

Matthew 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

The whole revelation of the will of God to the children of men is usually called The Bible, that is, The book, (for the word Bible derives from the Greek Βιβλος or Βιβλιον), with a note of eminency, being indeed the Book of books, so as Luther said well that he should wish all his books burned if he could know that men by them would be kept from reading the Scriptures. And to distinguish this from other books, we have (in the ordinary titles of our Bibles) added Holy, with respect to the authority, the matter, and end of it. This sacred book, with us Christians, is usually divided into the Old and New Testament: indeed the term Testament doth not so properly belong to the law and the prophets, as to the books of the evangelists, the Acts, and Epistles, &c. The title of New Testament in Greek is, *της διαθηκης απαντα*; that is, the whole of the new disposition, or new law, or new covenant, or new testament. The word originally and primarily signifieth a disposition of things. In regard that, amongst men, things are ordered, or disposed, by a law, or by contract, or covenant, or by will and testament, the word hath been used to signify any of these. But in regard that until a testator be dead a testament is of no force, Christ having not come nor died before all the law and the prophets were finished, (I mean the writings containing the law, and what other holy men wrote by inspiration from God, which the Jews call the prophets, or the holy writings), it is not so proper (but that use hath now obtained) to call those writings by the name of a Testament; especially considering, that a part of them (which contained the ceremonial law) was abolished by the Testator's death, and another great part of them fulfilled in his coming and dying. The name therefore of Testament doth most properly belong to the books of the evangelists, the Acts, and Epistles, which do not only contain the new law, (so far as it is new, either in respect of the full interpretation of the mortal law, or in respect of the law concerning the worship of God under the gospel, and the government of the church), but also the new covenant, which though made with Adam, first revealed to him, Ge 3:15, yet is more fully revealed in those books, and they are indeed the last will and testament of our blessed Lord and Saviour. These books do obviously divide themselves into the

Gospels, the Acts of the apostles, the Epistles of the apostles, and the Revelation. The evangelists, or Gospels, are four, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, whose books are called the Gospels, that is, books containing the good tidings (for so the word *εὐαγγέλιον* signifies) which was brought to all people by the coming, life, and death of Christ, the history of which, as also his resurrection and ascension into heaven, they relate. So as they are not called evangelists, as the term signifieth such an extraordinary officer as is mentioned Eph 4:2, such a one as Philip was, Ac 21:8, and Timothy, 2Ti 4:5; but as they were evangelical historiographers, writing the history, as well as publishing the mystery, of the gospel. Of these, Matthew and John were apostles, the other two only disciples to the apostles. In the account they give us of Christ, what he did, and what he said, we are not to expect either a full account of all he did or spake, (we are assured of the contrary, Joh 21:25) nor yet an exact account of every speech in any one sermon, or all the circumstances of any of his actions: we must conceive of them, not as exact notaries, but such who wrote from their memories (not without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit). Hence it is manifest, that although they do not contradict one another, (that indeed were incompetent with the Spirit of truth, their common guide), yet one evangelist hath what another hath not, and in the same piece of his history one hath more circumstances than another: and hardly any of them relate all things in the same order of time in which they were spoke or done, but set them down as their memory did serve them, keeping to the substance, and being less careful as to circumstances; so as where more evangelists relate the same history or sermon, what all say must be taken in to complete the history or discourse, so far as the Holy Spirit thought fit Christians should be acquainted with it; which is the method I have taken in my notes upon the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Matthew was the son of Alphaeus, Mr 2:14, called also Levi: by his employment he was a publican, that is, one who gathered custom for the Romans (which sort of people were generally hated, and perhaps none of the most honest men). Christ called him from the receipt of custom to be his disciple, Mt 9:10 Mr 2:14,15. He was sent out as one of the twelve apostles, Mt 10:3, so as he was both an eye and ear witness of what he wrote. What became of him after Christ's ascension I cannot tell, not knowing what credit is to be given to what ecclesiastical historians say in the case who wrote three or four hundred years after. The time of his writing this Gospel is as

uncertain; some say eight, some nine, some fifteen years after Christ's ascension. It hath been a question, also, whether he wrote in Hebrew or Greek: it is most probable that he (as the other evangelists) wrote it in Greek, though it hath been once or twice translated into Hebrew. Those who as to that question have a curiosity to know what is written on both sides, (not to mention other books), may read enough in Mr. Pool's Prolegomena to this Gospel in his Synopsis Criticorum. The matter of his Gospel is principally the history of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour. The passages after his resurrection and before his ascension are most fully related by St. John. Luke more fully relates the history of his birth, and what went before it. The history of the wise men coming from the east to inquire for Christ is related by Matthew alone; so are some parables, as that of the virgins, Mt 25:1-13, &c.

Chapter Summary

Mt 1:1-17 The genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph.

Mt 1:18-25 The miraculous conception of Mary: Joseph's doubts are satisfied by an angel, who declareth the name and office of Christ: Jesus is born.

Chapter Introduction

Ver. 1. *The book of the generation* signifieth no more than the writing containing the genealogy or pedigree; for the Jews called all writings books. Thus, Jer 32:10,11, *the evidences of a purchase* are called the *book*. So Isa 1:1 Mr 10:4, the writings called a *bill of divorce* are both in the Hebrew and the Greek called a *book of divorce*. Thus in ecclesiastical courts still, the term libel (which signifieth a little book) is used. So as these words are not to be looked upon as the title to the whole Gospel according to St. Matthew, but only to the following pedigree of our Saviour's ancestors.

Of Jesus Christ; of that person to whom the name of *Jesus* was given by the angel, as we shall hear further, Mt 1:20,21, because he should *save his people from their sins* (for Jesus, as also Joshua, signifies a saviour or deliverer); and who also was the

Christ, or the Messiah, prophesied of by Daniel, Da 9:25,26, expected by the Jews, as doth appear from Joh 1:41 (for Messiah and Christ denoted the same person, Joh 4:25); only Messiah was a Hebrew word, and Christ of Greek extraction, both signifying Anointed, and so God's designation of a person to the office of a priest, a prophet, or a king. *The Christ* signifieth a designation to all three.

The Son of David, the son of Abraham: not the immediate Son of either, but, by a long traduction, lineally descended from both. Abraham was long before David, but is here put after him, either because he was a king, or because the Jews expected Messiah was to be *the Son of David*; or because the evangelist's design was to begin the pedigree from Abraham, whom he therefore last mentions. Both are named, because both were concerned in the promise of Christ. It was made to Abraham, Ge 12:3 22:18; and to David renewed and enlarged, Ps 89:36,37. Hence it appeareth that the Jews looked that Christ should be *the Son of David*, Mt 22:42 Mr 12:35. Hence the evangelist puts David in the front. From Abraham the Jews derived themselves, they usually gloried they had Abraham to their father. The evangelist, by proving Christ to have descended from Abraham by Isaac, proveth him an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and to be descended from the seed to whom the promise was made; and by proving him the Son of David, he proves him *David's righteous Branch*, or *Branch of righteousness*, mentioned Jer 23:5,6 Jer 33:15, and so to have descended from the royal family.

Matthew 1:2

Ver. 2. The evangelist reckoneth the genealogy of our Saviour by three periods, reckoning thrice fourteen descents. The first period began in Abraham (Ge 21:2,3), and ended in David. The second began in Solomon, and ended in Jehoiachin. The third began with Jehoiachin, and ended in Christ. Luke (as we shall see in its place) fetcheth our Saviour's line from Adam. From Abraham to David there is no difference between Matthew and Luke, they both reckoned up the same fourteen persons, Lu 3:32-34. But Luke repeating our Saviour's pedigree by his mother's side, and Matthew by his supposed father's side, Joseph, after David they must differ, Mary descending from David's family by his son Nathan, Joseph descending from him by Solomon. All

interpreters agree that there are great difficulties about the genealogy of Christ, especially in reconciling Matthew and Luke; and the enemies of Christianity have in all times made their advantage of them, to weaken our faith as to the gospel: but Christians ought to consider,

1. That the Jews had without doubt perfect genealogies, and were more especially exact in keeping them as to the royal tribe of David, which was Judah, and the priestly tribe of Levi, that they might have a right king and high priest; and it cannot be expected that after seventeen hundred years almost we should make out genealogies as they could.
2. That they were very apt to make strifes about words and endless genealogies; as appears by the apostle's cautioning both Timothy and Titus against it, 1Ti 1:4 1Ti 6:4 Tit 3:9.
3. That it had been a sufficient exception against Christ if they could have proved he had not lineally descended from David.
4. That though they cavilled at Christ for many things, yet they never made any such cavil.
5. That we are forbidden strife and endless labour about genealogy. And therefore it is the most unreasonable thing imaginable for us to make such little dissatisfactions grounds for us to question or disbelieve the gospel, because we can not untie every knot we meet with in a pedigree.

But in this first period no such difficulties occur; both the evangelists are agreed, and the Old Testament agrees with both. That Abraham begat Isaac (when he was an hundred years old) we are assured by Moses, Ge 21:2,5; that Isaac begat Jacob he also telleth us, Ge 25:26. So also that Jacob begat Judah and his brethren, Ge 29:35. Judah was Jacob's third son by Leah, and that son of whom dying Jacob prophesied, That *him should his brethren praise, and to him should his father's children bow down. That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came; and unto him should the gathering of the people be*, Ge 49:8-10. Though Saul, who was the first king of Israel, (given them in wrath), was of the tribe of Benjamin, 1Sa 9:21; yet David was of the tribe of Judah, in whose line the kingdom held unto the captivity.

And his brethren: the brethren of Judah are here mentioned, being the heads of the Jewish nation: Christ descended from Judah.

Matthew 1:3

Ver. 3. That *Judas begat Phares and Zara* (they were twins begot of Tamar his daughter-in-law), the relict of his son Er whom God slew, Ge 38:7, appeareth from Ge 38:27-30. That *Phares begat Ezrom* appeareth from Ru 4:18 1Ch 2:5; and from the same texts appears also that *Ezrom begat Aram*, Ru 4:19 1Ch 2:9, where he is called *Ram*. Some may possibly be offended that amongst all the ancestors of Christ there are but three women named, and all of them such as had a great stain and blot upon their reputation. This *Tamar*, the mother of Phares and Zara, was blotted with incest, and Phares was one of the children begot in that incest. Rahab also is mentioned, Mt 1:5, whom the Scripture calleth an *harlot*, Jos 2:1; and Bathsheba was stained with adultery. But we ought to consider:

1. That (abating original corruption, which we indeed all derive from our parents) no man derives any intrinsic badness from the vice of his parents, though he may derive a blot upon his honour and reputation from it.
2. That this was one degree of our Saviour's humiliation.
3. That it was no way incongruous, that He who came into the world to die for great sinners, should be born of some that were such.

Matthew 1:4

Ver. 4. This exactly agreeth with the Old Testament, Ru 4:19,20 1Ch 2:10,11; only it is there said that *Naasson* was *prince of the children of Judah*, Nu 1:7 2:3, and *Salmon* is there called *Salma*.

Matthew 1:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 1:6".

Matthew 1:6

Ver. 5,6. This agreeth with Ru 4:22 1Sa 16:1,13. Here now ariseth the first difficulty we meet with in this genealogy, and it rather an appearance of a difficulty than a real one.

Salmon being the son of Aminadab, who was the prince of the children of Judah in Moses's time, *Salmon* cannot be imagined to have lived later than in the times of Joshua.

Boaz seemeth to have lived in Eli's time, which (if chronologers count right) was three hundred years after: here are but four men named to take up these years, *Salmon*, *Booz*, *Obed*, *Jesse*.

Answer. The world according to chronologers, wanted but five of two thousand five hundred years old, when the Israelites (under the conduct of Joshua) entered into Canaan: we will suppose *Salmon* to have then been a young man. *Eli* is by them said to have lived about the two thousand eight hundred and tenth. So that the distance is three hundred and fifteen years. *David* is said to have been born in the two thousand eight hundred and sixtieth. So as from *Salmon* to *David* are three hundred and sixty-five years. Admit *Salmon*, *Boaz*, *Obed*, and *Jesse* to have each of them lived a hundred years, or upward, in admitting this, if we consider the age and vigour of persons in that age of the world. *Moses* (though a man spent with travels and battles) lived one hundred and twenty years, De 34:7. *Caleb* at eighty-five years was strong and as fit for war as ever, Jos 4:11,12. If we allow these four men the life of *Moses* they might live four hundred and eighty years, which might allow to each of them fifteen or sixteen years apiece for the concurrency of their lives with their parents, yet three hundred and sixty-five years might be well allowed for all their time: nor is it unreasonable for us to suppose, that God might allow those whom he intended thus to dignify a something longer life than the ordinary sort of men lived in that age of the world. So as the thing being neither naturally impossible (for in our age we see particular persons live upward of a hundred years) nor morally improbable, and directly affirmed in three or four texts, they must have a great mind to quarrel with a Divine revelation who question the truth

of it upon such a pretence; especially considering that the lives of men in our declining and debauched age of the world, are no measures by which we can guess at the lives of extraordinary persons who lived near three thousand years ago.

David the king: possibly that term is added to distinguish the David here intended from others of the same name; or because he was the first king of the tribe of Judah, to whom the sceptre of Israel was promised, Ge 49:10; or the first king not given to the Israelites in wrath, as Saul was upon their murmuring against Samuel: or to show that Christ descended from that family, to whom the promise of the Messiah was made, Jer 23:5, and a kingdom established for ever, Ps 89:36,37. Thus our evangelist hath given us the names in his first period of fourteen generations: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judas, Phares, Esrom, Aram, Aminadab, Naasson, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David.

Solomon was not the eldest child of David by Bathsheba; that died, 2Sa 12:22,23. He was born after David had taken Bathsheba (who had been the wife of Uriah) for his wife, 2Sa 12:25, compared with 2Sa 11:27.

Matthew 1:7

Ver. 7. This exactly agrees with the history of the Old Testament, 1Ki 11:43 (where he is called *Rehoboam*); he reigned but seventeen years, and died. 1Ki 14:21,31. Abijam his son reigned in his stead; he is here called *Abia*; but we shall observe frequent alteration of names, both as to the final terminations, and where the quiescent letters in Hebrew fall into the name. Abia, or Abijam, reigned but three years, and was succeeded by Asa his son, 1Ki 15:2,8. Asa reigned forty-one years, 2Ch 16:13. So as these three princes reigned sixty years.

Matthew 1:8

Ver. 8. Jehoshaphat, here called *Josaphat*, in the Greek, (they having no letter to express the Hebrew י by), was the son of Asa, a good son of a good father, 2Ch 17:1,2; he reigned twenty-five years, 1Ki 22:42. Jehoram, here called *Joram*, succeeded him in his kingdom: he *slew his brethren; he walked in the ways*

of *Ahab*. 2Ch 21:4,6; he reigned but eight years, lived and died wickedly, and was buried infamously, 2Ch 21:19,20. But here ariseth another difficulty from what is said, *Joram begat Ozias*. It is certain that he did not beget him immediately, for Uzziah was the fourth from Joram. Jehoram or Joram begat Ahaziah, he was his youngest son; he lived but one year as king, 2Ch 22:1,2; then Athaliah usurped the kingdom for six years, not counting her usurpation. Joash the son of Ahaziah reigned forty years, 2Ch 24:1. He dies, and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ki 12:21. He was the father of Uzziah, 2Ch 26:1, called *Azariah*, 2Ki 14:21. So that when it is said, that *Joram begat Ozias*, we must only understand that Uzziah lineally descended from Joram: thus, Mt 1:1, Christ is called *the Son of David, the son of Abraham*. Thus the Jews said: *We have Abraham to our father*; and Elisabeth is said to be *of the daughters of Aaron*, Lu 1:5. But it is a greater question why the evangelist leaves out Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, who were all three lawful princes, and rightly descended from the family of David. To pass by various conjectures, the best account I find given of it is this.

1. It is manifest the evangelist had a design to divide all the generations from Abraham to Christ into three periods. The first of which should contain the *growing state* of the Jewish commonwealth, till it came at the height, which was in David's time. The second should contain its *flourishing state*; which was from David's time till the first carrying into captivity. The third should contain its *declining state*, from the first carrying them into captivity to the coming of Christ.
2. He designed to reduce all the generations in each period to fourteen; this appeareth from Mt 1:17. Now although the first period contained exactly fourteen descents or generations, yet in the second there was manifestly seventeen, so as the evangelist was obliged to leave out three to bring them to the number of fourteen: now though it be a little too curious to inquire why the evangelist chose to leave out these three, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, rather than any other three, yet there is a probable good account of it given by learned men, who have waded into these speculations. Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram by Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, 2Ch 21:6; Joash her grandchild; Amaziah her great grandchild. Now God had cursed the house of Ahab, and threatened to root out all his house, 1Ki 21:21. This (as is supposed) made the evangelist,

who was necessitated to leave out three to bring the generations to fourteen, rather to choose to leave out these princes, who were of Ahab's half blood, than any others. If any say, Why then did he not leave out more? Besides that he was not obliged any other way, (than as he would keep to his number to leave out these), he knew God's threatenings of children for the sins of parents usually terminate in the third and fourth generation.

Matthew 1:9

Ver. 9. That Jotham succeeded his father Uzziah, and reigned sixteen years, agreeth with 2Ch 26:23, and that Ahaz his son succeeded him, agreeth with 2Ch 27:9; he also reigned sixteen years, and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ch 28:27. Some here have cavilled at the truth of the history of holy writ, because it appeareth from 2Ki 16:2 that Ahaz died at thirty-six years of age, and that Hezekiah began to reign at twenty-five years of age doth also appear from 2Ch 29:1, whence it appeareth that Hezekiah must be born when his father was but eleven years of age, which they think improbable: but those who will question the truth of what we have so good a proof of as the revelation of holy writ is, are obliged not only to tell us of things in it that are improbable to their apprehensions, but either in nature impossible, or at least inconsistent with some other piece of Divine revelation. Of the latter sort, we hear of nothing objected in this case. Now though with us it be not ordinary for persons at that age to beget children, yet that it is not impossible in nature, nor more than hath happened in the world sometimes, Spanhemius hath largely proved in his *Dubia Evangelica*. Dub. 5, and that by no less authorities than those of Hierome amongst the ancients, and the learned Scaliger amongst the more modern writers. It is what may be. The Scripture telleth us it was so; that is enough for us, though it be not a thing very ordinary.

Matthew 1:10

Ver. 10. All this exactly agreeth with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. These three princes in a lineal descent immediately succeeded each other, Manasseh (2Ki 20:21 1Ch 3:13) reigning fifty-five, Amon two, and Josiah thirty-one years, altogether

eighty-eight years.

Matthew 1:11

Ver. 11. In this *Jechonias* (1Ch 3:15,16) (whoever he was) determined the evangelist's second period of fourteen generations. But there is much dispute, both about the Jechonias who is here mentioned, and the sons of Josiah as they are reckoned up 1Ch 3:15, where it is said: *The sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.* It is plain that Jehoahaz succeeded Josiah his father, 2Ki 23:31 2Ch 36:1. It is certain that amongst the Jews it was very ordinary for persons to have two names; thus king Uzziah in the Book of Kings is called *Azariah*, 2Ki 14:21. Most if not all of Josiah's sons had two names: it is plain that Jehoahaz his eldest son is the same who in 1Ch 3:15 is called *Johanan*; but he reigned but three months, probably set up by the people, and put down by Pharaoh-necho, in a battle against whom Josiah was slain; he pursuing his victory put him down and set up Eliakim his next brother, calling him Jehoiakim, as he is called 1Ch 3:15. He reigned eleven years, 2Ch 36:5. The king of Babylon puts him down, and setteth up Jehoiachin his son, who is also called Jeconiah, and Coniah. He reigned but three months and ten days, 2Ch 36:9; and the king of Babylon fetcheth him away, and sets up his uncle Zedekiah, called also Mattaniah. He reigned eleven years, as appeareth by 2Ch 36:11; then the whole body of the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon (2Ki 24:14-16 2Ki 25:11 2Ch 36:10,20 Jer 27:20 39:9 52:11,15,28-30 Da 1:2). We do not read, either in the Book of Kings or Chronicles, that Shallum (Josiah's fourth son) ever reigned, yet it should seem that he did, by Jer 22:11. Some think that he was set up instead of Jehoahaz, when he was carried away. But the Scripture saith nothing of it, nor is it very probable that the conqueror should skip over the second and third son, and set up the fourth. But it is not my present concern to inquire after Shallum, but only after Jechonias mentioned in this verse, and the other Jechonias mentioned in Mt 1:12, as the head of those generations which make up the last period. As to this Jechonias, the most probable opinion is, that it was Jehoiakim, who was also called Jeconiah, and that the Jechonias mentioned Mt 1:12 was Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim. In this I find some of the best interpreters acquiescing, nor indeed is there any great

difficulty in allowing Jehoiakim the father, as well as Jehoiachin the son, to be called Jeconiah (so near are the names akin, and the signification of both the same); but then the question is, how Josiah could be said to *beget Jehoiakim about the time of the carrying into the captivity of Babylon*; for it appeareth by 2Ch 36:5, that *Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years*; and in his time was the first carrying into Babylon; so that there must be thirty-seven years betwixt the begetting of Jehoiakim and the first transportation into Babylon. The margin of our Bibles tells us of another reading, *Josias begat Jakim*, (Jakim and Jehoiakim are the same), and *Jakim begat Jechonias* (that is, Jehoiachin). Beza thinks this the truest reading, taken out of an old copy of R. Stephens, magnified by Stapulensis and Bucer. But he thinks it should be thus, *Josias begat Jakim and his brethren*, (for we know that Josiah had four sons), and *Jakim begat Jechonias* (that is, Jehoiachin) about the time of the carrying into the captivity of Babylon. For Jehoiachin or Jeconiah was not nine years old when himself was carried away, and his father was carried away before. *About the carrying away into Babylon*: the Greek preposition $\epsilon\pi\iota$ doth not signify any determinate certain time, but doth include sometimes many and distinct times, as it must do here; for Josiah began to reign at eight years old, and reigned thirty-one years, so that he died at thirty-nine years of age, 2Ch 34:1. Jehoahaz (or Johanan) his eldest son succeeded him at twenty-three years old, so he must be born when Josiah was sixteen years of age; Jehoiakim began to reign at twenty-five years of age; Zedekiah at one and twenty; as appeareth from 2Ch 36:2,5,11. So that Zedekiah must be but about nine years old when his father died, which was not twelve years before, Jehoiakim was carried into Babylon, as appeareth by the history, 2Ch 36:1-23. Thus the persons in this period (which was the flourishing time of the kingdom of Judah) are fourteen: Solomon, Rehoboam, Abia, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoiakim; only here is no mention made of Jehoahaz's reign, who was Josiah's eldest son, who, it may be, is not mentioned by the evangelist, either because Jehoiakim (here called Jechonias) was a second son of the same father, or in regard of his short reign (for it was but three months and odd days); or, it may be, because in all probability he was tumultuously set up by the people, and not fixed in his throne before he was turned out by the conqueror Pharaoh-necho; nor do we read of any sons he left;

to be sure he left none who could succeed him in the throne, for Jehoiakim was set up, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him, as the history telleth us.

Matthew 1:12

Ver. 12. This *Jechonias* (1Ch 3:17-19) is generally thought to be Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakin; he is called *Jeconiah*, 1Ch 3:16, as well as *Jehoiachin*, 2Ch 36:8; so also he is called *Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim*, Jer 24:1. That this *Jechonias* *begat Salathiel* (Ezr 3:2 5:2 Ne 12:1 Hag 1:1) appeareth from 1Ch 3:17. It is here objected that God said concerning this Jeconiah, called also Coniah, *Write ye this man childless*, Jer 22:30 how then did he beget Salathiel? But it is easily answered, for that verse. Jer 22:30, will expound itself: *Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah*: so as that text is plainly to be understood, without a child that shall actually succeed in the crown; for the text itself supposes that he should have *seed*, but none that should *prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah*, which the Scripture, 2Ch 36:1-23 justifieth, for the king of Babylon set up Zedekiah his uncle in his stead, who was the last king in Judah, in the eleventh year of whose reign the Jews were all carried captive. This Jeconiah had eight sons, as we read, 1Ch 3:17,18. Salathiel is there reckoned as his second son; possibly Assir died young, or at least childless, so as the right of the crown was in Salathiel, who is the person alone here named. But how *Salathiel* is here said to have *begat Zorobabel* is yet a greater difficulty; for, 1Ch 3:19, it is said, *The sons of Pedaiah* (not of Salathiel) *were, Zerubabel, and Shimei*. If Zorobabel were the son of Pedaiah, how could he be the son of Salathiel? Several answers are given to this. Some think that Zorobabel, because he descended lineally from Salathiel, is called his son, which were a sufficient answer if the supposition were true, that Zorobabel were lineally descended from Salathiel: but that it is not, for according to 1Ch 3:18 Pedaiah was not the son, but the brother of Salathiel. Others think that Salathiel is here said to have begot Zorobabel, because Zorobabel succeeded him in the kingdom; but as that is a strange interpretation of the word *begat*, so neither was Salathiel a king, though possibly the title of the crown was in him as the great grandchild of Josiah, nor did ever

Zorobabel assume the crown that we read of. Whereas others say, that there were two Zorobabels, and that this son was the adopted son of Salathiel: both these things are suggested without proof. The most probable opinion, which I perceive the best interpreters acquiesce in, is, that Salathiel dying without issue, Pedaiah his brother married his wife, according to the law of God, De 25:5, and begat Zorobabel of her that had been the wife of Salathiel; and thence it is said Salathiel begat him, Pedaiah so raising up seed to his brother according to the law aforesaid. To this it is objected by some, that the law was, that the child should succeed in the name of the brother that was dead: so that if this were the sense, it should not have been, *Salathiel begat Zorobabel*, but Salathiel begat Salathiel. The answer to this is not difficult; for, to succeed in the name of the brother that is dead, doth not signify, to be called by the very name with which he was called, but to be denominated his son, as if begotten by him. And this is evident from Ru 4:10, where Boaz hath these words, *Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren*. Yet, Ru 4:21, Boaz, having a son by Ruth, did not call his name Mahlon, by the name of his father, but Obed.

Matthew 1:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 1:15".

Matthew 1:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 1:15".

Matthew 1:15

Ver. 13-15. Here are divers objections made to this last part of the genealogy, and in a great measure caused from the difference between Matthew and Luke; but I shall not attempt any reconciliation of those differences till I come to Lu 3:23-38. There is no *Abiud* reckoned amongst the sons of Zorobabel, 1Ch 3:19,20; and for the others named, we have no certain account of them in any part of the holy writ. From the time of Jehoiakim

were above five hundred years to the birth of Christ, of which seventy were spent in the captivity of Babylon. Zorobabel was alive at the end of the captivity, Ezr 5:2, and, as it appears, the ruler of the Jews, though not under the title and style of king. For *Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, and Jacob*, though we have no mention of them in any canonical books of holy writ but only this, yet Matthew's credit in the church of God ought to out weigh any other writings, pretending any thing contrary to what he saith; we are therefore obliged to believe they all lineally descended from David, but, living in a private state and condition, and holy writ not extending its history beyond Zorobabel's time, (the time when the Jews came out of Babylon), it is no wonder that we have no better means than we have from holy writ to know their lineal descent from the royal family. That Matthew in what he wrote was guided by the unerring Spirit, and that he had rolls of pedigrees which we want, we have reason to believe. This is enough for us Christians, who own the books of the New as well as the Old Testament to be wrote by persons Divinely inspired; so, as to them, we have nothing to do but to reconcile Matthew and Luke, both whom we own to have had the same infallible inspiration and direction. If Jews or pagans argue from any other topic than this, it is enough to tell them, that the Jews kept exact genealogies, and more especially as to the descents in the tribes of Judah and Levi, that they might never be at loss as to the Messiah, whom they expected as the Son of David, nor yet as to the true high priest. Though these records and rolls of genealogy be now lost, yet we have no reason to believe they were so in Matthew's time; of which genealogies (as to this part) doubtless what Matthew saith was but a copy, directed by that Holy Spirit by which he was inspired.

Matthew 1:16

Ver. 16. How Luke cometh to make Joseph the son of Heli we shall inquire (if God please) when we come to his third chapter: but from this verse ariseth a very grave question, viz. How, or wherefore, the evangelist, in deriving the pedigree of Christ, bringeth the line down to Joseph, from whom our Saviour did not descend, being no flesh of his flesh. Christ being the promised Messiah, the prophecy, Isa 7:14, must be and was fulfilled in him, *A virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and*

shall call his name Immanuel. Now if Joseph were not the true, but only the legal or supposed, father of Christ, what had the evangelist to do with his genealogy? Many answers are given to this. Some think that the evangelist accommodates himself to the vulgar opinion; they took him generally for the true and natural son of Joseph; they said, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* But then the Holy Spirit must have attempted to have proved a conclusion true from a medium that was false, which must by no means be allowed. Besides, neither could this be Matthew's design, who afterwards relates the mystery of our Saviour's incarnation plain enough; and tells us, Mt 1:18, that Mary was *found with child before Joseph and she came together.* Others therefore say that amongst the Jews the genealogies of women use not to be reckoned. How universally true that is I cannot tell; generally it is, (very probably), it being usual almost with all nations to reckon descents from the males. It is granted by most that Luke derives the descent of Mary. In the present case, it seemeth of high concern that the genealogy both of Joseph and Mary should be counted. Though our Saviour's being the Messiah could not have been proved from his being the Son of Joseph, for then he could not have been the Son of a virgin, yet (admitting the Jewish error in that case, not knowing the mystery of Christ's incarnation) Christ, by their own confession, was confirmed to be the Son of David because Joseph was so. On the other side, Luke deriving Mary's genealogy from David, and affirming Christ to be born of *a virgin espoused*, confirmed him to all the world to be both the Son of David, descending from Mary a virgin, that was a daughter to one who was the son of David, and also the true Messiah, in whom the prophecy was fulfilled, of a virgin's conceiving and bearing a Son. So that by the reckoning of the generation of two persons, both of which were lineally descended from David, he was proved to be the Son of David, both to the generality of the Jews, who could not deny but Joseph was so, and to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, to whom God should give to believe the mystery of the incarnation by the conception of the Holy Ghost. This to me seems a sufficient reason for the reckoning up our Saviour's descent from David both by father and mother. Which is advantaged by considering that Joseph was not only the *reputed* father, but the *legal* father of Christ; and although his being not the natural but the legal father of Christ will not prove him the Son of David, further than to the Jews who would have him to be the natural son of Joseph, yet the genealogy reckoned from Abraham to

Joseph will prove Joseph the son of David; (whom they judged Christ's natural father), so as they had nothing to say against that and the other parts of this Gospel; and this chapter indeed, with the genealogy of Mary, will prove that he was both the Son of David, and the true Messias, as a Son born of a virgin. Whereas some say that Mary was of the tribe of Levi, and think to prove it by her being cousin to Elisabeth, who is expressly called a daughter of Aaron, Lu 1:5; besides that Lu 3:23-38 plainly proveth her of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, the proof is by no means sufficient; for although the law, Nu 36:8,9, for the avoiding of a confusion of inheritances, commanded them to marry within their tribes, yet this law concerned not the daughters of the tribe of Levi, for that tribe had no inheritance as the rest. So as that kindred might easily be, though Mary was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah, as indeed she was. But leaving this question, let us come to the words of the verse. *And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary;* that is, the espoused husband of Mary. Espousals make a marriage before God: the angel afterward saith to Joseph, (but yet espoused), *Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.* And he was soon after the legal, actual husband of Mary.

Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ; that person who was called Jesus is by the direction of the angel, as we shall by and by see, who was also called Christ, which, as we said, signifieth Anointed, and the same with Messias. It is observed by some that the name Christ was given to kings of Judah (because of their anointing) before the captivity, but to none after, till he came who was *the Christ*; God by that providence (if the Jews would have understood it) pointing out to them, that the person was now come who was promised them under the notion of the Messias, Da 9:25,26, and whom they expected, as appeareth from Joh 1:41 4:25, and no longer to be expected.

Matthew 1:17

Ver. 17. The evangelist, for reasons which we cannot fathom, reduces our Saviour's progenitors to *fourteen* in each period of the Jewish state; and in the first period, determining with David, there were no more. In the second, he leaveth out three kings descended from the daughter of Ahab. In the third, which was from the captivity to Christ, there were doubtless more; Luke

reckoneth up twenty-four, (taking in Christ for one), and agreeth in very few with Matthew, who was forced to leave out some to keep to this number of fourteen. Nor doth Matthew speak any thing false, or contradictious to Luke, in saying there were fourteen though there were more. Besides, there might be many more progenitors of Mary than of Joseph, whose pedigree Matthew deriveth.

Matthew 1:18

Ver. 18. The evangelist prefaceth this extraordinary birth of our Saviour in this manner.

Now the birth or Jesus Christ was on this wise; not in the ordinary course and manner in which children are conceived and brought forth into the world ('with child of the Holy Ghost' Lu 1:35), but in this wonderful manner.

*When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph. Betrothing, or espousing, was nothing else but a solemn promise of marriage made by two persons each to other, at such a distance of time as they agreed upon. It was a decent usage, approved of (if not ordained) by God, as appears by De 20:7. That we are obliged still to use it I dare not say; it might be a prudential order and constitution of that state. There was nothing in it typical, nothing to bring it under the notion of a carnal ordinance, as the apostle calls some of their ordinances relating to the worship of God. It seemeth equitable, that the parties to be married might have some convenient time to think seriously of the great change they are soon to make in their lives, and more solemnly seek unto God for his blessing upon them; as also that they might more freely discourse together about their household affairs, and the settlement of their families, than the modesty of the virgins of that age would otherwise have allowed them. It made them man and wife before God, though they came not together for some time after. The distance of time seemeth to have been left to the agreement of parties and parents. In this case we cannot certainly assert the distance, but it appeareth to have been such as that she was *found with child* before they came together. Mary knew what the evangelist here asserts, that it was by *the Holy Ghost*; for as she must know that she had not known man as she told the angel, Lu 1:34; so the angel had satisfied her, saying, Lu 1:35,*

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. It cannot be doubted but that she revealed this to some of her friends, but how it came to be found, or who found it, we are not told. Joseph as yet had no such revelation.

God would have his Son to be born of a virgin:

1. For the fulfilling of the promise, Isa 7:14.
2. Of the Holy Ghost, that the womb of the virgin being sanctified by the Spirit of holiness, there might be no tradition of original sin.

Of a betrothed virgin:

1. That he might not be under the reproach of illegitimacy.
2. Nor his mother subjected to the punishment of the Judaical law.
3. That Mary's stock might be by her betrothed husband.
4. That Christ might have a guard in his infancy.

Matthew 1:19

Ver. 19. It was found she was with child, possibly herself or some of her friends told it to Joseph her espoused husband; it is plain from this text he came to the knowledge of it, for upon it, the evangelist saith, *he was minded to put her away privily*. Had Joseph at this time heard and believed that the Holy Ghost had come upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, being a good man, he would not have entertained thoughts of putting her away. But though she had before received this revelation, and might possibly have communicated it to some of her friends, yet it is manifest that her husband Joseph had not heard it, or at least was not easy to believe a thing of so unusual and extraordinary a nature. That she was with child was evident, how she came to be so was as yet hidden from him in nature, and so incredible a thing, as it had argued too much of easiness of

belief for him to have believed, had not Joseph had (as afterward he had) a Divine revelation for it: he therefore receiving such a report, and finding it to be true, resolves to put her away in the most private manner he could, rather than to expose her to a public shame, or to be made a public example. Their being betrothed was a thing publicly taken notice of, and he could not put her away so privately but there must be witnesses of it; the meaning therefore must be, as privately as the nature of the thing would bear. Joseph in this case had the choice of three things:

1. He might, notwithstanding this, have taken her to his house as his wife, for the law of divorce, or putting away, was but a law giving a liberty in case of a discerned uncleanness to put away the wife, it did not lay any under an obligation so to do.
2. He might give her a bill of divorce, and leave her with her friends. Now those skilled in the Jewish writings tell us this might be done, either more privately before two or three witnesses, putting a writing of that import into her bosom; or more openly and publicly before the magistrate.
3. He might, according to the law, De 22:23,24, &c., have brought her forth to be examined, whether she had only suffered a rape, or had herself consented. If it was done with her consent, she was by the law to be stoned.

Of these Joseph, in his first thoughts upon the matter, and before he rightly did understand the thing, chooseth the second and the milder part, and resolves to put her away, but in the most private manner the law would in that case allow him. He did this (saith the evangelist) because he was *a just man*, where the term $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ signifieth equitable, in opposition to severity and rigour; nor ought any to say Joseph in this showed himself an unjust man, because by the law she ought to have been stoned to death; for that is a mistake. Supposing she had been with child by man, yet if she had been forced the man only was to die, De 22:25,26; or she might have been with child before her betrothing, in which case she was only obliged to marry him that had so abused her. A kind and equitable man always presumes the best, especially in a case where life is concerned; besides that, no doubt Mary had by this time told Joseph the truth, and what the angel had said to her, to which (it being so incredible a thing as not to be believed but upon a Divine revelation) though

Joseph was not obliged, having as yet no such revelation, to give a present easy faith, yet he might reasonably give so much credit as to resolve upon the mildest course he could take, though he was willing also to avoid the blot upon himself by taking her to him for his wife according to his contract. God will not leave so good a man long unresolved what to do.

Matthew 1:20

Ver. 20. What we have in this verse assures us, that Joseph was not only inclined, by the kindness and benignity of his own natural temper, and by his charity, to that moderate resolution he had taken up, but also more immediately influenced by God, who was now sending a messenger to him to tell him what he would have him to do in this case. Whether this angel was the angel Gabriel, who Luke tells us, Lu 1:26, was sent to Mary, to tell her that the power of the Most High should overshadow her, or some other angel, none can assert; an angel it was. He appeareth to Joseph while he was asleep, and in and by a dream. By dreams was one way by which God revealed his mind to people formerly, Heb 1:1; one of those ways by which God made himself known to prophets, Nu 12:6; and not to prophets only, but to pagan princes sometimes, as appeareth by the instances we have in Scripture of the dreams which Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar both had. Dreams are either natural, or supernatural, or preternatural. How to distinguish the former from the two latter is not my work in this place, and possibly a difficult task, especially in our times, when God, having spoken to us by his Son, and given us his word as a perfect rule, hath left off ordinary speaking to his prophets by dreams and visions, though not limited himself but that he may sometimes so speak. We are assured of the truth of a Divine revelation to Joseph by this way of dreams, while his head was full of thoughts what he was to do in this case. God thinks of us when we sleep, and one way or other will not be wanting to our inquisition in sincerity to know his will, in the difficult cases of our lives. The angel saith unto Joseph, *Joseph, thou son of David*; by which compellation he lets him know he was to be the supposed and legal, though not the natural, father of the Messiah, who was by the confession of all men to be the Son of David.

Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; she that is thy

betrothed wife, and so thy wife in my sight; thou hast espoused her, and called me to witness that thou wilt consummate this marriage with her in a due time, and take her to thine house. I see what hath happened which troubleth thy thoughts; possibly thou art afraid lest thou shouldest offend me, marrying one who appeareth unto thee to be defiled; or thou art afraid of bringing a blot upon thyself if thou shouldest consummate this marriage; but do not fear any of these things, but go on, and consummate thy marriage. She is not, as you supposest, or mayest fear, defiled by man, *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. That holy thing,* (as Luke speaks), that human body which is in her womb, is created in her, and is of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, by his almighty creating power, hath supplied what is wanting from the help of the creature, as to ordinary productions of this nature.

Matthew 1:21

Ver. 21. When the usual time of women is accomplished, *she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.* He shall not be thy natural son, but he shall be her son, not begot by thee, but brought forth by her, so flesh of her flesh. His name shall be called Jesus by thee, or by his mother. It is the will of God thou shouldest give him that name.

For he shall save his people from their sins. It was the custom of the Jews (God's ancient people) to give names to their children, either expressive of the mercy which God had showed them in giving them their children, or of the duty which their children did owe unto God. This name was given by God, expressing the mercy of God to his people in giving them this child; *for he shall save his people from their sins,* saith the angel. Jesus comes from a Hebrew word, which signifies salvation. Joshua had his name from the same word, because he was to be a temporal saviour to save the Jews, the whole body of the Jews, from the Canaanites their enemies. This Jesus was to save his people, all that should believe in his name, whether Jews or Gentiles, from their sins. Hereby the angel hints the mistake of the Jews, in thinking the Messiah should be a temporal saviour, who should save the Jews from their enemies, minding them that he was to save them, not from their bodily, but spiritual enemies, from their sins; the guilt of them, and the power of them, and from the

eternal danger of them: and he alone should do it; *There is none other name under heaven given among men, neither is there salvation in any other, Ac 4:12.*

Matthew 1:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 1:23".

Matthew 1:23

Ver. 22,23. By these great acts of Divine Providence, that which was spoken and prophesied of by Isaiah, Isa 7:14, speaking by inspiration from God, was fulfilled. Though things are said in the evangelists to be fulfilled when the types have had their accomplishment in the antitype, and when something cometh to pass much like, or bearing some proportion to, something which before happened in the world, (as I shall show hereafter), yet I take the sense of being fulfilled here to be literally fulfilled; believing so much of that prophecy as is here quoted did literally concern Christ, and none but him. But we must take heed of interpreting the particle *that* as signifying the end of God's action in this great work of Providence; for the end for which God sent his Son into the world was before expressed, to *save his people from their sins*, not to fulfil a prophecy.

That here only signifies the consequent of that act of Divine Providence, and the sense is but only this, By all this which was done, was fulfilled that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, &c. But the Jews have so much clamouring against the application of that text Isa 7:14 to Christ, and some learned interpreters thinking the fulfilling mentioned to be no more than the fulfilling of a type in the antitype, it will be necessary that we make it appear that it was literally fulfilled. To which I know of but two prejudices:

1. That it could be no relief to Ahaz, nor to the Jews, against their sense and fear of their present danger, to tell them that Christ should be born of a virgin eight hundred years after.
2. That whereas it is added, Isa 7:16, *Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou*

abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Supposing those two kings to be Pekah king of Israel and Rezin king of Syria, who were at that time joined in a siege against Jerusalem, or at least preparing for it, and the child mentioned [Isa 7:16](#) to be the son of a virgin promised [Isa 7:14](#), it could be no relief to Ahaz, nor any great news for the prophet to have told Ahaz, that they should both leave the country before eight hundred years were elapsed. Let us therefore first consider the history to which that prophecy related. [Isa 7:1,2](#) we are told, that in the time of Ahaz, *Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it. And it was told the house of David, (that is, Ahaz), saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* The expedient which Ahaz thought upon in this distress, was to get Tiglathpileser, the king of Assyria, to join with and help him; which he afterward did, hiring him with *the silver and gold found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house,* as we find [2Ki 16:7,8](#). This conjunction with idolaters was what the Lord had forbidden, and had often declared his abhorrence of. To prevent it, he sends his prophet Isaiah to him: [Isa 7:3,4](#), *Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him, fear not, neither be faint hearted, &c.* In short, he assures him in the name of the Lord, that the counsel of these two kings should *not stand, nor come to pass, that within threescore and five years Israel should not be a people, &c.,* [Isa 7:7,8](#). Ahaz knew not how to believe this. Isaiah offereth him from God to ask a sign for the confirmation of his word, either *in the depth, or in the height.* Ahaz refuseth it under pretence that he would not *tempt the Lord,* as if it had been a tempting God to have asked a sign at his command. At this the Lord was angry, as appeareth by the prophet's reply, [Isa 7:13](#); *And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Then he goeth on, Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin, &c.* There was nothing more ordinary in the prophets than to comfort the people of God amongst the Jews in their distresses with the promise of the Messiah; this we find they often did with reference to the captivity of Babylon, and in other causes of distress and trouble. And certainly that is the design of the prophet here, in these

words: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.* Ahaz had refused to believe the promise God gave him, to defeat the counsel of these two kings; he had refused to ask a sign, for the confirmation of God's word. Well, (saith the prophet), God shall give you that fear him a sign, he shall in his own time send you the Messias, whose name shall be called Emmanuel, and he shall be born of a virgin. Nor yet doth he leave Ahaz and his people comfortless, as to their present distress, for saith he, Isa 7:16, *Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.* The Hebrew is **הַכֶּטֶר** which I think were better translated *this child*, than *the child*, for **הַ** seems not to be a relative, (referring to the child, mentioned in Isa 7:14), but a demonstrative, referring to the son of Isaiah, Shearjashub, whom God, Isa 7:3, commanded the prophet, going to meet Ahaz, to carry with him, who probably was a very young child. Saith the prophet: Here is a little child whom God hath commanded me to bring with me; before this child be much older, this land which thou art so much afraid of shall be quitted of both those kings who have now some possession of it; for at this time Rezin had taken Elath, a city of Judah, 2Ki 16:6; and doubtless he and Pekah had taken divers places, for they were come up to Jerusalem itself. And indeed, if this be not the sense, it is very hard to conceive to what purpose God commanded Isaiah to take Shearjashub with him when he went upon this errand. Isa 7:3. So that Isa 7:14 remains as a prophecy respecting the Messias only, and given not for any relief of unbelieving Ahaz as to his present distress, but for some relief to God's people among the Jews, with reference to their posterity. This will appear a much more probable sense than theirs, who think that Mahershalalhashbaz is the son mentioned Isa 7:14, whom we read of Isa 8:3, who was born to Isaiah of the prophetess, (who some think was at this time a virgin), and was a type of Christ; for the Scripture doth not tell us whether that prophetess was a virgin or a widow, neither was it any great wonder that a virgin being married should conceive, and bear a son. Nor had this been any relief to Ahaz, as to his present distress, for this virgin (if she were such) was yet to be married, to conceive, and bear a son; so that, according to that notion, we must allow three or four years before Ahaz could have expected relief. This is further advantaged by that passage, Isa 8:18, *Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath given me are for signs:* not the child, but *the children*. Shearjashub was for a sign

of God's deliverance of the Jews from those two kings; Mahershalalhashbaz was for a sign of the destruction of the Israelites within five years, and also of Syria, which fell out afterward. Thus Isa 8:14 remains a literal prophecy of Christ. For the Jewish interpretation of it concerning Hezekiah, (born fifteen years after), it is too ridiculous to be mentioned.

Matthew 1:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 1:25".

Matthew 1:25

Ver. 24,25. The will of God (as we heard) was revealed to Joseph in a dream. It is God that giveth a power to sleep, and a power to awake; therefore it is said, *being raised from sleep*, he showed both his faith and obedience; his faith in the Divine revelation, a certainty of which he had doubtless by some extraordinary Divine impression, and his obedience to the Divine precept.

He took unto him his wife, that is, he took her unto his house, (for betrothed virgins used to abide at their own friends' houses till the consummation of the marriage), and owned her as his wife, yet not fully using her as such, for the text saith he *knew her not* (a modest phrase used from the beginning of the world, as appears from Ge 4:1, to express the conjugal act) *till she had brought forth her firstborn Son*. Some make a great stir in determining whether he knew her afterwards, yea or no. Some of the ancients were stiff in their opinion that he did not, so are the popish writers, and many protestant interpreters. Mr. Calvin I think determines best, that none will move such a question, but such as are unwarrantably curious; nor contend for either part, but such as are unreasonably quarrelsome. For as, on the one side, none can conclude that she had more children from the word *till*, further than they can conclude, from Ps 110:1, that Christ shall not for ever sit at his Father's right hand, (the word *until* being a particle only exclusive of a preceding time, not affirming the thing in future time), nor doth the term *firstborn* conclude any born afterward; so, on the other side, there are no cogent arguments to prove that Mary had no more children by

Joseph. We read of the brother of our Lord, Ga 1:19, and of his mother and his "brethren", Mt 12:47; and though it be true *brethren* may signify kinsmen, according to the Hebrew dialect, yet that it doth so in these texts cannot be proved. The Holy Ghost had made use of the virgin for the production of the Messiah; why after this her womb should be shut up, and Joseph take her home to be his wife, and not use her as such I cannot tell, nor yet what reproach it could be to Mary or to our Saviour, marriage being God's ordinance, and the undefiled bed honourable: and those who think our Saviour would have been dishonoured in any others lying in the same bed after him, seem to forget how much he humbled himself in lying in that bed first, and then in a stable and a manger. We know he knew her not till Christ was born, whether he did afterward or no we are willingly ignorant because God hath not told us.

And he called his name Jesus: this is added to declare his obedience to the command received by the angel. We shall meet with more circumstances relating to the birth of Christ when we come to the two first chapters of Luke.

Matthew 2:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 2:1-2 Wise men from the east come to Jerusalem to inquire after Christ.

Mt 2:3-8 Herod is alarmed.

Mt 2:9-12 The wise men are directed by a star to Christ, and worship him, offering gifts.

Mt 2:13-15 Joseph, warned by an angel, fleeth with the young child and his mother into Egypt.

Mt 2:16-18 Herod's massacre of the children in Bethlehem and round about.

Mt 2:19-23 Upon the death of Herod Christ is brought out of Egypt, and dwelleth at Nazareth.

Ver. 1. That Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, was of Nazareth in

Galilee, appears from Lu 2:4, where we are told that he went from thence *unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David); to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife:* for, it seems, so was the emperor's decree, Lu 2:1, and Cyrenius the governor of Syria had ordered that every one should go to be taxed in his own tribe and city. Those words, *of Judea*, were added to distinguish the place from another Bethlehem, which was in the territories of Zebulun, Jos 19:15. The verse further tells us, that this was *in the days of Herod the king:* these words, *the king*, are added to distinguish him from Herod the tetrarch, Mt 14:1, or other Herods. This was that Herod the Great, commonly called the Ascalonite, the son of Antipater. There are three opinions of learned men concerning him. Some think that he was by birth an Idumean, and that his mother was an Arabian, and say he was the first foreigner that ever reigned in Judea; and that in him the prophecy was fulfilled, Ge 49:10, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came*. Others contend that he was a native Jew. A third sort say he was originally an Idumean, but that his predecessors had for some ages been proselyted to the Jewish religion: which last opinion is judged the most probable. Judea was at that time subject to the Romans, whose senate made him king over it. Christ being born at this time, it is said, *there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem*. How long it was after he was born that they came the Scriptures tell us not. Some think they came presently; some think within thirteen days; some think it was two years after. It is certain they were directed to find Christ at Bethlehem, Mt 2:8,9. There he was born, and circumcised the eighth day. There his mother accomplished the days of her purification, according to the law; which days were thirty-three, as may be seen Le 12:2,3, &c. Luke tells us, Lu 2:22, that after the accomplishment of those days, *they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him (as their firstborn) to the Lord, Ex 13:2, and to offer a sacrifice;* and he tells us there of his meeting with Simeon and Anna, and of their prophecies, Lu 2:25, &c.; and it is said, Lu 2:39, *When they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth*. It is not probable that these wise men came before our Lord was carried to Jerusalem, (which was about six weeks after he was born), for besides that they had a long journey to come, after such a noise made by the wise men's coming, it is no way probable that Joseph and Mary would have carried him to Jerusalem, where the inquiry was first made;

especially considering Herod's trouble about it, and his sending messengers presently to slay *all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof*, Mt 2:16. It is therefore most probable that it was near two years after the birth of Christ before they came; for though no such thing can be concluded from Herod's decree, which was for the slaying those that were *two years old and under*, yet one would think the following words signify some such thing, *according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*. He had then made inquiry about what time this child should be born; possibly they could not tell him the exact time, but if they said a year or a year and half before, Herod (to make sure) might make his decree for all to be slain from *two years old and under*; but had they said a month or six weeks, it is not probable Herod would have been so barbarous as to have slain all of two years old: so as, if we wisely consider the history of Scripture, it is no way probable that they came before Mary's purification was over, and their offering him to the Lord, &c. mentioned Lu 2:22.

But then how should they find him at Bethlehem? For he went to Nazareth, Lu 2:39.

Answer: God might order some motion of Joseph to Bethlehem (of which the Scripture is silent); it was a city within the tribe to which he related, where probably he had kindred. So as, though it were a year or more after the birth of Christ before these wise men came, yet it is possible they might find him at Bethlehem, his parents being as guests there, though inhabitants at Nazareth. This is enough to have spoken of the time when these wise men came, viz. at what distance from the birth of Christ, considering that nothing can be in the case certainly determined. It is yet a greater question who these wise men were, and from what part of the world (here called *the east*) they came. The uncertainties of men's conclusions in their points of curiosity, rather than profit, let us know how vainly men search for satisfaction when God hath hidden a thing from them. They cannot agree in the number of these men, some will have them twelve, some but three; and they undertake to tell us their names, though neither can they agree in it. Some will have them to be kings; and the papists make us believe they have their sepulchres with them to this day at Cologne; and by the number of the tombs they know their number; and that Church hath a festival for them, which is our Twelfth day. These and a hundred more fables there are about

them. The Scripture saith no more than *wise men*, and telleth us nothing of their number. Whether they were mere astrologers, or such as were skilled in magical arts, or more generally philosophers, is vainly disputed; only we have their observation of this extraordinary star, together with what the Scripture tells us of the use those Eastern nations made of astrologers, to guide us to think they were such as were famous in their country for astrology: though others think them persons skilled in Divine and human laws. The Scripture only calls them *wise men*. Whether they came from the eastern parts of the world, or that part of the world which lay eastward to the city of Jerusalem, is another unprofitable question: pagans they were, without doubt; whether Persians or Arabians, or of some other country, is of no great concern for us to know, and almost impossible to determine. These were the firstfruits of the Gentiles owning Christ as King of the Jews, whilst he came amongst his own, and they received him not; nor do I know any thing more worthy of our observation concerning them. Those that think it worth the while to read what more is said concerning them, may read enough in Spanhem, his *Dub. Evang.*, Heinsius, his *Exercitat. Sac. and Poli Critica*, which I rather choose to name than the popish writers, because in some of these he will find the antidote together with the poison of those fabulous discourses, and be taught a pious wariness of obtruding old wives' fables into canonical history, and lightly imposing upon the faith of ignorant people.

Matthew 2:2

Ver. 2. Jerusalem was the metropolis of Judea; thither they come, as to the most likely place where to receive satisfaction. Of whom they inquired the Scripture saith not, but it is observable that they took notice that there was a person born who was to be an illustrious King of the Jewish nation, they speak not at all doubtfully as to that. This information they doubtless had from a Divine revelation, for although there was an extraordinary star appeared, which might let them know that God had produced, or was producing, so extraordinary a work of providence in the world, yet without a supernatural interpreter they could not have made so true and particular interpretation of it, as upon the sight of it to have come with such a confidence to Jerusalem, affirming that there was a King of the Jews born, and

that this was his star, a light which God had put forth to direct that part of the world to the true Messiah. All guesses at the nature of this star, and the means how the wise men came to know that the King of the Jews was born upon the sight of it, and its motion, are great uncertainties; God undoubtedly revealed the thing unto them, and caused this extraordinary star, as at first to appear to confirm what he told them, so at last to appear directing them to the very house in which the young Child with his mother were.

And are come to worship him: whether worshipping here signifieth only a civil honour, which those Eastern nations ordinarily gave unto great princes, or that religious homage and adoration which was due unto the Messiah, is variously opened by interpreters. It is said, Mt 2:11, *they fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* This might be upon a civil or upon a religious account; and doubtless was according to the revelation which they had, concerning which nothing can be certainly determined.

Matthew 2:3

Ver. 3. Herod was hardly warm in his kingdom, and had taken Jerusalem by force, and was therefore much concerned to hear that there was a new King born; and supposing him to have been all his life acquainted with the Jewish writings and records, where were prophecies of the Messiah under the notion of a King, and not knowing that the kingdom of the Messiah was not to be of this world, but being possessed of the ordinary nation of the Jews, that the Messiah should restore a temporal kingdom to Israel, he could not but be troubled at the news of one born who was to be the *King of the Jews*, especially having a confirmation of it by such an extraordinary means, as persons coming from a far country, and being directed to their journey by some extraordinary impulse, upon the sight of a new star, which pointed to Judea, as the place to which it related: Herod upon this might justly think that his newly acquired kingdom would not last long. And though most people are quickly weary of conquerors, yet their former miseries being fresh in their minds, and the renewing of them likely upon a change in the government, it is no wonder if the generality of the people were

also troubled.

Matthew 2:4

Ver. 4. In this perplexity the king Herod calleth a synod or convocation, which was made up of the chief priests and scribes; the single question which he propounds to them was to resolve him *where Christ should be born*. It is most likely this was an extraordinary convention of such of these persons as the king thought fit, who were best skilled in the law, and other revelations of holy writ, not any orderly meeting of the sanhedrim; for the question propounded to them was of mere ecclesiastical concern, and to be resolved from the prophecies and writings of the Old Testament. The stating of the question to them, not where the King of the Jews, but where Christ should be born, makes it manifest, that although (that we read of) the wise men said nothing of Christ, yet Herod presently conceived that this King of the Jews, that was born, must be the Messiah prophesied of Ps 2:1-12 and in Da 9:1-27; he therefore desired to know of them the place in which, according to their received tradition, and sense of the prophecies of holy writ, the Messiah whom they expected (that is, Christ) should be born.

Matthew 2:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 2:6".

Matthew 2:6

Ver. 5,6. It was (as it seems) so received a tradition, and interpretation of Mic 5:2, that they gave him an answer without any hesitation, telling him he was to be born *in Bethlehem of Judea*; this they confirm by the prophecy of the prophet Micah, Mic 5:2; so confirming the Son of the virgin Mary (at unawares) to be the Messiah from the testimony of the prophet Micah. The words in Micah something vary from those here mentioned; they are thus: *But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* We must know,

1. That the writers of the New Testament, in their quotations out of the Old Testament, ordinarily quote only so much of them as makes to their purpose, and not always in the very terms in which they are found in the Old Testament: but keeping to the sense.
2. That it is more than probable that the evangelist keeps to the words in which the priests and scribes delivered in their answer to the king, for in this relation he is but reciting their answer.

The sole question propounded to them was: What the place was, where the Messiah, according to their records, was to be born? They answer: In Bethlehem Judah: they prove their answer from the testimony of the prophet. If any object that the prophet calls it Bethlehem Ephratah, not Bethlehem Judah, the answer is, that it is in sense the same, for Bethlehem Ephratah was within the tribe of Judah. It should seem by Ge 35:19 48:7 that it was formerly in Jacob's time called Ephrath. Some think that it was a town within Caleb's portion, and called Ephratah from his second wife, whose name was Ephrath, or Ephratah, 1Ch 2:19,50, if it were not the same place, only fortified anew. We read of another Bethlehem in Judah builded by Rehoboam, 2Ch 11:6; whether it had this addition from its old name in Jacob's time, or from Caleb's wife, or to distinguish it from Bethlehem belonging to the tribe of Zebulun, is hard to say: it is plain that that Bethlehem is meant, both by Micah and Matthew, which was in Judah; possibly in tract of time the addition Ephratah was lost.

But, say some, there is a contradiction between Micah and Matthew; Micah saith it was *the least*, Matthew saith it was *not the least*.

Answer: Here is no contradiction; consider Bethlehem itself, it was but a small city, (if it were in Caleb's lot it is not named), but in other respects it was not the least. It was of old famous for Ibzan, one of the judges, for Elimelech, Boaz, Jesse, David; and now last of all for the birth of Christ, where respect to which the evangelist calls it *not the least*; or if he reciteth the scribes' and priests' words, they might call it *not the least* upon the account of Boaz, Jesse, and David, all which were born or dwelt there;

and particularly with respect to Christ, who was born there. The prophet calls it *the least* with respect to its state in his time, the evangelist *not the least* with respect to its state then, its state being magnified by the birth of Christ. Micah saith *among the thousands*. Matthew, *among the princes*. It is the same thing, for, Nu 1:16, their princes were *heads of thousands in Israel*. The Jews would by no means have this text interpreted of Christ, but either of Zerubbabel or David: but as to Zerubbabel, he was born in Babylon, not in Bethlehem, and David was dead long before this prophecy; neither could the following words, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*, agree to Zerubbabel or David: Zerubbabel's name tells us where he was born, and we never read that Bethlehem was thus celebrated with reference to David, though he was born there, 1Sa 16:1 17:58, upon which account it is called *the city of David*, Lu 2:4. The prophecy certainly related to Christ, and him only, and so is interpreted by the Chaldee paraphrast, who some think was one of this council called by Herod in this cause.

Matthew 2:7

Ver. 7. Herod having heard the answer of the priests and scribes, did not think fit to make any noise of it amongst the people; he knew the Jews were apt enough to rebel, and being so little a conqueror had no reason to presume much of their goodwill towards him; he therefore calls the wise men privily, and takes no notice of any King they talked of, but only inquires the time when this new star first appeared. To what end he made this inquiry may be learned from Mt 2:16; only that he might be able to govern himself in his bloody decree, that he might neither destroy more children than would serve his present design, nor yet leave this Child behind.

Matthew 2:8

Ver. 8. He tells the wise men that Bethlehem was the place, wherein his wise men had informed him that the King of the Jews was to be born, and sends them thither with these instructions: That they should go, and *search diligently* there *for the young Child*, whom he doth not call King; thereby dissembling his bloody mind, and making as if he had no

jealousy of him; yet withal he suggests to them that he was like to be a great Prince, or else he would never have pretended that he had a design, when once he knew certainly where he was, to go and pay a homage to him. This text lets us see the malignity of Herod's heart, and indeed of all wicked men's hearts. Herod knew that the Messiah was born. The extraordinary star and the coming of the wise men, the priests' and scribes' answer to him, could not but confirm him that he was born, who was long since promised, as a King and Governor to Israel; yet could he not obtain of his wretched heart to comply with the counsels of God, but, contrary to his own convictions, shows the folly of his heart, in thinking it was in his power to frustrate the Divine counsels, and be too hard for God himself. Nor is his folly less remarkable, not sending any of his own courtiers with them, whom he might better have trusted than mere strangers to have come back and brought him an account; but whether it was that he durst not trust any of the Jews, or that he was over credulous in trusting to the innocent simplicity of these wise men, being not made acquainted with his intentions, he suffereth them to go alone upon this errand, whom he might possibly think would be least suspected of Joseph and Mary, so as at their return he should have a more full account of all circumstances concerning him, than he could have expected from one who had been taken notice of as one that belonged to his court.

Matthew 2:9

Ver. 9. *They departed* toward Bethlehem Judah; how long their journey was we cannot tell: some wonder that none of the Jews did attend them in their journey, coming out of their own country upon such a discovery, and impute it either to the Jews' fear of the tyrant under which they were, or to the blindness and hardness of their hearts, for St. John tells us he came amongst his own, and they received him not; but it is possible that the wise men's immediate applications were to the court, as thinking that the most probable place to hear of one that should be born King of the Jews; and it may be questioned whether Herod, though he called the scribes and the priests together, told them that his summoning of them was occasioned by the coming of the wise men, for the only question he propounded to them was where Christ was to be born, which they might understand without any relation to the wise men's question. Nor is it probable that Herod

should be more open than needed in publishing the coming of these wise men, or their errand. Yet the text saying that not only Herod, but all Jerusalem, was troubled, suggests to us, that both their coming, and the occasion of it, was noised abroad, more than probably Herod could have wished; but it is like their dismissal was so private, that if any of the Jews had had a heart and courage enough to have gone with them, yet they might not have had opportunity. It is more admirable that Herod sent none that he could securely trust with them. But the hand of God was in this thing. They shall be hid whom he will hide. The Lord had prepared them a better guide.

The star, which probably had disappeared for a good time while they were upon their journey to Jerusalem, (for they needed no star to guide them to so famous a place), as soon as they were out of Jerusalem it appeared again, *and went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was*: probably the star appeared in the lower region, and though it could not point so directly that they should know the very house, yet it might point so near as by inquiry they might easily find it, especially by the influence of God upon their spirits, which doubtless they did not want. Whether these wise men were of the posterity of Balaam, who prophesied of *a sceptre that should rise out of Israel, that should smite the corners of Moab, one that should have dominion*, &c., Nu 24:17,19, or this star had any relation to the star mentioned there, Nu 24:17 is very uncertain: it is more probable that these wise men came a much further journey, and that the star there mentioned was not to be understood in a literal sense, but better expounded by Simeon, Lu 2:32, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel*.

Matthew 2:10

Ver. 10. Joy is but the natural consequence of desire satisfied: they had in their own country seen an extraordinary star, which, according to the rules of their own art, they might guess to be an indication of a great Prince born, or, by a Divine revelation, they might know to be so. This kindled in them a strong desire to go and pay a homage to him; upon this they take a long journey to Jerusalem. When they come there they were more fully confirmed, from the answer of the priests and scribes, that there was a Christ to be born in Bethlehem Judah. Thither they go. In

their journey the same star they had before seen appears to them again, confirming both their former apprehensions, and, by its standing over Bethlehem, and a particular house in it, (to their apprehensions), they were fully confirmed that they had right instructions from Herod, and rejoiced in the satisfaction of their desires naturally, and possibly rejoiced spiritually in this matter of joy to all people, if they had (as is probable) a spiritual illumination, and believed that this Christ was also Jesus, one come to save both Jews and Gentiles from their sins.

Matthew 2:11

Ver. 11. How long the virgin Mary and her holy Child had been there is not expressed; those that think these wise men came within six weeks or two months, judge that Joseph and Mary came thither from Jerusalem after that he had been there offered, to the Lord, of which you read Lu 2:22; but they are forced, to uphold this, to interpret Lu 2:39, which saith that after *they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth*, of a considerable time after they had performed these things, which seemeth something hard and needless, especially considering Nazareth was Joseph's own city, i.e. the city where his fixed habitation was. It is most probable that they, after so long absence, went right home, and if the wise men (which is said) found them in Bethlehem, they were gone thither again to visit some relations.

They saw the young child with Mary his mother; under what other circumstances the Scripture saith not, but questionless they were very poor and mean, which is a very strong inducement to us to believe that they had a spiritual Divine revelation, that this was a King whose kingdom was not of this world, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; they would hardly else have treated a poor infant, in an ordinary house and no more attended, at the rate they did, for the text saith they *fell down and worshipped him;* a usual homage indeed which the Eastern nations paid to princes, but they used then to have better evidences of their royal state and dignity than these wise men seemed to have had, if they had not, besides the star, a Divine revelation what manner of King this was to be. We may therefore rather judge that their revelation extended not only to

the birth of a King, but of such a King as indeed he was, the eternal Son of God clothed with human flesh; and that their falling down and worshipping him is to be understood of a Divine worship they paid to him, as the Saviour of the world: and so they were the first fruits of the Gentiles, owning and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that their following offerings to him were upon that account, for opening *their treasures, they presented to him gold, frankincense, and myrrh*. The guesses of those who think that they offered him gold as to a King, frankincense as a High Priest, and myrrh to sweeten the place where he was, I take to be but the product of luxuriant fancies. It is most certain that those Eastern people seldom came to their princes without some presents, and that their presents were usually of the most choice things their country afforded. This is plain from Ge 43:11; and if what naturalists tell us be true, that myrrh was only to be found in Arabia, and frankincense in Sabea, (a part of Arabia) and that country also had gold, which it is plain that it had from 2Ch 9:14, it makes a very probable argument, that these wise men came from Arabia, which was full of men that were astrologers. The providence of God was wonderfully seen in these presents, by them providing for the sustenance of Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus in that exile which they were soon after to endure. For other allegorical and mystical significations of these presents, they are but conjectures, and the exuberances of men's fancies.

Matthew 2:12

Ver. 12. Now the wise God begins to defeat the crafty counsels of Herod, whose bloody hand he had stayed till he should from the wise men have had a perfect intelligence concerning this newborn King. God in a dream appeareth to the wise men, and warns them to go no more to Herod. The wise men came with no intention to serve Herod's bloody designs, but came in the simplicity of their hearts. This simplicity of theirs Herod would have abused, to have made them accessaries to his guilt. God will not suffer it: *He who walketh uprightly walketh safely*. Thus the integrity of Abimelech in taking Sarah protected him from guilt with reference to her, Ge 20:6. The word which we here translate *warned of God*, is used of persons whom God is pleased to honour, so far as to discourse with, either by himself or an angel, Lu 2:26 Ac 10:22 Heb 8:5 11:7. Thus hath God

honoured these wise men, whose hearts were inclined towards him and his Christ;

1. By giving them a star, to guide them.
2. Confirming their hearts by his word, from the mouth of the chief priests and scribes, that they were not mistaken concerning the star and its indication.
3. By speaking himself to them, to keep them from any guilt, or being so much as accessaries any way to that bloody tragedy, which upon their departure he knew would be acted. They take another way to go into their own country, so we hear of them no more.

Matthew 2:13

Ver. 13. How long it was before this apparition to Joseph the Scripture saith not, but admitting what is affirmed by some geographers, that Bethlehem Judah was but two days' journey from Jerusalem, it cannot be presumed long, for Herod had (doubtless) quick intelligence of the wise men's motions. Here was a second temptation upon Joseph, who was of no great quality, (a carpenter), and might have anxious thoughts how he in Egypt should maintain himself, his wife, and child; but Joseph knew that *the earth was the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*: though Egypt therefore was a land of idolaters, and he had no visible way of subsistence there, yet we shall hear that none of these things made him hesitate. Egypt was near to Palestine, and the dominions of another prince, within which Herod had nothing to do. Jeroboam fled thither, 1Ki 11:40, and stayed there till the death of Solomon. God's precept here did not only indicate his care and special providence for and over this holy Child, but included a promise of sustenance and support for it and its parents; and the Lord further assured Joseph that he should not die in that exile, for he would likewise tell him the time when he should come back. Christ's time to die was not yet come, and therefore he would have him out of the way, for he who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and knoweth the thoughts of man afar off, did know that *Herod would seek the young child to destroy him*: he should but seek him, for God had resolved to preserve him, but he would show the malice of his

heart in seeking of him, therefore God commands him to go away, and directeth him whither to go. The certainty of an issue, from the Divine counsels, or a Divine revelation, ought not to encourage us in the neglect of any rational and just means for the obtaining of it. Though God will provide for his church and people, yet it is his will they should use all just and lawful means for their own preservation.

Matthew 2:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 2:15".

Matthew 2:15

Ver. 14,15. True faith, or assent to a Divine revelation, always produces obedience to the precept of it. Thus it did in the wise men, thus in Joseph. Thus every where in holy writ. By which we may learn, that they indeed believe not the Scriptures to be the word of God, who take no care to live up to the rule of life prescribed in them. Joseph not only obeyed, but readily and presently obeyed: *When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother.* The poverty of our Saviour's parents is not obscurely gathered from this hasty motion of Joseph. His motion was not delayed for the packing up of goods, gathering in of debts, &c; if he lost any thing by his haste, yet he carried with him the promise and special care of God for him and his. Yet he moveth prudentially, and therefore he begins his journey *by night*, when least notice could be taken of his motion. We are not to put God upon working miracles for our preservation, though we have never so many sure promises, when it may be obtained in the use of means. They are God's security given to creatures, whom he hath endued with reason, and expressed that we should use it, while we yet trust in his word. We are not told into what part of Egypt Joseph went, nor how long he stayed there: some say six or seven years; others, but three or four months. The text saith he *was there until the death of Herod.* Some say that was before the paschal solemnity that year. But these things are great uncertainties. It is certain he stayed there till Herod died, but when that certainly was we know not, nor is it material for us to be curious in inquiring.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. That it might be fulfilled is a phrase we often meet with in the New Testament, to declare the harmony of Scripture, and the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the prophecies or promises of the Old Testament. Spanhemius tells us: "The Scripture is said to be fulfilled properly or improperly." Properly two ways, either literally or mystically. Improperly, secondarily, when some such like thing happeneth as was before foretold or spoken of, or an example is brought parallel to some former example. Literally the Scripture is said to be fulfilled;

1. When a thing before prophesied of, or promised, cometh to pass. Thus the prophecy, Isa 7:14, was literally fulfilled Mt 1:23; so Mic 5:2 was literally fulfilled Mt 2:6, by Christ's being born in Bethlehem; so Zec 9:9 was literally fulfilled Mt 21:5. Or else;
2. When the type is fulfilled in the antitype. Thus we read of many scriptures of the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ, several things about the paschal lamb, the brazen serpent, Solomon, David, Jonah, &c. Improperly the Scripture is said to be fulfilled, when any thing is reported as done, which bear a proportion to something before recorded in holy writ, as spoken or done: thus Christ applies the same thing to the hypocrites which lived in his time, Mt 15:7,8, which Isaiah spoke of those who lived in his time, Isa 29:13 so Mt 13:14 Isa 6:9: this divines call a fulfilling *per accommodationem, aut transumptionem*.

The question is, whether this scripture, which is Ho 11:1, was fulfilled in Christ's being carried into Egypt, properly or improperly. There is a great variety of opinions; those possibly judge best who think that the Israelites going into and coming out of Egypt, was a type of Christ's going into Egypt, being preserved there, and coming out again. Matthew saith the scripture was fulfilled, whether properly or improperly is not much material for us to know. I have only added thus much to shorten my discourse hereafter where we shall meet with this phrase.

Matthew 2:16

Ver. 16. Herod now expounds what he meant by his coming and worshipping Christ also, which he talked of Mt 2:8.

When he saw that he was mocked, &c; really mocked by their coming no more to him; not that they used any mocking language, or designed by their actions to deceive him, but probably intended to have gone back according to his desire, but that they were otherwise admonished by God in a dream.

He was exceeding wroth, as great persons used to be when they see any great design they have frustrated by their inferiors, *and sent forth, and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and in the coasts thereof, from two years old and under:* he sent forth soldiers, or executioners, and slew all the children. There is a tradition that amongst them he slew his own son, and that Augustus Caesar, hearing it, should say, "It was better to be Herod's hog than his child, because the Jews will eat no swine's flesh." Others say this is but a fable, for his son died very few days before himself.

From two years old and under: if we take these words as they seem to sound, they would incline us to think that Christ was near two years old before the wise men came; but some very learned men think they came within a year or little more, and that the term we translate "two years old", signifieth persons that had never so little entered upon the second year of their age: so as if a child were but a year and a week old, he was properly enough called διετης one of two years old, that is, who had began his second year. Hence they think that the star appeared some little matter above a year before they came to Bethlehem; and considering at how great distance some parts in Arabia were from Jerusalem, they think that a year might well be ran out in their deliberations about, and preparations for, and despatch of their journey. Thus they interpret the next words, *according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men,* that they had told them that it was something above a year since the star appeared first. This is now a middle way between those who (very improbably) think that they came within thirteen days, too short a time doubtless for such a journey, and those that think they came not till near two years, which to some seemeth as much too long. I leave it to the reader's judgment.

Matthew 2:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 2:18".

Matthew 2:18

Ver. 17,18. The text quoted is Jer 31:15. This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Judah was carried into captivity; there was then a great mourning in the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, for their children that were slain and carried into captivity. It was now fulfilled, that is, verified, a second time. There is no need that *Rama* here should be taken appellatively, as it signifieth a high place, from whence a noise is most loudly and dolefully heard. There were several places so named, one near Bethlehem, (formerly called Ephrath, Ge 35:16,19), Jud 4:5, a city in the lot of Benjamin, Jos 18:25. The slaughter was in Bethlehem and the coasts thereof; the noise reached to Rama, which was close by. Both Benjamin and Judah made up the one kingdom of Judah.

Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, a woman passionately desirous of children, therefore the fittest person to have her name used to express the sorrow of all those mothers who had lost their children in this slaughter. The slaughter of these children caused a lamentable mourning by tender mothers throughout Benjamin and Judah, such as the former captivity caused to be mentioned, Jer 31:15.

Matthew 2:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 2:20".

Matthew 2:20

Ver. 19,20. That is, as some say, within three or four months, for Herod, they say, no longer outlived this bloody act; and if we may believe historians, he was in his death made a dreadful example of Divine vengeance. But we cannot assert the just time how long he outlived this bloody act; when he was dead, God,

who had promised Joseph, Mt 2:13, to tell him by an angel, (as before), let Joseph know he might safely return. It is probable this apparition was not immediately upon the death of Herod, for Archelaus was reigning, who must be allowed some time to go to Rome, and to have this dignity conferred on him; but soon after he was dead this apparition was, with a command to him to return into the land of Israel, to which he soon yieldeth obedience.

Matthew 2:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 2:22".

Matthew 2:22

Ver. 21,22. The true King of the Jews being born, the singular providence of God so ordered it, that there was no more constituted governors of Judea under the title of kings, though they are said to reign, because the tetrarchs in their provinces exercised a regal power; for though Archelaus was by his father's will declared his successor in the kingdom, yet the emperor and senate of Rome was to confirm him, who made Archelaus tetrarch of Judea, as appears by this verse; Antipas, another of his sons, called also by his father's name, tetrarch of Galilee; Philip, another of his sons, tetrarch of Iturea; and Lysanias tetrarch of Abylene; and set a governor over Judea, which was Pontius Pilate; as appeareth by Lu 3:1. Of all the sons of Herod, Archelaus is said to be of the most fierce and bloody disposition, which made Joseph afraid to go thither. His brother Herod Antipas is reported of a much milder disposition, and more inactive temper. So Joseph, not without the direction of God, goeth into his own province, which was Galilee.

Matthew 2:23

Ver. 23. It appeareth by Lu 2:4, that Joseph dwelt in Nazareth before our Saviour was born; and, Lu 2:39, after Mary's purification it is said, *they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth;* and, Lu 4:16, he was there brought up. Hence, Joh 1:45, he is called by Philip, *Jesus of Nazareth*. But the following

words of this verse afford as great difficulties as any other in holy writ.

1. How Christ could be called a Nazarene, who apparently was born at Bethlehem.
2. How the evangelist saith that was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *He shall be called a Nazarene*; whereas there is no such saying in all the prophets.

There is a strange variety of opinions as to these questions. Spanhemius acquiesceth in that which seemeth least liable to exception, viz. That Christ was to put a period to that order of Nazarites amongst the Jews, whose rules we have Nu 6:2,3; of which order Samson was, as appears by Jud 13:7, and Joseph was called נְזִיר Ge 49:26, the very same word which is used Jud 13:7. Both Joseph and Samson were eminent types of Christ. And it was spoken of Christ by the prophets, (the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures), that Christ should be called נְזִיר *Nezir*, as it is in the Hebrew, in that it was spoken of those that were his types; who are both expressly so called. The word signifieth a holy person, one separated to God, and from ordinary converse with men. Christ was to be such a Nazarite, separated to God, for the accomplishment of our redemption, and, like Joseph, separated from his brethren: Isa 53:3, he was *rejected of men*: —*we hid as it were our faces from him, and we esteemed him not*. God by his singular providence so ordered it, that he who was the antitype to all the Nazarites, and the true *Nezir*, or person separated, should be educated at Nazareth, a poor contemptible town: Joh 1:46, *Nathanael said, Can there any good come out of Nazareth?* That while his education there gave the Jews an occasion to reproach him, as a Nazarene, because born at Nazareth, believers amongst the Jews might understand him to be the true Nazarite, understood in Joseph and Samson called by this name, as types and figures of him who was to come, separated by God to a more excellent end, and from men in a more eminent manner. So that what the prophets spake of this nature concerning Christ, they spake of those who were the true types of Christ. Those who will read Spanhemius, and *Poli Critica*, will find large discourses about the difficulties of this text, but this seemeth to be Spanhemius's opinion, improving the notion of Mr. Calvin.

Matthew 3:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 3:1-4 The preaching of John the Baptist; his office, and manner of living.

Mt 3:5,6 He baptizeth in Jordan,

Mt 3:7-12 and rebuketh the Pharisees.

Mt 3:13-17 Christ is baptized, and receiveth a witness from heaven.

Ver. 1. That is, in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, (as Luke expounds it, Lu 3:1) when John the Baptist and Christ also were *about thirty years of age*, Lu 3:23, for there was no great difference betwixt the age of Christ and John, as may be learned from Lu 1:31,41,57.

In those days, while Joseph and Mary, and our blessed Lord, dwelt in Nazareth. See Ex 2:11. This phrase *in those days* is the same with *in those years*. It is an ordinary thing in the Hebrew to confound the words signifying a day and a year, and the Greeks did the same, as appears by the seventy interpreters, 1Sa 1:3,7. The evangelists pass over with a great deal of silence our Saviour's minority, only mentioning his disputing with the doctors in the temple, Lu 2:46.

Came John the Baptist; John the son of Zacharias, Lu 3:2, called the Baptist, either because he baptized Christ, or because by him God instituted the ordinance of baptism, which before that time the Jews used in the admission of their proselytes.

Preaching according to his commission, Lu 3:2, where it is said the word of the Lord came to him.

In the wilderness of Judea; some parts of Judea, where houses and inhabitants were very few. None must think that the history of the second chapter is continued in this, there was a distance of twenty-eight or twenty-nine years; the evangelist designing not to satisfy men's curiosity, but only to give us that part of Christ's story which might be profitable to us to know.

Matthew 3:2

Ver. 2. The evangelist only gives us the sum and scope of the Baptist's doctrine, the other evangelists give us a more full account of his pressing also faith in Christ, Joh 1:29 3:29,36 so Ac 19:4. Repentance, faith, and new obedience ought to be the substance and scope of all our sermons. Repentance signifieth the change of the heart and reformation of the life, a turning from sin unto God. *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* that blessed state of the church (foretold by the prophets) under the Messias, wherein God will exhibit his Son as the King in Zion, and exert his power and kingdom, both extensively, subduing all nations to the obedience of his gospel, and intensively, in all the administrations of his government; *for the kingdom of heaven is not to be understood here of the kingdom of glory, but of the kingdom of grace, in all the administrations of it.* This passage containeth the argument upon which the Baptist in his sermons pressed, repentance and faith, and obedience to the will of God revealed.

Matthew 3:3

Ver. 3. It is not much material whether we understand these words as the words of the evangelist concerning John, as it should seem by Mr 1:3 Lu 3:4, or the words of John himself, for he thus spake, Joh 1:23. As the words of the prophet they are found Isa 40:3. The words are judged literally, but typically, to concern Cyrus and Darius, and either these princes, who were instrumental in the restoring of the Jews to their liberty from the captivity of Babylon, or those prophets who encouraged them to their return, or upon their return to build the temple and city. But they are confirmed by all the four evangelists, Mr 1:3 Lu 3:4 Joh 1:23, to have a special relation also to John the Baptist, who was to come more immediately before Christ, and with the fervency and in the spirit of Elias, Lu 1:17, crying, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* As the harbingers of great princes are sent before them to call to persons to remove things out of the way which may hinder their free passage, so John was sent before this great King in Zion, now coming forth to show himself, and to set up his kingdom in the world; to cry fervently to all people, by a true and timely repentance, to cast off those

sinful courses, and to reject those false opinions, of which they were possessed, the holding of and to which might hinder the progress of this spiritual kingdom.

Matthew 3:4

Ver. 4. There are great and insignificant disputes about the habit and the diet of John the Baptist. The evangelists doubtless designed no more than to let us know, that John Baptist's habit was not of soft raiment, like those who are in princes' houses, but a plain country habit, suited to the place in which he lived; and his diet plain, such as the country afforded. In vain therefore do some contend that John wore watered stuff, fine and splendid, as art in our days hath improved camel's hair; and others as vainly contend that he went in a camel's skin raw and undressed: but he was habited in a plain suit of camel's hair, such as ordinary persons of that country used, or else such a rough garment as is mentioned Zec 13:4, used by the prophets. Elijah had much such a habit, 2Ki 1:8. There is likewise a variety of opinions about these locusts which John did eat; the most probable is, that they were true locusts, for locusts might be eaten, Le 11:22. Nor is it to be thought that John did eat nothing else; all that is intended is, to let us know that John was a man not at all curious as to his meat or clothes, but was habited plainly, and fared ordinarily, as the men of that country fared; if there were any difference in his habit, it was to proportion himself to Elijah and the habit of prophets. In this the evangelist teacheth us what the ministers of the gospel should be and do. They should be men contemning the gaudery and delicacies of the world, and by their habit and diet, as well as other things, set an example of severity and gravity to others.

Matthew 3:5

Ver. 5. The preacher being described, the evangelist proceedeth to tell us what auditors he had. The term *all* here twice repeated, is enough to let us know, that it is often in Scripture significative no further than *many*, for it cannot be imagined that every individual person in Jerusalem and the region about Jordan went to hear John the Baptist, but a great many did. It is not to be wondered that there went out such a concourse of people to hear

John the Baptist,

1. If it be true, that from Ezra's time till now no prophet had appeared. Our Saviour speaking of John, *What went ye out for to see? A prophet?* Seems to hint that a prophet was a great rarity amongst them.
2. If we consider the severity of his life. Our Saviour saith he *came neither eating nor drinking*, that is, as other men.
3. If we consider the new doctrine he brought, and his fervency in the pressing it: he came to preach the Messiah, whom the Jews had long expected; to tell them his kingdom was at hand.
4. Especially if we consider the new rite of baptizing, which he brought in. For admit their washing of proselytes in use before, yet he baptized Jews. He was *sent to baptize with water*, Joh 1:33. So as from this time the institution of the sacrament of baptism must be dated, and he did baptize many.

Matthew 3:6

Ver. 6. A great part of those who went out to hear John were *baptized*, that is dipped, *in Jordan*; but from hence it will not follow that dipping is essential to baptism, the washing of the soul with the blood of Christ (the thing signified by baptism) being expressed by sprinkling or pouring water, as well as by dipping or being buried in water, Isa 44:3 Eze 36:25 Col 2:12. Whether they confessed their sins, man by man, by word of mouth, or by submitting to the doctrine of the gospel declared their renunciation of the righteousness of the law, and their engagement to a holy life, is not expressed; but it is most certain, that a profession of faith and repentance was ordinarily required before the baptism of adult persons. It may be wondered that this new practice of John (if it were wholly new) made no more stir amongst the Jews. Either (as some think) baptism was in use before that time, as an appendix to circumcision, (though circumcision only be mentioned), or they had some notion that Christ, Elias, and that prophet, when they came, should baptize; for, Joh 1:25, they asked John, *Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet*. That which seemeth to me most probable is, that before that time there was a

baptism in ordinary use amongst them after circumcising the child, beside the baptizing of proselytes. And as in the other sacrament Christ left out the typical part, and blessed the bread, used at last in that administration, and made use of that for the institution of the sacrament of the supper; so as to the ordinance of circumcision, he in the institution of that gospel ordinance left out circumcision, (which was typical also), and retained only the washing of the person with water, and so instituted the other sacrament of the New Testament. But yet there was so much new in the Baptist's practice, (for he did not baptize proselytes only, but Jews, nor did he use it as an appendix to circumcision preceding, but baptized adult Jews), that if the state of the Jewish church had not been declining, and their power of discipline very little, (if any), they would more than have sent to John to know by whose authority he baptized: but they were under the Roman power, and their ecclesiastical officers were more pragmatical than mischievous, God in the wisdom of his providence having so ordered it, that the change of worship should be at such a time brought in when it should be least potently opposed.

Matthew 3:7

Ver. 7. We shall often meet with the mention of these Pharisees and Sadducees; we will therefore inquire here a little more largely concerning them. There were three more eminent religious sects among the Jews. The Essenes, of whom we read nothing in Holy writ: their main doctrine was fate, they ascribed all things to it. The two others are here mentioned, and often in other parts of the New Testament we read of the Pharisees and Sadducees: the latter were most acceptable to the great men amongst the Jews; the former were more popular, and acceptable to the people. The Sadducees were directly opposite to the Essenes; they ascribed nothing to fate, but maintained the liberty and power of man's will in the most extravagant height: they denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection, angels, &c., all which the Pharisees owned: this we may learn from Ac 23:8 where Paul wrought his own escape by setting these two factions on quarrelling about these points. In short, these were no better than atheists, for what must they be less that deny spirits and the resurrection? The Pharisees, as to their doctrine, were much more sober; they owned spirits and the resurrection; and though they held much of the freedom of, and a power in, man's will,

yet they also ascribed much to the providence and grace of God. They were the interpreters of the law, and, as Mr. Calvin thinks, had their name from thence, not from their dividing and separating themselves from others, as some think. They spent much of their time in fasting and prayer; but,

1. They held a righteousness by the works of the law to be our righteousness for which we are accepted of God.
2. They made a very jejune interpretation of the law, as may appear from our Saviour's correcting it, Mt 5:17-48.
3. They held many unwritten traditions of equal force with the law of God.
4. They were very hypocrites in their practice, neglecting the weighty things of the law, making long prayers for a pretence for their wickedness, and doing all they did but to be seen of men.

Some of these Sadducees and Pharisees came to John's baptism, and no wonder, for, Mr 6:20: *Herod observed him, heard him, did many things, and heard him gladly*; but, Lu 7:30, it is said the Pharisees *were not baptized of him*. It is like they came out of curiosity.

He said unto them, O generation of vipers; the very language which Christ used to them, Mt 12:34 23:33. The viper, to which he compares them, is the worst and most dangerous of serpents. We need give no account of the Baptist's treating them so roughly, because our Saviour justifieth the term by applying it to them. Corrupt teachers are the worst of men, and of all orders of sinners, fewest of them repent and have their hearts changed.

Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? What comes in your mind, who think there is no resurrection, no hell, or who think you are so righteous that you need fear none, to do any thing that might testify you are afraid of wrath to come?

Matthew 3:8

Ver. 8. You come here and thrust yourselves into a crowd of

penitents, but this is not enough, true repentance is not a barren thing; neither are your leaves of external profession a sufficient indication of it, you must bring forth the fruits of holiness, fruits that may answer the nature of true repentance. The proper products of habits are called their fruits; thus we read of *the fruit of sin*, and *the fruit of righteousness*. Fruits meet (answerable to amendment of life) *for repentance* are works that are the proper product of repentance, or justly answering an external profession of repentance. As faith, so repentance, without works is dead.

Matthew 3:9

Ver. 9. All hypocrites bear up themselves upon something, upon which they promise good to themselves, and a freedom from the judgments of God. The Jews rested much upon their descent from Abraham, as appeareth also from Joh 8:39, by which means they entitled themselves to the covenant, Ge 8:10, extended to his seed as well as to himself, as also to the name of the church, Abraham's posterity by Isaac being all the visible church which God had upon the earth at that time. It is the great work of ministers to drive hypocrites from their vain confidences. This John doth here; as if he should say, I know what you trust to, you think with yourselves that, because you are the only church of God upon the earth, judgment shall not come upon you, God would then have no seed of Abraham to show mercy to, and to keep his covenant with; but mistake not, God, of stones, if he please, can raise up Abraham a seed. To keep covenant with papists and formalists have much the same presumption, though with this difference, the Jews were the true, the only church of God, these do but arrogate the name to themselves.

Matthew 3:10

Ver. 10. A prediction, as some think, of that dreadful destruction which within a few years came by the Romans upon the whole Jewish nation. The sense is, The vengeance of God is very near to be revealed, men must repent now or never, for *every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire*; judgment now is as nigh unto men, as the tree is to falling, to the root of which the axe is already applied: whether it be to be understood of the judgment common to all unbelievers,

all that *know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ*, as 2Th 1:8,9, or the particular destruction of this nation of the Jews. I shall not determine, though I rather judge the latter probable. The latter part of the text is made use of by our Saviour, Mt 7:19, in the latter part of his sermon upon the mount. It letteth us know, that it is not improper, nor dissonant to the style of John Baptist, and Christ, and others the most eminent first gospel preachers, to press repentance, faith, and holiness of life, from arguments of terror.

Matthew 3:11

Ver. 11. I am not the Christ, Mr 1:8 Lu 3:15,16 Joh 1:15,26, I am but the messenger and forerunner of Christ, sent before him to baptize men with the baptism of water, in testimony of their repentance; but there is one immediately coming after me, who is infinitely to be preferred before me, so much, that I am not worthy to carry his shoes, or unloose his shoe latchet. He shall baptize men with another kind of baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

With the Holy Ghost, inwardly washing away their sins with his blood, and sanctifying their hearts: the Holy Ghost working in their hearts like fire, purging out their lusts and corruptions, warming and inflaming their hearts with the sense of his love, and kindling in them all spiritual habits. Or, *with the Holy Ghost*, as in the days of Pentecost, there appearing to them *cloven tongues like as of fire*, as Ac 2:3: thus the term *fire* is made exegetical of the term *the Holy Ghost*. Or, *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*; changing and renewing the hearts of those that believe in him, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and consuming and destroying others, that will not believe, as with fire.

Matthew 3:12

Ver. 12. Judea is at present God's floor, the only church he hath upon the earth; but there is chaff upon this floor, as well as wheat. Now he is come who will make a separation between the chaff and the wheat; who by his preaching the gospel will distinguish between Israel and those that are of Israel, Ro 9:6;

between those who, living in the true expectation of the Messiah, shall receive him now he is come, and those who, by their not owning and receiving him, shall declare that they never had any true expectation of him: shall separate them into distinct heaps, raising up a gospel church, and shall at the last day make yet a stricter discrimination, and *thoroughly purge his floor*, taking true believers into heaven, and burning unbelievers *with unquenchable fire*, casting them into torments like unquenchable fire.

Matthew 3:13

Ver. 13. Christ, who now was about thirty years of age, Lu 3:23, cometh from Nazareth, a city in Galilee, where Joseph lived, Lu 2:4, and whither he went with, Joseph and Mary, Lu 2:39, and again after he had disputed with the doctors at twelve years of age, Lu 2:46; cometh from thence to Jordan, the great river, where John was baptizing disciples, offering himself to be baptized of him. He showed his humility by going to him, and also made the action public. If any ask to what end Christ, who had no sin, was baptized, himself gives us an account, Mt 3:15, *to fulfil all righteousness* (of which more in its place). He thus owned John's ministry and mission to baptize, and confirmed the institution of baptism by water, and offered himself to that testimony which he knew his Father would give of him. He thus initiated himself in the Christian church, as by circumcision he had made himself of the Jewish church, and so was the Head both of the believing Jews and Gentiles. He was not (as others) baptized in testimony of his repentance, or for the remission of sins, for he was without sin.

Matthew 3:14

Ver. 14. He did not absolutely repel him, but modestly excused himself for a time, knowing that Christ was already baptized with a more excellent baptism than he could administer to him, for God gave him the Spirit not by measure, Joh 3:34.

Matthew 3:15

Ver. 15. *Jesus said unto him, Suffer it to be so now.* The question is not whether thou or I be more excellent. It is thy duty to baptize, for my Father hath sent thee to baptize. It is my pleasure and duty to be obedient to my Father, whose will I know, though it be hidden from thee. Baptism is a new law of the gospel church, of which though I be the Head, yet I must be conformed to the members of it, concerning which my Father's will is, that they should be baptized with water, as well as with the Holy Ghost. Besides that, I am to put an end to the Jewish typical circumcision, and to put a new face upon the church, by instituting another sacrament of initiation. It is therefore both just and equal that I should be baptized (though not for those ends for which others, that are my members, are baptized, not for remission of sins, but) for the fulfilling of all righteousness, in obeying my Father's will.

Then he suffered him: he that erreth through ignorance will correct his error upon better information. We may learn from this example of Christ, that being baptized with the Holy Ghost will excuse none for contempt or neglect of baptism by water, because it is the revealed will of God, that all the members of his church should come under that ordinance; so as there is a fulfilling of righteousness in our case, as well as in Christ's, though in a different measure.

Matthew 3:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 3:17".

Matthew 3:17

Ver. 16,17. This story is also related Mr 1:10,11 Lu 3:21. Luke saith that *Jesus praying, the heaven was opened*. Mark saith, cloven asunder. It is most probable that the opening of the heavens mentioned (though possibly far more glorious) bare a proportion to that opening of the heavens which we often see in a time of great lightning, when the air seemeth to divide to make the fuller and clearer way for the light.

Unto him; that is, unto John. *And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.* The Spirit of God

is an invisible substance, and cannot be seen by human eyes, but the shape assumed by any person of the Trinity may be seen. Whether it was a real dove, or only the appearance of a dove, is little material for us to know. It was certainly one or the other; nor could any representation at this time be more fit, either to let the world know the dove like nature of Christ, Isa 42:2, or what should be the temper of all those who receive the same Spirit, though by measure, and are by it taught to be innocent as doves. Not that Christ had not received the Spirit before, but that his receiving of it might be notified to others. This dove, or appearance of a dove, lighted upon Christ, thereby showing for whose sake this apparition was. Christ was not confirmed only to be the Son of God by this appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and lighting upon him, but also by *a voice from the excellent glory*, saith Peter, 2Pe 1:17; God forming a voice in the air which spake, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. The word signifieth, a dearly beloved Son. The same voice was repeated at Christ's transfiguration, Mt 17:5. Peter from it concludes the certainty of the faith of the gospel, in the aforementioned text.

In whom I am well pleased: the word signifieth a special and singular complacency and satisfaction: I am pleased in his person, according to that, Pr 8:30; I am well pleased in his undertaking, in all that he shall do and suffer in the accomplishment of the redemption of man. We are *made accepted in the Beloved*, Eph 1:6. This text (as is generally observed) is a clear proof of the trinity of persons or subsistences in the one Divine Being: here was the Father speaking from heaven, the Son baptized and come out of the water, the Holy Ghost descending in the form or shape of a dove.

Matthew 4:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 4:1-11 Christ fasts forty days, is tempted of the devil, and ministered unto by angels.

Mt 4:12-16 He dwelleth in Capernaum,

Mt 4:17 begins to preach,

Mt 4:18-20 calleth Peter and Andrew,
Mt 4:21,22 James and John,
Mt 4:23-25 teacheth in the synagogues, and
healeth the diseased.

Ver. 1. This is mentioned by two of the other evangelists, (Mr 1:12 Lu 4:1). Luke saith that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, he returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit, &c.* Mark saith, *immediately the Spirit drove him.* Great manifestations of Divine love are commonly followed with great temptations. Others observe, that temptations usually follow baptism, the beginnings of spiritual life, and covenants made with God. He *was led up*: some think he was taken up; Mark useth the word *εκβαλλει*, the Spirit thrust him out: we must not understand an act of compulsion, doubtless he went voluntarily.

Of the Spirit; the Holy Spirit, that lighted upon him as a dove.

Into the wilderness. Mark's saying, Mr 1:13, that he was there *with wild beasts*, lets us know that it was not such a wilderness as John began to preach in, Mt 3:1; but a howling wilderness full of wild beasts. The end is expressed in the last words, *to be tempted of the devil*: thus his temptations are distinguished from Divine temptations, such as Abraham had, Ge 22:1; and by *tempted* here is meant solicited, or moved to sin, in which sense God tempteth no man, Jas 1:13. The general notion of tempting is, making a trial; God makes a trial of his people for the proof and manifestation of their gracious habit. Satan, by moving to sin, makes a trial of corruption, which was the reason that, although Christ was tempted, that he might be *able to succour those that are tempted*, Heb 2:18, and that he might taste all those evils to which we are exposed, and might overcome the devil; yet when the Prince of this world came, he could effect nothing against him, because he found nothing in him to comply with his motions.

Matthew 4:2

Ver. 2. He was in the wilderness, a place of solitude, and so fitter for Satan's purpose, and he was *an hungred*, which was another advantage Satan had. But he was not an hungred till *he had*

fasted forty days and forty nights. Here was the Divine power miraculously seen, in upholding the human nature of Christ without any thing to eat: this was a miracle. The like did Moses before the law, Elijah under the law. Christ doth the same in the beginning of the gospel; nor did he fast as the Jews were wont, of whom we sometimes read that they kept fasts several days; they only fasted in the day time, but ate their food at night; or sometimes only forbore pleasant bread, as Daniel did, Da 10:2,3, for three full weeks. But Christ fasted from all food, and that not only forty days, but forty nights also; from whence may easily be gathered, how idly, if not impiously, the papists found their fasting forty days in Lent. Here all Christ's acts (most certainly his miraculous works) are not recorded for our imitation; some of them are only for our adoration; all his miraculous acts are so. There can be nothing more sottish than for us to think that because Christ (supported by the Divine nature) fasted forty days, therefore we are obliged to do it; and because we cannot fast forty days and forty nights, without eating something, therefore we may eat fish, though no flesh (when all know that to some palates there is no more delicate food than fish); or we are obliged to fast in the day time, though not at night. And because Christ once in his lifetime fasted forty days and forty nights, therefore we must do so every year; or that the church hath any power to enjoin any such thing. If papists think Christ's fast of forty days and forty nights obliges them to imitation, let them keep them as he did, (with such a fasting I mean), and try whether they be able to do it, or whether four days or nights, instead of forty, will not convince them of their folly. Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, and thereby showed he was God man, the Divine nature supported the human; afterward he was hungry, to show that he was truly man, *touched with the feeling of our infirmities, in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*, Heb 4:15.

