in John Jn 4:49, is for dragging Him into his house, and said: Come down, for my child is ready to die. But, not so this man; rather he is far superior both to him, and to those who let down the bed through the roof. For he seeks not for His bodily presence, neither did He bring the sick man near the physician; a thing which implied no mean imaginations concerning Him, but rather a suspicion of His divine dignity. And he said, speak only the word. And at the beginning he said not even, speak the word, but only describe his affliction: for neither did he, of great humility, expect that Christ would straightway consent, and inquire for his house. Therefore, when he heard Him say, I will come and heal him, then, not before, he said: speak the word. 8:7⁷⁰.

8119: And yet it was not he that pressed it, but Christ that offered it: nevertheless, even so he feared, lest perchance he should be thought to be going beyond his own deserving, and to be drawing upon himself a thing above his strength.

Do you see His wisdom Mark the folly of the Jews, in saying, He was worthy for whom He should do the favor.⁷¹ But not so he, but he affirmed himself even in the utmost degree unworthy, not only of the benefit, but even of receiving the Lord in his house. Wherefore, even when he said, My servant lies sick, he did not add, speak, for

⁶⁹ At this point, Fr. Bertoni omits more than a column and a half - cf. Baronet translation p. 178 a & b.

⁷⁰ Fr. Bertoni omits a sentence here - cf. Baronet translation, p. 179 a.

⁷¹ Fr. Bertoni again skips a sentence, ib.

fear lest he should be unworthy to obtain the gift; but he merely made known his affliction. And when he saw Christ zealous in His turn, not even so did he spring forward, but still continues to keep to the end his own proper measure.

8120: And if anyone should say, wherefore did not Christ honor him in return? - we would say this, that He did make return to him in honor, and that exceedingly: first, by bringing out his mind, which thing chiefly appeared by His not coming to his house; and in the second place, by introducing him into His kingdom, and preferring him to the whole Jewish nation. For because he made himself out unworthy even to receive Christ into his house, he became ⁷²worthy both of a kingdom and of attaining unto those good things which Abraham enjoyed.

And it was a very great thing for a man who was out of the list of the Jewish people to admit so great a thought. For he did no less than imagine to himself, as it seems to me, the armies in Heaven; or that the diseases and death, and everything else, were so subject to Him, as his soldiers to himself.

8121: Wherefore he said likewise:

For I also am a man set under authority, that is, You are God, and I, man; I under authority, but You are not under authority. If I therefore, being a man, and under a authority, can do so much; for more He, both as God and as not under authority. Thus, with the strongest expression He desires to convince Him, that he said this, as one giving not a similar example, but one far exceeding. For if, I [said he], being equal in honor to them whom I command, and under authority, yet, by reason of the trifling superiority of my rank am able to do such great things; and no man contradicts me, but what I command, that is done, though the injunctions be various [for I say to this man, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes, 8:9], much more will You Yourself be able.⁷³

8122: But mark, I pray you, how he signified that Christ is able both to overcome even death as a slave, and to command it as its master. For in saying, come, and he comes, and, go, and he goes; he expresses this: If You should command his end not to come upon him, it will not come.

Do you see how believing he was? For that which was afterwards to be manifest to all, here is one who already has made it evident; that He has power both of death and of life, and leads down to the gates of hell, and brings up again [cf. 1 S 26]. Nor, was he speaking of soldiers only, but also of slaves; which related to a more entire obedience. But, nevertheless though having such great faith, he still accounted himself to be unworthy. Christ, however, signifying that he was worthy to have Him enter into his house, did much greater things, marveling at him, and proclaiming him, and giving more than he had asked.

For he came indeed seeking for his servant health of body, but went away, having received a kingdom. Do you see how the saying had already been fulfilled, Mt 6:33: Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.

⁷² Fr. Bertoni omits an entire paragraph here - cf. Baronet translation, p. 179 b.

⁷³ Another one sentence omission here - cf. Baronet translation, p. 179 b.

