

# Barnes Notes on Matthew 4:16 thru 7:29

## Barnes, Albert

Matthew 4:16

### Verse 16

**The people which sat in darkness**—This is an expression denoting great ignorance.

As in darkness or night we can see nothing, and know not where to go, so those who are ignorant of God and their duty are said to be in darkness. The instruction which removes this ignorance is called light. See John 3:19; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:8. As ignorance is often connected with crime and vice, so darkness is sometimes used to denote sin, 1 Thes 5:5; Eph. 5:11; Luke 22:53.

**Saw great light**—That is, as the passage is employed by Matthew, the light under the Messiah would spring up among them. In that region he grew up, and in that region he preached a great part of his discourses and performed a great part of his miracles.

**The region and shadow of death**—This is a forcible and beautiful image, designed also to denote ignorance and sin. It is often used in the Bible, and is very expressive. A “shadow” is caused by an object coming between us and the sun. So the Hebrews imaged death as standing between us and the sun, and casting a long, dark, and baleful shadow abroad on the face of the nations, denoting their great ignorance, sin, and woe.. It denotes a dismal, gloomy, and dreadful shade, where death and sin reign, like the chills, damps, and horrors of the dwelling-place of the dead. See Job 10:21; 16:16; 34:22; Ps. 23:4; Jer. 2:6. See also the notes at Isa. 9:2. These expressions denote that the country of Galilee was especially dark. We know that the people were proverbially ignorant and stupid. They were distinguished for a coarse, outlandish manner of speech Mark 14:70, and are represented as having been also distinguished by a general profligacy of morals and manners. It shows the great compassion of the Saviour, that he went to preach to such poor and despised sinners. Instead of seeking the rich and the learned, he chose to minister to the needy, the ignorant, and the contemned. His office is to enlighten the ignorant; his delight to guide the wandering, and to raise up those that are in the shadow of death. In doing this, Jesus set an example for all his followers. It is their duty to seek out those who are sitting in the shadow of death, and to send the gospel to them. No small part of the world is still lying in wickedness—as wicked and wretched as was the land of Zabulon and Naphthali in the time of Jesus. The Lord Jesus is able to enlighten them also, and every Christian should regard it a privilege, as well as a duty, to

imitate his Saviour in this, and to be permitted to send to them the light of life.  
See Matt. 28:19.

**Matthew 4:17**

**MATTHEW 4:17**

See the notes at Matt. 3:2.

**Matthew 4:18**

**MATTHEW 4:18**

**Sea of Galilee**—This was also called the Sea of Tiberias and the Lake of Gennesareth, and also the Sea of Chinnereth, Num. 34:11; Deut. 3:17; Josh. 12:3. Its form is an irregular oval, with the large end to the north. It is about 14 miles in length, and from 6 miles to 9 miles in width. It is about 600 feet lower than the Mediterranean, and this great depression accounts for some of its special phenomena. There is no part of Palestine, it is said, which can be compared in beauty with the environs of this lake. Many populous cities once stood on its shores, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hippo, etc. The shores are described by Josephus as a perfect paradise, producing every luxury under heaven at all seasons of the year, and its remarkable beauty is still noticed by the traveler. “Seen from any point of the surrounding heights, it is a fine sheet of water a burnished mirror set in a framework of surrounding hills and rugged mountains, which rise and roll backward and upward to where hoary Hermon hangs the picture on the blue vault of heaven.” The lake is fed mainly by the Jordan; but besides this there are several great fountains and streams emptying into it during the rainy seasons, which pour an immense amount of water into it, raising its level several feet above the ordinary mark. See *The Land and the Book* (Thomson), vol. ii. p. 77. Lieutenant Lynch reports its greatest ascertained depth at 165 feet. The waters of the lake are sweet and pleasant to the taste, and clear. The lake still abounds with fish, and gives employment, as it did in the time of our Saviour, to those who live on its shores. It is, however, stormy, probably due to the high hills by which it is surrounded.

**Simon called Peter**—The name “Peter” means a rock, and is the same as “Cephas.” See the Matt. 16:18 note; also John 1:42 note; 1 Cor. 15:5 note.