Matthew 4:3

Ver. 3. *And when the tempter, viz. Satan, the devil, as he is called, came unto him,* probably in some visible shape, he, forming an audible voice of the air, said, *If thou be the Son of God,* (not that he doubted it, which showed his horrible impudence), *command that these stones, (this stone, saith Luke, Lu 4:3) be made bread.* The temptation plainly was to the use of

means which God did not allow him, to relieve him in his distress of hunger, to distrust the providence of God in supporting of him. A temptation common to those who are the members of Christ, and enough to instruct us, that we ought to look upon all thoughts and motions to the use of means not allowed by God, in order to a lawful end, as temptations *vel a carne, vel hoste*, either from our own flesh, for *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed*, Jas 1:14, or from our grand adversary the devil. It is not much material for us to know from which, they being both what we ought to resist, though those from Satan are usually more violent and impetuous.

Matthew 4:4

Ver. 4. So also Lu 4:4. There is no better answering the tempter than by opposing the precepts of holy writ to his motions to sin. The word is called *the sword of the Spirit*, Eph 6:17. The papists, therefore, denying people the use of the word, disarm them as to the spiritual combat.

It is written De 8:3. Though man ordinarily liveth by common bread, such food as men usually eat, yet God's power is not restrained, he can uphold the life of man when that is wanting, as he supported the Israelites by manna (to which that text relates); nor is God obliged to create any extraordinary means, for his power, which is seen in creating such means, can produce the same effect without such means if it pleaseth him. His power must be seen in creating the means, and in upholding the proper power and faculty of the means, in order to their end; why cannot he by the same power produce the effect without any such means?

Matthew 4:5

Ver. 5. By *the holy city* is meant Jerusalem, once a holy city, Da 9:24; now, though a most impure and filthy city upon many accounts, yet, upon other accounts still a holy city, being the only city in the world which had then in it the true worship of the true God, and in which God doubtless, who in Ahab's time had seven thousand in Israel, had many holy people. How the devil

took Christ into the holy city is variously argued and judged; the words used in the Greek are such as would incline us to think he was not carried by force, but followed the tempter willingly, and set upon a place on the top of the temple, higher than the other parts of it. The end of his being set there the next verse tells us.

Matthew 4:6

Ver. 6. Before the devil had tempted our Lord to diffidence or distrust in God's providence, and the use of means not allowed by God to supply himself; here he tempts him to an unwarrantable presumption, and confidence of and concerning the Divine protection. In the former temptation the devil used no Scripture, but having been repelled in that assault by *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, Eph 6:17, he here takes up the same weapon. The thing to which the tempter solicits our Saviour, was the throwing himself down from a precipice, a temptation, in effect, to destroy himself; which is one of those fiery darts which he commonly throws at the people of God in their hours of melancholy, or under great pressures of affliction; but the usual argument which he useth to them, is deliverance from their terrors, the preventing of want, or avoiding shame. The argument he useth to our Lord is quite of another nature, the special protection of God promised to God's people, Ps 91:11,12. Herein he transforms himself *into an angel of light*, according to 2Co 11:14, and lets us know that truth may be abused to the patronage of lies; and that there is no hook more dangerous to the members of Christ, than that which is baited with Scripture misinterpreted and misapplied, which holy writ always is when it is so interpreted or so applied as to be made an argument to sin. This portion of holy writ is both:

1. Falsely cited; and,
2. As ill applied.
 - a) In the quotation the tempter leaves out those words, *in all thy ways*. This was none of our Saviour's ways, he had no call, no warrant from God to decline the stairs by which he might have gone down, and to throw himself down. God had never promised, nor ever given, any the protection of angels in sinful and forbidden ways.

b) He misapplies this text, using it not to instruct, but to deceive; dividing between man's duty and God's providence; making this word a promise to be fulfilled upon Christ's neglect of his duty; extending the promise of special providence as to dangers into which men voluntarily throw themselves; putting God upon working miracles to declare Christ to be his Son, where there was no need, and of which there was no use, mocking our Saviour's true use of Scripture, with Scripture abused, and many other ways: but he had to do with one not ignorant of his devices.

Matthew 4:7

Ver. 7. This is written De 6:16. To make an undue and unwarrantable trial of God, is to tempt God, whether the trial respecteth his power or his goodness; thus the word is used, Nu 14:22 Ps 78:18 Isa 7:12 Mt 16:1. By this answer Christ lets the devil know that he abused Scripture in his quotation of it; such as casting of himself down, when he had a plain way to go down by the stairs, would not have been an act of faith, but presumption; not a trusting God upon his word, but a tempting of God, expressly contrary to his command, De 6:16.

Matthew 4:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 4:9".

Matthew 4:9

Ver. 8,9. This is the third temptation by which the tempter solicits our Saviour to sin, and of all other the most impudent. For what can be more impudent than for the creature to expect a homage to him from him who was his Creator. What mountain this was, and how our Saviour was taken up into it, are things not revealed, and of very little concern for us to know. The text tells us it was exceeding high, yet not high enough from whence one kingdom could be seen in the extent of it. It is therefore most probable that Dr. Lightfoot judgeth most truly, that

"the devil, being the prince of the power of the air, formed an airy horizon before the eyes of Christ, carrying such pompous and glorious appearance of kingdoms, states, and royalties in the face of it, as if he had seen those very kingdoms and states indeed."

Such things the devil can do, and doth do, by condensing the air first, then shaping and figuring, and lastly so colouring it, that it may represent what he intends. All these things he promised to give our Saviour, if he would fall down and worship him. The same eminent person well observes, that

"what Luke calls worshipping before the devil, Matthew calls worshipping the devil";

and concludes solidly,

"that if to worship before the devil be to worship the devil, worshipping before an image (as the papists do) must be worshipping the image."

The devil here arrogates to himself what was God's alone to give, and such ordinarily are the devil's promises of things, as to which he hath no power to fulfil what he promiseth.

Matthew 4:10

Ver. 10. As this was of all the three the most impudent temptation, so our Lord receiveth it with the highest detestation, saying, *Get thee hence, Satan* by which words he doth not only show his detestation of this temptation, but also chides him off from any further tempting him. The sense is, Satan, I know better things, viz. that a religious adoration is not to be given unto any but unto God alone. Thou art a creature; no worship is due unto thee: to worship before thee (so Luke phrases it, Lu 4:7) is to worship thee. This is expressly contrary to the command of God, De 6:13 10:20. It is also observable, that our Saviour opposeth this to the devil's words, *εαν πεσθην προσκυνησης μοι*, if thou falling down wilt worship me; and that Christ answers, *Τον Θεοσ σου προσκυνησεις και αυτω λατρευσεις*; which shows the idleness of the papists' distinction of *doulia* and *latreia*; the first of which they say may be given to the creature,

the second only unto God; by which they justify their veneration of images. The using a posture of adoration before the creature in an act of worship, Christ here interprets a worshipping the creature, if the creature either exacts it of us, or we purposely set it before us, or choose it as an object exciting or moving us to such an act of adoration, which the papists do. Not that all prostration before the creature is an act of Divine adoration; there is a civil as well as a Divine worship; and in Divine worship the position of the creature before us may be merely for convenience, or accidental. But all prostration in an act of Divine worship is a posture of adoration, and where a creature is chosen and set before us in that act or posture, to excite or move us, it partakes of the homage. There is some little difference between the words, De 6:13 De 10:20, and those of St. Matthew; but that is said to be written, which is written as to the substance and sense, though not in those terms. Moses saith, *Thou shalt fear*; as Matthew quotes it it is, *Thou shalt worship*. The term *fear* applied unto God, signifieth any act of religion, whether external or internal, and though the last words in Deuteronomy, *thou shalt swear by his name*, be not mentioned in Matthew, yet enough are quoted for our Saviour's purpose. Falling down and worshipping belongeth only to God, (saith our Saviour), not to thee; let me therefore hear of thee no more.

Matthew 4:11

Ver. 11. *Resist the devil*, saith James, Jas 4:7, *and he shall flee from you*. Thus he did from the Head, thus he shall do from the members: but as he did not flee from Christ till commanded away, so neither till commanded off by God doth he leave the people of God; but upon our resistance God will command him off, that we may not be tempted above our strength. The evil angels leaving him, the good *angels came and ministered unto him*, whether by bringing him food, or bringing him off the mount, or otherwise executing his commands, is not expressed, and it is too much curiosity to inquire. God by this teacheth us, that our lives are to have their vicissitudes of temptations and consolations, and that our temptations shall have a happy issue, and that when ordinary means fail we may expect extraordinary influences and assistances. Luke saith, *he departed from him for a season*, to let us know, that though there was an end of his more eminent temptations, yet he was not afterward without

Satan's assaults.

Matthew 4:12

Ver. 12. John was some time after this cast into prison, for his free reproving Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, for taking Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and other evils, Mt 14:3,4 Mr 6:17 Lu 3:19,20. Jesus heard of this accident, and *departed into Galilee*. There were many things happened between Christ's temptations and this his motion into Galilee, which are omitted by all the evangelists except John, and by him recorded in his four first chapters. Neither by *Galilee* must we understand the Nether Galilee, which was within the jurisdiction of Herod, but the Upper Galilee, called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, Mt 4:15, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, which was in the jurisdiction of Philip, a man of a less bloody disposition. Others make it under Herod's jurisdiction, but where the Pharisees had less to do than in Judea. Our Saviour doth not out of cowardice avoid danger, but he knew his time was not yet come. But some judicious interpreters think that our Saviour first went into the Lower Galilee, and from thence soon after into the Upper Galilee: that which makes this more probable is the next words, *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum*; so as it should seem he first went to Nazareth, which was in the Lower Galilee.

Matthew 4:13

Ver. 13. By this (as was said before) it should seem that our Lord first went into the Nether Galilee, where Nazareth was, which after a time he left, and went to Capernaum; which Capernaum was a city near the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, whose lots in the land of Canaan were contiguous, and by the seaside, as appeareth by Jos 19:1-51.

Matthew 4:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 4:16".

Matthew 4:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 4:16".

Matthew 4:16

Ver. 14-16. The text in Isa 9:1,2, where the words are, *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* The Jews make a great many objections against the application of this text unto Christ, as indeed they do against the application of all texts cited out of the Old Testament by the evangelists. Christians, believing that the evangelists being holy men, who wrote not from a private spirit private interpretations, have not any reason to regard what their interest leadeth them to object: but even Christian interpreters are divided in their sentiments whether these words are said to be fulfilled, in this motion of Christ unto Galilee, in a literal, or typical, or a more improper and analogical sense; nor is it any great matter with which of them we agree. For my own part, I see no reason why Isa 9:2 should not be literally understood of and applied unto Christ. There is nothing more ordinary in the prophets, than, after a threatening of judgment and captivity unto the people, to comfort such as feared God amongst them with promises of the Messiah, and the spiritual salvation which was to be brought in. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali suffered much by Benhadad, 1Ki 15:20, and more by Tiglath-pileser, 2Ki 15:29, before the general captivity of the ten tribes, 2Ki 17:6. The Lord by the prophet, Isa 8:1-22, had been threatening this general captivity; possibly the prophet might say the affliction of those parts should not be so great as the second mentioned, 2Ki 15:29; because by the story it seems they were generally carried into captivity before the more general destruction of the other tribes there. Saith he, This darkness shall be abundantly hereafter compensated, by the coming of the Messiah, and preaching amongst this people; who living at a great distance from Jerusalem, never had such a light as some other parts of Judea, and first drank of the cup of God's wrath in

their captivity. It was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, because it was near to the men of Tyre, who were Gentiles, and had doubtless in it a greater mixture of Gentiles than any other part of Canaan, ever since Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in this Galilee, 1Ki 9:11.

Matthew 4:17

Ver. 17. From the time of Christ's baptism, or from the time that he heard that John was committed to prison, he, who before had preached and taught privately, and more rarely, began to preach more ordinarily and publicly, and the sum of his doctrine was the same with that of John the Baptist, confirming his doctrine, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. See the sense of those words, Mt 3:2 Mr 1:15.

Matthew 4:18

Ver. 18. Whether by *the sea* he here meant the lake of Gennesaret, or the ocean, is not worth the arguing, for the Jews called all great collections of waters the seas, according to Ge 1:10.

He saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, whether natural brethren, or called so because of their joint employment, *casting a net into the sea,* either for the catching of fish, or for the washing of their nets: see Lu 5:2.

For they were fishers: sea men (as the word seems to signify) used to fish in the sea. Simon had a ship of his own, Lu 5:3. The evangelists' differing relation of the call of Simon and Andrew hath made a great deal of work for interpreters. The greatest difference seemeth to be betwixt Matthew, in this text, and John, Joh 1:35-38. But certainly John speaketh of one call in those verses, the other evangelists of another. According to John, they were called to the knowledge of and first acquaintance with Christ while John was in the public exercise of his ministry, for they were his disciples, Joh 1:35,36,39, they are said at that time *to have abode with him that day*. Probably they again returned to their old employment, and when John was imprisoned, Christ, walking by the sea, saw them, and then called them to the

apostleship. There are other differences in their call observed betwixt Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but such as may be easily answered by those who observe, that there is nothing more ordinary, than for the evangelists, in reporting the same history, one of them to supply more largely what the other had recorded more summarily.

Matthew 4:19

Ver. 19. Here was their call to the office of apostles. It is observable that God's calls of men to places of dignity and honour, and his appearances of favour to them, have ordinarily been when they have been busied in the honest employments of their callings. Saul was seeking his father's asses, David keeping his father's sheep, when the Lord called them to the kingdom. The shepherds were feeding their flocks when they had the revelation of Christ. He calleth four apostles from their fishery; Amos from amongst the herdmen of Tekoa; Matthew from the receipt of custom; Moses when keeping Jethro's flock, Ex 3:1,2; Gideon from the threshing floor, Jud 6:11. God never encourages idleness, but despiseth not persons in meanest employments.

Follow me, that is, to return no more to your employment.

I will make you fishers of men: here is the work of ministers set out, to gain souls to God; they are not to fish merely for a livelihood, much less for honour and applause to themselves, but to win souls to God, and are to bait their hooks and order their nets to this end, which they will never serve, if either by general discourses they make the meshes so wide that all will dart through them, or if by their wit and learning they make their discourses so fine and curious that few or none of their hearers can understand them. Nor will all our art make us fishers of men: *I will make you*, saith Christ. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, God must give the increase. But yet we must order our nets rationally and probably in order to our end, and without that cannot expect God's blessings. Nor were the apostles presently to enter upon the work of the ministry, but first to *follow* him. And indeed such should all gospel ministers be. In the choice of Matthias, Peter limited the people in their election to *those that had accompanied with them all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them*, Ac 1:21. Other ministers commonly

prove fishers for something else, not for the souls of men.

Matthew 4:20

Ver. 20. When Christ calls, men shall obey; when he calls, he draweth. It is not of indispensable necessity that men who exercise the ministry should have nothing else to do, Paul's hands ministered to his necessities; but nothing but a providing for ourselves and households can excuse ministers in entangling themselves with the things of this life. Churches that are able ought better to provide for their ministers, and ministers so provided for sin if they do not wholly give up themselves to their work, 1Ti 4:15.

Matthew 4:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 4:22".

Matthew 4:22

Ver. 22. There was another James, Mt 10:3, the son of Alpheus, called James the less, brother of Joses and Salome, Mr 15:40. This was *James the son of Zebedee, and John*, who is thought to be the evangelist. Christ calleth them, not with his voice only, but by his Spirit, affecting their hearts, so as they immediately *left their ship and their father*. Elsewhere the disciples say, *Master, we have left all and followed thee*; probably their employment with their ship was their *all*. They left *their father* also, but it was upon Christ's call, in which case it is every man's duty, *and followed him*, to learn of him before they went out to preach him, and to be witnesses of his miracles, &c.

Matthew 4:23

Ver. 23. Jesus Christ having now called four disciples, did not judge it sufficient to send them about, but himself *went about all* the places of that dark country of *Galilee, teaching in their synagogues*; the word signifieth both the congregation convened and the place. Here it signifieth both. Synagogues were of old

time, Ac 15:21; how ancient we know not. Some think that they were no older than the return out of the captivity of Babylon: but I am posed then in determining where the body of the Jews ordinarily worshipped God on the sabbath days, for it is certain they did not all go up to the temple at Jerusalem. In the Old Testament we read of them only, Ps 74:8, as at that time *burnt up*. As to the order of them, we only read, that they had some rulers, Ac 13:15, who directed those who were to speak *words of exhortation*. The Scriptures were read in them, Ac 15:21; the law and the prophets, Ac 13:15. They prayed in them, Mt 6:5; they expounded Scripture in them, Lu 4:16-19. Christ preached in the synagogues; not only there, we shall find him preaching on the mount in the next chapter, and in private houses; but he did not decline the synagogues, either as to preaching or hearing, not wholly separating from a church corrupt enough through traditions, but not idolatrous. But what did he preach?

The gospel of the kingdom; the glad tidings for lost sinners, that was come into the world, by the revelation of him, who was the true Messiah, and the true and only way by which men might come to the kingdom of God, and be eternally saved. This is what all his ministers should publish; not their own conceits, or dictates of men, or things impertinent to the salvation of souls, but *the gospel of the kingdom*. *And healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease amongst the people*: the Greek is, *all diseases and sicknesses*, yet surely some died in Galilee in that time. This is another text, to prove that the term *all* in Scripture doth not always signify every individual, but some individuals of every, species. Christ confirmed his doctrine, and Divine mission, by these miraculous operations.

Matthew 4:24

Ver. 24. *Syria* is said to be bounded on the north by Cilicia, by Egypt on the south, on the west with the sea, and on the east with Euphrates, and to comprehend within it all Judea, Bethany, Galilee, Decapolis, Samaria, Idumea, Palestina, Syrophoenicia, Syria of Damascus, and Syria of Antioch. Christ's fame spread very far doubtless, because of the good he did, and the miracles he wrought, *and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases*: 'all' here again can signify no more than very many that were indisposed and ill affected as to their

bodily health, those that were sick of, or detained in their beds or houses by, divers diseases. Though Christ showed his power in curing some diseases which physicians judge incurable, yet he showed his kindness also in relieving others not so fatally sick.

And torments; such as were troubled with great pains, as if they were upon racks, or in the hands of tormentors, that set themselves to torture them.

And those which were possessed with devils: of these sorts of persons we shall read often in the gospel: this is the first time we meet with the term. It is observed that in the Old Testament we read little of any such persons; (we read only of Saul's being vexed with an evil spirit); we read much of them in the New Testament, and in ecclesiastical history for some years after Christ: they called them *energumeni*. Some think God, in those first times of the gospel, permitted the devil to this degree, that the power of our Saviour might be the more seen in casting them out, and in giving authority to his disciples to cast them out, which was a great demonstration of his Divinity. Others think that God did it for a demonstration of the error of the Sadducees, who held there were no spirits. The gospel seemeth to hint two sorts of these persons: some upon whom the devil had power no further than to rack and torture them, Mr 5:3-5 Lu 9:39; others in whom he dwelled bodily, and divined and prophesied in them, Ac 16:16.

And those which were lunatic; affected with such diseases as use to increase in some times of the moon, or at such times to seize persons: of this nature we know divers, more particularly the falling sickness and dropsy.

And those that had the palsy, a disease caused by the resolution of the nerves. Those diseases are mentioned which men account hardest to be cured, if capable of cure by men: Christ, to show his Divine power, healed them. Christ did not only cure these bodily distempers, but he also preached the gospel of the kingdom to heal their soul distempers. We read of many who came to him for bodily cure, but of none that said to him: *What shall we do to be saved?* How sensible are men and women of their bodily pains and diseases, more than of their soul's wants!

Matthew 4:25

Ver. 25. They followed for the loaves, for the benefit of the bodily cures, or out of curiosity, though some (probably) followed him out of love, and to learn of him.

Decapolis hath its name from ten cities comprehended in it. Here was a mixture both of Jews and Gentiles following Christ, who came to be a Saviour of them both, and to pull down the partition wall between both, to make them both one gospel church, Eph 2:14.

Matthew 5:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 5:1-12 Christ begins his sermon upon the Mount, declaring who are blessed.

Mt 5:13-16 He calleth his disciples the salt of the earth, the light of the world; and by the similitudes of a city on a hill, and of a candle, he urges upon them the necessity of setting a good example.

Mt 5:17-20 He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law.

Mt 5:21-26 He extendeth the precepts against murder,

Mt 5:27-32 adultery,

Mt 5:33-37 and false swearing,

Mt 5:38-42 exhorteth to suffer wrong patiently,

Mt 5:43-47 to love our enemies,

Mt 5:48 and to aim at perfection.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 5:2".

Matthew 5:2

Ver. 1,2. The last chapter concluded with telling us that a great multitude followed Christ, which he observing, that he might

with more convenience to himself, and advantage to them, speak what he had to say, *he went up into a mountain*; and sitting down, after the manner of the Jewish doctors to show their authority, which our Saviour also at other times observed, Mt 26:55 Lu 4:20 Joh 8:2, *his disciples came unto him*; both those strictly so called, and others also, viz. the multitude, mentioned in the last chapter, or some of them; and he began to speak to them with freedom, so as the multitude might hear. Christ thought it as lawful to preach in the mountain as in the synagogues; nor did his disciples doubt the lawfulness of hearing him, wherever he thought fit to speak.

Matthew 5:3

Ver. 3. Happy are they, who, though they be not rich in this world's goods, yet have a spirit suited to their state and condition, not looking for their consolation here, but, having a poor and low opinion of the world and all that is therein, looking after more excellent riches; and, in order to it, are of broken and contrite spirits for their manifold sins, and cannot entertain any proud opinion of their own righteousness, but flee unto the free grace of God, and the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not the great, and rich, and proud men of the world are happy, but these are the blessed men; for true happiness lieth not in worldly possessions, but in the favour of God, and a right to the kingdom of heaven, and that these men have, Ps 34:18 51:17 Isa 66:2.

Matthew 5:4

Ver. 4. The world is mistaken in accounting the jocund and merry companions the only happy men; their mirth is madness, and their joy will be like crackling of thorns under a pot: but those are rather the happy men, who mourn; yea, such are most certainly happy, who mourn out of duty in the sense of their own sins, or of the sins of others, or who mourn out of choice rather to suffer afflictions and persecutions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. Though such sufferings do excite in them natural passions, yet it is a blessed mourning, for those are the blessed tears which God will wipe at last from his people's eyes, and such are these.

They shall be comforted, either in this life, with the consolations of the Spirit, or with their Master's joy in the life that is to come, Isa 61:3 Joh 16:20 Jas 1:12. So as this promise, and declaration of blessedness, is not to be extended to all mourners, but only to such as God hath made so, or who in duty have made themselves so, obeying some command of God, for sympathizing with God's glory, or with his afflicted people, Ro 12:15, or testifying their repentance for their sins; for there is a mourning which is a mere natural effect of passion, and a worldly sorrow which worketh unto death, as well as a godly sorrow working repentance to salvation, 2Co 7:10.

Matthew 5:5

Ver. 5. Men count the hectors of the world happy, whom none can provoke but they must expect as good as they bring, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*: but I tell you these are not truly happy; they are tortured with their own passions; as their hand is against every one, so every man's hand is against them; besides that there is a God, who will revenge the wrongs they do. But *the meek*, who can be angry, but restrain their wrath in obedience to the will of God, and will not be angry unless they can be angry and not sin; nor will easily be provoked by others, but rather use soft words to pacify wrath, and give place to the passions of others; these are the blessed men. For though others may by their sword and their bow conquer a great deal of the earth to their will and power, yet they will never quietly and comfortably inherit or possess it; they are possessors *malae fidei*, forcible possessors, and they will enjoy what they have, as rapacious birds enjoy theirs, loudly, every one hath his gun ready charged and cocked against them; but those who are of meek and quiet spirits, though they may not take so deep root in the earth as others more boisterous, yet they shall enjoy what God giveth them with more quiet and certainty; and God will provide for them, verily they shall be fed, Ps 37:3,11.

Matthew 5:6

Ver. 6. You see many men and women hungering and thirsting after sensual satisfactions, or after sensible enjoyments; these are unhappy, miserable men, they often hunger and thirst, and are

not satisfied: but I will show you a more excellent way, a more excellent object of your hunger and thirst, that is, *righteousness*; both a righteousness wherein you may stand before God, which is in me, Jer 23:6, and is *revealed from faith to faith*, Ro 1:17, and the righteousness of a holy life. Those are blessed men, who *first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof*, God will fill these men with what they desire, Isa 55:1,2 Lu 1:53. There are some who understand this text of a hungering after the clearing of their innocency towards men, which is natural to just and innocent persons falsely accused and traduced, and they have a promise of being filled, Ps 37:6; but I see no reason to conclude this the sense of this text.

Matthew 5:7

Ver. 7. The men of the world bless themselves if they can take care of themselves, let others do what they will, and as well as they can: but I tell you, that those alone are the blessed men, who are touched with a true sense and feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and that not out of a mere goodness and tenderness of nature, but out of a true obedience to the will of God, and a sense of his love to them, and faith in his promises; and, moved from these principles, do not only pity and compassionate them, and wish them well, but extend their helping hand to them, suitably to their miseries: for these men *shall obtain mercy*, and that not only from men, if they come into straits and distress, but from the hand of God, Ps 37:26 112:5,6: he doth not say they shall merit mercy at God's hand, but they shall be mercified, they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:8

Ver. 8. The men of the world bless those who appear pure and holy to men, and put on a vizard and mask of purity, though they be but painted sepulchres, and their hearts be as cages of all unclean birds: but those alone are blessed, who, being washed from their filthiness by my blood, are of a sincere and upright heart; though they be not legally pure and free from all sin, yet are so pure as that God will accept them, the bent of their hearts being after holiness; who have not a heart and a heart, no doubleness of mind, who are persons in whom is no guile. For

though no mortal eye can see and comprehend the essence of God, yet these men shall by an eye of faith see and enjoy God in this life, though in a glass more darkly, and in the life to come face to face, and as he is, 1Co 13:12 Heb 12:14; 1Jo 3:2.

Matthew 5:9

Ver. 9. The world blesseth the boisterous, unquiet party of it, that can never be still, but are continually thinking of more worlds to conquer, and blowing up the coals of war, division, and sedition: but they are blessed indeed, who study to be quiet, seeking peace, and pursuing it; and are so far from sowing the seeds of discord, or blowing those coals, that their great study is to make peace between God and man, and between a man and his neighbour, doing this in obedience to God, and out of a principle of love to God and men; for those that do so shall approve themselves like unto God, to be his children, and so they shall be called.

To be called and to be is much the same: so what Moses said, Ge 21:12, is interpreted by Paul; Ro 9:7,8; so what is said by Matthew, Mt 21:13, is interpreted by Luke, Lu 19:46; what was said by St. John, Joh 1:12, is interpreted 1Jo 3:1; for God is the God of peace, 1Co 14:33.

Matthew 5:10

Ver. 10. The men of the world judge those men very unhappy and miserable whom their rulers make the objects of their wrath and malice, and pursue violently to the loss of their estates, liberties, or lives, never considering the cause for which they are so pursued: but they are quite mistaken; for that man who is pursued by such violence, and hunted upon this account, because to please men he durst not sin against God, but labours to keep *a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men*, Ac 24:16, is a blessed man; and if he be hunted out of the kingdoms of the earth, yet he shall be hunted but to heaven, for to such men belongeth the kingdom of God in glory, Jas 1:12 1Pe 3:14 4:13.

Matthew 5:11

Ver. 11. Reviling and speaking evil of persons falsely, because of their profession of Christ, and because they dare not sin against God, is a species of persecution, Ge 21:9 Ga 4:29, though the lowest degree of it. It hath been the constant lot of God's servants. David said, Ps 35:11, that *false witnesses did rise up, and laid to his charge things that he knew not*. Thus John and Christ were served, Mt 11:18,19 Lu 7:33,34; nor is it to be wondered that those whose consciences are so seared that they cannot feel the guilt of persecuting others for righteousness' sake, should not feel the guilt of lying and false swearing. But, saith our Saviour, you are blessed when these things happen unto you, 1Pe 4:13.

Matthew 5:12

Ver. 12. Be so far from being troubled, as to count it all joy, when you fall into these trials, Jas 1:2. Let it be music in your ears to hear that the drunkards make you their song. Rejoice in your hearts, express it in your lips and behaviour, *for great is your reward*, not of debt, but of grace; for our light and momentary afflictions are not worthy to be compared with an eternal and exceeding weight of glory; where there is no proportion, there can be no merit: especially, when it is given to us on the behalf of Christ to suffer, Php 1:29. Peter upon this argument saith, *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*, 1Pe 4:14. Our Saviour adds, *for so persecuted they the prophets before you*. The magistrates, and the rulers of the Jews, persecuted Elijah, Micaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and the rest of the prophets, whom you succeed, not in time only, but in the same office of revealing the mind of God to the people.

Matthew 5:13

Ver. 13. In our Christian course we are not to trouble ourselves with what men say of us, and do unto us, but only to attend to our duty of holiness, and an exemplary life, which is what our Saviour presseth plainly, Mt 5:16, and leads his hearers to it by four comparisons, which he institutes between them and four other things. The first we have in this verse, *Ye are the salt of the*

earth: the doctrine which you profess is so, a thing as opposite as can be to the putrefaction of the world, both in respect to corrupt doctrine and corrupt manners (therefore, by the way, it will be no wonder if they resist it by reviling and persecuting you).

You are the salt of the earth: through the grace of God bestowed upon you, Mr 9:50 Col 4:6. If it were not for the number of sound and painful ministers, and holy and gracious persons, the earth would be but a stinking dunghill of drunkards, unclean persons, thieves, murderers, unrighteous persons, that would be a stench in the nostrils of a pure and holy God. Look as it is in the world, *if the salt hath lost its savour*, its acrimony, by which it opposeth putrefaction in fish and flesh, not the fish or flesh only will be good for nothing, but the salt itself, so infatuated, (as it is in the Greek), will be *good for nothing, but to be cast upon a dunghill and trodden under foot*. So it is with ministers of the gospel, so with the professors of it; if they have lost their soundness in the faith, and holiness of life, they are of no value, nay, they are worse than other men. Money, if it be clipped in pieces, and hath lost its usefulness as coin, yet is of use for a goldsmith; meat corrupted, if it will not serve for men, yet will feed dogs; salt is good for nothing. No more are pretended ministers or Christians; their excellency lies in their savour; if that be lost, wherewith shall they be salted? Of what use are they, unless to cause the name of God and religion to be blasphemed? Such another similitude the prophet useth, Eze 15:2,3.

Matthew 5:14

Ver. 14. You that are to be my apostles are so eminently, but all you that are my disciples are so also. Christ is the Light of the world Joh 1:4,9; but though the sun be the light of the world, yet it doth not follow that the moon and the stars also are not so: he is the original Light, the great Light who hath light from and in himself. The ministers of the gospel are the lights of the world also; the angels of churches are stars, Re 1:20, and holy persons are *children of light*, 1Th 5:5.

A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. The church is often called the city of God. Christ compares his people here not to a city, but to a city upon a hill; so that all for which our Saviour

mentions a city here, is the conspicuity of a city so built. It is as much as if our Saviour should have said, You had need be holy, for your conversation cannot be hid, any more than a city can that is built upon a hill, which is obvious to every eye. All men's eyes will be upon you.

Matthew 5:15

Ver. 15. You ought also to consider the end why I have communicated of my light unto you; it is in part the same with that of men: when they light up a candle in a room, which is to show light to all those that are in the room, they do not use to light it up to hide it under a vessel, or a bushel; so I have not communicated my truths or my grace unto you merely for your own use, but for others use. It is said of John, (by our Saviour), *he was a burning and shining light*: so is every true minister of the gospel, yea, and every true Christian; not only a burning light, burning with love to God, and zeal for God, and love to and zeal for the souls of others; but also a shining light, communicating his light to others, both by instruction and a holy conversation. Others' pretended candles were never of God's lighting.

Matthew 5:16

Ver. 16. Our Saviour now plainly tells us what he intended by the comparisons before mentioned. Let the light of that doctrine which you receive from me, and the light of your holy conversation, (the latter by the following words seemeth to be here principally intended), *so shine before men*, be so evident and apparent unto men, *that they may see your good works*; all sorts of good works, whatsoever I have commanded or shall command you; and as I command you, and in obedience to such commands, otherwise they are no good works; *and glorify your Father which is in heaven*. You are not in your good actions to aim at yourselves, to be seen of men, as Mt 6:1, nor merely at doing good to others; *good works* are to be maintained *for necessary uses*, Tit 3:14, but having a primary, and principal respect to the glorifying of your Father; for, Joh 15:8, *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit*: not that we can add any thing to God's essential glory, but we may predicate and

manifest his glory; which how we can do by good works, if they proceed from mere power and liberty of our own wills, not from his special efficacious grace, is hard to understand. Our Father is said to be *in heaven*, because, though his essential presence filleth all places, yet he is pleased there, more than any where, to manifest his glory and majesty.

Matthew 5:17

Ver. 17. There are so many adversaries, Jews, papists, Socinians, Anabaptists, Antinomians, &c., that make their advantages of this text, for the establishing their several errors, that it would require a volume to vindicate it from their several exceptions; those who desire satisfaction may read Spanhemius Dub. Evang. 12.3. The plain sense of the text is this: It would have been a great cavil, with the Jews especially, (who had a great reverence for the law), if either our Saviour's enemies amongst them could have persuaded people that Christ came to destroy the law and the prophets, or his own hearers had entertained from his discourse any such apprehensions. Our Saviour designing, in his following discourse, to give a more full and strict interpretation of the law than had been given by the Pharisees and other Jewish doctors, prefaces that discourse with a protestation against his coming *to destroy the law*, and averring that he came *to fulfil* it. It is manifest, by his following discourse, that he principally spake of the moral law, though he also fulfilled the ceremonial law, he being the Antitype in whom all the types of that had their complement, and real fulfilling and accomplishment. Saith he, I am not come to destroy and put an end to the moral law. I am come to fulfil it: not to fill it up, as papists and Socinians contend, adding any new precept to it; but by yielding myself a personal obedience to it, by giving a fuller and stricter interpretation of it than you have formerly had, and by taking the curse of it (so far as concerneth my disciples) upon myself, and giving a just satisfaction to Divine justice for it. The greatest objection urged against Christ destroying part of the law, and adding new precepts to the moral law, is that about the change of the sabbath; but this is none, if we consider that the moral law required no more than one day of seven to be kept as a day of holy rest, not this or that particular day; for the particular day, the Jews learned it from the ceremonial law, as Christians learn theirs from Christ's and the apostles' practice. Nor is it any

objection against this, that the seventh day from the creation is mentioned in the law, to those who know how to distinguish between the precept and the argument; the seventh from the creation is not in the precept, but in the argument, *For in six days, &c.* Now there is nothing more ordinary than to have arguments of a particular temporary concernment used to enforce precepts of an eternal obligation, where the precepts were first given to that particular people, as to whom those arguments were of force, an instance of which is in the first commandment, as well as in this: as, on the other side, arguments of universal force are oft annexed to precepts, which had but a particular obligation upon a particular people for a time. Thus in the ceremonial law, we often find it is an argument to enforce many ceremonial precepts, *For I am the Lord thy God.*

Matthew 5:18

Ver. 18. *Amen I say unto you,* so it is in the Greek, a phrase, as some observe never used but by God and Christ himself; who is *the Amen, the faithful and true witness,* Re 3:14, though the servants of God have sometimes used it, as an adverb of wishing. It is by most concluded a form of an oath, God by it swearing by his truth and faithfulness.

Till heaven and earth pass, &c.; that is, the law is the certain and unchangeable will of God concerning reasonable creatures, and it shall never be altered in the least tittle, nor ever be abolished; you may therefore be secure that I come into the world upon no such errand.

Matthew 5:19

Ver. 19. Whosoever shall in his practice violate but one of the commandments of God, which the Pharisees judge of the least, and which possible are so compared with others, and shall teach men that they may do as he doth, making such false interpretations of the law as may warrant such a practice, he shall be accounted of the least value and esteem in the church of God, and shall never come into the kingdom of glory: but he who shall strictly and uniformly obey all the commandments, and teach others to do the like by his doctrine and example, that man shall

have a great renown and reputation in the church, which is the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and shall have a great reward in the kingdom of glory hereafter.

Matthew 5:20

Ver. 20. I am so far from giving a liberty to the violation of my Father's law, (as the scribes and Pharisees may possibly suggest), that I assure you that unless your obedience to it exceed that obedience which the scribes and Pharisees teach you, and themselves practise, you shall never come into heaven. What the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was we cannot better learn than from St. Paul, who was himself a Pharisee, and bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a great doctor amongst them, Ac 23:6 26:5 Php 3:5. That it was a righteousness of works appeareth from Php 3:1-21, and the whole Epistles to the Romans (Ro 1:1-16:27) and Galatians (Ga 1:1-6:18); and their not owning Christ as the Messiah, nor believing on him, Joh 7:48, made it impossible that it should be any other. That they looked upon their mere obedience to the ceremonial law as their righteousness cannot be proved, yea, the contrary is enough evident by their obedience to the moral law, according to the interpretation they put upon it. But their interpretation of the moral law was so short and jejune, that it is manifest that their righteousness was not only a righteousness not of faith but of works, but works that were very imperfect and short of what the true sense of the law required, as our Saviour afterward proveth. That is to say, it was no righteousness, for he that keepeth the whole law, if he be guilty in one point, is guilty of all, Jas 2:10.

Matthew 5:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 5:22".

Matthew 5:22

Ver. 21,22. The Pharisees, in their lectures upon the law, usually thus prefaced, *It was said by them of old time; this, saith Christ, ye have heard. Thou shalt not kill:* this was spoken by God in Mount Sinai, it was the sixth of the ten words then spoke.

And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: this now was the Pharisees' addition, for we read of no such addition to the law as delivered, Ex 20:13. Thus they mixed their traditions with the word of God, which possibly might be the reason of their saying rather, *It was said by them of old time*, than, "It was said by Moses", or, "It was said in the law of God"; for under that phrase, it was said by the ancients they both comprehended the law given by Moses to the ancient people of God, and also their own traditions and false glosses, which though not so ancient as the law, yet had obtained for some considerable time in the corrupt state of the Jews.

Shall be in danger of, or obnoxious unto, *the judgment;* not to the wrath and vengeance of God, of that they said nothing, but to those courts of judgment which sat amongst them, to administer justice in criminal causes. As if this law of God had been only intended to uphold peace, and to preserve human society and civil order.

Thou shalt not kill; that is, (as they interpreted), Thou shalt not, without a warrant from God, or from the law, actually take away the life of another. It appears by what followeth, that they extended not this law to unjustifiable passions in the heart, such as rash anger, malice, revengeful thoughts; nor to any opprobrious or revengeful words.

But I say unto you; I shall give you another sense of this law. The killing here forbidden is as well rash and causeless anger, and opprobrious, threatening speeches, as bloody actions.

Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, &c. Our Saviour (as most interpreters judge) speaks this with allusion to the three courts amongst the Jews. The one was the court of three men, which only judged of smaller and lighter causes, not in capital causes. Another was their court of twenty-three men, which much answered our courts at Westminster. The third was their sanhedrim, consisting of seventy men, which answered our parliament. Some think that by the judgment is meant the first or second of the courts; by *the council*, the superior courts amongst the Jews. But the judgment of our reverend Dr. Lightfoot seemeth much more probable, that by *the judgment* is meant the judgment of God; by *the council*

and *hell fire*, not only the judgment and vengeance of God, but the judgments and punishments that are inflicted in the courts of men, that are magistrates, and bear not the sword in vain: so as the sense is this: I say unto you, that if a man doth but in his heart nourish wrath and anger against another without a just cause, and lets it grow up into malice, and thoughts and desires of private revenge, though he be not by it obnoxious to courts of justice, who can only determine upon overt acts, yet he is accountable to God, and liable to his judgment: but if men suffer their passions to break out into reviling terms and language, such as *Raca*, (signifying a vain person), or, *Thou fool*, (speaking this from anger or malice), they are not only liable to the eternal vengeance of God, compared to the fire of Gehenna, but ought to be subjected to the punishment of the civil magistrate. Every civil government being by the law of God, in order to the prevention of quarrels or bloodshed, (which often followeth revilings of each other), obliged to punish such offences, as being the beginnings of murder, provocations to it, and indications of murderous hearts, hearts full of that which in the eye of God is murder.

Matthew 5:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 5:24".

Matthew 5:24

Ver. 24. The Jews were to *offer gifts and sacrifices*, Heb 5:1. Their gifts were their free will offerings, they were the most frequent oblations amongst the Jews, as may appear from Leviticus, and what the priests pressed with the greatest importunity, as may appear from Mr 7:11; therefore our Saviour instanceth in these, rather than in other parts of their worship. Bring unto God the best and most acceptable sacrifices (in your or, the teacher's judgment) that you can, if there be found malice or rash anger in your hearts, God will not accept them. Therefore, how near soever you be come to a religious action, if you there remember that your brother hath a just reason to be offended with you, for any malice or rash anger showed or expressed by you, do not think this will discharge you of your obligation to pay your homage to God; but forbear a while, *leave*

your gift before the altar, and do what in you lies to be reconciled to your brother, to have a placable spirit to him, to purge your heart of wrath and malice, and any desire of revenge, *and then come and offer your gift,* pay that homage which you owe, and it was in your heart to pay to God. It is a text usually applied with reference to communion with God in the Lord's supper, but equally extensive to any other part of worship, hearing the word, Jas 1:21, and prayer, 1Ti 2:8. God accepteth no service, no homage, from an implacable, malicious heart.

Matthew 5:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 5:26".

Matthew 5:26

Ver. 26. Forasmuch as the overt acts and expressions of unjust wrath and malice are iniquities punishable by the judge, let it be the care of those that will be my disciples, if by their passions they have provoked any, and made them their adversaries, quickly to agree with them; for you know the ordinary course of enraged adversaries amongst men, is to bring their actions, and to bring men before the civil judge; and when the judge upon inquiry hath found them guilty, he useth to deliver them to the gaoler to be carried to prison, until they have fully paid their fines for such offences. And forasmuch as not only the overt acts, but the passions which cause such acts, are culpable before God, and make men obnoxious to his righteous judgment, and God by them is made an adversary to the soul, as having violated his great command, *Thou shalt do no murder*; let all my disciples, who have been or may be overtaken with such faults, by repentance and faith in me make their peace with God in this life, lest dying in impenitency they be put under the eternal displeasure and wrath of God, from whence they shall never be delivered, Mt 6:15 18:35.

Matthew 5:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 5:28".

Matthew 5:28

Ver. 28. The scope of our Saviour in these verses is the very same as in the verses immediately preceding, viz. to correct the jejune interpretation which the Pharisees had put upon the Divine law, and to show that he, instead of coming to destroy the law, came to fulfil it, as other ways, so by giving a more strict and true interpretation of it; and whereas they interpreted it only as to overt acts, which disturb human society and break civil order, he showeth that it reacheth to the inward thoughts, and unlawful desires of the heart, and any means that have a tendency to such prohibited acts. It was said by God to those fathers of the Jews, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, Ex 20:14. This law (saith our Saviour) your doctors expound, You shall not carnally lie with a woman that is not your wife; but there is a great deal more in it than so, for he that but secretly in his heart desireth such a thing, or taketh pleasure in such thoughts, and casts his eyes upon a woman in order to such a thing, is in the sight of God an adulterer. Hence we read of *eyes full of adultery*, to avoid which Job *made a covenant with his eyes*, Job 31:1, and would not suffer his heart to walk after his eyes, Job 31:7. We must so interpret the commandments of God, as not to extend them only to forbid or command those acts which are plainly mentioned in them, but the inward pleasing of our hearts with such things as are forbidden, the desires of our hearts after them, or whatsoever is a probable means to give us that sinful pleasure of our thoughts, or further inflame such unlawful desires in our souls.

Matthew 5:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 5:30".

Matthew 5:30

Ver. 29,30. The sum of these two verses is, that the salvation of our immortal souls is to be preferred before all things, be they never so dear and precious to us; and that if men's ordinary discretion teacheth them for the preservation of their bodies to cut off a particular member, which would necessarily endanger

the whole body, it much more teacheth them to part with any thing which will prejudice the salvation of their souls. Not that any person is by this text obliged to cut off any bodily member, (as some have done), because there can be no such necessity; but only to mortify their members, Col 3:5, the deeds of the body, Ro 8:13, their inward lusts, which being mortified there will be no need of mutilating ourselves; for the members of the body are but commanded and animated to their motions from the inward lusts of the heart: but if there could happen such a case, as that a man must voluntarily part with the most useful member of his body, or sin against God to the damnation of his soul, he ought rather to choose the former than the latter. How much more then ought Christians to mortify their inward lusts and unlawful desires, which can be of no profit nor advantage to them; but will certainly make them to offend God, and so run them upon the danger of hell fire!

Matthew 5:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 5:32".

Matthew 5:32

Ver. 31,32. The law to which our Saviour refers here, or rather the indulgence and toleration, (for none was obliged to put away their wives in case of uncleanness), is that De 24:1, where we have it in these words: *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it her in her hand, and send her out of his house.* The Pharisees had extended this toleration which God gave husbands amongst the Jews to other cases, besides that of uncleanness or adultery; so as they put away their wives upon every slight occasion, interpreting those words, *that she find no favour in his eyes*, separately from the following words, *because he hath found some uncleanness in her*, and gave a liberty for men upon any dislike of their wives to put them away, provided that they first gave them a bill of divorcement; and that in these cases it was lawful for the parties, thus separated from each other, to marry to whom either of them pleased; and this is expressed in terms in their form of those

writings of divorcement, in Josephus and other writers. This indeed is a case properly relating to the judicial law; but all the judicial laws are either appendices to the moral or to the ceremonial law. This particular indulgence was an appendix to the moral law, by the seventh commandment, to which our Saviour is now speaking, and giving the true sense of it. He here opposeth the Pharisees in two points.

1. Asserting that all divorces are unlawful except in case of adultery.
2. Asserting that whosoever married her that was put away committed adultery.

It hath been a great question, not so much amongst divines as amongst lawyers, whether it be not lawful in any case to put away a wife, unless for adultery? The canonists have found out many cases in which they affirm it lawful. And the Council of Trent (from whom we may learn the sense of the popish divines) anathematize those who deny the church a power of determining other causes of divorce. But their blasphemous curse falleth upon him, who is above them, God over all blessed for ever, who in this text hath determined that point. Nor indeed did Moses give a toleration in any other cases. There may indeed be a parting between man and wife upon other accounts, either wholly or in part: in case one of them will part from the other, which the apostle determines, 1Co 7:11,15; in which case the person departing is only guilty if he or she marry again. In case of an error, through ignorance or inadvertency, upon the marriage, that it appeareth that the persons married were such as by the law of nature and of God ought not to have married, &c. But if we take divorce for the voluntary act of the husband putting away of his wife, it is unlawful in any case but that of adultery, which dissolves the marriage knot and covenant. A second question is also here determined by our Saviour, viz. that it is unlawful for her, that is justly put away, to marry to any other, or for any other to marry her wittingly.

Matthew 5:33

Ver. 33. This was said Ex 20:7, and more plainly Le 19:12; the substance was there said, though the words be not *verbatim*

recited.

Matthew 5:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 5:36".

Matthew 5:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 5:36".

Matthew 5:36

Ver. 34-36. Doth our Saviour here oppose himself to the law of God, which saith, De 6:13 10:20, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and swear by his name?* Doth he condemn Abraham, who swore his servant by the Lord God of heaven and earth? Ge 24:3. Doth he destroy such a useful means for the end of strife? Heb 6:16. None of all these. We must consider that our Saviour is here opposing himself to the corruptions of that age brought in by the Pharisees, who had taught people that swearing was nothing, if they did not forswear themselves; or at least swearing *by the heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, by their head*, or in suchlike forms, was no sin, if they forbore the name of God; that they were only obliged to swear by the name of God in public courts of justice, but they were not tied up to it at other times. To these and such like corruptions our Saviour opposeth these words, *I say unto you, Swear not at all;* not at all voluntarily, but where it is necessary for the end of strife; not at all in your common discourse, Jas 5:12: and so it is expounded in the next verse. The law doth not only forbid false swearing, but common and ordinary swearing, needless swearing, which speaks a great want of reverence in the heart of the name of God. And let not your teachers cheat you, in telling you God, or the name of God, is not concerned, in your swearing by heaven: is not heaven the throne of God? Or by earth: is not that the footstool of God? Or by Jerusalem: is not that the city of God? Or by your head: is it not God that hath given you your life and bodily members? Is it in your power to make a hair of your head white or black? So as the great thing here forbidden, is common and ordinary swearing, where God calleth us not unto it for the determination

of strife. Do not only think that false swearing, but be assured that ordinary, common, needless swearing, is forbidden by God.

Matthew 5:37

Ver. 37. St. James saith much the same, Jas 5:12. Let your ordinary discourse in the world be mere affirmations or denials of things in terms or phrases of the same import with *yea* and *nay*, though you do not always use those terms. Let forms of swearing be preserved for special times, when the providence of God calls to you for them to determine strife, and make some weighty matters which you assert credible unto others who will not take your bare assertions. Have such a reverence for the name of God, as not to use it for every trifle; and let not my ordinance for the end of strife be made of no use by your common use of the name of God; for in ordinary discourse and common talk, whatsoever is more than bare affirmations and denials, cometh of an evil heart, or from the devil, or from the corruption of other men's hearts. Some would make the communication mentioned here to be understood as if it were conversation; Let your ways of dealing with men be fitting, without fraud and guile; and so think our Saviour here strikes at the root and cause of so much idle and vain swearing, viz. the common falsehood, frauds, and cozenages of men in their dealings; but it seemeth hard so to interpret λογος in this place, our Saviour especially being speaking concerning words and forms of speech.

Matthew 5:38

Ver. 38. This was the commandment of God to the magistrate, in case a woman with child were struck, and any mischief came of it, Ex 21:24; in case of damage done to a neighbour, Le 24:20; and in the case of false witness, De 19:21. But in the mean time God had said to private persons, Le 19:18, *Thou shalt not avenge*; and it is said, Pr 24:29, *Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me*. The Pharisees had interpreted this law of God into a liberty for every private person, who had been wronged by another, to exact a satisfaction upon him, provided that he did not exceed this proportion of taking an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, doing no more wrong to another than that other

had done to him.

Matthew 5:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 5:41".

Matthew 5:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 5:41".

Matthew 5:41

Ver. 39-41. The apostle Paul giveth the best exposition upon this text, Ro 7:17-19,21, *Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. —Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* The general scope of our Saviour is that which they must observe, who would understand the sense of these words; they must not think that the particular things mentioned are their duty, but,

1. That it is the will of their Lord that they should not take any private revenge, but leave the avenging of their injuries unto God, and to the public magistrate, who is God's viceregent, before whom, notwithstanding any thing here said, they may seek a just satisfaction.
2. That in lighter cases we should rather remit the wrong done to us for peace' sake than stand upon a rigour of justice; rather overcome evil with good, than suffer ourselves to be overcome by the evil of others; rather suffer a blow on the other cheek, than with our own hands revenge the blow which is given thus on our cheek; rather lose our cloak also, than contend for our coat, taken away in judgment from us, though we be in that judgment oppressed. No injury can deserve a private revenge. Light injuries are not of that nature that we should contend for a public revenge of them.

Matthew 5:42

Ver. 42. In these words our Saviour presseth another piece of charity, viz. liberality to those who are poor; who are of two sorts: some such as are never able to repay us; to those he commandeth Christians *to give*.

To him that asketh, who hath need to ask, and in that order too which God hath directed, who hath commanded us to provide for our own household, and to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith. The other sort are such as may have only a temporary want: to these he commandeth us to lend, and not to turn away from them, when they desire to borrow of us, and we can spare it. This was an ancient precept of God, De 15:7-9, confirmed by Christ, as a piece of his will under the gospel.

Matthew 5:43

Ver. 43. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, was the old law of God, Le 19:18; the other part, *and hate thine enemy*, was the Pharisees' addition, or rather their collection, because the law only commanded them to love their neighbour. *uv* signifies sometimes a friend, sometimes more largely any other person; they took it in the strict sense, yet they could not be so blind as not to extend it to all those of their own nation, for Mt 5:17 there are two words used, one signifying *thy brother*, the other *thy countryman*, whom they are commanded in that verse not to hate in their hearts. But it appeareth by Lu 10:29, that they did not very well know their neighbour. The lawyer asked, *Who is my neighbour?* Christ instructs him by the parable of him that was *fallen among thieves*, that they ought not to look upon those of their own country only as neighbours, for a Samaritan might deserve the name better than a priest or Levite. But they generally looked upon all the uncircumcised as not their neighbours, but their enemies, whom the precept did not oblige them to love.

Matthew 5:44

Ver. 44. That this is no counsel of perfection, (as the papists

would have it), nor any new precept added to the law of God, (as the Socinians would have it), is plain from Pr 25:21, where we find it commanded under the Old Testament. Neither is it, I advise you, but, *I say unto you*, which argues a command.

Love here doth not signify the complacency of the heart in an object, which is love in the strict sense; but, Be charitable unto, do good to your enemies: nor are we equally obliged to do good to our enemies as to our friends; but it is expounded by the following words, and to be understood:

1. Of not seeking unlawful private revenge. *Bless them that curse you*: do not return reviling for reviling, while they curse do you bless.
2. Doing them common offices of kindness. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink*, Ro 12:20. This is a doing good to them that hate us, relieving them in their pressing necessities.
3. Doing them all the good we can for their souls. *Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*. So did our Saviour, Lu 23:34 and Stephen, Ac 7:60; so did David, Ps 35:13-15. In the mean time we may hate those who are God's enemies, as such, Ps 139:21,22; and for such we may seek a due revenge of God's honour upon them.

And for our enemies, this precept prohibits not the seeking of a just satisfaction for wrongs done unto us in a way of public justice, yet not without a mixture of charity.

Matthew 5:45

Ver. 45. As your heavenly Father hath a common love, which he extendeth to all mankind, in supplying their necessities, with the light and warmth of the sun, and with the rain; as well as a special love and favour, which he exerciseth only toward those that are good, and members of Christ; so ought you to have: though you are not obliged to take your enemies into your bosom, yet you ought to love them in their order. And as your heavenly Father, though he will one day have a satisfaction from sinners, for the wrong done to his majesty, unless they repent;

yet, to heap coals of fire on their heads, gives them good things of common providence, that he might not leave them without witness, yea, and affords them the outward means of grace for their souls: so, although you are bound to seek some satisfaction for God's honour and glory from flagitious sinners, and though you may in an orderly course seek a moderate satisfaction for the wrong done to yourselves, yet you ought to love them with a love consistent with these things; that so you may imitate your heavenly Father, and approve yourselves to be his children.

Matthew 5:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 5:47".

Matthew 5:47

Ver. 46,47. Reason obliges you, who expect a reward from God for what you do, to do something more than those who know of no such reward, or at least live in no expectation of any such thing; and you who condemn others as great sinners, and men not worthy of your converse, ought to do something by which you may outdo those whom you so condemn, both in offices of piety towards God and charity towards men. But if you only show kindness to your relations and to your countrymen, you do no more than those whom you look upon as heathens and the worst of men, who act only from the light and law of nature, and know of no reward God hath to give, nor live in any such expectation of it. By loving here is meant doing good offices, either for the souls or bodies of others. By saluting is meant common offices of kindness, such as inquiring of our neighbours' health, wishing them well, &c. The publicans were civil officers appointed by the Romans to gather up public taxes and revenues. The chief commissioners were knights and gentlemen of Rome, who either let out these revenues to others, or employed others under them in the collecting of them. These thus employed were some Jews, (such were Matthew and Zacchaeus), some Romans. These (as is ordinary) made their own markets, and exacted of the people, upon which accounts they were exceeding odious: and therefore ordinarily in Scripture we shall find *publicans and sinners* put together, Mt 9:11 11:19; and they are joined with harlots, Mt 21:32; and the Pharisee in

his justification gloried he was not as that publican, Lu 18:11. Those who condemn others ought to take care that they be better than others.

Matthew 5:48

Ver. 48. *Perfect* here is not taken in that sense as it is taken in other texts of Scripture, where it signifieth sincerity and uprightness, as Job 2:3, or where it signifieth a comparative perfection, as Paul saith he spake to those that were perfect; but for an absolute perfection, such as is in our *Father which is in heaven*, and so much is signified by the proposing of our heavenly Father as our example. Nor will it therefore follow, either that this is a mere counsel, not a precept, or that an absolute perfection in holiness is a thing in this life attainable. But that it is our duty to labour for it, *forgetting what is behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, as the apostle speaks, Php 3:13,14. *Pro perfecto est qui perfecto proximus*. God accounts him perfect who is nearest to perfection.

Matthew 6:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 6:1-4 Christ continuing his sermon, giveth directions about alms giving,
Mt 6:5-13 prayer,
Mt 6:14-15 forgiving our brethren,
Mt 6:16-18 fasting,
Mt 6:19-21 laying up treasure in heaven,
Mt 6:22-23 keeping a single eye,
Mt 6:24-31 and exhorteth not to be anxious about worldly things, but principally to seek God's kingdom and righteousness.

Ver. 1. *Alms* are any acts of kindness freely done by us for the relief of any that are in distress and misery, which, when they are done from a principle of love to God, his precepts commanding

them, obedience in faith to his promises made to the giving of them, and that he may be glorified, are truly good works, acts of religion, and acceptable to God, Ac 10:31, though meritorious of nothing from him; otherwise they are merely acts of humanity and morality, to the reward of which God is by no promise obliged. Therefore Christ's disciples are obliged to take heed, that in the doing of their alms, though they may do them before men, God may be glorified, Php 2:15 1Pe 2:12; yet they do them not before men on purpose that they should take notice of them, and applaud them for them, for God rewardeth no action of which he is not the end.

Matthew 6:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 6:3".

Matthew 6:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 6:4".

Matthew 6:4

Ver. 4. There are some who think that our Saviour here reflects upon some practice of the Pharisees then in use for ostentation, who, under a pretence of a means to call people together, caused a trumpet to be sounded when they distributed their alms; but those learned in their writings assure us they could never find in them any foundation for such an opinion. The speech is rather metaphorical, prohibiting all ostentation in acts of charity, and inviting others to take notice of them, as Jehu invited Jonadab to come and see his zeal, 2Ki 10:16; as the third verse is but a proverbial expression expounded Mt 6:4, *That thine alms may be in secret*. Not that it is not lawful to give a poor body money or bread, &c., in the sight of others; but only to do it for that end, that we might be seen of others. The thing forbidden under the metaphorical expression is ostentation, and seeking our own honour and applause. The thing commanded is sincerity with respect to our end. The apostle calls it a giving with simplicity, singly aiming at the glorifying of God, by an obedient performance of our duty. He tells us those who give their alms to

be honoured of *men have their reward*, that is, all which they are like to have; men applaud and cry them up, there is their reward: others shall have their reward from God, *who seeth in secret*, and so needeth not such a publication of our good deeds; and he will reward them openly before men and angels at the last day, Mt 25:31,32,34, and ordinarily in this life, Ps 37:25 41:1 Ps 112:9,10.

Matthew 6:5

Ver. 5. Our Saviour here cautions them against the same thing in prayer, as he had done before in giving alms, viz. hypocrisy and ostentation, doing this duty upon that design, merely to be taken notice of and applauded by men; it was lawful to pray *standing in the synagogues*, but not to do it merely to be taken notice of by men for devout persons, nor yet to confine themselves to praying in the synagogues. If they chose to pray *standing*, that they might be more conspicuous, and in the synagogues, because those places were more holy, (as they might dream), or, which seems rather to be here meant, because there most people would see them, for which purpose only they chose *corners of streets*, as was the old popish custom upon which account they set up crosses at three way leets?, &c., these things were sinful: but to pray standing was usual, Mr 11:25; and to pray in the synagogues and in the temple standing was usual, Lu 18:13. But those who do it merely for vain glory *have their reward*, and must expect none from God.

Matthew 6:6

Ver. 6. By this public prayer is not condemned, but secret prayer is established, and made every Christian's duty; and Christians are warned not to think that their duty of prayer is discharged by their going to places of public worship, and praying there: but that which our Saviour here cautions us against is ostentation, by which men may as much offend in their closets as elsewhere. Wherever we pray, we must take heed that our ends be right, that the glory of God be our principal end, and yielding obedience to his command; and there is no better means in order to this than the right setting of God before our eyes, as he that *seeth in secret*, and knoweth the most secret designs, scopes, and

intentions of our hearts, and who, if we thus perform our duty, will reward us of his free grace and mercy; not as persons who by our prayers have merited any thing at his hand, (for what merit can there be in our prayers?) but as having showed our obedience to his will, and in the fulfilling of those many promises which he hath made to those that seek his face for the hearing of their prayers.

Matthew 6:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 6:8".

Matthew 6:8

Ver. 7,8. It appeareth from hence, and from what followeth also, that the praying here spoken of is vocal prayer; not the mere homage which the heart payeth to God, by a recognition of him as the fountain of all good, and our secret desires that God would supply our wants, but the expression of those desires by the words of our mouths, which is that duty which the Scripture generally calleth prayer, and is most certainly a duty incumbent on every person. Nor are *repetitions* of the same requests in prayer, or *much speaking*, (that is, praying to some length of time), here absolutely forbidden: our Saviour before his passion prayed thrice for the same thing within a short compass of time, (though he did not use the same words), and, Lu 6:12, he *continued all night in prayer to God*. But that which is here forbidden, is an opinion of being heard for over long prayers, and using vain repetitions, as the priests of Baal continued from morning to night crying, *O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!* as if their god had been asleep, or gone a journey, as the prophet mocketh them, 1Ki 18:26,27. Repetitions are then vain, when they are affected, and flow from some irreverent thoughts we have of God; not when they are as it were forced from the heat and intention of our affections. The like is to be said of much speaking in prayer. Long prayers are not to be condemned, but the affectation of them is, and long prayers upon pretences and designs are: but when the mind is attent, and the affections fervent, length of prayer is no fault, especially upon solemn occasions, when we come not to ask a particular mercy at the hand of God, nor for a particular person or family. But

repetitions after the manner of heathens are condemned, as proceeding from irreverent thoughts of God, as if he did not know what things we have need of, or were, like a man, to be prevailed upon by a multitude of words.

Matthew 6:9

Ver. 9. Not always in these words, but always to this sense, and in this manner. None ever thought Christians obliged to use no other words than these in prayer, though none must deny the lawfulness of using those words which Christ hath sanctified.

After this manner; first seeking the kingdom of God, and begging those things which more immediately concern God's glory, and then those things which more immediately concern yourselves. Or, *After this manner,* praying only in particular for such things as are more generally couched in the following petitions.

Our Father which art in heaven: a compellation speaking our faith both in the power and in the goodness of God; our eyeing him as in heaven speaketh his power, Ps 115:3, our considering him as our Father speaks our faith in his goodness, Mt 7:11.

Hallowed be thy name. God's name is whatsoever he hath made himself known by: Let the Lord be glorified in every thing whereby he hath made himself known.

Matthew 6:10

Ver. 10. Let the Lord rule over all the nations of the earth, and let them be freely subject to his laws, and to his Son Jesus Christ; let the gospel of the kingdom be published, and prosper, by bringing all thoughts into a captivity to it. And let the kingdom of God come more within the hearts of all men, and hasten the revelation of the kingdom of glory. Let the will of the Lord be every where done, and that on earth, with as much freedom and cheerfulness, and with as little reluctancy, as it is done by the angels and saints in heaven. These three first petitions are of great cognation one to another; God is then glorified when his kingdom is advanced, and his kingdom is then promoted when

there is most free and cheerful obedience yielded to his will: the sum is, Let God be glorified.

Matthew 6:11

Ver. 11. And forasmuch as in thee we live, and move, and have our life, so the means for the upholding and the preserving of our lives, and the blessing upon them, must be from thee. We beseech thee to give us food convenient for us, that which thou hast ordained for our nourishment and preservation; and that thou wouldst preserve it to us, that we may have it from day to day while we live in the world, with thy blessing upon it; that we may not be tempted to take bread which is not ours, nor be over solicitous and careful for tomorrow, but by daily prayer may obtain daily supplies from thee, so far as shall be necessary or convenient for us.

Matthew 6:12

Ver. 12. Our Saviour here doth not teach us the order in which we should pray for good things for ourselves, only in three petitions comprehends whatsoever we should ask of God. For doubtless we are obliged, according to Mt 6:32, first to seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. That by our *debts* are here meant our sins is plain from Lu 11:4, as also from Mt 6:14 of this chapter, where they are called *trespasses*. The sense is, then, Discharge us from that obligation to death which our sins have laid us under; give us a pardon for our sins past and present; for who liveth, and sinneth not against thee?

As we forgive our debtors; not as perfectly, but in like manner as we, according to the imperfect state of our natures, forgive those who have done us injury, not seeking any revenge upon them, nor bearing them any malice: so as indeed those who, retaining their malice in their hearts, put up this prayer unto God, do in effect pray down Divine vengeance upon their souls: well therefore doth the apostle command, that we should lift up pure hands unto God, *without wrath or doubting*, 1Ti 2:8. So that not only faith but charity also, is necessary to our praying acceptably.

Matthew 6:13

Ver. 13. The term temptation in the general signifieth a trial, and is sometimes used to express God's trials of his people's faith and obedience, but most ordinarily to express Satan's trials of us, by motions to sin; which may be from our own lusts, Jas 1:13,14; or from the devil, who is therefore called the tempter; or from the world. These are the temptations which we are commanded to pray against: not that God leads any persons into such temptations, unless by the permission of his providence.

But deliver us from evil; from the evil one, as some read it, because of the article prefixed; but others think it not material whether we understand the devil, who is the evil one, or the evil of temptations, which harm us not if we be not overcome by them.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. These words are omitted by Luke, Lu 11:4; but many think that Luke speaks of another time, when he dictated this prayer. The words both show us that the honour and glory of God ought to be the end and scope of all our prayers, and that we can expect no audience but upon the account of God's grace and mercy; and they likewise confirm our faith, that God is able to grant what we ask of him.

Amen: this in the close of a sentence is a particle of wishing, and signifieth our desire to be heard; and as it is a term that signifies truth and certainty, it likewise signifieth our faith in God that we shall be heard.

Matthew 6:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 6:15".

Matthew 6:15

Ver. 14,15. Not that our mere forgiving our brethren the injuries done unto us is all that God requireth of us in order to the forgiveness we expect from him, the contrary is plain from

several other texts, Joh 3:18,36 Ac 2:38 16:31 &c.; but that without this forgiveness of our brethren, God will not forgive us, Mt 18:35. It is one piece of that obedience which we owe to God, and also of our gratitude, without the performance of which it is vain for us to hope for forgiveness from God.

Matthew 6:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 6:18".

Matthew 6:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 6:18".

Matthew 6:18

Ver. 16-18. Our Saviour in these words returns to his former work, to caution his disciples against hypocrisy, vain glory, and ostentation in their religious duties, the doing them to be seen of men. What he before said as to giving alms and prayer, he here again applies as to private fasting, which is by this discourse of our Saviour confirmed, though not as a stated, yet as an occasional duty of Christians, in order to, and as an indication of, their humbling of their souls for their sins, or under the mighty hand of God; but he requireth that it should be in sincerity, not in hypocrisy, for the glory of God, not for ostentation and appearance unto men. Our Saviour probably in this discourse hath a respect to some hypocritical usages of the Pharisees, using to disfigure their countenances, and look demurely or sourly upon their fasting days. Not that he prohibits here habits or gestures suited to the duty, himself sometimes commanded the Jews to put off their ornaments, nor was any thing more ordinary for good men than to cover themselves with sackcloth, and put ashes on their heads. All that our Lord prohibits is the affecting of these things, to cover the hypocrisy of their hearts. Nor must we think that it is the will of God, that we on such days should indeed anoint our heads and wash our faces; or (which is the same thing with us) adorn, paint, or perfume ourselves, or use any habits or gestures unsuitable to mourning, and not indicative of afflicted souls; but that we should rather do this than the other,

viz. put on a mask and vizard of sorrow for sin, when indeed we had no sense of it; for still we must appear to our heavenly Father to fast, which we cannot very well do, if our outward habit and demeanour be not something proportioned to the inward sorrow and affliction of our souls; for the putting on of fine dresses and ornaments must be an imperate act of the soul, and not like to be commanded by a soul in affliction, it being natural to such a soul to neglect the culture of the body, being wholly swallowed up with bitter thoughts relating to its own spiritual and eternal state. Our Saviour addeth the same argument to press sincere fasting, which he had before used concerning the duty of giving alms and secret prayer, where I have before spoken to those words.

Matthew 6:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 6:21".

Matthew 6:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 6:21".

Matthew 6:21

Ver. 19-21. A *treasure* (according to the notation of the word) signifieth something laid up for tomorrow, for future time; more largely it signifieth any riches, or what we judge a valuable portion. Make not the things of the earth your riches, or portion, with reference to future time; for all the riches of the earth are perishing, contemptible things; silver and gold is what rust will corrupt, clothes are what moths will spoil, any other things are subject to casualties, and, amongst others, to the violence of unreasonable men, who, though they have no right to them, will ordinarily take them from you. But let your riches, your treasure, be that which is heavenly, those habits of grace which will bring you to heaven, the *things which accompany salvation*, Heb 6:9, *which make you meet to be partakers of the saints in light*, Col 1:12: *be rich in good works, laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life*, 1Ti 6:18,19 Mt 19:21 25:34 Lu 18:22. Those

treasures will not be liable to such accidents as all earthly treasures are. Wherever you fix your treasure, your heart will be there also, thinking upon it, delighting in it. &c.

Matthew 6:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 6:23".

Matthew 6:23

Ver. 22,23. You had need look to your hearts, your understanding, judgment, and affections; for look what proportion there is betwixt your bodily eye and the rest of the bodily members, with regard to their guidance and conduct, the same proportion there is betwixt your heart and whole conversation, with reference to the guidance of it with relation to God. The eye is the window by which the soul looks out to guide the body; if that be not impaired by the defluxion of humours, &c., but be single, it directs all the motions of the body right; but if that be defective, or any way impaired, the whole body is at a loss how to move safely, and with advantage to it. So if your hearts be set right, if you have a right and sound judgment, a true and sanctified affection, they will influence and guide all your actions, your whole conversation will be regular and holy: but if that inward *eye be evil*, through covetousness, too much adherence to the earth, or through envy, (both which are called evil eyes in Scripture), or through the prevalence of any other lusts or passions, your darkness will be exceeding great, you will not be able to set one step right; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and according to the dictates and affections of the heart the hand and the whole man acts.

Matthew 6:24

Ver. 24. *No man can serve two masters*, that is, two masters that command contrary things each to other, for that is the present case of God and mammon. Or, No man with the like diligence, and alacrity, and faithfulness, can serve two masters. It is a proverbial speech, and in reason to be understood of contrary masters. He will either hate the one, or the first, and love the

second, or else he will cleave to the first, and contemn the other, that is, so in his actions behave himself, that he will appear a true servant but to one of them, and despise or slight the other.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. It is not improbable that some of the ancients have thought, that amongst some of the heathen they had an idol called Mammon, which they made the god of money; thence mammon by a figure signifieth riches, as Lu 16:9. So as it is of an equivalent sense to, no man can serve God and Bacchus, or God and Venus; that is, none can be a drunkard, or an unclean person, and a true servant of God. So no man can serve God, and yet make the getting of riches, right or wrong, his study; hence the apostle calls *covetousness idolatry*, Col 3:5. So that by serving here must be understood a giving up of ourselves chiefly or wholly to the service of God, and to the business of getting the world; or, serving the latter, in what it tempteth or commandeth us to, contrary to the will of God.

Matthew 6:25

Ver. 25. This text must not be interpreted in a sense contradictory to those many other texts, which forbid an idle life, an command us in the sweat of our face to eat our bread, or to provide for our families, 2Th 3:10,11 1Ti 5:8: nor did Christ himself live such a life; he went about doing good, finishing the work which his Father had given him to do. It must be therefore understood:

1. Of no such thoughts as are inconsistent with the service of God, mentioned in the last words.
2. Of no anxious and distracting thoughts.
3. Of no such thoughts as should show any distrust and diffidence in God's providing for us.

God hath given us our lives and our bodies, without our care for the existence of them; why should we, in a lawful and moderate use of means, distrust God for a subsistence for them? He hath given us the greater, will he not (think you) give us the less?

Matthew 6:26

Ver. 26. God takes care of all his creatures. For example, consider *the fowls*, and those not the tame fowls about your houses, but the fowls of the air, for whom the housewife's hand doth not provide, neither hath God fitted them for any labour by which they can procure their livelihood, nor doth he require any such thing of them, nor do they labour; yet their Creator (who is *your heavenly Father*) *feedeth them*. You have much more reason to trust in God, if you could not labour, being hindered by his providence, for you are more excellent beings than sensitive creatures, and you have a further relation to God than that of creatures to the Creator, for God is your heavenly Father; you are in the order of nature, and especially considering that God is your Father, much better than they.

Matthew 6:27

Ver. 27. How vain a thing is it to distract yourselves with anxious thoughts about your body and your life! All your thinking will not add a cubit to your stature: as your being and existence derives from God, so the increase of your stature depends upon him; likewise he maketh the child to grow to the just proportion which he hath intended him, and beyond that he cannot pass. If God's blessing be necessary to this, and so necessary that no thoughts, no means, will add any thing without the Divine blessing, what reason have you to take any such thoughts, as you cannot expect he should bless to their desired effect and issue?

Matthew 6:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 6:30".

Matthew 6:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 6:30".

Matthew 6:30

Ver. 28-30. From sensitive creatures our Lord proceedeth to vegetables, an order of creatures which have more than mere being, they have also life, though no sense, but yet two degrees beneath man, wanting not only reason, but sense. He shows us from an instance in these, that we have no more reason to be troubled and anxious about clothing, than about meat or drink. Clothing is of no other use than for warmth or ornament: for such clothing as will serve us for warmth, a little care will serve the turn; *Sundamus ad supervacanea*, our sweating thoughts are mostly for superfluities in clothing; if God see them fit for us, he will also give us them, without so many thoughts about them. Look upon *the lilies*; (whether he means what we call tulips, or other flowers called lilies, which probably those countries had in greater variety and beauty, is not worth the arguing); God designing to glorify himself in those creatures, though of meanest orders, hath given them a greater beauty than Solomon had in all his rich array; to let us know that art must not contend with nature, and that beauty and glory in apparel is no more than is to be found in creatures much inferior to our order; which made Solon (though a heathen) prefer the sight of a peacock to that of Croesus. And therefore this is a thing not worthy of any anxious thoughts, for if God seeth such things good for us, he that so clothes *the grass of the field*, which is but of a few days' continuance, will much more clothe us; and if we distrust him for such provision, we show ourselves persons of little faith.

Matthew 6:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 6:32".

Matthew 6:32

Ver. 31,32. Our Lord repeateth the precept before given, Mt 6:25, wherein he forbids not all moderate and provident thoughts for things necessary, but only such thoughts as shall argue our distrust in God, or perplex and distract our minds, or be inconsistent with our duty, and the employment of our thoughts about higher and better things. This he here presseth by two arguments.

1. Because these are the things which people spend all their thoughts upon, who are not aware that they have souls to take care for, or do not understand the providence of God, or have no such relation to God as Christians have, who call God Father.
2. You have (saith he) a heavenly Father, who, being the God of heaven, knoweth what you need, and, being your Father, will also supply your needs.

Matthew 6:33

Ver. 33. *The kingdom of God, and his righteousness,* in this verse, are terms comprehensive of whatsoever appertaineth to the honour and glory of God, either as means, or as the end. Let your principal care and study be how to get to heaven, and how to promote the kingdom of God in the world; to bring your hearts into subjection to the will of God, that the kingdom of God may be within you, and how to bring others to the obedience of faith and of the will of God. And for the things of this life, it shall fare with you as it did with Solomon, 1Ki 3:12, who asked not riches and honour, but had them. You shall have for your necessities, Ps 37:4 Mr 10:30 1Ti 4:8.

Matthew 6:34

Ver. 34. No such thoughts as before mentioned, for God will provide for you tomorrow when tomorrow cometh. Besides, every new day will bring forth some new cares; you know not what tomorrow will bring forth, nor what you will have need of tomorrow; and if you did, why should you torment yourselves before the time? It will be time enough when you feel the evils of a succeeding time. You need not torment yourselves with prophesying against yourselves, what it may be shall never be; or if it be, you had not need weaken yourselves for the encountering such evils, by a previous disturbance of your thoughts about them.

Matthew 7:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 7:1-5 Christ proceedeth in his sermon to condemn rash judgment,
Mt 7:6 forbiddeth the prostitution of holy things,
Mt 7:7-12 recommends prayer,
Mt 7:13-14 exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate,
Mt 7:15-20 to beware of false prophets, who may be known by their fruits,
Mt 7:21-23 and not to be his disciples in profession only, but in practice.
Mt 7:24-27 He compares doers of the word to houses built on a rock, those that are hearers only to houses built on the sand.
Mt 7:28-29 Christ endeth his sermon; the people are astonished at his doctrine.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 7:2".

Matthew 7:2

Ver. 1,2. Our Saviour must not be understood here prohibiting any judgment, which is elsewhere in holy writ allowed, for the Holy Spirit doth not command and prohibit the same thing; whence it is evident, that it is not to be understood of political or ecclesiastical judgments, nor was our Saviour here speaking to any such persons: it is therefore to be understood of private judgments, nor of them absolutely, for it is lawful for us to judge ourselves, yea, it is our duty, 1Co 11:31: Nor is that judgment of our neighbour's opinions or actions here forbidden which terminates in ourselves, in our satisfaction as to the truth or falsehood of the former, or the goodness or badness of the latter; we ought so to prove all things in order to our holding fast that which is good. Nor is all judgment of our neighbour's actions with reference to him forbidden: how can we reprove him for his errors, or restore him that is fallen, without a previous judgment of his actions? But that which is here forbidden, is either,

1. A rash judgment of his state, or a judging him for doing his duty: such was Simon's judging the woman, or the disciples' judgment of that woman, Mt 26:8,9. Or:
2. A judging of others for things which they judge to be indifferent, forbidden Ro 14:1-3. Or:
3. A judging them for secret things, such as inward habits of grace, when no apparent fruits to the contrary are seen. Or,
4. Condemning others for single acts, of a public censuring and condemning others for private failings. Or:
5. Finally, Any open and public censuring the actions of others, when and where it cannot conduce either to God's glory or our brother's good.

That ye be not judged: this is expounded in the next verse, telling us either the ordinary temper of men, or the just judgment of God, repaying such uncharitable actions *per legem talionis*, with suffering others to do the like to us, Lu 6:37.

Matthew 7:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 7:5".

Matthew 7:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 7:5".

Matthew 7:5

Ver. 3-5. Whether the word translated *mote* signifieth a mote or a splinter, is of no great concern to know. Our Saviour expounded this text, when he said to the Pharisees, bringing him a woman taken in adultery: *Let him that is guiltless throw the first stone.* So doth the apostle Paul, Ro 2:1. The text teacheth us these lessons:

1. That those who are most censorious of others, are usually more notorious and culpable themselves, if not for the same sins, yet for others of equal if not greater magnitude.
2. That it is notorious hypocrisy to spy smaller faults in others, and not to see greater in ourselves.
3. That it is notorious impudence to pretend to censure and judge others for sins in which we live ourselves.
4. That there is no such way to teach us charity in not hastily, rashly, or too severely judging others, as to look first into our own hearts and ways, and seeing if we have not the same or greater failings. Our charity in this kind should begin at home.

Matthew 7:6

Ver. 6. By *swine* and *dogs*, our Saviour doubtless understandeth wicked men of several sorts, either such as are more tame sinners, trampling upon holy things, and with swine wallowing in the mire of lusts and corruptions, Pr 26:11 2Pe 2:22; or, by *dogs*, more malicious, revengeful, boisterous sinners may be meant, whose consciences will serve them to bark and grin at the word of God, to mock at holy things, to persecute those that bring them the gospel, and are their open enemies, because they tell them the truth. The gospel is to be preached *to every creature*, Mr 16:15. But when the Jews *were hardened*, and *spake evil of that way before the multitude*, &c., Ac 19:9, the apostles left preaching to them. The precept doubtless is general, directing the ministers of Christ to administer the holy things, with which they are intrusted, only to such as have a right to them, and under prudent circumstances, so as the holy name of God may not be profaned, nor they run into needless danger.

Matthew 7:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 7:8".

Matthew 7:8

Ver. 7,8. Here is a precept expressed by three words, *ask, seek, knock*; and a promise annexed in three distinct terms, *it shall be given you, ye shall find, it shall be opened unto you*. The thing commanded is prayer; the thing promised is an audience of prayer, or an answer to prayer. The multiplying of the terms in which the precept is expressed is not idle and superfluous, it lets us know our averseness to the duty, and that God in it requireth of us faith, diligence, constancy, and importunity. Christ had before told us of whom we should ask, *our Father*; it is not said what we should ask, both in regard we have a liberty to ask any thing we have need of, and he had, Mt 6:8, particularly directed the matter of our prayers. The promise, that we shall have, signifies an answer, either in kind or in value; the promise of giving lets us know that our prayers are not meritorious.

For every one that asketh the things he needeth, and in faith, according to the will of God, and for a right end, receiveth, &c. See Jas 4:3.

Matthew 7:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 7:11".

Matthew 7:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 7:11".

Matthew 7:11

Ver. 9-11. Asking is but a verbal expression of an inward desire; no man desireth that which is evil, but that which he at least apprehends to be good, that is, suitable unto his wants. As earthly parents, knowing that their children, though through weakness of understanding they may ask that which is really evil for them, yet will not give them any such things, and gratify their ignorance; so neither will your heavenly Father, knowing what you truly need, and what is truly good for you, give you any thing which he knoweth is not suitable for you, but noxious to you: but if you ask any thing which is either absolutely good for you, and cannot be evil, or which your heavenly Father knoweth

to be good for you under your present circumstances, you may be assured, considering he is your Father, and hath as great a kindness for you as an earthly father for his child, and that he is your heavenly Father, and therefore hath a sufficiency to give, will give good things to you asking them of him: and this you may be assured of from that good will and inclination which you, though you come infinitely short of the perfection and good inclinations of your heavenly Father, find in yourselves towards your children; for you derive from him, as his children, all that goodness and benignity which you have. If therefore we in prayer ask any thing of God, which may be good or evil under different circumstances, and receive it not, we may conclude, that though we thought what we asked bread, yet indeed it was a stone; though we thought it a fish, yet God saw it was a scorpion; and account that God answered our general desires, which were for some good, by denying our specific request.

Matthew 7:12

Ver. 12. Most interpreters think the term *therefore* here redundant, as some such little particles often are in holy writ, for it is hard to make out this to be a proper inference from the premises. This precept containeth in it the substance of all that is to be found in the books of the law and the prophets which concerneth us in reference to others, the sum of the second table, which requireth only justice and charity. Christ doth not say, this is all the law and the prophets, but *this is the law and the prophets*. There is no man but would have others deal justly with him in giving him what is his own, whether honour, or tribute, or estate, &c., neither taking nor withholding his own from him. Nor is there any but, if he stood in need of it, would desire the charitable help of another, or a charitable remission from him of what he might in exact justice require. Do ye (saith our Saviour) the same unto them. And indeed this is but a confirmation of the light and law of nature, no more than what men would do if they would hearken to the light within them. And without this in vain do men pretend to religion, as our Saviour teacheth, Mr 7:9-13; which makes some think that our Saviour by this reflects upon the Pharisees, who laid all their religion upon ceremonies, and some ritual performances in observance of their traditions, and omitted *the weightier things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, Mt 23:23.

Matthew 7:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 7:14".

Matthew 7:14

Ver. 13,14. Our Saviour having in this sermon delivered many hard sayings to flesh and blood, here obviates a twofold temptation they might have to the neglect of them:

1. From their difficulty.
2. From the paucity of them who live according to these rules.

He here compares heaven to a house, a stately house, into which a *strait gate* leadeth to a city, the way to which is a *narrow way*. There is nothing more ordinary in holy writ, than to call a common course of men's actions a *way*. It is also compared to a *gate*. The sum of what our Saviour here saith is this: There are but two ultimate ends of all men, eternal destruction and eternal life. The course that leadeth to destruction is like a broad way that is obvious to all, and many walk in that. That course of life and actions which will bring a man to heaven is strait, unpleasing to flesh and blood, not at all gratifying men's sensitive appetites, and narrow, (the Greek is, afflicted), a way wherein men will meet with many crosses and temptations; and there are but a few will find it. You must not therefore wonder if my precepts be hard to your carnal apprehensions, nor be scandalized though you see but few going in the right road to the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:15

Ver. 15. The term *prophets* in holy writ is of larger extent than to signify only such as foretold things to come; others also who taught the people, pretending authority from God so to do, were called prophets. Thus *Bar-jesus*, Ac 13:6, is called a *false prophet*. A false prophet is of the same significance with a false teacher. Against those our Saviour cautions his hearers, as being

the most fatal and dangerous enemies to faith and holiness. Some of them indeed come *in sheep's clothing*, under very fair pretences, and a fair show of religion and strictness; but *they are ravening wolves*, as dangerous to your souls as ravenous wolves are to a flock of sheep.

Matthew 7:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 7:20".

Matthew 7:20

Ver. 16-20. A proper effect discovereth the cause. Lest his disciples should ask, How shall we distinguish true from false teachers? Our Saviour tells them, *By their fruits ye shall know them*. Our Saviour sends not his disciples to inquire into the truth of their mission, whether that more internal from God, of which they could not judge, or more external from men, who may err, and send out those whom God never sent; but you shall know them (saith our Saviour) by their faithful or unfaithful discharge of their duty: if they be true teachers, by their discharging the ministry in a faithful revelation of the mind and will of God, or by their holy life, living as ensamples to the flock; by their fruits of true doctrine and a holy life, by the discharge of their ministry in good conscience; for it is with men as it is with the trees, good trees bring forth good fruit, corrupt trees bring forth evil fruit. If

men have the root of the matter; the seed of God abiding in them, they will in every relation bring forth the fruits of truth and holiness: if they have not, they will bring forth error and wickedness. From whence we may learn, that our Lord expecteth from his people such a knowledge of the Scriptures, as that they may be able to discern truth from falsehood; and such a diligence, as to search the Scriptures, whether those things which their teachers deliver to them be according to them or not, Ac 17:11; not taking divine truths upon trust, nor believing any thing because dictated by teachers, using their teachers not as dictators, but only as helpers of their faith.

Matthew 7:21

Ver. 21. Some that say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord,* shall be saved, being the true disciples of Christ; but every one that owneth Christ by an external profession as his Lord, every one that prayeth, though he doth it often, and with some appearing zeal and importunity, shall not be saved, nor doth by it approve himself a true disciple of Christ; but he alone who doth endeavour to fulfil the whole will of God, both by faith and holiness, Ro 2:13 1Th 4:3 Jas 1:22,23. True religion lies sin obedience to the whole will of God.

Matthew 7:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 7:23".

Matthew 7:23

Ver. 23. That by *that day* is to be understood the day of judgment is generally agreed by interpreters.

We have prophesied in thy name; that is, revealed thy will unto people; *and in thy name,* that is, by thy authority and power, *cast out devils, and done many wonderful works,* that is, wrought many miraculous operations. In the Old Testament we find Baalam and Saul prophesying, who were both wicked men. Judas was sent out (under the New Testament) both to preach and to work miracles. So as none from gifts, no, not the most

eminent and extraordinary gifts, can conclude the goodness of his state, or any special favour with God.

I will profess, that is, I will openly declare to them, *I never knew you*, that is, so as to approve you, or take pleasure in you.

Depart from me, ye that work iniquity: see Mt 25:41.

Matthew 7:24

Ver. 23,24. See Poole on "Mt 7:25".

Matthew 7:25

Ver. 25. Our Saviour maketh frequent use of that ancient way of instructing people by similitudes and parables, which by their easy incurring into the senses give advantage to the memory: he here chooseth a similitude to conclude his excellent sermon upon the mount. The builder intended, who our Saviour dignifies with the name of *a wise man*, is he that not only heareth Christ's sayings, but doeth them. Under the notion of hearing is comprehended understanding and believing them; by doing them, he understandeth a sincere desire and endeavour to do them, with a practice so far as human frailty will permit. The *house* intended seems to be a hope for eternal life and salvation: by the *rock* is meant Christ, 1Co 10:4 Eph 2:20 1Pe 2:4. Every wise Christian, before he buildeth up to must himself a hope of eternal life and salvation through Christ, must find that he is one who doth not only read and hear the word of God, but so hears as to understand and believe it, that has an operative faith, working upon his soul to the obedience of the will of God, or at least a sincere endeavour to it. And he who doth so, though his hope may be sometimes assaulted with fears, doubts, temptations, (which are like the assaults of a house builded on a rock, by winds; floods, and storms), yet it shall not fail, because it is truly founded on Christ, according to the revelation of his will, Pr 10:28 1Jo 3:3.

Matthew 7:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 7:27".

Matthew 7:27

Ver. 26,27. There are and will be others, that, as foolish builders, run up a house in haste, without looking to the goodness of the foundation, and happen to build it upon loose ground. So they flatter themselves with the hopes of the house in the heavens not made with hands, 2Co 5:1, without looking to the bottom and foundation of these hopes, whether they be such as Christ hath warranted or not; but either build their hopes upon God's infinite mercy, or the sufficiency of Christ's merits, or their own works, hearing the word of God, and performing some other duties of religion, never regarding to live to the obedience of the will of God. And the same event will be to these men as to such foolish builders; their building may stand a while, but when a day of visitation, or death, or sharp afflictions or temptation, comes, then their house, their hopes, all fail and perish in a moment, because they had no good foundation, Job 8:13,14 Job 11:20 27:8 Pr 11:7.

And great was the fall of it: their misery and calamity shall be the greater, by how much their hopes have been the stronger, the disappointment of their expectation adding to their misery.

Matthew 7:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 7:29".

Matthew 7:29

Ver. 28,29. The same words also are repeated, Mr 1:22 Lu 4:32. They declare the effect of this and other of our Saviour's sermons upon the hearts of those that heard him, and the reason of it. They *were astonished*, affected with an admiration at what they heard him in this and other sermons deliver: the Divine verities revealed in his discourses, the purity of his doctrine, the convincing power that attended it, his bold and free speech without respect of persons, the simplicity of his phrase, the gravity of his matter, the majesty he showed in his discourses,

affected the people, and made him appear to them one sent of God, and clothed with his authority. He did not teach as the scribes, the ordinary teachers amongst the Jews, from whom they had the discourses about traditions, and rites and ceremonies, cold and dull discourses, of little or no tendency to their eternal salvation.

Matthew 8:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 8:2-4 Christ cleanseth the leper,
Mt 8:5-13 healeth the centurion's servant,
Mt 8:14-15 Peter's mother-in-law,
Mt 8:16-17 and many other diseased,
Mt 8:18-22 showeth how he is to be followed,
Mt 8:23-27 stilleth the tempest on the sea,
Mt 8:28-34 driveth the devils out of two men possessed, and seeth them to go into the swine.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 8:2".

Matthew 8:2

Ver. 1,2. We heard of Christ's going up into the mountain, Mt 6:1; and of great multitudes that followed him from Decapolis, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan: whether the same multitude, or others, followed him upon his coming down, is not said. But *behold*, (saith the evangelist), *there came a leper*: both Mark and Luke have the same story, or one very like to it, Mr 1:40 Lu 5:12. Of the plague, or leprosy, we read much in the books of Moses. It was a white scab in the flesh, which gradually consumed the body, and was contagious. The leper, and he who touched him, or any thing he came near, was legally unclean: thrice we read of it inflicted as a severe punishment; upon Gehazi, for lying and taking bribes, and upon king Uzziah, for offering sacrifice. It was a disease of very difficult cure. This leper comes and worshippeth Christ. Mark

saith that he kneeled down to him: whether he only kneeled down, or prostrated himself, is not much material, for either of them might be done according to the fashion of those countries, in token either of a civil respect, paid to him as a great and eminent prophet, or a piece of religious homage (if he had so early a revelation that he was the Son of God, which some doubt).

Saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. The term *Lord* will not conclude his recognizing Christ as the Son of God, being a term used by Sarah to Abraham, and afterwards to Elijah. The words import his desire, though they be not a form of prayer, but an acknowledgment of the power of Christ. The leper acknowledging Christ's power, submits himself to his will, and so with the same breath declareth his faith and modesty. He indeed declareth no faith in the will of God, nor can any person exercise any such faith as to any temporal mercy, any further than as God shall judge it for our good.

Matthew 8:3

Ver. 3. By the law of God, Le 5:3, he that touched another who was unclean (as the leper was, Le 13:1-14:57) was unclean; how then doth Christ (who was subject to the law) touch the leper? Some say he did not touch the unclean leper, but him that was a leper, and by his touch made clean. But it is a better answer, that by what Christ did as he was God (such were his miraculous operations) he could not contract any ritual uncleanness; and possibly under the law the priest was exempted from that uncleanness, for he came very near the leper in his office about him, expressed Le 13:1-14:57. Nor do we read of any uncleanness contracted by Aaron in his performance of his office to Miriam under her leprosy, nor by the priests, 2Ch 26:20, though it be said they thrust out Uzziah. Christ, by putting forth his hand, showed his kindness to this miserable creature; by healing him with a touch, he showed his Divine power.

Saying, I will; be thou clean: he answereth him in his own term, *I will*, and then commands the thing. How acceptable is faith to God!

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed, that is, removed; the

word *immediately* confirms the miracle, it was not only a thing done without ordinary means, but without the ordinary time requisite for such a cure.

Matthew 8:4

Ver. 4. Some think that our Saviour only commanded him silence until he had showed himself unto the priest, and he, according to the law, Le 13:1-59, should have pronounced him clean, lest their envy upon hearing of it should have caused them to have obscured the miracle, by delaying to pronounce him clean; but it is observable that this was not the only time when Christ commanded those upon whom he had wrought miracles to say nothing of it: see Mt 9:30 12:16 17:9. It is therefore more probable, that this precept was not to be understood with that limitation, but that Christ did it, either that he might not be thought to seek his own glory, or rather, because Christ judged it not yet time by his miracles to be publicly made known: but he sends him to the priest, both to teach him obedience to the law, and that the truth of the miracle might by a public record be confirmed. He also commands him to *offer the gift* appointed by the law, Le 14:1-57, thereby both acknowledging his cure to be from God, and testifying his thankfulness.

That Moses commanded; to show that he came not to oppose Moses.

For a testimony unto them; that hereafter it may be a testimony unto them, that I am more than the Son of man, Joh 5:36.

Matthew 8:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 8:10".

Matthew 8:10

Ver. 5-10. Many think that this story was in order before the other. It is related by Lu 7:1-9, with some larger circumstances: there is only this difference between the two evangelists; Matthew seems to speak as if the centurion at first came in person to him; Luke saith, that he first sent the elders of the Jews to him, then some friends. But we are accounted ourselves to do that which we set others on work to do.

There came unto him a centurion; there came some elders of the Jews first, then some particular friends of one that was a Roman captain, to him, to tell him that the captain had a servant at his house that lay grievously sick of and tormented with the palsy; that which we usually call the dead palsy, in which a fit of the apoplexy usually issueth, when it doth not presently kill. Our Lord promises to come and heal him, therein showing both his kindness, and how acceptable to him the humanity of this centurion to his servant was. The centurion by his friends, as Luke tells us, sends to him, desiring him not to trouble himself to that degree, telling him.

1. That it was a favour of which he was not worthy. The best men have always the meanest thoughts of themselves.
2. That it was needless, for if he would only *speak the word*, commanding out the distemper, that was enough to effect the cure. For he tells him, that he believed diseases were as much

at Christ's command as his servants were at his command. That they came at God's command, wrought according to their commission from God, and went off when God commanded them off; so that if he, though at a distance, would command off his servant's disease, it would be as effectual as his presence.

Whether this captain were actually proselyted to the Jewish religion or not, is uncertain: it should seem by our Saviour's next words that he was not an Israelite; but it is most certain that he had a right notion of the power of the true God, and it looks very probable that he had a revelation of Christ, as the true Messiah and Son of God.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled; admiration agreed not to Christ as God, but as man it did; and said to them that followed him, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; that is, in the generality of the Israelites, for if we speak of particular persons, both Joseph and Mary had showed a greater faith. This expression is enough to let us know, that the centurion was no native Israelite, and make it probable he was not of the Jewish church, which might be, though he was so kind to the Jewish nation as to build them a synagogue, upon which account, Lu 7:3, &c., the elders of the Jews pleaded with Christ for him. This made our Saviour go on, prophesying of a further conversion of the Gentiles.

Matthew 8:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 8:12".

Matthew 8:12

Ver. 11,12. That is, in short, many of those who are now heathens shall be saved; and many of the Jews shall be damned.

Many, not all, shall come from the east and west, from all parts, from the remotest parts in the world. Luke saith, east, west, north, and south, Lu 13:29 Isa 11:12 43:5,6.

And sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of

God; in heaven, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the heads of the Jewish nation, are, to whom the promises were made; or, in the church of God, for the church triumphant and militant are both but one church. They shall *sit down* with them, as men sit down at a banquet, an expression oft used to signify the rest and pleasure the saints shall have in heaven, Isa 25:6-8 Lu 22:29,30.

But the children of the kingdom, the Jews, who boast much that they are the children of Abraham, and think themselves the only church, and the only heirs of glory, and who are indeed the only church of God as yet, *shall be cast out into outer darkness*: either the darkness of errors, ignorance, and superstition, the gospel light shall not shine upon them, they shall be no more the church of God; or, the darkness of hell, where shall be nothing but pain and misery, and lamentations for the gospel, and the grace thereof, first offered to them, but unthankfully rejected by them, by which they judge themselves unworthy of the grace of God and of eternal life, Ac 13:46.

Matthew 8:13

Ver. 13. Luke saith, *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick*, Lu 7:10; so as it seemeth that what Christ said unto the centurion, must be interpreted, to those whom the centurion sent in his name. Go your way, your business is done, the centurion's faith hath obtained, it shall be done to him as he hath *believed*; where believing must signify, a certain persuasion of the power of Christ, with a relying on this mercy and goodness. The proximate object of faith is some word of God. How far this centurion was acquainted with the oracles of the Old Testament (though he lived amongst the Jews, and, as appears by his building a synagogue for them, Lu 7:5, had a kindness for their religion) I cannot tell. It is most probable that he had some immediate revelation of God concerning Christ, which he is here said to have believed, and to have had a full persuasion of and trusted in. All revelations of God are the object of faith, though the Scriptures, being now written, are to us that have them the tests and touchstones to try such impressions by.

As thou believest, not because thou believest. Our faith is not meritorious of the least mercies, built is an exercise of grace

which gives glory to God, and receiveth the reward not of debt but of grace. The miracle appeared in that the disease was of an incurable nature, and the cure was wrought without application of means, and in such a moment of time as means, though used, could not have wrought it.

Matthew 8:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 8:15".

Matthew 8:15

Ver. 14,15. This story is related, with some further circumstances, Mr 1:29-31 Lu 4:38,39. Mark tells us it was *the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John;* (it seems they lived there together); that they told him of her sickness, after he had been there some time; that he *took her by the hand, and lifted her up.* Luke saith it was *a great fever;* that *they besought him for her;* that *he stood over her, and rebuked the fever.* Here is no contradiction, only some amplifications of the story. It is plain from this text, that Peter was a married man, and continued so though called to be an apostle, and that he had a family. Fevers are ordinary distempers, and often cured by ordinary means, but this was a great fever. The miracle here was not in the cure of an incurable disease, but in the way of the cure, by a touch of his hand, or a lifting her up; and the suddenness of the cure, it immediately left her; and her sudden recovery of strength, that she could presently arise and minister to them: that she could do it, argued her cure miraculous; that she did do it, argues her sense of Christ's goodness, and thankfulness, and teacheth us the use we should make of all God's gracious providences to us, to make us fitter for the service of God, and to employ ourselves in it; so taking *the cup of salvation,* and praising *the name of the Lord,* Ps 116:13.