For because he evinced great faith, and lowliness of mind, He both gave him heaven and added unto him health.⁷⁴

+
+++
+

⁷⁴ Fr. Bertoni ends his Meditation 38 here, a good five pages prior to the conclusion of Chrysostom's Homily XXVI on which Fr. Bertoni based his instruction - cf. Baronet translation, pp. 180 a, ff.

8123 - MEDITATION 39

8123: Meditation 39

Mt 8:14-15⁷⁵

Mt 8:14: And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying, and sick of a fever;

v. 15: And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered to them.

- But for what intent did He go into Peter's house?

- As it seems to me, to take food. this at least is declared when it is said: She arose and ministered unto Him 8:15. For He used to visit His disciples, as Matthew likewise, when He had called him], so honoring them and making them more zealous.

8124: But do mark, I pray you, herein also Peter's reverence towards Him. For though he and his wife's mother at home lying ill, and very sick of a fever, he drew Him not into his house, but waited first for the teaching to be finished, then for all the others to be healed; and then when He had come in, besought Him. Thus, from the beginning was he instructed to prefer the things of all others to his own. Therefore neither does he himself bring him in, but He entered of His own accord, after the Centurion had said: Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, to show how much favor He bestowed on His disciple.

8125: And yet consider of what sort the houses of these fishermen; but for all that, He disdained not to enter into their mean huts, teaching you by all means to trample under foot human pride. And sometimes He heals by words only, sometimes He even stretches forth His hand, sometimes He does both these things, to bring into sight His way of healing. For it was not His will always to work miracles in the more surpassing manner: it being needful for Him to be concealed awhile, and especially as concerned His disciples; since they out of their great delight would have proclaimed everything. And this was evident from the fact, that even after coming to the mount, it was needful to charge them that they should tell no man.

8126: Having therefore touched her body, He not only quenched the fever, but also gave her back perfect health. Thus, the disease being an ordinary one, He displayed His power by the manner of healing; a thing which no physician's art could have wrought. For you know that even after the departing of fevers, the patients yet need much time to return to their former health. But then all took place at once. And not in this case only, but also in that of the sea, Mt 8:23, ff. For neither there did He quiet the winds and the storm, but he also stayed at once the swelling of the waves; and this also was a strange thing⁷⁶ Wherefore also the evangelist, to declare this, said, She

⁷⁵ Fr. Bertoni omits the first paragraph here - cf. Baronet translation, p. 184 a.

⁷⁶ Here Fr. Bertoni omits two sentences - cf. Baronet translation, p. 185 a.

arose and ministered unto Him; which was a sign both of Christ's power, and of the disposition of the woman, which she showed towards Christ.

8127: And another thing together with these we may hence observe that Christ grants the healing of some to the faith, even of others. Since in this case, too, others besought Him, as also in the instance of the centurion's servant. And this grant He makes, when there is no unbelief in him that is to be healed, but either through disease he cannot come unto Him, or through ignorance imagines nothing great of Him, or because of His immature age.

Mt 8:16: When the evening was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits from them with a word, and healed all that were sick, v. 17: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet Isaiah, that He took our infirmities and bare our sickness [cf. Is 53:4].

8128: Do you see the multitude, by this time, growing in faith? For not even when the time pressed could they endure to depart, nor did they account it unseasonable to bring their sick to him at eventide.

But mark, I pray you, how great a multitude of persons healed the evangelists pass quickly over, not mentioning one by one, and giving us an account of them, but in one word, traversing an unspeakable sea of miracles. Then, lest the greatness of the wonder should drive us again to unbelief, that even so great a people and their various diseases should be delivered and healed by Him in one moment of time, He brings in the prophet also to bear witness to what is going on: indicating the abundance of the proof we have, in every case, out of the Scriptures; such, that from the miracles themselves we have no more.

8129: And He said, that Isaiah also spoke of these things, 53:4:

He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

He said not, He did them away, but, He took and bore them; which seems to be spoken rather of sins, by the prophet in harmony with John, where he said, Jn 1:29: Behold, the Lamb of God, that bears the sin of the world.