**Matthew 4:19**

**MATTHEW 4:19**

**Fishers of men**—Ministers or preachers of the gospel, whose business it shall be to win souls to Christ.

**Matthew 4:20**

**MATTHEW 4:20**

**Straightway**—Immediately—as all should do when the Lord Jesus calls them.

**Left their nets**—Their nets were the means of their living, perhaps all their property. By leaving them immediately, and following him, they gave every evidence of sincerity. They showed, what we should, that they were willing to forsake all for the sake of Jesus, and to follow him wherever he should lead them. They went forth to persecution and death for his sake; but also to the honor of saving souls from death, and establishing a church that shall continue to the end of time. Little did they know what awaited them when they left their unmended nets to rot on the beach, and followed the unknown and unhonored Jesus of Nazareth. So we know not what awaits us when we become his followers; but we should cheerfully go when our Saviour calls, willing to commit all into his hands—come honor or dishonor, sickness or health, riches or poverty, life or death. Be it ours to do our duty at once, and to commit the result to the great Redeemer who has called us. Compare Matt. 6:33; 8:21-22; John 21:21-22.

**Follow him**—This is an expression denoting that they became his disciples, 2 Kings 6:19.

#### **Matthew 4:21**

#### **MATTHEW 4:21**

**And going on from thence**—From the place where he had found Peter and Andrew, Matt. 4:18.

**Saw two other brothers**—They were men engaged in the same employment, as it is probable that there were many such in the neighborhood of the lake.

**In a ship**—A small vessel. In fact, it was little more, probably, than a sail-boat.

**Mending their nets**—A very common employment when they were not actually engaged in fishing.

#### **Matthew 4:22**

#### **MATTHEW 4:22**

**Left their father**—This showed how willing they were to follow Jesus. They showed us what we ought to do. If necessary, we should leave father, and mother, and every friend, Luke 14:26. If they will go with us, and be Christians, it is well; if not, yet they should not hinder us. We should be the followers of Jesus. And, while in doing it we should treat our friends kindly and tenderly, yet we ought at all hazards to obey God, and do our duty to him. We may add that many, very many children, since Sunday schools have commenced, have been the means of their parents' conversion. Many children have spoken to their parents, or read the Bible to them, or other books, and prayed for them, and God has blessed them and converted them. Every child in a Sunday school ought to be a Christian; and then should strive and pray that God would convert his parents, and make them Christians too. We see here, too, what humble instruments God makes use of to convert people. He chose fishermen to convert the world. He chooses the foolish to confound the wise. And it shows that religion is true, and is the power of God,

when he makes use of such instruments to change the hearts of people and save their souls. See the notes at 1 Cor. 1:26-28.

### **Matthew 4:23**

#### **MATTHEW 4:23**

**All Galilee**—See the notes at Matt. 2:22.

**Synagogues**—Places of worship, or places where the people assembled together to worship God. The origin of synagogues is involved in much obscurity. The sacrifices of the Jews were appointed to be held in one place, at Jerusalem. But there was nothing to forbid the other services of religion to be performed at any other place. Accordingly, the praises of God were sung in the schools of the prophets; and those who chose were assembled by the prophets and seers on the Sabbath, and the new moons, for religious worship, 2 Kings 4:23; 1 Sam. 10:5-11. The people would soon see the necessity of providing convenient places for their services, to shelter them from storms and from the heat, and this was probably the origin of synagogues. At what time they were commenced is unknown. They are mentioned by Josephus a considerable time before the coming of Christ; and in his time they were multiplied, not only in Judea, but wherever there were Jews. There were no less than 480 in Jerusalem alone before it was taken by the Romans.

Synagogues were built in any place where ten men were found who were willing to associate for the purpose, and were the regular customary places of worship. In them the law, i. e. the Old Testament, divided into suitable portions, was read, prayers were offered, and the Scriptures were expounded. The law was so divided that the five books of Moses, and portions of the prophets, could be read through each year. The Scriptures, after being read, were expounded. This was done, either by the officers of the synagogue, or by any person who might be invited by the officiating minister. Our Saviour and the apostles were in the habit of attending at those places continually, and of speaking to the people, Luke 4:15-27; Acts 13:14-15.

The synagogues were built in imitation of the temple, with a center building, supported by pillars, and a court surrounding it. See the notes at Matt. 21:12. In the center building, or chapel, was a place prepared for the reading of the law. The law was kept in a chest, or ark, near to the pulpit. The uppermost seats Matt. 23:6 were those nearest to the pulpit. The people sat around, facing the pulpit. When the law was read, the officiating person rose; when it was expounded, he was seated. Our Saviour imitated their example, and was commonly seated in addressing the people, Matt. 5:1; 13:1.