Matthew 8:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 8:17".

Matthew 8:17

Ver. 16,17. Mark hath much the same Mr 1:32-34 and Lu 4:40,41. Luke adds, *he laid his hands upon them, and healed them.* We before, Mt 4:24, showed who were meant by persons possessed by devils. See Poole on "Mt 4:24". It is only observable that it is said, *he cast out the spirits by his word*, by the same power by which he made the world and all things therein, Ge 1:1-31, by his authoritative word. He *healed all that were sick*, that is, all that were brought to him. Laying on of his hands, was but an external symbol or rite used in blessing, in miraculous operations, and in ordination of ministers. The great question is, how that which the prophet Isaiah said, Isa 53:4, was fulfilled by these miraculous operations. The words are, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;* and, Isa 53:5, *with his stripes we are healed:* and the apostle Peter, referring to that text, saith, *Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree,* 1Pe 2:24. The words neither seem truly quoted, nor doth the sense appear the same, the evangelist applying what the prophet seems to speak of our sins, to our bodily infirmities, and his bearing them, to his curing them; whereas Peter seemeth to apply it to his bearing our sins, that is, the punishment of our sins, in his stripes, and by his sufferings on the cross. What I observed before is here to be considered, that the evangelists, in their quotations out of the Old Testament, took themselves only concerned to keep to the sense, not exactly to the words (which is a liberty we ordinarily take in quotations). As to the sense, grief and sorrows are terms capable of an interpretation, as to whatsoever comes upon us as the fruit and demerit of our sins, so as the prophet designed to express Christ's suffering all the punishment due to us for sin, of which nature are all the afflictions of this life, and death itself, as well as the pains of hell. The only question is, how Matthew's saying, he healed the people's diseases, answered the prophet's expression, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. This scripture was twice fulfilled in Christ: as to their bodily griefs and sorrows, that is mentioned by Matthew, though he bare them not all in his own body, yet he had compassion on men with reference to them, and showed himself afflicted in their afflictions by his putting forth his Divine power to heal them; and he bore the guilt that was the cause of these and other griefs and sorrows upon the tree, as is said by Peter; and he therefore healed them, that he might demonstrate himself to be the true Messias prophesied of by

Isaiah, who was to come, who was to bear our griefs and to carry our sorrows.

Matthew 8:18

Ver. 18. When Jesus did these things before mentioned, he was in Capernaum, Mt 8:5; but the multitudes pressing him, he gave order to pass over *the sea of Galilee*, otherwise called *the sea of Tiberias*, Joh 6:1.

Matthew 8:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 8:20".

Matthew 8:20

Ver. 19,20. We have the same story in Lu 9:57,58; only Luke saith it was *as they went in the way*; and saith, *a certain man thus said unto him*. Matthew more particularly describeth the man from his office, or ordinary employment. Both agree in what he said to our Saviour, *Master*, (so they usually called their teachers, to whose conduct they gave up themselves), *I will follow thee*, that is, I am resolved or I am ready to follow thee, *whithersoever thou goest*. Thus men often take up sudden resolutions to walk with God, and to be his servants, upon sinister accounts, and before they have well considered what they are like to meet withal who own themselves the disciples of Christ. Our Saviour, knowing his heart, and that this resolution was either bottomed in his curiosity to see his miracles, or in a hope of some livelihood from him, fits him with an answer, letting him know what difficulties those that followed him must look to meet with.

The foxes have holes, &c. Alas! thou dost not know what it is to follow me; my external condition is worse than that of *the birds of the air*, they have fixed nests, or the beasts of the earth, the worst of them have holes, but I have no fixed habitation on earth. He both here and in many other texts calls himself *the Son of man*, (a name never, that we read of, given to him but by himself), to declare the truth of his human nature, and that he had

a natural compassion for men; that he was *a child born, a son given to us*, Isa 9:6; the person prophesied of as the Messias. Da 7:13; the person mentioned who was to have *all things put under his feet*, Ps 8:6 1Co 15:27 Heb 2:8.

Matthew 8:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 8:22".

Matthew 8:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke repeating the same history, Lu 9:59,60, saith that Christ said to this man, *Follow me*. He replies, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father;* to live at home with my father, who is an old man, till I have performed my last filial office to him in burying him. Others think that he was already dead, and that this disciple would not have begged leave for so uncertain a time. Christ saith unto him, *Follow me;* not that our Lord disapproved the decent manner of burying the dead, but by this let him know, that no office of love and duty to men must be preferred before our duty to God, to whom we owe our first obedience. It appeareth by Lu 9:60, that this disciple was called to preach the gospel, a work not to be omitted or neglected for any offices to men. Of old, the high priests and the Nazarites were not to touch dead bodies, Nu 6:6, because of their separation to the more immediate service of God. Preachers of the gospel ought to keep themselves as free as they can from what may distract them. Saith our Saviour, *Let the dead bury their dead:* there are enough to bury the dead; persons that are spiritually dead, not alive to God, let them take care of those meaner offices; I have higher employment for thee than that is. Lawful and decent offices become sinful when they hinder greater duties.

Matthew 8:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 8:27".

Matthew 8:27

Ver. 23-27. It is apparent that the evangelists did not set down all the motions and actions of our Saviour in order, as done by him: whether therefore this was the same motion, and over the same sea, of which mention was made before, is uncertain, nor much material for us to know. Nor yet whether the storm which here arose was in the ordinary course of providence, or raised on purpose for our Saviour to show his power in quieting it. It is enough for us to know that a great storm did arise. It is expressly said that our Saviour was *asleep*; hereby he showed himself to be truly man, subject to like infirmities with us, sin only excepted, Heb 4:15. That *the disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish*, argued both their faith in his power, and their frailty in not considering who was with them in the ship, one who, though his humanity was asleep, yet was He who watcheth over Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. Our Saviour saith unto them, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* The prevalence of fears in us upon imminent dangers will not argue no faith, but will argue a weak faith; which yet he that will not break a bruised reed, nor quench a smoking flax, will not discourage. He will therefore give them a proof of his Divinity; *he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea*, let them know he was their Lord, and commanded them to cease, *and there was a calm*. It is he that rebuketh the waves of the sea when they roar, and stilleth the ragings of the people.

The men, either the sea men, or the passengers, or both,

marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? Surely this is more than a man, that can command winds and seas.

Matthew 8:28

Ver. 28. This history is related by Mr 5:1, &c. and by Lu 8:26, &c., more largely than by Matthew. The other two evangelists report it to be done in *the country of the Gadarenes*; Matthew, *in the country of the Gergesenes*; they were the same people, sometimes denominated from one great city in their territories, sometimes from another: whoso readeth the story in all three evangelists will easily conclude it the same, though related with different circumstances. Matthew saith there were two of these demoniacs. Mark and Luke mention but one. Luke saith, *the man had devils long time, that he wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* Mark saith, *there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.* Matthew saith he came out of the tombs, was exceeding fierce, so as none could pass that way. Divines agree, that the power of the evil angels was not abated by their fall, they were only depraved in their will. That the power of an angel is much more than is here mentioned is out of question. That the evil angels do not exert this power upon us is from the restraining power of God; we live in the air in which the devil hath a principality, Eph 2:2. Why God at that time suffered the devil more to exercise this power over the bodies of men, we probably showed before, upon Mt 4:24. See Poole on "Mt 4:24". The world was grown very ignorant, and wicked, and sottishly superstitious. Besides, he was now come who was to destroy the works of the devil, and was to show his Divine power in casting him out. The Jews buried their dead out of their cities; the richer of them had tombs hewed out of rocks, &c., and those very large, as may be learned from Isa 65:4 Joh 20:6. The devil chose these places, partly to affright persons through the horror of the places, and torment the possessed with the

noisomeness of them; partly to cheat men, with an opinion they were the souls of the persons deceased that were there buried.

Matthew 8:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 5:8, that Jesus first said to him, *Come out of the man;* and, Mr 5:6,7, *when he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee, that thou torment me not.* Luke's relation, Lu 8:28,29, is much the same with Mark's. The devils possessing these poor creatures, hearing Christ, to whose power they knew they were subject, to command them out of this man, or these two men, said, *What have we to do with, thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?* The devils knew Christ to be the Son of God, though the Jews would not believe it; they say unto him, *What have we to do with thee?* A usual phrase, made use of where men had no desire to be troubled with the company, converse, or importunity of others, Jos 22:24 2Sa 16:10 2Ki 9:18 2Ch 35:21 Joe 3:4 Joh 2:4, when they came to them with some ungrateful motions, &c.

Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Either they look upon their dispossession as a torment, for the devil is not at quiet but when he is doing evil; and as this is the temper of the old serpent, so we shall observe that he communicates it to his seed, Pr 4:16: or else the devil was afraid lest Christ should have commanded him to his chains before the day of judgment.

Matthew 8:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 8:31".

Matthew 8:31

Ver. 30,31. Both Mark and Luke interpose here something more. Mark saith, *And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many.* Luke saith, *And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.* A Roman legion consisted of twelve thousand five hundred

soldiers. Not that there were precisely so many evil spirits which had a power over this poor man, but many had. A certain number is named for one uncertain. Christ knew his case well enough, but probably asked him the question for the further glorifying of his Divine power in casting them out. Luke adds, Lu 8:31, *And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep*. I cannot think that the meaning of that is, into the sea, for surely the devil did not fear drowning: the word is ἀβυσσον, into the abyss, that is, into hell, into the bottomless pit, where he could do no more mischief. Mark says, Mr 5:10, the devil *besought him that he would not send them out of the country*. Still, upon the same grounds, the devil hath an insatiable thirst to do mischief, and would gladly be where he may do it. In the mean time he knoweth it is in the power of Christ to send him whither he pleaseth. Now comes in Mt 8:30,31. They saw *an herd of many swine feeding*. Mark saith, Mr 5:11, *nigh unto the mountains*. Luke saith, *on the mountain*. They beseech Christ to give them leave to enter into the swine, and the text saith, *he suffered them*. The devil cannot so much as trouble a swine without leave from God. The next verse tells us the consequent of it.

Matthew 8:32

Ver. 32. Mark gives us much the same account, Mr 5:13, only adding, *they were about two thousand*. Luke differeth not, only what Matthew calls a *sea* Luke calls a *lake*; but the Jews called all great gatherings together of waters seas. The devil is naturally so fond of doing mischief, that he will rather play at a small game than stand out. This way of executing his malice, upon the beasts, we have often had experience of in the practice of witchcraft. And it may teach husbandmen, and those that trade in much cattle, to whom they are beholden for the preservation of their cattle, and how rightly God is styled, he that preserveth both man and beast; and what need they have to keep up daily prayer in their families, and to live so as they may not make God their enemy, who hath legions of devils, as well as many legions of less hurtful creatures, to revenge his quarrels.

Matthew 8:33

Ver. 33. Mark and Luke in this differ not from Matthew, only they add, that they *told it in the city and country*. Those that most serve the devil are afraid of him when he cometh to show himself in his true colours. These men go and publish abroad the miracle, what had happened to the man that was so famous an object of the devil's malice, and what had happened to the swine.

Matthew 8:34

Ver. 34. Both Mark and Luke here add much. Mark saith, Mr 5:14-20, *And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.* Luke saith, Lu 8:37-39, *Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. By the whole city, or the whole country, we must understand a very great part of it. Came out to meet Jesus: Mark expounds it, *to see what it was that was done, and to pray him to depart out of their coasts.* They saw him, and not him only, but him that had been possessed of the devils, sitting at his feet clothed, in his right mind. A great miracle wrought! They did not only see it, but they heard their servants, the swine herds, attesting it; they had all the external means of faith imaginable. How are they affected? The text saith, *they were afraid.* An awe of this great person seized them, and possibly they were afraid lest he should have done them some further evil. What is the*

effect of this fear? Surely they will fall down at his feet beg his grace and favour, and that he would continue with them, and be the author of more good amongst them. Though they had lost two thousand swine, yet they were delivered from the fear of him that was possessed with the devil; and that poor creature was delivered from as great an affliction as we can imagine. Nothing of all this. They came, and prayed, and besought him to go out of their coasts. Certainly, our Saviour's knowledge of the nature of this people, and what was in their hearts, provoked him to give the devils such a liberty as he did to destroy their swine: we are ordinarily punished in the thing wherein we offend, we need no more than our ordinary wishes and prayers to ruin us: who shall hereafter tell us of a power in man's will to do that which is spiritually good upon a moral persuasion? What higher moral persuasion could these Gadarenes have had, than the sight of Christ, and what he had done, afforded? yet (for aught appears) they were unanimous in this desire, that Christ should be gone. They do not do what was in their power to do, desiring him to stay. But oh how dangerous a thing it is for men to reject Christ! He immediately departeth, and we do not read that he came here any more. But he out of whom the devils were cast abideth with him, sits at his feet, desires he may go along with him; How great a difference there is betwixt seeing and hearing of Christ, and tasting how good he is! The poor demoniac would have left his country, and gone with him. But Christ suffered him not; probably he saw it would be more for the glory of God for him to stay; he therefore commands him to return to his house, and show what God had done for him, and how he had compassion on him. We cannot, more show our thankfulness to God, than by declaring his wonderful works, and what in particular he hath done for us. This poor man doth accordingly, and publisheth the name of Christ in Decapolis, which name comprehends a space of the country within which were ten cities, (as the word doth signify), whereof Gadara (saith Pliny) was one; from which city these people had their denomination of Gadarenes, that is, citizens of Gadara; or, inhabitants of the country adjacent to that city.

Matthew 9:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 9:1-8 Christ cures one sick of the palsy,
Mt 9:9 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,
Mt 9:10-13 justifieth himself for eating with publicans and sinners,
Mt 9:14-17 and his disciples for not fasting.
Mt 9:18,19 is entreated by a ruler to go and heal his daughter,
Mt 9:20-22 healeth by the way a woman of an inveterate issue of blood,
Mt 9:23-26 raiseth to life the ruler's daughter,
Mt 9:27-31 giveth sight to two blind men,
Mt 9:32-35 healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil,
Mt 9:36-38 hath compassion on the multitudes, and teacheth his disciples to pray that God would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Ver. 1. Whether the same ship he came in or no it is not material: he *passed over* the lake of Gennesaret, *and came into his own city*; not Bethlehem, in which he was born, but either Nazareth, where he was brought up, or (which most judge) Capernaum, whither, leaving Nazareth, he went formerly to dwell, Mt 4:13, whither he is said to have entered, Mr 2:1; this was upon the seacoast of Zebulun and Naphtali, Mt 4:13.

Matthew 9:2

Ver. 2. The history of this miracle is reported by Mr 2:3-12; by Luke, Lu 5:18-26; by both with more circumstances than Matthew doth report it. Mark saith, *He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was not room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it*

*up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, Mr 2:1-5. Luke mentions not the place, nor our Saviour's being preaching, but saith, *And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee, Lu 5:18-20. All interpreters agree it to be the same history. Mark, in his preface to the report of the miracle, tells us where Christ was, viz. in Capernaum; what he was doing, preaching the word; the occasion of the people breaking up the roof of the house, viz. the press of the people, so as they could not come nigh to Christ. All three evangelists agree the sick man's disease to be the palsy, which being the resolution of the nerves, besides the pain that attends it, debilitates the person, and confines him to his bed, or couch, which was the reason of his being brought in his bed, and by four men. All the evangelists mention Jesus seeing their faith, their inward persuasion of his Divine power, and their confidence in his goodness, both the faith of the sick person and of those who brought him. He saw it in their hearts, for the inward principles and habits are not visible to us, yet they are seen and known to him who searcheth the heart, and knoweth what is in the heart of man. He saw it in the fruits, their endeavouring to lay him before Christ. He *said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee*. But what was this to his palsy? Our Saviour by this lets him, and those who brought him, know,**

1. That sin is the root from which our evils spring.
2. That being forgiven, bodily distempers (how fatal soever) can do a man no hurt.
3. That his primary end of coming into the world was to save his people from their sins.
4. That in the hour wherein remission of sins is granted to a soul, it becomes God's son, dear to Christ.
5. That remission of sins followeth the exercise of faith in Christ.

6. Possibly he begins with this to give the scribes and Pharisees occasion of some discourse.

Matthew 9:3

Ver. 3. Mark saith, There were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? Mr 2:6,7. Luke saith, The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? Lu 5:21. It should seem they did not speak it out. Mark saith, they reasoned in their hearts. Matthew in the next verse saith, Jesus, knowing their thoughts. It seemeth that it was then agreed on all hands, that forgiving of sins was the prerogative of God alone; and that for man to arrogate to himself such a power as belonged to God alone was no less than blasphemy, as all ascribings of Divine perfections to creatures must be. It stands the pope and priests in hand to clear themselves from this guilt. It was also agreed by the scribes and Pharisees, that Christ spake blasphemy in pronouncing to the sick of the palsy, that his sins were forgiven. The reason was, because they did not believe him to be the Son of God, but looked on him as mere man.

Matthew 9:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 9:6".

Matthew 9:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 9:6".

Matthew 9:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark repeats almost the same words, Mr 2:8-10. So doth Luke, Lu 5:22-24. Christ here giveth the scribes and Pharisees a demonstration of his Deity, by letting them know that he knew their thoughts, *Jesus knowing their thoughts said;*

a thing not compatible to angels, much less to one who is mere man; yet these blind scribes and Pharisees take no notice of it.

Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts; evil concerning me? I did this, saith he, on purpose to let you know, that I, who am indeed the Son of man, and whom you mistake in thinking to be no more than the Son of man, hath power, while he is upon the earth, and so conversing amongst you, to forgive sins, and you may make suitable applications to him for that end.

It had been as easy for me every whit to have said to this sick man, Arise and walk; and that I will demonstrate to you. Then saith he to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. The same power is required to the one as to the other; God, by your confession, can forgive sins, and God alone can raise men from the grave. The end of my miraculous operations is to convince you that I am he who hath a power to forgive men their sins. I therefore chose first to pronounce this man's sins forgiven, that I might have the advantage to confirm to you by a subsequent miracle this great truth, that I am the Son of God, though you think me no more than the Son of man, and that I have a power to forgive sins upon men's exercise of their faith and coming unto me. Now therefore believe, not because of my word only, but because of the sign I show you confirmative of it.

Matthew 9:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 9:8".

Matthew 9:8

Ver. 7,8. Mark saith. *And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion, Mr 2:12.* Luke saith, *And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today, Lu 5:25,26.* They all agree in sense, though not in words. With Christ's word there went out a power,

enabling him to do what he had commanded him. He immediately stands upon his feet, takes up his bed, or couch, *that whereon he lay*, (saith Luke), and went home in the sight of them all, so as none could doubt concerning the cure. What effect hath this upon the people?

They marvelled, saith Matthew; *they were amazed, and filled with fear*, saith Luke. Here is not a word of their believing and owning Christ as the Son of God, which was the great thing the miracle was wrought to bring them to; but blindness was happened to Israel, seeing they saw and could not perceive. The miracle wrought in them an awe and reverence of him as an extraordinary person, and put them into a kind of ecstasy and admiration; and the text saith they *glorified God*; but not aright: they praised God, not for sending his Son into the world to save sinners, but for giving *such power unto men*; they would still own Christ no more than a man, though a man to whom God had given great power.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1Co 12:3. Truly to believe, own, and receive Christ as our Lord, requireth the operation of the Spirit of grace, working such a faith and persuasion in us.

Matthew 9:9

Ver. 9. Mark hath the same story, Mr 2:14, only he calleth him *Levi*, and tells us he was the *son of Alphaeus*. Luke also mentions it, Lu 5:27,28, and calls him Levi, adding that he was a *publican*, and saith that *he left all, rose up, and followed him*. This Matthew might have also the name of Levi; all interpreters agree he was the same man. All three evangelists say, that when Christ called him, he was sitting in the custom house *at the receipt of custom*. This Matthew was one of the twelve apostles, Mt 10:3, and the penman of this Gospel. His father Alphaeus was honoured to have four of his sons apostles, James the less, and Thaddaeus, (called Lebbeus), Simon the Canaanite, and Matthew. He was a publican, an officer under the Romans to gather the public revenue; it was an odious name amongst the Jews, but Matthew, to magnify the grace of Christ in calling him, is not ashamed thus to describe himself, both here and Mt 10:3.

He saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. His word carried a secret power with it, which Matthew obeyed by leaving his employment and going after Christ.

Matthew 9:10

Ver. 10. Luke saith that *Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them,* Lu 5:29. Mark saith, *there were many, and they followed him,* Mr 2:15. Matthew, touched with the sense of the free and infinite love of Christ to him, maketh Christ a feast: this speaketh him a man of some estate: he invites many to dine with him, some of them publicans, some noted sinners. He designs good undoubtedly to such as had been his former companions, that they might also see the Lord, and be brought to follow him. Grace teacheth a man to study the conversion of others, and never dwelleth in a narrow soul, nor studieth its concealment from others.

Matthew 9:11

Ver. 11. Mark hath the same, Mr 2:16; so hath Luke, Lu 5:30, only he saith they *murmured.* The Pharisees having a perfect malice to Christ, did not only seek all means to carp at him, but to bring him under a popular odium: this seemed a fair opportunity. The publicans being an order of persons who both for their employment, and perhaps also their ill management of it, were abominated by the Jews, and reckoned amongst the more notorious sort of sinners; they therefore come to his disciples clamouring against their Master, that he kept communion with publicans and sinners.

Matthew 9:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 9:13".

Matthew 9:13

Ver. 12,13. Mark and Luke, in the places before mentioned, have

the same answer, only leaving out these words, *Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*, quoted from Ho 6:6. Our Saviour's reply to the Pharisees, to him that duly considers it, will appear very smart.

1. They were a generation that laid all religion upon rituals, sacrifice, and traditions.
2. That justified themselves, Lu 16:15, and thought they needed no repentance.

Saith our Saviour, I am the spiritual Physician. With him would they have the physician to converse, but with such as are sick? Those that are whole (as the Pharisees account themselves) think they have no need of my coming amongst them. By their peevishness at the acts of mercy which I do (and those of the highest mercy too, healing souls) they show that they do not understand what Hosea (a prophet acknowledged by themselves) long since taught them, that the Lord desired mercy before sacrifice; for that appeareth to be the sense of *not sacrifice* in that text, both by the next words, *and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*, and by the many precepts by which God declared that he did desire sacrifices.

For I am not come to call the righteous, that is, those who are swelled in an opinion of their own righteousness, *but (sensible) sinners to repentance*: first to repentance, then to the receiving remission of sins through me, and eternal life.

Matthew 9:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 9:17".

Matthew 9:17

Ver. 14-17. Mark hath this same history, almost in the same words, Mr 2:18-22, only he saith that some of the disciples of the Pharisees came with the disciples of John. Luke also hath it varying little, Lu 5:33-38; only he saith, *fast often, and make prayers, (and), the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.* And he addeth at last, Lu 5:39, *No man also having drank old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better:* which I shall consider, it plainly belonging to this history. Mark begins his narration of this history with telling us, *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast;* which is implied, though not expressed, by the two other evangelists. For the Pharisees, it is plain enough from the Pharisee's boast, Lu 18:12, that he fasted *twice in the week*, John also used his disciples to a severer discipline than Christ did (of which we shall afterward hear more.) It should seem that the Pharisees had a mind to make a division betwixt the followers of John and the followers of Christ, and set on John's disciples to go and ask an account of this. Hypocrites are always hottest for ritual things, as things most fit to raise a division about. There was no precept of God for any fast, but once in a year, though indeed God left people a liberty to fast oftener, as their circumstances more fitted and called for the duty. The Pharisees had set up themselves a method, and would fain have imposed it on Christ's disciples; especially considering John's disciples complied with the practice of frequent fasts, and seemed to suggest as if Christ set up a new and more jovial religion. (As if religion lay only or principally in rituals, as to which God had set no rule). The papists are at this day the Pharisees' true successors in these arts. Christ answereth them in two particulars:

1. He tells them that his disciples were not as yet under such a dispensation as called for fasting.
2. That his disciples were new converts, and to be brought on by degrees to the severer practices of external discipline and godliness. This is the sum of Mt 9:15-17. This he delivers in metaphorical expressions:

Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast. Your master John hath compared me to a bridegroom, Joh 3:29. These my disciples are *the children of the bride chamber*. It is as yet a festival time with them. Fasting is a duty fitted to a day of mourning and affliction. It is not yet a time of mourning for my disciples: yet do not envy them. There will shortly come a time when, as to my bodily presence, I shall be taken from them: then they shall mourn and fast. The second thing he saith he illustrates by two similitudes. First, (saith he), amongst men no discreet person will put in an old garment a new piece of cloth, for they will not agree together; the strength of the new cloth will bear no proportion to the strength of the old, which by wearing is made weak, so as if the garment comes to a stress the rent will be the greater. So as to wine, men do not use to put new wine into old bottles, that through much use are weakened, for fear of breaking the bottles and spilling the wines; but they use to put new wine into new bottles, to proportion the thing containing to the thing contained. My disciples are newly converted. Should I impose upon them the severer exercises of religion, it might discourage them, and be a temptation to them to go back; for, as Luke addeth, *No man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is better*. Custom is a great tyrant, and men are not on the sudden brought off from their former practices, but by degrees. This is a portion of Scripture which much commendeth prudence to ministers, both teaching their people as they are able to bear, and also putting them upon duties with respect to their stature and proficiency in the ways of God; especially in such things as are but our free will offerings to God.

Matthew 9:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 9:19".

Matthew 9:19

Ver. 18,19. Mark hath this history, Mr 5:22-24, And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I

pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. Luke hath it, Lu 8:42, adding only that she was his only daughter, twelve years of age. Two evangelists say she was at the point of death, or dying: Matthew saith that he said she was dead; that might be according to his apprehension; she was so near death, that he concluded that by that time he was got to Christ she was dead. Others observe out of Greek authors, that the particle $\alpha\rho\tau\iota$, here used, doth not always signify a time past, but sometimes a time near at hand. But the best answer is, that Matthew relates the story compendiously. It appears from Lu 8:49, that the maid did die. Matthew reports that first, which the messenger brought them the news of afterwards, as we shall see in Mt 9:23. By the ruler here both Mark and Luke tell us is to be understood Jairus; not a civil magistrate, but one who was the ruler of the synagogue in that place; for in their synagogues they had an order, there was one chief who ordered the affairs of it, and they say the interpretation of the law belonged to him. And worshipped him, with a civil worship, or respect, saying, My daughter is even now dead, or dying. One would judge the latter should be the evangelist's meaning of the particle, because of what the other evangelists say, Come and lay thy hands on her, and she shall live. His faith riseth not up to the centurion's faith, who declared his faith that if Christ would but speak the word his servant should live. Jairus desires him to come and lay his hands upon her. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and his disciples. The Jews thrust Christ's followers out of their synagogues; he is more kind to the ruler of their synagogue, he presently goeth, and his disciples followed him: they were to be witnesses of his miracles. Mark adds, much people followed, and thronged him; which gave occasion to another miracle, which Christ did in his way to Jairus's house, the relation of which Matthew giveth us before he perfecteth the history of this miracle.

Matthew 9:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 9:21".

Matthew 9:21

Ver. 20,21. Mark addeth, Mr 5:26,27, that she *had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched his garment, &c.* Luke saith, *the border of his garment.* In the crowd there cometh a woman that had a bloody flux twelve years. Inveterate diseases are hard to be cured. Nor had means been neglected, she had tried many physicians, and had spent all her estate upon them. She *came behind him*, out of modesty, and perhaps shame, desiring not to be taken notice of. That which induced her to come, was the fame she had heard of Jesus, and a persuasion wrought in her heart, (doubtless by the Spirit of God), that if she could but come to touch the hem or border of his garment she should be cured. In this she judged rightly, that Christ was all virtue, and that his virtue was not restrained to his laying his hand upon her. She believed that the oil poured on his head was like that poured on the head of Aaron, which ran down to the skirts of his garment. But if she thought that she could thus steal a cure, and that Christ's cures flowed not from his grace and good will, but a kind of necessity, herein she wonderfully erred, and Christ afterward let her know it, though he pardoned her mistake.

Matthew 9:22

Ver. 22. Matthew relates this story shortly, as he doth many others, being only intent upon recording the miracle. We must here supply something out of Mark and Luke. Mark saith, Mr 5:29-34, *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.* Luke reports the same circumstances with little variation, Lu 8:45-48. Christ was not ignorant of this woman's coming and touching his garment, he doubtless influenced her to the motion, his inquiry was therefore

only that the miracle might be taken notice of: he knew that virtue was gone out of him, and had healed the woman, for he had commanded it so to go out, or she had not been healed; but he desired that the people might take notice that she was healed by his grace, not by any magical virtue in his clothes. The woman is brought openly to come and confess it, that she had touched his clothes, and that she was healed. She feared and trembled, lest she should have offended. Christ comforts her, by assuring her the cure, and telling her, that her faith in him, as an instrumental cause, had effected it. We have met with Christ often before, as well as in this text, and shall again often meet with him, ascribing much to the exercise of faith. And the faith to which he ascribes so much seemeth not to be justifying faith, or that exercise of grace whereby a soul, in the sense of its lost estate by reason of sin, accepteth of him as its Saviour, and relies upon his merits alone for salvation; for we read nothing of the persons' repentance for sin, nor reliance upon Christ for the salvation of their souls, or any profession of any such thing. Is it then so valuable an act of faith to believe that Christ is the Son of God? I answer,

1. Though faith in Christ be the only saving faith, yet a faith in God, being persuaded of his power and trusting in him, is an exercise of grace, which God (as appeareth in Scripture) much rewarded with blessings of this life; it giveth God the honour of his power, &c.
2. But, secondly: The great truth, That Christ was the eternal Son of God, was that which God more especially aimed at to give the world's assent unto and persuasion of at this time; and indeed preliminary and necessary to people's receiving of him as their Saviour, for, *Cursed is he that trusteth in man*. It was also the great truth which the Pharisees and the rest of the Jews did oppose. Hence our Saviour takes all occasions both to confirm and to encourage this faith; which was but a persuasion that he was clothed with a Divine power, and did that which no man could do; and that he had in him Divine goodness, ready to relieve man's infirmities, according to that power.
3. It is hardly possible that any should truly and seriously believe that Christ, being apparently man, and the Son of man, should also exercise a power which none but God could do; and that

they should not believe in him as the Saviour of the world, and be quickened to the use of those means which he should reveal for their salvation. For these reasons, amongst others, we may conceive that Christ predicates this faith so much in those in whom he found it.

This miracle being wrought by our Lord in his way to Jairus's house, after the first notice he had of the dangerous sickness of his daughter, the evangelist now goeth on to give us an account of his perfecting that good work.

Matthew 9:23

Ver. 23. Neither Mark nor Luke speak any thing of the minstrels, but only of the people's wailing. Amongst the Jews we read not in any part of the Old Testament of musical instruments used at funerals, but amongst the pagans it was usual, as we read in their writers. Amongst the Jews, they had some songs sang, as some gather from Jer 9:17 Jer 22:18 34:5 Am 5:16. It is very like that the Jews having long lived amongst the heathens, had learned this usage from them. Before this Mark addeth, Mr 5:35-40, that there came some from the ruler's house, which said, *Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? But Jesus, as soon as he had heard the word that was spoken, said to the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. Matthew saith nothing of what happened in the way, neither the messengers' coming, and telling Jairus that his daughter was dead, nor our Saviour's comforting of him; but Luke mentions all, Lu 8:49,50. Matthew goes on with an account of what Christ did in the house, seeing the minstrels, and the tumult caused by the mourners there.*

Matthew 9:24

Ver. 24. Mark saith, Mr 5:39,40, *When he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and mother, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.* Luke saith, Lu 8:51-53, *When he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, (that is, into the chamber where the dead body lay), save Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.* The history is plain: when Christ came into the house, there was a mixed noise of fiddlers or pipers, and mourners. Christ coming in, with Peter, James, and John, asked them what they made such ado for? The maid was not dead, but asleep. They apprehending that she was dead, mocked him. He desires to go into the chamber where the corpse lay; but would suffer none but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maid, to go in with him; the reason appeareth afterward, because he did not desire that this miracle should be presently published. The only question is, in what sense our Saviour saith, *she is not dead, but sleepeth*; whereas they knew she was dead.

1. Some think our Saviour speaketh ambiguously, for death is in Scripture often called a sleep, 1Ki 14:20 Joh 11:11 Ac 7:60 1Co 15:6 with respect to the resurrection.
2. Others think that our Saviour speaks ironically, knowing that some of them would so diminish the miracle, to calumniate him, or abate his reputation. But it is a better answer to say that he speaks with reference to their opinion; *she is not dead* in that sense you judge her dead, so as she shall not come to life before the resurrection; she is not so dead but she shall come to life again; as he said to Mary concerning Lazarus, Joh 11:23.
3. Or, to me she is not dead.
4. Or shall we say, as soon as Christ was come into the house, who is *the resurrection, and the life*, Joh 11:25, her soul again returned into her body, which though to their appearance it

was separated from her body, was not yet fixed in its eternal mansion?

In what sense soever he spake it, they judged it ridiculous, and laughed him to scorn.

Matthew 9:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 9:26".

Matthew 9:26

Ver. 25,26. Mark saith, Mr 5:41-43. *And he took the damsel by the hand and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.* Luke saith, Lu 8:54-56. *And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.* It was the power and virtue that went out of Christ which wrought the miracles: he performeth them under a variety of circumstances; sometimes he used only his word, (as in the case of Lazarus), sometimes he touched the persons, laying his hand upon them; here he takes the maid by the hand, and also saith, Daughter, or maid, arise. They were words of power and authority, she presently arose. Luke saith her spirit returned again. Luke by this lets us know, that the soul is not the crasis, or some accident to the body, but a distinct subsistence of itself. For the curious question of some, where the soul of this maiden was, as also the soul of Lazarus, of whom we read in Joh 11:1-57, and others restored to life, when dead, were in the time while they were separated from their bodies; it is a matter of no great concern to us to know where: this we know, that God designed their return to their bodies again, they were not therefore fixed in their eternal mansions. Our Saviour hath taught us, that souls departed are under the conduct of angels to their stations. Lazarus's soul was carried by

angels into Abraham's bosom. What can be opposed if we say, that it is probable the souls of these persons were under the guard of angels, about or near the dead bodies, waiting the pleasure of God with reference to them, until the Lord again commanded the restoring of them to their bodies?

He commanded to give her meat, to confirm the truth of the miracle. Concerning our Lord's command that they should not publish what he had done, we spake before in the case of the leper. Our Lord's time was not yet come, and he was not willing his enemies should take too public a notice of him. But Matthew saith, *The fame thereof went abroad into all that land,* that is, Galilee, at some distance from Jerusalem, which was the great seat of his enemies, where probably our Saviour did least desire any public notice should as yet be taken of him.

Matthew 9:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 9:31".

Matthew 9:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 9:30".

Matthew 9:31

Ver. 27-31. This miracle is reported only by St. Matthew, though the other evangelists tell us of some others of the same kind. They *followed him in the way, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.* These are the first we read of in this

Gospel, that made their applications to Christ under the notion of the Messiah (for so much that compellation, *Thou Son of David*, importeth). He was to open the blind eyes, Isa 35:5 42:7, and was to be the Son of David, according to the prophecies of him; nor can any reason be given, why they called him the Son of David, but this their belief that he was the true Messias.

Have mercy on us: their petition is general, though without doubt they had a particular respect to their want of sight, and so our Saviour understood them. Others, that came to Christ for cure before, looked upon Christ as a man to whom God had given great power, and glorified God upon that account, as in Mt 9:8. Their courage and boldness in the faith also appeared, in that they feared not the Pharisees decree made, as appeareth from Joh 9:22; for *the Christ and the Son of David* amongst the Jews at this time signified the same person, as appears by Mt 22:42. Christ listens not unto them till he came into the house; there he saith, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Christ forgetteth not the prayer of faith, though he doth not give a present answer according to our expectation, that he may continue us in our duty, and quicken us yet to further importunity. Our Lord puts the common test upon them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* There is no absolute particular promise for good things of a temporal concern; it is enough for us in those cases to believe that God is able to do the thing, and that he will do it if he seeth it be for our good; he only therefore questions their faith as to his power. In their former owning him as the Messiah, the Son of David, they had declared that they believed his kindness to the sons of men.

They said unto him, Yea, Lord, we believe thou art able; and we believe thee the Messiah, come to do good, and we have a trust in thee thou wilt do it; for this cause we are come, we cry unto thee.

Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. See the mighty power of the prayer of faith.

Their eyes were opened, that is, their visive faculty was restored, or given to them.

And Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. It was known they were blind, and men must know that they

now saw; but he charges them not to publish it as done by him. The word used signifieth to command with authority, and with a threatening annexed: we have met with several such commands to persons cured, and none of them observed, nor the persons blamed by Christ for not observing them. We must say the parties sinned in publishing the things, unless the command was with some limitations not mentioned by the evangelists; but we are not able, either to give a just account why or how Christ commanded them, nor how they published the things, or were excusable in doing of it.

Matthew 9:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 9:33".

Matthew 9:33

Ver. 32,33. Some think this the same mentioned Lu 11:14, as shortly as it is here. The word in the Greek signifies deaf as well as dumb, for all persons who are deaf from their birth are also dumb. But it is probable this man was only accidentally dumb, from the power of the devil, that had possessed him, and suppressed his speech. It is observed that Christ cured,

1. Some that came on their own accord to him, as the woman with her bloody flux.
2. Others that could not come, but were brought to him, as the paralytic, before mentioned in this chapter, who was willingly brought.
3. Others who neither came nor were willingly brought, but he occasionally met, Lu 7:12 Joh 5:5 9:1.
4. Others that were brought without their consent, as the demoniac before mentioned, and this in this verse.

His design was, by these operations, to show himself the Son of God, and therefore did not always stay for people's voluntarily offering him occasions, but sometimes took them when they were not voluntarily offered, to show the freeness of

his grace.

Matthew 9:34

Ver. 34. This was not the only time they said so: see Mt 12:24 Mr 3:22 Lu 11:15. See Poole on "Mt 12:24". I shall in my notes on Mt 12:24 speak more fully to this text, where we shall also meet with our Saviour's vindication of himself from this imputation. At present, I shall only observe the miserable effects of blindness and malice. The common people marvelled, and said there was never seen such things in Israel. The Jewish doctors are mad, and charge our Saviour to have made a contract with the devil, and to have derived this power from him. But how did this appear to them? Nothing appeared as to any thing which our Saviour had done that could conduct their reason to such a judgment; nothing but what led their more charitable neighbours to a quite contrary judgment. But something they must say to defame our Saviour's reputation amongst the people; having nothing else, but what the people would have judged false, they thus charge him. Nor are the children of the devil to learn his arts, who, when they cannot charge good and holy men with profaneness, charge them with hypocrisy, of which it is impossible they should be competent judges.

Matthew 9:35

Ver. 35. We met with these words Mt 4:23, only there it was *all Galilee*, by which probably this text ought to be expounded: See Poole on "Mt 4:23".

Matthew 9:36

Ver. 36. Mark hath something of this, Mr 6:34. It pitied him, who came down from heaven to earth to seek and to save lost souls, to see what a company of people followed him, willing to be instructed, because they were εκλελυμενοι, or, as some read it, εσκυλμενοι, tired and wearied with running after him to hear the gospel, and ερριμμενοι, *scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd*. Had then the Jews at this time no ministry? They had the temple at Jerusalem, scribes, and Pharisees, and priests;

synagogues in other places, where the law was read and interpreted. Christ accounts those people to have no ministers who have no good ones; but either dumb dogs, that cannot bark, or lazy ones, that will not. Such was the generality of the Jewish ministry at this time. This moved the bowels of Christ (so the word signifies). It is a great misery when the congregation of the Lord are as sheep which have no shepherd, Nu 27:17; and so they are when they have no true prophets of the Lord to instruct them, 1Ki 22:17.

Matthew 9:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 9:38".

Matthew 9:38

Ver. 37,38. The plain sense of these two verses is this: John the Baptist and Christ had now been preaching for some time, God inclined the hearts of great multitudes to follow both the one and the other; there was a great people prepared for the Lord: Mt 11:12, *From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven had suffered violence, and the violent took it by force*; men were exceeding fond of hearing the gospel.

The fields were white to the harvest, as our Saviour expresses it, Joh 4:35. But there were few that would faithfully deliver the mind of God; there were abundance of idle Pharisees, and scribes, and priests, that spent their time in teaching people their rites, and ceremonies, and traditions, but the labourers were few; such must be God's gift to the people, and they must be thrust out. No arguments will be sufficient to persuade men to the weighty work of the ministry, with an intention to fulfil it, but the power of God inclining their hearts to it. You had need therefore pray unto God that he would send, nay, that he would $\epsilon\kappa\beta\alpha\lambda\eta$, thrust out, labourers into his harvest.

1. The inclination and desire of multitudes to hear Divine truth is God's harvest.
2. Ministers' work is a labour, Ga 4:11 Php 4:3 1Ti 5:17; if rightly discharged, it must be with labour.

3. God is the Lord of the harvest; ministers ought to look upon him as so.
4. None ought to thrust themselves into the work of the ministry, till God thrust them out, Heb 5:4.
5. There always were but a few labourers in God's harvest. Hence Chrysostom thought that but a few ministers would be saved.

Our Saviour in this chapter prefaces his work of which we shall discourse in the next chapter, viz. his sending forth his twelve apostles.

Matthew 10:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 10:1-4 Christ sendeth out his twelve apostles with power to do miracles.

Mt 10:5-15 He instructs them,

Mt 10:16-39 and forewarning them of persecutions, suggests motives of comfort and constancy.

Mt 10:40-42 He promiseth a blessing to those who should receive them.

Ver. 1. Mark saith, Mr 3:14,15, *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.* Luke repeats almost the same words, Lu 9:1,2; only he saith *he gave them power and authority over devils, —and to preach the kingdom of God.* This was the first mission which the apostles had, much different from that given them after his resurrection; they were now sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, then they were sent to all nations. They were not called *disciples* as that term signified only the common hearers of Christ, but in a more emphatic sense. He chooseth out *twelve*, that as the twelve patriarchs begat the Jewish church, so these twelve men might be the fathers to all the gospel church. The

number of twelve seems a sacred number. The new Jerusalem, Re 21:12, is described as having *twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels*, and to have written (on the gates) *the names of the twelve tribes*; and, Re 21:14, *the wall of the city* is said to have had *twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles*; the dimensions of it *twelve thousand furlongs*, Re 21:16.

The power he gave to the apostles was:

1. To preach the kingdom, that is, the gospel, which as it showeth the way to the kingdom of glory, so it was the means to gather the Christian church, which is the kingdom of grace, and to subdue men's hearts to the obedience of Christ.
2. To cast out devils, and heal all manner of sicknesses. By which they gained repute amongst people, confirming people that they were sent of God, doing (though not as Christ did them) things which none but God could do, by a derivation of power from him: Christ did the same things, but by a power inherent in himself.

These twelve were ordinarily to be with Christ, and to go forth (as occasion served) clothed with his power to preach and to work miracles.

Matthew 10:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 10:4".

Matthew 10:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 10:4".

Matthew 10:4

Ver. 2-4. Mark reckoneth up the same persons, Mr 3:16-19, with some additions, which we shall consider as we come at the persons whom they concern.

Apostles signifies persons sent; the term applied to Christ's disciples signifies the persons that were first sent by him to preach the gospel. It was reasonable for the evangelists to set down their names, because the whole Christian church was to be builded upon their doctrine, Eph 2:20.

The first, Simon, who is called Peter, because the term signifies a rock, and the confession of faith which he made our Saviour declares to be a rock, on which he would build his church, Mt 16:18. He is not here called *the first* because he was first called, or first believed, the contrary is plain from Joh 1:41; but when many are named, one must be first named. He was *the son of Jonas*; Christ gave him the name of *Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone*. He was called Simon Peter to distinguish him from Simon the Canaanite, afterward mentioned. So that it seems the papists are put hard to it for arguments to prove Peter's primacy and superiority over the apostles, and headship over the church, when they are enforced to make use of this, because he is here called *the first*. Yet such another was brought at the disputation of Berne, 1528, when Alexius Grad, the nuns' confessor, would prove Peter's headship because he is called Cephas; and he had read in some dictionary, that Κεφας anciently signified a head; as if the evangelist had not interpreted it, Joh 1:41, *Peter, or a stone*. By the same argument they can from hence prove Peter the first, Ga 2:9, will prove him the second, for so he is there reckoned, *James, Cephas, and John. Andrew his brother*; Simon Peter's brother; by John directed to Christ, Joh 1:40; called by Christ together with his brother Peter, Mr 1:16,17.

James the son of Zebedee, so called to distinguish him from another of the apostles of the same name, who was the son of Alphaeus. This is he of whose death we read, Ac 12:2; he was slain by Herod.

And John his brother, viz. the son of Zebedee: this is he who was called the beloved disciple, who also wrote the Gospel of John, Joh 21:20,24.

Philip, and Bartholomew. Philip was of Bethsaida the city of Andrew and Peter, Joh 1:44, found and called by Christ, Joh 1:43. Of the call of Bartholomew we do not read; some think him the same with Nathanael, mentioned Joh 1:45,46, &c. It is

some inducement to believe it, that he is here named with Philip, who was the instrument to bring him to Christ, Joh 1:45; but there is nothing of this certain.

Thomas, the same who was called Didymus, who was so unbelieving as to Christ's resurrection, Joh 20:24,27; and *Matthew the publican*, he that wrote this history of the Gospel: we heard before of his call from the receipt of custom; he was also called Levi.

James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus. This James is called *James the less*, Mr 15:40, and so distinguished from James the son of Zebedee.

The Lord's brother, Ga 1:19; that is, as some think, his kinsman, judging him not the son of Alphaeus who was the father of Matthew, but another Alphaeus, the husband of Mary the wife of Cleophas, Joh 19:25. But this appeareth not from Scripture. Instead of *Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus*, Luke saith, Lu 6:16, *Judas the brother of James* (he that wrote the Epistle of Jude, as appeareth by Jude). Mark, Mr 3:18, mentions not Lebbaeus at all, which makes some think that the words are transposed, and should be Thaddaeus the son of Lebbaeus; for Thaddai in the Syriac is the same with Judas.

Simon the Canaanite; Luke calls him *Simon Zelotes*, Lu 6:15 Ac 1:13. We must not understand by *Canaanite* a pagan, (for Christ sent out none but Jews), but one of Cana, which by interpretation is *Zelus*, from whence it is that Luke calleth him *Zelotes*.

And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. There are many guesses how Judas had the name of Iscariot, whether from Kerioth, supposed to be his town, or on some other account: the guesses of the best are but uncertainties, nor is it material for us to know. It here distinguishes him from the other Judas. Of his betraying his Master we shall hear afterward. Christ altered the name of Simon, whom he called *Peter*, Mr 3:16. He added to the names of James and John, calling them *Boanerges*, that is, *The sons of thunder*, Mr 3:17. Thaddaeus is called Judas, and by Matthew also Lebbaeus. These were the twelve first apostles, to which were added (after Christ's ascension) Matthias, (instead of Judas Iscariot), Paul, and Barnabas; but these conversed with

Christ, and were the first sent out by him. We shall now hear the instruction he gives them.

Matthew 10:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 10:6".

Matthew 10:6

Ver. 5,6. Here Christ limiteth their ministry to the Jews. The apostle tells us, Ro 15:8, *Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to conform the promises made unto the fathers;* and the apostle tells the Jews, Ac 13:46, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.* Therefore in this his first mission, he restrains his apostles from going to the Gentiles, to whom they had afterwards a commission to go, Mt 28:19, and did go, but not before the Jews had judged themselves *unworthy of everlasting life*, Ac 13:46, by rejecting and blaspheming the gospel, and persecuting the ministers of it. They are also commanded not to go *into any city of the Samaritans*. The Samaritans were partly Jews apostatized, and partly heathens, descended from those whom the king of Syria sent thither, when the ten tribes were carried into captivity, 2Ki 17:6, and from some Jews left in the land. You shall read of their religion there, 2Ki 17:31-41. They were perfectly hated by the Jews, and as perfect haters of them, as may be gathered from Lu 9:52,53 Joh 4:9. Our Lord, partly in regard they also were no better than Gentiles, and so hated as they were of the Jews, would not suffer these his first ministers to go and preach amongst them. Not that they were forbidden (if some particular persons, whether Gentiles or Samaritans, came to them) to preach to them, but only not to make it their work to go into their country or cities; the time was not yet come for this great light to shine upon the Gentiles.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. By *Israel* he here meaneth the two tribes that clave to the house of David, for the ten tribes ever since their captivity (2Ki 17:6) had lost their share in that name. He calls them *lost sheep* in the sense that Jeremiah speaks, Jer 1:6, *My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray.* So that *lost sheep*

here signifies wandering sheep, for want of proper guides. The Jews at this time had miserable teachers, so as they wandered as lost sheep. And this comporteth with what we had in the last verses of the former chapter. There was a great harvest and but few labourers; he is therefore providing them labourers, shepherds that should gather those scattered sheep into one fold.

Matthew 10:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 10:8".

Matthew 10:8

Ver. 7,8. In these words he gives them power,

1. To preach the gospel.
2. To confirm the doctrine they preached to be of God by miraculous operations, healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, casting out devils.

He bids them *go preach*, Κηρυσσετε, Cry like heralds; something like Isaiah's commission, Isa 58:1, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. He teacheth them what should be the sum of their sermons, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*; the same thing which John Baptist preached, Mt 3:2, which Christ preached, Mr 1:15, and which he directed the seventy to preach, Lu 10:9: not that they were to use no other words, but that all the words they used were to have this tendency, to declare that the time was now come, when God had fulfilled his promise of the Messiah, who was setting up his kingdom in the world, and to whose laws they were to be obedient. This doctrine they were to confirm by miracles, which he gives them a charge they should work *freely*, without receiving any reward for them, that the miracles being used to their private profit, might not lose their end, which was the confirmation of their doctrine.

Matthew 10:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 10:10".

Matthew 10:10

Ver. 9,10. Our Saviour having in the last verse commanded them to give freely, they might reasonably be thinking that they had need to provide well for their journey. No, saith our Saviour, *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, &c.* That this was but a temporary precept, the will of God concerning them for this short journey, appeareth from Lu 22:35,36, *But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, &c.* They were to finish this journey in a short time, and much provision would have been a hinderance to their motion. Besides, our Saviour designed to give them an experience of the providence of God, and to teach them to trust in it; as also to teach people that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, and that God expects that his ministers should not live of their own, but upon the altar which they served; so as at once he taught his apostles not to be covetous, nor overmuch solicitous, and people to provide for those who ministered to them in things spiritual. I pass over what others have critically observed concerning the words, that being not my proper work. Mark saith, Mr 6:8,9, that he *commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.* From whence is plain that the *staves* forbidden in Matthew were either staves for defence, or to bear burdens upon, not merely travellers' staves. The sum is, in this their first journey, which they were soon to despatch, he would have them trust God for protection and sustenance, and load themselves with nothing more than necessary.

Matthew 10:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 10:15".

Matthew 10:15

Ver. 11-15. Our Lord had before set them their limits, and appointed them their work, and directed them as to their accoutrements for their journey; here he directeth them their methods. Luke hath much of the same instructions, Lu 10:4-6, but applied to the seventy, not to the twelve. Mark hath something of them applied to the twelve, Mr 6:10,11.

And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. The method Christ set them was, when they came into any of the cities of Israel, to inquire if there were any worthy persons in it, and thither to go, and there to abide (if they did not find they were mistaken) until they left that place; and when they came into a house to salute it, wishing all peace and happiness to it; if they found themselves welcome, to preach to it the gospel of peace. But if they found themselves unwelcome, and discerned that the people of the city, or of that house, did not care for their company, and refused to hear them, they should not make themselves or the gospel a burden to them, but show their contempt of those who contemned the gospel, and the ministry of it, by shaking the dust off their feet as a testimony against them. Then he concludes, telling them, that the Lord would so grievously at last revenge such contempt, that the condition of the men of Sodom and Gomorrhah, who were destroyed by fire and brimstone, Ge 19:24, would at the last day be more tolerable than theirs. This is the sum, by which our Saviour doth obviate

the solicitous thoughts which might from his former words arise in their minds. How shall we live, going amongst strangers, if we carry nothing with us? Saith our Saviour, When you first come into a town or city, do not inquire for the inns that entertain strangers, but who is worthy, worthy of such guests; so Heb 11:38; a *son of peace*, Lu 10:6; who are accounted the most pious and religious persons in that town or city, or best affected to the gospel. (He hereby hints, that John the Baptist and his ministry had had such success, that in most places there were some such persons.)

Worthy doth not in our ordinary discourse signify always a meritorious person, but a person excelling, either in religion or knowledge, or moral virtue. Such persons our Lord presumes would entertain those who came upon so kind an errand to their houses. He commands them to go, and when they came to a house to salute it, to say, Peace be to this house; which was the Jews' ordinary salutation; under the notion of peace they comprehended all good. But, *let your peace come upon it* (I conceive) comprehends more, viz. preach the gospel of peace unto it; or, my peace shall be upon it, I will bless that house. But if you find you are misinformed, or mistaken, your peace shall return unto you; you have done your work, and you shall have your reward. If they will *not receive you, nor hear your words*; if they declare any contempt of you, and will not hear the glad tidings of the gospel; *when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet*. This was more than a sign of contempt of them; we read of Ne 5:13, that he shook his lap, and said, *So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise*. We have but one instance of this practice of the apostles, Ac 13:51. Mark adds, *for a testimony against them*: a testimony of God's despising them who despised his grace, and of the vengeance of God that should come upon them for that contempt. For he adds, *it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, the last judgment, than for that city*: their condemnation will be more dreadful, as having sinned against greater light, and fairer offers of greater grace, than ever they had.

Matthew 10:16

Ver. 16. Our Lord having hitherto instructed his twelve apostles

as to the places whither they were to go, the work they had to do, and the methods he would have them observe, now comes to arm them against their difficulties, and the temptations they were like to meet with.

I send you forth (saith he) as sheep in the midst of wolves. It is most probable that our Saviour speaks this with reference to what they were like to meet with when he should be taken from them, for we do not read of any great opposition which they at present met with. *I send you, (saith he), as sheep,* which are feeble creatures in themselves, and without any natural armour to defend themselves, *in the midst of wolves,* which are rapacious creatures, and have a particular enmity to sheep: amongst enemies who will have as great an inclination from their malice to devour you, as wolves have from their nature to devour sheep.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents. It is said of the serpent, Ge 3:1, *that he was more subtle than any beast of the field.* Naturalists observe, yet, a great natural sagacity in the serpent, which they note in several particulars. It is hard to say that Christ aimed at this or that particular thing wherein the sagacity of serpents appeareth; he only proposes the serpent as a pattern of subtlety, and commendeth prudence to them so far as it consisteth with innocency, for it followeth, *harmless as doves.* Amongst the beasts of the field there is none more innocent than a sheep; amongst the birds of the air none more innocent than a dove; to both these our Lord compares his disciples.

This text teacheth us:

1. That wisdom may dwell with prudence.
2. That all true prudence must be attended with innocency.

Matthew 10:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 10:18".

Matthew 10:18

Ver. 17,18. The last word, *Gentiles,* maketh it plain, that our

blessed Lord is not here arming his disciples so much against any opposition they were like to meet with upon this their first going out, for they were not to go to the Gentiles, as those they should meet with some years after his ascension; yet not excluding what they should meet with from the Jews, for what is said about delivering up to the councils and scourging in the synagogues seemeth to have a particular reference to the Jews. This scripture was most eminently fulfilled, as to the apostles, Ac 4:1-3 &c Ac 5:27 6:12: and as to being brought before governors and kings, there are instances enough in the Acts, more in ecclesiastical stories. Neither do I think our Saviour hath in these words any reference to the distinction of their councils amongst the Jews; he only designed to let them know the time would come, when, for their owning him, and preaching his gospel, they should be brought before all sorts of magistrates, and in all kinds of courts. That phrase, *and they will scourge you in their synagogues*, hath mightily perplexed some, especially such as have dreamed religious synagogues too holy places for such offices: but there is no need that we should take the term *synagogues* here for the places of their worship, it doth as well signify, in their conventions; and there are some that think that they had, adjoining to their synagogues, a place in which they punished offenders upon the account of religion; certain it is, 2Co 11:24, that Paul was five times scourged by the Jews according to their law, De 25:3. *For a testimony against them and the Gentiles*: a testimony for me, that is expressed in those words, *for my sake*; and against them, whether Jews or Gentiles. A testimony against them in the day of judgment, εἰς μαρτυριον, hence our terms of martyr and martyrdom, the one signifies a witness, the other a testimony.

Matthew 10:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 10:20".

Matthew 10:20

Ver. 19,20. Mark hath much the same, Mr 13:11; so hath Luke, Lu 11:11,12. The apostles being men but of an ordinary education before Christ called them, he might reasonably suppose that they would not appear before councils, and kings,

and governors without some abashment, having not been accustomed to such presences; he therefore arms them in these words, wherein he doth not prohibit ordinary thoughts, which every man hath before he speaketh, but anxious thoughts beforehand, *for, (saith he), it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* The Lord seemeth to speak here as he did to Moses, Ex 4:12, complaining he was *slow of speech, and of a slow tongue: Ex 4:11, Who hath made man's mouth? It shall, (saith Christ), be given you from God.*

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you; that is, not you from yourselves only: the Holy Spirit shall influence your thoughts as to the matter, and suggest that to you, and it shall influence your tongues, giving you a freedom of speech. This was verified in Stephen, Ac 6:10, and hath been eminently verified in a multitude of martyrs. We may observe from hence, that the influence of the Spirit is not to be confined to the will and afflictions. It hath also an influence upon our words in the service of God: not that we can conclude, that whatsoever Christians so speak, either in their confessions or other duties, is from such immediate assistance; but there is such an influence, though the Spirit in this, as in other operations, like the wind, bloweth where and when it listeth.

Matthew 10:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 10:22".

Matthew 10:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke speaketh much the same, Lu 21:16,17, though as spoken upon another occasion. Our Saviour here tells them, that the persecutions would reach even to death itself, and that the malice of the world against him and his gospel should proceed so far, as to extinguish all natural affection, between brethren, and parents, and children, and that they would meet with a multitude of enemies (for that is here meant by all, not every individual man, as in a multitude of other scriptures). The root of all persecution is hatred.

For my name's sake; for preaching or professing of my gospel,

and living up to the rule of it, Ac 4:18 5:41. This is that which Peter calleth suffering *as a Christian*, 1Pe 4:16. And by this phrase he doth not only admonish them of their duty, to see that they suffered for his name's sake, but also encourage them from the honourable cause of their suffering, it was for his name's sake. He also addeth another argument: *But he that endureth to the end shall be saved*. There shall be an end of these sufferings, if they end not in your lifetime they will end with your lives, and if you continue to the end you shall be saved. It is neither true patience, nor will it be profitable, if it holdeth not out to the end, Mr 13:13 1Co 9:24 Heb 3:6.

Matthew 10:23

Ver. 23. Whether this text at all warrants ministers' flight in a time of persecution I doubt; it seemeth to be a special command given to the apostles, that they might have a time before the coming of Christ, here spoken of, to preach the gospel over all the cities of Israel. But that in some cases it is lawful to flee I do not at all doubt, though I do question whether it be to be warranted from this text. What those cases are is largely discoursed, particularly by Mr. Torshell. Generally it is said, wherever the glory of God, or the good of others, calls to us for such a flight. But what may be judged such cases is a more particular question. Augustine to Honoratus speaketh well in the case. Ministers ought not to flee rashly, nor out of cowardice, nor that they might live elsewhere lazily, nor when their flight will betray the church of God: not where the persecution is general; but where the persecution is particular, against some of them, and there will be enough left for the care of the church in their absence, and with the consent of the church, they may flee. But this is too large a case to be spoken to here; especially considering (as I said) that I do not think that any flight is to be justified from this text, the precept being particular for special reasons.

Till the Son of man be come. There is a wonderful variety of interpreters' senses of this text, founded upon the various comings of Christ mentioned in holy writ. He was already come in the flesh, so as it, speaking of a time to come, could not be meant of that: nor can it be understood of his second coming to judgment, for they have gone through the cities of Israel long

ago. Christ is therefore said in Scripture to come, when he appeareth in some great work of providence, whether of judgment or mercy. This makes some interpret it of the destruction of Jerusalem; in which sense some think the coming of Christ is mentioned, Mt 24:1-51. Some, of the resurrection of Christ, from whence they say Christ's epocha commenced. Others understand it of the effusion of the Spirit in the day of Pentecost; this they ground on Joh 14:17,18, where they think Christ's coming, promised Joh 14:18, is the coming of the Spirit, promised Joh 14:17. Undoubtedly, in the general, our Saviour means, till the time be accomplished when you must leave preaching to the Jews and go to the Gentiles, and my kingdom shall be further extended than it is at present; which dispensation of God may for aught I know be called the coming of Christ, being an eminent act of God's providence, by which Christ was more showed to the world, and his kingdom further extended.

Matthew 10:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 10:25".

Matthew 10:25

Ver. 24,25. As much as if he had said, "Think not much if you meet with persecutions: I am your Lord and Master, you are my servants and household; you have no reason to look for better measure from the world than I your Lord meet with; it is honour enough for you to be used as well as I am. You know they have persecuted me, they call me Beelzebub, saying that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Why should you expect better?" Our Saviour used the same argument, Lu 6:40.

Beelzebub was the idol of Ekron, 2Ki 1:2. The word signifies, the lord of flies; either because they invoked his help against the flies, or (as others say) the name was in derision to that idol given by the Jews to the prince of the devils, because the places herein they sacrificed to it were infested with flies, which they say God's temple at Jerusalem never was, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrifices which were there killed. Certain it is they understood by it the prince of devils.

Matthew 10:26

Ver. 26. This is a proverbial speech, used by our Saviour upon more occasions than this, Mr 4:22 Lu 8:17 12:2. As to his present use of it, the sense is, "Though my gospel be now covered and hid, yet it shall be revealed and made known." Or, "Though your innocency be hid and covered, yet God shall bring forth your judgment as the light, and your righteousness as the noonday." Or, "Though your enemies' rage and malice be hid, and their vengeance seemeth to sleep, yet it shall be revealed." The first seemeth most probable, from what followeth in the next verse, which he seemeth to speak as a means to it.

Matthew 10:27

Ver. 27. The candle of the gospel, which God hath by John the Baptist and me lighted up, is not to be hid; though therefore you have it from me in private, yet do you publish it. I do as it were whisper it in your ear by private discourses, and in a private converse, but it shall be made as public as if it were published to the greatest advantage; and do you contribute what you can unto it, do you publish my gospel as it were upon the house tops.

Matthew 10:28

Ver. 28. As I told you before, you will in the publication of my gospel meet with opposition from men. Now that it is preached as it were in darkness, and whispered in men's ears, there is no great noise made in the world; but the case will be otherwise when it cometh to be publicly revealed, and published upon the housetops. But consider, the enemies can only kill the bodies of my disciples: you have souls as well as bodies; they have no power over your souls; but he that hath sent you to preach, and called you to the owning and profession of the gospel, hath a power over your souls as well as over your bodies, and to punish both in hell. We have the same Lu 12:4,5. There is nothing so effectual to drive out of our hearts a slavish fear of man in the doing of our duty, as a right apprehension of the power of God, begetting a fear of him in our souls.

Matthew 10:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 10:31".

Matthew 10:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 10:31".

Matthew 10:31

Ver. 29-31. Besides, consider, there is a God that governs the world, and by his providence influences and watcheth over the most minute and invaluable beings in it, and preserveth and upholdeth them; it extendeth to the very hairs of your head, and to a sparrow (two of which are sold ordinarily for an assarion, the tenth part of a Roman penny): these little birds fall not when they are shot, without the notice of him who is your heavenly Father, and he will much more regard even your bodies, for you are of more value than many sparrows. Our Lord here,

1. Asserts the providence of God to extend to the most minute things, not to be restrained to things in heaven, or some greater and more noble creatures.
2. He teacheth his disciples to take courage from the consideration of it, as being assured that their greatest enemies should not be able to steal or wrest them out of God's hands. But if they should die in their testimony, it should be by God's ordering.

Matthew 10:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 10:33".

Matthew 10:33

Ver. 33. As this is a time for you publicly to own me, so there will be a time (in the day of judgment) for me to confess and

publicly own you, *before the angels of God* (which Luke addeth to this sentence, Mt 12:8): as men deal with me in this life, so I shall deal with them in that day. Our Saviour speaketh much the same thing, as repeated by Mr 8:38 Lu 9:26; only there instead of *whosoever shall deny me*, it is, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words*. Christ requireth of us not only a believing on him, but an external profession: nor that only, but a confession of him, which signifieth a profession of him and his gospel in the face of opposition and enemies: see Ro 10:10 2Ti 2:12. It is dangerous, either through shame or fear, to withhold our public owning and acknowledgment of Christ, and his truths, when we are called to it; much more to deny them; but the guilt is greater when it is through shame, for where fear is the cause the temptation is more high. This text must be understood of those who persist in such denial, for Peter denied his Master, yet was graciously upon his repentance received by him.

Matthew 10:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 10:35".

Matthew 10:35

Ver. 34,35. Luke hath much the same with Mt 10:34, in Lu 12:51. As the Jews were much mistaken in their notion of the Messiah, as if he were to be a temporal prince, to restore the kingdom to Israel, and as the kingdom, so a peaceful kingdom; so many persons think still that where true religion comes, there must be forthwith peace and union. And indeed so it should be, and so it would be if the gospel were cordially and universally received. It is impossible that a system of laws should be compiled better fitted to human society, or conducive to peace, the great end of it, than the laws of the gospel are: but eventually it is not so, nor was such a civil peace the end of Christ's coming. Accidentally, through the corruption of men's hearts, the consequent of Christ's coming into the world, and of his gospel coming into and prevailing in any part of the world, is (as Luke phrases it) *rather division*, which is here called a sword. Through men's fondness of their idolatry, superstition, and lusts, and madness on them, their impatience of being outdone in religion and righteousness of conversation, the event of Christ's

coming was division, wars, variances, like the times prophesied of by Micah, Mic 7:6; God either stirring up wars to revenge the contempt of the gospel, (as it happened to the Jews), or men taking up arms to compel all others to their idolatries and superstitions. And that natural antipathy which men have to holiness, setting them at variance with those who, embracing the gospel, live a life as becometh the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, worketh so far, that men will have no respect to their nearest relations.

Matthew 10:36

Ver. 36. Not of the household of faith, which showeth that it is not the gospel, but men's corruptions, which causeth division. Those, who truly receive the gospel agree well enough, at least break not out into open feuds; but the tie of no natural or moral relations will hold together the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This doth not always happen, but very ordinarily, and therefore there was need that Christ should forewarn his disciples of it.

Matthew 10:37

Ver. 37. Luke seemeth to speak higher, Lu 14:26, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* But the sense is the same, for by hatred there is only meant displacency, and a setting them in his esteem below Christ and his commands. Christ doth not command or encourage want of natural affection, but only by this saying he reduces it to order, and showeth that our first love and homage is due to God; and where we cannot show what love and affections our father, or mother, or son, or daughter call for, without failing in that duty which we owe unto God, or violating some Divine precept, we must acknowledge our heavenly Father, even by disobeying our earthly parents. Instead of *is not worthy of me*, Luke saith, *cannot be my disciple*, which expounds this term. He is not worthy of my favour, of the name of my disciple, or the reward I intend my disciples.

Matthew 10:38

Ver. 38. We have much the same in Mt 16:24 Mr 8:34 Lu 9:23; It is not he that maketh not, but *he that taketh not his cross*; that is, he that doth not willingly, and cheerfully, and patiently bear and undergo those trials, and afflictions, and persecutions, which God in the way of his providence shall lay upon him, and bring him into, for my sake and my gospel, is not worthy of the name or reward of my disciples. Our Saviour calls all such trials, *the cross*, either with reference to the Roman last punishment, by crucifying, or signifying what death he should die, and with reference to his own cross.

Matthew 10:39

Ver. 39. Joh 12:25, giveth us a commentary upon these words thus, *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*. He in this text is said to find his life, who thinks that he hath found, that is, saved it, who is so much in love with his life that, rather than he will lose it, he will lose God's favour, deny the Lord that brought him, deny the most fundamental truths of the gospel. The man that doth thus (saith Christ) shall lose it; possibly he shall not obtain the end he aims at here, but if he doth he shall lose eternal life. When, on the contrary, he that is valiant for the truth shall sometimes be preserved, notwithstanding his enemies' rage; but if this happens not, yet he shall have life eternal, his mortality shall be swallowed up in life.

Matthew 10:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 10:42".

Matthew 10:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 10:42".

Matthew 10:42

Ver. 40-42. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, &c.;* we have the same Lu 10:16, only there it is, *he that heareth you heareth me;* and there is added, *and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.* In Joh 13:20, it is, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.* As great princes account what favour is shown to their ambassadors, who represent their persons, shown unto themselves, and whatsoever indignities or affronts are done unto them as done to themselves, so doth Christ.

Receiving is a general term, and capable of a large interpretation. That *hearing* is one branch of it, Luke tells us. The scope of the context, and the words that follow, do manifest that a giving entertainment to them in their houses is another thing here meant. There is another more inward, receiving of their doctrine by faith and love, to which undoubtedly there will be a great reward. But whether it be here intended, I doubt. Our Saviour was sending the twelve out, he had commanded them to take with them no gold, silver, nor brass, no scrip, &c.; but when they came into any city, to inquire who there were in that city who were worthy men, favourers to the gospel, and ready to entertain strangers, and to go to their house or houses, saluting them, and to abide there till they left the place. He furnisheth them here as it were with a ticket, or bill of exchange. He gives them an assurance, that whatsoever kindness should be done to them, he would account it as done to himself. And further hath assured both them, and all the world, that if any should come to them to reveal the will of God, (for that the term *prophet* signifieth), if they give him an entertainment upon that account they should be rewarded. What is here meant by the term, *a prophet's reward*, is variously guessed, whether it be,

1. The reward which God hath appointed for such as entertain his prophets; or;
2. Such a reward as such a prophet shall himself receive; or;
3. The reward which the prophet; will give him or them, viz. prayers and instruction.

That which appears to me most probable is, that no more is meant than a liberal reward, for such shall be the reward of those

who turn many to righteousness, Da 12:3. Those words, *in the name of a prophet*, are both exclusive of those from the benefit of this promise who receive and entertain the ministers of the gospel upon any other account than this, that they are the Lord's prophets; and also encouraging to those who may discern they have been mistaken in their acts of charity of this nature; if they have been sincere in their designs and actions, they shall not lose their reward, though the pretended prophet so entertained prove but an impostor.

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Christ will not only reward those who show love to his prophets, but those who show kindness to his members, whom the world counts contemptible, and calleth *little ones*; nor shall those only be rewarded who give them great entertainments, and make them great presents, but (if it be proportionable to what they are able to do) though it be a kindness of the most minute consideration, but *a cup of cold water*, they shall be rewarded. God rewards the love we show to him, and the good actions that flow from it. Here are three persons mentioned, for whose entertainment and reception God hath provided in this promise; *a prophet, a righteous man, a little one*: and a threefold reward promised; the reward of a prophet, the reward of a righteous man, and his reward. How to distinguish the righteous man and the little one I cannot tell, unless we understand by the righteous man one more perfect, more eminent in holiness; and by the little one, one that is sincere, though we cannot judge him so grown in grace and the knowledge of Christ. I should understand no more by the threefold rewards, than God's more particular value for his ministers, and for such as are more perfect in holiness; while in the mean time he will not *break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*; and that every one shall be rewarded according to his works; which shall not be measured by the quantity of the gift, but by the obedience, and affection, and ability of the giver, Lu 21:2,3 Heb 6:10.

Matthew 11:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 11:2-6 John sendeth his disciples to Christ.

Mt 11:7-15 Christ's testimony concerning John.

Mt 11:16-19 The perverse judgments of the people concerning both John and Christ.

Mt 11:20-24 Christ upbraideth the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum with their long unfruitfulness and impenitency.

Mt 11:25-27 He thanks the Father for revealing his gospel to the simple only,

Mt 11:28-30 and invites the weary to partake of his rest.

Ver. 1. We never find our Saviour idle, but continually going up and down doing good, and we find him most intent upon preaching and teaching, which doubtless is the great work of the ministers of the gospel; of what quality soever they be, they call pretend to no higher than Christ's. Nor did our Saviour think it enough to send others in his stead, as his curates, he went himself. Luke notes, Lu 10:1, that he sent the seventy, two by two, into every city whither himself was to follow; so as it seems he did not judge it enough that one proclamation of the gospel should be made to them. For those that think there is a distinction to be made between preaching and teaching, κηρυσσειν and διδασκειν, they may learn from this text, that they are both the work of Christ's ministers, if they be bound to take example from their Master, and not think the servant is above his Lord. Those that under value preaching, as the least part of the ministerial work, do both forget this text, and what Paul said, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; that is, not so much to baptize as to preach. If any think that people are now so instructed that there is no such need of preaching, they should do well to question their people a little, and they may discover their own great mistakes. Besides that experience teacheth us, that those who are best instructed are most desirous of that which deserveth the name of preaching; which lets us know that there is yet something further to be known, or that we had need have our remembrance stirred up, or at least our affections quickened.

Matthew 11:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 11:3".

Matthew 11:3

Ver. 2,3. The instance of this text alone is enough to convince the observing reader of holy writ, that the evangelists do not set down all things in that order as they were done. We have heard nothing before of John's being cast into prison in this gospel, nor do we hear any thing here of the story of it, till Mt 14:6, when our evangelist occasionally relates it something largely. He here tells us of something done during his imprisonment, viz. his sending two of his disciples to Christ, to be satisfied whether he was the promised Messiah, or they must look for another. Luke reports the same thing, Lu 7:19. Could he that was sent before Christ to prepare his way, and that had baptized him, and seen the Spirit descending on him, and heard the voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, and who had showed Christ to his disciples, Joh 1:29-31, &c., doubt whether he was the Messiah? Undoubtedly no; but John saw how some of his disciples, either envying for his sake, as Joh 3:26, or else inclinable to the common error of the Jews about the Messiah, were something shaken with the clamours of the scribes and Pharisees (who were far more favourable to John than to Christ). That they might be satisfied from their own sight of the works of Christ, he a little before his death sendeth them to Christ on this errand, *Art thou he who should come* (in the Greek, *who is coming*)? Which lets us know the full expectation the Jews generally had at that time of a Messiah coming. They desire only to be satisfied whether Christ was he.

Matthew 11:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 11:6".

Matthew 11:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 11:6".

Matthew 11:6

Ver. 4-6. We must imagine these disciples of John to have stayed with Christ some time, and to have seen him work some of these miracles, and to have heard him preach, and seen the great success of his ministry, and then to have left him with this answer. Luke therefore addeth, Lu 7:21, *And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.* Then he repeateth the answer which we have here, in which our Saviour refereth unto his works as sufficiently testifying of him, Joh 5:36,37 10:25,37,38. We read not that these disciples saw any dead person raised while they were with Christ, but it appeareth from Lu 7:18, &c. that the report of such a miracle was the occasion of their coming to Christ.

The question is, how the sight of these things done by our Saviour could be a sufficient argument to confirm to them that he was the Messiah, especially considering that his apostles did the same things?

Answer: First, it was prophesied by Isaiah, Isa 35:4-6, that when God should come to save them, the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; *then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:* and Isa 61:1, that the Messiah should *preach good tidings to the meek*, that is, the poor, Lu 4:18, which Christ, Lu 4:21, applied to himself. So that the fulfilling of these promises argued that the Messiah was come, and no other was to be looked for, whether these things were done by him or by his disciples.

Secondly, the disciples as yet had done no such things, so as his doing of them plainly evidenced his Divine power; the others did them but as his disciples, by his power and authority.

Thirdly, it is more than probable, that when the disciples did them, they used some such form as Peter used, Ac 3:6, *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.* We find Peter, Ac 3:12, very wary that the people should not mistake in thinking they did it by their own power or holiness.

And the poor have the gospel preached unto them. Gr. πτωχοι

ευαγγελιζονται, which may be translated, the poor preach the gospel, in an active sense, as the word is used Lu 2:10; or, the poor are gospelized, taking the word in a passive sense, as Heb 4:2 1Pe 1:25 4:6. In the passive sense it may be understood either of a more external reception of the gospel upon preaching, or of a more internal reception of the gospel by faith. In all senses it was true of the times of the Messiah,

1. The poor preached the gospel; nor was this a mean evidence that the Messiah was come, to see a few poor fishermen at his call leaving their nets and their friends, and following one calling them to preach a new doctrine to the new world.
2. The poor had the gospel preached to them; nor was this a less evidence of Christ to be the Messiah, considering the prophecy, Isa 61:1, and the contempt of the poor amongst the Jews, Joh 7:49.

But that the poor, who commonly are the more ignorant and rude sort of people, should vouchsafe to hear the gospel, and be turned into the likeness of the gospel upon Christ's preaching to them, this was yet a higher evidence. Many by *poor* understand the poor in spirit. The binding up of broken hearts, and bringing glad tidings to souls sadden on spiritual accounts is a great effect of the Divine power. It followeth, *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*. It is not improbable that our Saviour here reflects on the disciples of John, who out of a great honour for their master took many occasions to be offended at Christ. One while because he and his disciples did not first so often as they and the Pharisees, as Mt 9:14; another while because so many followed him, Joh 3:26. But the words spoken have a further reference than to John's disciples. The Lord Jesus and his doctrine are to many a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, according to the prophecy, Isa 8:14 Isa 28:16 Lu 2:34 Ro 9:33 1Co 1:23 1Pe 2:6. The Jews stumbled at the meanness of his person and parentage, and the meanness of his followers. The Gentiles, not at these things only, but his ignominious death. At this day many stumble at the sublimeness and strictness of his doctrine, &c. Christ speaks here with reference to all, and pronounces that man a blessed man, who shall so take offence at nothing, whether respecting his person, his life, or his death, his doctrine, or his followers, as to deter or discourage him from embracing him, and believing in him as the Saviour of lost

sinners, that shall by faith receive him.

Matthew 11:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 11:9".

Matthew 11:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 11:9".

Matthew 11:9

Ver. 7-9. Luke repeating the same story, Lu 7:24-26, instead of *they that wear soft clothing, saith, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.* Our Saviour here doth tacitly imply, that the ministers of the gospel should neither be uncertain and inconstant men, nor yet delicate men, affecting splendid apparel or delicate diet, but minding their great work, viz. the revelation of the will of God. But the scope of his present speech here, was to confirm the multitude in their good opinion of John, and to keep them from being scandalized, or altering their opinion of him, because he was now in prison. All men held John as a prophet, Mt 15:5; 21:26. You went out (saith our Saviour) into the wilderness to hear John preach: you did not go out to see some idle, light man, such as a reed shaken with the wind, nor yet to see a man clothed gorgeously, (the wilderness is no place for such persons, they are to be found in the courts and palaces of princes), you went out to hear one revealing the will of God to you. Nor did you mistake. He was a prophet. Not that Prophet of which Moses spake, De 18:15. But *a prophet; yea, and more than a prophet;* one that hath taught you what none of the prophets ever could teach you, that I, the Messias, am come; they could only tell you that I should come.

Matthew 11:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 11:11".

Matthew 11:11

Ver. 10,11. St. Luke hath the same, Lu 7:27,28, only he saith, *there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.* It was written, Mal 3:1, *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* The latter part was a prophecy of Christ. The former part a prophecy of John the Baptist, and applied to him not in this text only, but Mr 1:2 Lu 1:76 7:27. Christ is set out as a great Prince, who sends his harbingers before him to prepare his way, and by John's preaching we may learn the ministers' duty, who are to prepare Christ's way to people's souls, viz. to preach repentance and faith in Christ.

Verily I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there hath not risen a greater; that is, (as Luke expounds it), a greater prophet; i.e. amongst all the prophets of the Old Testament, God raised up none greater than John.

Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Mr. Calvin and many others think that by this phrase is to be understood, the least of those who shall preach the gospel after my resurrection will be greater than he, that is, as to their doctrine. John could only declare me to be come. They shall preach me, as having died for my people's sins, and risen again for their justification, Ro 4:25. The death and the resurrection of Christ were indeed great points of the gospel, which John could only prophesy of, not preach of, and declare us things in his time accomplished.

Matthew 11:12

Ver. 12. As John Baptist was a great man, so the Lord hath owned him as such, giving such a success to his ministry, that ever since he began the course of it, men have been carried on with a great ardour and heat, in hearing and receiving the gospel, which is the gospel of the kingdom, and bringeth men into the kingdom of Christ amongst men, and at last to the kingdom of glory. The hearts of men and women have been inflamed with a desire after the knowledge and obtaining of heaven, and

heavenly things. They are great persons whom God thus owneth; and those whom the Lord thus owneth, are ordinarily such as have some measures of the spirit of this first gospel ministry, making the great things of God the matter of their discourse, and doing their work with a seriousness, zeal, and fervour fitted to it.

The violent take it by force: they are not lazy wishes or cold endeavours that will bring men to heaven.

Matthew 11:13

Ver. 13. It is no wonder that there was such a heat kindled in the souls of people upon John the Baptist's coming, for they understood that Christ, typified in the law, and only foretold by the prophets, was now come. So as the ceremonial law from his time began to die, and all the prophecies of Christ in the prophets began then to have their complement. John showed them with his finger him who before had been only darkly revealed under types and figures, and in the prophecies of the prophets; men came to see that they had not hoped or waited in vain for the salvation of Israel.

Prophesied, in this verse, signifies, made dark revelations of Christ and the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 11:14

Ver. 14. God had told the Jews, Mal 4:5,6, that he would send them *Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest (saith he) I come and smite the earth with a curse.* This prophecy related to John the Baptist, as our Saviour here teacheth us; so, Lu 1:17, it is confirmed by the angel to Zacharias, and Mr 9:11. From which last text it appeareth, that the scribes had a tradition, that Elias should come before the Messiah. Their mistake was that they looked for an Elias to come in person, whenas God meant no more (as the angel expounds it, Lu 1:17) than one *in the spirit and power of Elias*, as bold and free a preacher, who should no more fear the face of men in the discharge of his duty than Elias did. Saith our Saviour, if you

will believe, this John was that Elias prophesied of by Malachi.

Matthew 11:15

Ver. 15. It is an epiphonema or conclusion often used by our Saviour, (and by St. John in the Revelation), quickening up the hearers to a just attention to and belief of what in the doctrine preceding he had revealed to them; intimating that he knew, that what he had said would not be entertained or believed of all, but only of such whose ears and hearts God had opened, or should open to receive spiritual mysteries. But it was a matter of great concernment, he therefore calls upon those whose ears God had opened to attend to it. So Mt 13:9,43 Mr 4:9 7:16 Lu 8:8.

Matthew 11:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 11:17".

Matthew 11:17

Ver. 16,17. Luke, telling to us the same history, Lu 7:31-35, prefaces it thus, Lu 7:29,30, *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.* Which letteth us know that our Saviour by the term *this generation* here doth not mean all the people of that generation; but the Pharisees and the lawyers, whom nothing could allure or persuade to the receiving of Jesus Christ, neither the ministry and example of John, nor yet his own preaching and example. For the people and the publicans justified the words of Christ, which he had spoken in commendation of John, and were baptized of him; but the Pharisees and lawyers did not believe, nor would be baptized of him. These our Saviour likens to a company of sullen children, whom their fellows could not persuade any way to a compliance with them: if they piped they would not dance; if they sang to them some mournful songs, neither would they be affected with them; so as no tune would please them. It is thought that our Saviour doth here allude to some sport used then amongst children, which we are not so well acquainted with, wherein

children were wont to sing, sometimes more merry and pleasant, sometimes more sad and mournful songs one to another; and that he here likens the Pharisees and lawyers to a sullen set of children, that, let their companions sing what they would, would not answer them. Our Saviour's meaning is expounded plainly enough by the next words (see Mt 11:18,19).

Matthew 11:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 11:19".

Matthew 11:19

Ver. 18,19. Luke hath the same words, Lu 7:33-35. The sense of the words is this: God hath by his providence used all means to win this people to the gospel. The doctrine of John the Baptist and Christ was the same, but their temper and converse was very different: John was an austere and morose man, Christ was of a more free and familiar conversation; but these men would neither give the one nor the other a good word; they reviled both of them, and rejected them both, and the doctrine which they brought.

John came neither eating nor drinking, that is, not as other men ordinarily do; he was a man that lived most in the wilderness, and fed upon very ordinary diet, not eating with publicans and sinners, not coming at any feasts, &c.; and they said of him, *He hath a devil*; he is a melancholic, hypochondriac fellow, a kind of a madman.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, he was of a more affable, pleasant temper, of a more free and less reserved converse, eating and drinking as other men (though keeping to the law of temperance) such things as the country afforded, not refusing to be present at feasts, though publicans and sinners were there. They said of him, *Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*: he displeased them with the two great freedom of his conversation; from whence, by the way, they may be better instructed, who place some perfection, or merit, in living like monks and hermits; by that rule John the Baptist was to be preferred before Christ. But

Christ could please the Pharisees and lawyers, and their followers, no more than John did. They could not say he was melancholic or morose; but they blasphemed him to a higher degree, calling him a glutton and drunkard, and a friend of publicans and sinners. A godly man, let his temper and converse be what it will, pleaseth none who hateth the truth of the gospel, and the power of godliness. If he be reserved, then he is a morose, melancholic man; if he be of a more free and open converse, then he is a drunkard, or a glutton; something or other they must have to say against a man that will not run with them to the same excess of riot, though they lay to their charge things that they know not. The business is, they hate the power of godliness in them. This instance of these men's thus treating John the Baptist and Christ, is of mighty use to strengthen those who meet with the very same things.

But wisdom is justified of her children. There is a great variety amongst interpreters in giving the sense of these words. Some think them spoken ironically, for the Pharisees went for the children of wisdom. Some think them spoken plainly, and think it should be, wisdom is judged, or condemned, of her children; but though the word δικαιομαί, signifying to justice or do justice to another, which, according to the merit or demerit of the person, may be by justifying or condemning, upon which account it was true here that wisdom was condemned of those who pretended to be her children, and the word is so used in other authors, yet we have no such usage of it in Scripture. Not to reckon the various senses others put upon the words, the plain sense of them seems to be this. It is a proverbial speech, something like that, *Ars non habet inimicum praeter ignorantem*, Learning hath no enemies but the ignorant.

1. I, who am the Wisdom of God, am justified by you, who truly believe on me: you know I am no glutton, no winebibber, no friend of publicans and sinners. Or;
2. Grace is justified of all that are partakers of it. Godly men that are wise will own the grace of God in all men, whether they be of John's temper or of mine, whether of more austere or more pleasant tempers. Or;
3. The wise counsel of God, making use of several instruments of several tempers to win these people unto his gospel, will be

justified, that is, acquitted, defended, praised, adored of those who belong unto God, and are acquainted with his wisdom and counsels.

Luke saith, *The people justified God*, Lu 7:29. Some, by the children of wisdom, understand the scribes and Pharisees themselves, (who thought themselves the children of wisdom), or the generality of the Jews, who were condemned in their own consciences, and could not but in heart justify Christ, though in their speeches they condemned him. But Christ never called them the children of wisdom. This interpretation therefore seemeth something strained. That which seemeth the most natural is what I before hinted. Though those that pretend to be the children of wisdom thus speak of John and of me, yet those who are truly wise will justify me, and also the counsels and wisdom of my Father in the use of all means to bring them to receive the glad tidings of salvation, brought to them both by my more austere and reserved forerunner, and by myself, who have chosen, though a holy and unblamable, yet a more free and pleasant way of converse with them.

Matthew 11:20

Ver. 20. Our Lord had hitherto spent most of his time in Galilee, and the cities belonging to that province: there both John the Baptist and himself had preached the gospel, there he had wrought many miracles, by both aiming at their repentance; but there were multitudes that did not receive him, nor would be brought to any sight of their sins, or any acknowledgment of him as the Messias. He now begins to reprove them smartly, not that they did not applaud and commend him, but because they did not repent. This was Christ's end in all his preaching, and in all his miraculous operations, to bring men to repentance, and to receive him as the Messias; and this should be the great end pursued by all his ministers.

Matthew 11:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 11:22".

Matthew 11:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke hath the same, Lu 10:13,14. *Chorazin* (and) *Bethsaida* were two cities of Galilee not far from one another, only the lake of Gennesaret was between them. Capernaum (by and by spoken of) was between them both, on the same side of the lake as Bethsaida, which was the city of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, Joh 1:44. In these towns Christ had often preached, so probably had the apostles, and Christ had done many great works in them. *Tyre and Sidon* were habitations of heathens, their country joined to Galilee. They were places of great traffic, inhabited with Canaanitish idolaters, and exceedingly wicked; threatened by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 23:1-18, and by the prophet Ezekiel, Eze 26:1-28:26, and by Amos, Am 1:9,10; a people odious to the Jews upon many accounts. To these our Lord here compares the Galileans, telling them that they were worse than that pagan people, who were so contemptible in their eyes, and that their plagues in the day of judgment would be greater.

For (saith he) if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Some think this a strong proof, that where the gospel is preached God gives a sufficiency of grace; so as if men will but use that power which they have in their own wills, they may, with the assistance only of that grace, truly repent and be saved. I shall not meddle with that dispute, but cannot see how that notion can derive any proof from this text;

1. Because the text only mentions Christ's miracles, not his preaching.
2. The text doth not say, they would long ago have repented unto life, but they would have *repented in sackcloth and ashes,* they would have been more affected than these Galileans were, who showed no sense at all of their sins. The king of Nineveh and his people repented, Jon 3:7,8; so did Ahab, 1Ki 21:27; yet none will say they repented unto life. None ever denied a power in man's will (his understanding being by the gospel enlightened to his duty) to perform acts of moral discipline.
3. Our Saviour might here speak after the manner of men, according to rational conjectures and probabilities. The scope

of our Saviour in these words is to be attended, which was only to show, that the men of Chorazin and Bethsaida, showing no signs of remorse for sin, or conviction of the Messiah upon the sight of his miracles, confirming his doctrine to be from heaven, had showed a greater stubbornness and hardness of heart than these heathens, who, though they were bad enough, yet had not had such means to reform and to convince them. Therefore he tells them their place in hell would be more dreadful than the place of the men of Tyre and Sidon. And so we are by this text taught, that as the sins of men who have the light of the gospel are much greater than the sins of the worst of men who have it not, so their condemnation in the day of judgment will be much heavier, Joh 3:19.

Matthew 11:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 10:24".

Matthew 11:24

Ver. 23,24. This speech of our Saviour is much of the same import with the other. The scope and sense of it is the same, to let the Capernaïtes know that the hardness of their heart was greater in contempt of the gospel, confirmed by so many miraculous operations, and their guilt greater, than the guilt of Sodom, long since destroyed by fire and brimstone, Ge 19:1-38, for though they were guilty of prodigious sinning, yet they had not such means to convince, reclaim, and reform them. God had not sent his Son amongst them, nor given them such testimonies of that act of grace as he had given these, by vouchsafing to confirm the doctrine of his Son by miracles; and therefore they must expect that God, in the day of judgment, should deal more severely with them than with the filthy and impure Sodomites. Our Saviour here speaketh not as an all knowing God, but as the Son of man to the sons of men, who speak upon probabilities and rational conjectures. If we should say that Christ spake this as an all knowing God, all that can be inferred is this, that an external reformation may be a lengthening out of persons' tranquillity. In the mean time God was just to both in not giving them such means, they sinning notoriously against the light of nature,

which they had, and the light of Lot's holy example, whose righteous soul they vexed with their filthy conversation and unrighteous deeds, 2Pe 2:7,8; and he was also just in destroying of them. Capernaum is here said to have been *exalted to heaven*, either with respect to their trading and outward prosperity, or with respect to the means of grace they enjoyed in hearing Christ's sermons and seeing his miracles. The casting down to hell, seems to be meant of a temporal destruction, the word αἰης not signifying the place of the damned, but the state of the dead; but Mt 11:24 must be understood of eternal condemnation, which shall be *in the day of judgment*.

Matthew 11:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 11:26".

Matthew 11:26

Ver. 25,26. Lu 10:21, hath the same thing, only he thus prefaces, *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c.* He rejoiced in spirit, his heart was inwardly affected with this grace of God his Father. Then he *answered and said*. Answering in Scripture doth not always signify replying to the words of others, but a speaking upon some fit occasion offered, a beginning of a speech.

I thank thee, O Father. Lord of heaven and earth. In the Greek the same word is used which signifieth to confess. In all thanksgiving and praising there is a confession of the power, wisdom, or goodness of God, so as all praising is a confessing, though all confession be not praising. By calling his Father *Lord of heaven and earth*, he acknowledgeth his absolute power to have done otherwise, even as it pleased him.

Because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent. By the *wise and prudent* he here plainly means the scribes and Pharisees, the learned doctors of that age, who should have been wise and prudent, and were so both in their own and in their followers' opinion. By *these things* he means the mysteries of the gospel, as Mt 13:11, *The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*. God is said to have hid them, because he had not revealed them

to them; nor can it be understood of a mere external revelation by the preaching of the gospel, but of an internal revelation by his Spirit, so as they embraced and believed them, 1Co 2:10; in which sense Paul saith, *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2Co 4:3.*

And hast revealed them unto babes, νηπιους. It signifieth persons that are young in years, infants, and weak in understanding. He principally means his apostles, together with those ordinary persons that believed in him, for the Pharisees said, Joh 7:48,49, *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.* O Father, (saith our Saviour), thou hast all power in thine hand, thou art the Lord of heaven and earth, thou couldest by thy Spirit have caused these learned men to have received and embraced thy gospel, and followed me, as well as these poor fishermen, and other Jews of none of the highest quality; in that thou hast not done it, thou hast declared thy justice, for their rejecting of thy counsel for their salvation, but in that thou hast revealed these things to any, especially to these persons, not under the same worldly advantages for reputation, wisdom, and wit, herein thou hast showed thy special and abounding grace, as well as the greatness of thy power. Lord, I rejoice in thy dispensations, and I give thee thanks that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected thy praise. There can be no other reason given of this, but thy good pleasure; *Even so, Father; so it pleased thee.* We may from hence observe,

1. That the further revelations of Christ some souls have more than others enjoying the same outward means, are not to be ascribed to the power or goodness of the will of man, but solely to the good pleasure of God.
2. That from the beginning of the gospel, the special and effectual revelations of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven have, from the good pleasure of God, been made generally not to the most learned and wise men in men's account, but mostly to persons of a meaner rank. *Surgunt indocti, et coelum rapiunt: Nos cum doctrina nostra in Gehennam trudemur. 1Co 1:26-28 Jas 2:5.*
3. That wheresoever God by his Spirit reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of God, it is matter of great joy and

thanksgiving; especially where God reveals these mysteries to persons most unlikely to have received them.

Matthew 11:27

Ver. 27. John saith, Joh 3:35, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* Mt 28:18, *All power is given unto me.* Joh 17:2, *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* God is the Fountain of power, Ps 62:11. He hath committed also power to Christ as Mediator, Ps 2:7-9, more particularly the power of life and eternal salvation, as Joh 17:2; he hath *the keys of hell and death*, Re 1:18, and all the means that lead to eternal life are in his power and disposal.

And no man knoweth the Son but the Father; no man knoweth his Divine essence, his eternal generation; and therefore men are not to listen to what the scribes and Pharisees say of him, but to attend to and to believe what the Father hath revealed from heaven concerning him, who best knoweth him.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son: no man knoweth the essence of the Father, or the counsels of the Father, as to the dispensations of the gospel.

Save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The prophets *inquired and searched diligently concerning this salvation, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*, 1Pe 1:10-12. Mr. Calvin saith, the Son is said to know the Father, as he is his lively image, the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory. And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Joh 6:46.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, Joh 14:9. All our saving knowledge of God is in and through Christ.

Matthew 11:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 11:30".

Matthew 11:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 11:30".

Matthew 11:30

Ver. 28-30. Our Lord having before showed;

1. That all power was given to him;
2. That none could know the Father but by and in him; closes his discourse with an invitation of persons to him. By the weary and heavy laden, in the text, some understand those that are laden with the sense of their sins, and the feeling the guilt of them. Others understand, with the burden of the law, which the apostles called *a yoke*, Ac 15:10.

Mr. Calvin thinks this too strait an interpretation. Others understand heavy laden with trials and afflictions. Christ will give rest to all those of his people that are any ways weary and heavy laden, but in an order first to souls wearied and heavy laden with the burden of their sins, and their want of a righteousness wherein to stand before God. Then to such to whom he hath given this rest, he promises also rest from their troubles and persecutions in the world, Joh 16:33. It is very like he used this term, *Come*, with respect to that of Isaiah, Isa 55:1,2. That by coming is to be understood believing is plain from Joh 6:44-46 Heb 11:6. The rest promised chiefly respecteth the soul, as appears from Mt 11:29. The promise may be understood both of that rest which believers have in this life, Ro 5:2 15:13, and also of that rest which after this life *remaineth to the people of God*, Heb 4:9. Whatever the rest be, it must be of Christ's giving and our seeking; nor is it to be obtained without labour and suffering, for it followeth, *Take my yoke upon you*. The members of Christ are not without a yoke, a law and rule by which they are obliged to walk; and though the service of God be a perfect freedom, yet to flesh and blood it is a yoke, grating upon our sensitive appetite, and restraining our natural motions and inclinations.

For I am meek and lowly. Humility and meekness are in themselves yokes, as they are contrary to our pride, and aptness to swell in a high opinion of ourselves; and to our wrath and danger, which sometimes boils to a great height, without any due fuel: and as in themselves they are a great part of Christ's yoke, so they fit and dispose us to take Christ's further yoke upon us, and may be here considered as means directed for the better performance of the precept, *Take my yoke upon you.* Our Lord also by this precept lets us know there can be no true faith without obedience to the commands of Christ. Though true faith and obedience be two things, yet they are inseparable; *Show me thy faith* (saith James) *by thy works;* and the rest of the text is not promised to either of them severally, but to both jointly.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Our Saviour had before (Mt 7:13,14) told us that the way to heaven is a strait way, how doth he now tell us his yoke is easy and his burden light?

Answer:

1. Nothing makes it hard or burdensome but our corruption, which floweth from the depravation of human nature.
2. It is much easier than the yoke and burden of the law.
3. Though it be hard to beginners, yet it is easy when we have once accustomed ourselves to it.
4. It is easy, considering that we do it not in our own strength, but by assistance from God, Jer 31:33 Eze 36:25,26 Joh 15:3, we are delivered even from the moral law, considered as a covenant, and as merely commanding us, and affording no help and assistance.
5. It is also easy; as we are by the love of God constrained to our duty, so we are freed from the rigour of the law. It is easy and light, as it is a course of life highly consonant to our reason, once delivered from a bondage to our passions. Finally, it is much more easy and light than the service of our lusts is. There is no greater slavery than a subjection to our lusts, that if a drunkard saith "Come", we must come, if an harlot saith "Go", we must go. Or than our service to the world, &c. To say nothing of the exceeding easiness of it, from the prospect

of the great reward proposed and promised to those who keep the commandments of Christ, the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2Co 4:17; as Jacob's hard service of fourteen years seemed to him but a few days.

Matthew 12:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 12:1-8 Christ alleges scripture in excuse of his disciples, whom the Pharisees charged with breaking the sabbath in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.

Mt 12:9-13 He healeth the withered hand on the sabbath day.

Mt 12:14-21 The Pharisees seek to destroy him: a prophecy of Esaias fulfilled in him.