- How then does the evangelist here apply it to diseases?

- Either as rehearsing the passage in the historical sense, or to show that most of our diseases arise from sins of the soul. For if the sum of all, death itself, has its root and foundation from sin, much more the majority of our diseases also: since our very capability of suffering did itself originate there.

8130: Mt 8:18: Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

Do you see again His freedom from ostentation? in that as the others say, He charged the devils not to say it was He, so this writer said, He repels the multitudes from Him. Now in so doing, He was at once both training us to be moderate, and at the same time allaying the envy of the Jews, and teaching us to do nothing for display. For He was not, we know, a healer to bodies only, but a curer also of the soul and a teacher of self-restraint; by both disclosing Himself both by putting away their diseases, and by doing naught for display. Because they indeed were cleaving unto Him, loving Him, and marveling at Him, and desiring to look upon Him.

8131: For who would depart from one who was doing such miracles? Who would not long, were it only to see the face, and the mouth that was uttering such words? For not by any means in working wonders only was He wonderful, but even when merely showing Himself, he was full of great grace; and to declare this the prophet said, Ps 44:3: Faith in beauty beyond the children of men. And if Isaiah said, Is 53:2, He has no form nor comeliness, he affirms it either in comparison of the glory of His Godhead, which surpasses all utterance and description; or, as declaring what took place at His passion, and the dishonor which He underwent at the season of the cross and the mean estate which throughout His life He exemplified in all respects.

8132: Further, He did not first give commandment to depart unto the other side, nor until He had healed them. For surely they could not have borne it. As therefore, on the mountain they not only continued with him while exhorting them, but also when it was silence followed Him; so here, too, not in His miracles only did they wait on Him, but also when He had ceased again, from His very countenance receiving no small benefit. For if Moses had his face made glorious, and Stephen like that of an angel; consider you our common Lord, what manner of person it was likely He would appear at such a time.

8133: Many now perchance have fallen into a passionate desire of seeing that form; but if we are willing we shall behold one far better than that. For if we can pass through our present life with Christian boldness, we shall receive Him in the clouds, meeting Him in an immortal and incorruptible body. But observe how He does not simply drive them away, lest He should hurt them. For He did not say, withdraw, but gave commandment to depart to the other side, giving them to expect that He would surely come thither. And the multitudes for their part evinced this great love, and were following with much affection....⁷⁷ .

⁷⁷ Fr. Bertoni ends his Meditation 39 in the middle of a sentence of Chrysostom's Homily XXVII - cf. p. 186 a of the Baronet translation.

8134 - MEDITATION 40

8134: Meditation 40
Mt 8:19

Mt 8:19: And a certain scribe came and said to him: Master, I will follow you whithersoever you shall go.

But some one person, a slave of wealth, and possessed with much arrogance, approaches Him, and said:⁷⁸

Master, I will follow You whithersoever You go.

Do you see how great his arrogance? For as not deigning to be numbered with the multitude, and indicating that he is above the common sort, so he comes near. Because such is the Jewish character; full of unseasonable confidence. So, too, another afterwards, when all men were keeping silence, of his own accord springs up, and says, Mt 22:36: Which is the first commandment.

8135: Yet, nevertheless the Lord rebuked not his unseasonable confidence, teaching us to bear even with such as these. therefore, he does not openly convict them who are devising mischief, but replies to their secret thought, leaving it to themselves only to know that they are convicted, and doubly doing them good, first by showing that He knows what is in their conscience, next by granting unto them concealment after this manifestation, and allowing them to recover themselves again, if they will: which thing he does in the case of this man also. For he, seeing the many signs, and many drawn after Him, thought to make a gain out of such miracles; wherefore also he was forward to follow Him.

- And whence is this manifest?

- Form the answer which Christ makes, meeting not the question, as it stands verbally, but the temper shown in its meaning. For, What? says he, do you look to gather wealth by following Me? Do you not see that I have not even a lodging, not even so much as the birds have?