**Teaching**—Instructing the people, or explaining the gospel.

**The gospel of the kingdom**—The good news respecting the kingdom he was about to set up; or the good news respecting the coming of the Messiah and the nature of his kingdom.

**Preaching**—See the notes at Matt. 3:1.

**All manner of sickness**—All kinds of sickness.

**Matthew 4:24**

**MATTHEW 4:24**

**And his fame went throughout all Syria**—It is not easy to fix the exact bounds of Syria in the time of our Saviour. It was, perhaps, the general name for the country lying between the Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west; and between Mount Taurus on the north, and Arabia on the south. Through all this region his celebrity was spread by his power of working miracles; and, as might be expected, the sick from every quarter were brought to him, in the hope that he would give relief.

**Those possessed with devils**—Much difficulty exists, and much has been written respecting those in the New Testament said to be possessed with the devil. It has been maintained by many that the sacred writers only meant by this expression to denote those who were melancholy or epileptic, or afflicted with some other grievous disease. This opinion has been supported by arguments too long to be repeated here. On the other hand, it has been supposed that the persons so described were under the influence of evil spirits, who had complete possession of the faculties, and who produced many symptoms of disease not unlike melancholy, madness, and epilepsy. That such was the fact will appear from the following considerations:

1. Christ and the apostles spoke to them and of them as such; they addressed them, and managed them, precisely as if they were so possessed, leaving their hearers to infer beyond a doubt that such was their real opinion.
2. Those who were thus possessed spake, conversed, asked questions, gave answers, and expressed their knowledge of Christ, and their fear of him things that certainly could not be said of diseases, Matt. 8:28; Luke 8:27.
3. The devils, or evil spirits, are represented as going out of the persons possessed, and entering the bodies of others, Matt. 8:32.
4. Jesus spake to them, and asked their name, and they answered him. He threatened them, commanded them to be silent, to depart, and not to return, Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25.
5. Those possessed are said “to know Christ; to be acquainted with the Son of God,” Luke 4:34; Mark 1:24. This could not be said of diseases.
6. The early fathers of the Church interpreted these passages in the same way. They derived their opinions probably from the apostles themselves, and their opinions are a fair interpretation of the apostles’ sentiments.
7. If it is denied that Christ believed in such possessions, it does not appear why any other clearly-expressed sentiment of his may not in the same way be disputed. There is, perhaps, no subject on which he expressed himself more clearly, or acted more uniformly, or which he left more clearly impressed on the minds of his disciples.

Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion that those persons were really under the influence of devils. For:

1. It is no more absurd to suppose that an angel, or many angels, should have fallen and become wicked than that so many people should.
2. It is no more absurd that Satan should have possession of the human faculties, or inflict diseases, than that people should do a thing which is done every day. What is more common than for a wicked man to corrupt the morals of others, or, by inducing them to become intemperate, to produce a state of body and mind quite as bad as to be possessed with the devil?
3. We still see a multitude of cases that no man can prove not to be produced by the presence of an evil spirit. Who would attempt to say that some evil being may not have much to do in the case of madmen?
4. It afforded an opportunity for Christ to show his power over the enemies of himself and of man, and thus to evince himself qualified to meet every enemy of the race, and triumphantly to redeem his people. He came to destroy the power of Satan, Acts 26:18; Rom. 16:20-21.

**Those which were lunatic**—This name is given to the disease from the Latin name of the moon (*Luna*). It has the same origin in Greek. It was given because it was formerly imagined that the patient was affected by the increase or the decrease of the moon. The name is still retained, although it is certain that the moon has no effect on the disease. The disease is mentioned only in this place, and in Matt. 17:15. It was probably the falling-sickness or epilepsy, the same as the disease mentioned Mark 9:18-20; Luke 9:39-40.