Mt 12:22,23 He healeth one possessed of a devil, who was blind and dumb,

Mt 12:24-37 and confuting the absurd charge of his casting out devils by Beelzebub, he showeth that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is an unpardonable sin, and that every idle word must be accounted for.

Mt 12:38-45 He rebuketh those that sought of him a sign,

Mt 12:46-50 and showeth whom he regardeth as his nearest relations.

Ver. 1. Mark relating this story, Mr 2:23, varies little. Luke relating it, Lu 6:1, saith it was on *the second sabbath after the first, and his disciples did eat, rubbing them*. God in his law, De 23:25, had said, *When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn*. To take for our need so much of our neighbour's goods as we may reasonably think that, if he were present, and knew our circumstances, he would give us, is no theft. The Pharisees

therefore do not accuse them of theft, but of violation of the sabbath. Luke saith this happened upon the second sabbath after the first. Whether that was the sabbath next following the feast of unleavened bread, (which was about the time of our Easter), the first and last days of which were sabbaths in the Jewish sense, or the feast of tabernacles, or any other, is not much material for us to know. But on a sabbath day it was that our Saviour *went through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred*: this may teach us their low estate and condition in the world. He could quickly have supplied their hunger, but he chose to leave them to relieve themselves with plucking, rubbing, and eating of the corn, that he might have an opportunity to instruct them and the Pharisees in the true doctrine of the sabbath.

Matthew 12:2

Ver. 2. So saith Mark, Mr 2:24, only he puts it into the form of a question. Luke adds nothing, Lu 6:2, but saith, *certain of the Pharisees*. They granted the thing lawful to be done another day, but not on the sabbath day. How blind is superstition, that they could think that it was contrary to the will of God, that his people should fit themselves for the service of the sabbath by a moderate refreshment! Some of the Pharisees ordinarily attended Christ's motions, not to be instructed by him, but (as is afterward said) that they might have something whereof to accuse him. What a little thing do they carp at! Wherein was the sin? The plucking of a few ears of corn, and rubbing them, could hardly be called servile labour, especially not in the sense of the commandment, which restrained not necessary labour, but such labour as took them off from the duties of the sabbath; but their tradition had made this unlawful, as it was a little reaping and a kind of threshing. Hypocrites and formalists are always most zealous for little things in the law, or for their own additaments to it.

Matthew 12:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 12:4".

Matthew 12:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark and Luke add little, only Mark specifies the time, *in the days of Abiathar the high priest,* and saith, *when he had need, and was an hungred.* We have the history, 1Sa 21:1-15. David was upon his flight from Saul, upon the notice of his danger given him by Jonathan, 1Sa 20:1-42, and being hungry, he asks of the high priest five loaves of bread; the high priest tells him he had none but *hallowed bread,* which the high priest gave him, 1Sa 21:6. What the shewbread was may be read, Le 24:5-9: it is expressly said, a stranger shall not eat thereof. Now (saith our Saviour) notwithstanding this, David and his followers, being an hungred, did eat thereof, though strictly, according to the letter of the law, none but the priests might eat it.

But some may object: What was this to the purpose? It was not upon the sabbath day.

Answer:

1. It was either upon the sabbath day, or immediately after, for it was to be set on every sabbath day, and to be eaten *in the holy place,* Le 24:8,9, and the high priest told David, 1Sa 21:6, that it was taken away to set hot bread in the room of it.
2. But secondly, that which our Saviour produces this for, was to prove a more general proposition, which being proved, the lawfulness of his disciples' act would easily be inferred from it. That was this: That the letter of a ritual law is not to be insisted upon, where some eminent necessity urges the contrary, in the performance of some natural or moral duty.

The law of nature commandeth every man to feed himself when he is hungry. The moral law confirms this, as it is a means to the observation of the sixth commandment, and especially on the sabbath day, so far as may fit us for the best sanctification of it. The law concerning the shewbread was but a ritual law, and that part of it which restrained the use of it when taken off from the holy table was of lightest concern, as it commanded it should be eaten by the priests only, and by them in the holy place. Where the life, or necessary relief, of men was concerned, the obligation of the ritual law ceased, and that was lawful, both for

David and the high priest, which in ordinary cases had not been lawful. Works necessary either for the upholding of our lives, or fitting us for sabbath services, are lawful upon the sabbath day. Though the law concerning the sabbath be a moral law, yet it is *jus positivum*, not a law natural, but positive, and must be so interpreted as not to destroy the law natural, which commands men to feed themselves; nor yet to destroy itself. The scope and end of it is to be considered, which is the keeping of a day as a day of holy and religious rest. What labour is necessary to such keeping of it is also lawful. The time of the sabbath is not more holy than the shewbread; and as David in a case of necessity might make a common use of that holy bread, so the disciples in a case of like necessity might make use of a little of that holy time, in such necessary servile work as might fit them for their sabbath service. Thus it was lawful by the law of God, and if the Pharisees had not been ignorant, or had understood what they had read, they would never have disputed this, the instance of holy David might have satisfied. So that this little kind of labour could only be a breach of one of their bylaws, by which they pretended to expound the law of God, in which he showeth they had given a false interpretation.

Matthew 12:5

Ver. 5. Neither Mark nor Luke have this argument of our Saviour's. The meaning is, all acts of servile labour are not unlawful on the sabbath day. The priests, according to the law, Nu 28:9, offer sacrifices, and do many other acts, such as circumcising, and many other things, which in your sense would be a profanation of the sabbath; yet you do not blame them, neither are they to be blamed, because God permitted and directed them.

If any say, "But how doth this agree to what our Saviour is speaking to?"

Answer: The disciples of Christ were employed with and by him in going about and preaching the gospel, and what they now did was but in order to fit them for his work, when they had not had such leisure as others beforehand to provide: and this establisheth a second rule, That works of piety, and tending to fit us for acts of piety, that cannot conveniently be done before, are

lawful on the sabbath day.

Matthew 12:6

Ver. 6. The Jews had very superstitious conceits concerning the temple, and might object, But the priests' works are done in the temple. The Jews had a saying, that in the temple there was no sabbath. They looked upon the temple as sanctifying all actions done there. To obviate this, (saith our Saviour), *In this place is one* (that is, I am) *greater than the temple*. The temple was but a type of me. If the temple can sanctify so much labour, will not my authority and permission, think you, excuse this little labour of my disciples?

Matthew 12:7

Ver. 7. Neither Mark nor Luke have this argument. Our Lord yet goeth on taxing these great doctors of ignorance. The text he quotes is Ho 6:6; we met with it before quoted by our Saviour, Mt 9:13. The meaning is, that God prefers mercy before sacrifice. Where two laws in respect of some circumstance seem to clash one with another, so as we cannot obey both, our obedience is due to that which is the more excellent law. Now, saith our Saviour, the law of mercy is the more excellent law; God prefers it before sacrifice; which had you well considered, you would never have accused my disciples, who in this point are guiltless.

Matthew 12:8

Ver. 8. This argument Luke hath, Lu 6:5. Mark hath it thus, Mr 2:27,28, *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*. Some interpreters make these two arguments:

1. The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath; therefore it is in my power to dispense with this action of my disciples, though it had been contrary to the letter of the law: or rather, therefore it is in my power to interpret the law, which I myself made.

2. The sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath. A law made for the good of another bindeth not, in such cases where the observation of it would be evidently for his harm and ruin. The law of the sabbath was made for the good of man, that he might have a solemn time, in which he should be under an obligation to pay his homage unto God; this must not be so interpreted as would tend to the destruction of a man.

I find interpreters divided about that term *the Son of man*. Some think that it is not to be interpreted, as usually in the gospel, concerning Christ; but of ordinary men, and that man's lordship over the sabbath is proved by the subserviency of it to his good, to which end also it was ordained. But certainly that is both a dangerous and unscriptural interpretation: dangerous to give man a lordship over a moral law, for it is very improper to call any lord of a thing, because he hath the use of it, and it is for his advantage: I cannot see but we may as well make man lord of the whole ten commandments as of one of them. Unscriptural, for though our Saviour useth this term more than threescore times in the gospel, yet he always useth it with relation to himself, never with reference to any mere man; neither is there any necessity to understand it otherwise here. Christ affirming himself Lord of the sabbath, spake properly enough to the Pharisees' quarrel; for it must needs then follow, that he had power to dispense with the observation of it at particular times, and much more to give a true and right interpretation of the law concerning it.

Matthew 12:9

Ver. 9. Mark saith, Mr 3:1, *he entered again into the synagogue on the sabbath day*. This our Saviour was often wont to do, to own there what was done according to his Father's institution, and himself to do what good he could; nor doth he now decline it because he had had so late a contest with them: it is therefore said that *he went into their synagogue*, as being neither ashamed of what he had delivered, nor afraid to own it in the face of his adversaries.

Matthew 12:10

Ver. 10. Mark, repeating the same history, saith, Mr 3:1,2, *There was a man which had a withered hand, and they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might accuse him.* So saith Lu 6:6,7, only he addeth that it was his right hand, which made his affliction greater. They asked him not that they might rightly inform themselves, but *that they might accuse him* to their magistrates, that had power in those cases, for the violation of the sabbath was, amongst the Jews, a capital crime.

Matthew 12:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 12:12".

Matthew 12:12

Ver. 11,12. Mark saith, Mr 3:3-5, And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. Luke reports it thus, Lu 6:8,9, But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? Christ knew their thoughts; he needed not that any man should tell him what was in the heart of men; he knew their design in coming, and propounding this question. He calls this man with the withered hand to stand forth, that all men might see, and take notice of him. Then he argues the case with the Pharisees, telling them, that they themselves would grant, that if a man had a sheep fallen into a pit on the sabbath day, they might labour so far as to take it out; so, it seemeth, in Christ's time they did expound the law. They also knew that the life or good of a man was to be preferred before the life of a beast. In their reproving him, therefore, they condemned themselves in a thing which they allowed. Then he propounds a question to them, which Matthew hath not, but it is mentioned both by Mark and Luke. He asketh them whether it was lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it? The argument is this, Whatsoever is good to save the life of man may be done on the sabbath day; but this is a good action; if I should not lend him

my help when it is in my power, I should, in the sense of God's law, kill him.

Matthew 12:13

Ver. 13. Mark saith, they held their peace, they made him no answer to his question, upon which he, looking round about him with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. Luke saith, Looking round about upon them all, he said, &c. Our Saviour looked about him to see if any of them would adventure to answer him, but he saw their mouths were shut. He was angry that these great doctors of the law should understand the law of God no better, and should yet be so hardy as to take upon them to instruct him. He was also grieved (saith Mark) at the hardness of their hearts. That which we call hardness, is a quality in a thing which resisteth the truth, a unimpressiveness, when a thing will receive no impression from things apt to make impressions: the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts lay in this, that whereas Christ's words and works might reasonably and ought to have made an impression upon them of faith, that they should have owned and received him as the Messiah, yet they had no such effect, nor made any such impressions upon them. He said to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, &c. Christ sometimes used the ceremony of laying on his hand; here he doth not, to let us know that that was but a sign of what was done by his power. What little things malicious men will carp at! What was here of servile labour on the sabbath day? They did far more themselves, as often as they lifted a beast out of a pit. Our Saviour compounds or prepareth no medications, he only speaks the word, and he is healed. But Matthew tells us that ...(see Mt 12:14).

Matthew 12:14

Ver. 14. Luke saith, *they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.* Mark saith, *they straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.* What cause of their madness was here offered? A poor lame man was miraculously healed. They certainly were mad to see themselves confuted, who would

not acknowledge him to be the Messiah, or to hear themselves nonplussed, or to find themselves contradicted (a thing proud men cannot bear). They take counsel with the Herodians (of whom we shall have occasion to say more when we come to Mt 22:1-46): all agree them and the Pharisees to have been steady enemies one to another, but Herod and Pilate can agree when Christ is to be crucified.

Matthew 12:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 12:16".

Matthew 12:16

Ver. 15,16. Here is nothing in these two verses but what we have before met with: the multitudes have followed Christ in all his motions, from his first beginning to preach and to work his miraculous operations.

He healed them all, must be understood of those that were sick. The charge he gives is the same which we have often met with, of which no satisfactory account can be given, further than that, knowing his time was not yet come, and he had much work to do before his death, he useth all prudent means to preserve his life, reserving himself for the further work which his Father left him to do. The publishing of his miracles would have made a great noise, and possibly have more enraged the Pharisees against him; neither did he seek his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him.

Matthew 12:17

Ver. 17. Christ did this, that is, he withdrew himself when he heard what counsels the Pharisees and Herodians had taken, he charged those whom he had cured that they should not publish it abroad, he did those good acts before spoken of, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet;* that he might show himself to be the very person whom the prophet Isaiah long since did foretell, Isa 42:1-4. The words in the prophet are thus: *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul*

delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus far that prophet; let us now consider his words, or prophecy, as repeated by the evangelist (see Mt 12:18).

Matthew 12:18

Ver. 18. The alteration is very little, and we must not expect to meet with quotations out of the Old Testament verbatim: it is enough that the sense is the same.

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen. The word indifferently signifieth a child or a servant, Christ is called the Lord's servant, because he took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even to death, Php 2:7,8: Whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: in Isaiah it is, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. Matthew seems to have left out whom I uphold, and to have taken the next words, mine elect, and to have translated them, whom I have chosen, which was all said by the prophet. God chose the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer, and the Head of the elect; hence we are said to be chosen in him, Eph 1:4. Peter saith he was foreordained, 1Pe 1:20 2:6, he is called a chief Cornerstone, elect. My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: in Isaiah it is, in whom my soul delighteth: the sense is the same.

He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, or to the nations. The words מִשְׁפָּט, in the Hebrew, κρισις in the Greek, and *judgment* in the English, are all so variously used, as gives interpreters a great latitude to abound in their senses. The most probable to me is this: *Judgment* signifies a thing adjudged: all judgment is either of approbation or condemnation.

He shall bring forth, or he shall show, the things which God approveth and judgeth right, both in matters of doctrine, worship, and the government of the church of God, and in matters which concern the government of men's lives and conversations: and to this end God promises to put his Spirit upon him, so Isa 11:2

41:1; and John tells us it was not given him by measure, Joh 3:34, which is the same with being *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, Ps 45:7, which the apostle applies to Christ, Heb 1:9.

Matthew 12:19

Ver. 19. These words declare the meekness, and gentleness, and modesty of our blessed Saviour. His meekness, that he should not do his work in any passion or roughness, nor carry on his kingdom with any strife or violence. Therefore when the Pharisees took counsel against him, he made no opposition, but peaceably withdrew, until the time came when he was to be delivered; and then he as meekly yielded up himself, rebuking Peter for but drawing a sword for him, and healing his ear which he had wounded. His not crying, nor lifting up his voice, or suffering his voice to be heard in the streets, might either signify his meekness, not crying out to stir up any sedition; or not setting a trumpet to his mouth, when he had wrought a miracle, that people might take notice of it; instead of it he charged the persons healed not to publish it.

Matthew 12:20

Ver. 20. He shall carry on his work with so little noise, that if he trod upon a bruised reed he should not break it. Or, he shall not despise the afflicted, that are as bruised reeds and smoking flax. But the best expositors interpret it of Christ's kindness to people's souls; he will not discourage those that are weak in faith, or weak in hope.

Smoking flax signifieth flax in the kindling of which the fire had not prevailed, and so is a very apt metaphor to express such as believe, but are full of doubts and fears, or such as have a truth of grace, but yet much corruption; Christ is prophesied of as one that will encourage, not discourage, such souls.

Until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory; Isaiah saith, *unto truth*. Some think that *until* here only signifies the event of the thing, not a term of time, for there shall never be a time when Christ shall break a bruised reed, or quench a smoking flax, in

the sense before mentioned. By *judgment* here may be meant, as before, what his Father hath judged right, until he hath caused the doctrine of the gospel, and the Messiah, to be believed and embraced of all the world. Or, until he shall have brought forth the judgment of those broken reeds and that smoking flax unto victory, until such souls be made perfect in faith and holiness, and shall have got a victory over all its unbelief and other corruptions. Or, until he hath brought forth condemnation unto victory, (for so the word signifieth), till he hath conquered death and hell, so as there shall be no condemnation to any soul that is in Christ Jesus, Ro 8:1. Or, until the last judgment comes, which shall determine in a perfect absolution and acquittal of all his people, and in a perfect victory over all his enemies.

Matthew 12:21

Ver. 21. This makes some think, that the bringing of judgment unto victory refers to the final destruction of the Jews by the Romans, after which the Gentiles came more universally to receive the gospel. Though Christ be meek and gentle with men a long time, while there is any hope of their reformation, yet he will not be so meek and patient always. Neither was he so with the Jews. But the falling of them proved the rising of the Gentiles. Christ is beholden to no people for bearing the name of his church; if the Jews fail in their duty, they shall be cast off, and *in his name shall the Gentiles trust*. God is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Isaiah saith, *the isles shall wait for his law*; his law, both of faith and holiness, shall be acceptable to the Gentiles. The term *law* here seemeth to expound that phrase, Mt 12:18, *he shall show judgment to the Gentiles*, that is, right things, he shall give them his law.

Matthew 12:22

Ver. 22. Some think this person was the same mentioned Lu 11:14, I presume, because the following discourse there is much the same with what followeth here; but others are of another mind; and it is certain Luke speaketh of no blindness in him. We heard before a discourse of such as were possessed by devils, so as this verse affords nothing new.

Matthew 12:23

Ver. 23. This is the first conviction we meet with, from the miracles wrought by our Saviour, that he was the Messiah, unless that of the two blind men, mentioned Mt 9:27; and their faith in it appears but weak, for they do not plainly affirm it, only ask the question, like the faith of those mentioned Joh 7:31, *When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?*

Matthew 12:24

Ver. 24. We met with the same blasphemous calumny from the same persons, Mt 9:34. The Pharisees, not acknowledging the Deity of Christ, nor that he was the Messiah, were for their interest concerned not to acknowledge, and as much as in them lay to keep others from believing, that he did that from his own power which God alone could do. But yet they might have allowed him to have by a power derived from God done these miraculous things, as Elijah and Elisha of old did. But they blaspheme at the highest rate imaginable, ascribing that to the devil which was proper to God alone. Christ's miracles were exceeding many, and it was a time when the Messiah was expected. The sceptre was departed from Judah, and, as it appears from Joh 7:31, (whatever the Jews now say impudently), they heard that when the Messiah did come he should work many miracles. These things put them into a rage. This remarkable piece of history is recorded by three evangelists: by Matthew in this place; by Mark, Mr 3:22-30; and by Luke, Lu 11:15-20.

Matthew 12:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 12:26".

Matthew 12:26

Ver. 25,26. This is our Lord's first argument. Mark relates it, Mr 3:23-26, with little alteration in the phrase; so doth Luke, Lu

11:17,18. The sum of the argument is, The devil is so wise, that he will look to the upholding of his own kingdom in the world. This will require an agreement of the devils amongst themselves, for if they be divided they cannot uphold their kingdom, nor stand, any more than a house, city, or kingdom in the world so divided can stand; therefore the prince of devils will not forcibly cast out the inferior devils. There is but one imaginable objection to this: Do we not see the contrary to this in people's going to cunning men for help against those that are bewitched, to get help for them? And is there no truth in those many stories we have of persons that have found help against the devil for some that have traded with the devil? I answer, It is one thing for the devils to play one with another, another thing for them to cast out one another. One devil may yield and give place to another, to gain a greater advantage for the whole society, but one never quarrels with another. The first may be for the enlarging of Satan's kingdom. This must be to destroy it. When a poor wretched creature goeth to one who dealeth with the devil for help for one who is vexed with some effect of the devil, one devil here doth but yield and give place to another by compact, voluntarily, and for the devil's greater advantage; for it is more advantage to the devil (who seeks nothing so much as a divine homage) to gain the faith of one soul, than to exercise a power to afflict many bodies. In such cases as these, the devil, for the abatement of a little bodily pain, gains a power over the soul of him or her who cometh to implore his help, and exerciseth a faith in him. This is an establishing, promoting, and enlarging his kingdom. But Christ forced the devils out of persons; they did not yield voluntarily, for a greater advantage, but forcibly, for no advantage. He did not pray the devils to come out, nor make use of any of the devil's sacraments, upon the use of which, by some original compact, he was obliged to come out upon a soul's surrender of itself by faith to him; but they came out unwillingly, upon the authoritative words of Christ, without the use of any magical rites and ceremonies testifying the least homage done to him.

Matthew 12:27

Ver. 27. Our Saviour's argument is this, Where the case is the same the judgment ought to be the same, and the contrary judgment speaketh malice, and hatred of the person. Do I cast

out devils? So do your children. You say they do it by the power of God; why do you say that I do it by a prince of devils? What appeareth in their casting of them out more than in mine, which can argue that they do it by the power of God, and I by the power of the prince of devils? The only question is who our Saviour here meaneth by their *children*. Some think that he meaneth his own apostles, who were all of them Jews, and to whom they might be more favourable than to him, because of their relation to them. Others think that he means some exorcists amongst the Jews; such they had, Ac 19:13. But concerning these there is a double opinion. Some think that they were such as themselves, acted by compact of the devil. Others think that they invoking the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God might honour them so far, as upon that invocation to command the devil out of persons. Origen and Justin Martyr both tell us, that there were some that used that form with such success. But so they might do, and yet not obtain their effect from a Divine influence, nor so much cast as flatter out devils, upon a homage first paid to the devil. I find some difficulty to persuade myself that in those times, especially when God by this miraculous effect was demonstrating the Messiah, God should so far concur with any but him, and those that did it by his express name and authority; and I observe, that when the seven sons of Sceva attempted such a thing, Ac 19:13, they called *over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth*, (which they, being the sons of the chief of the priests, would not have done if the more grateful form of, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would have done it), yet could they not prevail, as you read there, Ac 19:14-16. Our Saviour's meaning therefore must certainly be either,

1. You do not say so of your children, my apostles, who do, and profess to do, what they do by a power derived from me; why do you say this of me, not of them? Or,
2. There are some of you who seem to cast out devils, whereas the devil only plays with them, and yields to their magical arts for his own advantage, and abates some more external effects on people's bodies, upon the surrender of their souls to him, by believing he is able to cure them, and imploring his help; yet you think these men endowed with the power of God: why are you so unequal to me?

I observe, though we read of exorcists amongst the Jews, Ac 19:13, yet they are called περιερχομενοι, vagrants. They were an idle, vagabond sort of persons, (such probably as we call gypsies), with whom, or by whom; it is not probable God would work such effects, especially at such a time, though they used the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nay, it is plain from the story of the Acts, that though they used the name Jesus, God would not work by them; Mt 12:16, the demoniac *leaped on them, overcame them, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

Matthew 12:28

Ver. 28. Luke hath the same, Lu 11:20, only for *the Spirit of God* he hath *the finger of God*. By *the kingdom of God* he here meaneth the coming of the Messiah, which is so called, Da 2:44. The time is come, when the Lord begins his kingdom of grace, setting up his King upon his *holy hill of Zion*, Ps 2:6; whence we may observe, that Christ giveth in his casting out of devils by a Divine power, as an argument to prove himself the Messiah; for saith he, By this you may know the kingdom of God is come amongst you, that there is one come among you who by the finger, power, or Spirit of God casts out devils. But where had the force of this argument been, if the Jews had had exorcists whom God had so honoured, though vagabonds, as to cast out devils, upon their calling upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while in the mean time they derided and contemned Christ?

Matthew 12:29

Ver. 29. Mark hath the same words, with little variation, Mr 3:27; Luke saith, Lu 11:21,22, *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.* The sense is the same, though the words be multiplied. Our Saviour showeth how his casting out of devils by the Spirit and power of God argued that the Messiah was come, and the time come when God would set up his kingdom amongst men. The devil, (saith he), who is the god of the world, and the prince of

the power of the air, is very strong; there is none, save God only, who is stronger than he. If I were not God, I could never cast out this strong man, who reigns in the world as in his house; as you see amongst men, the strong man is not overcome but by one stronger. He by this also lets them know, that he was so far from any covenant or compact with Beelzebub, that he came into the world a professed enemy to him, to dispossess him of that tyrannical power he exercised amongst men, by his keeping them in darkness, blinding them with error and superstition, and seducing them to sinful practices, till God, for their prodigious sins, had also given him a power over their bodies, variously to vex, afflict, and torment them. Christ took from this strong man all his armour: by scattering the darkness which was in the world by the full revelation of gospel truth: by expelling error and superstition, teaching people the truths of God, and the right way of his worship: by taking away the guilt, and destroying the power of sin and death, ignorance, error, profaneness; the sense of the guilt of sin, and the power of lusts within us, being the devil's armour, by which he kept up his power, and doth yet keep up what dominion he hath in the world.

Matthew 12:30

Ver. 30. Luke hath the same, Lu 11:23. Some understand this concerning the devil, whom he was so far from favouring, that his work was quite opposite. Some understand it concerning some neuters, that would neither show themselves for Christ nor against him. Our Saviour tells them, that this cause would bear no neutrality, they must be either for him or against him. But possibly it is best understood concerning the scribes and Pharisees, whom he lets know, that he was one who showed men the true way of life and salvation, and those that complied not with him were his enemies, and instead of gathering, scattered the sheep of God.

Matthew 12:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 12:32".

Matthew 12:32

Ver. 31,32. Mark repeateth the same, Mr 3:28,29. with no alteration as to the sense, and instead of *neither in this world, neither in the world to come,* he saith, *but is in danger of eternal damnation.* Luke hath something of it, Lu 12:10, *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgive him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.* It is a text (which) hath very much exercised great divines, and much more perplexed poor Christians in their fits of melancholy and under temptations. There is in it something asserted, that is, that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, Mt 12:32.

Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven; that is, upon the terms other sins are forgiven, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. By *the Son of man* here some would understand any ordinary man; but;

1. Christ never spake of any under the notion but himself.
2. It had been no great news for Christ to have told them, that ordinary evil speaking against men should be forgiven.

Doubtless by *the Son of man here Christ meaneth himself.* He declareth that sins of ignorance should be forgiven; though a man should blaspheme Christ, yet if he did it ignorantly, verily thinking he was no more than the son of man, it should, upon his repentance and faith in him, be forgiven: a text yielding exceeding great relief to souls labouring under the burden of their sins, and reflecting upon their aggravation.

But the difficulty lieth in the latter part of the text, which denieth forgiveness to any who blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Upon this arise several questions. First, What the sin against the Holy Ghost here specified was.

Answer: It is not hard to gather this from the context, and what Mark addeth, Mr 3:30. *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.* Christ was come amongst these persons to whom he speaketh; he had not only preached, but he had wrought many miraculous operations sufficient to convince them that he acted by the power and Spirit of God. They were not only convinced

of it, so far as to acknowledge it, but they attributed these operations to the devil, and said he had a devil, and that he did what he did by the power of the devil. This, out of doubt, was their sin against the Holy Ghost, maliciously speaking to the highest reproach of the Holy Spirit, contrary to the rational conviction of their own consciences.

Hence ariseth a second question, Whether any such sin can be now committed.

Answer: If there were no other texts that seem to conclude, there may be such as those, Heb 6:4-6 10:26,27 1Jo 5:16, where he speaketh of *a sin unto death*, for the forgiveness of which he would not have Christians pray. I should conclude that there is no such sin now to be committed, for we cannot have such means of conviction as the Pharisees had, Christ not being on the earth now working miracles; but it is plain from the texts before mentioned, that there is such a sin, that men and women may yet incur the guilt of. But now what that sin is hath exercised the judgment of the greatest divines to describe. I shall not repeat the various opinions about it, many of which are easily confuted; but shall determine from the guidance of the scriptures that mention it, so far as they will direct in the finding of it out.

1. It cannot be any sin that is committed ignorantly. Paul was a blasphemer, but forgiven, because he did it ignorantly.
2. It must be a sin knowingly committed against the operations of the Holy Ghost. So was this sin of the Pharisees.
3. Apostasy must be an ingredient in it: *If they fall away, saith the apostle, Heb 6:6. It is a sinning wilfully after the receiving the knowledge of the truth, Heb 10:26.*
4. It should seem by this text persecution is an ingredient in it: the Pharisees did not only say this, but they spake it out of malice, designing to destroy Christ.
5. Most certainly it is, that though impenitency cannot be called that sin, yet it must be an ingredient in it, for what sins we truly repent of shall be forgiven, 1Jo 1:9; and therefore the apostle saith of such sinners, It is impossible they should be renewed by repentance.

Upon the whole then, if any person hath been instructed in the things of God, and hath made a profession of religion and godliness, and afterwards falleth off from his profession, and becomes a bitter enemy to it; saying that those things are the effects of the devil in men, which his heart telleth him are the operations of the Holy Spirit, and be so hardy as to persecute and seek to destroy such persons for such profession: the interpretation be to those that hate us and to the enemies of our God: if they have not committed this unpardonable sin, they have done what is very like it; and I know no way they have, but by a timely and hearty repentance to satisfy the world, or their own consciences, that they are not under this dreadful guilt. And that which confirms me in this opinion is, that we rarely hear of such persons renewed by repentance (if any instances of that nature at all can be produced). I know some have thought that this sin might be committed by words, without other overt acts, and indeed blaspheming (properly taken) can signify nothing else but evil or reproachful speaking. But these words must proceed from a malicious heart, full of rancour and revenge; for it is not every word, nor every blasphemy, that is here meant, it is (as Augustine saith) *quoddam dictum, quaedam blasphemia*, a certain word, a certain blasphemy; not words spoken ignorantly or hastily, or according to our real judgment and opinion; but words spoken maliciously, in order to destroy God or Christ, if it were possible, after sufficient means of light and conviction, that the things which we speak evil of are not from the evil, but, probably at least, from the Holy Spirit of God, and yet we will impute them to the devil, in order to the defaming or destruction of those servants of God who do them, or in whom they are found. We can define nothing certain in the case, but this cometh nearest to the sin here mentioned, that shall never be forgiven in this world, or the world to come; that is, as Mark expounds it, the persons guilty shall be in danger of eternal damnation, by which he hath spoiled the papists' argument from this text for their purgatory.

Matthew 12:33

Ver. 33. We met with much the same Mt 7:16. The words here spoken may be understood to have reference to the devil, to the scribes and Pharisees, or to Christ himself.

1. You say I do these things by the devil: you cannot but say the things I do are good; the fruit followeth the nature of the tree: the devil is evil, a corrupt tree, how can he produce good fruit? Or thus;
2. You show yourselves to be corrupt trees by the fruit you bring forth; you indeed are not lewd and profane, but put on a mask and vizard of godliness, but your fruit showeth what you are. Or;
3. If the fruit which I produce be good, why should not you judge me good? Speak things that are consistent; if the fruit be good, the tree must be good; convince me of any evil things that I do, from whence you can rationally conclude that I am a corrupt tree.

Matthew 12:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 12:35".

Matthew 12:35

Ver. 34,35. The evangelist Luke, Lu 6:45, hath much the same with what is here.

O generation of vipers: John had so called them, and Christ again so called them, Mt 23:33. A viper is of all other the most venomous and dangerous serpent. Christ is calling them a *generation of vipers*, intimates that the Pharisees were generally a most mischievous faction for the souls of men.

How can ye, being evil, speak good things? Why do I (saith he) spend my time and breath in reprovng or admonishing you? you have cankered hearts, full of pride, malice, and envy, and therefore, cannot ordinarily speak good things.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: what men ordinarily and deliberately do speak is from the affections and thoughts of their hearts. Hence good men out of the good treasure of their hearts speak good things, that is, most ordinarily

and commonly; and evil men out of the stock of malice, revenge, envy, pride and other lusts, which are in their hearts, speak evil things.

Matthew 12:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 12:37".

Matthew 12:37

Ver. 36,37. Some understand by *idle words* here, lying and deceitful words; others, contumelious and reproachful words. But the best interpreters here extend the sense further, not only from the sense of the word *αργον*, here used, but because they judge our Saviour is here arguing from the less to the greater, convincing the Pharisees what a dreadful account they had to give for their blasphemous and reproachful words, when all must give an account even for those words which they speak to no good purpose, but vainly, without respect either to the glory of God, or the good of others, or their own necessary and lawful occasions. Hence the apostle doth not only forbid *filthiness, foolish talking, and jestings*, Eph 5:1, and *corrupt communication*, Eph 4:29, but in the same verse commandeth that Christians' speech should be *to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers*; and to the Colossians, Col 4:6, *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt*. Nor will this seem too strict to those who consider, that any thing is abused when it is not used to the right end and use. God hath not given unto man his faculty of speech to fill the world with idle tattle and impertinent discourse, but that by it;

1. We might bless God, by prayers and praises, talking of his words and wondrous works.
2. That we might communicate our minds to men, in their or our own concerns, and so be mutually helpful one to another.

For by thy words thou shall be justified, &c.: what justified here signifies, appears by the word *condemned*, to which it is opposed. God will pronounce sentence for or against men in the last day, not only according to their other actions, but

accordingly as they have used their tongues. If there were no other text in the Bible to prove that we have need of another righteousness, than any of our own, wherein to stand before God, this text alone would be enough, for *if a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*, Jas 3:2.

Matthew 12:38

Ver. 38. We read the like to this Mt 16:1, and Luke seemeth to relate the same history, Lu 11:29.

Master was the usual title which they gave to any whom they owned as a teacher. By *a sign* they mean something that might confirm unto them that he was sent of God; they expected that an extraordinary mission should be so confirmed: so Joh 6:33, *What sign showest thou then, that we might see and believe thee? What dost thou work?* Moses showed them signs, (as they there go on), he brought down for them bread from heavens. Had not Christ showed them signs enough? What were all the miracles he had wrought in their sight? They either speak this out of a further idle curiosity, (their eye being not satisfied with seeing), or else they speak it in direct opposition to the whole scope and tendency of our Saviour's former discourse, which was from his miracles to prove himself truly God, and sent of God: if the latter, which seemeth from our Saviour's sharp answer most probable, the sum of what they say is this, Master, we have seen thee do wonderful works, but no other than what impostors may do by the assistance of the devil; we would see something done by thee which magicians cannot do, such as Moses did, Ex 8:19, when the magicians confessed they were outdone, and cried, *This is the finger of God*.

Matthew 12:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 12:40".

Matthew 12:40

Ver. 39,40. *An evil and adulterous generation;* either called adulterous for that specific sin, which reigned amongst them, and

indeed their polygamy was hardly better; or else because of their degeneracy from Abraham, whom they so much gloried in as their father, Joh 8:39,44.

Seeketh after a sign; not satisfied with my miracles which I do on earth, they would have a sign from heaven. God was not difficult of confirming and encouraging people's faith by signs; he gave Gideon a sign upon his asking, he gave Hezekiah and proffered Ahaz a sign without asking; but he had already given the Pharisees signs enough, and sufficient to convince them, but they would not believe, but out of curiosity would have a sign of another kind, *a sign from heaven*, as Mark expounds it, Mt 8:11, such a sign as the devil could not counterfeit.

There shall no sign be given to it; no sign of that nature, for we shall find that after this Christ wrought many miracles. But they shall have a sign when I shall be risen again from the dead, to their confusion and condemnation; when I shall answer the prophet Jonah's type of me. He was cast into the sea, and was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, in the heart of the sea, Jon 1:17, and then the whale vomited (him) out upon the dry land, Jon 2:10. So I shall be by them violently put to death and shall be in the grave part of three days and three nights, and then I shall rise again from the dead.

But here ariseth a difficulty. Christ indeed dying the day before the Jewish sabbath, and rising the morning after, might be said to be in the grave three days, because he was there part of three days; but how can he be said to have been there three nights? For he was only in the grave the night of the Jewish sabbath, (for their sabbath began at the evening before), and the night following, which were but two nights, either in whole or in part.

Answer: What we call day and night made up the Jewish $\nu\chi\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\nu$. It appears by Ge 1:5, that *the evening and the morning* made up *a day*. Three days and three nights is with us but the same thing with three natural days, and so it must be understood here. Christ was in the grave three natural days, that is, part of three natural days; every one of which days contained a day and a night, viz. twenty-four hours.

Matthew 12:41

Ver. 41. The story of the men of Nineveh we have in Jon 3:1-10. Luke repeateth the same passage, Lu 11:32.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment, that is, shall at the general resurrection rise, and stand up in judgment as witnesses against the scribes and Pharisees, and the other unbelieving Jews of this age, and shall be instruments as to that condemnation which God shall that day pronounce against them. Why?

Because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Jonas was a stranger to them, he wrought no miracles amongst them to confirm that he was sent of God, he only came and cried, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed;* yet they repented, if not truly and sincerely, yet in appearance; they showed themselves to be affected with what Jonah said, his words made some impressions upon them, as that *the king arose from his throne, laid his robe from him, covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes,* called a fast, as Jon 3:5-8. But, saith our Saviour, I am greater than Jonah: I was long since prophesied of, and foretold to this people, to come; I am come; I have preached amongst them, and not only preached, but wrought many wonderful works amongst them, yet they are not so much affected as to show the least signs of repentance.

Matthew 12:42

Ver. 42. We have the history to which this relates 1Ki 10:1, &c. She is here called *the queen of the south;* in the Book of Kings, and 2Ch 9:1, *the queen of Sheba*. Whether this Sheba, or Saba, was in Arabia or Ethiopia, is not much material; certain it is, it was southward of Judea, and a place at a great distance. Yet, saith our Saviour, though she was a great queen, though she lived at so great a distance from Jerusalem, though she had only heard of the fame and wisdom of Solomon; yet she came in person to hear his wise discourses, either about things natural or supernatural. These wretched Jews are not put to it to take a journey, I am come amongst them, I who am greater than Solomon, who am the Eternal Wisdom, and come to discourse of heavenly wisdom to them; I am come to their doors, theirs to whom the notion of a Messiah is no new thing, they have heard

of me; they are no heathens, but bred up to the knowledge of God. I have done many miracles before them, yet they will not hear nor believe me. The queen of Sheba in the day of judgment shall rise up as a witness against them, when God shall condemn them for their unbelief. The more light, and means, and obligations men have upon them to faith and holiness, the greater will their judgment and condemnation be.

Matthew 12:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 12:45".

Matthew 12:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 12:45".

Matthew 12:45

Ver. 43-45. The speech appeareth parabolical, the persons concerned in it are expressed in the last words, the men of that wicked generation. The text is thought to be well expounded by Peter, 2Pe 2:20, *If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.* Our Lord here compares the Jews to a man out of whom the unclean spirit was gone. The devil is called the *unclean spirit*, both in regard of his own impure nature, and because his work is to tempt men to sin, which is spiritual filthiness. The Jews were a people holy to the Lord, a people distinguished from pagans by a visible profession; so as the devil in a great measure had left them. Now, saith he, the devil is an unquiet spirit, and findeth no rest if he cannot be doing mischief to men. For the phrase, *he walketh through dry places, seeking rest*, we must know, that in parabolical speeches we must not make a severe scrutiny upon every phrase. Dry places are for the most part places least inhabited, for want of the conveniences of water. The devil cannot be at rest where he hath no mischief to do to men.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came

out: the devil so leaveth none, but he will be attempting to come into them again; and he ordinarily succeeds where Christ hath not prepossessed the soul: all other reformation proves but a sweeping and a garnishing, while the soul is empty of Christ. It may be swept from the filth of flagitious sins, and garnished with the paint of religion, or some habits of moral virtue; but none of these will keep out the devil.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. Seven, that is, many. The meaning is, he makes that man much worse than before. So (saith he) it shall be to these Jews. God gave them his laws, and so delivered them from such a dominion as the devil doth exercise over pagans. In force of this law, the scribes and Pharisees amended many things, so as they were like a house swept and garnished. God sent his Son to dwell amongst them, but him they rejected; so the house was empty, though swept and garnished. The devil will come again, and they will be ten times worse.

Matthew 12:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 12:50".

Matthew 12:50

Ver. 46-50. Mark repeateth the same passage, Mr 3:31-35. Luke repeateth it more shortly, Lu 8:20,21. Both Mark and Luke say more than one spake to our Saviour; first one, then others.

Thy mother and thy brethren: most interpreters think *brethren* here signifieth no more than some of his kindred, whom the Hebrews usually called brethren. By the following words of our Saviour, Mt 12:48-50, we must not understand that our Saviour slighted his mother or brethren, we are elsewhere taught what honour he gave to his parents, Lu 2:51; yet he seemeth to speak something angrily, because he was interrupted in his work: so Lu 2:49 Joh 2:3-4. We may show a just respect to our parents, and respect to our relations, though we do not neglect our duty to God out of respect to them. The only thing to be further learned from this paragraph, is, how dear believers and holy persons are to Christ; he counts them as dear as mother, brethren, or sisters, and thereby teacheth us the esteem we ought to have for such. Luke saith, he that heareth my word, and doth it. Matthew saith, he that doth it. It is the will of God, that we should believe on him whom he hath sent: See Poole on "Joh 1:12", See Poole on "Joh 6:40", See Poole on "Joh 8:47"; This text derogates nothing from the honour truly due to the blessed virgin, as the mother of the Messiah; but it shows the madness of the papists, exalting her above Christ, whom Christ, considered only as his mother, seemeth here to set beneath every true believer, though, considered as a believer also, she hath a just preference.

Matthew 13:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 13:1-9 The parable of the sower.
Mt 13:10-17 Why Christ taught in parables.
Mt 13:18-23 The exposition of the parable of the sower.
Mt 13:24-30 The parable of the tares,
Mt 13:31,32 of the grain of mustard seed,
Mt 13:33-35 of the leaven.
Mt 13:36-43 The parable of the tares expounded.
Mt 13:44 The parable of the hidden treasure,

Mt 13:45,46 of one pearl of great price,
Mt 13:47-52 of a net cast into the sea,
Mt 13:53-58 Christ's countrymen are
offended in him.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 13:3".

Matthew 13:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 13:3".

Matthew 13:3

Ver. 1-3. Mark saith, Mr 4:1, *He began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.* Luke, Lu 8:4, saith no more than, *when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.* Two evangelists agree that this sermon of our Saviour's was preached out of a ship, to multitudes that stood on the shore. The occasion of his going into a ship was the throng of people, both for his own and their convenience. It is here said that he *sat*; this, we observed before, was the usual gesture of the teacher amongst the Jews. This sermon is said to have been made *the same day*, which some observe in historical narrations is to be taken strictly, and lets us know the assiduity of Christ in his work.

And he spake many things unto them in parables: the term parable often in Scripture signifies dark sayings, or proverbial speeches, Eze 17:2 20:49. But in the Gospels it generally bath another sense, and signifies similitudes or comparisons of things. This being the first time we have met with the term, and the first formed and perfect parable we have met with, because we shall meet with the term often hereafter, with many formed parables, I shall here give some notes which may be not only of use to understand the following parables we shall meet with in this chapter, but in the following part of the Gospel.

1. A parable, in the gospel sense of the term, signifieth a

similitude, taken from the ordinary actions of men, and made use of to inform us in one or more points of spiritual doctrines.

2. That it is not necessary to a parable that the matter contained in it should be true in matter of fact; for it is not brought to inform us in a matter of fact, but in some spiritual truth, to which it bears some proportion. This we see in Jotham's parable of the trees going to choose themselves a king, &c.
3. That it is not necessary that all the actions of men mentioned in a parable should be morally just and honest. The actions of the unjust steward, Lu 16:1, &c., were not so.
4. That, for the right understanding of a parable, our great care must be to consider the main scope of it, whither the story tends, and what our Saviour designed principally by the parable to instruct and teach the people by that discourse.
5. That the main scope of the parable is to be learned, either from our Saviour's general or more particular explication of it, either from the *proparabola*, or preface to it, or from the *epiparabola*, or the conclusion of it.
6. It is not to be expected that all particular actions represented in a parable should be answered by something in the explication of it.
7. Lastly, though the scope of the parable be the main thing we are to attend unto, and in which it doth instruct us, yet it may collaterally inform us in several things besides that point which is in it chiefly attended.

It is said that our Saviour *spake many things to the multitude in parables*, covering truths under similitudes fetched from such ordinary actions as men did or might do. This was a very ancient way of instruction, by fables or parables, as we may learn by Jotham's parable, Jud 9:7,8, &c. It is now much out of use with us, but amongst the Jews was very ordinary; so as our Saviour spake to them in their own dialect. It had a double advantage upon their hearers:

1. Upon their memory, we being very apt to remember stories.

2. Upon their minds, to put them upon studying the meaning of what they heard so delivered; and also upon their affections, similitudes contributing much to excite affection.

But withal it had this disadvantage, that he who so taught was not understood of a great part of his auditory.

Matthew 13:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 13:9".

Matthew 13:9

Ver. 4-9. There is some difference in the terms used by Mark and Luke in their relations of this parable, Mr 4:3-8, and Lu 8:4-8; but none that are material, nor much to be considered by us, being they are in the parable. I shall when I come to it more exactly consider what differences there are betwixt the evangelists in the terms they use in the explication which our Saviour giveth us of the parable; which he did not give before

the multitude, but *when he was alone*, saith Mark, Mr 4:10. That which our Saviour spoke to the whole multitude was this. Now whether there were indeed any such sower, yea or no, is not at all material: our Saviour's design was not to inform them in a matter of fact, but of the different success of the preaching of the word; and for this purpose he brought this similitude, leaving the generality of the hearers to study out his meaning, concluding, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; which is an *epiphonema*, or conclusion of a speech, we met with before, and spake something to.

Matthew 13:10

Ver. 10. Luke saith, Lu 8:9, *His disciples asked him, saying, what might this parable be?* Mark saith, Mr 4:10, *When he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.* It should seem that his twelve apostles understood his meaning, but others that with them were about him when the multitude were gone did not: they therefore desire of him,

1. That they might understand the reason why he spake to the multitude in dark sayings and similitudes, without plainly opening this meaning to them.
2. They own their own dulness of understanding, and confess that they themselves were ignorant, and therefore desired him that he would tell them the meaning of this parable, with which he had entertained the multitude.

Their staying with the twelve when the generality of the multitudes were departed argued that they came with a desire to learn and to be instructed, not out of a mere curiosity to see Christ, or in a mere formality. They show both their charity, in desiring others might be intelligibly instructed; and their piety, in desiring that they might be more fully themselves instructed.

Matthew 13:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 13:12".

Matthew 13:12

Ver. 11,12. Mark saith, Mr 4:11, *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.* Luke saith no more than, *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables.* Only, Mt 8:18, he saith, *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Because it is given to you, &c;* given by my Father: God, according to the good pleasure of his will, hath given to some persons to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, more than to others. Some here distinguish concerning the things which concern the kingdom of God. The laws of his kingdom, they say, are delivered plainly viz. those things which are necessary to be known in order to our salvation are delivered plainly, so as we may understand them. But there are other things that belong to his kingdom not so necessary to be known in order to salvation, these God giveth to some only to know. I cannot agree to this notion. God manifested in the flesh is the great mystery of the gospel, the mystery hid from ages, yet I am sure the knowledge of Christ as such is necessary to salvation. I therefore think the emphasis lieth upon *know*.

1. There is a more general and confused knowledge of a thing; and there is a more distinct, clear, particular knowledge.
2. There is a mere notional knowledge, and there is a more effective, experimental knowledge.

To you my Father hath given eternal life, and, as means in order to it, to know more clearly, particularly, and distinctly the things that concern the kingdom of God; to know and to believe in me, who am the Saviour of the world: my Father hath no such special and particular kindness for the generality of this people, and therefore he hath not given to them the same aids and assistance.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: by him that hath, some understand, he that hath and maketh use of what he hath, and that is plainly the sense of it Mt 25:29, where it is the *epiparabola*, or conclusion of the parable about the talents. But though the preceding parable plainly leadeth to such a sense there, yet the preceding words

seem as directly to lead to another sense here, and what is the more natural and proper signification of the word *hath*, which most naturally signifies to have a thing in our possession. He that hath, therefore, in all reason signifies, he that hath that which, Mt 13:11, is said to be given. He that hath the saving knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. To him that doth not so much come to hear me out of curiosity, and comprehends by his understanding something of my will, but hath a heart that embraces and receiveth me, so as he believeth in me. To him that hath the seed of God in him as in good ground.

Shall be given: that is expounded by the next words, *and he shall have more abundance;* he shall have more grace, a more full, and clear, and distinct knowledge of me, and the things which concern my kingdom.

But whosoever hath not, hath not the seed of God, a true root of grace, in whom the seed of my word hath not fallen as in good ground, but only as in the highway, or in thorny or stony ground, *from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.* How can that be?

Answer: It must not be understood of things in the same nature and kind; Luke expounds it, Mt 8:18, by ο δοκει εχειν, that which either to himself or to others he seemeth to have. He that hath not a truth of grace may think he hath: his hope and opinion of himself shall fail. Others may, from his gifts and parts, think he hath. God shall unmask him, taking away his common gifts, or suffering him to fall into and be overcome by foul temptations. His gifts and parts shall decay, his moral righteousness will abate by God's just dereliction of him, and withholding his restraining grace.

Matthew 13:13

Ver. 13. Neither Mark nor Luke hath this, but it directly followeth from what they have, which also followeth here; only here it is plainly asserted concerning these hearers, and given as a reason why our Lord spake to them in parables. We shall in the explication of the following words inquire in what sense it is said, This people seeing, saw not, and hearing, heard not.

Matthew 13:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 13:15".

Matthew 13:15

Ver. 14,15. These words of the prophet are not less than five times found in the New Testament (besides by Matthew in these verses) applied to the Jews. They are taken out of Isaiah, Isa 6:9,10: *And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* It is quoted Mr 4:12 Lu 8:10, where the sense of the words only is quoted more shortly; Joh 12:40 Ac 28:26,27 Ro 9:8, more largely, yet with some more difference of phrase from that of the prophet. By all of them it appeareth, either that God spake those words to the prophet, as well with reference to those Jews that were to live in the time of Christ, as to those Jews who were living when Isaiah prophesied; or at least, that the words were as true of these Jews as they were of those, so the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in them. But the words are so differently related, that the prophet, and St. John, Joh 12:39,40, seem to make God the cause of the fatness of this people's hearts, the heaviness of their ears, and the blindness of their eyes: *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* So also Paul speaketh, Ro 11:8, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* Matthew saith, *This people's heart is waxed gross.* Matthew seemeth to speak of the more proximate cause; Isaiah, Luke, John, and Paul of the higher but remoter cause. Matthew, of their sinful act preceding; John, Luke, Paul, and Isaiah, of the judicial act of God, consequent to their sinful act. God first sent them Moses and the prophets, by whom they might have seen and known his will: they would not see, nor hear, nor understand, nor convert, nor be healed. God at last did leave them to the reprobacy of their own mind: he willed indeed the prophet to go and preach,

But, saith he, this shall be all the fruit of thy ministry, it shall but make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, they shall more and more shut their eyes: their time of conversion and healing is past; it is now too late, I will not convert, I will not heal them. Now (saith our Saviour) what was applicable to the Jews in the time of Isaiah, is in like manner applicable to you, and the prophet Isaiah did foretell what I should meet with. The generality of the people are a people that have so despised the grace of God, that their day of grace is over; God is resolved he will not convert nor heal them. They have had light, they have seen me and my works, they have heard my sermons and John Baptist's; in seeing they would not see, in hearing they would not hear nor understand. So they are fallen under a judicial hardness and blindness. They shall not now have the light as they have had: my Spirit shall no longer strive with them; neither shall they have a heart to make a due use of the means they have. This is doubtless the meaning of these words. And so they give a just reason why he spake to them in parables. And thus undoubtedly God doth to this day; when a people have a long time sat under a good and profitable ministry, wherein their souls have been dealt with plainly and faithfully, and they remain still ignorant, debauched, and unbelieving, God in a righteous judgment gives them over to the blindness of mind and hardness of heart under the ministry, that though it continue never so good amongst them, yet they are not affected with the word, but sleep and harden under it. Sometimes he by his providence suffers such a minister to come amongst them as speaketh nothing but parables, things which they understand not; or smooth things, fit to smooth them up in their sinful courses, and harden them in their prejudices against Christ and holiness. A most tremendous judgment of God. When God, antecedently to this contempt, by his providence sends such a ministry as may declare his willingness they should be saved and come to the knowledge of his truth; and consequently to this contempt, and despising of his grace, so dealth with them by his providence, either suffering their first seeming affections and edge to abate, (as the Jews are said for a while to have rejoiced in the light John brought), or suffering such a ministry to come amongst them, as one would think God sent lest men should convert and be healed. In the mean time Christ in this text excellently sets out God's method in his dealing with souls:

1. He bringeth them to hear and see.

2. Then he makes them to understand and believe.
3. Then he converts them, renews and changes their hearts.
4. Then he healeth them, pardoneth their sins, and accepts their persons, not because they are converted, but at the same time when he works faith in them, and giveth them a heart to repent.

Matthew 13:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on Mt "13:17".

Matthew 13:17

Ver. 16,17. Luke repeateth this passage, Lu 10:23, but not as annexed to this parable.

Blessed are your eyes; the eyes of your bodies and of your minds. With the eyes of your bodies you have seen the promised Messiah, come in the flesh; and you have seen the works which I have done, confirming me to be the Messiah: and with the eyes of your minds you have understood and believed.

For many prophets and righteous men (Luke adds, *kings*) *have desired to see those things which ye see, &c.* From the very first giving out of the promise of Christ to Adam, upon the fall, Ge 3:15, there was in believers an expectation of the Messiah, who being so great a good, so infinite a blessing to mankind, they could not but have a desire (if God had so pleased) to have seen him. But we are told that Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced. And Simeon's and Anna's expectation of him, mentioned Lu 2:34-38, lets us know that other pious souls had such desires. Our Saviour blesseth his disciples, that they had seen with the eyes of their bodies, what others had only seen afar off by the eyes of their minds, Heb 11:13.

Matthew 13:18

Ver. 18. Mark addeth a little check he gave them, Mr 4:13, *Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?* Luke saith, *The parable is this*, that is, My meaning in and by the parable was this. You, seeing that you cannot satisfy yourselves, as the most that heard me, hearing a sound of words without understanding what they meant, and seeing *that to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God*, and seeing that you see, God hath opened your eyes and ears to spiritual mysteries.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower: my true sense and meaning in this parable, my scope in it, was to show you the different effects which the word of God preached hath upon men's hearts, and the reasons of that difference.

Matthew 13:19

Ver. 19. Mark hath this thus, Mr 4:14,15, The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. Luke hath it thus, Lu 8:11,12, The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. From Luke we learn that the seed is the word; from Mark, that the sower is the preacher, Christ in the first place, then all who derive from him as his ministers, and are exercised in preaching the gospel, which Matthew calleth the word of the kingdom, because it is the instrument by which God raised up Christ's kingdom on earth, both in the church, and in particular souls, and by which he prepareth men for the kingdom of glory. This is a mighty commendation of the word. The soil is the heart, the soul of man. Now there are some hearers to whom the word preached is like seed that a sower throws upon some footpath, or highway, the plough never turneth the earth upon it, or the harrow never goeth over it; so it lieth bare, and is trodden down by the feet of passengers, and the fowls of the air come and pick it up. So, saith our Saviour, there are some that hear the word, but never meditate upon it, never lay it to their hearts, never cover it with second thoughts; the wicked ones, the devils, who are afraid of the power of the word digested, (like the fowls of the air), by suggesting other thoughts, or by presenting other

objects to them, catch away the word that was sown in their hearts. These are they whom I compared to the highway ground receiving the seed.

But some may say, how was it sown in their hearts, if the devil could thus catch it away?

Answer: By the heart here is meant the soul, which hath several powers and faculties. Every thing we hear goeth into our heart, in some sense. As the heart may signify the imaginative power of our soul, or that power by which we take the notion of a thing, the word doth enter into sinners' hearts, so far as they spend some thoughts upon it, and gain some knowledge and notion of it, yea, they may entertain it with some sudden and temporary affection and passion: indeed it is never so in their hearts, as that they truly believe it, or that their wills are conquered into the obedience of it.

Matthew 13:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 13:21".

Matthew 13:21

Ver. 20,21. Both Mark and Luke have this with no difference, save only in words, Mr 4:16,17 Lu 8:13. What Matthew calleth stony ground, Luke calls the rock. By the sun being up, and scorching the seed, in the parable, our Saviour meant tribulation or persecution, which Luke calleth *a time of temptation*, Lu 8:13.

Stony places are places where may be a little earth, but not much; he is here likened to such ground, who heareth the word, and anon (the Greek is εϑυς, which signifieth presently) with joy receiveth it, as Herod is said to have heard John the Baptist gladly. The word of God (as some other objects) doth often on the sudden affect some persons in whom it doth not take any deep root. A sudden passion surprises them, which is but like the overflowing of a brook, which is quickly down.

Yet hath he not root in himself, &c. Our Saviour here assigns two

causes of such hearers falling away, the one internal, the other external; the former is the great cause of the latter. By *root in himself* some understand constancy, or a serious resolution and purpose of heart; but this is doubtless but the product of this root, which is the same thing which the apostle calls *the seed of God*, Job calls *the root of the matter*; a principle of grace in a heart truly touched with the love of God and of his truth.

But dureth for a while; no longer than he thinks that he can by his profession attain the end he aimed at and propounded to himself, be it riches, or honour and reputation.

But when tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, or because of the word, when he seeth that he cannot own his profession without the danger of his estate, life, liberty, places, and preferments, &c. *by and by he is offended*, made to stumble and fall, he falls off from all his former profession of the gospel.

Matthew 13:22

Ver. 22. Mark adds, Mr 4:19, *and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word.* Luke saith, Lu 8:14, *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.* Under these terms, *the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, or the lusts of other things*, our Saviour comprehends all that which St. John calls *the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*. The immoderate desires of our hearts after lawful things, or their desires after things prohibited and unlawful, these he compares to thorns: as thorns in a ground choke the seed, shadowing the blade when it comes up, and keeping off the warmth of the sun, and drawing the fatness of the ground from it; so these divert men's thoughts; and draw men's affections off from the word of God, so as it bringeth forth no fruit; or if there be some little appearance of fruit, it dwindles away, and cometh to no perfection. None of these were profane, godless persons, who make no conscience of neglecting to hear the word preached; they are all hearers. Oh how strait is the way, how narrow is the gate, that leadeth to everlasting life! How few there be that find it!

Matthew 13:23

Ver. 23. Mark saith much the same, Mr 4:20. Luke saith, Lu 8:15, *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* To make a good Christian all these things must concur:

1. A hearing of the word.
2. An understanding or believing it.
3. A keeping of it.
4. A bringing forth of fruit.
5. A bringing forth fruit with patience.

He that receiveth the seed into good ground, is he (saith Luke) *who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it.*

The good ground, (in this parable), is the good and honest heart, that is, a heart renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

He heareth the word: he (saith the apostle) who is born of God, heareth us: *faith cometh by hearing. And understandeth it.* Mark saith, *receiveth it,* that is, not in the mere notion, but by faith, and a mind willing to learn and be instructed. Luke adds, and *keepeth it,* retains the savour and impression of it upon his soul.

Which also beareth fruit, the fruit of holiness in his life, in an obedience to the will of God; for all seed bringeth forth fruit according to his kind. Luke adds, *with patience,* by which is to be understood certainty, constancy, and perseverance, and that notwithstanding all trials and oppositions he meets with from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty; not all alike. A soul may be an honest and good soul, and that (as we see here) in Christ's opinion and judgment, though it doth not bring forth fruit in the same proportion with others.

Matthew 13:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 13:33".

Matthew 13:33

Ver. 24-33. Here are three parables by the evangelist put together before he cometh to the explication which our Saviour giveth of the first; all of them concerning the gospel church, and the dispensation of the gospel. In the one he instructs us what we are to expect as to the mixture of persons in it while it is in this world. In the other two concerning the increase and propagation of it. The first himself expounds, Mt 13:37-43. This parable is only found in Matthew. The other two are found, shortly both of them in Luke, one in Mark; neither of them are expounded. I will therefore, without any explication of these verses at present, go on to the verses following them, all which will lead me to our Saviour's own interpretation of the first of these parables; after which I will also consider these two parables that follow here, but are neither expounded here nor in the other evangelists.

Matthew 13:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 13:35".

Matthew 13:35

Ver. 34,35. Christ spake all the aforementioned things to the multitude, and also to his disciples, in parables, dark sayings, covering Divine and spiritual truths with fit and proper similitudes; and at this time he delivered himself wholly in this manner to them, though at other times he spake more plainly. He gave us the reason before; and by this way of speaking also he made his own disciples more diligent to attend to what they heard, and more inquisitive after the true sense and meaning of it. And thus, saith the evangelist, that which was spoken by the prophet, Ps 78:2, was also fulfilled in Christ: not that the psalmist, whether David or Asaph, did there prophesy concerning Christ, for plainly the psalmist intended to relate the history of God's dealing with the Jews, and their behaviour toward him. Nor was it fulfilled as the type in the antitype, but as a thing of the same nature was done. The prophet delivered

himself in dark sayings, so did Christ, but instead of *I will utter dark sayings of old*, the evangelist hath, *which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*; he means the great and mysterious things of the gospel, *hid from ages and generations*, Col 1:26 1Co 2:7 Ro 16:25, where it is called *the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began*. As the psalmist opened his mouth in grave discourses, tending to the good of the people to whom he spake; so Christ taught the people, by revealing the mysteries of the gospel, *hid in God from the beginning of the world*, as Paul speaks to the Ephesians, Eph 3:9.

Matthew 13:36

Ver. 36. The multitude went away (as most people do from sermons) never the wiser, understanding nothing of what they heard, nor caring to understand it. But there was a more conscientious part of our Saviour's auditory, who could not thus satisfy themselves; they follow Christ into the house, and entreat him to open to them *the parable of the tares of the field*; they say nothing of the other two parables, because probably they understood them, and it may be this parable did more affect them, in regard of the dreadful conclusion of it.

Matthew 13:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 13:39".

Matthew 13:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 13:39".

Matthew 13:39

Ver. 37-39. The design that Christ had in this parable was to show them, that though he laid a good foundation of a church in the world, calling some home to himself; and making them partakers of his effectual grace, laying the foundation of his gospel church in such as took his yoke upon them; yet in process

of time, while those that should succeed him in his ministry slept, (not being so diligent and watchful as they ought to be), the devil (who is full of envy and malice to men's souls, and is continually going about seeking whom he may devour) would sow erroneous opinions, and find a party, even in the bosom of his church, who would hearken to him, and through their lusts comply with his temptations, both to errors in doctrine and errors in practice: and it was his will, that there should be in the visible church a mixture of good and bad, such bad ones especially as men could not purge out without a danger of putting out such as were true and sincere; but there would be a time, in the end of the world, when he would come with his fan, and thoroughly purge his floor, and take to heaven all true and sincere souls, but turn all hypocrites into hell. This appears, by our Saviour's exposition, to have been our Saviour's plain meaning in this parable. Hence he tells us, that by the sower here he meant himself, *the Son of man*. By *the field* he meant *the world*. By *the good seed* he meant *the children of the kingdom*; such as had a true change wrought in their hearts, were truly regenerated and converted. By *the tares* he meant the children of the wicked one, that is, of the devil; such as did the works of the devil, Joh 8:44. That *the enemy that sowed* these tares was the devil, who by his suggestions, presenting objects, &c., makes himself the father of all wicked men. Our Saviour here saith nothing to that part of the parable, where the tares are said to be sown *while men slept*; that was plain and intelligible enough. The devil hath a power to seduce, persuade, and allure, none to force. If particular persons kept their watch, as they might, the devil could not by his temptation force them. If magistrates and ministers kept their watches according to God's prescription, there could not be so much open wickedness in the world as there is. Neither doth our Saviour give us any particular explication of that part of the parable, which is Mt 13:28,29, where the servants say to their master, *Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up*. And he said unto them, *Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them*. Our Saviour by this teacheth us, that every passage in a parable is not to be fitted by something in the explication. It was not the point that he designed in this parable to instruct them in, how far church officers might or ought to act in purging the church; but only,

1. That in the visible church they must expect it mixture, till the day of judgment.

2. That in that day he would make a perfect separation.

So as those that would from this passage in the parable conclude, that all erroneous and loose persons ought to be tolerated in the church till the day of judgment, forget the common rule in divinity, that parabolical divinity is not argumentative. We can argue from nothing in a parable but from the main scope and tendency of it. However, it is bold arguing from a passage in a parable, expounded by our Saviour himself, when he hath omitted the explication of that passage; nor can any thing be concluded, but that such must not be rooted out as have such a resemblance of wheat from the outward appearance, that they cannot be rooted out without a hazard of a mistake, and a rooting up of the wheat with them. But our Saviour reserves the point of the ministerial duty in purging the church to another more proper time; he here saith, nothing of that, but of his own design to purge it at *the harvest*, which he interprets, *the end of the world*, that is, the day of judgment. By *the reapers* he tells us that he meaneth *the angels*.

Matthew 13:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 13:43".

Matthew 13:43

Ver. 40-43. As in the common practice of men, when they have a mind to pick their corn, and have it clean, when it is reaped, to set men to clean the wheat, and to pick out the tares, and, having tied them up in bundles, to burn them, so (saith he) I will do. I

will send my angels at the day of judgment, and they shall take out of my church all impenitent sinners, all those who in this world have been scandals, and offences, and mischievous to my people, and who have made it their business to work iniquity.

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. That is, into hell, which, in regard of the severe torments which the damned shall feel there, is often in Scripture compared to fire, as Mt 25:41, and in other texts, by which is only set out to us the dreadfulness of the punishment of the damned, that is proportioned to, if not far exceeding, that of the burning living bodies in fire. Having thus expressed the punishment of wicked men, he expounds what he means by gathering the wheat into his barn, viz. the taking of righteous men to heaven.

Then, saith he, shall the righteous, those whom I have clothed with my righteousness, and who have lived in obedience to my will to that degree, that though they be not perfectly righteous, yet are sincere and upright, so as I have accepted them, *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:* an expression much like that of Da 12:2,3, significative of that glorious state of the saints in heaven, which no eye having seen, nor ear having heard, no tongue is able to express. He concludes in the same manner as he concludes the parable of the sower, exciting his hearers to a diligent consideration and belief of what he had said.

Our Saviour adding no particular explication of the two parables delivered, Mt 13:31-33, the disciples not asking him to explain them, and the evangelist having put the explication of the first parable after them, it is reasonable, that though I omitted the explication of them in their proper place, yet I should add something here for the benefit of those who possibly will not be able so readily to conceive our Saviour's meaning in them without an interpreter as the disciples did, which is thought to be the reason why they asked no explication of them. The one is the parable of the *grain of mustard seed*, Mt 13:31,32; the other, the parable of *leaven hid in three measures of meal*, Mt 13:33. The scope of both is the same. Our Saviour intended them both to let his disciples know the success that his gospel should have over all the world, that they might not be discouraged at the little success of it at present. To this purpose he compares it, first, to a *grain of mustard seed*, which, he saith, is the least of all seeds,

that is, one of the least of seeds, or the least seed that produces so great a plant; but becomes a tree so high, *that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof*. Though that small seed with us runs up to a great height, and produces a plant which hath branches considerable enough to lodge birds which sit low, yet we must not judge of what grew in those countries by what groweth in ours; there are strange and almost incredible stories told of that plant by naturalists, as to its growth in some hot and fertile countries. Christ by this foretold his disciples, what following ages quickly verified, that the heathen should entertain the gospel, and the sound of it should go to the ends of the earth, notwithstanding its present small appearance. Upon the same score he compares it to a little *leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of meal, till the whole mass of meal was leavened*. By these two expressions our Saviour also lets us know the quick and powerful nature of the word; that Christ's words are (as he said) spirit of life, and have a hidden and extraordinary virtue in them. I do not think it worth the while to inquire into the contents of these $\sigma\alpha\tau\alpha$ or measures of meal, and why he mentions but three. They are curiosities, the knowledge of which turneth to no account. Our Saviour certainly, by the expression, designed only to hint the small number of the Jews that believed in him, but foretold a far greater harvest.

The law should go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, as Isaiah prophesied, [Isa 2:3](#); but many people (after them) should say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord.

Matthew 13:44

Ver. 44. Whatsoever belongeth to the kingdom of God, whether the word, which is called *the word of the kingdom*, or the grace and favour of God, which he by me dispenses out under the administration of the gospel, *is like*, that is, should be adjudged, esteemed, and used like as *treasure hid in a field*. Men should do by it as they would do upon the discovery of a great sum of money, buried up in the earth, in some field not yet their own. Suppose a man had made some such discovery, what would he do? He would rejoice at it, he would hide it, he would sell all he had and buy that field. So should men do to whom there is a revelation of the gospel, and the grace thereof; they should

inwardly rejoice in the revelation, and bless God for it, and, whatever it cost them, labour that they might be made partakers of that grace. Earthly possessions cannot be had without purchasing, and those who have not ready money to purchase with must raise it from the sale of something which they have; therefore our labour for the kingdom of heaven is set out under the notion of buying. But the prophet, (Isa 55:1,2) let us know that it is a buying *without money and without price*. However, there is some resemblance, for as in buying and selling there is a parting with something that is ours, in exchange for something which is another's, so in order to the obtaining of the grace of the gospel, and the kingdom of glory, to which the remission of sins leadeth, we must part with something in order to the obtaining of it. We have no ready money, nothing by us, that is a *quid pro quo*, a valuable price for Divine grace; we must therefore part with something that we have, and it is no matter what it be, which God requireth. Where this discovery is made, the soul will part with all it hath, not only its old heart, its unlawful desires and lusts, but its riches, honours, and pleasures, if it can by no other means obtain the kingdom of heaven, that it may obtain it; they are all of no value to it. Nor is it at all necessary in order to buying, that the thing parted with be of a proportionable, value. Amongst men, wedges of gold have been purchased for knives and rattles, &c; nor doth any thing we can part with, that we may obtain the kingdom of heaven, bear any better proportion; yet it is a buying, because it is what God is pleased to accept, and upon the parting with gives us this heavenly kingdom.

Matthew 13:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 13:46".

Matthew 13:46

Ver. 45,46. The state of the gospel dispensation is such, that men in it having a discovery of more excellent things than before they were aware of, *life and immortality being brought to light through the gospel*, 2Ti 1:10, *grace and truth coming by Jesus Christ*, Joh 1:17, men and women are set upon seeking for these spiritual things, as merchants do for goodly pearls; and when God makes a discovery of Christ and his grace to the soul, it

appears to them as a *pearl of great price*, of more value than all they have in the world, and they are ready to part with all to obtain Christ and his grace. Both these parables have the same scope and tendency, viz.

1. To inform us that Christ and his grace are of a great and transcendent value.
2. That under the gospel there is a clear discovery of these things to the world.
3. That where this discovery is effectually and particularly made to any soul, that soul will part with all it hath, or is worth, rather than it will miss of Christ, and his grace and glory.

Matthew 13:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 13:50".

Matthew 13:50

Ver. 47-50. The scope of this parable is much the same with that of the tares, to teach us, that while the church is in this world there will be in it a mixture of good and bad, a perfect separation of which one from another is not to be expected until the day of judgment.

Again, the kingdom of heaven. This term signifieth the whole dispensation and administration of the gospel, both the grace dispensed in it, and the means of that grace which is administered under it. I should here interpret it of the preaching

of the gospel, which is called *the word of the kingdom*, being the means by which men are gathered in both to the church visible and invisible. This our Lord here compares to *a net*, thrown *into the sea* of the world, and gathering in of every kind, bringing in many to an outward profession, all of which shall not come to the kingdom of glory, nor are indeed true members of Christ; not members of the church invisible, though they be members of the church visible. When the end of the world shall come, and Christ shall have accomplished his design in the world, then a day of judgment shall come, and there shall be a perfect separation between such as received the gospel in truth, and in the love of it, and others: the former shall be taken to heaven, and the latter thrown into hell; which he expresses by the like phrases which he had before used in the parable of the tares, which need no further explication.

Matthew 13:51

Ver. 51. A conscientious teacher will have a respect to the profit of his hearers. Christ here setteth us an example, asking his disciples if they had *understood all these things*; as well those parables of which he had given them no particular explication, as those he had explained.

They say unto him, Yea, Lord, we have understood them.

Matthew 13:52

Ver. 52. Seeing you understand these things, communicate your knowledge of them unto others, do not know for yourselves alone.

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. The scribes amongst Jews were not only clerks, that were employed in writing, but teachers of the law; such a one was Ezra, Ezr 7:6. Our Saviour here by *every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God*, understandeth every good minister of the gospel, fitted to promote the kingdom of God, to be employed in the church of God: should be like a good *householder*, that hath not his provision to seek when his guests come; but hath a full fraught storehouse, and hath nothing to do but out of his stock

and storehouse to bring out all sort of provision, according to the various palates of his guests. Ministers of the gospel should not be novices, 1Ti 3:6, raw and ignorant men; but men mighty in the Scriptures, well acquainted with the writings of the Old and New Testament, and the sense of them; men that have a stock of spiritual knowledge, able readily to speak a word to the weary, and to speak to men and women's particular cases and questions.

Matthew 13:53

Ver. 53. See Poole on "Mt 13:54".

Matthew 13:54

Ver. 53,54. Mark relates this passage, Mr 6:1-4. Our Lord went up and down preaching the gospel: he having preached unto the people in the former parables, now he departeth from the seaside, where he preached as before, *into his own country*, most interpreters judge Nazareth; he was born in Bethlehem, but we read little or nothing of any time he spent there afterward. Nazareth was the place where he was brought up, and therefore he was called *Jesus of Nazareth*. There he preached in the synagogue, or in the synagogues of Galilee. Mark addeth, on the sabbath day.

Insomuch that they were astonished: it is not said they repented, or believed, but they admired at him, and were astonished.

And said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? That is, a power to do these mighty works. Mark saith, *Whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this that is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?* Astonishment and admiration flow from ignorance, and are no indications of any spiritual saving work upon men's hearts: we shall see that these Jews, notwithstanding their astonishment, are by and by scandalized, and offended at Christ.

Matthew 13:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 13:57".

Matthew 13:56

Ver. 56. See Poole on "Mt 13:57".

Matthew 13:57

Ver. 55-57. Mark saith the same, Mr 6:3; only he saith, *Is not this the carpenter?* ο τεκτων; which leadeth some to think that Christ, till he was thirty years of age, wrought with Joseph upon his trade. Lu 2:51, it is said, *that he came to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents.* Joseph was an artificer, that was certain; so τεκτων signifies; but whether a carpenter, or a smith, the word will not inform us. For the brethren of Christ and his sisters, here mentioned, the most by them understand his near relations. The Jews were offended at the meanness of our Saviour's parents and relations.

They were offended in him; that is, these things made them stumble at him, and not receive him as the Messias, or a prophet sent from God. How unreasonable is malice and prejudice! One would have thought that their knowledge of his friends and education should have rather led them to have concluded that he must be sent from God, and more than a man, seeing that he did not come by this wisdom by any ordinary means, nor work these great works by any human power.

Matthew 13:58

Ver. 58. Mark saith, Mr 6:4-6, *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.* Our Lord here gives another more external reason of their being scandalized at him; that is, his being so familiar with them, and conversing so long with them: familiarity ordinarily breeding contempt: to this purpose he applies to them a proverbial speech, *That a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country.* Men are ready to

undervalue, slight, and disesteem those they have been brought up and ordinarily conversed with and amongst.

He did not many mighty works there (Mark telleth us he did some, but not many) *because of their unbelief*: he saw them a people whose hearts, through the just judgment of God, were locked and shut up under unbelief, and therefore it was to no purpose to do more miracles before them, upon whom they would have no effect; nor did this consist with what he knew of the counsels of God with reference unto them. So as he left them, and went preaching about the villages or country towns in Galilee.

Matthew 14:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 14:1,2 Herod's opinion of Christ.

Mt 14:3-12 The cause and manner of John the Baptist's death.

Mt 14:13-21 Jesus departeth into a desert place, and feedeth there five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.

Mt 14:22-33 He walketh on the sea to his disciples,

Mt 14:34-36 and landing at Gennesaret, healeth the sick who touched but the hem of his garment.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 14:2".

Matthew 14:2

Ver. 1,2. This and the following history is related by Mark more largely, Mr 6:14-30; by Luke more shortly, Lu 9:7-9. We heard before, that the Romans, under whom the Jews now were, had altered the government of the Jews from a kingdom to a tetrarchy, or government of four. Luke telleth us who were the tetrarchs, Lu 3:1. Herod (as we read there) was the tetrarch of Galilee. He had before this time put John Baptist to death, upon

what occasion, and in what manner, we shall hear by and by. He heareth of the fame of Jesus. Luke saith he *heard of all that was done by him, and was perplexed*; that some said *John the Baptist was risen from the dead*; others, *that Elias had appeared*; others, *that one of the old prophets was risen again*. But *Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him*. Mark saith, Mr 6:14, *that king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad): and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead*. So as it seems though others had various opinions, yet Herod was fixed in this, that this man was John the Baptist risen again from the dead. Though Luke reports him as speaking more doubtfully, (as he might do to the people), yet Matthew and Mark speak him affirming of it more confidently (probably to his courtiers and confidants). There was an opinion amongst the heathens, that the souls of men and women, when they died, went into other bodies. Some think that Herod was infected with that, and that this is the meaning of his suspicion that John was risen from the dead; that his soul, which he had forced from his body, was gone into another body, so as it might be revenged on him. Or else he thought that John was indeed raised from the dead, (which yet by search might quickly have been known), and therefore mighty works showed themselves in him.

Matthew 14:3

Ver. 3. Mark saith, Mr 6:17, *for he had married her*. Whether this Philip was Herod's brother both by father and mother, is argued by some, as also whether he married her during the life of his brother: the Scripture satisfieth us not in these things, but it is most probable that Philip was his own brother, and that he at least lived in adultery with her during the life of her husband, contrary to the express law of God, Le 18:16.

Matthew 14:4

Ver. 4. Mark telleth us, Mr 6:20, that Herod feared, that is, revered and respected, John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. John was very popular, and all men counted him as a prophet; so that probably Herod sent for him to the court, and heard him there. John seeing Herod live in adultery and incest, was not able to suffer such a sin upon him, but tells him he did that which was not lawful for him to do, for God's law had forbidden such marriages. Mark addeth, that Herodias also had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not, because of the respect which Herod had for him. But this wore off, for Matthew tells us ...(see Mt 14:5).

Matthew 14:5

Ver. 5. At first he had some reverence for John because he was a good man, but either John, by the frequent checks he gave to his lust, or Herodias, by her continual importunities to Herod to revenge her of her great enemy, prevailed, and made Herod willing enough to put him to death; but now he was afraid of some popular tumult, or insurrection, because of the great esteem which the Jews generally had of John, thinking him a prophet, one sent of God to reveal his will unto men.

Matthew 14:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 14:7".

Matthew 14:7

Ver. 7. Mark relates this more fully, but the sense is the same, Mt 6:21-23, *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.* Those who have got over the point of lawfulness in an action, have nothing to consult but convenience:

therefore saith Mark, *when a convenient day was come*, when probably Herod should be over merry with wine, or should be busy with his company, and not so much at leisure to consider what he did. It so happened that the daughter of this Herodias danced before Herod upon his birthday. The keeping of birthdays was usual amongst the eastern kings; Pharaoh kept his birthday, Ge 40:20. Some by it understand the day of the prince's coronation, or entrance upon his government, which some think is meant in Ho 7:5, by the *day of our king, (when) the princes made him sick with bottles of wine*. The Jews reckoned them both amongst the pagan festivals, but they had derived both this and many other usages from them. Dancing was much used amongst them at their festivals, It seemeth this daughter of Herodias pleased Herod more than ordinary; he sweareth that he would give her what she would ask, to the half of his kingdom. That phrase, by Es 5:3, seemeth to have been ordinary with princes when they made liberal promises.

Matthew 14:8

Ver. 8. Mark, Mr 6:24,25, reports it more largely: *And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste to the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist*. The meaning is plain, so as the words need no interpreter: they let us see;

1. The power of the lust of malice and desire of revenge; surely Herodias might have prompted her to have asked something which might have done her more good than the blood of a holy and innocent man. The guilty soul is never at rest. John Baptist was a prisoner; she should not need have feared the influence of John's word to have caused a divorce, but she cannot be at rest while John is alive.
2. The great evil of wicked parents, and the contrary blessing of parents fearing God: the former, by commanding or persuading their children to sin, are great instruments towards their children's damnation; the other, by their admonitions, precepts and instructions, great instruments of their salvation and eternal happiness.

3. We may observe the genius of flattering courtiers, not one of them interposes to save the Baptist's life.

Matthew 14:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 14:11".

Matthew 14:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 14:11".

Matthew 14:11

Ver. 9-11. Mark relates it more largely, in Mr 6:26-28, *And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sake which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. The king was exceeding sorry; he could have wished she had asked something else: he was troubled; for we heard before, that although he feared not God, yet he feared the people. Yet for his oath's sake; not out of any religion of his oath: Juramentum non petest esse vinculum iniquitatis.* They must be sottishly ignorant, that think their calling God to witness that they will do a thing which God hath forbidden them to do, should oblige them in any measure to the doing of the thing. But for his oath's sake, in point of honour, because his word was gone out, that he might not appear guilty of any temerity or levity; and for the sake of those that were with him, that he might not seem before them to vary from his word, or it may be, as well to gratify them as to gratify the damsel and her mother; he sends an executioner, who took off John the Baptist's head, and gave it to the damsel in a charger, who carried it to her mother. What could be more unjust, and inhuman, and bloody? John was not tried, nor condemned. It was a great festival, and should not have been profaned or defiled with blood. These things were nothing, when an insatiable malice was to be gratified. Herodias will have her husband and his guests see that John Baptist's head in a charger was to her as

pleasing a dish as any was at Herod's great feast. Thus died this great man, to satisfy the malice and lust of a lewd and imperious woman; and to teach us what we must expect, if we will be faithful to the trust which God reposes in us.

Matthew 14:12

Ver. 12. The disciples of John, in testimony of their respect to their master, and of their owning of his doctrine, and grateful remembrance of him, hearing what Herod had done, came and took up John's body, and buried it in a tomb, and they soon after went and acquainted our Saviour with what had happened; which was the cause of our Saviour's withdrawing to a place where he might be less taken notice of, as we shall hear.

Matthew 14:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 14:14".

Matthew 14:14

Ver. 13,14. Mark hath the same, Mr 6:32. Our Lord knew that the time for his suffering was not yet come, and possibly consulted also the safety of his disciples. The people follow him on foot; but our Saviour going by sea, how could the people follow him on foot? It is answered, that it was but a creek of the sea which our Saviour passed over, and the people by going three or four miles about might follow him on foot. He seeing a great multitude, had compassion on them, and healed the sick persons that were amongst them.

Matthew 14:15

Ver. 15. The following miracle being an evident confirmation of the Godhead of Christ, is recorded by all the evangelists: by Matthew here; by Mark, Mr 6:35, &c; by Luke, Mt 9:10-12, &c.; by John, Mt 6:1-3, &c. These words lead us to it, and show us the occasion of it. Our Saviour was withdrawn to a more private place, which, because little inhabited, is called *a desert place*.

Luke saith it was near Bethsaida, Lu 9:10. The people, as it seemeth, had been together some time. It was now afternoon, and the time of dining was past. It was evening in the Jewish sense (who called it all evening after the sun was turned, and therefore had two evenings, as those skilled in their writings tell us, betwixt which the passover was to be killed). The disciples therefore pitying the multitudes, who, they presumed, might be hungry, come to our Saviour, and move him to dismiss them, that they might get something to eat in the villages of the adjacent country.

Matthew 14:16

Ver. 16. John relates the story thus: *When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him. Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

Matthew 14:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 14:21".

Matthew 14:21

Ver. 17-21. In the relation of this story by the other evangelists there is no difference in what is material; the others relate some circumstances more, as that they sat down on the grass, and *by fifties*, one saith, *by hundreds and by fifties*, &c.; but they all agree in the quantity of the provision, *five loaves and two fishes*; the number of the persons fed, *five thousand* (only one addeth, *besides women and children*); and in the number of the baskets full of fragments; and in our Saviour's lifting up his eyes to heaven, and blessing them. These are the main things observable in this history. In the history of the miracle, as there is no difference between the evangelists to be reconciled, so there is no difficulty to be explained. It is a plain relation of a matter of fact, by which our Lord evidently showed himself to be the Son of God, God blessed for ever, for he must in this necessarily exert a creating power: here must be a production of a substance or being out of a not being, or it had not been possible that five thousand men (besides women and children) should have been fed with five loaves and two fishes; and therefore some think that it is said that Christ blessed the loaves as he blessed the living creatures, Ge 1:22; but we have not here the following words, *Be fruitful and multiply*, which inclines me rather to think, that the blessing mentioned here, upon his lifting up of his eyes to heaven, was a begging God's blessing upon their food, himself thereby paying the homage of his human nature to his Father, and teaching us, according to that, 1Ti 4:4,5, to receive the good creatures which God's providence affords us for our nourishment with thanksgiving, sanctifying them by prayer. By this miracle, and others of the like nature, our Saviour took from the unbelieving Jews all manner of cavil and exception to his works. Though devils might by compact give place one to another, and some exorcists of their own might seem to cast them out, yet none ever pretended to multiply bread and fish, to such a proportion as this, that such a quantity of either should feed such a number, and leave such a remainder. This history like wise further instructs us, both concerning the low condition of Christ and his disciples, their faith in the word of Christ, and

our duty, and safety in depending upon his providence while we are doing of our duty, and minding the things of the kingdom of God, and obeying the will of God. St. John observeth the fruit of this miracle, Joh 6:14, *Those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

Matthew 14:22

Ver. 22. Mark saith, Mr 6:45, *before unto*, or over against, *Bethsaida*. Christ is said to have constrained them, to denote to us that they were not very willing to go. They were in a desert place, it was towards night, the day was far spent ere he wrought the miracle before mentioned; probably they were loath to leave Christ alone, in such a place, and at such a time. But his command was obeyed. Probably he commanded;

1. That he might better scatter the multitude, Mr 6:45.
2. That he might prevent a tumult, for St. John tells us, that the people had a design *to take him by force and make him a king*, Joh 6:15.
3. To make way for another miracle, to which their going by sea gave occasion, as we shall hear by and by.
4. To gain himself a private opportunity for prayer, for, Mr 6:46, *When he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray*. So also saith our evangelist.

Matthew 14:23

Ver. 23. John saith no more than that he departed himself into a mountain alone. Matthew and Mark say it was to pray. From whence (as from others places of holy writ) the duty of secret prayer is commended to us by the great example of our Saviour: he chooseth the mountain for it, as a place of greatest privacy and solitude.

And when the evening was come: this confirmeth the former notion, that the Jews had two evenings. They called that part of

the day after the sun had began to decline the evening, which was the evening before spoken of, interpreted by the other evangelists, when the day was well spent; and the twilight, which is here called the evening, and which is the time which we most usually call by that name.

Matthew 14:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 14:27".

Matthew 14:27

Ver. 27. While our Saviour was praying on the mount the ship which carried his disciples was upon the sea, that is, that creek of the sea which they were at that time passing over. A storm ariseth, not without the counsel of God, that Christ might show that both the winds and the waves were under his command.

And in the fourth watch of the night, that is, about three hours before the rising of the sun; for though the Jews anciently divided the night into three parts, each consisting of four hours, yet being at this time under the Romans, they kept to their division of it into four parts, which they called watches, from their military guards, which they relieved every three hours.

Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea, as if it had been firm ground.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear. By this it seemeth that the doctrine of spirits was not strange to that

age, though they had a sect of Sadducees which denied it. That the devil, by God's permission, hath a power to trouble and agitate the air, and also to assume a visible shape, and in it to affright persons by sea or by land, is unquestionable. When the disciples at distance saw Christ walking on the sea, they concluded it was some such apparition. This made them cry out through fear.

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Mark addeth, Mr 6:52, *They considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened.* Having had so late an experience, both of the power and goodness of their Master, in their late strait for want of bread, they ought not so soon to have showed a distrust in his providence, as if he would have suffered them to have perished in the sea: that miracle did not make a due impression upon them.

Matthew 14:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 14:31".

Matthew 14:31

Ver. 29-31. Peter, by saying *if it be thou*, showed that his faith was not so strong as it should have been, after he had heard his Master's voice. By his saying to him, *bid me come unto thee on the water*, he showeth a something stronger faith, and a resolution to obey his command; but his fear afterward, when the wind began to rise higher, and he began to sink, argued again the infirmity of his faith. Thus Peter is a pattern of the best believers,

who though they may sometimes think that they could trust God in any state or condition, yet often mistake their own hearts, and begin to shrink in an hour of great extremity; which lets us see what need we have to pray, that God would not lead us by his providence into great temptations, much more to take heed that we do not throw ourselves into them. No man knows how he shall find his heart under a great temptation, until he hath tried it. It therefore gives us a caution, as against condemning others, so against boasting, and too much confidence as to ourselves, and lets us see how much need we have to keep our eye upon Christ and his strength in such an hour.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand: God is never far off from his people when extreme troubles are hard at hand. Christ says Peter, but not without a cheek;

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Doubting is directly contrary to faith, yet it will not conclude a soul to have no faith, only a little faith.

Matthew 14:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 14:33".

Matthew 14:33

Ver. 32-33. *They,* that is, Christ and Peter, whom we must suppose to have walked some way with Christ upon the sea. Christ by his company making his mighty power more conspicuous; so as the Manichees had no reason to conclude, from Christ's walking on the sea, that he had no true human body, for sure Peter had; and they must ascribe little to our Saviour's Divine nature, that will not allow him to have had a power to suspend the natural motion downward, which we see in all gravity, which is an affection of all human bodies. No sooner was Christ come into the ship, but the wind ceased, in testimony of its homage to him, who bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

They that were in the ship came and worshipped him, paying a religious homage unto him, as he who had preserved their lives from so great a danger; and they further owned him to be *the Son*

of God. This was that great point which God was bringing the world to the acknowledgment of, and we see it was done by degrees. His miracles at first only procured a veneration of him, and a faith that he had his power from God. Then he comes to be acknowledged *the Son of David* by the blind man. The miracle of the five loaves brought many to acknowledge him *that Prophet that should come into the world*. This is the first time we meet with so plain and open an acknowledgment of his being the Son of God: this was done not only by his disciples, but by the mariners, and the passengers in the ship, but it was far from a steady faith as to that point, which the disciples yet wanted.

Matthew 14:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 14:36".

Matthew 14:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 14:36".

Matthew 14:36

Ver. 34-36. Mark relates the same, Mr 6:53-56, with no difference considerable. Christ had been in this country before, Mt 8:1-34, and in it wrought several miracles, so as they had a former knowledge of him. As soon as they had knowledge of his being again come, they express their faith in him, and their charity towards their neighbours, in telling it abroad, and bringing sick persons to him. I know not why any should fancy any superstition in their desire to *touch the hem of his garment*, considering how Mark expresses it, $\kappa\alpha\upsilon$, which we translate, *if it were but the border of his garment*. It rather soundeth in my ears as a high expression of their faith; they believed there was such a fulness of virtue in Christ, that it flowed from him to every part of his garment. It was their faith in Christ, not their touch of his garment, that healed them. I am sure our Lord so far encouraged their faith, that he healed all those who touched his garment with that faith and expectation. The evangelist saith, they *were made perfectly whole*. Their faith here plainly implied not only an assent to his power, but a confidence in his goodness.

Matthew 15:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 15:1-9 Christ reproveth the scribes and Pharisees for setting their own traditions above the commandments of God.

Mt 15:10-20 He teacheth that not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of it, defileth a man.

Mt 15:21-28 He healeth the daughter of a woman of Canaan,

Mt 15:29-31 and great multitudes near the sea of Galilee.

Mt 15:32-39 He feedeth four thousand and upwards with seven loaves and a few small fishes.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 15:2".

Matthew 15:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark relates this piece of history more largely, Mr 7:1-5, *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain, of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?* This portion of Scripture cannot be well understood without understanding something of the Jewish government as to matters ecclesiastical; in which the high priest was the chief. God addeth seventy men more to Moses and Aaron, Nu 11:25, to bear a share in the government; these were called the sanhedrim; and

this was the supreme court of judicature amongst the Jews, as to all things which respected the laws of God, whether moral, judicial, or ceremonial, and every one was bound to abide by their determination. These sat in Jerusalem, but had their inferior courts in other places, from which they appealed to the sanhedrim, who finally determined, De 17:8-13. It was the great business of this court to take care that there should be no corruption in religion. These were they therefore that sent messengers to John, when he began to preach, to inquire what he was, and by what authority he baptized, Joh 1:19. The Pharisees (as we before heard) had charged our Saviour's disciples with violation of the sabbath by plucking and rubbing ears of corn, and himself also with the same crime for healing the sick. It is very like these accusations were got to Jerusalem, and that these were emissaries sent from the sanhedrim to watch our Saviour, or possibly they came out of their own curiosity. They could find in our Saviour no guilt as to any violation of the law of God, but they pick a quarrel with him for some rites and ceremonies of their church, which he and his disciples were not so strict in the observation of. They say, *Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?* The word *traditions* signifies only things delivered, and is as well applicable to the law of God as any thing else. Thus the whole law of God was but a tradition, a doctrine of life, delivered to the Jews by Moses from God: thus the apostle bids the Thessalonians, *Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*, 2Th 2:15. But the term of *the elders* is that which restraineth it, for as the papists in our time hold that, besides what we have in the New Testament, the apostle delivered many things to the primitive church only by word of mouth, which have since that time been imparted to succeeding churches, to the observation of which Christians are as much obliged as to the written word, so the Jews did formerly. For though, for some tract of time, they kept to the Divine law, yet in process of time they abused that text, De 4:14, to found a new invention upon it: That while Moses was in the mount of God forty days and forty nights, God in the day time revealed to him the law written in the five books of Moses, and in the night he revealed to him several other things, as to which his will was they should not be written, for fear the heathens should transcribe them, but be delivered only by word of mouth to the sanhedrim, and be to them as much a rule of judgment as any part of the law which was written. By which means they gained themselves a liberty of making the law of

God what they pleased, for their traditions were of several sorts. Some were determinations of what in the law seemed doubtful. Others were determinations of what the law left at liberty. Others they called *sepimenta legis*, rules they gave under pretence of a guard to the Divine law; for the more caution, that they might not transgress it. These things at first were not imposed as laws, but commended by way of advice and counsel, afterward they came to be looked upon as laws, and grew almost infinite. They tell us that Ezra was he who gathered those traditions together, and made the Cabbala in seventy-two books, which was kept by Gamaliel and others till the destruction of Jerusalem. A hundred and twenty years after, they tell us Rabbi Judas, the son of Simon, composed a book of them, called Misna. Three hundred years after this, they tell us R. Johanan found more, and he and others, his colleagues, collected them into a larger book, called the Jerusalem Talmud. A hundred years after this, another rabbi made a collection of the traditions amongst the Jews that remained in Babylon, which he called the Babylonish Talmud; by which two the Jews are governed in ecclesiastical matters, all the world over, at this day. Their whole Talmud is divided into six parts. The sixth is about purifications; it containeth twelve books, and every book hath twenty or thirty chapters, all treating about the purifying of houses, clothes, vessels, human bodies, and their several parts. The Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem were in such an afflicted state, that though their Talmud was not perfected of five hundred years and more after Christ, yet it is probable they added not much to what they had in use in Christ's time. The Pharisees were very severe as to these traditions. The Sadducees kept more to the written law. But the Pharisees were in far greater credit with the Jews, therefore Paul called them the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, Ac 26:5. The Jews have several ordinary sayings, that show in what esteem they had these traditions, as, *If the scribes say our right hand is our left, and our left hand our right, we are to believe them. And, There is more in the words of the scribes than the words of the law,* &c. These scribes and Pharisees accuse our Saviour's disciples for the violation of one of these traditions. Mark saith, that *the Pharisees, and all the Jews,* (that is, the major part of those that followed the Pharisees' faction), *except they wash their hands oft, eat not.* They thought it sinful to eat unless they often washed their hands. The foundation of this tradition was doubtless in the Levitical law. God by that law had declared him unclean that should touch the carcass of any unclean thing, Le

5:2,3. Upon this (as some think) they had superstructed a tradition of washing their hands, pots, cups, vessels, when they had been at the market, or almost any where, for fear they, or their pots, cups, &c., should have touched any unclean person or thing. In this they were guilty of several errors:

1. Extending the law to the touching of things and persons, of whom the law had said nothing.
2. In cases where such touches happened accidentally, and were not made on purpose.
3. In thinking that the stain of sin could be washed away by a ritual action, which God never commanded.

We must not think that they charge the disciples here with a neglect of a civil washing for cleanliness, but of a religious superstitious washing.

Mark saith, κοιναις χεπσι, that is, with common hands; we translate it, polluted: so Ac 10:14 11:8: hands not first separated to God by the religious rite of washings.

Matthew 15:3

Ver. 3. Mark hath the same, Mr 7:9, though a little out of the order in which Matthew hath it: *Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*. Our Saviour could have answered them, had he pleased, more strictly to their questions, but he must then either have incurred danger or odium; he therefore chooseth to answer them by another question, which struck at the root of the matter. Admit, saith he, my disciples culpable in not observing traditions, which indeed you call the traditions of the elders, but are your own, devised by you, or some like you, merely to uphold your power and authority, and to keep people in a needless subjection to you: I am sure you are far more guilty, in making traditions contrary to the law of God, or rejecting God's law to keep your traditions. And indeed this is the common guilt of those who are great zealots for traditions and rites, not commanded in the word of God. The Jewish Rabbi Jose saith, *He sinneth as much who eateth with unwashen hands, as he that lieth with an harlot*. The

papists make it a greater sin for a priest to marry than to keep a concubine, and commit fornication; they make it a lesser transgression than to eat meat on a Friday.

Matthew 15:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 15:6".

Matthew 15:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 15:6".

Matthew 15:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark hath much the same, Mr 7:10-13. Mark saith *Moses said*, which is the same with *God commanded*: God commanded by Moses. Mark saith, *It is Corban, that is to say, a gift*. Mark addeth, Mr 7:12, *And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother;* which more fully shows their crime, and expounds what Matthew had said more shortly. Mark adds, *and many such like things do ye*. This is an instance by which our Saviour justifieth his charge upon them, that they had made void the law of God by their traditions. The law he instances in is the fifth commandment, Ex 20:12 De 5:16; which the apostle calleth *the first commandment with promise*, Eph 6:2; which God had fortified with a judicial law, wherein he had commanded, that *he who cursed his father and mother should be put to death* Ex 21:17 Le 20:9 he had also further threatened the violaters of this law, Pr 20:20. By the way, our Saviour here also lets us know, that the fifth commandment obliges children to relieve their parents in their necessity, and this is the sense of the term *honour* in other texts of Scripture: a law of God which hath approved itself to the wisdom almost of all nations. *Liberi parentes alant aut vinciantur*, Let children relieve their parents or be put into prison, was an old Roman law. Nor did the Pharisees deny this in terms, but they had made an exception from it, which in effect made it of no use, at least such as wicked children easily might, and commonly did, elude it by: they had taught the people to say to their parents, *It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me:* and in

that case, though they did not give their poor parents any thing wherewith they might relieve their necessities, yet they should be guiltless as to the fifth commandment. There is a strange variety of interpreters as to this text. Some making the sense this, That which I should relieve you with I have dedicated unto God, and therefore I cannot relieve you. Others thus, I have dedicated my estate to God, and that will be as much good and benefit to you, as if I had given it unto you. Others think that Corban was the form of an oath, from whence they form other senses. But the most free and unconstrained sense seemeth to be this: The Pharisees were a very courteous generation, and had a share in the gifts that were brought unto God for the use of the temple or otherwise; thence they were very zealous and diligent in persuading people to make such oblations. When any pretended the need that their parents stood in of their help, they told them, that if they told their parents it was *a gift*, that they had vowed such a portion of their estate to a sacred use, that would before God excuse them for not relieving their parents; so as the precept of honouring their parents, and relieving them in their necessities, obliged them not, if they had first given to God the things by which their parents might or ought to have been relieved. Thus he tells them, that by their traditions, under pretence of a more religion, and expounding the Divine law, they had indeed destroyed it, and made it of no effect at all.

Matthew 15:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 15:9".

Matthew 15:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 15:9".