8136: Mt 8:20: For the foxes, He said, have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.

Now these were not the words of one turning Himself away, but of one who while putting to the proof his evil disposition, yet permitted him [if he were willing with such a prospect] to follow Him. And to convince you of his wickedness, when he had heard these things, and had been proved, he did not say, I am ready to follow You..

And in many other places also Christ is clearly doing this; He doe not openly convict, but by his answer He manifests the purpose of them that are coming unto Him⁷⁹. And see how in this also He shows forth great moderation: in that He did not say, I

⁷⁸ Fr. Bertoni picks up the truncated sentence with which he ended his Meditation 39, and opens his Meditation 40 continuing the same sentence.

⁷⁹ Once again, right here Fr. Bertoni omits about three fourths of a column from Chrysostom's Homily XXVII - cf. pages 186 b - 187 a of the Baronet translation.

have it indeed, but despise it, but, I have it not. Do you see what exact care goes along with His condescension?⁸⁰

8137: But a certain other one, we read, said to Him:

Mt 8:21: Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Do you mark the difference how one impudently said, I will follow you whithersoever You go; but this other, although asking a thing of sacred duty, said, Suffer me.

Yet, He suffered him not, but said:

Mt 8:22: Let the dead bury their dead, but you follow me. For in every case He had regard to the intention.

- And wherefore, one might ask did He not suffer him?

Because on the one hand, there were those that would fulfill that duty, and the dead was not going to remain unburied; on the other, it was not fit for this man to be taken away from the weightier matters.

8138: But, by saying: their own dead, He implies that this is not one of His dead. And that because he that was dead, was, at least as I suppose, of the unbelievers. Now if you admire the young man that for a matter so necessary he besought Jesus, and did not go away of his own accord; much rather admire him for staying also when forbidden.

- Was it not, then, one may say, extreme ingratitude, not to be present at the burial of his father?

- If indeed he did so out of negligence, it was ingratitude, but if in order not to interrupt a more needful work, his departing would most surely have been of extreme inconsideration. For Jesus forbade him, not as commanding to think lightly of the honor due to our parents, but signifying that nothing ought to be to us more urgent than the things of Heaven, and that we ought with all diligence to cleave to these, and not to put them off for ever so little, though our engagements be exceeding indispensable and pressing. For what can be more needful than to bury a father? what more easy? Since it would not even consume any long time.

8139: But if one ought not to spend even as much time as is required for a father's burial, nor is it safe to be parted even so long from our spiritual concerns; consider what we deserve, who all our time stand off from the things that pertain to Christ, and prefer things very ordinary to such as are needful, and are remiss, when there is nothing to press on us? And herein, too, we should admire the instructiveness of His teaching, that He nailed him fast to His word, and with this freed him from those endless evils, such as lamentations, and mourning, and the things that follow thereafter. For after the burial he must of necessity proceed to inquire about the will., then about the distribution of the inheritance, and all the other things that follow thereupon; and other things that follow thereupon; and thus waves after waves coming in succession upon him, would bear him away very far from the harbor of truth.

⁸⁰ Another paragraph omitted! A real challenge for the translator!

8140: For this cause He draws him, and fastens him to Himself. But if you still marvel, and are perplexed, that he was not permitted to be present at his father's burial; consider that many suffer not the sick, if it be a father that is dead or a mother, or a child, or any other of their kinsmen, to know it, nor to follow him to the tomb; and we do not for this charge them with cruelty nor inhumanity: and very reasonably. For on the contrary, it were cruelty to bring out to the funeral solemnity men in such a state.

8141: But, if to mourn and be afflicted in mind for them that are of our kindred is evil, much more our being withdrawn from spiritual discourses. For this same cause He said elsewhere also, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of Heaven. And surely it is far better to proclaim the kingdom and draw back others from death, than to bury the dead body, that is nothing advantaged thereby; and especially when there are some to fulfill all these duties.⁸¹

+
+++
+

⁸¹ Fr Bertoni ends his Meditation 40 here with about two pages left in Chrysostom's Homily XXVII - cf. Baronet translation, p. 188 a.