**And those that had the palsy**—Many infirmities were included under the general name of palsy in the New Testament.

1. The paralytic shock, affecting the whole body.
2. The hemiplegy, affecting only one side of the body; the most frequent form of the disease.
3. The paraplegy, affecting all the system below the neck.
4. The catalepsy. This is caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or a part of the body, and is very dangerous. The effects are very violent and fatal. For instance, if, when a person is struck, he happens to have his hand extended, he is unable to draw it back; if not extended, he is unable to stretch it out. It gradually becomes diminished in size, and dried up in appearance. Hence, it was called the withered hand, Matt. 12:10-13.
5. The cramp. This, in Eastern countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means unfrequent. It originates from chills in the night. The limbs, when seized by it, remain unmovable, and the person afflicted with it resembles one undergoing a torture. This was probably the disease of the servant of the centurion, Matt. 8:6; Luke 7:2. Death follows from this disease in a few days.

**And he healed them**—This was done evidently by miraculous power. A miracle is an effect produced by divine power above, or opposed to, what are regular effects of the laws of nature. It is not a violation of the laws of nature, but is a suspension of their usual operation, for some important purpose. For instance, the regular effect of death is that the body returns to corruption. The ordinary laws of chemistry had been suspended by the operation of life—a power superior to those laws, and producing new combinations of matter in the animal or vegetable organization. When life is extinct those laws act in their proper power, and the body is decomposed; that is, the materials of which it is composed, under chemical laws, return to their natural forms of gases and earths. When one who claims to be from God suspends that regular effect, and gives life to a dead body for some important purpose, it is a miracle. Such an effect is clearly the result of divine power. No other being but God can do it. When, therefore, Christ and the apostles exercised this power, it was clear evidence that God approved of their doctrines; that he had commissioned them; and that they were authorized to declare his will. He would not give this attestation to a false doctrine. Most or all of these diseases were incurable. When Christ cured them by a word, it was the clearest of all proofs that he was sent from heaven. This is one of the strong arguments for Christianity.

#### **Matthew 4:25**

#### **MATTHEW 4:25**

**From Decapolis**—Decapolis was the name of a region of country in the bounds of the half-tribe of Manasseh, mainly on the east of Jordan. It was so called because it included 10 cities—the meaning of the word Decapolis in Greek. Geographers generally agree that Scythopolis was the chief of these cities, and was the only one of them west of the Jordan; that Hippo (Hippus), Gadara, Dion (or Dios), Pelea (or Pella), Gerasa (or Gergesa), Philadelphia, and Raphana (or Raphanae), were seven of the remaining nine, and the other two were either Kanatha and Capitoliass, or Damascus and Otopos. These cities were inhabited chiefly by foreigners (Greeks) in the days of our Saviour, and not by Jews. Hence, the keeping of swine by the Gergesenes Matt. 8:30-33, which was forbidden by the Jewish law.

#### **Matthew 5:1**

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#### **MATTHEW 5:1**

**And seeing the multitudes**—The great numbers that came to attend on his ministry. The substance of this discourse is recorded also in Luke 6. It is commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” It is not improbable that it was repeated, in substance, on different occasions, and to different people. At those

times parts of it may have been omitted, and Luke may have recorded it as it was pronounced on one of those occasions. See the notes at Luke 6:17-20.

**Went up into a mountain**—This mountain, or hill, was somewhere in the vicinity of Capernaum, but where precisely is not mentioned. He ascended the hill, doubtless, because it was more convenient to address the multitude from an eminence than if he were on the same level with them. A hill or mountain is still shown a short distance to the northwest of the ancient site of Capernaum, which tradition reports to have been the place where this sermon was delivered, and which is called on the maps the Mount of Beatitudes. The hill commonly believed to be that on which the sermon was delivered is on the road from Nazareth to Tiberias, not far from the latter place. The hill is known by the name of Kuran Huttin, the Horns of Huttin. Of this hill Professor Hackett (*Illustrations of Scripture*, pp. 323, 324) says: “Though a noontide heat was beating down upon us with scorching power, I could not resist the temptation to turn aside and examine a place for which such a claim has been set up, though I cannot say that I have any great confidence in it. The hill referred to is rocky, and rises steeply to a moderate height above the plain. It has two summits, with a slight depression between them, and it is from these projecting points, or horns, that it receives the name given to it. From the top the observer has a full view of the Sea of Tiberias. The most pleasing feature of the landscape is that presented by the diversified appearance of the fields. The different plots of ground exhibit various colors, according to the state of cultivation: some of them are red, where the land has been newly plowed up, the natural appearance of the soil; others yellow or white, where the harvest is beginning to ripen, or is already ripe; and others green, being covered with grass or springing grain. As they are contiguous to each other, or intermixed, these particolored plots present at some distance an appearance of joyful chequered work, which is really beautiful.