Matthew 15:9

Ver. 7-9. The Greek is, διδασκοντες διδασκαλιας, teaching doctrines, the commandments of men.

Ye hypocrites, who put on an outward vizard or appearance of holiness, but have nothing in your hearts of true and severe piety,

well did Isaiah prophesy of you: Isaiah spake to the Jews that were then in being, but what he then said of your forefathers that lived in his age, is true of you who are their children.

Saying, This people, &c. The evangelist doth not quote the words of the prophet exactly, but his sense, and teacheth us this lesson, That whatsoever outward show and profession of religion be in and upon men, if their hearts be not right with God, and what they outwardly do proceed not from an inward principle of faith, love, and obedience in and to God, they are but hypocrites.

In vain do they worship me, &c.; that is, idly, and unprofitably, and to no purpose: I will not account what they do.

Teaching doctrines, the commandments of men: he means in the worship of God, for other commandments of men are not the preacher's texts, nor doth he here mean by *commandments of men* such as backed the commandments of God, and only served to enforce them, but such as he had been speaking of, human traditions, of which God had said nothing, as washing of hands; or such traditions as enervated the commandments of God; such were the last mentioned.

Matthew 15:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 15:11".

Matthew 15:11

Ver. 10,11. Mark hath the same, Mr 7:15. Our Saviour turns off his discourse from the Pharisees and scribes, who he saw were indocible, to the multitude, in whom he discerned a more teachable temper: he useth the preface, *Hear, and understand*, as well knowing how they had been taught, and what an advantage error in possession hath. That which he tells them, and that before the scribes and Pharisees, (as will appear by the following verses), was, that that which goeth into a man doth not defile him, but that which cometh out of him. He speaketh not of a Levitical pollution, for so he that did eat of an unclean thing might by it be defiled; but even in such an eating it was not the flesh of the unclean bird or beast that defiled the man, but his

sinful lusting after it, and eating it in disobedience to the command of God.

Matthew 15:12

Ver. 12. The Pharisees' offence was, without question, at his making so light a matter at their washings; not that they understood our Saviour as speaking against the distinction of meats, which was established by the ceremonial law, not as yet abrogated. There is nothing doth more offend hypocrites than pressing spiritual worship and homage to God, and the slighting of all external rites and actions, not attended with a suitable inward homage and devotion of heart.

Matthew 15:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 15:13".

Matthew 15:14

Ver. 13,14. *Every plant* may be understood of doctrines, practices, or persons. These scribes and Pharisees are a wretched generation, that are got into the sheepfold not at the door; my Father never sent them, they are crept in at the windows, they are plants got into my garden, which my Father never planted there, and they must be rooted up.

Let them alone, they are incorrigible, and blinded by their own interest against any conviction or instruction: as, Ho 4:17, *Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone:* so these men are joined to their superstitious traditions; I will not concern myself with them. They are pretended leaders of the blind, Ro 2:19, but themselves are blind. I pity the poor people, for while the blind lead the blind they both fall into a ditch. An ignorant and unfaithful ministry is the greatest plague God can send amongst a people.

Matthew 15:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 15:16".

Matthew 15:16

Ver. 15,16. Mark saith, *his disciples asked him concerning the parable.* Peter probably began, the rest followed. Or Peter speaks in the name of the rest, for our Saviour in his answer doth not say, Art thou, but, *Are ye.* They did well in that they desired to be instructed what the meaning was of the parable, that is, the dark saying, which he used (for the Hebrews called all dark sayings parables); possibly they might also stumble at what our Saviour said, as tending to the destruction of the ceremonial law, about the difference of meats. But that they were no better instructed than not to understand a thing so plain and obvious, this was their fault, and argued their small improvement of our Saviour's company. God expects a proficiency in knowledge from us proportionate unto the means he giveth us.

Matthew 15:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 15:20".

Matthew 15:20

Ver. 17-20. Mark hath this, with very small difference in words, Mr 7:18-23; only he specifies some more sins than Matthew enumerates. The sum of what our Saviour saith is this: That all sin proceedeth from lust, some desires in the heart of man after things forbidden in the law of God. All the ticklings of our hearts with such thoughts, all the willings and desires of such things,

though they never issue in overt acts, yet defile and pollute a man; and from these inward motions of the heart proceed those overt acts (mentioned by Matthew or Mark) of *murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, pride, foolishness*: now these things, take them in their nest, which is the heart, they defile and pollute that; take them in their passage through our lips into the world, they pollute that; take them in their overt act, they pollute the man. But to eat with unwashen hands, a thing no where forbidden by God, only by the Pharisees, who had no such authority given them from God to command any such things, this doth not pollute a man. It is possible that men may sin in not obeying the commandments of men, but it must be then in things in which God hath authorized them to command, and to determine our practice in, for the pollution lies in a disobedience to the commandment of God, not of men.

Matthew 15:21

Ver. 21. Mark addeth, Mr 7:24, *and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid.* Some here make a question, whether our Saviour did go into Phoenicia, (of which Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities), or only into the coasts of Palestine, next to it: those that think he did not go into Phoenicia, are guided by his prohibition of his disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles, Mt 10:5, and the consideration that the time was not yet come for his manifestation to the Gentiles. I rather incline to think that he went into Tyre and Sidon; and that this was a kind of a *praeludium* to the calling of the Gentiles, and a prediction of what should be done more fully afterwards. It is manifest he did not go with a design to make himself public there, for Mark saith, he *would have no man know it.* But for privacy withdrew himself thither, and showed some of his miraculous operations there; and Mt 15:22 saith the woman that came to him was a Canaanite. Mark saith she was *a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation.* Nor is here any contradiction, for ever since the Grecian monarchy prevailed over so great a part of the world, the name of Greeks had obtained, so as they called all Greeks who were not Jews, Ro 1:14, 16 10:12.

A Syrophenician, saith Mark, *by nation;* that is, one that was a native of that part of Phoenicia which is joined to Tyre and

Sidon. Matthew calls her a Canaanite, or a woman of Canaan, by which though some would understand one of Cana, yet as the orthography will not agree, so Mark calling her a Greek, and a Syrophenician, inclines us rather to judge her of the stock of the old Canaanites.

Matthew 15:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 15:23".

Matthew 15:23

Ver. 22,23. Mark saith, A certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs, Mt 7:25-27. Though the woman appears to have been a pagan, yet living so near Galilee, she had doubtless heard of Christ, both what he had done in casting out devils, and also that he was looked upon as the Son of David, and usually called by that name by those who went to him for any cures; she therefore gives him that title. Others think her to have been more specially enlightened, and to have called him the Son of David, not as a usual compellation given him, but as believing him to have been the true Messias promised to the Jews: nor is that impossible, for though the gospel at this time had not shined out upon any considerable number of the heathen, yet God in all times had his number amongst them; and this woman living so near to the Jews, and so near to Galilee, where our Saviour hitherto had most conversed and preached, it is not improbable that she might have received the grace as well as the sound of the gospel, so God might have kindled in her heart a true faith in the Messias. Our Saviour's commendation of her faith in the following discourse maketh this very probable. Matthew saith that he answered her not a word. Mark saith that he said to her, Let the children first be filled, &c. To the observing reader this will appear no contradiction. For by Mark it should appear, that she first came to our Saviour into the house, into which he went that he might be private, and there fell at his feet. Here Christ

answered her not a word, took no notice of her at all. But it appeareth by Matthew that Christ soon left the home, and she followed after him upon the way. The disciples said, Send her away; for she crieth after us. Then it was that our Saviour said to her, Let the children first be filled; his disciples first interposing, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. How many of the papists think that this text patronizes their invocation of saints departed I cannot tell, for these disciples were alive, and we do not read that she spake to any of them to intercede for her. It is certain they did move Christ on her behalf.

Matthew 15:24

Ver. 24. Our Lord by these words doth not deny but that he was sent as a Redeemer to more, but not as a minister, or as an *apostle*, as he is called, Heb 3:1. The apostle, Ro 15:8, saith, *that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers*. Our Lord's ministry was confined to the Jews; so was the apostles', Mt 10:5. Till some time after our Saviour's ascension the gospel was not preached generally to the Gentiles, though some particular persons might and did, both in Christ's time and in the time of the apostles, before they did go to the Gentiles, hear, receive and embrace the gospel, as we shall hear this woman did.

Matthew 15:25

Ver. 25. She here acknowledgeth his Divine power, and implores his help; thus showing that she believed him to be the Son of God, and a rewarder of those that sought him; and continues her request after two repulses.

Matthew 15:26

Ver. 26. Mark saith, Mr 7:27, *Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet, &c.* By the *children* here he means the Jews, by the *dogs* he means the heathen. The Jews are called the children of the kingdom. Israel is called God's *son*, his *firstborn*, Ex 4:22. The apostle, Ro 9:4, saith, to them belonged the *the adoption*. By *bread* here our Saviour

means the publication of the gospel, and the miracles by which the truth of the doctrine of it was confirmed; by *dogs* he means the heathen, whom the Jews did count as dogs, no members of the household of God: it was a term of contempt, 2Sa 3:8 2Sa 16:9 2Ki 8:13. When our Saviour saith, *It is not meet* he means it is not just, nor equal.

Objection: How came it then that the gospel was ever carried to the Gentiles?

Mark expounds our Saviour's meaning, or rather gives us an account of our Saviour's words, more perfectly: *Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet, &c.* The Jews are God's children, a people whom he chose out of all the nations of the earth, to whom he gave many privileges; it is his will the gospel should be first preached to them, and then to the Gentiles. Gentiles are as dogs, of whom God hath not taken such a care; but they shall have their time. Only it is not consonant to my Father's will that the gospel, and the miracles by which it is confirmed, should be exhibited unto you Gentiles, till it hath been fully preached to the Jews, and they be first filled with the sound, and with the confirmations of it.

Matthew 15:27

Ver. 27. Mark reports it to the same sense, Mr 7:28. She goeth on after three repulses, the last of which was not without a reproach, for our Lord had implicitly called her a dog. These words are as much as if she had said, Lord, I confess the Jews are children; I am a dog, a poor heathen, no proper member of the household of God; and it is truth that it seemeth unreasonable that I, being a dog, should be served before all the children are filled. Lord, I do not beg such a full manifestation of thy power and goodness for the Gentiles. I beg but a crumb of mercy for myself and poor child; and, Lord, though we do not use to give our loaves prepared for our children to the dogs that feed under our table, crumbs of our children's bread, as Mark expresses it, yet we suffer our dogs to gather them up. Lord, I know thou hast a plenty of grace and blessing, the children may be filled, and yet I may have some crumbs. Three things are remarkable in her answer, besides her faith so eminently expressed.

1. Her humility; she owneth herself a dog.
2. Her modesty; she begs no more than a crumb.
3. Her fervency and importunity after three repulses.

By this we learn our duty in prayer, to go to God humbly, to implore him modestly, and to be instant in prayer, going on in our duty, though we have not presently such an answer as we desire. These things, conjoined with faith, make an acceptable prayer.

Matthew 15:28

Ver. 28. Mark saith, Mr 7:29, *And he said unto her. For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. O woman! For this saying, showing the greatness of thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt. Go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*

And her daughter was made whole from that very hour, as she understood when she came home to her house, for she found the devil was gone out of her daughter, and her daughter was laid upon the bed. Thus the words of both the evangelists compounded make but one entire and perfect sense. The greatness of her faith appeared in two things:

1. In that she had so little means, so small a revelation; being a pagan, she ordinarily had not heard the gospel, nor seen so many of Christ's mighty works, confirming the truth of the doctrine of it. Hence it is observed, that Christ admired the faith of none but pagans, Mt 8:10.
2. In that she would not give over, though he gave her three repulses. So as she said, like Jacob, I will not let thee go, until thou bless me. And as he, like a prince, so she, like a princess, prevailed with God, and obtained the thing which she desired.

But will some say. Where was her faith? What promise, what word of God, had she to assent to? God doth not speak to us outwardly, but inwardly, as undoubtedly he had to this woman,

giving her some inward assurance that he was the Son of God, and both able and willing to grant her the thing she asked. Now a firm and fixed assent to any Divine revelation is faith, whether the revelation be internal or external. We from hence learn the mighty power of true faith and fervent prayer.

Matthew 15:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 15:31".

Matthew 15:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on Mt "15:31".

Matthew 15:31

Ver. 29-31. Mark gives us an account of this motion of our Saviour's, Mr 7:31-37, and mentions a particular miracle which our Lord wrought, either in the way, or when he came to the place where he rested; which not being mentioned by our evangelist, I shall consider when I come to that chapter in Mark. Matthew only tells us in general that he healed many, some lame, some that were blind, some that were dumb, &c. Such a general account of the miracles wrought by our Saviour we had Mt 4:24 8:16 11:5; the evangelist not largely setting down every particular miracle wrought by our Saviour. And they glorified the Lord God of Israel. The Pharisees ascribed these operations to the devil's power, but the poor people owned them as the works of God, and gave praise unto God.

Matthew 15:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 15:39".

Matthew 15:39

Ver. 32-39. Mark gives us an account of this miracle, Mr 8:1-10. There is very little difference in their relations, only Mark saith, our Saviour went *into the parts of Dalmanutha*; Matthew saith, *into the coasts of Magdala*: most think that it was the same place, which had two names: some think one was the name of the country, the other of the city or town; others, that they were two towns near together. There are no difficulties in this history. Some question how they could fast three days; but the text doth not say so, only that at that time they had nothing to eat, having spent what they brought with them, probably in their baskets, which answers another question also, how they could get baskets in the wilderness. The miracle was of the same nature with that which we met with Mt 14:15-22; only there were five thousand men fed with five loaves and two fishes, here four thousand were fed with seven loaves and a few fishes; there they took up

twelve, here but seven baskets full. Our Lord worketh sometimes without means, sometimes by means, and those differently proportions to his end, as it pleaseth him. The miraculous operations of our Saviour are amongst his *miranda et adoranda*, not his *imitanda*. These actions of his, which we are in reading to admire and adore, but are not concerned to imitate, yet something we may observe from them, both for our instruction and imitation. For our instruction, we may from this history observe the extent of Christ's compassion to his disciples, which though it is most eminently seen in what he doth for their souls, yet reacheth also to their bodies and more external wants. It also teacheth us to trust God in the doing of our duty. Those that are in a wilderness hearing Christ, shall not faint by the way before they get home. His course of giving thanks before he brake and made use of the bread, (which we observed before in the other miracle), commendeth to us the religious custom of begging a blessing before our meat, and giving thanks to God for good things of that nature, when we have received them.

Matthew 16:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 16:1-4 The Pharisees require a sign.
Mt 16:5-12 Jesus warns his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and explains his meaning.
Mt 16:13-20 The people's opinion, and Peter's confession, of Christ.
Mt 16:21-23 Jesus foreshows his own death, and rebuketh Peter for dissuading him from it.
Mt 16:24-28 He showeth that his followers must deny themselves in prospect of a future reward.

Ver. 1. What these Pharisees and Sadducees were we have had an occasion to show before in our annotations on Mt 3:7, See Poole on "Mt 3:7". There was a great opposition between them, as we may learn from Ac 23:7,8. The Pharisees and scribes were great zealots for their traditions; the Sadducees valued them not.

The Pharisees held the resurrection, angels, and spirits; the Sadducees denied all. But they were both enemies to Christ, and combine in their designs against him. They came to him *tempting*, that is, desirous to make a trial of him; they desire *that he would show them a sign from heaven*; such a one as Moses showed them, Joh 6:30,31 bringing down bread from heaven. They had seen our Saviour showing many signs, but they had taught the people that these things might be done by the power of the devil, or by the art of man; therefore they challenge our Saviour to show them another kind of sign, a sign from heaven, that they might know he was sent of God. See Mr 8:11.

Matthew 16:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 16:3".

Matthew 16:3

Ver. 2,3. You can, saith our Saviour, make observations upon the works of God in nature and common providence, and from such observations you can make conclusions; if you see the sky red in the evening, you can conclude from thence that the morrow will be fair, because you think that the redness of the sky at night speaks the clouds thin and the air pure; and on the other side, the redness of it in the morning speaks the clouds thick, so as the sun cannot disperse them; or because you observe that generally it so proveth, though nothing be more mutable than the air. But you cannot *discern the signs of the times*: you are only dull at making observations upon the Scriptures, and the will of God revealed in them concerning me. You might observe that all the signs of the Messiah are fulfilled in me: I was born of a virgin, as was prophesied by Isaiah, Isa 7:14; in Bethlehem Judah, as was prophesied by Micah, Mic 5:2; at a time when the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from his feet, as was prophesied by Jacob, Ge 49:10: that John the Baptist is come in the power and spirit of Elias, to prepare my way before me, as was prophesied by Malachi, Mal 4:5; that there is one come, who openeth the eyes of the blind, and unstops the ears of the deaf, and maketh the lame to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, according to the prophecy, Isa 35:5,6. All these are the signs of the time when the Messiah was to come; but these

things you cannot discern, but, like a company of hypocrites, who pretend one thing and do another, you come and ask a sign, that you might believe in me, when you have so many, and yet will not believe.

Matthew 16:4

Ver. 4. We meet with the same answer given to the Pharisees, Mt 12:39. You pretend yourselves to be the children of Abraham, but you are bastards rather than his children; he saw my day afar off and rejoiced, you will not believe though you see me amongst you, and at your doors; he believed without any sign, you will not believe though I have showed you many signs. You shall have no such sign as you would have; the sign of the prophet Jonah is enough. But in our Lord's former reference of them to the prophet Jonah, he instanced in one particular, viz. his being three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; here he seemeth more generally to refer to Jonah as a type of him in more respects, which indeed he was. Chemnitius reckons them up thus:

1. Jonah was thrown into the sea by the mariners, to whom he had entrusted himself: Christ was delivered to death by the Jews, to whom he was specially promised.
2. Jonah was willingly thrown into the sea: Christ laid down his life, and man took it not from him.
3. Jonah by being cast into the sea saved those in the ship: Christ by his death saved the children of men.
4. Jonah after he had been in the whale's belly three days was cast up on dry land: Christ after three days rose again from the dead.
5. The Ninevites, though upon the preaching of Jonah they made a show of repentance, yet returning to their former sins were soon after destroyed; so were the Jews within forty years after Christ's ascension.

So as Jonah was many ways an eminent sign and type of Christ. Our Lord having referred them to study this sign, would

entertain no more discourse with them, but leaves, and departeth from them. Mark saith, Mr 8:13, that he entering into the ship again, departed to the other side, (the ship which brought him to Dalmanutha, or Magdala), and went into the coasts of Galilee again.

Matthew 16:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 16:7".

Matthew 16:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 16:7".

Matthew 16:7

Ver. 5-7. Mark saith, Mr 8:14-16, *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.* The disciples went into the ship without taking a due care for provision for their bodies, which they were sensible of when they came on shore on the other side. Christ happened in the mean time to give them a caution against the doctrine of the Pharisees, and Sadducees, and Herodians, which he properly expressed (though metaphorically) under the notion of leaven: this they understood not, but fancied that he had spoken this to them with reference to their want of bread, as if he had only given them warning, that for the making of bread to supply their necessity, they should not go to the Pharisees, or Sadducees, or Herodians, for leaven; or that they should not go to buy any bread of the Pharisees or of the Sadducees. So dull are we to understand spiritual things, and so soon had they forgot the doctrine which our Saviour had so lately taught them, Mt 15:17,18, that those things which are foreign to a man, and come not out of his heart, do not defile a man, but those things only which proceed out of his heart.

Matthew 16:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 16:12".

Matthew 16:12

Ver. 8-12. Mark, giving us an account of this passage, Mr 8:17-19, useth some harsher expressions: *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your eyes yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? Our Saviour here charges them with three things, ignorance, unbelief, forgetfulness.*

1. Ignorance, in that they did not understand that his usual way was to discourse spiritual things to them under earthly similitudes, and so by leaven he must understand something else than leaven with which men use to leaven their bread.
2. Unbelief, that they having seen the power and goodness of the Lord and Master, to feed four thousand with seven loaves, and five thousand with five loaves, leaving a great remainder, and

that he did this for a mixed multitude, out of a mere compassion to the wants and cravings of human nature, should not judge that he was able to provide for them, although they had brought no bread; or doubt whether he would do it or no for them, who were much dearer to him.

3. Forgetfulness, which is often in Scripture made the mother of unbelief and disobedience. De 4:9,23 25:19 Ps 78:11.

There is nothing of difficulty in the terms, only from this history we may learn these things:

1. That God expects that we should not only hear and see, but understand.
2. That he looks we should not only hear for the present time, but for the time to come. Christ expected that his disciples should have learned from his doctrine about washing of hands, that he could not mean the leaven of bread, but something else, which might defile them.
3. That he is much displeased with his own people, when he discerns blindness and ignorance in them, after their more than ordinary means of knowledge.
4. That former experiences of God's power and goodness manifested for us, or to us, ought to strengthen our faith in him when we come under the like circumstances; and a disputing or doubting after such experiences argues but a little and very weak faith, and a hardness of heart, that the mercies of God have not made a just impression on our souls.

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Mark, instead of and of the Sadducees, hath, and of the leaven of Herod, which hath made some think that Herod was a Sadducee. The doctrine of the Pharisees is reducible to two heads:

1. Justification by the works of the law, and those works too according to that imperfect sense of the law they gave.
2. The obligation of the tradition of the elders; whose traditions

were also (as we have heard) some of them of that nature, that they made the law of God of no effect.

The doctrine of the Sadducees we are in part told, Ac 23:8. They said there was no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit: these were principles excellently suited to men of atheistical hearts and lives, and it is more than probable that Herod and his courtiers, and some of his lords and great captains, had sucked in some of these principles, and these were the Herodians mentioned, Mt 22:16 Mr 3:6.

These doctrines are by our Saviour compared to leaven, not only because of the sour nature of it, but also because heretics' words (as the apostle saith) eat as doth a canker, and are of a contagious nature; as leaven doth diffuse its quality into the whole mass of meat. Our Saviour had upon this account compared the gospel to leaven, Mt 13:33, because by his blessing upon it it should influence the world, as we heard, in Mt 13:1-58.

Matthew 16:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 16:14".

Matthew 16:14

Ver. 13,14. This, and the following part of this discourse, is related both by Mark and Luke. Mark hath it, Mr 8:27, And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. Luke saith, Lu 9:18,19, And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. Matthew and Mark name the place whither our Saviour was going, viz. Caesarea Philippi: it is so called partly to distinguish it from another Caesarea, and partly because it was built to the honour of Tiberius Caesar, by Philip the tetrarch. It was a city at the bottom of Lebanon, and upon the

river of Jordan. Mark saith this discourse was in the way. Luke saith, as he was alone praying; but as must there signify after, for we cannot think that our Saviour would interrupt himself in prayer by this discourse, nor could he be alone praying if his disciples were with him, both which Luke saith; so that εν τω ειναι αυταν προσευχομενον καταμονας were certainly translated better, after he had been praying alone, his disciples were with him: so that this discourse might be (as Mark saith) in the way, before they came to Caesarea Philippi, whither he was going.

He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men (or the people, as Luke hath it) say that I am? Not that our Saviour, who knew the hearts of all, did not know, but to draw out Peter's following confession.

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: we heard before that Herod said so.

Some, Elias: this respected the prophecy, Mal 4:5. The Jews had a tradition, that before the coming of the Messiah Elias should come, Joh 1:21.

Others, Jeremias, (this is only in Matthew), or one of the prophets. The Jews seeing Christ do such wonderful works, could not resolve themselves who he was. Herod and his court party said that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. They had, it seems, an opinion of some extraordinary virtues, or powers, in such as were risen from the dead. Many interpreters agree that the Jews had an opinion, that good men's souls, when they died, went into other bodies; this made them guess that our Saviour was one of the old prophets.

Matthew 16:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 16:16".

Matthew 16:16

Ver. 15,16. Mark saith, Mr 8:29, *Thou art the Christ.* Luke saith, Lu 9:20, *Peter answering said, The Christ of God,* that is, the

Messiah. You that are my disciples and apostles, what is your opinion of me? Our Lord expects not only faith in our hearts, but the confession of our lips, Ro 10:10.

And Simon Peter answered, not because he had any priority amongst the apostles, but he was of a more quick and fervid temper than the rest, and so speaketh first; they silently agreed to what he said. What he saith is but little, but of that nature that it is the very foundation of the gospel.

Thou art Christ, the Anointed, the person of old promised to the world under the name of the Messiah, Da 9:25,26.

The Son, not by adoption, but by nature for they believed John the Baptist, Elias, and the old prophets the sons of God by grace. It is plain Peter means more than that.

Of the living God. Our Lord had asked, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* And in the same sense he speaks to the disciples, *Whom do ye say that I the Son of man am?* Lord, saith Peter, we believe that thou the Son of man *art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* God is often in Scripture called the *living God*, in opposition to idols, which had eyes and saw not, ears and heard not, nor had any life in them, Ge 16:13 Heb 3:12 9:14 &c. So as here we have a full and plain confession of that doctrine, which is the foundation of the gospel.

Matthew 16:17

Ver. 17. Our Lord appeareth here to be mightily pleased with this confession of Peter and the rest of his disciples, (for we shall observe in the Gospel, that Peter was usually the first in speaking, Joh 6:68), he pronounces him *blessed*, and giveth the reason of it afterward.

Simon bar-jona, that is, Simon son of Jona, or, as some would have it, son of John (they think Jona is a contraction of Johanna). Our Lord gives him the same name, Joh 21:15.

For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. By *flesh and blood* our Saviour meaneth man, and the reason and wisdom of man. Thus it is often used in

Scripture, Isa 40:5 Ga 1:16 Eph 6:12. Some note it always signifieth so when it is in Scripture opposed to God. Thou hast not learned this by tradition, or any dictates from man, nor yet by any human ratiocination, but from *my Father which is in heaven*. This confirmeth what we have Eph 2:8, that *faith is the gift of God*. No man cometh to the Son, but he whom the Father draweth, Joh 6:44. Men may assent to things from the reports of men, or from the evidence of reason, but neither of these is faith. Faith must be an assent to a proposition upon the authority of God revealing it. Nor doth any man truly and savingly believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, but he in whom God hath wrought such a persuasion; yet is not the ministry of the word needless in the case, because, as the apostle saith, *faith comes by hearing*, and ministers are God's instruments by whom men believe. No faith makes a soul blessed but that which is of the operation of God.

Matthew 16:18

Ver. 18. *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter:* Christ gave him this name, Joh 1:42, when his brother Andrew first brought him to Christ. I did not give thee the name of Cephas, or Peter, for nothing, (for what Cephas signifieth in the Syriac Peter signifieth in the Greek), I called thee Cephas and thou art Peter, a rock. Thou shalt be a rock. This our Lord made good afterward, when he told him, that Satan had desired to winnow him like wheat, but he had prayed that his faith might not fail, Lu 22:32. Thou hast made a confession of faith which is a rock, even such a rock as was mentioned Mt 7:25. And thou thyself art a rock, a steady, firm believer. *And upon this rock I will build my church*. Here is a question amongst interpreters, what, or whom, our Saviour here meaneth by *this rock*.

1. Some think that he meaneth himself, as he saith, Joh 2:19, *Destroy this temple* (meaning his own body). God is often called a Rock, De 32:18 Ps 18:2 Ps 31:3, and it is certain Christ is the foundation of the church, Isa 28:16 1Co 3:11 1Pe 2:6. But this sense seemeth a little hard, that our Saviour, speaking to Peter, and telling him he was a stone, or a rock, should with the same breath pass to himself, and not say, Upon myself, but upon this rock *I will build my church*.

2. The generality of protestant writers, not without the suffrage of divers of the ancients, say Peter's confession, which he had made, is the rock here spoken of. And indeed the doctrine contained in his confession is the foundation of the gospel; the whole Christian church is built upon it.

3. Others think, in regard that our Saviour directeth his speech not to all the apostles, but to Peter, and doth not say, Blessed are you, but, *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona*, that here is something promised to Peter in special; but they do not think this is any priority, much less any jurisdiction, more than the rest had, but that Christ would make a more eminent and special use of him, in the building of his church, than of the rest; and they observe, that God did make a more eminent use of Peter in raising his gospel church, both amongst the Jews, Ac 2:1-47, and the Gentiles, Ac 10:1-48. But yet this soundeth a little harshly, to interpret *upon this rock*, by this rock. I do therefore rather incline to interpret it in the second sense:

Upon this rock, upon this solid and unmovable foundation of truth, which thou hast publicly made, *I will build my church*. It is true, Christ is the foundation of the church, and other foundation can no man lay. But though Christ be the foundation in one sense, the apostles are so called in another sense, Eph 2:20 Re 21:14 not the apostles' persons, but the doctrine which they preached. They, by their doctrine which they preached, (the sum or great point of which was what Peter here professed), laid the foundation of the Christian church, as they were the first preachers of it to the Gentiles. In which sense soever it be taken, it makes nothing for the papists' superiority or jurisdiction of St. Peter, or his successors. It follows, *I will build my church*. By church is here plainly meant the whole body of believers, who all agree in this one faith. It is observable, that Christ calls it his church, not Peter's, and saith, *I will build*, not, thou shalt build. The working of faith in souls is God's work. Men are but ministers, by whom others believe. They have but a ministry towards, not a lordship over the church of God.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; that is, the power of the devil and all his instruments shall never prevail against it utterly to extinguish it, neither to extinguish true faith in the heart of any particular believer, nor to root the gospel out of the world.

The gates is here put for the persons that sit in the gates. It was their custom to have the rulers to sit in the gates, Ru 4:1,11 2Sa 19:8. Neither doth *hell* signify here the place of the damned; αδης no where (except in one place, and as to that it is questionable, Lu 16:23) signifies so, but either death, or the graves, or the state of the dead: yet the devil is also understood here, as he *that hath the power of death*, Heb 2:14. The plain sense is, that our Lord would build the Christian church upon this proposition of truth, that he was the Christ, the Son of God; that Peter should be an eminent instrument in converting men to this faith; and where this faith obtained in the world, he would so far protect it, that though the devil and his instruments should by all means imaginable attempt the extinguishing of it by the total extirpation of it, the professors of it, and might as to particular places prevail; yet they should never so prevail, but to the end of the world he would have a church, a number of people called out by his apostles, and those who should succeed in their ministry, who should uphold this great truth. So as this is a plain promise for the continuance of the gospel church to the end of the world.

Matthew 16:19

Ver. 19. *And I will give unto thee;* not unto thee exclusively, that is, to thee and no others; for as we no where read of any such power used by Peter, so our Saviour's first question, Whom think you that I am? Letteth us know that his speech, though directed to Peter only, (who in the name of the rest first answered), concerned the rest of the apostles as well as Peter. Besides, as we know that the other apostles had as well as he the key of knowledge and doctrine, and by their preaching opened the kingdom of heaven to men; so the key of discipline also was committed to the rest as well as unto him: *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*, Joh 20:22,23. The keys of the kingdom of heaven; the whole administration of the gospel, both with reference to the publication of the doctrine of it, and the dispensing out the ordinances of it. We read of the key of knowledge, which the scribes and Pharisees took away, Lu 11:52, and the key of government: *The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder*, Isa 22:21, I will commit thy government into his hand; which is applied to Christ, Re 3:7.

The sense is, Peter, I will betrust thee, and the rest of my apostles, with the whole administration of my gospel; you shall lay the foundation of the Christian church, and administer all the affairs of it, opening the truths of my gospel to the world, and governing those who shall receive the faith of the gospel.

And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Some very learned interpreters think that our Saviour here speaketh according to the language then in use amongst the Jews; who by binding understood the determining and declaring a thing unlawful; and by loosing, declaring by doctrine, or determining by judgment, a thing unlawful, that is, such as no men's consciences were bound to do or to avoid. So as by this text an authority was given to these first planters of the gospel, to determine (by virtue of their infallible Spirit, breathed upon them, Joh 20:21) concerning things to be done and to be avoided. Thus Ac 15:28,29, they loosed the Gentiles from the observation of the ceremonial law. Some think that by this phrase our Saviour gave to his apostles, and not to them only, but to the succeeding church, to the end of the world, a power of excommunication and absolution, to admit in and to cast out of the church, and promises to ratify what they do of this nature in heaven; and that this text is expounded by Joh 20:23, *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained;* and that the power of the church, and of ministers in the church, as to this, is more than declarative. That the church hath a power in a due order and for just causes, to cast persons out of its communion, is plain enough from other texts; but that the church hath a power to remit sins committed against God more than declaratively, that is, declaring that upon men's repentance and faith God hath remitted, I cannot see founded in this text. Certain it is, that Christ doth not here bind himself to confirm the erroneous actions of men, either in excommunications or absolutions; nor to authorize all such actions of this nature that they do. I do therefore rather incline to think that our Saviour by this promise declared his will, that his apostles should settle the affairs of the gospel church, determining what should be lawful and unlawful, and setting rules, according to which all succeeding ministers and officers in his church should act, which our Lord would confirm in heaven. And that the ordinary power of churches in censures is rather to be derived from other texts of Scripture than this, though I will

not deny but that in the general it may be here included; but I cannot think that the sense of binding and loosing here is excommunicating and absolving, but a doctrinal or judicial determination of things lawful and unlawful granted to the apostles; the not obeying or living up to whose determinations and decisions may be indeed a just cause of casting persons out of the communion of the church, as the contrary obedience and conformity to them a good ground of receiving them in again. But whether in this text be not granted to the apostles a further power than agrees to any ministers since their age I much doubt, and am very prone to believe that there is.

Matthew 16:20

Ver. 20. We met with some charges of this nature before, given to those whom he had miraculously cured, that they should tell no man of it, Mt 8:4 9:30; but this seemeth to differ from them. There he only forbade the publication of his miracles; here he forbids them preaching that Jesus was the Christ, a doctrine necessary to be believed in order to people's salvation. We are not able to give an account of all our Saviour's particular actions.

1. We are sure this was a precept but of a temporary force and obligation, for we know that afterward they did sufficiently publish this abroad, only for a time he would not have it published by his disciples. We cannot certainly determine whether he forbade them;
 - a) Because they were not as yet fit to publish so great a truth.
Or;
 - b) Because the time was not yet come for the publication of it.
Or;
 - c) He would not have it published till he rose again from the dead, having triumphed over death, lest people, hearing of it before, should have had their faith shaken by his death; which seemeth very probable, because in the next words he begins to speak of his death.
 - d) That he might hereby (as much as might be) avoid the odium and envy of the Pharisees. Or;

- e) That himself might publish first this great truth of the gospel, and confirm it by his miracles.

Matthew 16:21

Ver. 21. Our Lord taught his hearers by degrees, as they were able to hear and to bear his instruction. He therefore first instructs them in the truth of his Divine nature, and bringeth them to a firm and steady assent to this proposition, That he was the Christ, the Son of God. Lest they should have this faith of theirs shaken by his sufferings and death, he begins to instruct them as to those things, that when they saw it come to pass, they might not be offended, but wait for his resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 16:22

Ver. 22. Peter took our Lord aside, as we do our friend to whom we would speak something which we would not have all to hear, *and began to rebuke him; επιτιμων*, to reprove him, as men often do their familiar friends, when they judge they have spoken something beneath them, or that might turn to their prejudice; saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.* The words in the Greek want the verb, so leave us in doubt whether we should translate them, Be merciful to thyself, spare thyself, or, Let God, or God shall, be merciful unto thee. The last words expound them; *this shall not be unto thee.* God shall be merciful unto thee, and help thee, this shall not betide thee. These words were undoubtedly spoken by Peter out of a good intention, and with a singular affection to his Master; but,

1. They spake him as yet ignorant of the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, of the doctrine of the cross, and of the will of the Father concerning Christ.
2. They spake great weakness in him, to contradict him whom he had but now acknowledged to be the Christ, the Son of God. Good intentions, and good affections, will not justify evil actions. Christ takes him up smartly.

Matthew 16:23

Ver. 23. Peter, thou thinkest that by this discourse thou showest some kindness unto me, like a friend, but thou art in this an adversary to me; for so the word *Satan* doth signify, and is therefore ordinarily applied to the devil, who is the grand adversary of mankind.

Get thee behind me, I abominate such advice. I told thee I *must* suffer. It was the determinate counsel of God; it is my Father's will. He is mine enemy that dissuades me from a free and cheerful obedience to it. I will hear no more such discourse.

For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. The word is *φρονηεις*, and, it may be, were better translated, Thou thinkest not of, or thou understandest not, the things that be of God, that is, the counsels of God in this matter, as to the redemption of mankind: thou considerest me only as thy Master and thy Friend, and wouldst have no harm come to me; thou dost not mind or think of me as the Saviour of the world, or the Redeemer of mankind, which cannot be redeemed otherwise than by my death. Though by thy intemperate affection to me thou wouldst hinder the redemption of mankind, this is not in this thing to mind, think on, or savour the things of God, but to suffer thyself to be seduced by thy carnal affection. It is a mistaken kindness to our friends, to persuade them, for our personal advantage, to do what they cannot do in consistency with their obedience to the will of God.

Matthew 16:24

Ver. 24. Mark hath the same, Mr 8:34, and Luke, Lu 9:23; only Mark saith, *when he had called the people unto him with his disciples*; Luke saith, *he said to them all*. He spake it to his disciples, but not privately, but before all the rest of the people, who at that time were present.

If any man will come after me; that is, if any man will be my disciple: so it is expounded by Lu 14:26,27, which is a text much of the same import with this, only what Matthew here calleth a

denying of himself, Luke calleth hating. The disciples of others are called the followers of them.

Let him deny himself. To deny ourselves, is to put off our natural affections towards the good things of this life, let them be pleasures, profit, honours, relations, life, or any thing which would keep us from our obedience to the will of God. Thus Christ did: the apostle saith *he pleased not himself. I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me, Joh 5:30 4:34, and take up his cross;* willingly and cheerfully bear those trials and afflictions which the providence of God brings him under for owning and standing to his profession, all which come under the name of the cross, with respect to Christ's cross, on which he suffered.

And follow me: in his taking up the cross he shall but do as I shall do, following my example. Or else this may be looked upon as a third term of Christ's discipleship, viz. yielding a universal obedience to the commandments of Christ, or living up as near as we can to the example of Christ, 1Pe 1:15. This doctrine our Saviour preacheth to them upon occasion of Peter's moving him to spare himself, by which he did but indulge his own carnal affection, without respect to the will of God as to what Christ was to suffer for the redemption of mankind.

Matthew 16:25

Ver. 25. We met with these words in Mt 10:39. See Poole on "Mt 10:39".

Matthew 16:26

Ver. 26. Our interpreters, by translating the same word soul in this verse which they had translated *life* Mt 16:25, let us know that they understood it here of that essential part of man which we call the soul, in which sense it could not be understood in that verse, for it is impossible in that sense to lose our soul for Christ's sake. Some think that it hath the same sense here as in that verse, and that our Saviour argues here from the less to the greater, thus: Men will lose any thing rather than their lives; skin for skin, and all that a man hath, for his life; and this is but

reasonable, for if a man lose his life to get the world, what will the world gotten do him good? What can be a proportionable exchange or compensation to him for that? Now if you value your temporary life at that rate, how much more ought you to value your eternal being and existence! It cometh much to the same, only the sense is plainer if we take it as our translators have taken it, for otherwise part of the argument is not expressed, but left to be understood, or supplied from the next verse. So as the sense is this: Besides bodies which may be killed by persecutors, you carry about with you immortal souls of infinitely more value; and besides a temporal life, of which you are in possession, there is an eternal state, which awaits you. You are creatures ordained to an eternal existence, either in misery or in happiness. Admit you could, by pleasing yourselves, denying me, shifting the cross, declining a life according to my precepts and example, prolong your temporal life, yet what will you get by it, considering that by it you must suffer loss as to your eternal happy existence, for I shall then deny you before my Father and his angels? Can any thing you can get or save in this world be a proportionable exchange for eternal happiness?

Matthew 16:27

Ver. 27. This verse makes it plain, that our Saviour by ψυχη in the former verse understood the soul of man, or eternal life, that blessed state which is prepared for the saints of God; for he here minds them that there shall be a last judgment, and gives them a little description of it.

1. As to the Judge, the Son of man, him whom you now see in the shape of a man, and whom men vilify and contemn under that notion. He is to be *the Judge of quick and dead*, Ac 10:42 2Ti 4:1.
2. As to the splendour of it. He shall *come in the glory of his Father*. It is also his glory, Joh 17:5; he calls it the glory of his Father, because by his eternal generation he received it together with the Divine nature from his Father, and it was common to him with his Father; or because his commission for judgment was from his Father:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment

unto the Son, Joh 5:22.

With his angels; his holy angels, 1Th 1:7.

And then he shall reward every man according to his works: not for his works. Our Saviour is not here speaking of the cause of the reward, but the rule and measure of it: According to his deeds, Ro 2:6.

*According to his labour, 1Co 3:8. According to that he hath done, 2Co 5:10. Not according to his faith, but works, for *faith without works is dead*; but these works must spring out of a root of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. He shall reward him, by a reward of grace, not of debt, Ro 4:4. Works shall be rewarded, but not as with a penny for a pennyworth, but of grace.*

Matthew 16:28

Ver. 28. Mark saith, Mr 9:1, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*; Lu 9:27, saith no more than *till they see the kingdom of God. There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death*, that is, that shall not die. Heb 2:9. It is the same with not seeing death, Joh 8:51,52 Heb 11:5. The great question is, what is here meant by the *Son of man coming in his kingdom*. It cannot be meant of his second coming to judgment, spoken of immediately before, for all who stood there have long since tasted of death, yet is not that day come. Some understand it of that sight of Christ's glory which Peter, and James, and John had at Christ's transfiguration, of which we shall read in the next chapter; and I should be very inclinable to this sense, (for there was a glimpse of the glory of the Father mentioned Mt 16:27) were it not for those words added by Mark, *till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power*. This inclineth others to think, that it is to be understood of Christ's showing forth his power in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the most generally received opinion, and which seemeth to be best, is, that the coming of the Son of man here meant is, his resurrection from the dead. His ascension into heaven, and sending the Holy Spirit, after which the kingdom of grace came with a mighty power, subduing all nations to the Lord Jesus Christ. *He was declared, (or determined), to be the Son of God with power, according to*

*the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Ro 1:4. And when, after his resurrection from the dead, they asked him, Ac 1:6, whether he would at that time *restore the kingdom to Israel*, he puts them off, and tells them for an answer, Ac 1:8, *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*. And then, Ac 1:9, he in their sight ascended up into heaven. Then did the kingdom of the Son of man come with power, Ac 2:33-36, they knowing assuredly that the Son of man, whom the Jews had crucified, was *made both Lord and Christ*, as Ac 2:36, and, as Ac 2:34,35, set at God's right hand, (according to the prophecy of David, Ps 90:1), until his enemies should be made his footstool.*

Matthew 17:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 17:1-9 The transfiguration of Christ.
Mt 17:10-13 He instructs his disciples concerning the coming of Elias,
Mt 17:14-21 healeth the lunatic,
Mt 17:22,23 foretells his own passion,
Mt 17:24-27 and payeth tribute.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 17:2".

Matthew 17:2

Ver. 1,2. Both Mark and Luke have recorded this history. Mark saith, Mr 9:3, his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. Luke saith, Lu 9:28,29; And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. All three agree the place, upon a mountain. Matthew saith it was six, Luke saith eight days after the preceding discourses. Luke mentions our Lord's praying, which neither of

the others mentions, and saith his transfiguration began while that he was praying. They all agree the company that was with our Saviour, Peter, James, and John; which were the three our Saviour took with him when he went to pray before his passion, Mt 26:37. Peter was to be a great instrument in carrying on the works of the gospel. James was he whom Herod killed, Ac 12:2. John was he who outlived all the apostles. He intended to have these three witnesses of his agony, Mt 26:37; he prepareth them for that, and for the future testimony they were to give him, by making them eye witnesses of this his glorious transfiguration. This, as to his person, lay in the change of his countenance, looking gloriously as the sun, and his raiment looking extraordinarily white.

Matthew 17:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 17:4".

Matthew 17:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark adds, Mr 9:6, For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. Luke addeth, Lu 9:31-33, *who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, &c.: not knowing what he said.* So as the history seemeth to be thus: After six or eight days Christ took Peter, James, and John, and went up into a mountain, and prayed. While he prayeth his disciples fall asleep. Waking, they saw him with his face shining gloriously, like the sun, and his garments white as snow, and two men talking with him about his death and passion, whom they (by revelation) knew to be Moses and Elias. They were sore afraid, and Peter, not well knowing or considering what he said, saith to Christ, *Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* It is most likely that Moses and Elias appeared in their own bodies. As to Elias, there was no difficulty, for his body was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. For Moses, it is said the Lord *buried him in a valley in the land*

*of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day, De 34:6. The devil and the archangel had a dispute about his body, Jude 1:9. It is very probable God raised up the body of Moses for this transfiguration testimony, that by the law and the prophets, represented in Moses, the giver of the law, and Elias, one of the most famous of the prophets, the disciples might be confirmed in their faith concerning Christ as the true Messias, and also fortified against the scandal and temptation of that ignominious death which he was soon after to undergo; and that these three apostles, being the highest number of witnesses, by the law of Moses, to confirm a thing, might be judged competent witnesses of what they saw and heard. Do not think Peter's saying, *let us make here three tabernacles, &c.*, proceeded from any pleasure or satisfaction that he had from this glimpse he had of the Divine and excellent glory; for how could this consist with that fear with which Mark saith they were possessed? but that, as Mark saith, *he wist not what to say*, or, as Luke, *not knowing what he said*. Which I take to be, as a reasonable, so the best excuse can be made for the errors and weakness discovered in his speech, as if Moses and Elias, or Christ, could have dwelt there, &c.*

Matthew 17:5

Ver. 5. Mark and Luke relate the same without any considerable variation, only Luke saith, *they feared as they entered into the cloud*. It seemeth that the cloud did encompass them, so as they seemed all as if they had been within the cloud. This still increased their fear. It is observable, that God did very often make his appearances to people in a cloud, making the clouds his chariots, Ex 16:10 40:34 Nu 11:25 Ps 104:3 to teach us humility, not to pry too much into his secrets, who covereth himself with thick darkness, and likewise to consult our weakness, who are not able to behold him as he is. This is said to be a bright cloud, so differing from the cloud in which he appeared under the law, but without doubt it had something of a shadow in it, and was chosen of God for some abatement of the brightness of his glory. This cloud encompasses Christ, Moses, and Elias, and also Peter, James, and John.

And behold a voice out of the cloud: they saw no visible shape, no more did the Jews, De 4:15, only, as St. Peter (who saw it)

expresses it, 2Pe 1:17, *there came such a voice from the excellent glory*. He speaks of this very time, as may appear from 1Pe 1:18. The voice is the same which was heard upon the baptism of Christ, Mt 3:17; only there is added to it, *hear ye him*: you need no Elias to instruct you, hear him. Thus Moses saw what he had before prophesied of, De 18:15,18, fulfilled: he in this ministry as a servant in the house of God had prophesied, that the Lord would raise up a prophet from amongst their brethren like unto him, and put his words into his mouth and he should speak unto them all that God should command him, De 18:18; and, De 18:15, *unto him ye shall hearken*. God had now fulfilled that word, and he declares that this prophet was his Son, his beloved Son, and commands them to hear him. Which words establish Christ as the only Doctor and Teacher of his church, the only one whom he had entrusted to deliver his truths and will to his people, the only one to whom Christians are to hearken: nor doth this destroy the ministers of the word, who are no more than the interpreters of what he hath said, and are no more to be regarded than as by them we hear Christ speaking more plainly and frequently unto us. This appearance of God from time to time in a cloud, and that not in any visible shape, but in an excellent glory, causing a voice to be heard, lets us see the audaciousness of those who by any pictures or images pretend to make any representation of any person in the Trinity. And this command from God to us to hear Christ, lets us also see the audacity of those who take upon them to impose upon Christians what Christ never spake.

Matthew 17:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 17:8".

Matthew 17:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 17:8".

Matthew 17:8

Ver. 6-8. Mark saith no more than, *And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only*

with themselves. Such is the majesty and glory of God, that a cloud will not so veil it as that a man is able to behold any appearance of it without some consternation; something more than that fear of reverence, without which none ought to draw nigh unto him. Paul *fell to the earth* when a *light from heaven* shone upon him, Ac 9:3,4. The disciples here fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. This lets us see the goodness of God in hearkening to the people's request, Ex 20:19 De 5:28 18:16,17, and speaking to us by men like unto ourselves: by Moses under the Old Testament; by Christ (that Prophet mentioned De 18:15) under the New Testament, and such as he commissioned to declare his will, Heb 1:1,2.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. To deliver them from the fear of a spectrum, or apparition, he toucheth them, and saith in effect, It is I; be not afraid. They look up, and see the excellent glory and the cloud was withdrawn, as also Moses and Elias, and they and their Lord were left alone; and he goeth down from the mountain with them. Whether this mountain was Tabor, or some other mountain much nearer Caesarea Philippi, is of no consequence for us to be satisfied in.

Matthew 17:9

Ver. 9. Mark saith the same, Mr 9:9. Luke saith, Lu 9:36, *They kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.* The other two evangelists record the precept; Luke and Mark, their obedience to it. The most probable reason of this charge given by interpreters is, lest his after sufferings should have shaken again their faith, as to the Divine nature of Christ, before he was by his resurrection from the dead *declared to be the Son of God with power*, as the apostle speaks, Ro 1:4.

Matthew 17:10

Ver. 10. Before these words, Mark saith, Mr 9:10, *And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.* Then he addeth, *And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first*

come. The disciples (as appeareth) were as yet very imperfectly instructed in the doctrine of man's redemption by Christ, though Christ had before told them, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so he should be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth. How dull the best of men are to apprehend spiritual mysteries, which are above the reach of our reason! The Jews had a tradition, and retain it to this day, That before the coming of the Messias Elias should come; they build it upon Mal 4:4,5. That they had such an expectation appeareth by their sending to John the Baptist, Joh 1:21, to know if he were he, meaning Elijah the Tishbite (for him they expected); and this was their great error, and still blindeth them. The disciples had now seen Elijah, and possibly might wonder at our Saviour's forbidding them to speak of the vision, as thinking that nothing could more conduce to the receiving of him as the Messias: or possibly they might wonder at Elijah's so soon leaving the earth, the Messias being come, whom they expected he should come before. So as though they were fully satisfied that Christ was the true Messias, yet they knew not how to reconcile their faith to the promise, or to their tradition built upon the promise. This causeth the question.

Matthew 17:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 17:13".

Matthew 17:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 17:13".

Matthew 17:13

Ver. 11-13. Mark saith, Mr 9:12, *He answered and told them, Elias verily comes first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.* Our Saviour agreeth to the promise, but showeth their mistake as to the true sense of it. They understood the promise of Elijah the Tishbite: the promise referred only to one

of his spirit, and such a one was come, that was John the Baptist, as the angel told Zacharias, Lu 1:17, *He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*. Very much of the power and spirit of Elijah was evident in John. Elijah was full of zeal for God, 1Ki 19:10: so was John the Baptist. Did Elijah freely reprove, not only Baal's priests, but even Ahab and Jezebel? John as freely reprov'd Herod and Herodias, and the Pharisees and Sadducees. Was Elijah an austere man? Such was John the Baptist. Did Elijah flee unto the wilderness to save his life? John Baptist, for some time, lived and preached there. Elijah living in a corrupt time, was a great means or instrument to restore decayed religion: so was John the Baptist, in the time wherein he lived. This notwithstanding, not the Jews only, but some Christians, and that not only papists, but some protestants, think, that besides the Elias which is long since come, there is another Elias, who shall come before the end of the world. They found their opinion upon this text in a great measure,

1. Because our Saviour here saith, *ερχεται πρωτον*, he doth come first; and Mark saith, *ελθων πρωτον, αποκαθιστα*, *coming first, restoreth all things*. Now John the Baptist was both come and gone; nor had he restored all things. Besides, they say, that John denied himself to be Elias, Joh 1:21; and it is plain, that not the scribes and Pharisees, but the disciples, only understood the prophecy of Elijah the Tishbite; and Malachi saith, that Elijah should come before *the terrible day of the Lord*, which day, they say, is the day of judgment, in the constant language of Scripture. But to all this is answered,
 - a) That the Baptist, Joh 1:21, only denied himself to be that Elias about which they inquired, according to their tradition.
 - b) That it is true, that the disciples were led away with the Jewish tradition, and looked for Elijah the Tishbite, but Christ both here and elsewhere correcteth their error.
 - c) That not only the day of general judgment is called the terrible day of the Lord, but the gospel time, Mt 3:10, when the axe was laid to the root of the tree, &c.; so Ac 2:20; and the day of the Jews' particular judgment, which some understand hinted in those texts.

- d) That our Lord first repeateth the words of Malachi, and so he saith, Elias shall come, or is coming; and then he expounds the words of Malachi of John the Baptist.
- e) That the words of Mal 4:6 are expounded by the angel, Lu 1:16,17, and there applied to John the Baptist.
- f) That John did fulfil the words of the prophet, by endeavouring the conversion of the Jews, and prevailing in a great measure.
- g) That the last words in Malachi, *lest I smite the earth with a curse*, plainly show that the text in Malachi cannot be understood of the day of judgment.

And though the name of Elias be given to John, yet it is no more than the giving the name of David to the Messiah, Eze 37:24. So as there is no other Elijah to be expected, but the Elijah prophesied of by Malachi was (as our Saviour doth expound it) John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded.

They knew him not, their tradition blinded them so as they could not discern the prophecy of Malachi fulfilled in him, so did unto him *whatsoever they listed*; and, saith our Saviour, so shall they do with the Son of man, that is, with me, who am the Son of man.

Matthew 17:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 17:16".

Matthew 17:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 17:16".

Matthew 17:16

Ver. 14-16. The same history is told us both by Mark and Luke, but with considerable difference; we have it, Mr 9:17,18, thus, *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have*

brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. As an introduction to this, Mark saith, Mr 9:14-16, that when our Saviour came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, *What question ye with them?* Luke gives us this account, Lu 9:37-40, *And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.* When our Lord went up to the mountain where he was transfigured, he left at the foot of it the multitudes, and nine of his apostles, he took only three with him. How long he stayed there no evangelist tells us. The multitude and his disciples stayed waiting for his coming, probably not far off; some of the scribes were got to them, and they were arguing together. The day after our Lord, and Peter, James, and John, were come down from the mount, they go to the multitude, who received him with great passion, and saluted him. He begins to inquire what they were discoursing about; but was by and by interrupted with a certain man, who comes and falls down upon his knees before him, begging mercy for his son, who (as Matthew reports his condition) was lunatic and sore vexed, often falling into the fire, and often into the water. Mark saith, he had a dumb spirit, that it tore him, he often foamed and gnashed with his teeth. Luke saith, that it was the man's only child, that he had a spirit, that he cried out, it tare him, he foamed, and was bruised by it, &c. By the description of this young man's disease, it appeareth to have been what we call the falling sickness, wherein men fall down, foam, and beat themselves. With this disease the devil joined, so as at certain times of the moon this disease took him, and the devil acting with it, he was dumb, at least for the time, and fell sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water, foamed, gnashed with his teeth, tore himself: this seems to have been his condition. The father (during Christ's absence) had attempted a cure by his disciples, but the text saith they could not (the reason

we shall hear afterward); upon this he crieth unto Christ for his help.

Matthew 17:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 17:18".

Matthew 17:18

Ver. 17,18. Mark relates this part of the history much more largely, Mr 9:19-27, *he answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.* Luke relates this shorter, but addeth nothing to what is in the other evangelists, Lu 9:41,42. *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation.* Christ here calls them so not with respect to justifying faith, but that faith which respected the Divine power as to working miracles. Every revelation of the Divine will is the object of faith; Christ had revealed to the Jews that he was sent of God, and furnished with such a power; this the Jews, and particularly the scribes, did not believe. The faith of the father of this child was but very weak in the case; no more, as we shall see afterwards, was the faith of the disciples; so as he may be understood to respect them all, though in different degrees. He calls them *perverse*, because they had so often seen and experienced his power of this nature, yet their faith was not clear

and strong. He biddeth that the young man should be brought to him, and it was done. *And when he saw him, (saith Mark), straightway the spirit tare him, &c.* Our Saviour could easily have prevented this, but probably he suffered it that the miracle might be more evident. However, it letteth us see how hardly the devil parteth with his possession in us in any degree, and how ready he is to run to the length of his line in doing us mischief. Christ asked his father how long he had been so vexed; his father tells him, from a child. By this also the miracle was more illustrious, which probably was the reason why Christ propounded the question. No evils are too inveterate for Christ to remove. The father renewth his request, and in it showeth the weakness of his faith: *If (saith he) thou canst do any thing.* His coming to Christ, and crying to him, argued that he believed he could do something; his saying *if thou canst do any thing* speaks the weakness of his faith. Christ tells him, if he could believe, all things are possible. Nothing ties God's hands but his creatures' unbelief. It is said, that Christ *could not* in Capernaum *do many mighty works because of their unbelief.* Upon this the father cries out, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* Men may truly believe, and yet have a mixture of unbelief. God rewards a weak faith, to souls labouring under the sense of their weakness, and desiring an increase of strength. Christ rebukes the spirit (called a dumb and deaf spirit, because it made the person such that was thus affected with it). Christ commands the spirit out, and so to come out as never more to enter into him. The evil spirit roars, rends him, comes out, and leaveth him as one dead: which still confirmeth us in his malice to mankind; he will do what harm he can when he cannot do us the harm he would.

Matthew 17:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 17:21".

Matthew 17:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 17:21".

Matthew 17:21

Ver. 19-21. Mark repeats only what we have here Mt 17:19,21. The reason assigned here by our Saviour why his disciples could not cast out this devil, was their unbelief; not their total want, but the weakness of their faith. Christ here again lets us see the power of faith, and the mischief of unbelief. I take the plain sense of the text to be this, That there is nothing which may tend to the glory of God, or to our good, but may be obtained of God by a firm exercise of faith in him. Whether our Saviour here speaketh of a faith of miracles, or no, I will not determine; I rather think that he speaketh here of any true faith: we must have the power and promise of God for its object. The promise of working miracles by a Divine power committed to them, was a particular promise made to the disciples, Mt 10:1-42, and so was only the object of their faith. But I take our Saviour's words to extend to a further latitude, though, as to miraculous operations, it was only applicable to them. There is nothing which God hath promised to give or bestow on any but faith will obtain from him, if attended by a fervent prayer, to which fasting is subservient, as preparing us to it. There are some things which are obtained by a stronger faith, and by more fervent and importunate prayers, than others are. A mercy sometimes seem to us to come out of the hand of God with more difficulty, and wrestling for it; but there is nothing within the latitude of a promise, but is to be done and obtained by the vigorous exercise of faith, and by fervent and importunate prayer. The apostles had yet but a weak and imperfect faith, and they had not used such fervent and importunate prayer in this case as they ought to have done; thence did this work appear so difficult unto them.

Matthew 17:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 17:23".

Matthew 17:23

Ver. 22,23. Mark saith, Mr 9:30-32. *And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.*

Luke saith, Lu 9:44,45, he said unto them, *Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.* It is said that Christ taught his disciples *as they were able to hear*, Mr 4:33. He tells them, Joh 16:12, he had many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them at that time. Christ a long time concealed the doctrine of his passion, and resurrection from the dead, from them, until he had confirmed them in the great point of his Divine power, and his being the true Messiah; now he begins to deliver this doctrine unto them, that what they should now soon see might not weaken their faith in him as the Messiah and the Son of God; partly in regard of that inveterate opinion which had possessed the generality of the Jews, that the Messiah should be a temporal prince, and should deliver the Jews from that servitude under which they were, and had for a long time been; partly in regard of the difficulty to conceive how he who was the Son of God could die. Once or twice before therefore he had begun to speak to them about his passion, Mt 16:21. Moses and Elias had some discourse with him about it, Lu 9:31. The text saith, they understood it not; it was hid from them; they perceived it not; they were afraid to ask him.

They were exceeding sorry: possibly they were sorry that they could not understand it, and reconcile it to the notion of the Messias they had drank in; for it seems hard to assert they were sorry for what Christ said about his suffering, because the Scripture saith, they understood it not, thinking our Saviour had not spoken plainly of a matter of fact which should be, but that he intended something else besides what his words seemed plainly to import.

Matthew 17:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 17:27".

Matthew 17:27

Ver. 24-27. The Jews were by God's law, Ex 30:13, obliged to pay a half shekel, which was for the service of the sanctuary, Ex 30:16: this was paid every year. The half shekel amounted in our money to fifteen pence, or thereabouts. Whether this were the tribute money here demanded and paid, some doubt, and say that the Romans having the Jews now under their power, imposed this payment upon every head, as a tribute to the emperor; which being a customary payment, they thought the Jews would less stumble at, though it was changed from a sacred to a civil use, from a homage penny to God, to be a homage penny to the conquerors. The agreement of this sum with what was required by the law, together with what our Saviour saith afterward, will incline us to think that this tax was that religious tax mentioned in Ex 30:13-16, and that the collectors were some officers deputed for that service by the priests. When Peter came into the house, our Saviour prevents his propounding the question to him, (for Peter had before told them, Yes he did), by asking him of whom the kings of the earth use to receive tribute, *of their own children, or of strangers?* Where by *children* we must not understand their political children, that is, their subjects, but their natural children, for otherwise Peter would not have said, *Of strangers*, nor would our Saviour have answered, *Then are the children free*; for there is nothing more ordinary than for princes to receive tribute of their subjects. That which our Saviour seemeth to mean is this: This tribute is gathered for my heavenly Father. I am his Son, I am not bound to pay it.

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, lest we give them occasion to say we break the law of God, go thou to the sea, (the sea of Galilee, which was near), and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find στατηρα, a piece of money, to the value of about a half crown in English. How this money came in the mouth of the fish is a very idle dispute, considering that he that speaks was the Creator of all things.

That take, and give unto them for me and thee. The papists, who think they have found here an argument for the primacy of Peter, because Christ paid this tribute for him, and not for the other disciples, do not only affirm what they do not know, but forget that Capernaum was the city in which Peter lived, (we heard before of Christ's curing his wife's mother there of a fever), and that Peter was the only man of whom this tribute was demanded. This portion of Scripture affords us this instruction: That it is the duty of Christians to yield something of their own right, when they cannot insist upon and obtain it without a scandal and prejudice to the gospel, and the concern of religion. If this were required in pursuance of the law, Ex 30:12,13, and our Saviour had refused to pay it, the scribes and Pharisees would have clamoured against him as violating the law of God. If it were required as a civil tax, they would have clamoured against him as a man that went about to stir up sedition or rebellion. Having therefore first asserted his right and immunity, he departeth from it to prevent a scandal. We must never part with God's right; but to depart from our own is not only lawful, but oftentimes very advisable and expedient. Our Saviour chooseth rather to work a miracle than to give a scandal, and by this miracle he also confirmed his immunity, that he was the Son of him who is the King of kings, and so not in strictness obliged to pay it.

Matthew 18:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 18:1-6 Christ proposes a little child to his disciples for a pattern of innocence and humility.

Mt 18:7-9 He warns them to avoid offences, though at the expense of a hand, a foot, or an eye,

Mt 18:10-14 and not to despise the little ones, whom it is the Father's will to save.

Mt 18:15-20 He teacheth how to treat an offending brother,

Mt 18:21-35 and how oft to forgive him, by the parable of a king, who punished one of

his servants for refusing that mercy to his fellow which he had experienced from his lord in a larger degree.

Ver. 1. Mark, who relates also the same history more largely, Mr 9:33, saith, that this discourse was in the house at Capernaum, and that our Saviour began with them, asking them what they had been discoursing of by the way. That they held their peace, for they had been in the way arguing one with another who should be the greatest; they might at the same time also ask Christ the question. Luke, in whom we find the same history, speaketh of it only as a question that had arisen among themselves, Lu 9:46. It had been the matter of their thoughts in the way, yea, and of their more private discourse also. Luke saith, Jesus knew the thoughts of their hearts. We had need set the Lord at all times before our eyes, for we are always in his sight. He encompasses all our paths, as the psalmist saith. In the way, when we think also we cannot be overheard, he heareth us, and will call us to account for our travelling thoughts and discourses. They were at first ashamed to tell the Lord what they had been thinking and discoursing upon, for Mark saith, Mr 9:34, *they held their peace*. But by and by they propound the question to Christ himself; so saith Matthew, What do they mean here by *the kingdom of heaven?* or what gave them occasion to such a discourse? It is most probable that they did not in this question intend the kingdom of glory; but either the church, or gospel dispensation; or (which indeed is most likely) that earthly kingdom which the Jews thought the Messiah should exercise on the earth. The general error of their nation, about a secular kingdom, which the Messiah, when he came, should exercise upon the earth, restoring the kingdom to Israel, as they phrase it, Ac 1:6, seemeth to have infected them; so as though in this they differed from the unbelieving Jews, that they owned Christ to be the promised Messiah, and the Christ the Son of God, yet they looked for a temporal kingdom which he should administer. Three times we find them in this mistake; here, and Mt 20:21, and at our Saviour's administration of the supper, Lu 22:24; and by Ac 1:6 it should seem that till Christ's ascension they were not fully instructed in the nature of Christ's kingdom, but expected that after his resurrection this kingdom of his should have began; and therefore they say, *Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* Some think that that which at this time

raised their jealousy and stirred up their ambition, was our Saviour's promising Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Mt 16:19, and paying tribute for him, Mt 17:24-27. But neither of these could be, for had not the keys been given equally the question had been determined, they needed have reasoned no more. He that had the keys was certainly to be the greatest; and for the paying of tribute, it was too minute a thing to cause such a jealousy. Besides, this discourse of theirs was by the way to Capernaum, where he now was; that was after he came to the house. But they doubtless fancied a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, in which places would be bestowed; and Christ, by his discourse about the tribute, had asserted himself a King's Son; and they conceived that after his death and resurrection (which Christ had lately been speaking of) this his kingdom would begin, which also agreeth with what we have Ac 1:6: they therefore thought it now time to speak for places. They had been arguing the point amongst themselves, and could not come to a resolution. Some of them were Christ's near kinsmen (such was James, Ga 1:19). Some of them had more extraordinary parts; he named two of them, on this account, *the sons of thunder*. To others he had showed a more particular kindness; John is called *the beloved disciple*; Peter, James, and John were taken up to the mount to see his transfiguration. These things might cause some emulation and suspicions; they therefore come to our Saviour to be resolved.

1. How slowly do we conceive, and how hardly do we come to understand, spiritual things! We are of the earth, and we are earthly.
2. How prone are we to seek great things for ourselves, neglecting our higher spiritual and eternal concerns! This text lets us see, that even the best of men are subject to earthly mindedness, ambition, emulation, and hardly brought truly to understand, believe, and seek the things which are above.

Let us now observe how our Saviour behaveth himself towards his disciples upon this question, and what answer he makes to it.

Matthew 18:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 18:4".

Matthew 18:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 18:4".

Matthew 18:4

Ver. 2-4. Mark saith, Mr 9:35-37, *And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, &c.* Luke saith only, that he took the child, and set him by him, Lu 9:47; and adds, Lu 9:48, *he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.* How easy a thing had it been for our Saviour, had he intended any such primacy in the church as the papists contend for, to have said, Peter shall be the greatest! Here was a very fair opportunity for him, if he had pleased, so to have declared his will; but here is not a word of such tendency. Mark saith our Saviour,

1. *Sat down*, as the manner of their teachers was, when they taught, to denote their authority.
2. He *called the twelve*, to let them know that what he was about to speak was a grave matter not of a particular but universal concern for them to learn, that, they might teach others.

He *said unto them*, (saith Mark), *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all; and* (which Luke adds) *he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.* You would know (saith he) who shall be greatest he that doth not desire to be first; he who is most remote from pride and ambition; he that most contemneth the world, and the priorities and superiorities of it. The proud and ambitious man, he that seeketh great things for himself, shall be of least esteem in my kingdom; he is really least in grace, and ought to be of least esteem and repute among Christians, and he will be the last in the kingdom of glory.

Then he calleth to him *a little child*: the word doth not always

signify a very young child; here it doth, for,

1. He took him in his arms (saith Mark).
2. A young child was the fittest pattern to commend humility to them.

This was an ancient and usual way of teaching, by types, as it were, or patterns: see Jer 19:10 27:2. He reads this lecture upon the child, *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, &c.* The prefixing *Verily* adds much to the authority of this saying. Converted here, $\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\text{-}\phi\eta\tau\epsilon$, doth not signify the change or conversion of a soul from a state of sin unto God, (so the apostles were already converted), but the turning of their souls from a particular lust or error, into the opposite right way of truth and holiness: except ye repent of your pride and ambition, ye cannot be saved. The next words expound it, *and become as little children*: not as little children in all things, (which was the Anabaptists' dream in Germany, upon which they would run about the streets playing with rattles, &c.), but, Mt 18:4, humbling yourselves as little children.

1. Little children know not what dominion means, and therefore affect it not, are not ambitious.
2. They are not given to boast and glory, and to prefer themselves before others.
3. They are ready to be taught and instructed.
4. They live upon their fathers' providence, and are not over solicitous.
5. They are not malicious and vindictive. *In malice* (saith the apostle) *be ye children*.

The three first are principally here intended. If ye be not thus like little children, ye will be so far from being greatest in the kingdom of God, that you will never come here at all. So as this text teacheth us all,

1. The necessity of humility in order to salvation.
2. That even converted souls have need of a daily conversion. Repentance is a work which will never be perfected till we come to die.
3. How abominable in the eyes of God ambition and pride are in any, especially in ministers of the gospel.
4. That in the church the way to be great is to be humble.
5. That true humility lieth in a mean opinion of ourselves, not minding high things, condescending to men of low estate, not being wise in our own conceits, Ro 12:16; *in honour preferring one another*, Ro 12:10.

Matthew 18:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 18:6".

Matthew 18:6

Ver. 5,6. Mark hath it thus, Mr 9:37, *Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.* Then he addeth, Mr 9:42, *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* Our Lord having declared that the little ones before mentioned shall be greatest in the kingdom of God, here cometh to show the care which he in his providence will take for them; that their friends shall be his friends, and their enemies his enemies: Whoso receiveth such a little child, that is, a humble Christian. In the next verse it is opened by, one that believeth in me. By receiving I conceive is here to be understood the showing of any favour or kindness to them: Christ declares that he would take it as done to himself. It is much the same with Mt 10:40-42. Mark addeth, *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* The reason is, because he and his Father are one, and the Father takes any kindness done to Christ as if it were done to himself, and the Son takes any kindness or unkindness done to any humble, believing

soul, as if it were done to himself: see Mt 25:34-46.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c. As offending signifieth the laying of a stumbling block before any, so it signifieth any motion or temptation to them to sin against God, whether it be by flattering or frowning arguments, though the latter seemeth rather to be understood here; so, by offending, it signifies the doing them any harm upon Christ's account, because they own him, and make a profession of his gospel, which, besides that it is a stumblingblock upon which they fall and suffer as to their bodies and outward concerns, is also a stumbling block to their souls, such dangers being strong temptations to Christians, to turn them aside from the right paths of truth and holiness.

It were better for him that a millstone, &c.; *μυλος ονικος*, a stone in such a mill as asses were wont to draw, because of the heaviness of it. Some think our Saviour in this phrase alludes to some punishment of notorious malefactors, in use not amongst the Jews, but some other nations, by tying a stone about their necks, and throwing them into the sea: but whether it be such an allusion or no, is of no great moment; the phrase signifieth a certain destruction, both in regard of the weight of the stone and the depth of the sea. He saith, It is better that a millstone, &c., because of the punishment which shall be inflicted on such persons beyond this life.

Matthew 18:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 18:9".

Matthew 18:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 18:9".

Matthew 18:9

Ver. 7-9. By *offences* are here meant stumbling blocks to souls, such persons or actions as are to others temptations to sin. The world, saith our Saviour is full of temptations. Temptations to sin

are on all hands, some enticing and persuading men to that which is evil, others setting them an example to it, others alluring them by promises, others by threatenings and punishments driving men to it as much as in them lieth: the world will one day find the evil and mischief of it.

It must needs be that offences come; God hath so ordered it in the wisdom of his providence, that he will not restrain the lusts of all men's hearts, but suffer some to walk in their own ways. Men in power will command those under them to do what is sinful, fright them by threatenings, force them (if possible) by punishments. Equals and inferiors will set examples of sin, allure, entice, and persuade. But woe be to those by whom such offences come! Men, saith our Saviour, should be so afraid to sin, as they should rather part with the dearest things they have in the world, if they be as dear as eyes, hands, feet, rather than sin, or endure them to be occasions of sin to them. See Poole on "Mt 5:29", where Mt 18:8,9 are opened. Mark hath the same things, Mr 9:43-48, only with the addition of this saying thrice, *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;* which phrase doth but denote the eternity of sinners' misery, taken from Isa 66:24.

Matthew 18:10

Ver. 10. Our Saviour having before declared how dear believing souls are unto him, though their quality or parts be not like others', here he gives the world a further charge not to *despise*, that is, not to contemn or neglect them, because God the heavenly Father hath such a care of them, so as he hath given his angels a charge over them, Ps 34:7 91:11 Heb 1:14; which *angels* (saith he) *do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*, that is, are always ministering before him, and ready to execute his will and pleasure; so as the argument is not only drawn from the indecency and undutifulness that such despising must import, but also from the danger of it. Your heavenly Father so loveth these little ones, that he hath given his angels a special charge concerning them; and these angels being continually in the Lord's presence, are ready both to make report how they are used in the world, and likewise having commission from God to execute his vengeance upon those who neglect, despise, or affront those that he hath taken into such a special

protection. Here is no ground in this text for their notion, who fancy that every particular child of God hath his proper angel to attend him. Our Saviour doth not say their several and respective angels, but *their angels*; and if all the angels be *ministering spirits*, for the good of God's elect, Heb 1:14, I see no great reason to contend for a particular angel for every individual amongst them. But be that as it will, the opinion hath no patronage from this text.

Matthew 18:11

Ver. 11. We find the same in Lu 19:10, but applied upon another occasion. Our Saviour here riseth higher in his argument against giving offence to his little ones. All scandal tendeth to the ruin and destruction of him to whom it is given. *Scandalum non est nisi malae rei aedificans ad Gehennam*, saith Tertullian; and a greater than he hath taught us the same lesson, Ro 14:15 1Co 8:11 Now, saith our Saviour, I am *come to save that which was lost*; you ought therefore to take care that you be not the causes and instruments of any being lost. Or thus; You look upon poor humble souls, that believe in me, as mean, contemptible creatures, therefore you think you may despise them: were not all those whom I came to redeem in as mean and despicable a condition? Yet I did not despise their souls. Did I come to save them, and shall it be your work to destroy them?

Matthew 18:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 18:14".

Matthew 18:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 18:14".

Matthew 18:14

Ver. 12-14. We shall meet with the parable or similitude more fully, Lu 15:4. To what purpose it is brought here our Lord hath told us, Mt 18:14, to show us, that it is not the will of our

heavenly Father that the least and meanest believer should perish. And every scandal, or offence, (as I before showed), hath a tendency to destroy that soul before whom it is laid, or to which it is given. Take heed, saith our Saviour, of giving scandals and offences to others, yea, though you should have observed them in something slipping and going astray. Will you be more uncharitable to men than you are to the beasts which you keep? You do not thus with a sheep; though it be gone astray you do not despise and neglect it, much less take courses to drive it further. No, you rather leave the rest, as being safe, and go, though it be into the mountains, to recover the sheep that is lost; and if you find it, have a greater passion of joy for that one sheep so recovered than for all the other. If you see some error in any of my sheep, if they do wander, should it not be your care rather to *restore such in the spirit of meekness*, as [Ga 6:1](#), than to lay further stumbling blocks before them, and give them occasion of further stumbling and falling? My Father hath done so for lost man: my coming to seek and to save that which is lost, is an evidence to you that it is not his will that one of my little ones should be lost.

Matthew 18:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 18:17".

Matthew 18:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 18:17".

Matthew 18:17

Ver. 15-17. Our Saviour very appositely addeth this to his former discourse concerning avoiding offences, that none might think that by the former doctrine he had made void the law, [Le 19:17](#), which commanded all *in any wise to rebuke their neighbour, and not to suffer sin upon him*, pretending that it was their duty in some cases to offend any person by that law. He here telleth them that he would not be so understood, as if they might not tell offenders of their sins for fear of offending them, this had been to have withheld charity from their souls under a pretence of

charity. Only in these reproofs we must keep an order, which order he here prescribes.

1. Doing it privately, between them and him alone.
2. If that had not its effect, then taking two or three with them.
3. If that also proved ineffectual, then telling it to the church.
4. If that he would not *hear the church, then, let him be unto thee* (saith Christ) *as an heathen and a publican.*

If thy brother shall trespass against thee. By *brother* here he meaneth any Christian; for what hath the church to do to judge those that are without? 1Co 5:12.

Trespass against thee. Some interpret this of offences done so privately, that none else knoweth them but one single person; but it is objected, that then there needed no going to him, much less were there need of any witnesses, for they could prove nothing. Others therefore understand the precept of private injuries, which are in man's power to forgive, Lu 17:3. Others think such injuries are primarily intended, but yet the precept is not to be restrained to them, but to be understood of all offences, whether against God, ourselves, or our neighbours; and that our Saviour useth this term *against thee* only to distinguish the offences he is here speaking of from public scandals; for, 1Ti 5:20, it appeareth to be the will of God, that public and open sinners should be rebuked *before all, that others may fear*. The rule therefore seemeth to be given concerning private miscarriages; not such only as are done in the sight or hearing of a single person, but such as are not the matter of public fame, nor openly committed before a multitude, but being committed more secretly, are come only to the knowledge of some particular person or persons. In such cases it is the will of God, not that we should blazon and publish them, but, being certain that any Christian hath so offended, it is our duty first to go to him, and tell him of it; that is, not only tell him what thou knowest, or hast heard in matter of fact, that he hath spoken or done, but show him also the sinfulness of it.

If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; that is, if he confesseth the sin, and be brought to a sight of it, a sorrow for it,

and a resolution against it for the time to come, thou hast gained the soul of thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, if he either denieth the matter of fact, that he did such a thing, or (admitting that) standeth to justify the fact, as what he might do, *then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established:* one or two more, either such as may be of more authority with him, whose words may probably be of more weight than thine with him, or who may witness the matter of fact if it be denied, or at least witness by charitable admonition of him, and his contumacy, if he refuseth to hearken to thee, and to repent and reform. What was the law of God in civil and judicial causes, De 19:15,

God would have observed in ecclesiastical causes: One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. And so the words in Matthew should be translated, or at least understood; every word, that is, every matter, be confirmed.

And if he shall neglect to hear them; either refuse to speak with them, or to suffer them to speak with him; or, hearing them with his ears, if he persists to deny the fact, or to justify the fact, as if it were no sin, or go on still in the same course; (all these things are to be understood by the term of not hearing); if he shall not hear them, *tell it to the church.* That the term church is a noun of multitude is evident, and therefore cannot be understood of any particular person. Some would by the church here understand the political magistrate; but as this sense is embraced by very few, so it is very improbable that our Saviour should send Christians in that age to the civil magistrates, when they were all great haters and persecutors of the Christian religion, especially in cases that were not punishable by the judges; for no deliberate person will say, that the offences mentioned in this text were all of that nature as a civil judicature might take notice of them. Others say, that by the church is here meant the Jewish court called the Sanhedrim, which had a mixed cognizance, both of civil and ecclesiastical causes. There are three prejudices against this:

1. That the Jewish court was never in Scripture called \square Εκκλησια.

2. That it is not probable that our Saviour would direct Christians to go to the Jewish courts in such cases.
3. That the Sanhedrim was too great a court to be troubled with all scandals, though they did take cognizance of some things in religion, which were of a grand concern; such as blasphemy, idolatry, false prophets, &c.

Others therefore understand it of the Christian church. Against this opinion there is this great prejudice, that there was no such thing in being at that time; but I take this to be a lighter objection than those against the two other opinions:

- a) Because we need not understand our Saviour speaking with relation to the present time, but the time to come, and giving laws which should take place and abide from the gathering of the Christian church to the end of the world.
- b) Nor is it necessary that we should take the term *church* here in the strict sense, in which it is most generally used in the Scriptures of the New Testament for the general notion of the word is only a company of people called together; and in this sense, Tell the church, is no more than, Tell the multitude, make his crime more public: now what that multitude was which our Saviour meant, would easily be understood when the churches came to be formed.

But the next verse will make it more plain; Mt 18:18, *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, &c.* By *the church* then must be meant those who had power to bind and loose. Now though at this time there was no particular church formed, yet there were some who had a power to bind and loose. Christ had given such a power to his apostles. These were the present church, and at this time in being. They were afterwards to constitute particular churches, to whom, (when constituted), in force of this precept, such offences were to be told. There are yet further disputes, whether this offence and contumacy be to be told only to the rulers, or to the multitude. I say, to the whole church, but first to the rulers, then by them to the multitude, not to judge of it, but for their consent in casting a person out of the communion of the church. Thus the incestuous person was first accused to Paul, then cast out by the

consent of the whole church, 1Co 5:3-5. For it is unreasonable to think that people should deny communion to any without knowing a justifiable cause; and to no purpose for rulers in a church to cast one out of its communion with whom the members will have communion.

If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican; that is, esteem him as a vile person, for so they esteemed all heathens and publicans. How far this could reach beyond having an intimacy of civil communion with them, and a communion with them in the sacrament, I cannot understand; for as Christians were licensed to a civil commerce with heathens and publicans, so neither were heathens and publicans ever, that we read of in holy writ, denied the benefit of their prayers, and hearing the apostles preach. I am very well satisfied, that the primitive church did not deny to persons excommunicated liberty to be present at the prayers of the church, but it was long after the apostles' times, and whether grounded upon any practice of theirs I much doubt. Christians had a liberty to pray for any who had not sinned the sin unto death: that they might not be present at such prayers I cannot learn from any thing in holy writ.

Matthew 18:18

Ver. 18. We met with this sentence, Mt 16:19, where we observed that by binding and loosing was signified (according to the usage of the Jews of those times) declaring of propositions true or false, or judging things lawful or unlawful. Some think that it hath no further import here; but it is the opinion of Mr. Calvin, and other very judicious interpreters, that it is here to be extended to the censures of the church, the sentence of the church pronounced justly in the case of offences; and is added, lest persons justly denied the communion of the church should condemn such censures. Christ assures these persons that such censures ought not to be slighted, for God would confirm them in heaven; as also to their absolutions, or readmissions of such persons into their communion, upon their true repentance and acknowledgment of their errors. Not that our Lord by this intended to confirm all sentences of excommunication, or to patronize any cheat or hypocrisy in any, to gain an absolution, or restoration to the church. But only, as to the first, to assure

stubborn and impenitent sinners that he would ratify what his church did, according to the rule he had given them to act by. It is therefore a terrible text to those who are justly and duly cut off from the communion of the church, for notorious and scandalous sins, such as whoso committeth and doth not repent of, they shall never enter into the kingdom of God. And as comfortable to those who, being so cast out, do truly repent, and are under temptations to be swallowed up of too much sorrow. If therefore any be cast out of any church for professing or standing to any truth of the gospel, or because he will not do what is sinful, we must not understand them bound in heaven, though they be bound on earth, nor have any such excommunications any terror in them. How forcible are right words! But these arguings, what do they reprove? The church is not by this text made infallible, nor is the holy God by it engaged to defend their errors.

Matthew 18:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 18:20".

Matthew 18:20

Ver. 19,20. Most interpreters agree there is a connection betwixt these verses and those immediately preceding, as if it were a further confirmation of what God had said concerning his binding and loosing in heaven whatsoever they should bind or loose on earth; and say, the asking mentioned in this verse supposes that no church will adventure upon so grave an act as excommunication, without asking his direction or counsel; nor undertake such a thing as absolution, without the like serious asking of God pardon for the repenting sinner. Now, saith he, let the church be never so small that so joins in prayers on this occasion, what they ask of God shall be done. Whether it hath any such reference or no, or be an independent promise of Christ's presence with his church, I shall not determine. Those who think this text hath such a particular reference, yet do also grant it a more general promise of Christ's presence with his people. Whenever they are met by his authority, or upon his account or command, whether it be for counsel, or judgment, or prayer, or the celebration of any sacred institution of his, he is in the midst of them, to protect and favour them: what they ask

shall be done for them; that is, provided the thing asked be good, Mt 7:11, and for a right end, Jas 4:3, and in a right manner, Lu 18:1 Jas 1:5-7. Christ in this text establisheth the duty of prayer in communion with others. He doth not only require of his people secret prayer, Mt 6:6, but also praying in company with others; the gathering together of his people for prayer, whether in private families or more public congregations.

Matthew 18:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 18:22".

Matthew 18:22

Ver. 21,22. Luke hath something like this Lu 17:4, but it seemeth to have been spoken at another time, and upon some other occasion; yet the sense is much the same, and there are who think that Peter's mention of seven times arose from our Saviour's command there, that we should forgive our brother offending us seven times, when our Saviour by it intended not a certain and definite number, but a number uncertain and indefinite. But it is a greater question, what sinning and what forgiveness is there meant, I cannot think that our Saviour here speaketh concerning the church's absolving scandalous sinners justly excommunicated, but of the private forgiveness of injuries done to us; it is not the church, but I forgive him; for although the doors of the church ought to be as open to a repenting sinner as the doors of heaven are, yet I think both the phrase of the text and the following parable (which seemeth to me a comment upon this text) seem to lead us to the interpretation of these verses as to private wrongs or injuries; they are properly sins against us, and such as it is in every single person's power to forgive. But it seems hard that Christians should be obliged to forgive another his private wrongs so often as he doth them, if he will go on without end multiplying affronts and injuries to us; we must therefore know, that our Saviour by this precept doth not oblige any to take his enemy into his bosom, and make him his intimate or confidant again; but only to lay aside all malice, all thoughts and desires of revenge towards him, to put on a charitable frame of spirit towards him, so as to be ready to do him any common offices of friendship. Thus far we are obliged

to forgive those that do us injuries, so often as they stand in need of forgiveness. The apostle, Col 3:8, speaks of wrath, malice, &c., as pieces of the old man, which every true Christian hath put off, and calls upon us in malice to be children.

Matthew 18:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 18:35" The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce, which after five shillings the ounce is seven pence half penny. (Mt 20:2).

Matthew 18:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 18:35".

Matthew 18:35

Ver. 23-35. All these verses (except the last) are but a parable, which (as I before showed) is a similitude brought from the usual actions of men, and made use of to open or apply some spiritual doctrine. The main scope, or the proposition of truth, which our Saviour designs to open or press, is that which is first and principally to be considered and intended; and that, as I before showed, is to be known, either by the particular explication given by our Saviour, or by what went immediately before, or followeth immediately after. The scope of this parable is plainly expressed, Mt 18:35, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* Nor is it obscurely hinted to us in what went before, where our Saviour was instructing Peter in the great duty of forgiving men their trespasses. This being agreed, as we use to say, that similitudes run not on four feet, so we are not to expect that all the actions of men, mentioned in the parable,

should be answered by some correspondent actions of God: As similitudes always halt, so never more than when by them God's actions are expressed and represented to us. The main points which this parable instructs us in are;

1. That it is our duty, especially theirs who have received forgiveness from God, to forgive their brethren.
2. That if they do not, they may justly question whether God hath forgiven them, and expect the same severity from him which they show unto their brethren.

These being the main things for instruction in which this parable is brought, and which we ought chiefly to eye as the things taught us by this parable, nothing hindereth but that it may also instruct us in some other things, though we cannot raise a proposition of truth from every branch of the parable, and some things be put in according to the passions and usual dealings of men, which possibly are in them unrighteous actions, and may follow from their ungoverned passions, which will by no means agree to the pure and holy nature of God. I will first open such terms in the parable as may be less intelligible to vulgar readers.

The kingdom of heaven; my administration of my kingdom: I am come to purchase remission of sins, and to dispense out remission of sins to those who are indebted to the justice of my Father; but in the application of my blood to men and women for the remission of their sins, both my Father and myself will do as a king, that took account of his servants, &c. Men must look for pardon from my Father, and benefit from me as their Redeemer, upon the following terms: see [Mt 6:15](#).

Ten thousand talents; a certain for an uncertain number; a very great sum. Those who have computed it, say it amounts to a million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. He *commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had;* a thing which our law will not suffer, but in use amongst other nations, and amongst the Jews in particular, as may be learned from [2Ki 4:1](#).

And delivered him to the tormentors; that is, to the keepers of the prison; so the next words teach us, and the Greek word often signifieth no more, though it doth indeed sometimes.

An hundred pence, Mt 18:28, signifieth a small sum, hardly exceeding in our money fifty shillings. This parable excellently instructs us in these truths:

1. That as men, by the law of nature and God, and the laws of men, may be debtors to us, to our reputation, to our estate; so we are all debtors to the glory, honour, and justice of God.
2. That it is a vast debt we owe to God's honour and justice, to which no debt owing by any to us can bear any proportion.
3. That we have nothing to pay to God, in satisfaction for our debt.
4. That God hath a right to demand a full satisfaction of us.
5. That God, for Christ's sake, upon our application to him for mercy, will forgive us our debts.
6. That we are not so ready to forgive our brethren their little injuries, as God is to forgive us.
7. That our difficulty to forgive our brethren, after God's liberality in forgiving us, is a great charge, or will be a great charge against us in the court of heaven.
8. That we ought to set before us God's compassion towards us, and free love in forgiving us, potently to move us to forgive those who have done us injury, and to forgive them out of that consideration.
9. That we ought from our hearts to forgive men their trespasses; that is, so as not to hate them, bear them any grudge or malice, seek any private revenge upon them, or public satisfaction, beyond what they are able to give, but be ready to do them what common offices of kindness in their straits are in our power.
10. That the not doing of this will be an ill evidence to our souls, that God hath not indeed forgiven us, as well as a bar against such forgiveness; and an ill omen, that some punishment from God expects us in this life, to bring us to a temper more

conformable to the gospel, and if not, this life, yet in the life which is to come.

Matthew 19:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 19:1-2 Christ healeth the sick,
Mt 19:3-12 answereth the question of the Pharisees concerning divorce, and the objection of his disciples to the expediency of marriage,
Mt 19:13-15 receiveth little children with tenderness,
Mt 19:16-22 instructs a young man how to attain eternal life, and how to become perfect,
Mt 19:23-26 showeth how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,
Mt 19:27-30 and promises great rewards to his disciples, and to all who have forsaken aught to follow him.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 19:2".

Matthew 19:2

Ver. 1,2. Most interpreters agree that both Mark, Mr 10:1, and Lu 9:51, make mention of the same motion of our Saviour out of Galilee into the province of Judea which is here expressed, though Luke and John mention, something largely, some things done in the way, of which Matthew speaketh not. He *departed* from Galilee. Our Saviour had hitherto spent his time mostly in Galilee. The country of the Jews was divided into three provinces, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Galilee was the more northerly part of the country, and was divided into the Upper Galilee, which is also called Galilee of the Gentiles, Mt 4:15, and the Lower Galilee, which was contiguous to it, but lay more southerly, and adjoined to Samaria. Our Saviour dwelt at Nazareth a long time. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, were all

cities of Galilee. He is now taking his leave of this province, into which he never returned more. His next way into Judea lay through Samaria, (for Samaria lay in the middle between Galilee and Judea), and through part of it he did go, for, Lu 9:52,53, some inhabitants of a village belonging to the Samaritans refused to receive him.

And came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. This phrase hath caused some difficulty to interpreters, because Judea was bounded by Jordan, and had no coasts beyond it. Some say that the term *beyond Jordan* must be applied to *he came*, he came beyond Jordan to the coasts of Judea. Others say, that as men came out of Egypt, the coasts of Judea were beyond Jordan, Mt 4:15. But some think it should be there translated, *by Jordan*: the word $\pi\epsilon\rho\alpha\nu$ signifies any border, or side of a border.

Beyond Jordan, therefore, is on the border of Jordan, and possibly were better translated so, seeing the word will bear it, and there were no coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. It is probable that our Saviour, coming out of Galilee into Samaria, kept on the left hand near to Jordan, till he came into Judea, which also bordered on that river. Wherever he went *great multitudes followed him*, but more for healing their bodies, or for the loaves, than for the feeding or healing of their souls; so different is most people's sense of their bodily and spiritual wants.

He healed them, the text saith; but it saith not, they believed in him.

Matthew 19:3

Ver. 3. Our Saviour, though yet at some distance from Jerusalem, was come into that province where the Pharisees had the greatest power, and were in greater numbers: now they come to him, *tempting him*; where the word *tempting* rather signifies, generally, making a trial of him, than strictly, soliciting him to sin; they came (as appeareth by their question) to make a trial whether they could entrap him, and get any determination from him of a point for which they might accuse him. The question they propound to him is, *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* The word here translated *cause*, signifieth not cause, or occasion, but crime also. So it may be translated

crime; but they did not only put away their wives for crimes, but upon any occasion, in abuse of that text, De 24:1, *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her;* which the Pharisees had interpreted of any kind of deformity, or natural infirmity, not merely of moral uncleanness. Had our Saviour now answered Yes, he had contradicted what he had formerly delivered, Mt 5:32; had he denied, they had trapped him as contradicting the law of Moses, De 24:1, according to their interpretation of it. So they had whereof to accuse him.

Matthew 19:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 19:6".

Matthew 19:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 19:6".

Matthew 19:6

Ver. 4-6. Mark, Mr 10:2-9, giveth us the same history of this discourse, differing a little in the order of the words, but nothing as to the substance of his discourse. Our Saviour answereth neither Yea nor Nay to their discourse, but gives them a fair occasion to answer themselves, and tacitly charges them with ignorance and corruption of the law of God. He refers them to the first institution of marriage, and for that to the book of Genesis, Ge 1:27 2:24. It is as much as if our Lord had said, You own the book of Genesis, as well as the book of Deuteronomy. In the book of Genesis you read the first institution of marriage: it was instituted by God himself; he made *male and female*, Ge 1:27; he made the law of marriage, Ge 2:24, that *a man* (should) *leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they* (should) *be one flesh*; from whence he concludes that the man and wife are one flesh in God's account. From hence he leaves them to conclude, whether it was probable that Moses, whom they so revered, and who was so faithful in the house of God as a servant, would license them to put asunder whom God had

put together; or whether they had not put an interpretation upon the law of Moses which it could not bear in consistency with the law of God. For the sense of those words, Ge 1:27 2:24, see the notes on those places. See Poole on "Ge 1:27". See Poole on "Ge 2:24".

Matthew 19:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 19:8".

Matthew 19:8

Ver. 7,8. Mark reports this a little differently, Mr 10:3 &c., as if Christ had first *said unto them. What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept, &c.* The substance of our Saviour's answer seemeth to be this: Moses gave you no positive command in the case, he could not make a law directly opposite to the law of my Father; but Moses saw the wantonness and wickedness of your hearts, that you would turn away your wives without any just and warrantable cause; and to restrain your extravagances of cruelty to your wives, or disorderly turning them off upon any occasion, he made a law that none should put away his wife but upon a legal cognizance of the cause, and giving her a bill of divorce. Indeed possibly this bill of divorce was sometimes judicially granted upon irregular causes, and Moses might connive at it for the preventing of greater evils, because you were always a hard hearted and stiff necked people; and you by your traditions have expounded that law beyond Moses's intention, and made a bill of divorce grantable in cases which he never thought of, nor intended in that law. But the measures of lawfulness are neither to be taken from Moses's temporary toleration and connivance, nor much less from your traditions and expositions of the law of Moses, but from the original institution of marriage, and from God's original law relating to it: now God at first made but one woman for one man, and so united them that he styled them *one flesh*; so as he who puts away his wife, doth as it were divide and tear his own flesh piece from piece, which is barbarous, inhuman, and unnatural. And the law of God was not, that a man should

forsake his wife whenever he had a mind to it, but that he should rather forsake his father and mother than his wife; that he should cleave to his wife, living and dwelling with her, as a man of knowledge; not hating his own flesh; loving his wife as his own body, loving and cherishing her, Eph 5:28,29. Now how can this possibly consist with a man's putting away his wife upon every little and trivial cause of offence or dislike unto her.

Matthew 19:9

Ver. 9. We met with the like determination of our Lord's upon this question Mt 5:32, only there it was (instead of committeth adultery) causeth her to commit adultery, that is, in case she married again. Here our Lord saith the like of the husband: we have the same, Mr 10:11 Lu 16:18. The reason is this: Because nothing but adultery dissolves the knot and band of marriage, though they be thus illegally separated, yet according to the law of God, they are still man and wife. Some have upon these words made a question whether it be lawful for the husband or the wife separated for adultery to marry again while each other liveth. As to the party offending, it may be a question; but as to the innocent person offended, it is no question, for the adultery of the person offending hath dissolved the knot of marriage by the Divine law. It is true that the knot cannot be dissolved without the freedom of both persons each from another, but yet it seemeth against reason that both persons should have the like liberty to a second marriage. For,

1. The adulteress is by God's law a dead woman, and so in no capacity to a second marriage.
2. It is unreasonable that she should make an advantage of her own sin and error.
3. This might be the occasion of adultery, to give a wicked person a legal liberty to satisfy an extravagant lust.

But for the innocent person, it is as unreasonable that he or she should be punished for the sin of another. But what our Saviour saith here, and in the other parallel texts, is undoubtedly to be understood of husbands and wives put away not for adultery, but for other light and trivial causes, for which by the law of God no

divorce is allowed.

Matthew 19:10

Ver. 10. This is a very strange saying, and discovers to us both the imperfect state of Christ's disciples, and also the tyranny of a sinful practice grown up into a custom. The Jews had assumed a liberty of turning their wives out of doors upon every light and trivial offence or dislike; the disciples think, if this licentiousness may not be allowed it is not good to marry. So a holy institution of God, ordained for the propagation of mankind, for the restraint of extravagant lust, and for the solace and comfort of man's life, should be despised, rather than those unquiet lusts and corruptions mortified, the mortification of which would have made those irregular separations both needless and undesirable. Surely they should rather have said, If the case of a man be so with his wife, then both husbands and wives had need to learn to deny themselves, to comply each with another, to silence their brutish and boisterous passions, that, being the same flesh, they might also have one and the same spirit, and not be like a diseased piece of flesh, where humours so quarrel that one piece need be cut off to preserve the other. But the best of men have their infirmities; and, as the Hebrews said, *Spiritus Dei non semper tangit corda prophetarum*, The Spirit of God was not always upon the hearts of the prophets; so it is as true, *Spiritus Dei non semper et ubique tangit corda fidelium*, All that the saints say is not gospel. Their flesh hath its turn to speak, as well as the Spirit in them. A sinful liberty conceded, indulged, or connived at, by the laws, or by the rulers of a church or place where we live, for a long time, is not easily restrained, and even good men may for a time be carried away with the error of it, so as they cannot discern it, be convinced of it, or be brought clear of it to a conformity to the will of God.

Matthew 19:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 19:12".

Matthew 19:12

Ver. 11,12. Our Saviour, knowing the sinful custom and practice of the Jewish nation now for many years, and giving some allowance for that, and his disciples' infirmities; so he doth not answer them severely, as what they said might deserve, but reproves them gently. What he saith amounts to thus much: You do not consider what you say.

All men, without sinning against God, cannot abstain from marriage. An ability to live chastely without the use of marriage is a peculiar gift of God, and your saying hath no place in persons to whom God hath not given that gift, *for it is better to marry than to burn.* There are some whom God by nature hath made unfit for marriage. There are others whom men (wickedly) make unfit for it, that they may gratify their own jealousy. (Thus several courtiers were made eunuchs, and so entrusted with the care of princes' wives and concubines). And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs, not castrating themselves, (that is wickedness), but abstaining from marriage, and yet living chastely, (having mortified their lusts, and brought under their body), that they might be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and be more free for the work of the ministry, or be able more to give up themselves to a holy life and spiritual conversation. But God, who by his ordinance of marriage designed to people and continue the world, hath given to persons different tempers and constitutions; so as possibly the most of men and women cannot without making use of marriage govern their lusts. As to these, marriage is not a matter of choice and deliberation, and they may and ought to use it as an appointment of God, for the ends for which he hath instituted it. If there be any who can receive this saying, who can without marriage bridle his lust, and so live in a solute and single state as not to sin against God by any extravagance of lusts, and impure desires and affections, and desire, and shall do so, that he may be more spiritual, and serve God with less distraction, and be a more fit instrument to promote the kingdom of God in the world, let him do it.