8142 - MEDITATION 41

8142: Meditation 41

Mt 8:23-24

Mt 8:23: And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him.

v. 24: And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but he was asleep.⁸²

The multitudes then He sent on, but the disciples He took with Himself: for the others mention this, too. And He took them with Him, not for naught, nor at hazard, but in order to make them spectators of the miracle that was to take place. For like a most excellent trainer, He was anointing them with a view to both objects; as well as to be undismayed in dangers, as to be modest in honors. Thus, that they might not be high minded, because having sent away the rest, He retained them, He suffers them to be tossed with the tempest; at once correcting this, and disciplining them to bear trials nobly.

8143: For great indeed were the former miracles, too, but this contained also in it a kind of discipline, and that no inconsiderable one, and was a sign akin to that of old. For this cause He takes the disciples only with himself. For as, when there was a display of miracles, He suffers the people also to be present; so when trials and terrors were rising up against Him, then He takes with him none but the champions of the whole world, whom He was to discipline.

And while Matthew merely mentioned that He was asleep, Luke aid that it was on a pillow, signifying both His freedom from pride, and to teach us hereby a high degree of austerity. The tempest therefore being thoroughly excited, and the sea raging:

Mt 8:25: They awake Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

But He rebuked them before He rebuked the sea.

v. 26: And Jesus said to them: Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm.⁸³

8144: Because as I said, for discipline these things were permitted, and they were a type of the temptations that were to overtake them. Yes, for after these things again, He often suffered them to fall into more grievous tempests of fortune, and bare long with them. Wherefore Paul also said, 2 Co 1:8: I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, of our tribulation, which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure beyond strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. v. 9: But we had in our selves the answer... v. 10: Who has delivered and does deliver us out of so great dangers: in whom we trust that he will yet also deliver us. Signifying therefore

⁸² Fr. Bertoni immediately omits the first paragraph of Chrysostom's Homily XVIII.

⁸³ In his manuscript, Fr. Berotni adds this biblical text here, not found in Chrysostom..

hereby that they ought to be confident, though the waves rise high, and that He orders all things for good, He first of all reproveth them.

8145: For indeed their very alarm was a profitable occurrence, that the miracle might appear greater, and their remembrance of the event be rendered lasting. Since when anything strange is about to happen, there are prepared beforehand many things to cause remembrance, lest after the miracle had passed by, men should sink into forgetfulness. Thus Moses also first is in fear of the serpent, and not merely in fear, but even with much distress; and then he sees that strange thing come to pass [cf. Ex 4:3, f]/. So these, too, having first looked to perish, were then saved, that having confessed the danger, they might learn the greatness of the miracle. Therefore, He sleeps.

8146: For had he been awake when it happened, either they would not have feared, or they would not have besought Him, or they would not so much as have thought of His being able to do any such thing. Therefore, He sleeps, to give occasion for their timidity, and to make their perception of what was happening more distinct. For a man looks not with the same eyes on what happens in the persons of others, as in his own. Therefore, since they had seen all benefited, while themselves had enjoyed no benefit, and were supine [for neither were they lame, nor had they any other such infirmity]; and it was meet they should enjoy His benefits by their own perception: He permits the storm, that by their deliverance they might attain to a clearer perception of the benefits. Therefore, neither does He this in the presence of the multitudes, that they might not be condemned for little faith, but He has them apart, and corrects them, and before the tempest of the waters, He puts an end to the tempests of their soul, rebuking them, and saying:

Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? 8:26.