Matthew 19:13

Ver. 13. Mark saith, Mr 10:13, and Luke saith, Lu 18:15, they were brought that he should touch them. A doubt may from this text arise in the reader's mind, for what purpose the parents or

nurses did bring these young children to Christ. It was not for baptism, for he baptized none himself, Joh 4:2. It is not likely it was for healing; for though our Saviour in such cases did sometimes touch or lay his hand upon the sick persons, yet it is not likely that in that case the disciples would have rebuked them, knowing that their Master used to heal such as were brought to him. It must therefore unquestionably be, that he might bless them. Matthew here saith, *that he should put his hands on them,* and pray. The putting of hands upon persons when they blessed them, or prayed for a blessing on persons, was a very usual rite and custom amongst the Jews.

Without all contradiction (saith the apostle, Heb 7:7) *the less is blessed of the better*. It was a custom amongst the Jews to bring persons to those whom they looked upon as excelling in holiness, to be blessed and commended to God by their prayers, Ge 27:4 48:14. The parents or nurses of these children by this act declared that they looked upon Christ as some great Prophet in favour with God, and whose prayers could prevail with God, and whose blessing was considerable as to these little ones.

The disciples rebuked them, as thinking they were too troublesome to their Master, and not understanding what children in health had to do with their Master, nor perhaps having before seen such a precedent.

Matthew 19:14

Ver. 14. See poole on "Mt 19:15".

Matthew 19:15

Ver. 14,15. Both Mark and Luke add something to this story. Mark saith, Mr 10:14-16, *When Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* Luke saith the same, Lu 18:16, only he saith, he *called them unto him,* and leaves out what Mark hath, Mr 10:16 of Christ taking

them up in his arms, putting his hands upon them, and blessing them. From this text divines will prove the baptism of children, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven; which whether we understand of the church, and the dispensation of the grace of Christ under the gospel, viz. that the gospel church is made up of infants as well as more adult persons, or that the grace of Christ under the gospel, viz. remission of sins through the blood of Christ, doth belong to some children, as well as to grown persons; or of the kingdom of glory, viz. children shall go to heaven as well as grown persons; the argument is well drawn from this text, Those who have a right to a membership in the church are to be baptized; or, Those who have a right to the kingdom of glory may be baptized. But one or both of these are affirmed in this text. We must take heed we do not found infant baptism upon the example of Christ in this text, for it is certain that he did not baptize these children; Mark only saith, *he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* The argument for infant baptism from this text is founded upon his words, uttered on this occasion, not upon his practice. Mark addeth, that our Saviour told them, that unless a man received the kingdom of God as a little child, he could not enter into it. But we opened those words before, Mt 18:3, where we met with the same in effect. See Poole on "Mt 18:3".

Matthew 19:16

Ver. 16. This history is reported by Mark, Mr 10:17-23 and by Luke, Lu 18:18-25. Mark saith, *When he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* Luke saith, *A certain ruler asked him.* Our Lord was now in his way from Galilee to Judea and to Jerusalem. There cometh a person, a ruler, whether of some of the synagogues, or in some place of civil magistracy, the Scripture saith not. He runs, he kneels to him, (paying him at least a civil homage, as to his superior), he salutes him with the ordinary title they gave to their teachers, Master, Good Master; he propounds a grave question to him, what he should do that he might get to heaven; but yet he doth not propound the question in those terms, but, *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* It appeareth by his respect showed to Christ at his coming, and by the question proposed, and by his going away sorrowful when our Saviour's

answer did not satisfy him, that he did not come upon any captious design to entrap our Saviour, but out of a desire to learn; but yet it appeareth plainly that he was a Pharisee, or a disciple of the Pharisees; and thought his life was in his own hands, that he had a power in himself to do some good thing by which he might merit eternal life, or upon the doing of which he might at least obtain everlasting life, though not as a strict reward for his work, without any consideration of a Messias. He grants an eternal state, he declares his desire of an eternal happiness, he declares his readiness to do some *good thing* that he might obtain it.

Matthew 19:17

Ver. 17. Mark omits the latter clause, and only saith, *Thou knowest the commandments*; so saith Luke, Lu 18:19,20. Our Saviour's design here was, not to show this young man by this answer the way by which it was possible that he or any other might come to heaven, but only to convince him of the errors of the Pharisical doctrine. They would not own Christ to be God, nor to be come forth from God; they taught eternal life to be obtainable by the works of the law, and by a fulfilling of the law, according to that imperfect sense which they gave of it, of which we heard much, in Mt 5:1-48. Now, saith our Saviour, seeing you will not own me to be God, nor yet to have come from God, *why callest thou me good?* There is none originally, essentially, and absolutely good, but God: there is none derivatively good, but he derives his goodness from God. How callest thou me good, whom thou wilt neither own to be God, nor to derive from God?

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. This was the doctrine of the Pharisees, That men might keep the commandments. Saith our Saviour, The way to eternal life, according to your doctrine, is plain before thee. You say, men may perfectly keep the commandments of God. He that doth so shall be saved. Therefore *keep the commandments*. Not that our Saviour thought he could do it, or that there did lie a passable road to heaven that way, but that he might convince him of his error, and the need he had of a Saviour.

Matthew 19:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 19:19".

Matthew 19:19

Ver. 18,19. Mark addeth, *defraud not*, Mr 10:19, but Luke doth not put it in, Lu 18:20. Three things we may observe:

1. There are no commandments mentioned but those of the second table.
2. Nor are they reckoned up in order.
3. The tenth commandment is expressed by, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; which elsewhere our Saviour calls the second great commandment, and makes comprehensive of all the commandments of the second table.

We must not from our Saviour's order here, in the enumeration of the commandments, either conclude that the precepts of the second table are greater than those of the first, or that it is enough to keep them in order to eternal life: nor yet, that the fifth commandment is lesser than the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, because it is put after them. But;

1. Our Saviour had reckoned up commandments enough to convince this man that he could not by keeping the commandments hope for eternal life.
2. He had reckoned those, by some of which he intended by and by to convince him that he had not kept the commandments.
3. And those of the non observation of which it was most easy to convince him.
4. The Pharisees looked upon these as the most vulgar and easy commandments.
5. Because love to our neighbour is an excellent evidence of our love to God.

As concerning the order in which they are enumerated, it was not our Saviour's business here to show which was the greatest commandment; that he hath elsewhere determined, calling, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c., the first and great commandment*: here he is not solicitous about the order.

Matthew 19:20

Ver. 20. Those words, *what lack I yet?* are not in Mark or Luke. The young man understood these commandments according to the Pharisees' interpretation of them, who, as we heard, Mt 5:1-48, interpreted them only as prohibiting the overt acts, not the inward lusts and motions of the heart, together with the means or occasions leading to such acts. Paul saith, he *had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*, Ro 7:7. Men that deceive themselves with false glosses and interpretations may think they keep the commandments of God, and be very confident of a righteousness in themselves; but it is impossible others should be so. *What lack I yet?* He expected Christ should have set him some new task, and was not aware that he only wanted a better knowledge and understanding of the law to convince him of his mistake.

Matthew 19:21

Ver. 21. Mark repeats it thus, Mr 10:21, *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.* Luke, Lu 18:22, repeats it as Matthew, only he begins it with, *Yet lackest thou one thing.* Mark saith, that Jesus *beholding him loved him*: not with a special saving love, for he sent him away sad; upon his going he tells his disciples, that it was a very hard thing for a rich man to come to heaven; he tells him one thing was wanting to him: but he loved him with such a common love as he loveth all his creatures with, and more especially such as are better than others. All that can be concluded from hence is, that acts of moral righteousness are pleasing to God. He saith to him, *If thou wilt be perfect*, that is, in keeping the commandments of God. The papists make a great deal of stir to found upon this text their counsels of perfection; as

if Christ here were advising only the young man to do something beyond what the law strictly required, in order to a more perfect state than others. But that this cannot be the sense of the words will appear to him who will diligently consider;

1. That this had been needless, for our Saviour, in directing the young man to keep the commandments in order to his obtaining everlasting life, had sufficiently declared that the keeping of the commandments was perfection enough.
2. He says, One thing is wanting to thee, that is, in order to thy obtaining everlasting life, which had not been true if our Saviour had granted him to have kept all the commandments, for he had before let him know that the keeping them was sufficient. Our Saviour therefore, by this speech, only endeavours to convince him that he had not kept all the commandments.

But it may be objected, How could that be, for there was no commandment that obliged him to go sell all that he had, and give to the poor? I answer, there was a commandment that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, which he could not do unless he had a heart ready to obey any command God should lay upon him, which our Saviour puts upon the trial by this special precept:

3. There was a commandment of God that he should love his neighbour as himself, and that he should not covet. Now not to be ready at the commandment of God liberally to relieve the poor members of Christ, argued a covetous mind, more in love with his estate than with God; so as though this was not before specially commanded, yet it was commanded generally, and that he would have understood had he rightly understood the law of God; especially having such a promise annexed as *thou shalt have treasure in heaven*.
4. Nor must all the command be taken to be included in those *Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor;* but the following words must also be taken in, *and come, take up the cross, and follow me*. Perfection here is not made to lie in a voluntary poverty only, but in coming after and following of Christ, with a free taking up of the cross.

In short, no man can be perfect in keeping the commandments of God, that doth not love God with all his heart, soul, and strength; nor can any man pretend to this, that hath not a heart ready to obey God in all things, whether more generally or more specially commanded. Nor can any man fulfil the duties of the second table, without first fulfil the duties of the first: for if our love to our neighbour flow not from a love to God, it is no act of obedience, and consequently no fulfilling of the law; which is not fulfilled by mere doing the external duty of it, but by doing what is required in it out of an obedience unto God, which cannot be without a first loving God.

Matthew 19:22

Ver. 22. Mark saith the same, Mr 10:22; so doth Luke, Lu 18:23. He was sorry that he had ever propounded the question, or that the terms were such as his covetous heart could not comply with. He would have had heaven if he could have had it cheap; or, it may be, he would have parted with something for it; but to sell all was a hard saying! Or he was sorry to see himself so confuted, and convinced that, whatsoever he dreamed, he had not kept the commandments, and had not a heart prepared to obey God in one thing. It is not said, because he loved his great possessions, but, *for he had great possessions*; yet the first is intended. It is a hard thing for us to have a great concern in the world, and not to love it more than God.

He went away; he would hear no more of that discourse. How many would have heaven if they might have it upon their own terms! How few are willing to come up to God's terms! How false and deceitful are our hearts! They will persuade us we have done all, when indeed we have done nothing, nor are prepared to do any thing in truth and sincerity. We are not perfect, something is wanting to us, till *to will* to do whatsoever God requireth of us be present with us, though, when it comes to, we may want strength to perform.

Matthew 19:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 19:24".

Matthew 19:24

Ver. 23,24. Mark saith, Mr 10:23-25, And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Luke saith, Lu 18:24,25, And when Jesus saw that he was sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Our Lord, seeing the young man that came to him so briskly, with such a zeal for his soul, and appearing warmth of desire to be instructed in the right way to heaven, and asking for a task to be set him; first, what good thing he should do in order to that end, then calling for more; when our Saviour had reckoned up some commandments to be observed, What lack I yet? saith he; go away quite damped and sorrowful when our Saviour said not to him, Give thy body to be burned; no, nor yet, Cut off a right hand or foot, or pluck out a right eye; only part with some of thy circumstances, Sell that thou hast and give to the poor; a thing he might have done, and have been a man still perfect, both as to his essential and integral parts: he hence takes occasion to discourse with his disciples the danger of riches, and the ill influence they have upon men's souls, with relation to their eternal welfare. Luke and Mark say he spake it by way of question, How hardly? Matthew delivereth it as spoken positively, A rich man shall hardly enter, &c. The sense is the same, only the interrogation seems to aggravate the difficulty, and to fortify, the affirmation, as much as to say, A rich man shall very hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples were astonished at this, (saith Mark), which made our Saviour say it over again, with a little exposition, *How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!* Which exposition is so far from a correction or abatement of the severity of his former speech, that some judge it rather a confirmation of it, for he goes on with saying, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* But why should this astonish the disciples, who had no reason upon this account to

fear for themselves, who had forsaken all to follow Christ? Possibly, because it was so contrary to the common opinion of the world, who did not only, as in Malachi's time, *call the proud happy*, but thought God had scarce any favour for any but the rich; in opposition to which Christ, Lu 6:20,24, blesseth the poor, and pronounces woes to the rich, as having received their consolation. As to the words themselves, the design of our Saviour in them was not to condemn riches, as in themselves damnable; nor yet to deny salvation to all rich persons: our Lord knew that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, were all rich persons, and yet in heaven; so was David and Solomon, &c. He also knew that riches are the gifts of God, good things, not in themselves pernicious. His design was only to show that they are dangerous temptations, soliciting and enticing our hearts into so great a love of them, and affection to them, as is not consistent with our duty with reference to God; and giving the heart of man such advantages for the lusts of pride, covetousness, ambition, oppression, luxury, (some or other of which are predominant in all souls), that it is very hard for a rich man so far to deny himself, as to do what he must do if ever he will be saved. For those words in Mark, *them that trust in riches*, I take them rather to give the reason of the difficulty, than to be an abatement of what he had before said; for to trust in riches, is to place a happiness in them, to promise ourselves a security from them, so as to be careless of a further happiness, Ps 49:6 52:7 1Ti 6:17. That which makes it so hard for a rich man to be saved, is the difficulty of having riches and not placing our felicity in them, being secure because of them, and having our hearts cleave unto them, so as we cannot deny ourselves in them to obey any command of God; and the suffering them to be temptations to us to pride, luxury ambition, oppression, contempt and despising of others, covetousness, &c. Upon these accounts our Saviour goeth on and saith, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*. Which doubtless was a proverbial expression, in use then amongst the Jews, to signify a thing of great difficulty, by terms importing impossibility: or else the phrase may signify an impossibility without the extraordinary influence of Divine grace, as our Saviour seemeth to expound it in the next verses.

Matthew 19:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 19:26".

Matthew 19:26

Ver. 25,26. Mark saith, *They were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, &c.* All three evangelists agree in the same substance of the other words. But why are the disciples amazed? or why do they say, Who then can be saved? Are there not in all places more poor than rich persons? The disciples might reasonably conclude, that poor persons were by their poverty also exposed to many great and dangerous temptations; that even they, though they had not riches, yet might too much place felicity in them, and covet what they had not; and from hence collect a difficulty for any to get to heaven. Our Saviour saith unto them, *With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* If men indeed were left all to themselves, none would be saved; the blackamoor cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots; but God can bring men to heaven by the mighty power of his grace: he can change a rich man's heart, and take it off from too much love of riches, and make him to despise and contemn his wealth, and to put his trust in the living God; or a poor man's heart, and make him also poor in spirit and rich in grace.

Matthew 19:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 19:28".

Matthew 19:28

Ver. 27,28. Mark and Luke repeateth the words of Peter in part, but neither of them have this part of our Lord's answer, particularly respecting his apostles. We heard before, Mt 4:18-22, of Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John, forsaking all and following of Christ, when he called them; the others doubtless did the same. Peter observing that our Saviour laid not the stress of men's salvation either upon riches or poverty, but upon the frame of men's spirits, their humility, self-denial, their obedience to and readiness to follow him; rejoins these words, and saith, *We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?*

Some think that he had an expectation of something in this life, according to the notion which the other Jews had, and it is apparent the disciples had some tincture of a secular kingdom, which the Messias should exercise. But considering our Lord's former discourse could not be so interpreted, and the disciples question, *Who then can be saved?* I cannot agree that. And for the same reason I cannot agree, that the coming of the Son of man in his glory, mentioned Mt 19:28, should be understood of his coming in his mediatory kingdom, (as some would have it), but of his last coming, which is most properly called the coming of the Son of man in his glory, mentioned 1Th 4:15-17 Jude 1:14; and that the thing here promised to the apostles, is not a preference in the church, but a further degree of honour and glory in the day of judgment.

Ye which have followed me in the regeneration; that is, at this time, while I have been by my doctrine reforming the word; in the regeneration of my church, while I have been putting it into a new state. Some make those words, *in the regeneration*, to refer to the next words.

In the regeneration; that is, in the day of judgment, when Christ shall come in his glory. The apostle indeed, Ac 3:21, calleth that day, *the times of restitution of all things*. And the prophet speaks of it as the time of the new heavens and new earth, Isa 66:22. So doth the apostle, 2Pe 3:13; and John, in Re 21:1. It is not much material to which part we apply the term.

Ye which have followed me; that is, who have followed and shall go on and follow me, for this promise cannot belong to Judas, the son of perdition.

Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones. Judges and princes use to have assessors, that sit with them in judgment. He mentions *twelve thrones*, because he had now twelve disciples, his apostles; and though afterward Judas fell away, yet Matthias succeeded, Ac 1:26; so as the twelve thrones shall not be empty, but filled up with twelve that followed Christ, for such a one was Matthias, Ac 1:21.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Though the tribes were thirteen, yet they usually went under the notion of twelve, because Levi was not counted, as having no particular

possession. That is, judging the Jews for their unbelief, and not reception of me: judging others also; but judgment shall begin at the house of God. Doubtless this promise imports, that the apostles shall have a higher place in glory at the great day than ordinary believers: yet the apostle saith the saints shall judge the world, 1Co 6:2.

Matthew 19:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 10:29,30, *for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.* Luke saith, Lu 18:29,30, *for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* The words are a liberal promise, and we must consider,

1. To whom it is made.
2. Of what it is.

The former promise respected the apostles, and was special, as appears by the number of twelve thrones. This respecteth all those that should forsake any thing, houses, brethren, lands, sisters, fathers, mothers, wife, children, for Christ; which is expressed by three phrases (*for my name's sake, for the gospel's sake, for the kingdom of God's sake*) all of the same import; rather than they will forsake me, and the profession of my gospel; rather than they will sin against God. The promise is,

1. Of *an hundredfold in this time.*
2. Of *eternal life.*

We must not understand of an hundredfold in specie, but in value. Therefore Mark saith, he shall receive what he hath in this life *with persecutions*. What is therefore this hundredfold in this life?

1. Joy in the Holy Ghost, peace of conscience, the sense of God's love; so as, with the apostles, they shall rejoice that

they are thought worthy to suffer any thing for the name of Christ, Ac 5:41. They shall, with Paul and Silas, Ac 16:25, sing in the prison; with those, Heb 10:34, take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. This inward joy and peace shall be a hundredfold more than fathers and mothers, or brethren, or sisters.

2. Contentment. They shall have a contented frame of spirit with the little that is left; though they have not so much to drink as they had, yet they shall have less thirst, Php 4:11,12.
3. God will stir up the hearts of others to supply their wants, and that supply shall be sweeter to them than their abundance was.
4. God sometimes repays them in this life, as he restored Job after his trial to greater riches. But they shall have a certain reward in another world, eternal happiness.

Matthew 19:30

Ver. 30. So saith Mark, Mr 10:31. We have much the same sentence, Lu 13:30 Mt 20:16. The Jews that are counted now the first, nearest to the kingdom of heaven, shall have no place there; and the Gentiles, looked upon as most remote from it, shall be admitted into it. The Pharisees and great doctors, who think themselves first, that is, nearest the kingdom of heaven, shall be last; and those whom they count last, such as shall have nothing to do with heaven, shall be counted the first, shall have the preference, the chiefest place in heaven. It is a general sentence, and may be applied variously. But if we consider what discourse follows, we shall see reason to interpret it as an awakening sentence to the best of men. It is the apostles, those who had forsaken all to follow him, to whom he here saith, *But many that are first shall be last*, &c. As much as if he had said, You have forsaken all and followed me, but you had need look, and consider, from what principle, with what love, and to what end you have done it; you had need keep a watch upon yourselves, and see that you hold on, and that you have no confidence in yourselves. For many that are first in, profession, first in the opinion of others, first in their own opinion and confidence, at the day of judgment will be found to be last in mine and my

Father's esteem and reckoning: and many who make not so great a noise, nor have so great a name and repute in the world, and who have the lowest and meanest opinion of themselves, will be found first, and highest in my favour. The day of judgment will frustrate many expectations.

Matthew 20:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 20:1-16 The parable of the labourers who were hired at different hours to work in the vineyard.

Mt 20:17-19 Jesus foretells his own passion and resurrection,

Mt 20:20-28 answereth the petition of the mother of Zebedee's children, and checks the indignation of the other disciples thereat.

Mt 20:29-34 He giveth sight to two blind men.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 20:16".

Matthew 20:16

Ver. 1-16. We find this parable only recorded by St. Matthew; nor have any thing to guide us in understanding the scope of our Saviour in it, but Ac 20:16, *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.* Some here by *first* understand such as are of greatest repute and estimation in the world, or who have the highest opinion of themselves. By *last* they understand persons who are of meaner note and reckoning in the world, and have lowest opinion of themselves. The former shall be last as to the love and favour of God, and any reward from him; and the other shall be first. Others by the *first* understand the Jews, who were the first people God had in the world, and more dignified than any other by privileges: by *the last*, the Gentiles, who came last into the church of God. This seems to be directly intended by our Saviour, who perfectly knew the pride and invidious temper of the Jews, who valued themselves upon their prerogative, that they were the church of God, when the world lay in wickedness; and were apt to resent as an indignity that the Gentiles should be called into the church, and be made equally partakers of spiritual privileges with them. Having now fixed the scope of the parable, the interpretation is easy.

The kingdom of heaven, that is, the sovereign dispensation of God in calling nations or persons to partake of spiritual benefits in his church, and consequently of eternal blessedness, is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. The householder is God the Father, compared by Christ to a husbandman, with respect to the culture of vines, Joh 15:1; to one that hath a

vineyard, Isa 5:1,2 &c. The *vineyard* is the church. The *work* is that which concerns eternal salvation, both of our own salvation, and of others that are committed to our charge, or that are within the compass of our activity to do them spiritual good. The *labourers* are, eminently, persons in office, and, generally, all that are called by the gospel. The hiring of them imports the gracious promise of the reward published in the gospel to those who will work. The penny is the reward, comprehensive of the spiritual privileges that persons in the church are made partakers of. Men *standing idle in the marketplace*, signifies their neglect of the great and proper work for which they came into the world, to glorify God and save their souls. His going out at several times, and calling in some to the vineyard at the *third, sixth, and ninth hours*, implies the calling of the Jews in the early age of the world, and his sending the prophets in sundry times, when they were degenerated, to return to his service. The calling some at the *eleventh hour* particularly respects the bringing in the Gentiles by preaching the gospel, who before were without the knowledge of God and the way to life. The *even* is the time of accounts and recompence. The murmuring of some that they received no more than those that came later into the vineyard, primarily and immediately signifies the envy and vexation of the Jews, that the Gentiles should be equal partakers of the grace of God with themselves, who for so many ages had been his peculiar people. The householder's vindicating himself is from two considerations, wherein it appears that his liberality to some is perfectly consistent with his justice to all.

1. That he agreed with them for a penny, which they received: the Jews enjoyed those external privileges of God's covenant, which they so much valued themselves for, till they cut themselves off by their obstinate rejecting his grace.
2. That he might do what he pleased with his own. He was master of his own favours, and it was malignity to tax his bounty to others, which was nothing prejudicial to what was due by agreement to them. Our Saviour concludes the parable, *that the last shall be first*; the Gentiles shall be made partakers of the gospel, with the blessed privileges attending it: *and the first shall be last*; that is, the Jews should be deprived of those privileges.

And analogically in every age, some who are first, in

presumption of their own merit, in profession, and reputation, but not in real holiness, shall be last in God's account; and those who were sincere and diligent in the Christian calling, though not valued by the world, shall be preferred before them.

For many be called, but few chosen. This is the reason of what is said before. Many are called by the external preaching of the word into the visible communion of the church; this is the evident meaning by the reading of the parable, wherein it is said persons were called at several hours, comprehending the ministry of the prophets and the apostles, and all the succession of preachers in every age.

And few chosen; that is, by the free and unchangeable decree of God ordained to eternal life, and to partake of saving grace in order to the obtaining it. This is the main scope of the parable.

Matthew 20:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 20:19".

Matthew 20:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 20:19".

Matthew 20:19

Ver. 17-19. Both Mark and Luke give us account of this passage. Mark saith, Mr 10:32-34, *And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.* Luke hath it, Lu 18:31-34, *then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of*

man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. Our blessed Lord was yet upon his road from Galilee to Jerusalem; we have here an account of some of his travelling discourse, to teach us to make use of all time for edifying and profitable discourse. Mark saith, *that as they went Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.* Mark gives us no account of any formidable object in their eye. Those that think they were amazed to see him make such haste to his death, forget that Luke saith, that after our Saviour had further instructed them in this, they understood it not; but probably they knew he was going into the nest of his enemies, and this made them afraid. He calls to him the twelve, (it was not a discourse fit for a multitude), and gives them an account very particularly of what he had twice or thrice before taught them: He had before told them of his death and resurrection, and that he should be betrayed to death; here he describes the manner, they should deliver him to the Gentiles (to Pilate and Herod); he describes his previous sufferings, he should be scourged, mocked, spit upon, and the kind of his death, he should be crucified; that when these things came to pass, they might be assured that he was God, who had so punctually foretold things to come, not existent in their causes, but mere contingencies. He comforteth them with two things:

1. That it was according to what had been foretold by the prophets.
2. That though he died, he should rise again the third day.

They had need of this forewarning for a forearming; for considering that they now looked upon him as the Messiah, it might well pose them to think how he should die; and when they had seen all these things come to pass, it might have shaken their faith; but being so particularly foretold, the coming of them to pass rather confirmed their faith in him as the Son of God than weakened it.

But Luke saith, *they understood none of these things;* that is, surely they believed none of them, *the saying was hid from them.*

The words were plain enough, but they could not reconcile them to their reason, they could not conceive how he who was the Messiah could die; nor get over the prejudice of his being a temporal prince, and exercising a kingdom in this world. For his rising again the third day, they could not believe it.

Matthew 20:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 20:21".

Matthew 20:21

Ver. 20,21. Mark saith, Mr 10:35, And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, the other on thy left hand in thy glory. Matthew's saying in thy kingdom, Mark, in thy glory, leaves us in some doubt whether these two disciples and their mother had here some carnal notion of the kingdom of heaven, because Christ had before spoken of some that should be first in it, and others last; or were in some expectation of some glorious secular kingdom, which Christ after his resurrection should exercise in the world; for that they had some such thoughts appears from Lu 22:24 Ac 1:6. This mother of James and John was Salome, Mr 15:40, a constant follower of Christ, Mt 27:55,56. Matthew saith she spake. Mark saith her two sons spake. They would first have had a general grant from Christ of whatsoever they should ask, or a certain thing. But wise men use not to grant such requests. Our Lord asks them what they would desire. Then do they betray their ambition. Was there ever a more unseasonable request, than for them to be suitors for great places to him, when he had but now told them he was going to be spit upon, scourged, condemned, crucified? Yet there was this good in it; they by it discovered a faith in him, that notwithstanding all this he should be exalted, and have a kingdom. But how carnal are our conceptions of spiritual and heavenly things, till we be taught of God a right notion of them!

Matthew 20:22

Ver. 22. Mark hath the same, Mr 10:38,39. Our Saviour gently reproves them for their unadvised petition, and again minds them, that he was first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory, and that by much tribulation they also must enter into the kingdom of God; which was a thing fitter for their present thoughts, than sitting at his right hand and left hand, for we must *suffer with him*, if we will be *glorified together*, Ro 8:17. How ready are we to ask we know not what!

Are ye able to drink of the cup, &c.: the sense is, *Are you able to suffer what I am to suffer?* Hereby our Saviour intimates that those who are the freest and greatest sufferers for Christ shall have the greatest rewards from him. Christ here expresses his sufferings under the notion of drinking of a cup, and being baptized with a baptism. A *cup* is an ordinary metaphor in holy writ, by which a man's portion in this life is expressed, whether it be a portion of good things or evil, Ps 11:6 Isa 51:17 Jer 25:15 La 4:21 Mt 26:39,42 Joh 18:11. Drinking of a cup is usually put for suffering, Jer 49:12 Eze 23:32 Ob 1:16. The metaphor being, as some think, taken from a custom in some nations, to put malefactors to death by giving them a cup of poison to drink; or, as others think, from the lewd custom, at competitions to force men to drink off their cups. To be *baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with* hath the same import: see Lu 12:50. Afflictions are ordinarily compared in Scripture to waters: to be baptized, is to be dipped in water; metaphorically, to be plunged in afflictions. I am, saith Christ, to be baptized with blood, overwhelmed with sufferings and afflictions; are you able to be so?

They say unto him, We are able. This was as rashly spoken as the other. How little do we know our own strength! When Christ was apprehended, they *all forsook him and fled*, Mt 26:56.

Matthew 20:23

Ver. 23. Mark hath the same, Mr 10:39,40. Our Saviour here tells them, that as he was first to suffer and then enter into his glory, so they that should be glorified with him should also first suffer with him; for none shall be crowned but those who *strive*

lawfully, 2Ti 2:5; and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2Ti 3:12. But who should be highest in the kingdom of glory his Father must determine, upon whose will the disposal of his kingdom, and the preferences in it, depended. This text hath been abused by those who have denied Christ's Deity, and equality to the Father, as if it served their purpose, because Christ here denieth it in his power to dispose of the kingdom of heaven; but besides that, he elsewhere asserts the contrary, Joh 10:28 17:2. Christ doth not here speak of what was in his power, but what was his office as Mediator; so his work was to encourage them to fight the good fight, not to dispense out crowns to them. Or else he speaketh of himself as man, as he speaketh, Joh 14:28. Nor indeed doth Christ here deny that it was in his power, but only that it was in his power to give this preference to any except those for whom his Father had prepared it. Note, the Greek is, ουκ εστιν εμον δουναι αλλ' οις ητοιμασται, that is, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared; so that those words, *it shall be given to them*, which our translators put in, were better left out. All this was before ordered and determined by God, and he could only dispose of the kingdom of God according to the eternal counsel. ¶Αλλα (which we translate *but*) hath here the force of ιε μη, (*unless*,) as in Mr 9:8 2Co 2:5. Besides that, to show the order of the Trinity in working, acts of power and providence are usually ascribed to the Father, though by other scriptures it appears that the Son in them cooperates with the Father.

Matthew 20:24

Ver. 24. Mr 10:41. Here is not yet a word of Peter's primacy, or any claim he put in for it; nor, it seemeth, had the others any apprehension of such an establishment, for then neither would James and John have put in for it, nor would all the disciples (among whom Peter was one) have been so displeased at the ambition of James and John; yet they seem to be sick of the same disease, and to have been displeased only that they had the start of the motion, and had put in their petition first.

Matthew 20:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 20:27".

Matthew 20:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 20:27".

Matthew 20:27

Ver. 25-27. So Mark hath much the same, Mr 10:42-44. Luke hath also much the same, (but it seemeth spoken at another time), Lu 22:25-27. I shall not here intermeddle with the disputes some have founded on this text: Whether there may be a civil, magistracy amongst Christians; a thing undoubtedly foreign to the sense of this text. Or, Whether Christ here establisheth a party amongst ministers; which I do not think our Lord's design here. Nor yet with that other question, Whether ministers of the gospel may take upon them the exercise of any civil power. That which our Saviour here intends is,

1. To distinguish his kingdom from the kingdoms of the world. Those kingdoms are over men's bodies and estates; his was a spiritual kingdom, over the hearts and consciences of men. Or rather, his was a kingdom of glory, where there would be no need of rulers and magistrates, as in the government of the world, nor any such exercise of authority as is here exercised in the government of earthly kingdoms and politics.
2. To condemn ambition and pride in his disciples, as making them most unfit for this kingdom, which is a thing he had before taught them. The way to be greatest in heaven is to be humblest, to be low and mean in our own eyes. This I think to be the most proper interpretation of this text; our Lord by it correcting the erroneous opinion his disciples had of the nature of his kingdom, as also their pride and ambition, and pressing upon them other studies, than how to be the greatest in any earthly kingdom. If any do think that in this text our Lord hath some respect to the kingdom he hath upon earth, he rather checks ambition, and an affectation of superiority, than any thing else, and lets us know that such as love the preeminence are most unfit for it; that the work of heads of the church is but a ministry, not a domination; and that those who are fittest for it, and deserve most honour in the church,

are those that least seek and affect it; and those most unworthy of that honour, who most hunt after it. But I prefer the first sense given of this text.

For certainly what our Saviour here saith was not only occasioned by, but had a great relation to, the petition of James and John with their mother; and the bearing rule and exercising authority mentioned there relates to the kingdom mentioned in that petition; which I think cannot be understood of the church, which was a kingdom of Christ, which they as yet little understood: but they either meant the kingdom of glory, entertaining carnal conceptions of that, that there would be some superiority and inferiority there amongst the saints, which our Saviour here correcteth their mistake in; or else they fancied a secular kingdom, to be exercised by Christ on earth, after his resurrection from the dead. Our Saviour correcteth this mistake also, intimating that his kingdom should be of another nature, and the way to be highest in it was to be humble and low, and mean in opinions of ourselves.

Matthew 20:28

Ver. 28. So saith Mark, Mr 10:45. The apostle saith, Php 2:7 *he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant*. Our Saviour had before taught them, that *the disciple is not above his master*. Such, saith our Saviour, as is the King in my kingdom, such must the rulers and great persons in it be. See what a kingdom I have; *I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*, to serve the necessities of men's and women's souls and bodies; *and to give my life a ransom for many*, λυτρον, a redemption price. The apostle useth αντιλυτρον, which signifieth a price paid instead of another, 1Ti 2:6. So as there is no further satisfaction or price to be paid for any.

Matthew 20:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 20:34".

Matthew 20:34

Ver. 29-34. Mark repeateth the same story, Mr 10:46-52, with several more circumstances.

1. He mentions only one blind man, and nameth him *Bartimaeus*, *the son of Timaeus*. He saith, the blind man was *begging*.

Mark saith, when Christ called the blind man, they said unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. He further adds, that Christ said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. Luke relates the same, Lu 18:35-43. He saith, As he was come nigh to Jericho. He mentions but one blind man. In repeating Christ's words he saith, Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. Our Lord presently gives his disciples a demonstration of what he had said, that he came to minister, to serve even the poorest and most despicable creatures. Jericho was a city not far from Jordan, Jos 3:16; it was taken, Jos 6:1-27, and upon the division of the land fell within the lot of Benjamin, Jos 18:21. Our Saviour took it in his way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Probably these blind men, or Bartimaeus at least, who alone is mentioned by Mark and Luke,

hearing Christ was coming, sat first on the side of Jericho next Galilee, and then got him on the other side, as our Saviour was leaving the town. Which makes Luke say, as he was come nigh; and the two other evangelists say, as he went out of Jericho, he sat begging. Bartimaeus being (as it should seem) the most known, and the most famous, is alone mentioned by Mark and Luke. Matthew (naming none) saith there were two; which Mark and Luke deny not, but knowing only the name of the one of them, they mention only one. They speak to our Saviour under the notion of the Son of David, by which they owned him as the true Messiah; for that was a title by which the Messiah was known amongst the Jews, according to the prophecies of him. They ask him for mercy; they continue in their cry, though the multitudes rebuked them, as possibly thinking they only came to ask some alms, and were too importunate, seeing our Lord seemed not to regard them. God sometimes trieth our faith by delays, how it will hold out, but he never frustrateth it. This minds us of our duty, to pray without ceasing. Christ stops, calleth them, asks them what they would have. They seem most sensible of their bodily wants, and answer, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. Jesus hath compassion on them, toucheth their eyes, (Christ sometimes, but not always in healing, touched the affected part), and (as Luke saith) he said, Receive thy sight. The miracle is wrought; they presently are able to see. Luke addeth, that Christ said, Thy faith hath saved thee. We have met with the same phrase before. I have made thee whole, but thy faith in me hath prevailed with me to do it. Their faith in his power was seen,

1. In their owning him as the true Messiah; so able to do it.
2. In their imploring his mercy, and going on in their cries of that nature, though they met with a rebuke.

Faith and fervent prayer do great things with God, because of his compassion. *The prayer of faith shall save the sick, Jas 5:15. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Jas 5:16.* Nor is any man so mean and contemptible in the world, (these two blind men were beggars), but if they can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if they will lie in Christ's way, if they will cry unto him, and not give over their cries, they shall obtain at our Saviour's hands greater things than these. This miracle gains God glory from the multitude, and from the blind man not only

praise, but a resolution to follow Christ. This should be the effect of all salvations wrought for us. Mercy is then duly improved, when it bringeth forth in our hearts glory and praise to God, and engages us to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Saviour had wrought his former miracles in Galilee, where the witnesses of them were remote; he hath now two witnesses in the province of Judea, who go along with him towards Jerusalem, where we shall find him in the next chapter.

Matthew 21:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 21:1-11 Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

Mt 21:12-14 He driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and healeth the diseased there.

Mt 21:15-16 His reply to the priests and scribes who took offence at the hosannas of the people.

Mt 21:17-22 He curseth the barren fig tree, which presently withereth.

Mt 21:23-27 He silences the priests and elders who questioned his authority.

Mt 21:28-32 The parable of the two sons whom their father sent to work in his vineyard.

Mt 21:33-46 The parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 21:3".

Matthew 21:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 21:3".

Matthew 21:3

Ver. 1-3. This famous story of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem is recorded by Mark, and Luke also: by Mark, Mr 11:1; by Luke, Lu 19:29. There is little difference in their relation of it thus far; afterwards we shall find more. I shall consider what they all say, that I may at once give the story perfect. Mark saith, *Bethphage and Bethany*. He saith, *ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat*. Luke hardly varies at all from Mark, at least in nothing considerable. Our Lord was come now very nigh Jerusalem; Bethany was but fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, that was about two miles, wanting an eighth part, Joh 11:18; it was the town of Lazarus, Joh 11:1. Matthew names only Bethphage, which was a place at the same distance, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, so called from the plenty of olive trees growing there; this mount was betwixt Jerusalem and Bethphage. It is like our Saviour was at both these towns, for Mark and Luke nameth both. From one of them he sendeth two of his disciples to a village near hand, telling them they should there find, at their entrance in, an ass tied, with a colt, on which yet never man sat. Mark and Luke only mention the colt, because Christ rode only upon the colt. Matthew mentions the ass, for the fulfilling of the prophecy, of which we shall hear in the next verses.

Loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, (which he knew they would, and Mark and Luke tell us they did), ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them. Not, our Lord, but *the Lord* of heaven and earth, whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills, *hath need of them*: not for any weariness; he who had travelled on foot from Galilee to Bethany, could have gone the other two miles; but that he might enter into Jerusalem as was prophesied of him, Zec 9:9.

And straightway he will send them. The words are so, as may be understood as a promise of Christ to send them back, but it is more likely they are intended as an assurance to the disciples that the owners would make no difficulty to send them. These instructions (considered with the success) were an evident argument of Christ's Divine nature, who could tell all particular circumstances, and also which way the heart of man would incline.

Matthew 21:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 21:5".

Matthew 21:5

Ver. 4,5. The words are, Zec 9:9, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* The evangelist quotes no more of them than served for his purpose. John, in the short account he giveth of this our Saviour's entrance, quotes them shorter, Joh 12:15. The former part of the words are found Isa 62:11. The Jews agree this prophecy to respect the Messiah, though they were so blinded as not to see it was fulfilled in Christ. *Tell ye the daughter of Zion,* prophesy you to the Jews, to the citizens and inhabitants of Jerusalem, *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee:* thy spiritual King, having salvation, the King promised and foretold, that shall bring salvation, *cometh,* that is, shall shortly come to thee for thy profit and advantage. And you shall know him by this; he shall come $\theta\kappa\pi$, poor, afflicted, meek, lowly, *sitting upon an ass,* an ass used to bear burdens, (so the word signifies), *and a colt the foal of an ass:* not upon both; they are exegetical of each other; the first denoted the species of the beast, the second its age. There was not any prophecy of Christ more plainly fulfilled than this. Asses were of old beasts that great persons used to ride on, Jud 10:4 12:14. But after Solomon's time the Jews got a breed of horses; so as only poor people rode upon asses, mostly reserved for burdens. Whom could the Jews possibly expect to see coming riding into Jerusalem, under the notion of a King bringing them salvation, in so little state, upon the foal of an ass, but the person prophesied of by Zechariah, Zec 9:9, whom they themselves confess to be the Messiah? And had not there been a strange veil upon their hearts, Herod's courtiers, and Pilate's, might have understood his kingdom was not of this world, nor he such a King as threatened their grandeur.

Matthew 21:6

Ver. 6. Mark saith, Mr 11:4-6, *And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.* Luke saith, Lu 19:32-34, *And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him.* The true obedience of Christ's disciples is to be learned from the practice of these two disciples: they dispute not the commands of their Lord, nor make objections, nor raise any disputes, nor are afraid of any danger to themselves; they went, and that speedily, and are exact to what their Lord had commanded them; accordingly they find as he had said. They loose the colt. The owner seeing them, asks why they loose the colt. They tell him the Lord had need of him.

Matthew 21:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 21:9".

Matthew 21:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 21:9".

Matthew 21:9

Ver. 7-9. Mark saith, Mr 11:7-10, *And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.* Luke hath it yet with more circumstances, Lu 19:35-40: *And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the*

*Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. John also gives us some account of this, Joh 12:12,13: On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. They bring the ass and the colt to Jesus, who had no saddle, no costly furniture for him; they were glad to lay on the ass's back some of their garments, and to set Christ upon the colt. And in a kind of a natural country triumph, made up without any kind of art, some threw their clothes in his way, some cut down boughs of trees, (*palm trees*, saith John), with these they bestrew the way. Christ at Bethany, in his journey, had done a famous miracle, raising up Lazarus from the dead. John saith, Joh 12:18, the fame of this made many that were in Jerusalem, who were come thither against the passover time, (for, Joh 12:1, it was but *six days before the passover*), go out to meet him; and, joined with those who came along with him from Bethany, they cried all along as they came, *Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.* Many of these expressions, seem to be taken out of Ps 118:24-26. Their laying the garments upon the ass, and throwing them in the way, was a custom they used towards princes, as appears not only by many records out of profane authors, but from 2Ki 9:13, where the like was done to Jehu, upon his being anointed king over Israel. For the acclamations, they were also such as were usual to princes. Whether *Hosanna* signifieth, *Save now*, or, *Help, we pray*; or whether it was a term by which they expressed their desire of good success or prosperity to the person to whom they applied it; or whether it was the name of some song used in their festivals, or it signifies boughs, &c., is not much material: they by this acclamation acknowledged him a King, the Son of David; they blessed him, they wished him peace, honour, and glory. This was the acclamation of the multitude, who doubtless had but a small and*

imperfect knowledge of the Divine nature of Christ, but yet looked on him as the Son of David, as the Messiah. The Pharisees (some of which it seemeth had mixed themselves with this multitude) were troubled at the acclamation, and (as Luke tells us) speak to Christ to rebuke them; but he answereth, *If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* It is a proverbial expression, the sense of which is alone to be attended. The sense is this: The time is come, set by my Father for the publication of my kingdom, and declaring what I am; and when God's time is come the thing must come to pass, by one means or another. If these children of Abraham should hold their peace, God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham, and they should do the same thing, publish me as the Son of David, the King in Zion.

Matthew 21:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 21:11".

Matthew 21:11

Ver. 10,11. Such an unusual sight might well affect a great number in Jerusalem with admiration and astonishment, the people, especially, giving honour to him as a King, and calling him the Son of David; and certainly, but that the meanness of his appearance and meanness of his followers put uninterested men out of fear, and gave Herod and Pilate some security that there was no attempt on foot against the civil government, our Saviour and his followers would have been apprehended, as raisers of a sedition and rebellion. But the multitude now gave him no other title than that of Jesus the Prophet; which yet was enough to distinguish him from other prophets, for he was Jesus a Saviour, and the Prophet foretold, De 18:15,18,19.

Matthew 21:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 21:14".

Matthew 21:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 21:14".

Matthew 21:14

Ver. 12-14. This piece of the history is related by two of the other evangelists, but with great difference. Luke before this mentions a discourse upon the way, upon our Saviour's first sight of the city, and his prophecy of the destruction of it; but no other evangelist mentioning it, I shall pass it over till I come to his history. Mark hath this part of the history thus, Mr 11:11-19, *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. (Then he relates our Saviour's cursing the barren fig tree, which I leave till I come to it in order). And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves: and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. —And when the even was come, he went out of the city, Mt 21:19. Luke saith, Lu 19:45-47, *And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and those that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple.* It is plain by all the evangelists, that our Saviour, coming to Jerusalem five days before the passover, went every night to Bethany, about two miles off, and returned in the morning to the temple, where Luke saith that he taught daily. The first day it should seem, by Mark, that he only came into the temple, looked round about upon all things, and with the twelve went out to lodge at Bethany. By his going into the temple, we must understand only the outward court, for the priests and Levites only might enter into the inner court, and the holy place; and the high priest only might enter into the holiest of all. Though Mark mentions not his driving out the buyers and sellers the first day, but recites it as if it had been done the second day of his coming, yet the best interpreters think*

that it was done the first day, as Matthew and Luke seem to hint; nor is any thing more usual, than for the evangelists to set down things out of the order of time in which they were done. Some learned authors in the Hebrew learning tell us, that in the outward court was a daily market of such things as the Jews used for sacrifices, wine salt, oil, oxen, and sheep; but it being but three or four days before the passover, the market was much greater, because of the great multitude of lambs then to be used. By the law, Ex 30:12,15, every one also was to bring a half shekel. For this purpose there were tables of moneychangers, men that were furnished with half Shekels to change with the people, that every one might have his half shekel; and those that so changed allowed some little profit to those that changed their money, which gain was called *κολλυβισται*; thence the changers were called *δολλυβισται*, *money changers*. Those that *sold doves* were there, to furnish the women that came up to their purification with their offerings, according to the law, Le 12:6. This was the reason of that great market which our Lord found in the outward court of the temple; and it is not likely that our Lord should see these abuses the first day and take no notice of them, but come the next day and correct them, which makes interpreters think Mark in this relation postponed this part of the history. Here arise two questions:

1. Whether it was unlawful for them to sell these things in that part of the temple.
2. Admit it were, By what authority did our Saviour do this?

To the first it must be said, That had it not been unlawful, our Saviour would not have reproved them for turning his Father's house, and the house of prayer, into a place of merchandise; nor would he have driven them out in such a zeal, overturning the tables, &c., which he had done also once before, Joh 2:15. The temple was built by God's direction, not only dedicated by men, but God's acceptance of it was testified. It appeareth by Joh 2:19, it was a type of Christ's body. We know there were special promises made to those that did pray toward it. God saith he had *hallowed* it, 1Ki 9:3; that is, separated it from common use to his service, amongst other things for a *house of prayer*, Isa 56:7. Now though we read of no other things sold there but what were useful for sacrifices, yet this was a civil use, and a profanation of that holy place, because there were market places in Jerusalem,

in which these things might have been done. It had been against decency, if the temple had not been hallowed in this manner, if such things had been done in the synagogues, being places set apart and commonly used for God's worship; but to use the temple in this manner, so specially hallowed, was doubtless a great profanation of that holy place. As to the second question, By what authority our Lord, being no public magistrate, did these things, I am not so posed to determine that, he being the eternal Son of God, and now in the exercise of his regal power, as I am to give an account how it came to pass that the priests, and scribes, and Pharisees never questioned him for what he did; for if any will say, that we presently shall read of their taking counsel against him, I reply, But we read of nothing relating to this laid to his charge. Nor do we read of their questioning him when he did the same things before, an account of which we have in Joh 2:13-25. For though I know some say that our Saviour did this *Jure zelotarum*: that the Jews had a law, that any might punish even to death such as profaned the worship or holy things of God; which they justify from De 13:9, and the examples of Phinehas killing Zimri and Cozbi, Nu 25:6-8, and Mattaniah's killing the Jew sacrificing to idols at Modin, and the king's commissioner, of which we read in Apc 2Mac 2:24,25: yet this doth no way give me any satisfaction: for as, on the one side, I should not have known how to have defended the act of Phinehas if God had not by and by justified him, nor do I think that the law in De 13:9 is to be expounded of private persons; so, on the other side, if the priests, and scribes, and Pharisees had not known of some law that justified our Saviour in this act, I can hardly conceive they would have so quietly put it up, especially considering that probably their profit was concerned, if they had for gain licensed those traders to a place within the compass of the temple, as is very probable. Being therefore fully satisfied that our Saviour, who was Lord of the temple, and to whom the Spirit was given without measure, did no more than he might lawfully do, I am willingly ignorant how it came to pass that he met with no opposition in it, because God hath not pleased in his word to inform us. It is certain that he did the thing, and that it was a thing fit to be done, and that he, as the Son of God, had authority to do it; what made them take it so quietly I cannot tell, nor is it necessary for us to know, nor of any great advantage.

Matthew 21:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 21:16".

Matthew 21:16

Ver. 15,16. The other evangelists say nothing of this part of this history. The *wonderful things* here mentioned, are his healing the blind and lame, of which we read Mt 21:14. The cry of the children doubtless more displeased them; it was of the same nature with that of the multitude in the way, and in the streets, when our Lord came into Jerusalem; they owned Christ as the Messiah, and gave him praise, and wished all manner of felicity to him. The Pharisees showing a displeasure at the acclamation, Christ refers them to what was written, Ps 8:2: there it is, *thou hast founded, or ordained, strength*, that is, a solid and firm praise; a prediction that from the testimony of such weak persons, the glorious power of Christ should be proclaimed, and from such mean and despicable beginnings great and glorious things should come to pass.

Matthew 21:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 21:22".

Matthew 21:22

Ver. 17-22. Luke hath nothing of this passage, but Mark relates it with some variation and additions: the variation is only as to time, as to which the evangelists were not curious. Matthew relates this miracle as done in the morning of the second day, as Christ and his disciples returned from Bethany; so doth Mr 11:12: but Matthew speaks as if the disciples discerned it presently withered; Mark mentions it as not discerned to be withered till the next morning, Mr 11:20. Mark saith, Mr 11:13, *for the time of figs was not yet*; which breeds a difficulty, why our Saviour should curse the fig tree for having no fruit, when the time for its fruit was not come (of which more by and by). Mark saith, Mr 11:21,22, that *Peter calling to remembrance his Master's cursing the fig tree, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.* Then repeats the substance of what Matthew hath in Mt 21:21,22; to which Mark addeth, Mr 11:25,26, *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses.* When our Lord had been in the temple, and driven out the buyers and sellers there, he went out of the city to be at Bethany, either to avoid the noises of the city, (now very full of people, the passover being so nigh), or to get a more private place for prayer. He returns the next morning; and being hungry, and seeing a fig tree in his way, he goes to it, finds it full of leaves, but no fruit on it. He saith unto it, Never fruit grow on thee more. Mark saith, *For the time of figs was not yet.* Why then doth our Saviour curse this tree? Some think that by *time* is here meant season (as indeed the Greek word often signifieth); these would have the meaning to be, for it was not a seasonable year for figs. But this rather augments than abates the difficulty, for why should our Saviour curse it for having no figs, when the year was such as was not seasonable? Others therefore think that *ou* should be *ou*, then the English would be, Where he was was a time of figs. For this it is said;

1. That the Greek spirits and accents were ordinarily left out in ancient copies, which if they be taken away the words are the same.
2. That this was according to truth, for it was a time of green figs, at least; it being near Jerusalem, and but three or four days before the passover, about which time they reaped their corn, as appears from Le 23:10 De 16:9; and it is plain from So 2:13, that in the beginning of their spring their fig trees put forth green figs.

But when I consider that none of the ancient translations are according to this criticism, but as our translations, I conclude that the ancients understood it *ov*, not *ou*, and it seemeth too bold to interpret the words contrary to their unanimous sense. Others therefore tell us, that fig trees, or at least some kind of them, (like orange trees), had leaves and fruit upon them always, some green, some half ripe, some full ripe; and that these kept on their leaves all the winter: so that our Saviour seeing leaves, might be led to it with an expectation of some fruit put forth the former year, for the time for the ripening of fruit of that kind that year was not come; and finding none, he cursed it; thereby in a type showing what should be done to barren souls, who have only leaves, no true fruit of righteousness. Or what if we should say, that he did not curse it with any respect to its want of fruit, but only to show his Divine power, working a miracle?

And presently the fig tree withered away: as soon as our Saviour had cursed it, it began to wither. Mark tells us this was the next morning, Mr 11:20, which made Peter say, *Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.* Matthew saith, *When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!* Upon this our Saviour telleth Peter and the rest, that if they had faith, and doubted not, they should not only do that which he had done to the fig tree, but if they said to that mountain, Be removed and cast into the sea, it should be done. This is interpreted by Mt 21:22, *All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.* We met with the like expression before, Mt 17:20. Mark hath the same, Mr 11:23. Luke hath it, Lu 17:6. It is an expression which ought not to be strained further than to signify, that there is nothing conducive to the glory of God and our own good, but believers may receive at

the hand of God, if they can believe without doubting that what they would have shall come to pass. I see no reason to discourse of a faith of miracles as different from other faith; which only thus differed, that the disciples (the apostles I mean) had a power given them, and a promise made to them, that they should be able to work miraculous operations, which is not given to other Christians serving only the particular occasions of that time, to give credit to the gospel. The general proposition is true, and shall be made good to every believer, That whatsoever good is made the matter of a promise, (such are all good things), shall be given to believing souls, praying for them. But there were of old special promises, not made to the people of God in general, but to particular persons, for particular ends; we cannot expect to do or obtain such things now. Nothing is too big for true faith to obtain, but that faith must have a promise to lean upon, and it must be showed by prayer, as Mt 21:22. Mark adds, that it must be also attended with charity, a charitable heart, ready to forgive, and actually forgiving, our brethren their trespasses. But it is no more than we met with in Matthew, Mt 6:14,15, where we opened the sense of those words.

Matthew 21:23

Ver. 23. Mark hath before this, Mr 11:18, *And the scribes and chief priests heard it, that is, his turning the buyers and sellers out, and overturning the tables of the money changers, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.* Then he saith, Mt 22:27,28, *And they come again, to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?* Luke saith, Lu 19:47,48: *And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.* It is plain that our Saviour went every night to Bethany, and returned to Jerusalem every morning, and daily preached in the temple. And Luke saith, *the people were very attentive to hear him;* in the Greek it is, hung upon him, hearing him. They were also much affected with the miracles which they had seen him working. So as the scribes and the elders *feared him,* saith Mark. This

possibly might be one reason why they made no opposition to our Saviour, driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, viz. for fear of the people; for we must remember they were a conquered, tributary people, and traded the jurisdiction of the Romans, under whom, though they had a liberty for the exercise of their own religion, yet they had not such a power as before; it was not lawful for them to put any to death, Joh 18:31. And for the preserving of their own liberty, they were obliged to take heed of causing any tumults for matters concerning their religion. So as what they did of this nature they did by craft, rather than plainly and openly attempting it, Mr 14:1. It is likely they might have some previous secret counsels what method to take, mentioned both by Mark and Luke. The method, it seems, which they agreed upon, was first to send to him, to know by what authority he did those things, and who gave him such authority. This is mentioned both by Matthew and Mark. They sent such a message to John, Joh 1:19-21. They had often questioned him about his doctrine, and had gone by the worst, he justifying his doctrine to their faces. For the truth of his miracles, it was so evident that they could not question that; They therefore now only question his authority to preach. The question was captious enough, for if he had said, By a Divine authority, they would probably have accused him of blasphemy. For a human authority, they knew he had none, according to their rules for order, for they came from the court that should have given them such authority. Our Saviour well enough understanding their design, gives them, who would not understand his Divine mission by his miraculous operations, a wary answer.

Matthew 21:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 21:27".

Matthew 21:27

Ver. 24-27. We have the same without any considerable alteration Mr 11:27-33. Luke also records the same history, Lu 20:1-8, with no considerable difference, only he thus prefaceth to it: *And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders:* which makes it plain, that their question principally related to our Saviour's preaching. It should seem, they had a law prohibiting any to preach in the temple without authority from the chief priests and elders. If any one think this was not an apposite answer to the question propounded to him,

1. They ought to consider, that our Saviour did truly judge they deserved no answer, for his works had testified of him that he acted by a Divine power; he should not need tell them so, in so many words.
2. In very deed there was a direct answer couched in this question of our Saviour. I pray, saith he, by what authority did John preach and baptize? They could not say, By a human authority, for they knew he was not licensed by their masters: it must follow that he acted by virtue of an extraordinary Divine mission.

So do I, saith our Saviour, and have given you a greater proof of it than ever John Baptist did. But our Lord well knew that the Pharisees had a greater reverence for John the Baptist than for him, and that many of the people had a great opinion of John, indeed greater than of him; our Saviour coming *eating and drinking,* as he expresses it, that is, being of a more free and sociable conversation, which did not so please the Pharisaical morose, and supercilious humour: he therefore chooseth to teach them by a question, in which, as soon as they could resolve themselves, they might know by what authority he did what he did. Besides, by the baptism of John, mentioned in our Saviour's question, is not to be understood only his administration of baptism, but his doctrine, and indeed the whole of his ministry; for as his baptism is called *the baptism of repentance,* so the Pharisees here argue, that if they should say, *From heaven,* he

would say, *Why then did ye not believe him?* Which must be understood of his doctrine. A great part of John's doctrine was, that the Messiah was come, that Christ was he; Joh 1:29, he pointed to him and said, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;* which had they believed, they would never have come to him with so silly a question. The Pharisees therefore rightly judged how they would be ensnared, if they said John's baptism and doctrine was from God, for then a Divine faith was due to his words, and they must have owned Christ to be the Messiah. But why did not they say, *Of men?* The text saith, they feared the people. Those who will not fear God, shall have something to fear sordidly and slavishly. The people all owning John as a prophet, a man that had an extraordinary mission from God, and commission to reveal the mind and will of God, would have cried shame upon them had they disparaged him, as one that spake of his own head. They say, *We cannot tell.* Herein they lied. Our Saviour replies, *Neither do I tell you, &c.* Not, I cannot tell you, but I do not tell you: I will tell you no more than what John hath long since told you, and what, if you will, you and all men may know by my miracles.

Matthew 21:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 21:32".

Matthew 21:32

Ver. 28-32. Matthew alone mentions this parable. The scope of it is taught us Mt 21:31, *The publicans and the harlots go* (that is, shall go) *into the kingdom of God before you*, that is, you Pharisees. Who these Pharisees and who the publicans were, we showed before, Mt 3:7. The publicans were very odious to the Jews: see Mr 2:16. Harlots are great sinners. By *the kingdom of God*, here, is meant that of glory. Our Lord's saying that publicans and harlots should go in before the Pharisees, doth not imply that they should follow. It only signifieth that some who had been publicans (as Matthew and Zacchaeus) and harlots were in a better condition than these Pharisees. He proves it because they had done the will of God, which the Pharisees, notwithstanding all their fair profession, had not, but resisted it, and particularly in the ministry of John the Baptist, who came to them in the way of righteousness, preaching the true doctrine of righteousness, and living a holy and righteous life; upon the hearing of whose doctrine, some of the publicans and other great sinners had believed in Christ; but the Pharisees, though they heard his doctrine, saw his conversation, and saw others repent and own Christ, yet were so far from believing, that they would not repent, that they might believe; they would not be awakened to any sense of their sinful courses, nor amend any thing of their former ways, that they might receive Christ and embrace his righteousness and salvation. For although evangelical repentance is the fruit of faith, yet that repentance which lieth in a previous sense of sin, and a resolution to leave sinful courses, goeth before it. Now to illustrate and press this home upon the consciences of these Pharisees, our Saviour brings this parable, (as Nathan did to David, 2Sa 12:1,11) that they might, being convicted, condemn themselves. Hence the parable is easily understood: The *man* mentioned is God. The *two sons* were the Pharisees, a people highly pretending obedience to the law of God, and making a great show of religion. And *the publicans and harlots*, great sinners, bad and vile people, making no pretence to religion. God saith to the one and the other, *Go, work in my vineyard*, that is, do my will, do the work I command you to do. The Pharisees, so hypocrites and formalists, by their outward pretence and profession, say, *I go, sir*; but yet go not; all their religion is a vain show, a mere outside appearance. Others by their lives declare that they will not go;

but yet upon second thoughts, having their hearts touched by the finger of God, they do God's work.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. This is plain; for what was the will of the father, but that they should do the work he set them to do? This the latter did not. The father's will was not only that the son should give him a cap and a knee, and compliment him, but that he should go to work in the vineyard. It is the least part of God's will that men should give him good words, be a little complemental and ceremonious toward him; but that they should repent and believe, and obey his gospel. This some publicans and harlots did; the generality of the Pharisees refused. It is a hard thing to convince a moral, righteous, civil man, that he lacks any thing to salvation; and hence it is that profane persons many times repent, believe, and are saved, when others perish in their impenitency and unbelief, because they think they have no need of repentance, or any further righteousness than they are possessed of.

Matthew 21:33

Ver. 33. Mark hath this parable, Mr 12:1-9. Luke hath it, Lu 20:9-16. Who is here intended under the notion of a *householder*, or a *man*? We are told by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 5:1,2, it is the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: *the house of Israel and the men of Judah* are his *vineyard*, his *pleasant plant*, Isa 5:7 he hedged this people by his providence. God often compares his church to a vineyard, De 32:32 Ps 80:8 Jer 2:21. The other expressions, of making in it a winepress, or a winefat, signify no more than that God had provided for the Jews all things necessary for use or ornament. His letting of it out to husbandmen, and going into a far country, signifies that, being himself, as to his glorious residence, in heaven, he had entrusted the church of the Jews with a high priest, and other priests and Levites.

Matthew 21:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 21:36".

Matthew 21:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 21:36".

Matthew 21:36

Ver. 34-36. Mark agrees in the substance, but mentions three single servants sent, and then many others. The first he saith *they caught, and beat, and sent away empty*. At the second he saith *they cast stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled*. The third he saith *they killed*; and for others, they did beat some, and kill some. Luke speaks to the same sense. I observed before, that we must not look to fit every particular phrase in a parable in the explication. By the *servants* here sent to the husbandmen are doubtless to be understood those extraordinary prophets, whom in the corrupt state of the Jewish church God sent to reprove the priests, and to admonish the priests, as well as the people, of the duty which they owed unto God, in obedience to his law. And the various phrases here used, to express the indignities offered to the servants, do but signify the various abuses offered to many of these prophets, of which are instances in 1Ki 19:10 2Ch 36:16 Ne 9:26 Jer 44:4,5. Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned; so was Micaiah; Zechariah slain in the temple, &c.

Matthew 21:37

Ver. 37. Mark saith he had but *one son, his well beloved*, Mr 12:6. Luke saith, Lu 20:13, *Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him*. God is here brought in acting after the manner of men, using all probable means to get their rent: we must not fancy that God did not know what men would do. God, after all his prophets, sent his only Son to the Jews and to their priests, his well beloved Son; he said, Perhaps they will reverence my Son. These words must be understood, not as expressing what they would do, or what appeared to God probable that they would do, but as expressive of what they ought to do, and what God might reasonably expect from them.

Matthew 21:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 21:39".

Matthew 21:39

Ver. 38,39. Mark and Luke have the same with no considerable alteration. Our Lord here prophesieth his own death by the means of these wicked priests, and so both lets them know that he was not ignorant of what was in their hearts, and they had been already (as we heard before) taking counsel about, by which they might again have concluded that he was the Son of God, and one who knew their hearts; and he also lets them know, that they should not surprise him, and that he was not afraid of them.

But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said, This is the heir. These words let the Pharisees (to whom, together with the people, he at that time spake) know that themselves knew he was the Son of God, and were convicted in their own consciences that he was the true Lord of the church. Though this was not true of all that had a hand in crucifying Christ; for Paul saith of some of them, that if they had known him, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;* yet it was doubtless true of many of them, and those the most knowing men amongst them. But herein did their most prodigious blindness and madness appear, that when they knew this, they should think it possible to prevent his being set as King upon the Lord's holy hill of Zion. One would think this were impossible to rational creatures. But why should we think so? How many are there in the world at this day, that are convicted in their own consciences, and do believe that the ways and people whom they prosecute to their ruin, yea, to death itself, are the truths, the ways, the people of God, yet they will be kicking against the pricks! And though God makes many of them perish in their enterprises, and suffers them not to come with hoary heads to the grave in peace, yet there ariseth another instead of this hydra, a posterity approving their doings and thinking, though their fathers failed in this or that little policy, yet they shall prevail against God, and his inheritance shall be theirs. Wise Providence thus fitteth the saints for their crown, and suffers sinners to prepare themselves for the day of wrath.

Matthew 21:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 21:41".

Matthew 21:41

Ver. 40,41. Mark relates the latter verse as Christ's own words, Mr 12:9; so doth Luke, Lu 20:15,16, adding, that *when they heard it, they said, God forbid*. It is said, to solve this difficulty,

1. That *they say unto him* must not be understood of the Pharisees, but some of the hearers; the Pharisees said only, *God forbid*.
2. Others think the Pharisees and elders did at first say as is here expressed, but our Saviour then telling them they were the men and opening it further to them, they said, *God forbid*.

It is very possible the Pharisees and elders might first say it, and that our Saviour confirming and opening their words, showing them how they had given judgment against themselves, they said, *God forbid*; so both they might say these words, and Christ also. This I take to be the most satisfactory answer. By those words also our Saviour declares, that his church should shortly be taken out of the hands of these Pharisees, and elders, and priests, and put into the hands of his apostles and a gospel ministry.

Matthew 21:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 21:44".

Matthew 21:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 21:44".

Matthew 21:44

Ver. 42-44. Mark saith, Mr 12:10,11, *And have ye not read this scripture, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* Luke saith, Lu 20:17,18, *And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* It is more than probable that our Saviour had more words with them upon this argument than are left us upon sacred record; for John hath let us know, that we are not to expect that all he did or spake should be written, Joh 21:25; and as not every discourse or action, so not all words in the same discourse, nor all circumstances relating to the same action. Knowing themselves and their masters to be the husbandmen with whom the Lord had entrusted this vineyard the house of Israel, it is not reasonable to think they should be very patient to hear that God would miserably destroy them as wicked men, and commit his vineyard to the trust of others. We cannot therefore in reason imagine but that they should reply something to that, as thinking it a strange thing that he should assert, that for the rejection of him, God would reject his ancient people, and cast off the church of the Jews. To show this was nothing which ought to seem strange to them, he asks them, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone, &c.* Luke saith, *he beheld them, and said, What is this then, &c.?* As if the Pharisees had charged him with speaking without any warrant from the word of God, there was no such thing in the law or prophets. To convince them of their mistake, or at least that there was nothing in that he said which needed to appear strange to them, he saith, *Did ye never read? or, Have ye not read the scripture?* (so Mark relates it); or, *What is this then?* As Luke hath it. The text he quotes is Ps 118:22,23. It is manifest that the Jews understood that Psalm to be a prophecy of Christ, by the people's acclamations of Hosanna; for the substance of those acclamations are in Ps 118:25,26: *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hoshiah na, הושיע ענה נה Save, I beseech thee.* This they understood of the Messiah. This they had heard cried unto our Saviour. Saith our Saviour, In that very Psalm you may read, *The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.* Before he had compared the church to a vineyard, to show their obligation to bring forth fruit; here to a building, to denote God's dwelling in

it. The builders here intended were the heads of the Jewish church, who not only by their own pretences, but by their calling, were builders, and ought to have been builders; though indeed they proved destroyers and pullers down, instead of builders. The church is elsewhere compared to a building, 1Co 3:9 Eph 2:21; and the teachers in it to builders, Ro 15:20 Ga 2:18. Our Lord is here compared to a *stone*, because he is the only firm foundation, *the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph 2:20-22: called by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 28:16, *a stone laid in Zion for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*; which is applied to Christ, Ac 4:11 Ro 9:33 1Pe 2:6-8. He is *become the head of the corner*, that is, the chief, the principal stone in the building. Lest they should be startled at this, he addeth, *this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes*. This may seem strange to you, that those who seemed to be builders and pillars should be rejected and thrown away; and no wonder, for it is the *Lord's doing*. In the reformations of churches from gross corruptions, God doth always some extraordinary things, which we are not at present able to reconcile to other reasons. Mt 21:43, (which some think should have been put after the next verse), our Lord tells them plainly, that God was removing his church from them to the Gentiles, which he calleth a people that should bring forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: there will be many that shall be offended at Christ, his person, his doctrine, his institutions, upon which account he is called a stumbling stone, Ro 9:33. But they *shall be broken*: if they take offence at me, so as they will not believe on me, nor receive me, it will be their ruin.

But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder: if they shall go on to persecute me and my members, so that I fall on them, they shall be ruined, irreparably and irrecoverably, with a more dreadful destruction.

Matthew 21:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 21:46".

Matthew 21:46

Ver. 45,46. Mark hath much the same, Mr 12:12; so hath Luke, Lu 20:19,20: but Luke adds, *They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.* These wretched men were convinced in their own consciences, *they perceived that he spake of them.* They had nothing to oppose to what he said. They could not deny but that the psalmist, Ps 118:22, spake of the Messiah. They could not but own that they were the builders, and that they had refused him. Yet their lusts and interests would not suffer then, to obey these convictions, to receive and to embrace Christ, and prevent that ruin which was coming upon them. They durst not apprehend Christ for fear of the people. They had nothing to lay to his charge; they therefore send out spies to watch him, to see if they could catch any thing from him in discourse, whereof to accuse him before Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea at this time.

Matthew 22:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 22:1-14 The parable of the marriage of the king's son: the unworthiness of those that were first bidden: others called in their room: the punishment of one that came without a wedding garment.

Mt 22:15-22 The captious question proposed concerning paying tribute to Caesar, and Christ's answer.

Mt 22:23-33 He confutes the Sadducees who questioned him touching the resurrection.

Mt 22:34-40 He showeth which are the chief commandments of the law.

Mt 22:41-46 He proposeth to the Pharisees a knotty question concerning Christ.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 22:14".

Matthew 22:14

Ver. 1-14. Luke hath this parable, Mt 14:16-24, which hath made divers interpreters think that Matthew hath put it out of its due order; for Luke reports it as spoken long before, and that not in the temple, but at a Pharisee's house where he was at dinner, and upon occasion of one of them saying, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* But I know no reason why we may not allow our Saviour to have used the same parable twice, in two differing companies, and upon two different occasions, especially considering there are remarkable differences in Luke's and Matthew's relation. I shall therefore leave the consideration of Luke's relation till I come to that chapter in his Gospel, where I shall meet with it in course, and consider only what Matthew saith. We must remember this is a parable, not an historical narration. The first verse tells us, *And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables:* he answered, that is, he began a discourse, so the word very often signifies. Our Saviour hath neither given us any particular explication of this parable, nor any *proparabola*, or *epiparabola*, any sentence before or after the parable, guiding us as to the explication, except only that short sentence, Mt 22:14, *For many are called, but few are chosen;* which rather guides us in the explication of the four

latter verses than of the whole parable: yet it is not hard for us to find out our Saviour's scope in this parable. It seemeth to be double:

1. To inform those to whom he spake of the destruction suddenly coming upon the Jews, for their rejection of the gospel, and of the calling of the Gentiles.
2. To let us know, that neither Amongst the Jews nor Gentiles all should be saved whom God called by the external ministration of the gospel; but those alone who, belonging to the election of grace, should be found in the day of judgment having on the wedding garment.

So then, *the kingdom of heaven* here signifies, the way or equity of God in the dispensation of the gospel, or the administration of things in order to the kingdom of glory. The *king* here mentioned must be he who is the King of kings. The *marriage for his son*, is the exhibition of the covenant of grace; which whosoever layeth hold on, Isa 56:4, is by faith united to Christ; which union is often expressed in holy writ under the notion of a marriage, Ps 45:10,11 Eph 5:23, &c.: or their union with him in glory, Re 19:9. The persons *bidden* were the Jews. The *servants* that called them to the *wedding*, were those that were faithful amongst their ordinary teachers, or the prophets, such as Isaiah and the rest, whom they refused to hearken unto. The *other servants* might signify John the Baptist, and the twelve, and others sent out by Christ, to tell them that Christ was now come, there wanted nothing but their coming to him and receiving of him. Their making *light of it, going one to his farm, another to his merchandise*, and others taking the servants, entreating them spitefully, and slaying them, signifies the Jews' general refusal of the gospel, and the particular rage and malice of some of them, shown in their abusing of the Lord's prophets and messengers, and which he knew some of them would further show against Stephen and James. The king's sending forth his armies, and slaying the murderers, signified the coming of the Roman armies, and their utter destroying Jerusalem. The sending of the servants into the highways, and inviting all those whom they found to the wedding, signified the apostles going to the Gentiles, and preaching the gospel to all nations; which much enlarged the territories of the church, gathering in many who professed to accept of Christ, but not all in truth and sincerity.

The king's coming to see his guests, signifieth Christ's coming at the day of the last judgment, with his fan in his hand, throughly to purge his floor. His finding one without his wedding garment, signifieth his finding many hypocrites at the day of judgment. The guests at weddings were either wont to put on their best clothes, (as we usually do), or a particular garment which was then in use, and was worn by those who were invited to weddings. By the *wedding garment* here is meant Christ, Ro 13:14, who is at this feast both the bridegroom, and the meat at the feast, and the wedding garment also, in divers respects. It is but an idle dispute, whether faith is meant, or love: neither the one nor the other separately, but faith that worketh by love; whatsoever God requireth of us, that we may be made meet for the kingdom of God: without faith and holiness none can see God. His being *speechless* signifies, that those who have lived under the proffers of grace and salvation, and have rejected them, neither believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor bringing forth fruits of holiness, will be without excuse at the day of judgment. And the king's commanding his servants to *bind him hand and foot*, &c., signifieth that all such persons as live within the church, under the means of grace, yet die impenitent and unbelievers, having not by a true faith received Christ as their Saviour, and brought forth the fruits of true repentance and holiness, shall get nothing by their being within the church and externally called, but shall be thrown into hell as well as others, the pains of which are here expressed by binding hand and foot, lying in outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth; as in other places by a worm that shall never die, and a fire that shall never go out; all metaphorical expressions, signifying the vexations and intolerable punishment of the damned in hell.

For (saith our Saviour) many are called, but few are chosen. We met with this expression before, Mt 20:16, where the sense of it was not so obvious as it is here. Some by it here understand, a choice unto life eternal; nor without reason, if that be understood by the marriage supper, as it is Re 19:9; and it appears to be partly at least the sense of it here, in that the person without the wedding garment is doomed to eternal misery. If we by the marriage supper understand a union with Christ here, or the benefits flowing from that, we must by *chosen* here understand effectually called, being made partakers of that special distinguishing grace which bringeth salvation. The gospel is preached to many whom God doth not favour with his special

grace, so as they receive it, convert, and are saved. The former part of this parable doth hint us the reason why the Jews rejected the offers of grace and salvation made to them, viz. the power that the temptations from the world, of pleasure, profit, and honour, had upon them. As the latter part also showeth us the true reason why any are saved to be from the free grace of God, viz. because they are chosen, chosen to eternal life, and particularly favoured to be made partakers of his special and, distinguishing grace.

Matthew 22:15

Ver. 15. Mark saith, Mr 12:13, *They send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.* Luke saith, Lu 20:20, *They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.* His life was what they sought for. This they had no power allowed by the Romans to take away without the sentence of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. That they might have something to accuse him of before him, which he might condemn him for, they first take counsel. They saw he did nothing worthy of death; they therefore issue their counsels in a resolution to send some persons to discourse with him, under the pretence of conscientious, good men, to propound some questions to him, his answer to which might give them some opportunity to accuse him of blasphemy or sedition. The men they pitch upon were some of them Pharisees, some Herodians.

Matthew 22:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 22:17".

Matthew 22:17

Ver. 16,17. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:14. So hath Luke, Lu 20:21. There is a great variety of opinions, who these *Herodians* were; we read of them in an early consultation against Christ with the Pharisees, Mr 3:6. Some think, they were foreigners of other nations, whom Herod, being tetrarch of Galilee, had

brought in from contiguous pagan nations; but this is not probable, for then the Pharisees would have had nothing to do with them. Others think that they were some of Herod's guard, or soldiers; but neither is this probable, considering the issue of their counsels, to send some who in Christ should not know, nor be frightened with. Others (which is more probable) think they were some of those Jews who favoured Herod's side, and had forgotten the liberty of their country, joining with the conqueror, and taking his part. Others think they were Sadducees. Others say, that they were persons that were of a mongrel religion, made up of Judaism and Gentilism. Our Saviour bids them *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of Herod*, Mr 8:15; which maketh it probable, that the Herodions were not only courtiers, and for the Roman interest, but that they had embraced some particular doctrines, much differing from the Pharisees; it is likely they were leavened with some of the doctrine of the Sadducees, denying angels and spirits, and the resurrection. It is plain that they were some of Herod's faction; what their principles were as to religion is not so plain, nor of much concern to us to know. They begin their discourse to our Saviour with a great compliment, *Master*, a name the Jews did usually give to those whom they owned for teachers.

We know that thou art true, one that will tell us the truth, and speak as thou thinkest to be true, *and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men*: thou wilt speak nothing out of fear, nor for any favour or affection; but plainly tell us what is truth, and what God would have us do in the cases we offer to thee. In these words they give us the true character of a good teacher; he must be a good man, true, one that will truly teach men the way of God, and, in the faithful discharge of their duty, not be afraid of the face of men. But herein they condemned themselves, for if our Saviour was so, why did they not believe in him, and obey what he taught them?

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But how came this to be a case of conscience? What doubt could there be, whether men from their peace might not lawfully part from their own, especially such a little part of it? Some think that they spake with relation to that particular tribute which was demanded, which they think was that half shekel, Ex 30:12,15, paid by the Jews every year, which

was to go for the service of the tabernacle: they say that the Romans had ordered this payment to go to the emperor, and this bred the question, Whether they might lawfully pay that which was appointed as a testimony of their homage to God, and for the service of the temple, to a profane use. I must confess I cannot so freely agree to this, wanting any good proof that the Romans exacted that payment to the emperor, and thinking it a very probable argument to the contrary, that the tables of the money changers, who changed the people's money into half shekels fit for that payment, was now continued. And if that payment had been now altered, and turned to the use of the civil government, our Saviour's overturning those tables, and driving the money changers out, had offered them a fair opportunity to have charged him with sedition, which they did not do upon that account. I rather therefore think the question propounded concerning the lawfulness of making any payments to the emperor, looking upon him as a usurper of authority over a free people. That the Jews were very tenacious of their liberty appears from Joh 8:33; and, without doubt, the most of them paid such taxes as the Roman emperor laid upon them with no very good will. Now those hypocrites turn it into a case of conscience, God having made the Jews a free people, Whether they should not sin against God in paying these civil taxes to a pagan conqueror. There was one Theudas, and Judas, mentioned Ac 5:36,37, who made an insurrection upon it. This was a question captious enough. For if he had said it was lawful, he had probably incurred the odium of the people, which was what they desired, for they had apprehended him before this time but for fear of them. If he had said it was not lawful, they had what they sought for, a fair opportunity for accusing him, and delivering him up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor at this time amongst them.

Matthew 22:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 22:22".

Matthew 22:22

Ver. 18-22. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:15-17. So hath Luke, Lu 20:23-26. Our Saviour, saith Luke, *perceived their craftiness*, how subtlety they went about to entrap him. He calls them to show him *the tribute money*. The Jews had two sorts of money, shekels and half shekels, which was money proper to them, and Roman coin, pence and sesterces. Their tribute was paid in this coin. Accordingly they bring unto him a penny, a Roman penny, as much in value as seven pence halfpenny in our coin; which it seems was the poll money, which the Romans exacted of every head. The coining of money was always looked upon as an act of sovereign power, hence the usurpation of it is made so criminal. Most princes use to have their effigies stamped upon their coin, and some inscription about it, with their names, and some words expressive of their dominion over such places where their coin is current; so as the admission of a prince's coin as current amongst a people was a testimony of their owning and subjection to such a prince. Such an image and superscription this piece of money had; upon which our Saviour concludes, *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's*. Although Caesar be a usurper, yet God hath given you into his hands, you have owned him by accepting his coin as current amongst you. His right and God's right are two distinct things. Religion doth not exempt you from your civil duties, and obedience to princes, in things wherein they have a power to command. Princes have power to impose tributes upon their subjects, for the maintenance and upholding of the civil government. Let Caesar have his due, and let God have his right. You are a company of hypocrites, who by this question would make me believe you have a great zeal for God and his rights, and that you would not pay taxes that you might assert God's

right over you; this is your preference, but indeed your design is to try me, if you can persuade me, by any words of mine, to encourage you to any sedition, or acts of disloyalty to your civil governors. I see no reason for it; Caesar hath his right, and God hath his rights; you may give them both their rights, and so you ought to do. God's kingdom is of another nature than the kingdoms of the world. His law forbiddeth no civil rights. Thus our Saviour answers their question so as he maketh them to condemn themselves, if, owning the civil magistrate's power, they did not give him his rights, and so as neither Caesar nor yet the people had any just cause of exception against him for his words. This answer surprises them, they marvel and go their way, having played their game and got nothing.

Matthew 22:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 22:28".

Matthew 22:28

Ver. 23-28. Mark thus repeats the same history, Mr 12:18-22. So

doth Luke, Lu 20:27-33. Concerning the Sadducees we have before spoken; they were a sect amongst the Jews much differing from the Pharisees, as may be seen, Ac 23:8. Amongst other erroneous tenets, they denied the resurrection, as may be seen in that text, as well as this; and (which indeed was their fundamental error) they denied spirits, and consequently the immortality of the soul in its separate estate. Their design seemeth not so much to have been to have drawn out a discourse from our Saviour which might have touched his life, (which was the Pharisees' design), as to have exposed him, by bringing him to an absurdity. To this purpose they put a case to our Saviour upon the law, De 25:5, where God had ordained, for the preservation of the inheritances of the several tribes and families distinct, That if brethren dwelt together, and one of them died leaving no issue; the wife of the dead should not marry unto a stranger; her husband's brother should go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, &c. Now they either knew of, or else supposed, a ease of seven brethren, successively marrying the same woman; they desire to know whose wife of the seven this woman should be in the resurrection. Instead of discovering their acuteness, and putting our Saviour upon a difficulty, they did but betray their own ignorance as to the state of the resurrection.

Matthew 22:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 22:30".

Matthew 22:30

Ver. 30. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:24,25, only he propounds it as a question, *Do ye not therefore err, because ye know, not the Scriptures?* Luke saith, Lu 20:34,35, *And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* The discourse of the Sadducees was bottomed upon this mistake, that there should not only be a resurrection of bodies, but of relations too; and the state of the world to come should be like the state of this world,

in, which, for the propagation and continuance of mankind, men and women marry, and are given in marriage. Now, saith our Saviour, your error is bottomed in your ignorance, *because ye know not the Scriptures*, (which indeed is the foundation of all men's errors in matter of faith), *nor the power of God*. If you knew the power of God, you would know that God is able to raise the dead. To confirm our faith in the resurrection, the Scripture every where sendeth us to the consideration of the Divine power, Ro 8:11 Php 3:21. If you knew the Scriptures, you would know that God will raise the dead, and the state of men in the resurrection shall not be as in this life, where men and women die daily; and in case they did not marry and give in marriage, the generation of men would quickly be extinct. *But* (saith Luke) *they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead*. It is manifest by the first words, that the latter words are not to be understood of the general resurrection, (to which all shall come, worthy or unworthy), but of the resurrection unto life; that resurrection which is not the mere effect of Divine providence, necessary in order to the last judgment, but that resurrection to life which is the effect of Christ's purchase. And this is observable, that the resurrection from the dead will be of so little advantage, nay, of such miserable disadvantage, to wicked men, that the Scripture sometimes speaketh of the resurrection as if it were peculiar to saints, 1Co 15:22 Php 3:11; so in this text. Hence Luke calls them afterward, *the children of the resurrection*; not that others shall not rise, but the children of God alone shall be the favourites of the resurrection, those who shall rise as children to an eternal inheritance. Concerning the state of persons in the resurrection our Saviour thus describes it: that men and women there shall be *as the angels*, not in all things, but in the things mentioned, which are two, one of them mentioned by Matthew, both by Luke:

1. They shall not die any more.
2. They shall not marry, nor be given in marriage.

The first showeth the needlessness of the latter, for one great reason of marriage was to supply the gaps which death maketh in the world; but men shall not die any more, therefore there will be no need of conjugal relations amongst men, more than among angels. *The children of this world* (saith Luke) *marry, and are*

given in marriage. Marriage was only an institution for this world, and is to continue no longer than this world stands; for the state of men in another world will be such as needs it not, being a state of immortality, so not needing it for propagation; and a state for perfection, and so not needing it for mutual help in the affairs of man's life, nor a remedy against extravagant lust.

Matthew 22:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 22:33".

Matthew 22:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 22:33".

Matthew 22:33

Ver. 31-33. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:26,27; so hath Luke, Lu 20:37,38; only Mark and Luke mention the time when God spake these words—in *the bush*, that is, when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Ex 3:6; and Luke addeth, *for all live unto him.* Mark also saith, *Touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses?* Our Saviour, in the foregoing words, had, by the by, asserted the doctrine of angels; here he asserts both the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and also of the resurrection of the body: and though Cardinal Perron, and Maldonate the Jesuit, boldly assert that the resurrection of the body cannot be proved from hence without taking in the tradition of the church; yet, notwithstanding their confidence, those who have a greater reverence for our Saviour's words, think that not only the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body also, is irrefragably proved by this argument of our Saviour's; to make out which, these things are to be observed:

1. God doth not say I have been, but *I am*: he speaketh of the time present, when he spake to Moses, and of the time to come.
2. He doth not say, I am the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but *the God of*: now wherever God styles himself the God of

any people or person, it always signifieth, God as a Benefactor, and one that doth and will do good to such a people or person. It is a federal expression, as where he saith to Abraham, Ge 17:7, I will be a God to thee and thy seed, that is, of thee and of thy seed.

3. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, doth not signify part of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but their entire persons, which consist of bodies as well as souls.
4. God is not the God of the dead, he doth not show kindness to them if they be dead, and shall rise no more.
5. In this life, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received no such signal kindness from God, but others might receive as great kindness as any of them did. Hence now our Lord proveth, as the immortality of their souls, so the resurrection also of their bodies, that God might show himself the God of whole Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Gerard saith: The argument of this text is made clear by Heb 11:16, *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city*. This is that which made God to be truly called their God, because he hath prepared for them a city, which city they could never possess without a resurrection. It is yet further added by some, That God's promise to Abraham of the land of Canaan was in these terms, Ge 13:15, *To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever; not only to thy seed, but to thee*: so to Isaac, Ge 26:3; to Jacob, Ge 35:12 Ex 6:4,8 De 11:21.

The promises seemed not to be fulfilled in giving their posterity the earthly Canaan, which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived not to enjoy; but to extend to the rest prepared for the people of God, the city mentioned by the apostle, Heb 11:16, which God had prepared for them, to justify himself to be their God. Now this could not be prepared for their souls merely, which were but a part of them, and hardly capable of perfect happiness without a reunion with the body, there being in it such an innate desire. Nor was it reasonable that the bodies of these saints, having been sharers with their souls in their labours, should have no share in their reward from that covenant; therefore of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our Saviour firmly proveth their resurrection. Luke addeth, *for all live unto*

him. Not live unto him only as their end, but in the same sense as Paul saith of Christ, Ro 6:10, *in that he liveth, he liveth unto God*; that is, with God. So saith Luke, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though dead at present, live with God; and they, and all the children of Abraham, shall live to God, that is, with God, to all eternity. Matthew addeth, *when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine*. Poor people, they had been used to hear discourses from the Pharisees, about the traditions of the elders, rites and ceremonies, washing hands before meat, and the necessity of washing pots and cups; and the Sadducees, declaiming against the doctrines of angels and spirits, and the resurrection; they were astonished to hear one instructing them in things concerning their souls, the resurrection and life eternal, and confuting their great teachers from books of Scripture owned by themselves; for the Sadducees, though they had no great regard to the prophets, yet they owned and paid a great deference to the books of Moses.

Matthew 22:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 22:40".

Matthew 22:40

Ver. 34-40. Mark relates this history more fully, Mr 12:28-31. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all thy strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question. Luke omits this history, only subjoins to our Saviour's answer to the Sadducees, Lu 20:39,40, Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all. There are different opinions of interpreters concerning the design of this scribe, called by Matthew a lawyer, in coming to Christ with this question. Some think that he came upon the same errand with the others, to entangle him in his speech. Others, that he came merely out of a desire to be more fully instructed by him, and that tempting here signifies no more than trying him, not for a bad end, but as the queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon with hard questions, to have an experiment of his wisdom. Our Saviour's fair treating him, and the commendation he gave him, together with his fair speaking to our Saviour, and commending his answer, induce me to think that he came on no ill design. Besides that, the opinion of some, that he came hoping to hear our Saviour vilify their ritual precepts in comparison of the

moral precepts, seemeth to me not probable; for himself consents to what our Saviour saith, and addeth, that to love the Lord our God, &c., is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. His question was, Which is the first and greatest commandment? Matthew saith, the great; Mark saith, the first: they have both the same sense, and our Saviour puts them together, Mt 22:38. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Mark adds, with all thy strength. It is to be found De 6:5, only there is not with all thy mind. Luke puts it in, Mt 10:27. It is but the same thing expressed in divers terms, for with all thy soul is comprehensive of heart, mind, and strength. Mark adds a preface: Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: thou shalt love, &c. Those words only;

1. Stirred up the people's attention.
2. Showed the reason of the following precept, which is fully expressed in Matthew.

If any ask, To which of the ten commandments is this to be referred? It is easily answered, that it is the sum of the four first, which comprehend our duty toward God. Our Saviour's expressing them by loving God, shows us that the law, of God was not fulfilled in the observation of the letter of those commandments, but doing these things which God commands out of a principle of love, the highest degrees of love to God. They idly interpret this precept, who interpret it only an obligation upon us to love God as much as we are able in our lapsed state; the fall of man lost God no right of commanding, and telling us our duty. The law doth undoubtedly require of us love to God in the highest degree, to be showed by the acts of the whole man, in obedience to all his commandments, and that constantly. It is our only happiness that the law is in the hands of a Mediator, who hath thus perfectly fulfilled it for all those who believe in him, Ro 8:3, and accepteth of us the will for the deed. Thus the moral law is a schoolmaster that leadeth us unto Christ. Our Saviour justly calls this the first and great commandment,

1. Because God is to be served before our neighbour.
2. Nor can love to our neighbour flow from any other true principle than that of love to God, nor is our neighbour to be

loved but for God's sake, and in subordination unto him.

And the second is like unto it, commanding love also; so that, as the apostle saith, love is the fulfilling of the law. Thy neighbour, that is, every man, as thyself; doing as much for him as thou wouldst have him do for thee, and doing no more against him than thou wouldst willingly he should do against thee: as truly and sincerely as thyself.

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets: there is nothing commanded in all the Old Testament but may be reduced to these two heads. This is the whole duty of man there commanded. The whole book of God is our rule, and we are obliged to every precept in it. Moses summed up all in the ten commandments, to which, truly interpreted, all the precepts of Scripture are reducible. Christ here brings the ten to two. The apostle brings all to one, telling us *love is the fulfilling of the law*. There is nothing forbidden in Scripture but what offends the royal law of love, either to God or man; there is nothing commanded but what will fall under it. Mark addeth, that the scribe applauds our Saviour, as having said the truth, and confessing that the fulfilling these two precepts was more than all sacrifices and burnt offerings; in which he agreed with Samuel, who long since told Saul that *to obey was better than sacrifice*; and it needs must be so, seeing that all the true value of sacrifices lay in the obedience by them given to the will of God. Christ tells the scribe he was not far from the kingdom of God. He who once rightly understands the law of God, and hath cast off that silly fancy of thinking to please God with ritual things, hath made a great proficiency under that schoolmaster, who, if rightly understood, will show him the need of another righteousness than his own wherein to appear before God.*

Matthew 22:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 22:46".

Matthew 22:46

Ver. 41-46. Mark hath this story shortly, repeating only the substance of it, Mr 12:35-37; adding nothing to it, but concluding, *And the common people heard him gladly*. Luke repeateth it as shortly, Lu 20:41,44. For the right understanding of this discourse of our Saviour to the Pharisees, we must know, that though the Pharisees and the Jews in general did expect a Messiah or a Christ, yet they expected no more of him, or in him, than that he should be a man, the son of David, descended from his family, according to the promise, Isa 9:6; and dreamed only of a secular prince, who should deliver them from their enemies, and restore them to their ancient civil liberties. Christ seeing a pack of them together, took the liberty, which he had allowed them towards himself, to propound a question or two to them. His question was, *What think ye of Christ?* Not of himself, but of the Messiah whom they expected; whose Son he should be.

They say unto him, The Son of David, that is, one who should in a right line be descended from David. This was a constant and uncontrolled tradition amongst them. Hence Mark saith, the question was propounded, *How say the scribes?* Luke, *How say they that Christ is,* that is, is to be, *the Son of David?* This was a commonly received opinion amongst them, which our Saviour by the next words doth not contradict, but only argues that he must needs be something more; for, saith he, *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?* Ps 110:1. Mark saith, *David*

himself said by the Holy Ghost. David was a prophet, and spake by inspiration from the Holy Ghost. Ac 1:16 2:30. Luke saith, *in the book of Psalms;* whence we may observe, that Ps 110:1-7 was David's Psalm, not a Psalm composed by some other for David, as some contend. Would David have called him Lord, whom he knew to be merely his son, one that should only descend from him? He would have said, The Lord said to my son, or, will say to my son.

The Lord said, Jehovah said, unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. Would David, speaking prophetically by the Holy Ghost concerning the Messiah, had he believed he was to be his son, and no more, have said that Jehovah should say unto him, *Sit at my right hand,* a place of the highest honour, dignity, and favour, *until I make thine enemies thy footstool,* that is, for ever? For *until* doth not signify a determinate time. See Poole on "Mt 1:25".

If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? That is, how is he then no more than his son, no more than a mere man? Our Saviour by this argument doth neither go about to prove that the Christ was not to be the Son of David, nor that he was the Messias himself, but that their expected Messias or Christ must be more than a mere man, otherwise David would never have called him Lord, nor yet prophesied that Jehovah should call him to sit at his right hand. Matthew concludes with telling us, that as the Sadducees and the scribes were nonplussed before, so now the Pharisees' mouths were also stopped. Mark saith, *The common people heard him gladly.* Matthew saith, *No man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man ask him any more questions.* Nor shall we hear of their troubling him with disputes any more; they now see disputing will not do their business, their next business is to consult how to take away his life; which is always the course of proud and malicious men, given over of God to ruin, to conceal their convictions, and proceed to execute their lusts and malice, rather than they will not have their ends. But before they meet with a fit opportunity we shall have some excellent discourses from our Saviour to the disciples and the multitude.

Matthew 23:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 23:1-12 Christ exhorteth to observe the doctrine, but not to follow the evil examples, of the scribes and Pharisees; and particularly not to imitate their ambition.

Mt 23:13-33 He pronounces divers woes against them for their blindness and hypocrisy,

Mt 23:34-39 and prophesieth the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 23:3".

Matthew 23:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 23:3".

Matthew 23:3

Ver. 1-3. Our Lord having now done with the Pharisees, turneth his discourse to the more docible people, who (as we heard before) heard him attentively and gladly, Mr 12:37 Lu 19:48. Our Saviour foresaw that some unwary hearers might make two ill uses of what he had spoke against the scribes and Pharisees.

1. Some might report him an enemy to the law, the interpreters of which the Pharisees were.
2. Others might condemn the authority of the law, because he had represented these men, in whose hand the interpretation of it at present was, so truly contemptible.

Whereas, on the other side, many might run into errors of practice, from the example of the scribes and Pharisees, their magistrates and teachers. Against all these mistakes he cautions them in this chapter, showing that he did not undervalue the law of Moses, nor would have his reflections on the Pharisees prejudice any thing which they taught them of it, and according

to it; neither would he have his people take the copy of the law from their actions.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat: these men were the ordinary readers and interpreters of the law of God. *Moses* is here put for the law, as Lu 16:31, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets;* and so Mt 23:29, *They have Moses and the prophets.* *Moses's seat* signifieth the seat appointed for those that gave the sense of the law, or judgment upon it; thus, *Moses of old time hath in every city those that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day*, Ac 15:21 2Co 3:15. Their way was, while they read the Scriptures they *stood up*: (paying a particular reverence to the pure word of God), Lu 4:16; when they had done reading, they *sat down* and opened it. Their sitting in the seat of *Moses* did not signify a succession to *Moses*, for he had no successor, being the Mediator of the Old Testament; but the delivering and interpreting the doctrine and law of *Moses*. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is rather to be understood of the chair of magistracy than the doctrinal chair. The Pharisees being exercised in that, it may be understood of both, for the reading and interpreting the law chiefly belonged to the scribes.

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; that is, whatsoever is in *Moses* which they bid you observe and do. The term *all* is to be understood restrainedly, with respect to the subject matter or persons spoken of, in multitudes of scriptures. Our Saviour's cautioning his disciples so often against the leaven of these men, and their traditions, plainly showeth us that must be here the sense of it: Let not the law of God lose his authority with you because of those wicked men. He doth not command them to hear none but them, for then to what purpose did he himself preach, or send out the twelve, if none might hear them? All that can be concluded from this text is that the law of God, or word of God, is not to be despised, whoever reads or delivereth it. He goeth on, *But do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* We are naturally more led by example than by precept. Men had therefore need be cautioned against ill living teachers. *Odi philosophum qui non sapit sibi.* A man had need very well know the medicine which he taketh from a physician he seeth sick of the same disease, when he himself refuseth and abominates it. He that says and does not, may be heard, but not imitated. There may be a time when men can ordinarily hear no others, which was the present

case.

Matthew 23:4

Ver. 4. Our Saviour saith the same of the *lawyers*, Lu 11:46. The *burdens* here mentioned were not their traditions and ritual things, Christ would never have before commanded his disciples to observe and do them, but the things truly commanded by the law of God, especially the ceremonial law, called *a yoke*, Ac 15:10, *which* (say the apostles) *neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*. They are, saith our Saviour, rigid exactors and pressers of the law of God upon others, but will not themselves use the least endeavours (such as the putting to of a finger) themselves to do them.

1. He blames them that their own lives no way answered their doctrine.
2. It may be, he also blames their too rigid pressing the law in all the minute things of it.

There may be a too rigorous pressing of the law. Good teachers will be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, yet teaching no more than themselves will endeavour to practise; and being conscious of human infirmity, they will do it with great tenderness and compassion, joining law and gospel both together.

Matthew 23:5

Ver. 5. Our Saviour had, Mt 23:4 blamed the Pharisees for not living up to what they taught, pressing the law of God on others, but not doing nor endeavouring to observe it themselves. Here he blames them for doing what good things they did for ostentation, *to be seen of men*; and abounding in their ritual performances of more minute concernment, in the mean time neglecting their moral duties.

All their works they do for to be seen of men; this is their main end, to be seen of men; for this he had reflected on them, Mt 6:1-34.

They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. For the right understanding of this we must have recourse to Nu 15:37-40, *And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: that ye may remember, and do all my commandments.* De 22:12, *Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.* In obedience to this law, the Jews did generally wear such garments that had fringes and blue ribands annexed to them. The Jews at this day do it not, because, as they pretend, they have lost the true way of dying the blue colour, required in the law. The end why God commanded them is expressed, *that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them;* and be restrained from their own inventions and imaginations in God's service. They were also a note of distinction of the Jews from other people. Besides these, God commanding that they should *bind his laws for a sign upon their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes,* De 6:6-8, they made them parchments, in which the precepts of the law were written, which they bound to their foreheads and arms. These were called phylacteries, from φυλακτω, to keep, things wherein the law was kept. The Pharisees, for a boast how zealous keepers they were of the law of God, (than which they did nothing less), made these phylacteries and ribands broader, and their fringes much longer, than other men's: this is that making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments, which our Lord here reflects upon, done only for ostentation, and that they might be seen of men.