8147: He instructed them also that men's fear is wrought not by the approach of the temptation, but by the weakness of their mind. But should any one say that it was not fearfulness, or little faith, to come near and awaken Him; I would say this, that that very thing was an especial sign of their wanting the right opinion concerning Him. That is, His power to rebuke when awakened they knew, but that He would do so even sleeping, they knew not as yet. And why at all marvel that it was so now and when even after many other miracles their impressions were still rather imperfect? wherefore also they are often rebuked; as when He said:

Are you also without understanding?

8148: Marvel not, then, if when the disciples were in such imperfect dispositions, the multitudes had no exalted imagination of Him. For:

They marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the sea and the winds obey Him?

But Christ did not chide them for calling Him a man, but waited to teach them by His signs, that their supposition was mistaken.

- But from what did they think Him a man?

- First from His appearance, then from His sleeping, and making use of a ship. So, on this account they were cast into perplexity, saying: What manner of man is this?

8149: Since while the sleep and the outward appearance showed man, the sea and the calm declared Him God. For because Moses had once done some such thing, in this regard also does He signify His own superiority, and that the one works miracles as a slave, the other as Lord. Thus He put forth no rod, as Moses did, neither did He stretch forth His hands to Heaven, nor did He need any prayer, but, as was meet for a master commanding His handmaid, or a creator His creature, so did He quiet and curb it by word and command only; and all the surge was straightway at an end, and not one trace of the disturbance remained.

8150: Mt 8:28: For this the evangelist declared, saying:

And there was a great calm 8:26.

And that which had been spoken of the Father as a great thing, this He showed forth again by His works, Ps 106:25. And what had been said concerning Him? He spoke, it says, and the strong wind ceased. So here likewise, He spoke, and there was a great calm. And for this most of all did the multitudes marvel at him; who would not have marveled, had He done it in such manner as did Moses.

Now when He is departed from the sea, here follows another miracle yet more awful. For men possessed with devils like wicked runaways at sight of their master, said:

8151: Mt 8:28: And when he was come on the other side of the water, into the country of the Gerasens,, there met him two that were possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchers, exceeding fierce, so that none could pass by that way.. v. 29: And behold, they cried out, saying: What have we to do with You, Jesus Son of God? are you come hither to torment us before the time?

For because the multitudes called Him man, the devils came proclaiming His Godhead, and they that heard not the sea swelling and subsiding, heard from the devils the same cry, as it by its calm was loudly uttering. Then, lest the thing might seem to come of flattery, according to their actual experience they cry out and say in these words:

Have you come here to torment us before the time?

8152: With this in view, then, their enmity is avowed beforehand, that their entreaty may not incur suspicion. For indeed they were invisibly receiving stripes, and the sea was not in such a storm as they; galled and inflamed, and suffering things intolerable from His mere presence. Accordingly no man daring to bring them to Him, Christ of Himself goes unto them.

And Matthew relates indeed that they said: Have you come here before the time to torment us? 8:29:.⁸⁴ For they supposed that their punishment was now close

⁸⁴ Fr. Bertoni skips a sentence here - cf. Baronet translation p. 191 a.

upon them, and feared as even now to fall into vengeance⁸⁵. Have you come here to torment us before the time?

8153: that they had sinned, they could not deny, but they demand not to suffer their punishment before the time. For, since He had caught them in the act of perpetrating those horrors so incurable and lawless, and deforming and punishing His creature in every way; and they supposed that he, for the excess of their crimes would not await the time of their punishment: therefore, they besought and entreated Him: and they that endured not even bands of iron come bound, and they that run about the mountains, are gone forth into the plain; and those who hinder all others from passing, at sight of Him blocking the way, stand still.⁸⁶

8154: Mt 8:30: And there was, not far from them, an herd of many swine feeding.

v. 31: And the devils besought Him, saying: If you cast us out hence, send us into the herd of swine.

v. 32: And he said to them: Go. But they going out went into the swine, and behold the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea: and they perished in the waters.⁸⁷

- Now, should anyone say, And wherefore did Christ fulfill the devils' request, suffering them to depart into the herd of swine?

- This would be our reply, that He did so, not as yielding to them, but as providing for many that are delivered from those wicked tyrants, how great the malice of their insidious enemies; another that all might learn how not even against swine are they bold, except He allow them; a third, that they would have treated those men more grievously than the swine, unless even in their calamity they had enjoyed much of God's providential care.

8155: For they that hate us more than the brutes is surely evident to every man. So then they that spared not the swine, but in one moment of time cast them all down the precipice, much more would they have done so to the men whom they possessed, leading them towards the desert, and carrying them away, unless even in their very tyranny the guardian care of God had abounded, to curb and check the excess of their violence. Whence it is manifest that there is no one, who does not enjoy the benefit of God's Providence. And if not all alike, nor after one manner, this it itself a very great instance of providence; in that according to each man's profit, the work also of providence is displayed.

8156: And besides what has been mentioned, there is another thing also, which we learn from this; that His providence is not only over all in common, but also over each in particular; which He also declared with respect to His disciples, saying: But the very

⁸⁵ Fr. Bertoni skips a paragraph here - ib., p. 191 a & b.

⁸⁶ Here Fr. Bertoni skips almost a full column, cf. pp. 191 b - 192 b.

⁸⁷ Fr. Bertoni adds these three biblical texts, not found this way in the Chrysostom original.

hairs of your head are numbered. MT 10:30. And from these demoniacs too, one may clearly perceive this; who would have been choked long before, if they had not enjoyed the benefit of much tender care from above. For these reasons then He suffered them to depart into the herd of wine, and that they also who dwelt in those places should learn His power.

Mt 8:33: And they that kept them fled: and coming into the city, told everything, and concerning them that had been possessed by the devils⁸⁸.

For where His name was great, He did not greatly display Himself: but where no one knew Him, but they were still in an insensible condition, He made his miracles to shine out, so as to bring them over to the knowledge of His Godhead.

8157: For it is evident from the event that the inhabitants of that city were a sort of senseless people; for when they ought to have adored and marveled at His power, they sent Him away, and besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.⁸⁹

Mt 8:34: And behold the whole city went out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their coasts.

And mark also His meekness together with His power. For when the inhabitants of that country, after having received such benefits, were driving Him away, He resisted not, but retired, and left those who had shown themselves unworthy of His teaching, having given them for teachers them that had been freed from the demons, and the swine-herd, that they might of them learn all that had happened.

While He retiring, leaves the fear vigorous in them. For the greatness withal of the loss was spreading the fame of what had been done, and the event penetrated their mind. And from many quarters were wafted sounds, proclaiming the strangeness of the miracle; from the cured, and from the drowned, from the owners of the swine, from the men that were feeding them...⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Fr. Bertoni adds this biblical passage, not in Chrysostom's original

⁸⁹ Fr. Bertoni omits more than a half of a column here - cf. Baronet translation, pp. 192 b - 193 a. As is noted, it was most difficult to follow Fr. Bertoni here, with his omissions and his additions, all copied from some other source.

⁹⁰ Fr. Bertoni ends here abruptly His Meditation 41, leaving the last two and a half pages of Chrysostom's Homily XXVIII untouched [cf. Baronet translation, pp. 193 a - 195 B.

Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove writes: "After 73 Meditations on the First Book of Kings, and 41 on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Fr. Bertoni judged that his seminarians were now mature to take on their deeper understanding of Genesis. This is the motivation that he finds expressed by St. John Chrysostom in his Commentary [On Genesis. Hom. II, n. 1], and which is included in the First Prelude: 'Let us imitate the farmers: when they see that the field has been prepared and that the harmful weeds have been removed, they seminate the field abundantly, thus, since this our spiritual field, by the grace of God, is not purified from disordered affections, after which the dogmas of Sacred Scripture have been presented, today let us try to approach the more subtle teachings...' " [cf. Nello, pp. 606, f. - Mss B, \$ 4615].

8158:

1. Election of Matthew.
2. To whom does the Church belong.
3. Jesus and others.
4. May God so conserve it!

+
+++

+