Matthew 23:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 23:7".

Matthew 23:7

Ver. 6,7. We have the same applied to the scribes, Mr 12:38,39 Lu 11:43. Mark addeth, *which love to go in long clothing*. Our Saviour in these words doth not blame a distinction in habits and places, for he himself hath taught us, that those who are in kings' palaces wear soft raiment; and, being often called Master and Lord, never reflected on them who called him so, as having done amiss: he only blames the Pharisees' ambition, and silly affectation of these little things, seeking their own honour and glory, or an undue domination. There is therefore an emphasis to be put upon the word *love*; they might take salutations, and the upper rooms, if offered them as their due, for keeping civil order, but not affect them.

Matthew 23:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 23:10".

Matthew 23:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 23:10".

Matthew 23:10

Ver. 8-10. It is most certain that our Saviour doth not here forbid the giving of the titles of masters and fathers to his ministers, for then Paul would not have given himself the title of father, 1Co 4:15; nor called the Galatians his little children, Ga 4:19: nor called Timothy his son, and himself his father, Php 2:22; nor called himself a doctor of the Gentiles, 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11. That which he forbids is,

1. An affectation of such titles, and hunting after them.
2. *Rem tituli*, the exercise of an absolute mastership, or a paternal, absolute power; so as to require any to believe things because they said them, or to do things because they bid them, without seeing the things asserted, or first commanded, in the word of God.

For in that sense God alone is men's Father, Christ alone their Master. Pastors and teachers in the church are all but ministers, ministers of Christ to publish his will, and to enjoin his laws; nor must any be owned as masters and fathers, to impose their laws and doctrines. This is twice repeated, because such is the corruption of human nature, that it is very prone, not only to affect these swelling titles, but also to exercise these exorbitant authorities.

Matthew 23:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 23:12".

Matthew 23:12

Ver. 11,12. We have what is in Mt 23:12 twice in Luke, Lu 14:11 Lu 18:14. These verses expound what went before, and let us know;

1. That it was not a title, but the affectation of a title, which he blamed.
2. Not a doctorship, or mastership, but such a doctorship or mastership as made a man too big for the ministry of the church; such honour as lifted up the man's heart above his work.

He is an infamous doctor in the church of Christ, who thinks himself too high or too great to be a minister in it. For God will abase, and men shall abase, him who exalteth himself. God resisteth, and men usually contemn and despise the proud, especially ministers who are so. Both God shall exalt, and men shall honour, those that humble themselves, both to men, condescending to those of low degree, and to their work, thinking not the meanest ministry to souls a work beneath them.

Matthew 23:13

Ver. 13. Our Saviour now cometh to denounce eight woes against the teachers of those times, the scribes and Pharisees. Luke saith, Lu 11:52, *Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.* It was written of old, that *the priest's lips should preserve knowledge:* God hath committed the key of knowledge to the ministers and guides of his church, not that they should take it away, but that the people might *seek the law at their mouths, because they are the messengers of the Lord of hosts,* Mal 2:7. Now saith our Saviour, you have taken it away: this Matthew calls a shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; doing what in them lay to keep men from the knowledge of the mind and will of God, neither themselves teaching them the knowledge of God, which yet was their office and duty, nor suffering others to do it who would. You will neither go in yourselves, neither will you suffer them that are entering to go in. Yourselves are too proud or lazy, to preach the gospel, which is the way to the kingdom of heaven, and when others would, you suffer them not; nor yet will you suffer the people, who have a heart to it, to hear it. For this he calls them *hypocrites* seven times in this chapter, they pretending to be teachers and openers of the door to the kingdom of heaven, when indeed they did shut it; and denounces a woe to them, comprehending that ruin which soon after came upon them and their city by the Roman armies, and that eternal damnation which slept not, and was due to them. There are no worse men in the world than hypocrites, men pretending highly to God, yet neither themselves doing their duty in embracing the gospel, nor suffering others to do it, but doing what in them lie to hinder people from the means by which they might come to the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 23:14

Ver. 14. Mark hath the same, Mr 12:40 and Lu 20:47. If any should think that long prayers are here condemned, he will be confuted by Lu 6:12, where he will find that our Saviour *continued all night in prayer to God.* It is the end of their long prayers which alone our Saviour blames, their making them a *pretence to devour widows' houses;* which whether they did as interested in the civil power, (in which it is certain the Pharisees amongst the Jews were employed), or by virtue of their

ecclesiastical power or influence, persuading silly women to give them their estates, or at least to give them a great part of them, to the service of the tabernacle, that they might pray for their souls, was an abomination to God, not only for the hypocrisy of such prayers, designed for another end than they pretended, but because God had taken upon him the special care and protection of the widows. As our Saviour had before blamed their religious acts for the ostentation in them, seeking only their own honour and applause, so he here blames them for their covetous design in them.

Matthew 23:15

Ver. 15. A third woe followeth, expressed in this verse, because they corrupted their proselytes, both as to doctrine and manners, so as they were twice more the children of the devil, and in danger of hell, than before. A proselyte was one who, coming from some pagan nation, relinquished idols, and worshipped one true and living God. Of these writers tell us there were two sorts; one that only professed to believe and worship one God, though he did not embrace the Jewish religion: such a one they suffered to live amongst them, and called him a *proselyte of the gate*. Others embraced the Jewish religion, and were admitted into their church, by circumcision, and baptism, and sacrifice (as their writers tell us): these they called *proselytes of righteousness*. Our Saviour saith the scribes and Pharisees compassed sea and land, that is, would take any pains, (it is a proverbial expression), to make one a proselyte; nor was this blameworthy in them, but that which followeth, that they made him twofold more the child of hell than before; corrupting him with their false doctrine, and setting him examples of an ill life. Their business was not to turn men from sin unto God, but merely to convert them to an opinion, if they had once got them into their church, so as they could make their markets of them; never regarding their souls more, nor to press upon them the reformation of their lives, that they might be saved. Thus priests and Jesuits at this day go to China, Japan, to proselyte men to the Roman faith; and use all imaginable arts to seduce persons born and bred under the profession of the protestant religion in protestant countries, and boast much of their converts; but he who looks upon the Scriptures, and considereth the lives of the most of their converts, will easily see they are but twice more the children of

hell, being licensed, by their indulgences, pardons, absolutions, nay, by their very casuists, to live most prodigious impious lives, to say nothing of their damnable errors in matters of faith.

Matthew 23:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 23:22".

Matthew 23:22

Ver. 16-22. Our Saviour here showeth the false doctrine which the Pharisees, for their own gain, taught the people concerning oaths. God had commanded that they should fear and serve the Lord their God, and swear by his name, De 6:13 10:20. He that sweareth by any person, or thing, doth two things:

1. He attributes to the thing, or person, by which he sweareth, a knowledge of the heart and the secret intention.
2. He calleth upon the person, or thing, by which he sweareth, to be his judge, or to take a revenge upon him, in case he doth not believe in his heart what he affirms or denieth with his words to be true or false; otherwise an oath is no security at all.

From whence appeareth, that it is unreasonable for any to swear by any other than God, who alone can have a knowledge of the truth, and security of the heart; and that he who sweareth by any creature committeth idolatry in his heart, and in his heart doth indeed blaspheme, paying a Divine homage to a creature, and attributing to the creature what only agreeth to the Creator. The Pharisees, as it seemeth, had taught the people, that it was lawful to swear by the creature, but all oaths by creatures did not bind to the performance of the thing promised by such oaths: if a man swear *by the temple*, or *by the altar*, it was nothing, no man was bound by such oaths to perform the thing for which such oaths were given as a security. But if any man swear *by the gold of the temple*, or *by a gift* which he brought to the altar, these oaths did bind him. By the *gold of the temple* is not to be understood the golden vessels used in the temple, nor the golden plates with which the several parts of the temple shined; but the gold which was brought as an offering into the temple, and put into the treasury there; of which, and of the gifts, the priests and officers about the temple had a considerable share, which made them equalize an oath by these to an oath made by the name of God itself.

1. Our Saviour here showed the unreasonable folly of the tradition, and calleth them for it *blind guides*; for in reason, the temple sanctifying the gold must itself be more especially holy, that is, separate for a holy use. The temple was holy, so was the altar, before the gold was brought into it, but the gold was not holy till it was brought into the holy place, and there offered.
2. He lets them know, that oaths by the creatures once made did oblige, as much as if they had been made by God himself. They were indeed sinfully made, for men ought not to have sworn by creatures; but being made, those who made them

were bound to perform them, if the matter of them were not sinful. For he that swears *by the altar, swears by it, and by all the things thereon;* and he who swears *by the temple, swears by it, and by him that dwelleth therein;* and he who swears *by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.* For none who sware by inanimate things could possibly be imagined to call these things, which he knew had no life, no sense, no knowledge, to be a witness to the truth of his heart, as to what he believed, or what he intended. So as though he that sweareth by the creature be a profane swearer, yet he is bound by his oath, he indeed swearing by the God of those creatures. He hath reason to repent of the profane and unlawful form of his oath, but if the matter be what he may without sin perform, he is bound by his oath to the performance of it.

Matthew 23:23

Ver. 23. We have much the same Lu 11:42, only there it is, *Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God.* It is manifest by our Saviour's words in the latter part of the verse, *these ought ye to have done,* that he doth not blame the Pharisees' exactness in tithing mint, anise, rue, cummin, and all manner of herbs; but their neglecting the weightier matters of the law, faith and love to God, judgment and mercy. The Levites having no inheritance: God ordained tithes for their maintenance; of which also the poor were to have a share, Le 27:30 Nu 18:24. The Pharisee boasted, Lu 18:12, that he paid tithe of all he possessed. Christ here acknowledgeth that the Pharisees were exact in their paying tithes; but he blames them,

1. For their partiality, neglecting the weightier things of the law.
2. For their hypocrisy; they were only exact in these little things, that they might be taken notice of as scrupulous observers of the Divine law; while they omitted those things, which were of much more weight, which he reckoneth up: *faith*, by which some understand faith in God, but the most, faithfulness, and sincere and honest dealings with men, in opposition to fraud, and cheating, and circumventions.

Judgment, by which he means justice, giving to every one what is their own.

Mercy, by which he means a charitable behaviour, in helping such as are miserable and afflicted.

Love to God, which is the true root, out of which all things should flow, and is indeed comprehensive of all our duty toward God, as well as the root of all our good works towards men.

Matthew 23:24

Ver. 24. It is a proverbial expression used amongst them, against such as would pretend a great niceness and scrupulosity about, and zeal for, little things, but in matters of much higher concern and moment were not nice and scrupulous at all: and this indeed is both a certain note and an ordinary practice of hypocrites. There is no man that is sincere in his obedience to God, but hath respect to all God's commandments, Ps 119:6. Though some duties be greater, of more moment for the honour and glory of God, than others, which a good man will lay the greatest stress upon, yet he will neglect nothing which the law of God enjoins him. But concerning hypocrites, these two things are always true:

1. They are partial in their pretended obedience.
2. They always lay the greatest stress upon the least things of the law, bodily labour and exercise, and those things which require least of the heart, and least self-denial.

Matthew 23:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 23:26".

Matthew 23:26

Ver. 26. Luke hath this, Lu 11:39,40, as occasioned by the Pharisees wondering that he washed not before dinner; instead of *extortion and excess*, he hath *ravening and wickedness*, and

addeth, *Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?* But the same thing might be spoken at two several times. He speaks there to the Pharisee, with whom he dined, Mt 23:37. Here he speaks to the disciples and the multitude. Our Saviour's design here seemeth to me not to be a condemning of their legal or traditional washings of pots and cups, which he elsewhere reflects upon, but, by way of allusion only, to blame them that in their whole conversation they rather studied an external purity, than the inward purity of the heart, whereas if they would first have looked at purity of heart, the other would have followed that. A man may be outwardly pure, and inwardly filthy and impure; but no man can have a pure heart, but he will live a pure and holy life, for the external acts are but the impure acts of the soul: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, and according to the inclinations and affections of the heart the foot moveth, the hand and all the bodily members act. For our Saviour's application of this to their traditional washings, I shall speak to it when I come to Lu 11:39.

Matthew 23:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 23:27".

Matthew 23:28

Ver. 27,28. The similitude is of the same import with the other, to show that the Pharisees had only a vizard of strictness and holiness, when in the mean time their hearts were full of lusts, hypocrisy, and iniquity. The Jews had two sorts of graves; some for ordinary persons, which appeared not (to which our Saviour likened the Pharisees, Lu 11:44); others that were covered with tombs, which were wont to be kept whited, so as they looked very fair outwardly, but had within nothing but rottenness and putrefaction. To these he compares them in this place. They were men that made a great show, but had nothing of any inward purity or cleanness, but were full of iniquity. Thus Paul called Ananias a *whited wall*; and, Ps 5:9, the psalmist saith of the throat of the wicked that it is *an open sepulchre*.

Matthew 23:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 23:30".

Matthew 23:30

Ver. 29,30. Luke hath it, Lu 11:47, *Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.* It is plain by our Saviour's discourse, that the Pharisees were at great charge oft times to rebuild or adorn the sepulchres of the Lord's prophets, who had been slain by the Jews in former ages for testifying the truth of God, and the sepulchres of other righteous men dying for their righteousness. This they did like a company of hypocrites, to persuade the world of what they also said, that had they lived in the times of those prophets and other good men, they would have had no hand in their blood.

Matthew 23:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 23:33".

Matthew 23:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 23:33".

Matthew 23:33

Ver. 31-33. You (saith our Lord) confess that you are lineally descended from those who killed the prophets: you have not only their blood communicated to you, but their spirit; your behaviours and carriages towards me and my disciples have witnessed, and will yet further testify, that you are the children of those who killed the prophets in a moral as well as a natural sense; you inherit the same spirit, and are full of the same malice and rancour. They killed them, and you bury them: seeing there is no reclaiming you, go you on, fill up the measure of your fathers' sins. There is something more to be added to make the

iniquity of this nation full. You are a company of serpents, vipers, that cannot escape the damnation of hell.

Matthew 23:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 23:36".

Matthew 23:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 23:36".

Matthew 23:36

Ver. 34-36. Luke saith, Lu 11:49-51, Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Luke saith, Therefore also said the wisdom of God. Matthew saith, Behold, I send. Christ is the wisdom of God; he here tells them he would send them prophets, wise men, scribes. Luke expounds it by prophets and apostles; men authorized by Christ to reveal unto men the will of God, and men that should be extraordinarily inspired to enable them thereunto.

Scribes, that is, persons instructed to the kingdom of God; a new sort of scribes, but much fitter for their work than the present scribes.

And some ye shall kill and crucify, &c.: our Lord in this only foretells what usage both himself and his apostles should meet with from them, which was fulfilled in what the Scripture telleth us of the scourging of Paul, the stoning of Stephen, the killing of James, &c., beside the crucifying of himself.

That upon you, that is, as he expounds it, Mt 23:36, *upon this generation, may come all the righteous blood*, that is, the blood of righteous men, *shed upon the earth, from the blood of*

righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, &c.
Here arise two questions:

1. Who this Zacharias the son of Barachias was.
2. How it could stand with God's justice to bring the guilt of the blood of former generations upon that generation.

As to the first, some have guessed the person spoken of to have been one Zacharias the son of Baruch, who was the last slain upon the taking of Jerusalem, as Josephus tells us: but our Saviour here speaks of a thing passed, not to be afterwards done. Others think it was Zacharias the father of John Baptist: but we have no proof that he died a violent death. Others think it was Zechariah, who was one of the small prophets: but there was no temple in his time. It is most probably concluded to be Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, whom the Jews stoned with stones at the commandment of Joash in the court of the house of the Lord, 2Ch 24:21. The father's name indeed doth not agree; but, first, Jehoiada (as many of the Jews had) might have two names: some think it was this same Zechariah who is called *the son of Jeberechiah*, Isa 8:2. Our Saviour nameth *Abel*, who lived before the law, and *Zacharias*, who lived under the law, both slain for righteousness' sake; that under them he might comprehend all the martyrs slain in those two periods. Others judge, that these two are named because we read of Abel's blood crying, Ge 4:10, and Zechariah's praying (when he died) that the Lord would require his blood. For the other question, it is but righteous with God to punish the sins of parents upon their children; and though such vengeance doth not ordinarily reach further than the third and fourth generation, yet where succeeding generations go on in the same sinful courses, it may reach further, and often does. Isa 65:6,7, *I will (saith God) recompense into their bosom your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together*. That was the case here. They filled up the measure of their fathers' sins. Therefore Christ tells them, that vengeance should sleep no longer, but come upon that generation, which happened in the utter destruction of Jerusalem within less than forty years after. Our Lord concludes with a pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, and a further confirmation of what he had said about their ruin.

Matthew 23:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 23:39".

Matthew 23:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 23:39".

Matthew 23:39

Ver. 39. We have the same Lu 13:34,35. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* The doubling of the word showeth the vehemency of our Saviour's affection.

Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; that hast killed, and abused, and art yet going on to do the like, not taking notice of the vengeance of God upon thee before for this very sin, 2Ch 36:16,17 Ne 9:26,27. How often would I have gathered thee, giving thee all external means proper to have reformed thee and reconciled thee to God, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings! Which if thou hadst accepted and embraced, the chickens are not safer under the wings of the hen from the danger of a kite than thou wouldst have been from enemies. But thou wouldst not; instead of hearkening to my prophets, thou killedst them, and didst stone those sent unto thee, and so didst voluntarily reject me, and all my offers and tenders of grace, mercy, and protection, through the mere obstinacy of thy perverse will.

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; both the temple, in which you place such a confidence, and your own dwelling houses, shall be destroyed, burnt, and razed down, or at least left without you as inhabitants.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: I will appear no more to you as a public preacher, after two or three days, for ever; and you, that the other day so envied the people's acclamations to me, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, shall be glad yourselves to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall say the same thing, Blessed is he, &c. For

whereas some interpret the term *till*, &c. of the day of judgment, or the time when the Jews shall be converted, I take them to be strained interpretations.

Till here certainly is to be interpreted, as Ps 110:1 Mt 1:25; and this comports with the history, for after this time our Saviour appeared in the temple publicly no more. For the disputes raised from Mt 23:37, about God's secret will, whether he seriously willed the salvation of the Jews, &c., I take the affirmative part to have no foundation in this text, for *would I* is plainly enough here interpreted by the foregoing word, *sending* them *prophets*, and other ministers, to persuade them to repentance and reconciliation with God; as the use of means proper to an end appear to us indications of the will of him that useth them.

Matthew 24:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 24:1,2 Christ foretells the destruction of the temple.

Mt 24:3-31 He showeth what signs and calamities shall go before it; and what shall happen at the time of his coming.

Mt 24:32-35 By a parable of the fig tree he marketh the certainty of the prediction.

Mt 24:36-41 No man knoweth the day and hour, which shall come suddenly.

Mt 24:42-51 We ought therefore to watch, like good servants who expect their master's coming.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 24:2".

Matthew 24:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 13:1,2, *one of his disciples*. Luke saith, Lu 21:5, *some*. Mark saith, the disciple said, *Master, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!* Luke saith, they spake how the temple *was adorned with goodly stones and gifts*.

All three evangelists agree in the substance of our Saviour's reply. Christ had now done his work in the temple, where he never came more, and was going toward the Mount of Olives, where we shall find him in the next verse. His disciples, either one of them or more, probably one in the presence of the rest, either doubting (considering the structure of the temple) whether it could be destroyed, or at least thinking it pity that so famous a structure should come to ruin, come to him, admiring the stones and buildings. Most think this was the temple builded by Zerubbabel, almost six hundred years before, though it received great additions by Herod (for we have no record that that temple was ever destroyed). Incredible stories are related about the dimensions of the stones, and the ornaments of it. Our Saviour saith unto them, *Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another;* that is, this brave, goodly temple shall be utterly ruined. Nor (if we may believe other histories) did this prophecy fail as to the letter of it. Titus, the Roman emperor, taking Jerusalem, about forty years after this, commanded his soldiers to spare the temple when they entered the city, but they in their rage burnt of it what was of a combustible nature; and Turnus Rufus, left general of his army when he went away, drew a plough over it, as God had said. Jer 26:18 Mic 3:12, *Zion shall be ploughed like a field.* And when after this Alippius, by the command of Julian the apostate, attempted the rebuilding of it, with the help of the Jews, it is reported by divers, that balls or globes of fire rose up from the foundations, destroyed many of the workmen, and made the place inaccessible for any further such attempts. So justly are the Divine threatenings to be feared, whatever improbability of the contrary appeareth to us. We are very apt to be taken with the glistening prosperity of sinners, but we ought to measure the duration of it from the revelations of the Divine will, not from our own reason or fancy; to remember the temple of Jerusalem. There are no places so strong but an almighty God is able to destroy, and sin is enough to blow up. We may also observe how little God values splendid houses of prayer when they are made dens of thieves.

Matthew 24:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 24:4".

Matthew 24:4

Ver. 3,4. Mark saith, Mr 13:3-5, *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you.* Luke saith, Lu 21:7,8, *And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived.* Mark names the disciples which came to our Saviour privately, *Peter, James, John, and Andrew.* They seem to propound three questions to him:

1. What should be the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem?
2. Of his coming?
3. Of the end of the world?

It is probable they might send these four to propound these questions to our Saviour. Three of them being such to whom Christ had showed signal and special favour before. Some doubt whether the questions propounded were three or two; if but two, the coming of Christ must either be the same with the first, or with the last. Those who understand Christ's coming as a distinct period from the other two, think that the disciples refer to that secular kingdom which they fancied that the Messiah should exercise in the world. They desire to know the signs of these times, that is, prognostic signs, which might beforehand instruct them that the time was nigh, even at hand. They name two things there which time hath told us were to be at more than sixteen hundred years' distance one from the other, for historians tell us that Jerusalem was destroyed within seventy or seventy-one years after our Saviour's birth, within less than forty years after this discourse; but it is probable that they put them together, as believing that Jerusalem should not be destroyed till the day when Christ should come to judge the world, and that the end of the world and of the Jewish state should come together. And as we all are naturally curious to know things that are to come, so these disciples were in this thing particularly curious, having some particular apprehensions of the coming and kingdom of

Christ, according to the mistaken notion which the Jews had of that kingdom which their expected Messiah should exercise in the world. Our blessed Lord at another time, Ac 1:7, told them it was not for them *to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*. He therefore giveth them no such certain signs of these things, as they could from them certainly conclude the particular time; but yet gives them some signs from whence they might conclude, when they saw them, that the time was hastening; which signs, though some have distinguished, appropriating those in the former part of the chapter to the destruction of Jerusalem, and those in the latter part to the day of judgment, yet they rather seem in our Saviour's discourse mixed together; and time, which is the best interpreter of prophecies, must expound them to us. The destruction of Jerusalem is a thing past many hundreds of years since; so as by those histories which we have partly in holy writ, partly in other authors, it will not be hard to pick out what our Saviour intended for signs of that destruction, though there are some signs which were common signs both of that destruction and of the end of the world, and it is agreed by divines that the destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the destruction of the world, and therefore most of the signs are common to both. Paul was brought to Rome in the beginning of the reign of Nero, Ac 27:1-44. Other historians tell us he and Peter were put to death about the end of his reign; within a year or two after Jerusalem was destroyed. Our Saviour prefaces his discourse of these signs with a usual caution to his disciples, *Take heed that no man deceive you*.

Matthew 24:5

Ver. 5. Mark hath the same, Mr 13:6 Luke saith, Lu 21:8, *Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not after them*. Our Saviour seemeth to have given this as a sign common both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, though possibly before the destruction of Jerusalem, while the Jews were in expectation of a Messiah as a temporal prince or deliverer, there were more of them than afterward, for every one who could get a party together to colour his sedition and rebellion, gave out himself to be the Christ. Of this number are said to have been Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, mentioned by Gamaliel, Ac 5:36,37. Amongst these some also

reckon the Egyptian mentioned Ac 21:38, and Simon Magus, who gave out himself to be *some great one*, and the people accounted him *the great power of God*. Such there have been, and probably may be more toward the end of the world. Many were deceived by the impostors: Christ warns his disciples concerning them.

Matthew 24:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 24:8".

Matthew 24:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 24:8".

Matthew 24:8

Ver. 6-8. Mark hath the same, Mr 13:7,8. Luke hath also much the same, Lu 21:9-11, only he addeth, *fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven*. Interpreters think this prophecy did chiefly respect the destruction of Jerusalem, for the time from our Saviour's death to that time was full of seditions and insurrections, both in Judea and elsewhere. The truth of our Saviour's words as to this is attested by Josephus largely, from the eleventh chapter of his second book of the Wars of the Jews to the end of the fourth book. Besides that there were great wars between Otho, and Vitellius, and Vespasian, the Roman emperor who succeeded Nero, we read of one famine, Ac 11:28, which Agabus there prophesied should be in the time of Claudius Caesar. Of earthquakes in several places mention is made in divers histories. Our Saviour tells them that these things should be, but the end should not be presently, which any one that will read Josephus's history of the Wars of the Jews, will see abundantly verified upon the taking of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

Matthew 24:9

Ver. 9. Mark hath this thus, Mr 13:9, *But take heed to*

yourselfes: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. Luke saith, Lu 21:12,13, *But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.* Our Saviour, knowing that his disciples' minds still ran upon a secular kingdom, here calls off their thoughts by giving them a sign of his coming, an account of those persecutions and trials which they should undergo before his coming, either in his power to the destruction of the Jews, or in his glory at the last day: the afflictions specified are, a being hated of all nations, delivered up to councils, beating in the synagogues, casting into prisons, and being killed; all which happened to the disciples of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Christians were counted a *sect every where spoken against*, Ac 28:22. Stephen was stoned, Ac 7:59. James was killed with the sword, Ac 12:2. Paul and Silas were imprisoned, Ac 16:23. Paul *five times received of the Jews forty stripes save one*; he was *thrice beaten with rods, once stoned*, 2Co 11:24,25. He was brought before king Agrippa and Festus. Peter and John were called before the council, Ac 4:7 Ac 5:21. So as all these things happened before the destruction of Jerusalem, and this may be interpreted as a sign of that great destruction; but not of that only, for the text saith, *ye shall be hated of all nations*, which came to pass afterward, when Christianity was persecuted by heathens for three hundred years together. Mark saith, this should be done *for a testimony against them*, that is, the persecutors. Luke saith, *it shall turn to you for a testimony*. The persecutions of Christians are,

1. A testimony against the persecutors, of their ingratitude, and cruelty, and hatred to the name of Christ.
2. They are a testimony to the persecuted, of their faith, and patience, and courage, &c.

Matthew 24:10

Ver. 10. Mark saith, Mr 13:12,13, *The brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise*

up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Luke saith, Lu 21:16,17, And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Many shall be offended; the meaning is, shall turn apostates, stumbling at these great afflictions and persecutions for the gospel.

And shall betray one another. We read of several apostates in holy writ, such as Phigellus, Hermogenes, Demas, Hymeneus, Philetus, and others; but all things not being written that were done, we have no particular record of such treachery as is here mentioned. But it is no other than we may reasonably presume was done, though we had not been assured of it, to justify our Saviour's prediction. There is no time of great persecution but proves a time of great apostasy and some treachery. It hath been a constant observation, that no hatred flames to that degree with hatred upon the account of religion. Nor is what our Saviour here predicted more than the history of all ages of the church have justified.

Matthew 24:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 24:12".

Matthew 24:12

Ver. 11,12. Here are two signs more given:

1. The abounding of false teachers.
2. The abatements of Christians' zeal, and love to God.

For the matter of Mt 24:11, See Poole on "Mt 24:23" and See Poole on "Mt 24:24", where we shall meet with it more fully.

By the aboundings of iniquity here, we may either understand the rage, and malice, and cruelty of the enemies of the gospel; or the apostasy of such as are professors. Both these are great temptations, and though they will not extinguish that holy fire

which God hath kindled in good souls, yet they have oft times a very ill influence upon them, to abate of their former warmth in the ways of God. Or if we understand it of love to brethren, the apostasy of professors much cools the Christian, not knowing who they may trust and confide in as sincere. If by the abounding of iniquity we understand the abounding of profaneness in the general, (which always also aboundeth most in times of persecution), that also hath no small influence upon Christians' warmth in their profession, to cool and abate it: see Heb 10:25 2Ti 1:15 4:16.

Matthew 24:13

Ver. 13. We have the same Mr 13:13. We also met with it before, Mt 10:22. It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.

Matthew 24:14

Ver. 14. So saith Mark, Mr 13:10. Some think that *the end* mentioned in the close of this verse refers to the destruction of Jerusalem; others, that it refers to the day of judgment. If we take *world* (as it is often taken) for the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews, synecdochically, the whole being put for a great part, it is most certain, that before Jerusalem was destroyed, the gospel, which is here called the gospel of the kingdom, either because it shows the way to the kingdom of God, or because it is that sacred instrument by which Christ subdueth men's hearts to himself, was preached to the world, that is, to the Gentiles, and that to a great part of them. Paul alone had carried it from Jerusalem to Illyricum. The Romans' faith was spoken of throughout the world, Ro 1:8. Paul saith it was *preached to every creature*, Col 1:23 Ro 10:18 15:16 Col 1:6 1Ti 3:16. But others choose by *the end* here to understand the end of the world.

Matthew 24:15

Ver. 15. Mark saith, Mr 13:14, *standing where it ought not.* Here are two questions:

1. What is here meant by *the abomination of desolation.*
2. What text in Daniel our Lord refers to.

As to the latter, there are three places in Daniel which mention it: Da 9:27, *for the overspreading of abominations*, or, as it is in the margin, with the abominable armies he shall make it desolate. Da 11:31, *They shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.* Da 12:11, *From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up.* Mr. Calvin thinks that the text in Daniel here referred to is that of Da 12:11. Others say that it is that of Da 9:27, contending that those two other texts speak of Antiochus, which is the very reason given by others to the contrary. It is of no great consequence to us to know which verse our Saviour refers to. Be it which it would, it was *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*; by which quotation our Saviour doth both give his testimony to that book, as a part of holy writ, and also lets his disciples know, that what he told them was but what was prophesied of, and so must have its accomplishment, and that the Jewish worship was to cease. As to the second question, amidst the great variety of notions about it, I take theirs to be the best who understand *the abomination of desolation* to be meant of the Roman armies, which being made up of idolatrous soldiers, and having with them many abominable images are therefore called *the abomination*; those words, *of desolation* are added, because they were to make Jerusalem desolate; and so St. Luke, who hath not these words, possibly gives us in other words the best interpretation of them, Lu 21:20: *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.* When, saith our Lord, you shall see the abominable armies *stand in the holy place*, that is, upon the holy ground, (as all Judea was), *whoso readeth* those prophecies of the prophet Daniel, *let him understand*, that as through the righteous judgment of God he once suffered the holy place to be polluted by the abominable armies of Antiochus, which he foretold, so he will again suffer the holy place to be polluted by the abominable armies of the Romans, who shall make the holy

place desolate, which was prophesied by the prophet Daniel as well as the former. Therefore, saith our Saviour, when you see the Roman armies pitch their tents before Jerusalem, be you then assured God will give Jerusalem into their hands, and then all that I have foretold shall come to pass.

Matthew 24:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 24:18".

Matthew 24:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 24:18".

Matthew 24:18

Ver. 18. Mark hath this, Mr 13:14-16. Luke saith, Lu 21:21, *Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countriest enter thereinto.* The import of all this is no more than, Let every man with as much speed as he can shift for himself, for, as Luke saith, then the desolation of Jerusalem is nigh; for, as he addeth, *these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.* Let none of you think the storm will over, for when you see this be assured the time is come when all I have spoken of this city shall be accomplished.

Matthew 24:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 24:20".

Matthew 24:20

Ver. 19,20. Mark saith nothing of the sabbath day, Mr 13:1-37. Luke hath not what Matthew hath, Mt 24:20.

Woe to them in this text is only a phrase testifying our Saviour's compassion on such, and indicative of the addition it would

make to their misery, as it would retard their flight. Upon this account also, he bids them pray their flight might not be *in the winter, neither on the sabbath day*. The winter would naturally retard their motion, through the cold and moisture of it. The sabbath would be a moral hinderance, in regard of the superstitious opinion they had of the sabbath, that they might not upon that day defend themselves, nor flee from their enemies beyond the length of a sabbath day's journey, which was but two miles: our Saviour hints to them that their flight must be farther. When our Saviour spake this the Jewish sabbath was the day of holy rest, and he knew that although by his resurrection he should sanctify a new sabbath, yet the Jews would not for a time understand that the old sabbath was abolished. Here is therefore no establishment of the old sabbath to be observed after his resurrection; the praying that their flight might not be upon the sabbath day respected only either their remora to their flight which the sabbath would give them, (in case they should keep it as a holy rest), or the addition of trouble it would make in their spirits, when they considered that was the day in which they were wont to go to the house of prayer, keeping it a day of holy rest unto God.

Matthew 24:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 24:22".

Matthew 24:22

Ver. 22. Mark hath the same in effect, Mr 13:19,20. Luke speaks more particularly, Lu 21:23,24. *For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* These verses must be understood with reference to the Jewish nation, and whoso shall read in Josephus the history of the wars of the Jews, will easily agree there is nothing in all the foregoing Jewish story which we have recorded in Scripture like unto it; the final destruction of them by Titus was rather an abatement of miseries they suffered by the factions within themselves, than any thing else. And thus some think that God shortened those days of their misery by

sending the Roman armies to quiet the seditions and factions amongst themselves, which were more cruel one to another. God promises to shorten these days for the elect's sake that were amongst this sinful people. So that as the city was taken in less than six months, so was their whole country in less than eighteen months more. And if the Lord had not, in compassion to those amongst this people who belonged to his election of grace, shortened these days of calamity, both by sending the Roman armies to quiet their intestine divisions, and then giving these armies so quick a victory, none of the Jews would have been left alive, which indeed any one will judge that shall but read those histories.

Matthew 24:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:26

Ver. 23-26. Mark hath much the same, Mt 13:21-23. There is no doubt but that our Saviour here hath a special respect to those persons who, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, taking advantage of the Jewish expectation of the Messiah as a secular prince, who should restore them to liberty, (an opinion which, as we have often heard, had infected the generality of the Jews, and not a little even the disciples of Christ), made themselves heads of parties, and pretended that they were the Messiah, the Christ, thereby to encourage people to follow them, and to stand up for their liberty; of which kind there were several mentioned both in the history of Josephus, and in the Roman history, respecting those times. Our Lord therefore cautions his

disciples against such, and thereby taketh them off their expectation of any such secular kingdom of the Messiah as they had dreamed of. He tells them that there would such persons arise, and some of them should do great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they would deceive the elect of God; but he had prayed for them; only they must also watch and take heed, that they might not be cheated and deceived by them, though they came with never so fair pretences, for his coming would be quite of another nature, and his kingdom would be a quite other kingdom.

Matthew 24:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 24:28".

Matthew 24:28

Ver. 27,28. Luke hath much the same, Lu 17:24,37. The disagreement of interpreters about *the coming of the Son of man*, here spoken of, makes a variety in their interpretation of these verses. Some think the coming of the Son of man here spoken of was his coming to destroy Jerusalem, which, he saith, will be sudden like the lightning, which though the thunder be taken notice of aforehand, as following the lightning, yet is not taken notice of. These interpreters make *the carcass*, mentioned Mt 24:28, to be the body of the Jewish nation, designed to be destroyed; and *the eagles* to be the Roman armies. Job saith of the eagle, Job 39:30, *where the slain are, there is she*, Hab 1:8, saith the same of the Chaldean armies; *They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat*. Some understand by the coming of Christ here, his coming in his spiritual kingdom. The preaching of the gospel shall be like the lightning; you need not listen after those that say, Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there, for my gospel shall be preached every where; and where the carcass is, where my death and resurrection shall be preached, all the elect, my sheep that hear my voice and follow me, shall be gathered together. Others understand it of Christ's coming to judgment, which is compared to lightning for the suddenness and universality of it. There, saith Christ, I shall be, and all my saints shall be gathered together. Luke seemeth to speak of this, Lu 17:24,37. That phrase, *Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the*

eagles be gathered together, is a proverbial speech, signifying that it will need no great labour to bring things together which are naturally joined by an innate desire either of them to the other; so that it is applicable in more cases than one. And whether that discourse in Luke were at the same time when this was I cannot say; our Saviour's discourse on this argument, Lu 21:1-38; hath not these verses, and is a part of a discourse which is said to have been begun, at least to the Pharisees, Lu 17:20. But I shall further consider what Luke saith when I shall come to that chapter in him.

Matthew 24:29

Ver. 29. Mark saith, Mr 13:24,25. *In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.*

Luke saith, Lu 21:25,26 *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Interpreters are much divided in the sense of these words, whether they should be interpreted,

1. Of Christ's coming to the last judgment, and the signs of that;
or,
2. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

Those who interpret it of the destruction of Jerusalem have the context to guide them, as also the reports of historians, of strange prodigies seen in the air and earth, before the taking of it; likewise the word *immediately after*, &c. But I am more inclinable to interpret them of the last judgment, and to think that our Saviour is now passed to satisfy the disciples about their other question, concerning the end of the world; for although Christ's coming may sometimes signify that remarkable act of his providence in the destruction of his enemies, yet the next

verses speaking of his coming with great power and glory, and of his coming with his angels, and with the sound of a trumpet, and gathering his elect from the four winds, the phrases are so like the phrases by which the Scripture expresses Christ's coming to the last judgment, 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16, and Christ speaking to his disciples asking of him as well about that as the destruction of Jerusalem, I should rather interpret this verse with reference to the last judgment, than the destruction of Jerusalem before spoken of, or at least that these signs should be understood common both to the one and the other, as divers of the other signs mentioned in this chapter are. Some think that the darkening of the sun and the moon here, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, are to be taken metaphorically, as signifying the great change there should be in the ecclesiastical and civil state of the Jews; and it is true that such kind of expressions do often in Scripture so signify, Isa 13:10 24:23 Eze 32:7 Joe 2:31. But without doubt the literal sense is not to be excluded, whether we understand the text of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of his coming to his last judgment; for as historians tell of great prodigies seen before the former, so the apostle confirms us that there will be such things seen before the day of judgment, 2Pe 3:10,12.

Matthew 24:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 24:31".

Matthew 24:31

Ver. 30,31. Mark saith, Mr 13:26,27, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.*

Luke saith, Lu 21:27,28, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Interpreters are also divided about these words, as about the former, some understanding them concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and judging that by the sign of the coming of the Son of man is probably meant some prodigy or some comet seen before that destruction, which should be of that nature as it should make the Jews (here called *the tribes of the earth*) to mourn; they by the angels and trumpet, mentioned Mt 24:31, understanding the ministers of the gospel, who after the destruction of Jerusalem should go and preach the gospel over all the world, and so gather in the elect into the gospel church. But I cannot agree to this sense, and most interpreters expound these words of the last judgment. What is meant by *the sign of the Son of man* all are not so well agreed. Two of the evangelists say only *the Son of man*. Matthew mentions first the appearance of the sign of the Son of man, then the Son of man himself; probably it signifieth some great prodigy that shall be seen before that great and terrible day. Those things which incline me to think that the day of judgment, not the destruction of Jerusalem, is that which is spoken of in these verses, is;

1. That all the phrases are such as the Scripture useth to express Christ's coming to the last judgment: his coming in the clouds of heaven, Mt 26:64 Re 1:7; the tribes of the earth mourning, Re 1:7; his coming with the angels, and the sound of a trumpet, Mt 25:31 Mr 8:38 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16; his sending his angels to gather the elect, Mt 13:49.
2. The *tribes of the earth mourning*, seems to signify more than the twelve tribes of Israel.
3. That which Luke hath, *Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*; seemeth hardly applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, rather to *the redemption of the body*, mentioned Ro 8:23.

For the gospel before this time was carried to the Gentiles; nor do I know that that is any where called redemption. Those things which have led some learned interpreters to expound Mt 24:29-31 of the destruction of Jerusalem, are, I conceive, those particles, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*, Mt 24:29 and the particle *then*, Mt 24:30; together with Mt 24:34 where our Saviour saith, *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*. But the term, *immediately after the*

tribulation of those days, may signify not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but that, and all the calamities of those days that should follow that, to the end of the world: and it is very usual for prophetic scriptures to speak of things to come long after as if they were presently to come to pass, De 32:35; and the day of judgment is ordinarily spoken of as if it were at hand, 1Th 4:15 Jas 5:8 1Jo 2:18, both to denote the certainty of it, and to keep us from security, and to let us know that a thousand years in God's sight are but as one day, 2Pe 3:8. For in Mt 24:34, we shall give the sense of it, in its order.

Matthew 24:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 24:35".

Matthew 24:35

Ver. 32-35. Mark hath the very same, Mr 13:28-31. So hath Luke, Lu 21:29-33, only he saith, *the fig tree, and all the trees, when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, &c.* By this similitude of the fig tree (called therefore by Luke a *parable*) our Saviour doth not only design to inform them that these things which he had told them should be as certain signs of the approaching of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of his kingdom, as the fig trees and other trees putting forth of leaves is a sign of the approaching summer, as So 2:13; but that as the frosts, and snow, and cold of the winter, doth not hinder the trees from bringing forth fruit in the summer, so these tribulations and troubles should be so far

from hindering and destroying Christ's kingdom, that they should prepare the world for it, and promote it: so that as they might know from these tribulations in Judea that the kingdom of grace was at hand, and began; so from the following tribulations upon the world they might know that his kingdom of glory was also hastening.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. There are several notions men have of that term, *this generation*, some by it understanding mankind; others, the generation of Christians; others, the whole generation of the Jews: but doubtless our Saviour mean's the set of men that were at that time in the world: those who were at that time living should not all die until all these things shall be fulfilled, all that he had spoken with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem; and indeed the most of those signs which our Saviour gave, were signs common both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the last judgment, abating only Christ's personal coming in the clouds with power and glory. So that, considering that the destruction of Jerusalem was within less than forty years after our Saviour's speaking these words, so many as lived to the expiration of that number of years must see the far greater part of these things actually fulfilled, as signs of the destruction of Jerusalem; and fulfilling, as signs of the end of the world.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. By this expression our Saviour confirmeth the truth of what he had said, assuring those to whom he spake, that although there should be a change of the heavens and the earth, 2Pe 3:10,12,13, which then commonly look upon as the most stable and abiding things, yet the truth of what he had said should not fail.

Matthew 24:36

Ver. 36. Mark addeth, Mr 13:32, *neither the Son, but the Father. Of that day and hour*, that is, the particular time when the heavens and the earth shall pass away, as he had before said, or when the end of the world shall be, which was one of the questions propounded to him by his disciples, Mt 24:3.

Knoweth no man, no mere man, nor have men any reason to be

troubled at it; for it is a piece of knowledge which the Father hath reserved in his own power, and his own pleasure, from the angels, who continually behold his face. Nay, I myself, as man, know it not. Nor is it more absurd, or derogating from the perfection of Christ, than for to say, that Christ, as man, was not omnipotent, or omniscient, &c. By the way, this gives a great check to the curiosity of men's inquiries after the particular time or year when the world shall have an end, or the day of judgment begin, or be.

Matthew 24:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 24:39".

Matthew 24:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 24:39".

Matthew 24:39

Ver. 37-39. Luke hath much the same, Lu 17:26,27, where he also saith, it shall be as *in the days of Lot*; but I shall consider what he saith, which seemeth spoken at another time, and upon another occasion, when I come to his seventeenth chapter. Two things our Saviour seemeth here to teach us:

1. That Christ's coming to the last judgment will be sudden, and not looked for; upon which account his coming is compared in Scripture to the coming of a thief, Mt 24:43,44 2Pe 3:10 Re 16:15.
2. That it will be in a time of great security and debauchery: such was the time of Noah, Ge 6:3-5.

Matthew 24:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 24:41".

Matthew 24:41

Ver. 40,41. Some refer this to the coming of Christ in his kingdom of grace; some: to his coming in the day of judgment: it is true of both those comings. God shows the freeness of his grace much in the conversion of sinners, and makes discriminations of which we can give no account, as he tells us, Lu 4:25-27. But it seemeth here rather to be understood of that separation which Christ shall make at the day of judgment, of the sheep from the goats, the elect from the reprobates; for of that coming our Saviour seemeth to be speaking, both in the preceding and in the following words.

Matthew 24:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 24:44".

Matthew 24:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 24:44".

Matthew 24:44

Ver. 42-44. Mark saith, Mr 13:33, *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.* What our Lord here meaneth by watching is easily gathered, as well by what went before, where our Saviour had been speaking of the security and luxury of the old world, as by what followeth, Mt 24:44, where he biddeth them be always ready; and therefore Lu 21:34-36, expounds this thus: *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* Our Saviour in these verses, from the uncertainty of the particular time when the day of judgment shall be, presseth upon his disciples a sober, heavenly, and holy life; intimating that by such a life only they can make themselves ready for the coming of Christ, and to

stand before the Son of man, when he shall appear in his power and glory. He presseth this from that which common prudence would teach any householder, viz. if he knew in what watch of the night a thief would come, to watch, and not suffer his house to be broken open; that is, in what time of the night, for the Jews divided the night into the first, second, third, and fourth watch, as the Romans divided it for relief of their military guards. Now, saith our Saviour, you, knowing that there will come such a time, and not certainly knowing at what time, stand concerned to be always watching and praying.

Matthew 24:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 24:26".

Matthew 24:46

Ver. 45,46. We have much the same, Lu 12:42-44, whether spake at the same time, and upon the same occasion, or no, I know not. It is said there, Lu 12:41, that Peter gave occasion to this discourse, by saying, *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?* Our Saviour replies as here, only Luke saith, *Who is that faithful and wise steward?* The question intimates that there are but a few such. This discourse plainly refers to the ministers of the gospel, whom Christ leaveth in trust with his church, *to give them their meat in due season*. He declareth the blessedness of those ministers that shall be found faithfully discharging their trust, and that the Lord in the day of judgment will exalt them to a much greater honour, according to that of Da 12:3, *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

Matthew 24:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:50

Ver. 50. See Poole on "Mt 24:51".

Matthew 24:51

Ver. 47-51. Luke hath much of this, Lu 12:45,46: *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.* If that servant prove an evil servant, presumes upon my not making such haste to judgment as he thought I would, and shall prove a persecutor of my people, or a loose and debauched person, I will come to his particular judgment before I come to the general judgment, and at such a time as he shall not be aware of me, and destroy him, and give him his portion with such as believe not my second coming, and with such as are one thing in profession and another thing in practice, in hell, where the condition of poor creatures will be miserable as the condition of those that weep and gnash their teeth. By this parable our Saviour doth quicken his apostles, to whom he intended to leave the care of his church when he should be ascended into heaven, to a faithful care of the flock committed to their trust, and also lets us know that in succeeding ages there would arise a generation of loose and debauched ministers, and such as would persecute the sincerer professors of his gospel, who could not comply with their doctrines and lives. Of which, as all ages of the church have given a proof, so the time since popery hath prevailed in the world hath given a more plentiful and abundant proof: all which extravagances are encouraged from their atheism, and the belief of Christ's coming to judgment. He also showeth how severe he will be against such persons: he will come upon them before

they be aware of it, and cut them in pieces. The word signifies to cut them in two pieces, as the Jews were wont to divide their sacrifices; or, (as some think), as some pagan nations were wont to punish perfidious persons, and some more notorious malefactors. And give him his portion with unbelievers and hypocrites in hell, Mt 13:42 25:30. The case of all persons that live secure and debauched lives because judgment is not speedily executed, will be sad; but the case of ministers that do so will be dreadful. They are a sort of sinners whom God seldom suffereth to live out half their days; and when he doth, yet they shall not escape the severest damnation of hell. They betray a greater trust, and lead multitudes to hell with them, and so are the greatest traitors against the Divine Majesty.

Matthew 25:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 25:1-13 The parable of the ten virgins, Mt 25:14-30 and of the talents, which a king distributed among his servants, to be improved by them.

Mt 25:31-46 A description of the last judgment.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 25:13".

Matthew 25:13

Ver. 1-13. For the understanding of all parables, I have formerly showed, that parables are similitudes brought from some earthly things, or actions, to illustrate some heavenly doctrine, or spiritual mysteries, and insinuate them into our practice. For the right understanding of all parables, the first and principal thing to be attended to is the scope and main end of the parable. What heavenly doctrine it is which our Saviour by that earthly similitude designs to illustrate, or what practical thing it is which he designs by that parable to press, I have showed. Our Saviour sometimes more particularly showeth this, expressing what he meant by the several things and actions mentioned in the parable. This he did, Mt 13:1-58, in the parable of the *sower*, and of the *tares of the field*. But in most parables he doth not so; but from something going before or coming after gives us light enough to know what his main design was, and leaveth to us by that to interpret the several parts of the parable. Here he hath left us a sufficient light to know his meaning:

From his discourse in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, where he had been pressing the duty and prudence of watchfulness, from the uncertainty of the time of his coming. It is manifest that he is pursuing the same design still, by the *επι παραβολη*, or the saying with which he closes this parable, Mt 25:13, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh*. This watchfulness we had interpreted by an opposition to sin, both of omission and commission: taking heed of having our hearts *overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life*, Lu 21:34,36; taking heed of smiting our fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunken; discharging our trusts faithfully, ministers giving to the household of Christ their portion in due season, Mt 24:45,49; being ready for the coming of Christ, Mt 24:44; praying, Lu 21:36. This our Lord had pressed there particularly on ministers; he is here in this parable pressing the same duty on all; and in this parable further opens the duty of watchfulness, not only as opposed to slumbering and sleeping, but as comprehending a getting of ourselves ready, as he had said, Mt 24:44; and this readiness he also further openeth in this parable, under the notion of having not only lamps, but oil in our lamps.

To these purposes he takes up this parable, which we shall not

so well understand without understanding their usual rites and customs at weddings, which were these:

1. Their marriages were ordinarily in the night.
2. They usually had young men that attended the bridegroom, and young virgins that attended the bride at her father's house. The young men attended the bridegroom. These were called *the children of the bride chamber*, or *the friends of the bridegroom* or bride, Mr 2:19 Joh 3:29.

The wedding being in the night, there was need of lamps. When the bridegroom came, the bride maids, who were attending the bride, went forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps lighted, to conduct him and his companions into the house, and to her who was to be the bride.

When they were entered the door was shut, and the marriage proceeded. Our Saviour now, to quicken his auditors to the watchfulness before spoken of, supposes such a marriage, and ten virgins, the usual number at such solemnities. He supposes these ten virgins to have been half of them wise and half foolish: the wisdom of the one he makes to lie in getting their lamps ready and furnishing themselves in time with oil to feed them, that they might not go out, either while they waited for his coming, or in their conduct of him. The folly of the others he makes to lie in their want of this care, so as when the bridegroom came their lamps were out: they would have borrowed oil of the others, but they had none to lend them, so as they were shut out of the door of the bridal house, and though they knocked could obtain no entrance.

It is not hard now to apply the several parts of the parable to the end for which this parable is brought, provided that we do not expect that similitudes should run on four feet, or that every minute circumstance in a parable should be fitted in the explication.

The kingdom of heaven (which in Scripture always signifies that of grace or glory) here signifieth that of grace. The state of the church is likened to *ten virgins*: these ten virgins are professors; their lamps and their going forth to meet the bridegroom, signify their joint profession of the gospel, and their expectation joyfully

to meet Christ, who is the bridegroom here meant. Ps 45:14 Joh 3:29.

Five of them were wise, and five foolish. This signifieth the difference of professors; some have lamps, make a profession, but have no truth of grace; others have the root of the matter in them, a true faith and love, which feeds men's profession.

The bridegroom's tarrying signifies Christ's delaying to come to judgment. Their slumbering and sleeping signifies the infirmities of the best, who sleep, though their hearts wake; and the deeper security of others in their sinful state. The coming of the bridegroom at midnight signifieth Christ's coming in a dark time of troubles and afflictions, or at a time not looked for. The virgins trimming their lamps upon the cry made, signifies the care of pious souls, more especially upon any notices of Christ's coming, to prepare themselves for the meeting and reception of him. The foolish virgins late discerning that their lamps were out, and that they wanted oil, lets us know that hypocrites and formal professors will too late know that profession without a root of faith and true regeneration will serve them in no stead. Their asking the wise virgins to lend them some of their oil, with their refusal, because then they should not have enough for themselves, lets us know the woeful shifts that hypocrites will at last be put to, and how vain their hopes are, who hope to be relieved from the grace and good works of others. Their going to buy oil, and their being shut out before they returned, and knocking in vain, and in vain crying, *Lord, open to us*, lets us know, that as the tree falls so it must lie; that after our buying time in this life, mentioned Isa 55:1,2, is expired, our state will be determined; that we are concerned to take the counsel of Solomon, Ec 9:10, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, especially for our souls, to do it with thy might; for here is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the place, whither thou goest.*

Therefore we are all concerned to watch, that is, to look that we have not only lamps, but oil to feed our lamps, and to keep our lamps burning, because we know, that the Bridegroom Christ will come, and we do not know at what time he will come, to the general judgment, or our particular judgment; for when we die, we can do no more to make ourselves ready for the great coming of Christ to judge the world, but must appear before him as we

go out of this world. No oil after the determination of our lives will be to be bought, no further preparation of ourselves is to be made, as our life leaveth us judgment will find us.

Matthew 25:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 25:15".

Matthew 25:15

Ver. 14,15. There is much the same parable Lu 19:12, but the difference is so great in the narration, and the time, and circumstances, and scope seem so different, that the best expositors think it another, and spoken at another time, though there be much of this in that: I shall therefore leave the consideration of that in Luke, until I meet with it in him, (though some interpreters do think this the same with that), and only consider this, as it is before us in this evangelist. By *the kingdom of heaven*, is doubtless here to be understood the economy of God's providence in his gospel dispensations. The *man travelling into a far country*, is Christ ascending up to heaven, who, when he ascended up on high gave gifts unto men, Eph 4:8. By *the goods*, which the man is said to have delivered to his servants, are to be understood the gifts which God giveth to men, being himself (as to his glorious presence, and his principal residence, which is in heaven, at a great distance from us) as a man in a far country; for I see no reason to restrain these gifts to such as flow from Christ as Mediator, but rather choose to interpret it generally of all the gifts of God, whether of providence or grace. Whereas it is said, Mt 25:15, that this man divided his goods to his servants unequally, *to one five talents, to another two, to another one, to every man according to his several ability*, it signifieth only God's unequal distribution of his gifts to the sons of men, according to his own good pleasure; which is true both concerning natural parts, as wit, understanding, judgment, memory, as concerning those which the heathens call good things of fortune, as riches, honours, and dignities; Christians call them the good things of Providence; under which notion also come all acquired habits, or endowments, such as learning, knowledge, moral habits, &c., which though acquired are yet gifts, because it is the same God

who gives us *power to get wealth*, as Moses speaks, De 8:18, who also gives men power to get knowledge, and upon study and meditation to comprehend the natures and causes of things, and also to govern and bridle our appetites: or the gifts of more special providence, or distinguishing grace. I take all those powers given to men, by which they are enabled to do good, or to excel others, to come under the notion of the goods here mentioned, which God distributeth unequally according to his own good pleasure, and as seemeth best to his heavenly wisdom, for the government of the world, and the ordering of the affairs of his church; of all which God will have all account one day, and reward men according to the improvement, or no improvement, which they have made of them in their several stations.

Matthew 25:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 25:18".

Matthew 25:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 25:18".

Matthew 25:18

Ver. 16-18. This part in the parable only showeth the different use that men and women make of those gifts, whether of common providence or of grace, especially common grace, which the Lord bestowed on them. Some make a great use of them for the profit of their Master, for the end for which God entrusted them with them, to wit the glory of his holy name, and the salvation of their souls. Others make no use at all of them for those ends.

Matthew 25:19

Ver. 19. God, in the day of judgment, will call all men to account for those gifts which he hath given them, how they have used the days of life, the measures of health, their knowledge, wit,

memory, understanding, their wealth, estate, honours, dignities, relations, all their natural or acquired habits, all their enjoyments, &c., for the honour of his name, and the advantage of their own souls.

Matthew 25:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 25:23".

Matthew 25:23

Ver. 20-23. This part of the parable teacheth us only these things:

1. That some persons in this world make a very good use and improvement of those gifts and good things which God hath entrusted them with, according to the measure with which God hath entrusted them.
2. That those who do so shall in the day of judgment have a liberal reward in the kingdom of glory, called here *the joy of their Lord*.

That God doth not expect an equality of service from all, but a service proportionable to those gifts which God hath given men; and those shall go to heaven who have made a due improvement of the gifts with which God hath blessed them, though it be not proportionable to the service which others, of greater parts, and who have had greater advantages and opportunities, have made: if men have but two talents, yet if they gain other two, they shall go to heaven at last, as well as those who have had five, and

improved them to the gaining of other five.

We must take heed of concluding from this part of the parable, that those who have most given them ordinarily do make the best improvement of them, for daily experience teacheth us the contrary, neither is the parable brought to instruct us in any such thing.

Matthew 25:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 25:27".

Matthew 25:27

Ver. 24-27. We must remember that we are in a parable, which (as other similitudes) cannot be expected in all things to agree with what it is brought to illustrate. This part of the parable doth chiefly instruct us in these two things:

1. That it is the genius of wicked men to lay the blame of their miscarriages upon others, oft times upon God himself. The unprofitable servant here pretends that the dread of his lord, as a severe man, was that which kept him from labouring, and making an improvement of the talent with which his master had intrusted him. Thus many think that if there be an election of grace, or any thing of special and distinguishing grace, and man hath not a perfect power in his own will, he shall have something to excuse himself by before God hereafter, for his not repenting, and believing God in such a case, condemning men for unbelief and impenitency, should reap where he did not sow, and gather where he did not straw.

2. Men in their excuses which they fancy, instead of excusing will but accuse and condemn themselves. The lord of the unprofitable servant tells him that the fault lay in his own sloth and wickedness, and his dread of his lord's security was but a mere frivolous pretence and unreasonable excuse; for if he had dreaded any such thing, he would have done what he could, he would have put out his money to the exchangers, and then he should have received his own with increase.

And shall not God as justly another day reply upon those who think to excuse their lewd and wicked lives, their impenitency and unbelief, from their not being elected, not having a power of themselves to repent and believe, nor receiving his efficacious grace. O you wicked and slothful wretches! Did you suspect or fear you were not elected? Why then did you not give all diligence to make your calling and election sure? Do you plead the want of power in your own wills to repent and believe, and that I did not give you a special, effectual grace? But had you not a power to keep from the taverns and alehouses? To keep from lying, and cursing, and swearing, and open profanation of my sabbaths? Had not you a power to read, to hear, to pray? If you had to your utmost used the talents I gave you, and I had been warning in my further necessary influences of grace, you might indeed have said something; but when you made no use of the talents you had, why should I trust you with more? Faith comes by reading, hearing, praying; you had a power to these things, these talents you had. Why did you not read, hear, pray, that you might believe? If you took me to be so severe a master, why did not you do what was in your power to do, that you might find me otherwise? If you had done what lay in your power to do, in the use of those talents which I gave you for that end, you might then have blamed me if I had not given you more; but you never tried my kindness in such a case. So that you are not ruined by any severity of mine, but by your own sloth, neglect, and wickedness. Thus much this parable teacheth us, that God in the recompences at the last day of judgment will be found just, and sinners will all be found liars, and their damnation will be of themselves.

Matthew 25:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 25:30".

Matthew 25:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 25:30".

Matthew 25:30

Ver. 28-30. God often in this life deprives men and women of those gifts which he hath given them, and they do not make use of for the glory of his name, and the good of their and others' souls, the great ends for which he hath entrusted them with them. But this seems not to be here intended, this text referring to the day of judgment: all therefore that we are to understand by this is; That no man's gifts, whether of nature or providence, of what advantage soever they have been to him in this life, will be of any profit to him in the day of judgment, unless he hath in this life used them to the ends for which God gave them. In that day he will lose all; and the glory of heaven shall not be the portion of them that have had great talents of learning, wit, riches, honours, spiritual gifts, or any thing of that nature, but of those only who have used these things to the honour and glory of God, and to the advantage of their own and others' souls. For all those that have been unprofitable, hell will be their portion at last, where their misery will be, as of those that live in extreme darkness, continual weeping and gnashing of teeth. The substance of what is in Mt 25:29 we met with Mt 13:12, *To him that hath shall be given, &c.*; but I think the proverbial speech here is applied differently from the application of it there. There, *him that hath* seemeth to signify, him that hath an actual possession; for it is said before, *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.* So that I take that text to contain a promise of the increase of grace to those that have the seed of God; whereas the appearances of it in others shall not last, but vanish away. Here, plainly, *him that hath* signifieth, him that maketh a good and true use of what he hath; and thus the parable expounds it. So as the sense is, He that hath any talents from God, and maketh use of them, and improves them for the honour and glory of God, shall be rewarded with further gifts of grace or glory. But if a man *hath not*, that is, hath, but is as if he had not, making no use of what he hath for

the glory of God, those gifts and talents which he hath shall be of no profit and advantage, but miserable disadvantage to him at last.

Matthew 25:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 25:33".

Matthew 25:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 25:33".

Matthew 25:33

Ver. 31-33. Our Saviour having spoken much before of his spiritual kingdom, which he exerciseth in his church, cometh now more plainly to tell them what kind of a kingdom he should further set up and exercise in the end of the world; far different from that which the Jews dreamed of, and his own disciples seemed to have some expectations of.

When the Son of man, he who now appeareth to you in the form of a servant, and only as the Son of man, shall come in his glory, a glorious manifestation of himself; he now appeareth clothed with flesh, but he shall appear in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; he shall come with ten thousand of his saints, Jude 1:14, with his mighty angels. 2Th 1:7. Then shall he sit (after the manner of great princes) upon the throne of his glory; he shall appear in great splendour: and before him shall be gathered all nations, that is, all persons that ever were or at that time shall be in the world; the quick and the dead, Ac 10:42 2Ti 4:1 1Pe 4:5. He shall send forth his angels, and say to them, who are his reapers, Mt 13:30, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. He by his angels shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd, who feedeth both sheep and goats together, at night separateth them one from another. So the saints of God, who are like sheep for whiteness, gentleness, innocency, and feed in this world together with stinking and lascivious goats, the wicked of the world, compared to goats for the filthy qualities by which

they resemble them; yet at the day of judgment Christ shall separate them.

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand. The right hand is the place of honour and dignity, and the place for favourites: then Christ shall exalt his saints to great honour and dignity, and show them his favour.

But the goats on the left; wicked men shall rise to shame and contempt. The right hand men of the world shall be at the left hand of Christ. It shall be then seen, that because they are people of no understanding, he that formed them will show them no favour.

Matthew 25:34

Ver. 34. *The King*, that is, he who was before called *the Son of man*, who shall then sit on the throne of his glory; he shall say to his saints, to those on his right hand, those whom he designs to honour and to favour, *Come, ye blessed of my Father;* you whom my Father hath blessed with all spiritual blessings in me, who were also blessed in his eternal thoughts: for there was *a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;* you have not purchased it by your works; no, it was prepared for you before ever you were. You were blessed in my Father's eternal thoughts, so he prepared a kingdom for you; and you have been blessed since with all spiritual blessings through me, so you are now prepared for it. Therefore come and now inherit it, as that which you are foreordained and born unto, as that which is freely given you, not purchased by you.

Matthew 25:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 25:40".

Matthew 25:40

Ver. 35-40. The recompences of the last judgment are according to the tenor of our good works, and the desert of evil works. The King here gives the reason of his gracious rewarding sentence, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.* This doth not imply any desert, much less any worthiness of equality between the work and the reward; but that evangelical works, the products of unfeigned faith and love, qualify us by the covenant of grace to receive it. The causes of the reward are either, the original cause, the most free and rich mercy of God, or the meritorious, the most perfect righteousness and sacrifice of Christ; and the good works here recited are infallible signs that the performers of them are the objects of the Divine favour in predestination, and are truly united to Christ. Besides, in the gospel, which is the law of grace, God has established a necessary connection between faith, that works by love, and the blessed reward; and accordingly evangelical works are the condition of our title, that qualifies us to obtain the kingdom of glory, freely promised for Christ's sake to obedient believers. And in this respect the dispensing the reward may be said to be an act of justice, namely, in the faithful performance of the promise; as in the forgiving sins, which is an act of pure mercy, God is said to be *faithful and just*, 1Jo 1:9. Our Lord here reckons but one species of good works, instead of many, as is usual in Scripture, and he rather chooseth to instance in works of charity than of piety.

1. He knows the hardness of men's hearts; and;

2. That the poor they should have always with them, especially such as would live godly, and so be more than others out of favour with the world.
3. He knew how acceptable these were to his Father, and had a mind the world should know it, Isa 58:7 Eze 18:7 Mic 6:8 Mt 9:13 1Jo 3:17. And hereby declares, that acts of charity to the souls makes us fit subjects for the Divine mercy in the day of judgment, 2Ti 1:18.

The answer, Mt 25:37, *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, &c.*, only teacheth us this, That at the great day the best of men shall blush and be ashamed to hear God speak of any good works they have done, and be swallowed up in the admiration of God's free and infinite grace, in rewarding any thing which they have done at so liberal a rate.

And the King shall answer and say unto them, &c. This only confirmeth what we had, Mt 10:42, that Christ looketh upon acts of kindness done to the meanest godly persons, and will reward them, as if they had been done unto himself; so that though our charity must not be limited only there, yet it must be chiefly shown to those of the household of faith: other charity may be showed in obedience to the command of God, and have its reward, but none can so properly be said to be done to Christ, as that which is done to those who are his true members.

Matthew 25:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 25:45".

Matthew 25:45

Ver. 41-45. The great King and Judge of the whole earth had before given sentence for those on his right hand, who are now possessed of their kingdom, and sit with him to judge the world. He now comes to sentence the goats at the left hand, whose judgment is to eternal misery; lying in two things:

1. In a departure from God, so as never more to have any favour from him.
2. In a sense of pain and misery, exceeding that which fire causeth to a body consuming with it.

In this life wicked men are capable of some presence of God with them, and receive several favours from God, in gifts of common providence and common grace; which might serve either as encouragements to allure them, or means to help them, in turning to God: but having abused these, the righteous God in that day will totally depart from them, and they shall receive no more tokens of kindness and favour from him; and whereas, by the advantages they had from such a presence of Divine providence, as God was pleased in this life to allow them, they lived in some degrees of pleasure and liberty, which they were not thankful for, they shall at that day be condemned to eternal torments. Nor shall the justice of God be impeached for disproportioning eternal torments to temporary sinnings; for the infiniteness of the Majesty offended, to which satisfaction is due, is to be considered, and is so amongst men, who think it reasonable to recompense a prince or nobleman for an injury done to them with ten thousand pounds, which they would not recompense to an equal with so many shillings.

Beside that, every sinner hath sinned *in suo infinito*, to the utmost line of his time, and wanted nothing but more time to have sinned more, for he had a will to have sinned infinitely. This everlasting fire is said to be prepared for the devil and his

angels; not because it was not also prepared for men, but the evil angels were condemned to it before man had sinned, so that man comes but into a share with the evil angels; and by this God also lets us know that they are the children of the devil by evil works, Joh 8:44 1Jo 3:8. Having determined their punishments, and pronounced their sentence, he comes to justify himself in it: *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c.* For here may be interpreted as a causal; for though none merits his own salvation, yet every sinner's destruction is of himself, and he meriteth his condemnation. The mentioning only of sins of omission, and those only as to acts of charity, doth not only teach us that sins of omission are enough to damn us, but that omissions of acts of charity to the distressed members of Christ are such sins, as, if not repented of, and washed off with the blood of Christ, are enough to condemn us to the pit of hell; and such things as God doth keep in mind, and will in a more special manner reckon with men for. I cannot pass by a reflection which I find almost all interpreters make upon this text: If those in the day of judgment shall be sent to hell who do not feed the poor members of Christ, and give them to drink when they are thirsty, what shall be done to those who pluck the bread out of their mouths which they have got in the sweat of their face, and spill the drink which their own labours or others' liberality hath given them to drink? If those shall have their portion with the devil and his angels who give not entertainment to them when they are banished and strangers, what shall become of them who are instruments of their banishment, and to make them strangers? If it shall go so hard with those that clothe them not when they are naked, what shall become of those who any way help to strip them naked? If those shall not escape the vengeance of God who do not visit them when they are sick, and in prison, where shall they appear who cast them into prisons, and are means of those diseases that shorten their lives, by their barbarous usages of them? Those that smite their fellow servants had need be sure that it be not for well doing. Our Lord here tells us, that the wicked in that day will say, *When saw we thee an hungred, &c.* they did not deny that they had refused to give bread to the hungry; but they deny that they ever saw Christ an hungred, and did not feed him. Persecutors have always ill names to give the servants of God, pretending still a great reverence for God and Christ. But mark our Lord's answer, and that with an oath:

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the

least of these, ye did it not to me. It is no matter what you thought of or called those to whom you showed no mercy; you see they are here at my right hand. You might have known them to be my sheep, you saw them hear my voice, and following me: you, in casting them into prison, cast me; in starving them, you starved me; and in stripping them of their goods, you stripped me. Therefore, go, *ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Matthew 25:46

Ver. 46. So then it seems they shall rise as well as the other; though they live in the lands of the Grand Seignior, or the Great Mogul, they shall not (as some filthy dreamers have thought) have such a quiet sleep in the graves, but that the sound of the last trump shall awaken them. Nor are they out of the jurisdiction of him that shall be the Judge both of the quick and the dead. Nor shall they escape a judgment without the law, because they have sinned without the law: *For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, Ro 1:20. They shall perish* (as they have sinned) *without the law, Ro 2:12. They shall go into everlasting punishment,* not a punishment for a time, as Origen thought.

But the righteous, those who shall be so adjudged, being made so in this life by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and accepted as such for their holy and sincere conversation, though in many things imperfect, shall go *into life eternal;* which doth not signify a mere eternal existence, (for so the worst of men shall live eternally, or else they could not be capable of eternal punishment), but a happy and blessed estate, which shall never have an end: and thus *eternal life* always signifieth in Scripture, being opposed to eternal death, everlasting fire, the worm that never dieth, &c. Thus endeth Christ's kingdom of grace; or rather, thus shall begin his kingdom of glory; all his enemies being put under his feet, and none remaining but this glorious King, and those who shall be his true subjects. Of which kingdom shall be no end.

Matthew 26:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 26:1,2 Christ again foretells his own death.

Mt 26:3-5 The rulers conspire against him.

Mt 26:6-13 A woman poureth precious ointment upon his head.

Mt 26:14-16 Judas bargains to betray him.

Mt 26:17-25 Christ eateth the passover, and points out the traitor.

Mt 26:26-30 He institutes his last supper,

Mt 26:31-35 foretells the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's denial of him.

Mt 26:36-46 His agony and prayer in the garden.

Mt 26:47-50 He is betrayed and apprehended.

Mt 26:51-56 One of the servants of the high priest hath his ear cut off; Jesus forbiddeth opposition.

Mt 26:57-68 He is carried to Caiaphas, falsely accused, examined, pronounced guilty, and treated with indignity.

Mt 26:69-75 Peter's denial and repentance.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 26:2".

Matthew 26:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 14:1. *After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread.* Luke saith, Lu 22:1, *Now the feast of unleavened drew nigh, which is called the passover.* For our better understanding of what the evangelists say here, and in the following part of this history, we will consider the law of the passover in its institution, which we find in Ex 12:3 &c., Le 23:4 &c., Nu 28:16 &c., In Ex 12:1-51, we find its first institution, and the occasion of it. Upon the tenth day of the month Nisan, they were to take up a lamb for every household; or if the household were too small, they might take in their neighbours.

This lamb was to be a male without blemish, and to be kept up to the fourteenth day; then to be killed in the evening; or between the two evenings, that is, as is most probably judged, some time that day after the sun began after noon to decline, before the sun did set. The flesh of this lamb was that night to be eaten, neither raw, nor sodden, but roasted with fire, with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs: nothing was to remain till the morning; and if any did remain, it was to be burned. They were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands. They were to strike the blood of the lamb on the two first posts, and on the upper doorposts, of the houses where they did eat it. Seven days they were to eat unleavened bread, beginning on the fourteenth day of the month at even, and ending the one and twentieth at even. This was to be to them for a memorial of their deliverance in Egypt upon God's destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians and sparing them, and their deliverance and coming out of Egypt; and was to be an ordinance unto them for ever. This may be read at large, Ex 12:3-20. This also was a figure of the true Passover Jesus Christ, whom the apostle calleth *our Passover*, and the evangelist calls *the Lamb of God*. The law of the passover was again repeated, Le 23:5-8 Nu 28:16-25. The first and last of the days of unleavened bread (as may be seen there) were to be days of *an holy convocation*. There were some differences between the observation of the first passover in Egypt and their after observations of it. At the passover in Egypt the blood was to be sprinkled on the doorposts; in following times the blood and the fat were to be sprinkled upon the altar: at the passover in Egypt every paschal society slew the passover in their own house; but afterwards they were all slain in the temple, and then carried to be roasted and eaten by the several societies. The passover in Egypt was to be eaten standing, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet and staves in their hands, in token of their being ready to take their journey out of Egypt; but in their following passovers they (in token of the liberty into which God had brought them) did eat it sitting: hence we shall find that Christ sat down with the twelve when he ate the passover. In other things the observation was much alike. They strictly kept to the time, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan or Abib, which answereth to part of our March and April. This great festival was to be kept *after two days*, saith our Saviour. Whether the two days are to be understood as including or excluding the day when he spake is uncertain, and not material for us to know; probably he spake this on the Tuesday, (as we

call it), Friday being to be the passover day.

And the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Though he was not yet actually betrayed that we read of, yet he knew both what counsels his adversaries had already been taking, and were further about to take, and what was in the heart of Judas; he therefore forewarns his disciples, that when the thing should come to pass they might not be surprised, and might know that he was the Son of God, who could foretell future contingencies, though he was also as the Son of man to be crucified.

Matthew 26:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 26:5".

Matthew 26:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 26:5".

Matthew 26:5

Ver. 3-5. Mr 14:1, saith, *The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.* Luke saith much the same with Mark. They had before this been seeking how to destroy him, Lu 19:47; nor was it the first time they had made a formal council about it, Joh 11:47; but now again they met. The place is named, that was the high priest's hall; the councillors were the chief priests, scribes, and elders. The matter of their deliberation was to *kill* Christ, and how they might do it *by subtlety*, for they were afraid of the people, who had a great esteem for our Saviour, because of the many miracles he had wrought.

But they said, Not on the feast day: that was now within two days, and in order to it the city was full of people, and they were afraid (as they were concerned, being a conquered people, and having but a precarious liberty for their religion) of causing any tumults: this awed them, not any great religion for the festival, for all things now were out of order with them. Their high priest was chosen annually, and at the will of their conquerors; some

little appearance they had of their ancient religious government, but it was in no due order.

Matthew 26:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 26:13".

Matthew 26:13

Ver. 6-13. This piece of history (or one very like it) is recorded by the three other evangelists. Mark hath it with very little

difference, Mr 14:3-9. Instead of *for much*, Mr 14:9, Mark hath a precise sum, *three hundred pence*, and adds, *they murmured against her*; and some other little differences he hath in words rather than in sense. In Luke, Lu 7:36-38, we read, *One of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat*. This seemeth not to be the same history, though some think it is. *And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment*. It is plain this Pharisee's name was *Simon*, by Lu 7:40. Luke further addeth a discourse between our Saviour and this Pharisee, Lu 7:39-50, which I shall in its order consider. John relates it, Joh 12:1,2, &c.: *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them which sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always*. Whether all the evangelists relate one and the same or divers stories is the question. Luke's relation seemeth the most different; he saith nothing of this Simon being a leper, and relates this history immediately after things done in Galilee. All the other three agree this passage to have fallen out at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem. It is very probable that Matthew, and Mark, and John recite the same story. They agree it to have happened in Bethany, at a supper in Simon's house; they agree in the kind of the ointment, and in our Saviour's discourse upon the thing. The difference in the time, John mentioning six days before the passover, and Matthew two days, will be cleared by considering, that St. John sets down the precise time when our Saviour came to Bethany, which was six days before the passover; St. Matthew sets down the time when the feast was

made, which was two days before the passover; so that our Saviour had been four days in Bethany before he was entertained in the house of Simon, and anointed by Mary for his burial. When Christ came out of Galilee toward Jerusalem, he came (as we heard before) to Bethany, Mr 11:1. There he was entertained at a supper by one Simon, who had formerly been a leper, and probably had been cured by Christ, who therefore in gratitude entertained him, and made him a supper; where (saith John) Martha served, Lazarus sat at meat, whom he had newly raised from the dead, Joh 11:1-57. There comes a woman, John saith her name was Mary, and takes a pound of the ointment of spikenard; Matthew and Mark say it was in an alabaster box. John saith she did anoint his feet, and wiped them with her hair. Matthew and Mark say nothing of her anointing his feet, but of his head only. Though therefore opinions both of ancient and modern divines be very various, some thinking that the evangelists speak but of one anointing, others, that they speak of two, others, that they speak of three; yet it seems most probable that they speak of two, one of which is mentioned by Luke a year before this, the other is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and John. Whoso deliberately reads over the history in Luke, and compares it with the record of it in the three others, will see reasons enough to conclude that Luke speaketh of another person, and another time, and another place; for certainly Simon the Pharisee and Simon the leper were not the same: besides, we read in Luke that Simon carped at our Saviour for letting such a sinful woman come near him; here is nothing like it in this story. I shall therefore here consider the history as reported by our evangelist, taking in what Mark and John have to make it complete. Matthew and Mark say it was *in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper*. John mentions not the house, but adds that Lazarus was at the same time at supper with our Lord and that Martha waited. It will not from hence follow that our Saviour was at the house of Lazarus, (as some think), for as the other evangelists express another house, so John gives no suspicion of any such thing, but by mentioning the presence of Lazarus and his two sisters there, which might be and one of them wait, though they were at the house of a friend.

There came unto him a woman, (so say Matthew and Mark; John saith it was Mary, one of the sisters of Lazarus), she having an alabaster box of ointment very precious, poured it on his head as he sat at meat. John saith the ointment was of spikenard, very

costly; and that she anointed his feet, and wiped them with her hair; and that the quantity of it was a pound, so as the odour of it did fill the room. She did certainly anoint both his head and his feet. It is certain that in those Eastern countries this was a usual fashion, to entertain their guests at banquets by anointing them with oil, to which the psalmist alludes, Ps 23:5. This woman seemeth to have exceeded the usual compliment of this nature, in the kind of oil she used, the quantity of it, and in her anointing his feet (which she possibly did instead of washing his feet, which was very usual with them); in these things she showed the greatness of her love to this guest.

When his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? Mark adds, they murmured at the woman. They said, This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. Mark and John say, for three hundred pence. John saith it was Judas Iscariot that spake the words, and gives the reason for it, because he bare the bag, into which the price of the ointment (had it been sold) must have come; and he was a thief, he spake not this out of any regard to the poor, but to himself: it is likely other of the disciples might also think that it was too great a waste upon such a compliment. Our Lord understanding of it, vindicates the woman.

1. He tells them that she had done *a good work*. Actions not forbidden by the Divine law, nor commanded in it, take up their goodness or badness from their principles and ends; what she had done was done out of a principle of love to Christ, and for his honour and glory, so it was a good work.
2. He tells them that they had the poor with them always, but they should not have him always. A work may be good done at an extraordinary time, and upon an extraordinary occasion, which is not so if brought into ordinary practice. Christ here declares that he had no design to discourage the relief of the poor, but they would have daily occasions to do them good, but he was not long to be with them.
3. He tells them that she had poured this ointment upon him against his burial. That is, if this cost had been spent upon my dead body you would not have blamed her; for those kind of perfumes, both moist and dry, were much used in their embalming dead bodies. I am about to die, I have often told

you so; you believe it not; she believeth it, and hath, out of her love to me, but bestowed such a cost upon my dying body, as you would not have blamed had it been bestowed upon my dead body: so she showed her faith in Christ's words as well as his person.

Or, if this woman did not do it with any such intention, yet (saith our Saviour) she hath done the thing; I shall suddenly die, and she hath but anointed me aforehand, and is certainly as much excusable as those that spend more about bodies already dead. Finally, he tells them, that wheresoever this gospel should be preached, what she had done should be told to her honour and praise, *for a memorial of her*. Christ, seeing that her action proceeded from a hearty and burning love to him, accepteth her act as an extraordinary act of kindness to him, and proportions her a reward. Without love, if a man give all his goods to the poor, it signifieth nothing; but if there be love in the heart, it makes the gift acceptable. Love seldom underdoes in an act of kindness, and it cannot overdo where Christ is the true object of it. Men, who know not our hearts, may be ready to blame us for actions which God will highly commend and reward.

The evangelist having thus far digressed from his discourse, (probably to give us an account of the reason of Judas's disgust to our Saviour), he now returneth to a discourse about what was done at the council he had told us of, Mt 26:3-5. The fear of an uproar amongst the people seemed to be that alone which made them shy of apprehending him on the feast day.

Matthew 26:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 26:16".

Matthew 26:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 26:16".

Matthew 26:16

Ver. 14-16. Mark saith, Mr 14:10,11, And Judas Iscariot, one of

*the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him. Luke hath this yet more fully, Lu 22:3-6, Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. While they were busy in council, (viz. the chief priests, and scribes, and elders), how they might surprise Christ without making a tumult, Judas surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples of our Lord, instigated by the devil, who possibly did take advantage of Judas's discontent that the ointment was not sold, and he had not the money to put into the bag, or that Christ checked him so openly before the disciples, goes to the council, and offereth them to betray him unto them, without making any noise in the city. This being what they desired, and were consulting how to effect, they were glad of such an offer, and agreed with him for a sum of money. No evangelist but Matthew, in this place, mentions the particular sum, which was *thirty pieces of silver*. Interpreters do very probably think that these thirty pieces were thirty staters or shekels of the sanctuary, which being but of the value of two shillings and six pence apiece, amounted but to three pounds fifteen shillings in our money, which was the sum appointed by the law, Ex 21:32, to be paid for a servant gored to death by the beast of another, the poorest and meanest price of any person's life: Judas left it to them, and they set the meanest price imaginable. There are other opinions about the value of these pieces of silver, but this is the most probable, especially considering the mean opinion these men had of Christ, and their design and interest to depreciate him as much as might be, and that the priests were the great men in this council, who most probably agreed with him for such pieces of money as were most in use amongst the Jews. It may be a just matter of admiration that they should make so cheap a bargain with him, considering that they doubtless (had he insisted upon it) would have given him more; but there was a prophecy to be fulfilled, which we find Zec 11:12,13, *So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.* I shall have occasion, when I come to Mt 27:9, to discourse that text further. The price*

was set by the council of Heaven, which had determined this degree of our Lord's humiliation, that as he took upon him the form of a servant, so his life should be valued at the rate of an ordinary servant's life. Though therefore Judas was covetous enough to have asked more, and it is like the malice of those councillors would have edged them to have given more, yet it was thus ordered by the Divine council. Christ must be sold cheap, that he might be the more dear to the souls of the redeemed ones. For thirty pieces of silver he covenanted with them, and they promised it to him; whether it was now paid, or when he had done his work, appeareth not. From that time, (saith Mark), *he sought how he might conveniently betray him*. Luke expounds this $\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\ \sigma\chi\lambda\omicron\upsilon$, without tumult, Lu 22:6. He was now fixedly resolved upon his villany; his lust wanted but opportunity, which soon after offered itself.

Matthew 26:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 26:19".

Matthew 26:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 26:19".

Matthew 26:19

Ver. 17-19. No one of the evangelists relates this history fully, but Mark relates the former part more fully than Matthew: Mr 14:12-16 *And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendet forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say you to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.* Lu 22:7-13, differeth a little in the former

part of this relation: he saith, *Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, &c.;* so he goeth on, Lu 22:10-13, varying scarce at all from what Mark saith. The variations of the evangelists are of no moment, none contradicts the other, only one hath some circumstances omitted by the other. Our Lord was now at Bethany, whither he went every night from Jerusalem. The day was come for the killing of the passover. What that day was, the law hath fixed, Ex 12:6; the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) in the evening; or, between the two evenings, that is, as is mostly agreed, betwixt the declining of the sun after noon and the setting of the sun; for they counted one evening began when the sun was declined, which was the second evening of that day, and another evening (belonging to the ensuing day) beginning at sunset. Between these two evenings the passover was to be killed. Now this fourteenth day was called the first day of unleavened bread, though strictly it was not so, according to the Jewish account of days, from sunset to sunset; but it was so after the Roman account, who count the days as we do, from midnight to midnight. For the Jews began their feast of unleavened bread from their eating the passover; so as their fourteenth day must needs take in so many hours as were betwixt the setting of the sun and midnight of the first day of unleavened bread, which held to the end of the twenty-first day; so were seven entire days with a part of another. Matthew and Mark bring in the disciples first asking our Saviour (knowing his resolution to keep the passover) where he would have it prepared. He said (Luke saith) to Peter and John, *Go into the city to such a man, &c.* Mark and Luke here supply something omitted by Matthew, for Matthew only mentions their going to the master of the house, and telling him from Christ, *The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.* The other two evangelists mention more in their instructions; telling us that he told them, that when they came into the city, they should see a man carrying a pitcher of water, whom they should follow into what house soever he should go in, and there they should say to the master of the house, *The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.* Mark and Luke add, *Where is the guest chamber?* No doubt but at that time most

householders who had convenient houses did prepare chambers for the several passover companies. Our Lord here gave his disciples an eminent proof of his Divine nature in so particularly telling them what they should meet with in the city, and disposing the heart of this householder to so free a reception of him. For all three evangelists agree, that the disciples did as Jesus commanded, *and found as he had said unto them. And they made ready the passover.* There was a great deal of work to be done, of which none of the evangelists say any thing. Some upon the reading of this may be thinking, Where had they the lamb? When was it offered? &c. According to the law, in Ex 12:3, the lamb was to be taken up the tenth day, and kept to the fourteenth; it might either be brought by those that did eat it, or bought at Jerusalem, for They had great markets for that purpose some days before the passover. Whether all the lambs thus eaten by the paschal societies were first to be brought to the temple, and then killed, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and poured out at the foot of it, and their fat and entrails offered, I much doubt; I rather think this was only to be done with some of them, instead of all. That some were so killed by the priests, their blood so sprinkled and poured out upon and at the foot of the altar, I doubt not, though God having no temple nor altar built at that time, there be no such thing in the law, Ex 12:1-51; but at Hezekiah's passover, 2Ch 30:16,17, we find the Levites killing the passover, and the priests sprinkling the blood; but, as I said before, I do not think that the priests and Levites killed the lambs for all the passover societies. The great time that it must have taken, and the vast quantity of blood there would have been, the long time it must have taken to cleanse the entrails, makes it appear impossible to be done in four or five hours, for they had no longer time to kill it in. They did not begin to kill till after the evening sacrifice, for the day was done with, and that was between two and three of the clock, and they were to finish by sunset, for then the other evening began. This inclineth me to think that every lamb was not so killed and offered, only some instead of all. But what the disciples did as to these matters, the Scripture hath not told us. It is enough for us that we are told the passover was made ready, and we may be assured that nothing in the preparing of it was omitted, which by the law of God was required as to this sacred action. It was not the business of the evangelists to acquaint us with every particular circumstance, only to let us know that our Lord did keep the passover, and in the close of that feast institute his supper, to which relation our evangelist now comes.

Matthew 26:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:23

Ver. 23. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 26:25".

Matthew 26:25

Ver. 25. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:17-21: And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born. Luke saith, Lu 22:14-16, &c., And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this,

and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Then Luke passeth to our Lord's institution of the supper. Luke mixes the discourse about the person that should betray him with the relation about the institution of the supper, contrary to the relation both of Matthew and Mark, and John, so as we may reasonably think that Luke misplaces it, giving us an account of that passage, Lu 22:21-23, within his relation of the history of his receiving the passover, and instituting of the supper, which immediately followed each other, but not strictly in that order in which our Saviour spake them, which appeareth plainly by the other three evangelists to have been during the eating of the passover, and before the institution of the Lord's supper. For the understanding of the history, we must understand something of the Jewish order in their eating of the passover: which was this, as we have it described by the learned Doctor Lightfoot;

"Their sitting at meat was commonly upon beds or couches, made for that purpose, with the table before them. Now at other meats they either sat, as we do, with their bodies erect, or when they would enlarge themselves to more freedom of feasting, or refreshing, they sat upon the beds, and leaned upon the table on their left elbow; and this or the other posture they used indifferently at other times, as they were disposed, but on the passover night they thought they were obliged to use this leaning composure, and you may take their reason for it in some of their own words. They used their leaning posture as free men do, in memorial of their freedom. And Levi said, Because it is the manner of servants to eat standing, therefore now they eat sitting and leaning, to show that they were got out of servitude into freedom ... Upon this principle and conceit of freedom they used this manner of discumbency frequently at other times, but indispensably this night, so far different from the posture enjoined and practised at the first passover in Egypt, when they ate it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their staves in their hands, and in haste, Ex 12:11. And as the thought of their freedom disposed them to this leaning, reposed, secure composure of their elbow upon the table, and their head leaning on their hand, so, to emblem out the matter the more highly, they laid their legs under them, sitting on them, and laying out their feet behind them."

(Thus the woman, Lu 7:38, could conveniently come at our Saviour's feet to wash, anoint, and wipe them).

"Thus removing and acquitting their legs and feet, as far as possible, from the least show of standing to attend, or readiness to go upon any one's employment, which might carry with it the least colour of servitude, or contrariety to their freedom. Now according to the manner of sitting and leaning are the texts to be understood, about the beloved disciple's leaning in the bosom of Jesus, Joh 13:23, and on the breast of Jesus, Joh 13:25 Joh 21:20. Ἐνακειμενος εν κολπῳ και επιπεσαν, or επιπεσων επι το στήθος, which some translators not having observed, or at least not expressed, they have intricated the reader in such gross conceptions about this matter, as that some have thought, and some have pictured, John reposing himself or lolling on the breast of Jesus, contrary to all order and decency: whereas the manner of sitting together was only thus, Jesus leaning upon the table with his left elbow, and so turning his face and breast away from the table, on one side; John sat in the same posture next before him, with his back towards Jesus, his breast or bosom not so near as that John's back and Jesus's breast did join together, and touch one another, but at such a distance as that there was space for Jesus to use his right hand upon the table, to reach his meat at his pleasure, and so for all the rest, as they sat in like manner. For it is but a strange fancy with which some have satisfied themselves about this matter, conceiving either that they lay upon the beds before the table, one tumbling upon or before the breast of another; or if they sat leaning on the table, that they sat so close that the back of one joined to the breast of another: they sat leaning, but with such distance between each other, that the right hand of every one of them had liberty to come and go between himself and his fellow, to reach his meat, as he had occasion."

Thus far that learned man, in his discourse of the temple service, in the time of our Saviour, in Joh 13:1-38. By which discourse we may learn;

1. That the Jews at the eating of the passover used the very same posture as at other times they did eat their meat in.

2. That this was not lying along, but sitting upon their legs, and sometimes leaning their head upon their left elbow, yet at such a distance one front another, as every one that sat might freely use their right hand to take their meat, and reach it to their mouths: nor did they always sit at meat so leaning, but at their pleasure leaned or not leaned; only at the paschal supper they always leaned, as an emblem of their more perfect liberty. By this we easily understand what is meant by Christ's sitting down with the twelve, after the manner of that country in eating their meat.

And as they did eat, he said. For the understanding of this we must a little inquire into the Jewish manner of eating that holy supper, which I will take out of the aforementioned learned author in the same book and chapter, paragraph third.

"They being thus set, the first thing towards this passover supper that they went about was, that they every one drank off a cup of wine."

So do their own directories and rituals about this thing inform us. Now the consideration of this is of mighty use to us to help us to understand the two cups mentioned by Luke, [Lu 22:17](#), and again [Lu 22:20](#). The latter was the cup which our Saviour consecrated for the institution of his supper, as is plain by the consecration of the bread mentioned immediately before it, [Lu 22:19](#). The cup mentioned [Lu 22:17](#) was their first cup of wine, which they drank before the passover supper, mentioned by Luke only. Our Saviour's giving thanks when he took it, was but his blessing of the whole paschal supper. Luke before this mentions some words of our Saviour, [Lu 22:15,16](#), *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God:* that is, I am now about to suffer, I know that I am betrayed, I have therefore earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I die, to put an end to this legal service, which hath now continued so many years, and hath all this time been but a type of me and my death, and oblation for sin, [Joh 1:29](#) [1Co 5:7](#). For this is the last passover I shall eat with you or that you shall eat before you see those things fulfilled in gospel providences which this service doth but typify. This indeed was but the preface to the paschal supper, nor doth Luke mention

more of it, only addeth, Lu 22:18, *For I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come;* of which words I shall here say nothing, for they are doubtless by Luke put out of the true order, being both by Mark and Matthew mentioned as spoken after that our Saviour had blessed and taken the sacramental cup. So as, questionless, Lu 17:21,22 should have been before the Lu 17:18, according to the order in which Matthew and Mark put them, and Lu 22:18 should be put after Lu 22:20, and so also both Matthew and Mark do place them. Luke mentions no more of the paschal supper; let us therefore return to our evangelist.

And as they did eat, that is, the paschal supper, which (according to the law, Ex 12:8) was the lamb or kid roasted, which they were to eat *with unleavened bread and bitter herbs*. The Jews had a hundred traditional rites, which they observed about the paschal supper; but there seems to have none of them been of any Divine institution. The law required no more than the eating of the lamb or kid roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. As to their drink, it prescribed nothing, they were left to liberty: for their tradition of four cups of wine to be drank, &c., I cannot find any of the evangelists mentioning our Saviour's usage of any such thing, but very probably he drank wine at his pleasure, as at other meals, keeping only to the rule of the law. Now saith Matthew and Mark, *And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me*. He had before told them the Son of man should be betrayed, Mt 17:22 Mt 20:18, where he had also told them he should be scourged, mocked, and crucified; but he now cometh to discover the traitor to them, *One of you*. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say unto him, Lord, is it I?* They were sorrowful that he should be betrayed by any, but more troubled that one of themselves should be so accursed an instrument: every one mistrusts his own heart, and saith, *Is it I?* Christ replies, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me*. The dish here could be no other than the dish at the passover supper; probably the hand of Judas was at that time with our Saviour's in the dish, for we read of no more reply from any but from Judas. Our Saviour addeth, *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born*. By these words our Saviour dooms the traitor, though withal he tells them, that for his suffering it was

determined by God, foretold by the prophets, and so eventually necessary; he was not dragged to it, *The Son of man goeth*. But God's decree as to the thing did neither take away the liberty of Judas's will in acting, nor yet excuse the fact he did. *Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!* A text worthy of their study, who will not understand how God should decree to permit sin, and make a sinful act as to the event necessary, without being the author of sin. As to our Saviour's death, God had determined it, foretold it, it was necessary to be; but yet Satan put the evil motion into the heart of Judas, and Judas acted freely in the doing what he did.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. This (as I said) maketh it very probable that the hand of Judas was in the dish with our Saviour's, dipping in the sauce, when our Saviour spake these former words. That Judas, as well as the other disciples, was with our Lord at this action, is out of doubt. That he stayed any longer may very well be questioned, not only because Joh 13:30, *He then having received the sop went immediately out;* but because one cannot in reason think that his guilty conscience should suffer him to stay beyond that word, or that our Saviour would have admitted of the society of so prodigious a traitor at his last supper, the institution of which immediately followed.

Matthew 26:26

Ver. 26. See Poole on "Mt 26:30". See Poole on "Mr 6:41".

Matthew 26:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 26:30".

Matthew 26:30

Ver. 26-30. Mark relates this with no considerable difference, Mr 14:22-26; only he saith, *they all drank of it, and, shed for many for the remission of sins.* Luke saith, our Saviour upon his giving the bread, said, *This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.* Lu 22:24-30 gives us some further discourses of our Saviour with Peter, and to his disciples; but no other evangelist mentioning them in this place, and Luke no where saying that they were spoken in the guest chamber, I shall not consider them till I come to that chapter in Luke.

And as they were eating, that is, while they were yet in the guest chamber, where they had eaten the paschal lamb, (for we must not think that our Saviour interrupted them in their very act of eating the paschal lamb, with these words, and another institution), *Jesus took bread;* without doubt unleavened bread, for this night there was no other to be found in the house of any Jew, nor yet for seven days which began from the sunset of this night. But it will not from hence follow, that the Lord's supper must be eaten with unleavened bread. For though our Saviour be to be imitated in his actions relating to gospel worship; yet not in such of them which had a plain reference to the Jewish worship, and were there instituted for a special reason, as unleavened bread was, to put them in mind of the haste in which they came out of Egypt. Our Saviour at this time could use no other than unleavened bread, for no other was to be had.

And blessed it: he did not only give thanks to God for it, and beg his blessing upon it, which (as we have before observed) was our Saviour's constant practice where he did eat bread, but he set it apart, and consecrated it for a part of his last supper. It seemeth very probable that this is to be understood here in the word *blessed it.* For although the Jews, and our Saviour, ordinarily used a short prayer and thanksgiving before they did eat meat, thereby showing that they owned God as the Giver of those things, and depended upon him for a blessing upon them, yet we no where read, that they did so during the same meal, as often as

they put bread into their mouths. Luke (as we heard before) made a particular mention of our Saviour's blessing the paschal supper. The mentioning of our Saviour's blessing of this bread manifestly leadeth us to a new notion and institution; and the repeating of it again, Mt 26:27, upon his taking the cup, doth yet further confirm it: That our Saviour's blessing both the one and the other signifieth to us not only his giving thanks to God, and begging of God's blessing, as upon ordinary food, but his sanctifying the one and the other to be used as a new gospel institution, for the remembrance of his death.

And brake it, and gave it to the disciples. Whether (as some say) the master of the Jewish feasts was wont, after begging of a blessing, thus to break bread and to give it to all the guests, I cannot tell, I know no scripture we have to assure us of it; certain it is our Saviour brake it, and did give it to his disciples. That he gave it into their mouths, they not touching it with their hands, or that he gave it into every one of their particular hands, the Scripture saith not, nor is it very probable, except we will admit that he changed the posture he was in; for let any judge how probable it is that one sitting upon his legs, leaning or not leaning, (the constant posture they used in eating, whether the paschal supper or any other meals), keeping his posture, could reach it to eleven persons in the same posture, to put it into their several mouths, or give it particularly into every one of their hands; it is therefore more probable, that he put the dish or vessel in which the bread was from him to him that sat next to him, and so it was conveyed from hand to hand till all had taken it, after he had first spoke as followeth. Those who can think otherwise, must presume that our Lord changed his posture, which I am sure is not to be proved from any place of holy writ.

And said, Take, eat; this is my body; Luke adds, *which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.* Paul puts all together, 1Co 11:24, only for *given* he saith *broken*. What contests have been and yet are betwixt the papists, Lutherans, and Zuinglians (since called Calvinists) about the true sense of those words, *This is my body*, every one knows. The papists make the sense this; This bread, once consecrated by the priest, is presently turned into the very body and blood of Christ, which every communicant eateth. Hence are their adorations to it, their elevations of it, their carrying it about in solemn processions, &c. The Lutherans, though they see the gross absurdities of this

sense, yet say, That the true and real body and blood of Christ, in its true substance, is present with the bread and wine in the sacrament, and eaten by every communicant. Both these opinions agree in this absurdity, that Christ's body now must be no true human body; for we know that all true human bodies are subject to our senses, and so in one place that they cannot at the same time be in another, much less in a thousand or ten thousand places at the same time. But neither the papists nor the Lutherans will hear of any arguments from that head, but stick to the letter of our Saviour's words. The Zuinglians say the meaning is; This signifieth my body. In the same sense as it is said, *Christ is the way, a door, a vine, a shepherd;* and as it is said of the lamb, Ex 12:11, *It is the Lord's passover:* yet they are far from making this ordinance a bare empty sign, but do acknowledge it a sacred institution of Christ in the gospel, in the observation of which he doth vouchsafe his spiritual presence, so as every true believer worthily receiving, doth really and truly partake of the body and blood of Christ, that is, all the benefits of his blessed death and passion, which is undoubtedly all intended by our Saviour in these words: and when he saith, *Take, eat,* he means no more than that true believers should by the hand of their body take the bread, and with their bodily mouths eat it, and at the same time, by the hand and mouth of faith, receive and apply all the benefits of his blessed death and passion to their souls; and that they should do this in remembrance of him, that is, (as the apostle, 1Co 11:26, expounds it), showing forth *the Lord's death till he come.*

It followeth, *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Christ's taking of the cup, and giving of thanks, were actions of the same nature with those which he used with a relation to the bread, of which I spoke before. Let the papists and Lutherans say what they can, here must be two figures acknowledged in these words. The *cup* here is put for the wine in the cup; and the meaning of these words, *this is my blood of the new testament,* must be, this wine is the sign of the new covenant. Why they should not as readily acknowledge a figure in those words, *This is my body,* I cannot understand; the pronoun *this,* in the Greek, is in the neuter gender, and applicable to the term cup, or to the term blood; but it is most reasonable to interpret it, This cup, that is, the wine in this cup, is the blood of the new covenant, or

testament, that is, the blood by which the new covenant is confirmed and established. Thus the blood of the covenant signifieth in several texts, Ex 24:8 Zec 9:11 Heb 9:20 10:29.

Which is shed for many for the remission of sins; to purchase remission of sins; and this lets us know, that by *many* here cannot be understood all individuals, unless we will say that Christ purchased a remission of sins for many who shall never obtain it, which how he could do, if he died in their stead, suffering the wrath of God due to them for sin, is very hard to understand.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine. I observed before, that Luke puts these words before the institution of the supper, and some think that they properly belong to that place; but I understand no reason for it, Matthew and Mark both placing it here; nor doth it seem probable, that after these words our Saviour should presently drink of it in the institution of his supper. Some here object our Saviour's drinking after his resurrection; but besides that, it cannot be proved that he drank any wine; neither did he otherwise eat or drink at all, but to show that he was indeed risen, for he hungered and thirsted no more after his resurrection. Or else by this phrase our Saviour only meant, I will no more participate in this ordinance with you.

Until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom, that is, in heaven. Some will say, Shall there then be drinking of wine in heaven?

Answer. No; neither doth the particle *until* signify any such thing. But the joys and pleasures of heaven are often metaphorically set out under the notion of sitting down to banquet, Mt 8:11, supping, Re 3:20, eating and drinking, Lu 22:30. Our Saviour calls this *new wine*, to signify that he did not by it mean such wine as men drink here: I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, but both you and I, in my Father's glory, shall be satisfied with rivers of pleasures, which shall be far sweeter, and more excellent, than that which is but the juice of the grape, and the fruit of the vine.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. That the Jews were wont to close their passover supper

with singing a hymn I do not doubt; nor that they had some particular psalms or hymns which they used at that time to sing: but whether it were any of these that our Saviour at this time praised God with I cannot tell, much less whether he designed this praising of God with particular relation to the paschal supper, or his supper, which he had now instituted, or both. The inquiries after these things are but insignificant curiosities, fit for such as have more mind to look into the skirts of holy writ, than to find out of it what may be of profit and advantage to them. Our Saviour doubtless intended by this to instruct us, that the ordinance of his supper is a eucharistical service, wherein our souls are most highly concerned to give thanks unto God; and as singing is an external action which God hath appointed to express the inward joy and thankfulness of our hearts, so it is very proper to be used at that holy institution.

They went out into the Mount of Olives. Our Lord knew that his time was now come when he must be actually delivered into the hands of his enemies. That he might not therefore cause any disturbance either to the master of the family wherein he was, or to the city, though it was now midnight, he goeth out of the city (the gates being either open, because of the multitude of people, very late, or else easily opened to him) to the Mount of Olives; a mountain in the way betwixt Jerusalem and Bethany, so called, as is thought, from the multitude of olive trees growing upon and about it. The evangelist as yet mentions nothing of Judas, who now was gone to plot his work, and will anon return to accomplish it. In the mean time let us follow our Saviour, attending to his discourses and actions.

Matthew 26:31

Ver. 31. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:34

Ver. 34. See Poole on "Mt 26:35".

Matthew 26:35

Ver. 31-35. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:27-31, only he saith, Mr 14:30, *This day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* Luke hath it not entire, but he hath something of it, Lu 22:31-34, with some addition, thus, *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* Those who read the evangelists, must remember that they did not write our Saviour's words from his mouth, but from their memories; and therefore must be allowed to vary in their expressions, and in circumstances, giving us only an account of the substance of words and actions, as their memories served them; from whence also it is that some of them have some circumstances not in the others. Our Saviour's design here in general, is to inform his disciples of something which would happen by and by.

All ye (saith he) shall be offended because of me this night. The word *offended* is of a very large signification in holy writ; here it seems to signify disturbed or troubled, though if we take it strictly for stumbling, so as to sin, it was true enough, for that happened, (as we shall see anon), which made them to forsake Christ and flee, which doubtless was their sin.

For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock; shall be scattered abroad. The words are Zec 13:7. The words there are imperative, *Smite the shepherd*. There are different opinions, whether that text is primarily to be understood of Christ, or it be only a proverbial speech, which the prophet made use of with another reference, which yet Christ doth apply

unto himself. I do more incline to think, that Christ here interprets the prophecy to relate primarily to himself, for he doth not say, As it is said, but, It is written; yet, consider it as a proverbial speech, it is true of others also. But certainly our Saviour designed to uphold the spirits of his disciples, by letting them know, that though they should see the Shepherd smitten, that is, himself, who is the *good Shepherd*, Joh 10:11; and is called by the apostle, *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, Heb 13:20, *the chief Shepherd*, 1Pe 5:4; yet they should not be disturbed, for:

1. It was no more than was prophesied concerning him, Zec 13:7.
2. Though at present they were scattered, yet it should not be long, for he should rise again, and then he would go before them into Galilee; which was fulfilled, as we read, Mr 16:7.

Upon these words, Peter, whom by all the gospel history we shall observe to have been of the highest courage, and most forward to speak, saith, *Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended*. These doubtless were his present thoughts, this his sudden resolution. Here now seem to come in our Saviour's words to Peter, mentioned by Luke only, Lu 22:31, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*.

You is in the plural number, and to be interpreted by *you all*, though our Saviour directeth his speech only to Peter, who first spake, whom he calleth by his own name, and doubles it, to signify his earnestness in giving him warning. To *sift you*.

In sifting there are two things:

1. The shaking of the corn up and down.
2. The separation of the grain from the dust, or the seeds mixed with it: Satan hath desired, or hath obtained leave of my Father, to trouble you all, shaking your faith this and that way.

But I have prayed, that although the workings of your faith be suspended, and the habit of your faith be shaken, yet it may not

utterly fail, but the seeds of God may abide in you: you shall not wholly fall away, but be renewed again by repentance; and *when thou art converted*, when thou hast fallen, and shalt have a sight of thy error, and be humbled for it, endeavour to strengthen thy brethren's faith.

We may observe from hence:

1. That temptations are siftings. God sifts us to purge away our dross. Satan sifts us, if it were possible, to take away our wheat.
2. That the devil is the great tempter. Others may hold and move the sieve, but he is the master of the work.
3. That he hath a continual desire to be sifting in God's flour.
4. That he hath a chain upon him; he must ask God's leave to trouble his people.
5. That God often giveth him leave, but through Christ's pleadings he shall not conquer: he may sift and trouble a believer, but the believer's faith shall not fail.
6. That in the hour of temptation we stand in Christ's strength, by the virtue of his intercession.
7. That lapsed Christians, when the Lord hath restored them, ought to endeavour to strengthen and establish others.

Jesus saith to Peter, *Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.* Luke saith, *thou shalt deny that thou knowest me.* Mark saith, *before the cock crow twice;* and so interprets Matthew, for he denied Christ but once before the cock did crow once. How little do we know ourselves, that cannot tell what our hearts will be three or four hours! Peter was too confident of the contrary, and replies again upon our Saviour, telling him, that if all should deny him, he would not. So also they all said, but what happened we shall hear more by and by.

Matthew 26:36

Ver. 36. Mark leaveth out yonder, Mr 14:32. Luke saith, Lu 22:39-41, He came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed. Whether this Gethsemane were the name of a garden, or of a village wherein was a garden, is not much material for us to know. In Jerusalem, they say, they had no gardens, but their gardens were without the gates. Certain it is, it was on the other side of the brook Cedron, Joh 18:1, and either in or at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Thither Christ went with his disciples, that is, eleven of them; we shall hear of the twelfth by and by. Luke saith, that he bade his disciples pray that they might not enter into temptation: these words Matthew and Mark have, after Christ's first return to them; they say he now said only, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Matthew 26:37

Ver. 37. See Poole on "Mt 26:38".

Matthew 26:38

Ver. 37,38. Mark names the three disciples, Mr 14:33,34: *And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.* The three witnesses of his transfiguration, Mt 17:1, he takes also to be witnesses of his agony. He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. The words in the Greek are expressive of the greatest sorrow imaginable, which he further expresses Mt 26:38, saying, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* This was not wholly upon the sense of his approaching death, for he laid down his life, no man took it from him; nor yet to consider how his disciples would be left; but in the sense he had of the wrath of God due to man for sin, which he now felt, bearing our sins. So as this was a part, and a great part, of his suffering as appears by his following earnest prayers for the passing away of that cup, his sweating as it were drops of blood, Lu 22:44, the angels

coming and ministering unto him, Lu 22:43. Luke saith, he was *in an agony*, which signifieth a great inward conflict.

Matthew 26:39

Ver. 39. Mark saith, Mr 14:35,36, He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from, me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Luke saith, Lu 22:41,42, He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Here are three distinct forms of words, but all agreeing in one and the same sense. Matthew saith, He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed. He at his first motion carried but three with him, Peter, James, and John; now he leaves them, but not far, Luke saith, about a stone's cast.. Fervent prayer loves privacy, and Christ by this teacheth us that secret prayer is our duty. He fell on his face; Luke saith, he kneeled; he possibly at first kneeled, then fell on his face. We read in Scripture of sitting, standing, kneeling, and prostration used in prayer; the first and last rarely; standing and kneeling were the most ordinary postures. David prayed sitting in his house, 2Sa 7:18. Abraham fell on his face, Ge 17:17. So did Moses and Aaron, Nu 16:22,45. Prostration was ordinarily used in great passions; hardly otherwise in prayer. Saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Mark first tells us the sum of his prayer, then saith he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Luke saith he said, If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luke's if thou be willing expounds Matthew's if it be possible. A thing in itself may be possible which considered in its circumstances is not so: thus, as it is in Mark, all things are to God possible; but yet it is not possible for God to alter any thing which he hath decreed, or said shall come to pass; because God is not as man, one that can lie, or repent. But it will be objected, Did not Christ know that it was not possible? Did not he himself, Mt 26:54, say, thus it must be? I answer, It is one thing what he knew as he was God, and of counsel with the Father; and another thing what he

prayed for as man. Besides, our Saviour's saying, if it be possible, doth not suppose that he knew it was possible; it signifieth no more than this, Father, my human nature hath an aversion from this heavy stroke, so as, if it were possible, it craves of thee a discharge from this curse: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. The first clause is but the expression of the natural (but not sinful) infirmity of his flesh; the latter a perfect resignation of his will to God. In the first he tells his Father what his natural flesh would crave, if it might consist with the will of God. In the second he begs that, whatsoever his flesh craved, yet the will of God might be done. And herein he sets us a perfect pattern for our prayers for deliverance from temporal evils, viz. with a submission to the will of God. By this our Saviour doth not declare himself ignorant or uncertain of the Divine will: only as, though the person that died was God man, yet the human nature only died; so, though the person that prayed was God man, yet he only prayed as he was man.

Matthew 26:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 26:41".

Matthew 26:41

Ver. 40,41. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:37,38. Luke hath nothing of our Saviour's going the second or third time, but hath some other passages, which we shall consider by and by; and telleth us but once of his finding the disciples asleep, which we shall also take notice of in their order. Whether Christ came this first time only to Peter, and James, and John, whom he had left nearer to him, or to the other eight, left at a farther distance, I cannot determine, but think the first most probable. He *saith unto Peter*, and so to James and John, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* You, Peter, that even now wert so resolute for me; and you, James and John, that told me, you could drink of the cup whereof I drank, and be baptized with the baptism I should be baptized with; what, do you faint the first time?

Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. Here he calls them to a greater watching, spiritual watching, in opposition to security, that they might not fall under their temptations. By

watching, he directeth them to the use of such means as were within their power to use; by adding *pray*, he lets them know, that it was not in their power to stand without God's help and assistance, which must be obtained by prayer, and upon their praying should not be denied them.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak: the spirit, sanctified by Divine grace, is resolved with constancy to perform its duty; but the flesh, the sensitive part, is apt to faint and fall away when terrible temptations assault us: therefore you should earnestly pray for supernatural strength, and be vigilant, lest you be surprised and overcome by them. The words also may have an immediate respect to their being overtaken with sleep in this hour of Christ's summons, though they resolved affectionately to attend him and cleave to him.

Matthew 26:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 26:43".

Matthew 26:43

Ver. 42,43. Mark saith Mr 14:39,40, *And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him. Saying the same words.* How our translation came to translate this so I cannot tell, in the Greek it is τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, which must be translated, the same word, or the same speech, not words (if that were the evangelist's sense). But that it is not, for, as it is plain our Saviour used more than one word, so it is as plain it was not the same speech, or form of words, for we have met with four different forms already: our Lord prayed but thrice, so as he could not say the same speech. But λόγον here signifies matter—speaking the same matter, or to the same sense, and this we translate it, Mr 1:45 10:10, and in a multitude of other texts, in correspondence with the Hebrew רַבֵּר he comes to them a second time, and findeth them asleep. So quickly did they find the truth of what he had but now taught them, that *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*, for there is no doubt but they did what they could to keep themselves awake.

Matthew 26:44

Ver. 44. See Poole on "Mt 26:46".

Matthew 26:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 26:46".

Matthew 26:46

Ver. 44-46. Mark saith nothing of this third praying, but saith, Mr 14:41,42, *And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betray me is at hand.* What the meaning of *saying the same words* is, we heard before; praying to the same sense, or saying the same thing, or matter, though using other words, as it is plain he hid. Luke tells us, Lu 22:43, *there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* This is not the first time we read of angels appearing and ministering to Christ. They did so, Mt 4:11, after his conflict with the devil in the wilderness. Now an angel appeared to him in the hour of temptation. Then he had *without, troubles*; but now he hath *within, fears*, being in a great agony.

Thus it is said, Joh 12:27,28, that he being in a conflict, and praying, *Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. A voice was heard, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* There the answer was testified by a voice from heaven; here it is by an angel. So God, Da 9:21, let Daniel know his prayer was heard. Hannah knew another way, by the peace of her spirit after prayer—*her countenance was no more sad*, 1Sa 1:18. How the angel did strengthen him we are not told. Let no man think that he who was the Son of God needed an angel to strengthen him: he was not now exerting his Divine virtue, but by his suffering showing that he was truly man, and, as to that nature, made lower than the angels.

Luke addeth, Lu 22:44, *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* These words are expressive of the great conflict of our Saviour's spirit, which was such as thrust out sweat like great drops of blood: whether they were very blood, or sweat with some mixture or tincture of blood, is very hard to determine, nor of any consequence for us to know: it is no unusual thing for bodies to breathe out sweat in ordinary conflicts of spirit; this was much more than ordinary. Luke saith, Lu 22:45,46, that *when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* All three evangelists agree, that Christ coming the third time found them sleeping. Luke gives one reason of it, *for sorrow.* Their sorrow, added to their watching, may be some excuse for their sleeping, though otherwise it was a time which called for more waking.

The evangelists do not so well agree in what Christ said to his disciples. Luke saith, *Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* Matthew and Mark say he said, *Sleep on now, and take your rest, &c.* He might say both. Nor can we determine whether he spake those words seriously, as willing that they should take their rest, for they could be no further useful to him, whose time was now come; he was betrayed, and the traitor was at hand: or, with some reflection upon them for their drowsiness, which the words going before, *What, could ye not teach with me one hour?* Seem to hint us.

Matthew 26:47

Ver. 47. Mark saith the same, Mr 14:43, adding also *the scribes.* Luke saith there was *a multitude,* and *Judas went before them,* adding, that he *drew near to Jesus to kiss him,* Lu 22:47. If any ask how Judas knew where Jesus was at that time of the night, or rather so early in the morning, John satisfieth us, Joh 18:2, *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples.* And then goeth on, Joh 18:3, *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.* Those skilled in the Jewish learning tell us, that the ordinary guard of the temple belonged to

the priests, and such officers as they employed; but upon their great festivals, the Roman governor added a band of his soldiers, who yet were under the command of the priests. It is thought these officers, soldiers, and others came with a warrant to apprehend our Saviour from the Jewish sanhedrim, or highest court, which was made up of chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and the elders of the people: they had torches and lanterns, because it was yet dark, before the day was broke; swords and staves, to be ready against any opposition. Judas the traitor comes before as their leader.

Matthew 26:48

See Poole on "Mt 26:49".

Matthew 26:49

Ver. 48-49. Mark, Mr 14:44,45, differs not, only instead of *hold him fast*, he hath, *lead him away safely*; and instead of *Hail, master*, he saith, *Master, master*. There is in these words nothing difficult or doubtful: Judas had given them a sign how to know Christ, that was his kissing of him: being come where he was, he steps to our Saviour and kissed him, by which he let them know that he was the person against whom their warrant was.

Matthew 26:50

Ver. 50. Mark saith nothing of what Christ said to him. Luke, Lu 22:48, adds, that Christ said to him, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Whether Christ used this compellation of *friend* to Judas, to mind him what he formerly had been, and still ought to have been, or as a common compellation, (as we oft use it), is not much material. A kiss is the symbol of friendship and kindness, and therefore very improperly used by a traitor and professed enemy; yet so used by Joab to Amasa, 2Sa 20:9. That makes our Saviour ask him if he were not ashamed to betray the Son of man by a kiss. Judas, by calling him *Master, master*, acknowledged he had been once his disciple. By his kiss he pretended friendship to him, yet betrayed him. Oh the depth of

desperate wickedness which is in the heart of man! Especially such as apostatize from a former profession; they are commonly the worst and most false enemies of Christ and his gospel.

Matthew 26:51

Ver. 51. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:52

Ver. 52. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:53

Ver. 53. See Poole on "Mt 26:54".

Matthew 26:54

Ver. 51-54. Matthew relates this history shortly, but Mark much more, Mr 14:47; he saith no more than this, *And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.* Luke also relates something of it, Lu 22:50,51, *And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.* John relates the same passage with some more particulars, Joh 18:10. *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.* The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, *Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* If any ask, how Christ and his disciples came to have a sword, he may be satisfied that they had two, from Lu 22:35-38, which verses being in none of the other evangelists, I have left to be spoken to in their order. The disciples seeing the officers laying hands on Christ, as was said Mt 26:50, knowing *what would follow*, as Luke saith, *one of them* (St. John tells us it was Peter) *drew a sword, and smote off the right ear of one of the high priest's servants.* John tells us his name was Malchus. Our

Saviour reproveth Peter, commanding him to put up the sword again into its sheath, and telling him,

1. That he who taketh the sword should perish with the sword. It is to be understood of private persons taking up the sword to destroy their lawful magistrates; and this lesson it teacheth all Christians. Men must have the sword given orderly into their hands, before they may use it, and that no private person can have against the supreme magistrate.
2. Secondly, (saith our Saviour), I needed not thy help to defend me. If I were to make any defence, I could *pray to my Father*, and he should *give me more than twelve legions of angels*; there is therefore no need of thy drawing a sword in my defence.
3. The Scripture (saith he) must be fulfilled; it was prophesied of me that I should be thus used, and those prophecies must be fulfilled. Having reproved Peter, and silenced his passion, Luke tells us, he begged leave so far as to touch his ear, and he healed it; thus doing good to those that hated him, and working a miracle in the sight of them, which (had not their hearts been hardened) might have convinced them both of his innocency and his Divine power; but they take no notice of his kindness. Now he applies himself to the multitude of his enemies.

Matthew 26:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 26:56".

Matthew 26:56

Ver. 55,56. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:48-50. Luke, Lu 22:52,53 hath it thus: *Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* What our evangelist reports as spoken to the rabble, Luke reports as spoken to the chief priests and captains of the

temple, (that is, of the soldiers, who at that time were the guard of the temple), some of which, it should seem, came along with the rabble, to whom our Saviour directeth his speech.

I sat daily with you teaching in the temple. I observed before, that it was their usual manner for those that taught in the temple to sit while they taught, to testify their authority; Christ, when he came up to the passover, was wont to teach in the temple.

And ye laid no hold on me: I did not hide myself, nor go about to raise a party to defend myself, but quietly taught in the temple. If I had been guilty of any crime, you might easily have taken me; why are you now come out against me as against a thief, upon whom you had need to raise the country? Why come you against me with swords and staves, as if you thought I would make some resistance to defend myself? You never saw any such thing in me as should give you a jealousy of such a thing.

But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, the many scriptures which spake concerning the sufferings of Christ. Luke addeth, *but this is your hour, and the power of darkness,* that is, this is that which God hath determined. Wicked men and persecutors of Christ and his gospel have their hour. There is a time which God in his wise counsels hath set and determined, when, for the trial of his people's faith and patience, he suffers the devil, by vile and wicked men, who are his instruments, to imprison and otherwise vex and molest his people. That such a time is their hour, and what they do is by the permission and according to the counsel of God, and but an hour, a determined and short time, are great arguments to persuade us to the exercise of faith and patience.

And the power of darkness; a time when the prince of darkness is putting forth his power: or, *the power of darkness,* that is, a time of exceeding great darkness, of affliction to me and my disciples. Wicked men's hour is always to Christ's disciples the power of darkness.

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Probably all of them fled at first, though Peter and another came back again: or, *all* here signifieth the most of them. We never know our hearts upon the prospect of great trials, until we come to grapple with them, and to be engaged in them. These disciples had all said they

would not forsake him; when it comes to the push, not one of them stands by him. But although they shrunk at first, not without the providence of God permitting them thus to fail in their duty, then governing their failures to his own glory; yet they again returned to their duty after Christ's resurrection, owned Christ, preached his gospel, and at last drank of the cup, which he drank of first, and were baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized. All must not be condemned for flight in a time of persecution. We must observe whether they apostatize from their profession, or whether they do not return again, before we pass a judgment against them.

Matthew 26:57

Ver. 57. Mark saith, Mr 14:53, *They led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.* Luke saith no more but, *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house,* Lu 22:54. John saith, Joh 18:12,13 *Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.* All things were now out of order in the Jewish church. Regularly, their high priests were to be such as derived from the eldest son of Aaron, and were to hold in their place for life; but they were now chosen annually, and their conquerors ruled the choice as they pleased. Yet some think, that in this the Jews kept something of their ancient form, and the high priest was chosen regularly of the house of Aaron and for life; but the Romans when they listed turned him out, and sold the place to another; and such a one was Caiaphas, who was at that time high priest, son-in-law to Annas. Their carrying of Christ first to Annas's house, was no more than to stay there a while till Caiaphas, and the council, which was appointed to meet that morning at the house of Caiaphas, could assemble.

Matthew 26:58

Ver. 58. Mark adds, Mr 14:51, *and warmed himself at the fire.* Luke saith, Lu 22:51,55, *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed*

afar off: And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. John gives us a more particular account how Peter came into the hall, Joh 18:15,16: And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Some think that this other disciple was John himself; but it is not probable that John and the high priest should be so well acquainted: it is more probably judged, that it was none of the twelve, but one who favoured Christ more secretly, some citizen of Jerusalem whom the high priest favoured, or at least knew by face, and had some respect for, and therefore he was admitted in, and he helped Peter in; who being come in, and a fire kindled in the hall, the rest of the company sat down and warmed themselves by the fire, Peter also sat down amongst them, being desirous to see the end.

Matthew 26:59

Ver. 59. See Poole on "Mt 26:60".

Matthew 26:60

Ver. 59,60. Mark expounds this latter verse, Mr 14:56, *For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.* It is plain that they had taken up a resolution to destroy Christ one way or another, but they will make a show of justice in the execution of their malice. The council being set, it is not to be thought that they had then leisure to send about for witnesses, but out of their malice they screwed and sifted such witnesses as were brought, to see if they could get of them upon their oaths to affirm any thing against him which by their law was capital. *Many false witnesses came, yet they found none;* that is, no two agreeing in the same story, as the law required, De 19:15, for a single testimony was none. *Vox unius est vox nullius,* A single witness is no witness, or none that could testify any thing of a capital nature. Many came and witnessed trivial things, but none witnessed any thing which touched his life; till *at last came two*

false witnesses.

Matthew 26:61

Ver. 61. Mark saith, Mr 14:57-59, *And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together.* These are called by the evangelists, *false witnesses*. Our Saviour said, Joh 2:19, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, speaking of his body,* as John tells us there, Joh 2:21. He did not say, *I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.* But Mark saith these witnesses could not agree in their tale, or their testimony, though agreeing was not sufficient to make him guilty of a capital crime. The high priest must use some other arts.

Matthew 26:62

Ver. 62. See Poole on "Mt 26:63".

Matthew 26:63

Ver. 62,63. Mark speaks to the same purpose, Mr 14:60,61. The high priest expected a long defence, and so to have had matter of accusation against him out of his own mouth. Christ disappointeth him, saying nothing at all, either out of modesty, or not thinking what they said of any moment, or worthy of any reply, or perhaps seeing that they could not agree in their tale, so as what they said was of no force against him. The high priest therefore comes at last to examine him, *ex officio*. Mark saith, Mr 14:61, *Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed.* Luke, to give us the story of Peter, from his first coming into the high priest's hall to his going out, entire, interrupts himself a little in his relation of their dealings with Christ, and then relates some indignities offered him which the other evangelists do not mention; which seem to have been offered him where the soldiers and the rabble had been before he appeared in the council: Lu 22:63-67, *And*

the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led him into their council. Then he mentions nothing of what the witnesses said, possibly because it was nothing of moment, nothing upon which they proceeded against our Saviour for his life, but goes on, saying, *Art thou the Christ? tell us.* Matthew saith, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the living God?* Mark, *the Son of the Blessed.* It is plain both from this text, and from [Joh 1:49](#), that the Jews did expect a Messiah who should be the Son of the ever living and blessed God; but whether they understood that he should be the Son of God by nature and eternal generation, or only by a more special adoption, than the whole Jewish nation was, (to whom the apostle saith belonged the adoption), I cannot say. *I adjure thee that thou tell us,* that is, as some say, I charge thee upon thy oath to tell me; but it doth not appear that they had given any such oath to him, the guilty person was not wont to be forced by an oath to accuse himself, neither is it very probable that our Saviour would have taken such an oath. The sense therefore seemeth to be rather, I command, or require, or charge thee, as solemnly as if thou hadst taken an oath, (as in the presence of God), to tell us. Or, I charge thee with a terrible imprecation on thee, if thou speakest falsely, or wilt be silent, to declare if thou be the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matthew 26:64

Ver. 64. Mark saith, [Mr 14:62](#), *And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see, &c.* Luke saith, [Lu 22:67-69](#), *And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.* What all the evangelists say put together, makes up our Saviour's perfect answer. To what purpose (saith Christ) should I answer you? This is now but a captious question, not propounded by you to that end that you might be satisfied as to the truth, but only to ensnare me, for if I should tell you I am, you would not believe it. If I should argue the matter with you, you would give me no answer. I have given you proof enough, but yet, Caiaphas, thou hast said the truth, I

am the Christ, the Son of the ever living, blessed God; and, to confirm you further, hereafter you shall see me, whom you think to be no more than the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. There is a time for a man to speak, and a time for him to hold his peace; in the matter of confession of truth. The seasons for silence, or speech, are to be judged from the honour and glory of God; when we cannot be silent without betraying the truth, we are bound to speak. Our Lord therefore, being so solemnly adjured in the name of God to tell them what was the truth, now confesseth, and denieth not, that he was the Son of God, and tells them, *hereafter* they should see it. Whether the term *hereafter* refers to the time soon following, (as ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ, in this evangelist, and ἄπο τοῦ νῦν, in Luke, seem to signify), and be to be understood of Christ's resurrection, his ascension into heaven, the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the carrying of the gospel to all nations, or to the day of judgment (which the New Testament often speaks of as a thing at hand, and that phrase, *coming in the clouds of heaven*, seems rather to signify); or (as others think) to both, referring the sitting on the right hand of power to the former, and the coming in the clouds to the latter; is hard to determine.

Matthew 26:65

Ver. 65. See Poole on "Mt 26:66".

Matthew 26:66

Ver. 65,66. Mark hath much the same, Mr 14:63,64, only he saith, *they all condemned him to be guilty of death*. Luke saith, Lu 22:70,71, *Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am? And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth*. This rending of clothes was a thing very ordinary amongst the Jews, used by them in testimony of sorrow and of indignation. They used it in causes of great sorrow and mourning, even before the Israelites were formed into a nation; we find it practised by Reuben and Jacob, Ge 37:29,34, and by Jacob's sons, Ge 44:13; by Joshua and Caleb, Nu 14:6, by Jephthah, Jud 11:35. Indeed he that was high priest was

forbidden to do it, Le 21:10, and, in order to it, to come near a dead body, Le 21:11; which command yet the Jews restrain to his priestly garments, but upon other occasions he might rend his clothes, as Caiaphas here did. It was usual in case of blasphemy, both to show their sorrow for it and detestation of it, 2Ki 19:1 Jer 36:24 Ac 14:14. So as they convicted our Saviour, not upon oaths of witnesses, but upon words which they interpreted to be blasphemy. The high priest, being but the president in this council, asks the opinion of the rest of the council. They all condemn him as guilty of a capital crime, which is here phrased *guilty of death*, that is, one who by their law ought to die.

Matthew 26:67

Ver. 67. See Poole on "Mt 26:68".

Matthew 26:68

Ver. 67,68. Mark hath much the same, Mr 14:65: *And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.* Though there be nothing more barbarous and inhuman than to add to the affliction of the afflicted, yet this is no more than we ordinarily see done by a rabble of brutish people; spitting in the face was but an ordinary token of contempt, Nu 12:14 De 25:9. And perhaps in all these indignities Isaiah was a type of Christ, Isa 1:6, if that text be not to be understood of Christ immediately. In the mean time, it lets us see that there is no degree or mark of contempt, or shame, or suffering which we ought to decline and grudge at for the name of Christ; who, through much more excellent than us, yet for our sake endured the cross, and despised the shame.

Matthew 26:69

Ver. 69. See Poole on "Mt 26:70".

Matthew 26:70

Ver. 69,70. Mark hath this, Mr 14:66,67, only he saith, *Peter was beneath in the palace, and warming himself.* Luke hath this whole story before what he saith of Christ's examination and condemnation: Lu 22:56,57, *But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.* We before left Peter in the high priest's palace, warming himself by the fire amongst the servants. It is a dangerous thing for Christians to come into places of temptation. A maid comes to him, and charges him to have been with Christ, whom she calls *Jesus of Galilee*: so they called Christ sometimes *Jesus of Nazareth*, the city in Galilee where Christ lived the greatest part of his life.

He denied before them all; so loud that all heard it.

I know not what thou sayest, or, (as Luke saith), I know him not; I neither know him, nor what thou sayest.

Matthew 26:71

Ver. 71. See Poole on "Mt 26:72".

Matthew 26:72

Ver. 71,72. Mark hath the same, Mr 14:70, more shortly. So Luke, Lu 22:58. It is like Peter, upon the first alarm, began to shift away, and was got into the porch, but there another meets him with the same charge. Here, to the former lie which he had told, and here repeateth, he adds an oath for the confirmation of what he had said. What are the best of men, when God leaves them to their own strength! But the temptation yet riseth higher.

Matthew 26:73

Ver. 73. See Poole on "Mt 26:74".

Matthew 26:74

Ver. 73,74. Mark saith, Mr 14:70,71, *And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.* Luke hath it, Lu 22:59,60, *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.* One spake in the name of the rest that were gathered about Peter, and he charges Peter confidently; and he might well, for John saith, Joh 18:26, that this was *one of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off.* He said, *Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* Temptations always grow upon us in the company of wicked men. Here Peter adds to his lying, swearing and cursing; all confirming of what he had said in the denial of his Master; all in an exact fulfilling of what Christ had told Peter, Mt 26:34, though he was then difficult to believe it; to teach us all not to presume too far upon our own strength, but to pray that we be not led into temptation; while we stand, to take heed lest we fall; and in order to it, to avoid the society of wicked men, and places in which we probably may be tempted. To teach us also charity to lapsed brethren, and not too hastily to condemn our brethren for falling a second and a third time into the same sin; especially, while the same fit of temptation holdeth. It is added, *And immediately the cock crew*, that is, the second time; so saith Mark, Mr 14:72, who had mentioned the cock's first crowing, Mr 14:68, upon Peter's first denial of his Master.

Matthew 26:75

Ver. 75. Mark saith, Mr 14:72, *And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.* Luke saith, Lu 22:61,62, *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.* We have in this last verse Peter's repentance and the occasion and cause of it. A good man may fall, and that foully, but he shall not fall so as to rise no more. David lay longer than Peter under the guilt of his sin, but both of them wept bitterly.

He went out of the porch; whither he went is not said; possibly he was afraid to what this detection of him might rise, or else sought a place (as Joseph did) to weep more privately and plentifully than he durst do, or thought convenient to do, in the porch of the high priest. That which gave occasion to this reflection was the crowing of the cock the second time, and his remembrance of the words of Jesus, Mt 26:34. Our memories serve us much in the business of repentance, and therefore that the soul should be without knowledge of the law of God is not good. Peter remembered what Christ had personally said to him. True penitents are still excited to repentance, by remembering the law of God, what Christ hath in his word said to them, and considering their own ways. The crowing of the cock the second time helped him to remember the words of Jesus, for he had said, *Before the cock crow twice, &c.* But the cause of his repentance is expressed by Luke, *The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter*. More must be understood by this look of Christ upon him than the mere cast of Christ's bodily eye: with that look there was a virtue which went from Christ which healed Peter, exciting his habit of grace, and assisting him in the exercise of it; which double influence of grace is necessary to every renewed soul. Christ looked upon Judas, when Judas kissed him; yea, and said to him, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Yet Judas went on in his villany without remorse. He looked upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly. He looked only upon the face of Judas, but he looked upon the heart of Peter, as well as upon his face.

Matthew 27:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 27:1,2 Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.

Mt 27:3-10 Judas hangeth himself.

Mt 27:11-14 Christ's silence before Pilate.

Mt 27:15-18 Pilate's custom at the feast, and proposal to the people,

Mt 27:19 his wife's message.

Mt 27:20-26 Being urged by the multitude, he washes his hands in his own justification, and releasing Barabbas

delivereth Jesus to be crucified.

Mt 27:27-32 Christ is mocked of the soldiers, crowned with thorns,

Mt 27:33-38 crucified between two thieves,

Mt 27:39-44 reviled,

Mt 27:45-50 and calling upon God expires.

Mt 27:51-56 The astonishing events which attended his death: the centurion's confession.

Mt 27:57-61 Joseph of Arimathea begs his body, and buries it.

Mt 27:62-66 His sepulchre is sealed, and a watch set over it.

Ver. 1. See Poole on "Mt 27:2".

Matthew 27:2

Ver. 1,2. Mark saith, Mr 15:1, *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.* Luke saith, Lu 23:1, *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him to Pilate.* John saith, Joh 18:28, *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.* If any ask why having condemned Christ, they did not put him to death. John tells us, Joh 18:31, it was not lawful for them to put any one to death. They had already out of their malice to Christ broken several of their own canons, or rules observed in ordinary capital causes, sitting in the night time, and upon a festival day. They must have notoriously broken another, if they had themselves on that day put him to death. It should seem by their stoning Stephen, Ac 7:59, they had a power in some cases to put persons to death; but Christ was to be crucified, and as to that kind of death they had no power: See Poole on "Joh 18:31". Besides that, we must consider it was the passover day, and stoning any man to death required a concourse of people to throw stones, and they were afraid of tumults. The Roman governor had the militia in his power, and could better prevent and suppress tumults than they could do. Finally, Christ

was by his death to give testimony to his kingly office; and the Jews, as we shall hear, had this to charge him with, That he made himself a King: this was a civil cause, and to be condemned by Pilate the Roman governor amongst them. In the morning, therefore, consulting how to put Christ to death, they delivered him to Pontius Pilate, having first bound him; for though he was bound upon his first apprehension, yet it is probable that they had loosed him when he came into the hall of the high priest, and now bind him a second time, when they carried him before Pilate. John tells us, that they would not themselves go *into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover*; which words have in them a difficulty, and also give us an account of a most unaccountable superstition. For the passover, they had eaten it the night before. But we must know, that not the paschal lamb only, but all the sacrifices offered any of the seven days, were also called the passover, De 16:1,2, &c. It was now the first day of unleavened bread, but there were to be offerings this day of which they were to eat, which in a large sense are called the passover. But how unaccountable was the superstition of these hypocrites! They made no conscience, when they had eaten the paschal lamb in the evening, to spend the whole night in consulting how to shed innocent blood, and condemning of Christ; but they pretend now conscience, that they will not go into a pagan's house in the morning, for that was the defilement they feared, having nothing to do to sit in judgment with him.

Matthew 27:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 27:5".

Matthew 27:4

Ver. 4. See Poole on "Mt 27:5".

Matthew 27:5

Ver. 3-5. Matthew (who alone reports this piece of history) interrupts his relation of our Saviour's trial before Pilate, with an account of Judas's end. We must not interpret *Then* strictly, so as

to think Judas did this at the time when Christ was carried before Pilate, but some short time after; for they went immediately from the high priest's hall to the judgment hall, and stayed there until Christ was condemned by Pilate, before they returned to come into the temple. But possibly it was that day, after Pilate had condemned him, or within some short time after that Judas (as it is said) *repented himself*; that is, began to be terrified in his conscience for what he had done. The consciences of the worst of men will not always digest mire and dirt, but sometimes throw it up, yea, though it hath first incurably poisoned them. Sin is sweet in the month, but bitter in the belly. All repentance is not saving. Nor doth all confession of sin obtain remission. Judas here repents, and confesseth he had sinned, and his particular sin, in betraying an innocent person; yet he findeth no mercy, he hath not a heart to beg forgiveness, nor to apply himself to Christ for remedy. But the answer of the chief priests and elders is very remarkable:

What is that to us? see thou to that. Wretched Judas! he had been the servant of these wicked men's lusts, and for a poor wages served them in the highest act of villany. He falls into a distress of conscience for what he had done. What miserable comforters do they prove! Tempters never make good comforters. Those who are the devil's instruments, to command, entice, or allure men to sin, will afford them no relief when they come to be troubled for what they have done: nor will it now satisfy the conscience of Judas, to remember that he had a warrant for apprehending Christ, and acted ministerially. The priests will not take the money, he throws it down in the temple, and goes and hangs himself. How great is the power of conscience, smiting for the guilt of sin! Judas could have no hope of a better life, so as all his happiness lay in the time of this present life; yet he is not able to allow himself that. The devil that entered into his heart to tempt him, now entereth again to persuade him to put an end to his misery in this life, by hastening himself to an eternal misery. Let all apostates, turning persecutors of innocent persons, read this, and tremble. There is a difficulty of reconciling this text to that of Luke, Ac 1:18, where it is said of him, that *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*. That which is usually said is, that he fell from the place where he hanged himself, and with the fall burst himself. I know there are some others, who think that the word *απηξαστο* need not be translated, 'he hanged himself', but he was

suffocated or strangled. Some think the devil strangled him, and threw him down a precipice. Others, that he was suffocated by some disease, which caused a rupture of his body. Others think (as we translate it) that he hanged himself, and swelling, his body brake, and his bowels gushed out. Concerning the manner of his death, we can determine nothing, but that he was strangled, and his bowels gushed out; both these the Scripture asserts, but how it was we cannot certainly tell.

Matthew 27:6

Ver. 6. God, De 23:18, had forbidden to bring the price of a whore, or a dog, into the temple; this they had interpreted of all filthy gain: upon which they thus determine, that it was not lawful for them to put the money they had given Judas, for so sordid a service as that of betraying his Master, into the chest, or place which they had, where they kept the monies given for the repairs of the temple; and in this they were right enough, perhaps, but in this they showed themselves stupidly blind hypocrites, that they saw not it was much less lawful for them, who had hired him to this sordid action, to be employed in the service of the temple, for, Isa 52:11, those that *bear the vessels of the Lord* ought to be holy. Thus, to justify our Saviour's words, they *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*.

Matthew 27:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:8

Ver. 8. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 27:10".

Matthew 27:10

Ver. 7-10. They at last resolve what to do with the money, which was no great sum, for, as we noted before, it exceeded not three pounds fifteen shillings. They would not turn it to their own private use, for (probably) it was before taken out of the treasury; neither would they again return it into the treasury, because it had been made use of as the hire of blood. They therefore agree to buy with it a piece of ground ordinarily known by the name, of *the potter's field*, probably because some potter had digged earth, and thrown the waste of his pot kilns there, so as it was of no great value. This field the vulgar, upon this purchase of it by the priests, called many years after, *The field of blood*. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet*. The evangelists use this term *fulfilled*, as I have before noted, in very different senses.

1. Sometimes to express the accomplishment of a prophecy.
2. Sometimes to express the fulfilling of a type, or answering it by the antitype.
3. Sometimes to express an allusion to some other scripture, mentioning some matter of fact of a like nature.

For the text here quoted, we have no such text in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, which are upon sacred record. Jeremiah indeed did buy a field by order from God, Jer 32:9, to declare his faith in God's promises for the return of the Jews out of captivity, but he bought it of his uncle *Hanameel*, and for *seventeen pieces of silver*; and that he was a potter, or that the field was called by that name, we do not read. The nearest place in the prophets to this text is Zec 11:12,13, *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord*. It is a very hard text as it lies in the prophet to give a just account of. The prophet was one of them who prophesied after the captivity of Babylon, yet, Zec 11:6, he plainly prophesieth after God's destruction of the Jews and of Jerusalem. Which destruction being after that of the Chaldeans, to what it should refer, but to the last destruction of the Jews by the

Romans, I cannot understand. Zec 11:7, he saith, *I will feed the flock of the slaughter*, that is, the flock designed for the slaughter, or drawing near to the slaughter, *even you, O poor of the flock*. Christ came in person to feed the church of the Jews, but they also abhorred him, so that he abhorred them, and resolved to cast them quite off; Zec 11:8,9. So he broke first his *staff* called *Beauty*, took away all the glory and beauty of that church. Then, as it were in indignation, he saith, *If ye think good, give me my price*. What requital will you give me for my labour amongst you? *So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver*. Their selling of Christ to a traitor for so much, signified their high contempt of him. *And the Lord said, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord*. The evangelist indeed doth not quote the very words of the prophet, but the substance of them. And for my part I think, that the evangelist here by fulfilling meaneth the accomplishment of the prophecy in Zechariah. For I know not what other tolerable sense to make of the prophecy, if we do not say the prophet spake in the person of Christ, foretelling his own coming amongst them, their rejection and contempt of him, and his utter rejection of them; and prophesying, as a piece of their contempt and rejection of him, their selling him to Judas for thirty pieces of silver, (a most contemptible price), and God so ordering it by his providence, that this money should again be brought them, and this potter's field should be bought with it. So as I think that text was fulfilled here more than by allusion, or as it was typical to this act, and that this act was the very thing which there is prophesied, and here fulfilled. But how Matthew saith this was *spoken by Jeremy the prophet* is a harder knot. It is observable that Zechariah hath many things found in Jeremiah, and it is not improbable that the very same thing was prophesied by Jeremiah, though afterward repeated by Zechariah, and only in the writings of Zechariah left upon sacred record. Matthew having now given us an account of the fate of Judas, returneth to our Saviour, carried (as we heard) before Pilate.

Matthew 27:11

Ver. 11. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:2; so hath Luke, Lu 23:3. John relates it more distinctly, Joh 18:29-32: *Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?*

They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

The other evangelists seem to have given us the story of this our Saviour's first appearance before Pilate summarily. John seems to have given us it more orderly and particularly. It is the course of all judicatures to require the accusers to speak first. Pilate therefore asketh what accusation they had brought against him. Their answer was very malapert, If he had not been a malefactor, &c. What was this to the purpose? Suppose him never so great a malefactor, must it not appear he is so before a judge condemns him? These accusers (as it seemeth) were of the same mind that the papists are, that the civil magistrate is to be executioner to the church; and when the ecclesiastical power hath condemned a man for heresy or blasphemy, the civil magistrate hath nothing to do, but without his own hearing the cause to put the person to death. But they met with a more equal judge, though he were a heathen. Say ye so, saith he, *Take him, then, and judge him according to your law.* This he either speaks as deriding them, and scorning what they would have put him upon; or else not thinking he had deserved any thing worthy of death, knowing they might without him scourge him, or inflict some lighter punishments. They reply, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* It is very questionable in what sense they spake this. Those that affirm that the power of judging and determining in capital causes was before this time taken from the Jews, must affirm that Stephen was put to death in a popular tumult, for he was after this stoned to death by the Jews, [Ac 7:59](#); which is not probable, considering what we read of him, [Ac 6:13,15](#), called before the council, and witnesses used against him, and have no record of any notice the civil magistrate took of the fact as a disorder. I therefore rather think their meaning was, This is with us a feast day, on which it is not lawful for us to put any to death without thy consent. Or, it is not lawful for us to put any to death for any civil cause, for saying he is our king; for it is manifest by the question which Pilate first put to him upon his second coming into the hall, mentioned [Joh 18:33](#), in which all the other three evangelists agree, that they had charged him with saying, that he was the King of the Jews; to which all

that he replied, which is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is, *Thou sayest it*. I am not bound to accuse myself; who witnesses this against me? But John saith that our Saviour said, *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* Our Saviour, by this answer to Pilate's question, seems to vindicate his right not to be condemned without witness, which, if others had told Pilate this, they were bound to have produced. Pilate tells him, he had it not of himself, he was no Jew, but they were those of his own nation who had delivered him to him; and therefore asketh him what he had done. Then our Saviour openeth himself, not denying that he was the King of the Jews, but telling him he was no king of this world; his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and he might know what King he was by his retinue, and those who took his part; for if he had laid claim to any secular kingdom, he should have had some appearing to take his part, and to fight for him to deliver him from his enemies, but he saw he had none. Pilate laying hold of his words, replies, *Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?* Our Saviour still useth prudence, and keeps himself upon a close guard. It had been dangerous for him directly to have owned himself a king. He therefore only tells Pilate, that he said he was a king, and that he came into the world to bear testimony to the truth; and further adds, that every one who was of the truth did hear his voice. This poses Pilate, who had no notion of that truth which Christ spake of; he goes out as it were deriding him, saying, *What is truth?* Presently he goeth out to the Jews, Mt 27:38, and tells them he found in him no fault at all, and offers to release him; but this we shall meet with in our evangelist by and by: the passages hereto mentioned are only related by John; excepting only the question, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* and our Saviour's answer, *Thou sayest it*, which is reported by all.

Matthew 27:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 27:14".

Matthew 27:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 27:14".

Matthew 27:14

Ver. 12-14. Mark saith much the same, Mr 15:3-5. These things were before Pilate went out to the people, and told them that he found no fault in him at all, and offered to release Barabbas unto them. Then seemeth to me to follow in order what we have in Lu 23:5-17, in these words: *And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.* The constant charge which, we shall observe, was laid upon all the ministers of the gospel from Christ's time. Tertullus the Roman advocate thus charged Paul, &c. *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.* After the death of Herod the Great, who died soon after our Saviour was born, (as we heard before), the sceptre departed from Judah, there were no more kings. The government of Jewry was turned into a tetrarchy, divided into four provinces, each of which had a governor, who was called the tetrarch of that province. You have the division and the names of the tetrarchs, Lu 3:1, where you will find that *Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.* Our Saviour being taken within the jurisdiction of Pilate, it seemeth not to have been necessary for Pilate to have sent him to Herod, but a compliment to satisfy his curiosity. For, saith Luke, *when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.* This is now all historical, and hath in it nothing difficult. Christ had spent most

of his time in Galilee, (which was Herod's tetrarchy), though Herod had not seen him, yet he had heard much of him, and had the curiosity to desire to see him, hoping that our Saviour would have wrought some miracle before him. But he failed in his expectation. He propounds several questions to him. Our Saviour being not before a proper judge, answereth him nothing. So as there was nothing done, only the chief priests and scribes followed him with incessant clamours. Herod and his guard vilify and mock him, put him on a gorgeous robe, and send him back to Pilate. All the effect of this was, Herod was pleased with Pilate's compliment, and from that day was reconciled to Pilate, though there had been a former enmity betwixt them; only, as we shall hear hereafter, Herod decreeing nothing against Christ, Pilate made some use of it, in his endeavours to have delivered our Saviour.

Matthew 27:15

Ver. 15. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:17

Ver. 17. See Poole on "Mt 27:18".

Matthew 27:18

Ver. 15-18. Mark saith, Mr 15:6-11, *Now at that feast he released unto them, one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should*

rather release Barabbas unto them.

Luke hath this passage of the history more fully, Lu 23:13-18: *And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)*

John saith, Joh 18:38-40, that when he went out he told them he found no fault in him at all. *But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews. Then cried they all again, saying, not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*

The history is plain: Pilate discerned, upon his before mentioned examination of Christ, that our Saviour had done nothing amiss, but was only loaded with the malice and envy of the chief priests and scribes; this made him resolve to do what in him lay to deliver him. He first tells them that they had brought him before him, accused him of many things, but had proved against him nothing criminal; that he had sent him to Herod, in whose jurisdiction he had lived, but neither did Herod find any fault in him. Now there was a custom, that ever at the passover the governor released a prisoner at the request of the people. The people desired he would keep their old custom in this particular. Pilate propounds to them to release the King of the Jews. The chief priests influence the people to declare their dissatisfaction at that, and to name one Barabbas, a prisoner who was a robber, and had been guilty of an insurrection, and of murder committed in the insurrection: accordingly the people cry out, *Not this man, but Barabbas*. This makes him again to return to the judgment seat.

Matthew 27:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 27:20".

Matthew 27:20

Ver. 19,20. Matthew only mentions this passage of Pilate's wife; whether it was when Pilate sat upon the judgment seat the second time, (the story of which we have heard), or afterward, is uncertain; nor is it material. She doubtless refers to some late dream, which possibly she might have after her husband was gone from her, for he was called early. Whether this dream was caused by God for a further testimony of Christ's innocency, or were merely natural, cannot be determined. But still the cry holdeth, Not him, but Barabbas. So much influence had the wicked priests upon the people.

Matthew 27:21

Ver. 21. See Poole on "Mt 27:23".

Matthew 27:22

Ver. 22. See Poole on "Mt 27:23".

Matthew 27:23

Ver. 21-23. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:12-14. So also Luke saith, Lu 23:20-23, *Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.*

John, Joh 19:1-12, hath yet more circumstances relating to the latter part of this trial, which follow: *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of*

thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. I have not given the reader at one view what all the evangelists say, as thinking it scarce possible from them all to set down the order how things passed at this trial; but only, that I might take notice of what was remarkable in it, related from one or other of them. The reason of our reading so often of Pilate's going out, and then again coming on to the judgment seat, seemeth to be because, as we heard before, the Jews would not come into Pilate's house, but stood at the door; and, on the other side, I conceive that he could not proceed judicially but sitting upon the tribunal, or seat of judgment. So as, though he could proceed in judgment within the house, with the attendance of his own servants, soldiers, and officers; yet, when he had any thing to propound to the Jews, he went out. We cannot think that the evangelists report all the things the Jews objected against our Saviour, nor all the questions by Pontius Pilate propounded to him. For the evangelists tell us, summarily, that they accused him of many things, and Pilate saith, *Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?* There was, it seems, but one thing that they most insisted upon, that was, his making himself a king, as to which we heard before how our Lord cleared himself. In the whole process of this trial these things are remarkable:

1. Our Saviour's silence.
2. Pilate's equity.
3. The rage and madness of the chief priests, scribes, and people.

Our Saviour's silence confirms to us that piece of the law of nature, that no man is bound to accuse himself. Pilate's equity appears in many things: He would not condemn him without a particular hearing of his cause himself, he would not force him to accuse himself; he accepts our Saviour's vindication of himself, as to the great thing wherewith he was charged; he twice declares that he found no fault in him; he studies expedients to deliver an innocent person from their rage; he sends him to Herod, and obtains his concurrent suffrage to his innocency; he offereth to release him according to a custom they had at the passover to deliver one, whomsoever they desired; when this would not do, he caused him to be scourged, then brings him out to them again, hoping to have moved them to compassion by that lighter punishment of him.

The rage and madness of the Jews, principally of the chief priests and scribes, appeared in their urging to have had our Saviour condemned without hearing; their excessive clamours against him; their preferring one before him who was a robber, a murderer, one that had made a public insurrection; their insisting so much upon the kind of death that he should die, viz. by crucifying him, though in that they did both fulfil the counsel of God, who had determined that he should be *made a curse for us*, and it was written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*, Ga 3:13, and what himself had prophesied, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and they should mock, and scourge, and crucify him, Mt 20:19. But that which is most remarkable is, the providence of God, for the evidencing of our Saviour's innocency. Pilate's wife calls him a *just man*. Pilate twice tells them that he found no fault in him. They are able to say nothing when Pilate asks them, *What evil hath he done?* Herod objects nothing against him. He is merely condemned upon the brutish clamour and rage of the rabble, incensed and set on fire by the chief priests and Pharisees. The art of these his adversaries is also observable, because it is the same which the enemies of the gospel, deriving from this first pattern, have ever since observed

in the execution of their malice against the preachers and faithful professors of the gospel. They durst not insist upon the doctrine which our Saviour preached, which was the true cause of their malice against him, but bring him under a charge of treason and sedition, as if he had gone about to make himself a king in opposition to the Roman emperor; though there was not the least pretence for any such thing, and if there had, none who considereth that they were a conquered people, and how zealous they upon all occasions showed themselves for their civil liberties, can imagine they had any great kindness for Caesar. It is very observable, that malice against religion and godliness, and a desire of the extirpation of it, and the professors of it, is the predominant lust in the hearts of wicked men. To serve this, they not only deny their own reason, and principles of common justice, but deny themselves likewise in some other lusts. And herein they show themselves the true seed of the serpent, and the children of the devil, whose works they do; who, though he be the proudest spirit, yet, to destroy a soul, will abate his pride, truckle to a poor witch, and go upon her errands.

Matthew 27:24

Ver. 24. See Poole on "Mt 27:26".

Matthew 27:25

Ver. 25. See Poole on "Mt 27:26".

Matthew 27:26

Ver. 24-26. Mark saith, Mr 15:15, *So Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him to be crucified.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:24,25, *And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.*

John saith, Joh 19:13, When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the Judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. Here are three accounts given of Pilate's coming over to the Jews' desire to condemn Christ, contrary to the conviction of his own conscience, for he had twice declared that he found no fault in him. Matthew saith, he saw he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made.

Mark saith, he did it *to content the people*. John saith, it was upon the hearing of that saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar*. His fear of being accused to the emperor Tiberius, as favouring one who made himself a king, especially if his opposing the Jews in their desire of his death should have caused a tumult, was questionless the great thing that moved him to give judgment in this case contrary to his own conscience; and this is the meaning of his contenting the people, mentioned by Mark. It is plain by the whole story he had no mind to gratify or gain favour with them, but considering how jealous and suspicious a prince Tiberius was, it was Pilate's interest to quiet them, and to give them no occasion of accusing him unto the emperor.

He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude. It was the law of God in manslaughter, where he that slew the man was not known, the priests and elders of the city that (upon measure) should be found nearest to the dead body, should take a heifer, and bring it to a rough valley, and strike off its head, and wash their hands over the head of the beheaded heifer, and say, *Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it*, De 21:1-7. Some think that Pilate, living amongst the Jews, had learned this rite from them; but others think that it was a rite used in protestations of innocency amongst other people, as well as the Jews. But it was a great fondness in Pilate, to think this excused him, and freed him from the guilt of our Saviour's death. For there was such an inseparable guilt clave to the act, as

nothing could expiate but that blood which he spilt. Those who take upon them the trust of executing laws, had need to take heed what they do, for the law will not excuse them in the court of heaven, unless it be found according to the law of God. What Pilate did he did but ministerially, the law condemned, not he: but if it be understood of the law of God about blasphemy, to which the Jews undoubtedly referred, Joh 10:33,36, it was misapplied. If it were a Roman law, Pilate ought to have considered the equity and justice of it, and whether the fact was proved or not. Pilate had twice owned there was no fault in him. His washing his hands could not purge him of the murder, whereof he was guilty in his condemnation; he did but protest against what he immediately was about to do.

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children: his blood, that is, the guilt of his blood, be upon us, &c. A most sad imprecation, the effect of which hath been upon that miserable people now more than sixteen hundred years.

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, &c. The scourging was before this, and so recorded by St. John, for we cannot imagine that he was twice scourged.

He delivered him to be crucified; not to the Jews, but to his own officers, for it was a civil crime that he was accused of before Pilate, and crucifying was a Roman punishment.

Matthew 27:27

Ver. 27. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:28

Ver. 28. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:29

Ver. 29. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:30

Ver. 30. See Poole on "Mt 27:31".

Matthew 27:31

Ver. 27-31. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:17-20, only he saith they put upon him a purple robe. John seemeth to mention this a little out of order, Joh 19:1-3, as done before his condemnation; for though some think that Matthew and Mark rather mention these things out of their due order, yet the abuses seem more likely to be done to a person who was condemned, and so dead in law, than while he was upon his trial. Writers tell us that none might be crucified before he was scourged, and that not with rods, (which was the Jewish manner), but with whips (far more cruelly); but whether it was before or after condemnation we are not certain. He was condemned upon that article, that he should say, he was the King of the Jews. To mock him, therefore, they set a crown on his head, but of thorns; they put a sceptre into his hand, but it was of a reed; they bowed the knee before him, as was wont to princes; they put on him a robe of purple, or scarlet, both which were used by princes; in short they put upon him all the indignities and marks of scorn imaginable. When they had thus glutted themselves, they restore his own garment to him, and lead him away to the place of execution. Who can read these things with a believing heart and dry eyes, if he remembers, that our sins platted the crown of thorns set upon our Saviour's head, and made the whips with which he was scourged? Our stomachs (when we read these things) are ready to rise against the pagan soldiers; but how little did they do in comparison of what Christ suffered for our sins! Who can read these things, and not be fortified against temptations from suffering if we will own the gospel and cause of Christ? Our sufferings will come much short of what Christ hath suffered for us.

Matthew 27:32

Ver. 32. See Poole on "Mt 27:34".

Matthew 27:33

Ver. 33. See Poole on "Mt 27:34".

Matthew 27:34

Ver. 32-34. Mark saith, Mr 15:21-23, *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.*

Luke is larger in his account of the passages between his condemnation and crucifixion, Lu 23:26-32. *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.*

Joh 19:17, saith no more than, *And he bearing his cross went forth unto a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.* Matthew, and Mark, and Luke say, that a countryman, one Simon a Cyrenian, (compelled to it by the soldiers), carried the cross after Christ. John saith, that he himself bare it. Both were doubtless true. Some say that Christ himself did carry it through the city, and when he was out of the city this Simon carried it. Others think, that Christ being wearied, Simon took it. But reason will tell us, that the cross was too heavy a piece of timber for one to bear, and therefore Simon was compelled to bear the hinder part; therefore Luke saith, he bare it after Jesus. The dispute whether this Simon was a native Jew, though an inhabitant of Cyrene, or a proselyted Cyrenian,

or as yet a pagan, and whether this Cyrene was one of the ten cities comprehended in the name Decapolis, is not worth spending any words about. All the evangelists agree, that he was crucified at *Golgotha*; Luke calls it Calvary; they are both names of the same signification, *the place of a skull*; the one is the Hebrew term, the other Latin.

They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. Mark saith, *wine mingled with myrrh.* There is so great a cognation between wine and vinegar, that it is no wonder if one evangelist calls it vinegar, another wine, which, if it be acid, is vinegar. The word translated *gall* signifies all bitterness, whether it be caused from gall or myrrh. Some think that some good people gave him wine, and the soldiers added myrrh to it. But this is a great uncertainty. Certain it is, that it was an ordinary favour they showed to dying persons, to give them some intoxicating potion, to make them less sensible of their pain. It is probable it was something of this nature; but our Saviour was not afraid to die, and so had no need of such an antidote against the pain of it; he refused it. We shall find they afterward gave him something to drink also.

Luke tells us that great multitudes followed him to the place of execution, (which is still very ordinary), lamenting him, to whom our Saviour saith, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children;* and then prophesieth the miseries that should follow his death, to that degree, that the barren should bless themselves; and they all should *say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us.* He bids the women weep only for themselves and for their children; for how much better is it for persons of any tenderness to have no children, than to have children, and to see them dashed against the stones, as was threatened to Babylon, Ps 137:9; or to kill them for the parents' sustenance, as it happened in Ahab's time; or to see them slain before the parents' faces, as it happened to Zedekiah, when the enemy took Jerusalem! Jer 52:10. The people also, he saith, should (as it was of old prophesied of those of Samaria, Ho 10:8) cry to the mountains to cover them, and to the hills to fall on them: a proverbial expression, to signify their wishing themselves dead and under ground; or expounded by Isa 2:19, *And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.* See the like expressions, Re 6:16 9:6. *In those*

days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? It is another proverbial expression, which may be understood impersonally: *If they do*, that is, if it be thus done to. If God suffers them thus to do to me, who am his Son, what shall be done to you, who are but as dry sticks, and so fitter for the fire? If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? 1Pe 4:17,18.

Matthew 27:35

Ver. 35. See Poole on "Mt 27:37".

Matthew 27:36

Ver. 36. See Poole on "Mt 27:37".

Matthew 27:37

Ver. 35-37. Mark saith, Mr 15:24-28, *When they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, The King of the Jews. And with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:33,34, *And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

John telleth us some further circumstances, Joh 19:18-24 *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where*

Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. And they crucified him; that is, four soldiers, as we learn from John's narration of this matter of fact; it seemeth this business was assigned to four more especially.

This crucifying was a bitter and shameful kind of death, not in use amongst the Jews, but amongst the Romans. The manner of it is not particularly known to us: but, as it is described by writers, a piece of wood was erected which was crossed with a bar upon the top. The body of the person being fastened to the main piece of wood, his arms were extended, and nailed to the cross bar, or piece of timber, and his hands and feet were nailed. Mark saith, *it was the third hour*, which with us was about nine of the clock: so hasty they were in destroying this just person, that between midnight and nine of the clock in the morning, they apprehended him, tried and condemned him in the sanhedrim, or at least in a court of high priests and elders, and then before Pilate the Roman governor, and led him to be crucified, and nailed him to his cross. The evangelists tell us, he was crucified in the middle between two thieves, of whom we shall read more afterward. Several scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in this crucifixion of Christ. *They pierced my hands and my feet*, Ps 22:16, was fulfilled in his nailing to the cross. In his being crucified betwixt two thieves was fulfilled that, Isa 53:12, *He was numbered with the transgressors*. That of the psalmist, Ps 22:18, *They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture*, was fulfilled in the soldiers' parting of our Saviour's garments, as their fee. But how could they part them, and yet not rend them? Possibly they parted his other garments, and only did cast lots for his coat, or upper garment. Or, it may be, they valued it, and agreed each man's share, and then cast lots for the whole. I see no ground for their assertion, who say, that in such cases they only stripped the condemned person of his upper

garment. John's relation seemeth to oppose it; he saith, *and also his coat*. Matthew, Mark, and John all agree in the inscription which Pilate drew to be put upon his cross, signifying the crime for which he died; only John puts in those words, *of Nazareth*. Thus Christ died in the attestation of his kingly office. This inscription angered the Jews; they solicit Pilate to alter it, and that it might be, Who said he was the King of the Jews. But Pilate refused, saying, *What I have written I have written*. There was nothing more pleasing to Pilate than this, (as he thought), to deride the Jews, as having such a despicable person (as he judged him) their King. In the mean time the counsels of God have their effect; Christ in his death is declared to be the King of the Jews. Luke saith, that Christ said, *Father, forgive them; for they know what they do*. Whether these words were spoken when our Lord was first nailed to the cross, or afterward, is not much material. Luke relates them before the soldiers' parting his garments. Our Saviour by them declares himself a true Pastor and Shepherd of souls, teaching his disciples no more than he himself did practise. Mt 5:44, he had taught his disciples to pray for them who despitefully used and persecuted them. Himself here practises it. The malice of men ought not to quench in Christians the grace of God. Let us now consider the passage that happened from the time he was nailed to the cross until the time of his expiration, which was more than three entire hours.

Matthew 27:38

Ver. 38. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:39

Ver. 39. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:40

Ver. 40. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:41

Ver. 41. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:42

Ver. 42. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:43

Ver. 43. See Poole on "Mt 27:44".

Matthew 27:44

Ver. 39-44. Mark relates this part of the history with no material circumstance differing from Matthew, Mt 15:29-32. Luke saith, Lu 23:39-43, *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

John saith, Mt 19:25-30. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. Matthew and Mark relate more particularly what abuses our Saviour suffered while he hung dying upon the cross:

1. From passengers.

2. From the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

Nothing is more inhuman than to mock such as are in the most extreme and utmost misery, and it is what we seldom hear from the worst of men; but for the chief priests and elders, the magistrates and rulers of the Jews, to be guilty of such a barbarous behaviour, is amazing. That not the ordinary priests only, but the chief priests, that is, either such as had been in the office of high priest, or else some of the most ancient and grave men of the priests; that, not the hot headed young men amongst the Jews, but the elders of Israel, should be so rude, as not only to behave themselves indecently to a man in the most extreme misery, whom they ought to have pitied, and for whom they ought at this time to have been praying, but also forgetting all reverence to God, to say, *He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him;* jeering all faith and trusting in God, and as it were defying God's power, and saying with Nebuchadnezzar, Da 3:15, *Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?* This is justly surprising, and lets us see to what a height of wickedness the Jews were come, and confirms us in this, that if those who serve the Lord in public places, especially in holy things, be not the best of men, they are the worst. Having more knowledge of the will of God than others, if they have once mastered their consciences, they become the vilest of men, and the most prodigious patterns of atheism and all wickedness. It lets us also see to what a degree malice and covetousness will debauch souls, and teach us to fear sinning against our light and convictions. All this was foretold by the prophet David, Ps 22:8, and so must be. But the necessity of the event by no means excused the sinfulness of the act, nor made God the author of these men's sins. Matthew saith, *The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

Luke saith, *only one of them did so.* Some think that at the first they both reviled him, but the heart of one of them was changed while he hung upon the cross; but it is no unusual thing in Scripture to use the plural number for the singular; and the number may be understood not so much to refer to the persons as their qualities, they were both thieves, though but one of them reviled our Saviour. Or what hinders, but that they both might desire Christ to put forth his power to deliver them, though one of them further reviled him, by words which the evangelists have

not set down. Luke tells us, that one of these thieves rebuked his fellow, and cleared Christ's innocency. Thus God had that honour from a thief which was denied him by the chief priests and elders. He can *of stones raise up children to Abraham*. He begs of Christ to remember him when he came into his kingdom; discovering an eminent faith in Christ, he is rewarded, by Christ telling him, *Today thou shalt be with me in paradise*: a plain text to prove that souls neither sleep nor die with the body, but immediately pass into their eternal mansions. John addeth, that there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and her sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, and mentions our Saviour's recommending his mother to the care of his beloved disciple, and tells us of John's care of her; the other three evangelists mention their being there, but standing afar off; which might both be true, they being nearer the cross at first, then removing themselves further from it. John further mentions their giving our Saviour (upon his saying, *I thirst*) *vinegar to drink*. It is very probable this was but a kindness they did usually show to malefactors, dying that kind of death, when they were so long a time dying; but the evangelist tells us that in our Saviour's case there was a scripture to be fulfilled, Ps 69:21, *In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*: whether David there spake in the person of Christ, or what was at that time primarily fulfilled in David, was at that time fulfilled in Christ as his antitype, is not much material for us to know; that the text related to Christ, and was fulfilled in him, we are assured by the evangelist. This giving of Christ to drink was distinct from that we meet with before, as may appear by the many different circumstances. That he refused; this he received, and said, *It is finished*: my passion is finished, or upon the finishing.

Matthew 27:45

Ver. 45. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:46

Ver. 46. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:47

Ver. 47. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:48

Ver. 48. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:49

Ver. 49. See Poole on "Mt 27:50".

Matthew 27:50

Ver. 45-50. Mark hath the same, Mr 15:33-38. Luke saith, Lu 23:44, *that it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.* John saith no more, Joh 19:30, but that—*he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* It is said, Joh 19:14, it was *about the sixth hour* when Pilate brought forth Christ to the Jews; how then could he be crucified at the third hour, and the darkness begin at the sixth? The different ways the Jews and the Romans had of counting hours, make us to be at a loss sometimes as to circumstances of time to reconcile some scriptures. But as to the present difficulty, it is said that the Jews, as they divided the night into four watches, so they also divided the day into four parts, each part having its denomination from the succeeding part, by which name all the intermediate time was called. Thus when the third hour (which with us is nine of the clock) was past, they called all the sixth hour till past twelve. Thus Pilate condemned Christ in the beginning of the sixth hour, and the darkness began at the end of it, that is, after twelve, for dividing the day into quadrants, the hours had their denomination from them. John also saith no more than *about the sixth hour*, which is true if it were some small time after.

There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. That

this darkness was caused by the eclipse of the sun at that time of the day is plain enough, but that this was no eclipse in the ordinary course of nature is evident; for;

1. Whereas all eclipses use to be in the time of the new moon, this was when the moon was at the full, the fifteenth day of the month Nisan.
2. This eclipse was not seen in one part or in another, but over all the earth that was under the same hemisphere.
3. No eclipse in a natural course can last three hours.

So that plainly this was a miraculous eclipse, not caused by the interposition of the moon, (as other eclipses), but by the mighty and extraordinary power of God, which made a heathen philosopher at a great distance cry out, Either the Divine Being now suffereth, or sympathizes with one that suffereth: he is said to have seen this eclipse in Egypt.

And about the ninth hour (that is, about three of the clock, as we reckon the hours) *Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, or Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* The words are Hebrew, though Mark reports them according to the Syriac corruption of the dialect. They are David's words, [Ps 22:1](#). David was a type of Christ. He that was the Son of David useth David's words, possibly spoken by David in the person of Christ. God's forsaking any person or place, must be understood with reference not to his essential presence, for so he filleth all places, and is present with all persons; but with reference to the manifestations of his providence for our good: thus when God withholds his good providence to us, either with respect to our outward or inward man, he is said to forsake us. A total forsaking either of our bodies, or of our souls, is not consistent with the being of our outward man, or the spiritual being or life of our inward man. All forsakings therefore in this life are gradual and partial. The forsaking which Christ therefore here complains of, was not the total withdrawing of Divine favour and assistance from him; that was impossible, and incompetent with the first words testifying his relation to God, and assistance in him; but it must be understood with respect to God's consolatory manifestations, and that is testified by his other words, related by Luke, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. Which words having said,

he *gave up the ghost*, say Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John addeth, that he *bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*: words added, to confirm what he elsewhere said, that he laid down his life, none took it from him. His crying twice at this instant with a loud voice, argued his spirits not so spent, but he might have lived a few minutes longer, but he freely laid down his life. The people saying, *He calleth for Elias*, when he said *Eli, Eli*, spake them to be Jews, who to this day dream of an Elias to come and *restore all things*. That they no better distinguished between Eli and Elias, must be attributed either to the corruption of their dialect, he saying *Eloi, Eloi*, (according to the Syriac corruption of the term), or their too great distance from him. Their mocking him upon it was but consonant to their former behaviour toward him, while he was upon the cross. Their giving him the sponge with vinegar and hyssop we before gave an account of.

Matthew 27:51

Ver. 51. See Poole on "Mt 27:53".

Matthew 27:52

Ver. 52. See Poole on "Mt 27:53".

Matthew 27:53

Ver. 51-53. Mark, Mr 15:38, mentions only the rending of the veil. No more doth Luke, Lu 23:45. John mentions none of these things. It pleased God to give a testimony against this prodigious piece of wickedness by prodigious signs, both in the heavens and on the earth. In the heavens the sun, as we heard before, suffered an unusual, preternatural eclipse, which lasted three hours. In the earth, there was an earthquake, to that degree, that the rocks were rent by it. Earthquakes were sometimes no more than indications of God's power and majesty, Ps 68:8 Joe 2:10; and some think, that by this earthquake Christ declared his Divine power. It is certain that the centurion concluded from it, *this was the Son of God*, Mt 27:54. But earthquakes were sometimes not only the indications of the Divine majesty and power, but also of his wrath, Ps 18:7,8 Joe 3:16 Na 1:6. And such doubtless was this;

to show that the earth abhorred what these men had done. Besides these, *the veil of the temple was rent*: three of the evangelists mention it. It is not much material whether this were the outward veil, or the inward veil, or hangings, which parted the most holy place from the other part of the temple, though probably it was the inner veil. By this rending of the veil God testified his wrath against the Jews, and that he was leaving his temple amongst them. The veil also was a type of Christ's flesh, Heb 10:20: the antitype being rent, it was reasonable that the type should also be so. By this also was showed, that the temple service was now at an end, and to continue no longer, and the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles was pulled down. For what Matthew speaks, Mt 27:52,53, of the graves opening, and the bodies of the saints arising, &c., probably it was not till Christ's resurrection; only Matthew puts it in here, reckoning up together all the prodigious things that happened, for Matthew himself saith, Mt 27:53, *they came out of the graves after his resurrection*, and it is not likely that the graves opened any considerable time before they came out of their graves. These now were the prodigies which attended the death of our Saviour.

Matthew 27:54

Ver. 54. See Poole on "Mt 27:56".

Matthew 27:55

Ver. 55. See Poole on "Mt 27:55".

Matthew 27:56

Ver. 54-56. Mark saith, Mr 15:39-41, *And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him); and many other women which came up with him to Jerusalem.*

Luke saith, Lu 23:47-49, *Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

We heard before, Mt 27:36, that the soldiers sat down and watched Christ. The centurion here mentioned was the captain of this watch; he seeing the earthquake, and all the other things that were done, saith Matthew. Mark saith, *When he saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost. He glorified God,* saith Luke. Matthew and Mark tell us how he said. *Truly this man was the Son of God.* Luke saith he said, *Certainly this was a righteous man:* he glorified God by a confession of the truth, to the glory of God, saying, he was a righteous man, and such a righteous man as was also the Son of God. It seems very probable that this captain, living amongst the Jews, had learned from them their expectation of a Messiah, and speaketh this with reference to that, and acknowledgeth that Christ was he. Luke addeth, that all the people that came to see that sight returned, smiting their breasts, being convinced of the great wickedness committed by their high priests, and chief priests and elders, and fearing that vengeance which followed in less than forty years.

And many women were there: these women had followed Christ out of Galilee: two only are named here, *Mary Magdalene*, who probably had her name from Magdala a city in Galilee, *and Mary the mother of James and Joses*, (*James the less*, saith Mark, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee), *and the mother of Zebedee's children:* *these stood afar off*, these three evangelists say. John told us, Joh 19:25, that two of these were so near the cross, with the mother of our Lord, that he spake to them. Here we read nothing of the mother of our Lord, probably she was gone with John, to whom Christ had commended her, and the rest withdrew and stood farther off from the cross at this time. Matthew goeth on now, describing the coming of Joseph of Arimathea to beg the dead body of Christ; so doth Mark and Luke.

John interposes something tending to complete the history, Joh 19:31-37: *The Jews therefore, because it was the*

preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

The day upon which he was crucified was the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, upon the Friday, as we call it; this appeareth from this text, which saith *it was the preparation* to the Jewish sabbath; and *that sabbath*, the evangelist saith, *was a high day*, not because, as some think, the Jews put off their passover to that day, but because it was the second day of the feast of unleavened bread. It is true, Joh 19:14, it is called *the preparation of the passover*; but we must remember, that all the seven days of unleavened bread were so called, as I before noted. This day was indeed the preparation to the sabbath in the paschal week, for otherwise we must say that Christ did not eat the passover the same day that the Jews did, which involves us in many inextricable difficulties, and could not be if the paschal lamb was to be killed by the priests, for they would not have killed it the day before. It is therefore most probable, that Joh 19:14 must be expounded by Joh 19:31, and *the preparation of the passover*, Joh 19:14; was the preparation to the sabbath, which falling within the compass of the seven days of unleavened bread, was a great day with them, especially being the day following the eating of the paschal lamb. By the law, De 21:23, the body of none that was hanged was to abide all night upon the tree. It was between three and four of the clock in the afternoon before that Christ died; they used to set some hours apart for preparation to the sabbath, which that night began as soon as the sun was set; this therefore makes them go to Pilate, and desire that the legs of them that suffered might be broken. Pilate grants their request. The soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Christ, they found him dead, and brake not his legs, but a soldier with a spear pierced his side. The evangelist takes

notice of these minute things, (and assures us he saw them, that we might believe), that he might show us how in every point the things of old spoken of Christ were fulfilled in him. Christ was the true paschal Lamb, as to which the law was, That a bone of it should not be broken, Ex 12:46 Nu 9:12; or else the evangelist refers to Ps 34:20, where it is said of a righteous man, *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken*. Our Saviour's side was pierced, and that also is recorded, to let us know the fulfilling of that scripture, Zec 12:10, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*.

Matthew 27:57

Ver. 57. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:58

Ver. 58. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:59

Ver. 59. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:60

Ver. 60. See Poole on "Mt 27:61".

Matthew 27:61

Ver. 57-61. Mark hath it, Mr 15:42-47, *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen and took him down, and*

wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where he was laid.

Luke hath it, Lu 23:50-54, thus: *And behold there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them); he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.*

John reports it with some additions, Joh 19:38-42: *And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day: for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

All four evangelists (as we see) repeat this history, one supplying what is wanting in another towards the completeness of it. Nor must we think it is for nothing so punctually related; much depended upon the world's satisfaction in the truth and certainty of his death, burial, and resurrection, they are three great articles of our faith. We have therefore here punctually described his burial, with all the circumstances of it. As it is with us, so it seems it was with them.

The bodies of those who died as malefactors were taken to be in the power of the magistrates, to dispose of as they pleased, though they were ordinarily granted upon petition to their friends and relations. The person who begged the body of our Saviour is described to us by his name, Joseph; by his city, Arimathea

(there it seems he was born, or had his mansion house, though he resided in Jerusalem); by his quality, both his more exterior quality, and his more interior qualification. As for his outward quality, Matthew saith he was *a rich man*. Mark saith he was *an honourable counsellor*. Luke also calls him *a counsellor*, but *had not consented to the counsel and deed of them*, that is, of them who had examined and condemned Christ: whether he was a member of the Jewish sanhedrim, or of Pilate's council, (though the last be not probable), or had been a counsellor formerly, but now was not so, is hard to determine; but his quality doubtless made his access more free to Pilate. He *went in boldly* to him, saith Mark; his quality in the city, and his love to Christ, both contributed to this boldness. For his more inward qualifications, Matthew and John both tell us he was *a disciple*, one that had learned of Christ, though John tells us, it was *secretly for fear of the Jews*. *Among the chief rulers many believed on him*, Joh 12:42.

As bad as that set of rulers was which now ruled the Jewish affairs, (and a worse could not be), Christ had some disciples amongst them, as well as afterward in Nero's court: these, for fear of the Jews casting them out of the synagogues, durst not openly own Christ, but secretly loved him. Joseph and Nicodemus were two of them. And to let us know what the disciples of Christ are, and should be, this Joseph is described by Luke to be *a good and a just man*; by Mark, to be one who *waited for the kingdom of God*; a believer, one who, believing what Christ had said, both concerning his kingdom of grace and glory, lived in the expectation of it. This man begs of the governor the body of Christ. Pilate wondered that he should be so soon dead, but inquiring of the centurion, and hearing that he was dead, he commands that his body should be delivered unto Joseph.

The manner of the Jews was, neither to have gardens nor burying places within the city, but without the wall; it should appear that this Joseph had a garden place without the city, and near to the place where Christ was crucified, and in that garden he had cut out of some great stone a sepulchre for himself. Matthew calls it *his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock*. The other evangelists do not call it his own new tomb, only Luke and John observe it was a sepulchre in which none ever before was laid. So as when they found him risen from the dead,

they could not say it was some other body, for there was no other body in the tomb. But before they laid in the body, both Matthew and Mark observe, that Joseph wrapped it in fine linen, and John further addeth, that they embalmed the body; to which purpose it was that Nicodemus (that ruler who came to Jesus by night, of which we have the story, [Joh 3:1-36](#), with whom our Saviour had a discourse about regeneration) brought the *mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about an hundred pound weight*; John adds, *as the manner of the Jews is to bury*, not ordinarily, but persons of greater note, whose estates were such as they could bear such an expense. This was the beginning of honour done unto Christ, after that he had passed through his lowest degree of humiliation.

Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, that is, the wife of Cleophas, of whom we heard before, stayed to see where he was laid, and took their seats over against the sepulchre. Luke saith, [Lu 23:55,56](#), *The women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment.* It seems they sat but a little while (as Matthew saith) *right over against the sepulchre*, but went home, and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him, but would not do it on the sabbath, which was now beginning, thinking that it would be time enough upon the first day of the week. Matthew saith, that Joseph *rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.*

Matthew 27:62

Ver. 62. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:63

Ver. 63. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:64

Ver. 64. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:65

Ver. 65. See Poole on "Mt 27:66".

Matthew 27:66

Ver. 62-66. This part of the history is recorded by no other evangelist: the recording it by Matthew contributes yet further to evidence the truth of Christ's resurrection; for here was all imaginable care taken to prevent a cheat in the case.

The next day, that followed the day of the preparation, must be the sabbath day, Mr 15:42. These superstitious hypocrites, that quarrelled with our Saviour for his disciples (being hungry) plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, and for his healing him that had a withered hand, Mt 12:13, can now themselves go to Pilate, to set him on work to command that the sepulchre should be made fast to the third day. They allege that Christ, whom they impiously call *that deceiver, said, while he was alive,* that he would rise again the third day, to answer the type of the prophet Jonas, Mt 12:39,40. They were doubtless jealous that there was more truth in those words than they were willing to believe. They pretend also a fear lest his disciples should come privately by night, and steal his body away, and then say he was risen. But was this a probable thing, that a government should be afraid of a few poor, unarmed men? They were doubtless convicted in their own consciences that he would rise again from the dead, and to prevent his coming out of the sepulchre, they would have Pilate command that the sepulchre should be made sure. Pilate tells them, that they had a watch, a band of soldiers, which he had commanded at this time to attend them, either for the guard of the temple, or other things about which they would employ them; they might make the sepulchre as sure as they could.

So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. Vain men! As if the same power that was necessary to raise and quicken the dead could not also remove the stone, and break through the watch which they had set. But by this their excessive care and diligence, instead of preventing Christ's resurrection, as they intended, they have confirmed the truth and belief of it to all the world. So doth God take the wise

in their own craftiness, and turn their wisdom into foolishness, that he may set his King upon his holy hill of Zion.

Matthew 28:1

Chapter Summary

Mt 28:1-8 Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women.

Mt 28:9-10 Christ himself appeareth to them.

Mt 28:11-15 The chief priests bribe the soldiers to report that he was stolen by the disciples.

Mt 28:16,17 Christ appeareth to the eleven in Galilee,

Mt 28:18-20 and sendeth them to teach and baptize all nations.

Ver. 1. We are now come to that part of the Gospel which treats concerning the resurrection of Christ, and the converse which he had upon the earth for forty days, Ac 1:3, until the time of his ascension into heaven. Matthew and Mark are the shortest in this narration. I shall therefore, only consider what Matthew saith, and what the other evangelists speak as to the same things which he mentions, leaving out what the other evangelists have (not at all mentioned by him) to be discoursed in their proper place. We heard before that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had prepared spices and ointments to anoint the body of Christ, but the sabbath day being at hand, they would not by that unnecessary action profane the sabbath; as Luke tells us, Lu 23:56, *they rested on the sabbath, according to the commandment*: The sabbath ended with them at the setting of the sun. They did not go as soon as the sabbath was ended, but after it was ended, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*. The first day of the week began with them as soon as the sabbath was ended, so as the first day of the week was a third part spent; therefore Mark reports the time, Mr 16:1,2, *And when the sabbath was past; and says that Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning,*

the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. Luke saith, Lu 24:1, that upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

John saith, Joh 20:1, *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre.* As to the time, three evangelists say it was upon the first day of the week, early in the morning; about sunrising, saith Mark; *while it was yet dark*, saith John: these now interpret Matthew's οψε σαββατων, which doth not signify, in the evening of the sabbath, but in the evening of the sabbaths, the end of the week. The Jews, in honour to the sabbath, called all the days of the week sabbaths, the first of the sabbath, the second of the sabbath, &c.; so as οψε σαββατων is well translated by our translators, *In the end of the sabbath*, the evening or night following the sabbath, following the seventh day, which was the sabbath. Nor is οψε to be taken here strictly for that time of the night which we call the evening, but for the whole night, which must be reckoned to continue until the sunrising of the first day of the week; and so Matthew expounds himself, adding, *as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*, that is, the first artificial day, as the day is accounted from sunrising to sun setting; otherwise it was upon the first natural day of the week, which began from the sun setting before. Matthew mentions the coming of Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, who, Mark saith, was the mother of James and Salome, to the sepulchre. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, but it is not probable she went alone, and two other evangelists say also the other Mary. Luke saith there were *certain others with them*: there might be divers with them, though one only be named by John, two by Matthew and Mark as being the principal persons in the company. And though Matthew only mentions their going to see the sepulchre, yet Mark telleth us that they went also to anoint his body, and Luke saith they carried the spices prepared for that end; their faith, as it seemeth, was yet but weak as to our Saviour's resurrection.

Matthew 28:2

Ver. 2. See Poole on "Mt 28:4".

Matthew 28:3

Ver. 3. See Poole on "Mt 28:4".

Matthew 28:4

Ver. 2-4. Matthew alone telleth us this; all the other evangelists agree that when the women came they found the stone rolled away, which eased them of the solicitude they had as they came, saying amongst themselves, *Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?* Matthew saith, an angel descended and rolled away the stone, and came and sat upon it. This angel had assumed a shape, for he appeared to those that saw him, as to *his countenance, like lightning*; as to his garment, as one clothed in exceeding white linen, white as snow. What doth the watch all this while? Matthew saith, they were afraid, shook, and became like dead men. Luke and John make mention of two angels. Indeed there needed not any angel at all to remove the stone, if this had been all he had come down for; He that was quickened by the Spirit, could by the same power have rolled away the stone; but as it was fit that the angels, who had been witnesses of his passion, should also be witnesses of his resurrection, that he who was *justified in the Spirit*, should be seen of angels, 1Ti 3:16; so it was necessary, that the keepers might give a just account to Pilate, the chief priests, and scribes. And no wonder that they were afraid, and as dead men, whereas all apparitions of this nature naturally affright us, and they had such a conscience of guilt upon them, and might justly fear what their masters should say to them, when they found the body was missing; especially also seeing, or being sensible of, the earthquake, or great concussion of the air (for though we translate it *earthquake*, yet the Greek saith no more than *σεισμος μεγας*). Besides that the presence of the angels seemed reasonable to prevent a cheat, by putting some other dead body into the sepulchre, and to direct the women who were now coming towards the sepulchre, for they were not yet come: when they were come, they found the stone rolled away; and Matthew's relation, how the stone came removed, was doubtless not from them, but from the keepers, or some to whom they had related it.

Matthew 28:5

Ver. 5. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:6

Ver. 6. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:7

Ver. 7. See Poole on "Mt 28:8".

Matthew 28:8

Ver. 5-8. Mark saith, Mr 16:5-8, *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid.*

Luke saith, Lu 24:3-11, *And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them*

not.

John saith, of Mary Magdalene only, Joh 20:2, *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

Matthew in this relation omits many things more distinctly related by the other evangelists. When the women came to the sepulchre, they first entered in; so saith Mark and Luke. It was within that they saw the angel, habited as it were in a long white, shining garment. They were affrighted, (as we naturally are upon apparitions), they bowed down their faces to the earth. The angel bids them not to fear, he knew that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; *Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen;* showeth to them the place where his body was laid; minds them of Christ's words to them in Galilee, Mt 18:23; bids them go tell his disciples (Mark adds, *and Peter*) that he was going before them into Galilee, and that there they should see him, as he had said unto them, Mt 26:32 Mr 14:28.

They departed quickly from the sepulchre (as Matthew saith) *with fear and great joy;* Mark saith, trembling and amazed. John doth not say, unbelieving, but he saith it in effect, for he saith, that they said to Simon Peter, *They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.* The cause of their fear and amazement was doubtless the apparition of the angel. The cause of their sudden joy was the news that he was risen, told them by the angel. It appeareth that their joy was but a sudden flash of passion, not rising from the certainty of their souls as to the truth of what they heard, because they said to the disciples, that they did not believe it, but upon second thoughts concluded that somebody had removed our Saviour's body: neither did the apostles themselves believe it, as appeareth by Luke; he saith they looked upon it as an idle tale.

John saith expressly, Joh 20:9, *As yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead:* they knew it notionally, but they did not give a firm and a fixed assent to it, they did not believe it. It was not, it seemeth, in the power of their wills to believe this article of Christ's resurrection; for as

they had a Divine revelation of the thing from Christ himself, so we cannot but think they had mind and good will enough to believe it. But God had not given them the power of faith as to this point.

Matthew 28:9

Ver. 9. See Poole on "Mt 28:10".

Matthew 28:10

Ver. 9,10. Matthew repeateth this very shortly. Mark saith, Mr 16:9-11, Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Luke saith, Lu 24:12, *Then* (that is, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had come and told the disciples what they had seen and heard, though at first they gave no credit to it) *arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

John relates this more distinctly, in Joh 20:3-18: *Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, (whom Jesus loved, as Mt 28:2, and that was John himself, who wrote that Gospel, Joh 13:23), and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in*

white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. What there is particularly to be noted upon the several particulars in John's relation, I shall observe when I come to that chapter of John; I have only at present transcribed it, that from the comparing it with the other evangelists we might understand the order of this history.

And as they went to tell his disciples. This seemeth to be their second going, and the order to be thus: When Mary and the rest came to the disciples, and told them they had been at the sepulchre, and what they had there seen and heard, they believed it not. But yet, it being close by the city, and not knowing what to think, Peter resolves to go and see, and so doth John. They both run, but John comes there first, but goes not into the sepulchre, but only looks in, and sees the linen clothes lying. Peter comes (for it was very near the gates of the city); he goeth in, seeth the linen clothes, and the napkin. Then John also adventures to go in, and saw and believed; he is the first is said to have believed. Then they went home. But Mary stayed weeping; and now and then looking into the sepulchre, she seeth not the clothes only, but two angels sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet of the place where the body of Christ did lie. They ask her why she wept. She tells them, Because they had taken away her Lord, and she did not know where they had laid him. Now, saith John, when she had said thus, *εστραφη εις τα οπισω*, we translate it, *She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing*, Joh 20:14; which seemeth to contradict our evangelist Matthew, who saith, *As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.* Our translation now would

make one think that Mary was still at the sepulchre, and there looking back she saw Jesus; and this seemeth either to assert that Mary saw Christ twice, once at the sepulchre, once in her return to the city, or else to contradict Matthew; but the Greek words may be translated, 'She was turned backward', that is, was going back to tell his disciples, and met Christ, who saluted her, saying, *All hail*.

Though Mary Magdalene be only named, and possibly all the women who were with her at first did not come back with her the second time, yet it is plain she was not alone, for Matthew saith, *They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him*. He bids her be not afraid, but go and tell his disciples they should meet him in Galilee. For the other discourse betwixt him and Mary, we shall meet with it when we come to that chapter in St. John's Gospel where it is mentioned. Mark saith, that *when they had heard he was alive, and had been seen of her, they believed not*. We do not read that the angels appeared either to Peter or John, much less that Christ as yet showed himself to them; so they had only the testimony of Mary as to these things, and their own view of the empty sepulchre, and the clothes lying by. How hard a thing it is to believe spiritual mysteries, above the reach of our reason! So hard, that no revelation of flesh and blood is sufficient to beget such a faith.

Matthew 28:11

Ver. 11. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:12

Ver. 12. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:13

Ver. 13. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:14

Ver. 14. See Poole on "Mt 28:15".

Matthew 28:15

Ver. 11-15. No other evangelist hath this passage, which was necessary to be inserted by Matthew:

1. To satisfy readers how it could come to pass, that Matthew should know of the earthquake, or concussion of the air rather, and that an angel came and rolled away the stone; for all this was done, and Christ risen, before the women came: it came out by the watch, or by Pilate to whom the watch related it, or else by some of the priests and elders, who did not keep counsel so well as others.
2. To show the horrible wickedness of these priests and elders, that would thus cover the blood they had spilt with a lie and subornation. Thus one sin requires more to defend it.
3. To let us see how simple people will show themselves in their malice. What a story here was! If they were asleep, how could they know that Christ's disciples came by night and stole him away? Would no noise of rolling away the stone wake them? Malice will not allow men deliberation enough to show themselves wise. God infatuated these men, that succeeding ages might know they were suborned. Here we have also the ground of that fable with which the Jews presently filled all the world.

Matthew 28:16

Ver. 16. See Poole on "Mt 28:17".

Matthew 28:17

Ver. 16,17. The other evangelists mention several other appearances of Christ, which we shall consider when we come to them. This was in Galilee, upon Christ's appointment either before or after his resurrection, we cannot certainly say when, or how. Some think (upon what grounds I know not, but because

the evangelists mention no more) that this was the famous appearance mentioned by the apostles, *when he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*, 1Co 15:6. The text speaks but of eleven that went into Galilee; it is possible more might meet him there, but we have no guidance of Scripture to conclude it. Some *worshipped him; but some doubted*: Thomas we know did so, so might others: but some think that it had been better translated, 'some had doubted'; I understand no sufficient reason for it, for it is not certain that this was after his other appearances mentioned by the other evangelists.

Matthew 28:18

Ver. 18. See Poole on "Mt 28:20".

Matthew 28:19

Ver. 19. See Poole on "Mt 28:20".

Matthew 28:20

Ver. 18-20. Mark saith, Mr 16:15-18, *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* Our blessed Lord in these three last verses:

1. Asserts his power and authority.
2. He delegates a power.
3. He subjoins a promise.

The power and authority which he asserts to himself is, *All power both in heaven and earth*, Ac 10:36,42 Eph 1:20-22; power of remission of sins, Lu 24:47, of congregating, teaching,

and governing his church; a power to give eternal life to whomsoever he pleased. This was inherent in him as God blessed for ever, given to him as our Mediator and Redeemer, given him when he came into the world, but more especially confirmed to him and manifested to be given him at his resurrection and ascension, Php 2:9,10. Having declared his power, he delegates it:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; the Greek is μαθητευσατε,

make disciples all nations; but that must be first by preaching and instructing them in the principles of the Christian faith, and Mark expounds it, telling us our Saviour said, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, that is, to every reasonable creature capable of hearing and receiving it*. I cannot be of their mind, who think that persons may be baptized before they are taught; we want precedents of any such baptism in Scripture, though indeed we find precedents of persons baptized who had but a small degree of the knowledge of the gospel; but it should seem that they were all first taught that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and were not baptized till they professed such belief, Ac 8:37, and John baptized them in Jordan, *confessing their sins*, Mt 3:6. But it doth not therefore follow, that children of such professors are not to be baptized, for the apostles were commanded to baptize *all nations*: children are a great part of any nation, if not the greatest part, and although amongst the Jews those that were converted to the Jewish religion were first instructed in the law of God before they were circumcised, yet the fathers being once admitted, the children were circumcised at eight days old; nor were they under any covenant different from us, though we be under a more clear manifestation of the same covenant of grace, of which circumcision was a sign and seal to them, as baptism is to us. Infants are capable of the obligations of baptism, for the obligation ariseth from the equity of the thing, not from the understanding and capacity of the person; they are also capable of the same privileges, *for of such is the kingdom of God*, as our Saviour hath taught us.

All nations: the apostles were by this precept obliged to go up and down the world preaching the gospel, but not presently. So it is plain that the apostles understood their commission, from Ac 1:8 Ac 3:26 13:46 18:6,7 Ga 2:7. They were first to preach and

to baptize amongst the Jews, and then thus to disciple all nations. Pastors and teachers who succeeded the apostles were not under this obligation, but were to be fixed in churches gathered, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of the apostles. They by this commission have authority in any place to preach and to baptize, but are not under an obligation to fix no where, but to go up and down preaching in all nations.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptizing them is no more than washing them with water. We read of the baptism of *pots and cups*, Mr 7:8, (we translate it *washing*,) which we know may be by dipping them in water, or by pouring or sprinkling of water upon them. It is true, the first baptisms of which we read in holy writ were by dippings of the persons baptized. It was in a hot country, where it might be at any time without the danger of persons' lives. Where it may be, we judge it reasonable, and most resembling our burial with Christ by baptism into death; but we cannot think it necessary, for God loveth mercy rather than sacrifice, and the thing signified by baptism, viz. the washing away of the soul's sins with the blood of Christ, is in Scripture expressed to us by pouring and sprinkling, Eze 36:25 Heb 12:24 1Pe 1:2.

In the name of the Father, &c.; in the Greek it is, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, into the name. *In the name* doth not only import the naming of the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost upon them, but, in the authority, or (which is indeed the chief) into the profession of the trinity of the persons in the one Divine Being: dedicating the persons baptized to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thereby obliging them to worship and serve God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for in baptism there is both a solemn dedication of the person to God, and a solemn stipulation: the person baptized either covenanting for himself that he will be the Lord's, or his parents covenanting for him that he shall be the Lord's; which covenant doth both oblige the parents to do what in them lieth in order to that end, and also the child, the parents covenanting for no more than the child was under a natural and religious obligation to perform, if such covenant had never been made by its parents on its behalf.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. There is a teaching must go before baptism of persons grown up; and this was the constant practice of the

apostles. It is fit men should act as rational creatures, understanding what they do. And there is a teaching which must follow baptism; for baptism without obedience, and a living up to that covenant in which we are engaged, will save no soul, but lay it under a greater condemnation. The apostles might teach nothing but what Christ had commanded them, and they were bound to teach whatsoever Christ had commanded them. Here now is the rule of the baptized person's obedience. We are bound to no obedience but of the commands of Christ, and to a perfect obedience of them, under the penalty of eternal condemnation. When Mark saith, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, it doth not imply that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, or in the same order with faith in Christ; but that the contempt of it is damnable, as being a piece of presumptuous disobedience; and such a faith is to be understood there, under the notion of believing, as worketh by love.

And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: I am and I will be with you, and those who succeed you in the work of the ministry, being called of me thereunto. I will be with you, protecting you, and upholding that ordinance, and blessing you, and all others of my faithful ministers that labour for making me and my gospel known, with success.

Unto the end of the world; not of this age only, but of the world: my ministry begun in you shall not fail, nor shall the adding of souls to the number of them who shall be saved (as a token of my gracious presence with you) fail, till the world shall be determined, and the new heavens and the new earth shall appear. What Mark addeth concerning the signs that should follow those that believed, had a particular reference to the times immediately following Christ's ascension into heaven, and is to be understood of those miraculous operations which were to be wrought by the apostles, and others, for a further confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel by them preached. Matthew says nothing of them here. There is no promise of Christ's presence with his ministers to enable to such operations to the end of the world; but with his ministers preaching, baptizing, and teaching men to observe and to do whatsoever he hath commanded them, he hath promised to be, till time shall be no more.