“In rhetorical descriptions of the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, we often hear the people represented as looking up to the speaker from the sides of the hill, or listening to him from the plain. This would not be possible with reference to the present locality; for it is too precipitous and too elevated to allow of such a position. The Saviour could have sat there, however, in the midst of his hearers, for it affords a platform amply large enough for the accommodation of the hundreds who may have been present on that occasion.”

**And when he was set**—This was the common mode of teaching among the Jews, Luke 4:20; 5:3; John 8:2; Acts 13:14; 16:13.

**His disciples came unto him**—The word “disciples” means “learners,” those who are taught. Here it is put for those who attended on the ministry of Jesus, and does not imply that they were all Christians. See John 6:66.

**Matthew 5:3**

**MATTHEW 5:3**

**Blessed are the poor in spirit**—The word “blessed” means “happy,” referring to that which produces felicity, from whatever quarter it may come.

**Poor in spirit**—Luke says simply, Blessed are the poor. It has been disputed whether Christ meant the poor in reference to the things of this life, or to the humble. The gospel is said to be preached to the poor, Luke 4:18; Matt. 11:5. It was predicted that the Messiah would preach to the poor, Isa. 61:1. It is said that they have special facilities for being saved, Matt. 19:23; Luke 18:24. The state of such persons is therefore comparatively blessed, or happy. Riches produce care, anxiety, and dangers, and not the least is the danger of losing heaven by them. To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition. Such are happy:

1. Because there is more real enjoyment in thinking of ourselves as we are, than in being filled with pride and vanity.
2. Because such Jesus chooses to bless, and on them he confers his favors here.
3. Because theirs will be the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

It is remarkable that Jesus began his ministry in this manner, so unlike all others. Other teachers had taught that happiness was to be found in honor, or riches, or splendor, or sensual pleasure. Jesus overlooked all those things, and fixed his eye on the poor and the humble, and said that happiness was to be found in the lowly vale of poverty more than in the pomp and splendors of life.

**Theirs is the kingdom of heaven**—That is, either they have special facilities for entering the kingdom of heaven, and of becoming Christians here, or they shall enter heaven hereafter. Both these ideas are probably included. A state of poverty a state where we are despised or unhonored by people is a state where people are most ready to seek the comforts of religion here, and a home in the heavens hereafter. See the notes at Matt. 2:2.

#### **Matthew 5:4**

#### **MATTHEW 5:4**

**Blessed are they that mourn**—This is capable of two meanings: either, that those are blessed who are afflicted with the loss of friends or possessions, or that they who mourn over sin are blessed. As Christ came to preach repentance, to induce people to mourn over their sins and to forsake them, it is probable that he had the latter particularly in view. Compare 2 Cor. 7:10. At the same time, it is true that the gospel only can give true comfort to those in affliction, Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:18. Other sources of consolation do not reach the deep sorrows of the soul. They may blunt the sensibilities of the mind; they may produce a sullen and reluctant submission to what we cannot help: but they do not point to the true

source of comfort. In the God of mercy only; in the Saviour; in the peace that flows from the hope of a better world, and there only, is there consolation, 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 5:1. Those that mourn thus shall be comforted. So those that grieve over sin; that sorrow that they have committed it, and are afflicted and wounded that they have offended God, shall find comfort in the gospel. Through the merciful Saviour those sins may be forgiven. In him the weary and heavy-laden soul shall find peace Matt. 11:28-30; and the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, shall sustain them here John 14:26-27, and in heaven all their tears shall be wiped away, Rev. 21:4.

### **Matthew 5:5**

#### **MATTHEW 5:5**

**The meek**—Meekness is patience in the reception of injuries. It is neither meanness nor a surrender of our rights, nor cowardice; but it is the opposite of sudden anger, of malice, of long-harbored vengeance. Christ insisted on his right when he said, “If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” John 18:23. Paul asserted his right when he said, “They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves, and fetch us out,” Acts 16:37. And yet Christ was the very model of meekness. It was one of his characteristics, “I am meek,” Matt. 11:29. So of Paul. No man endured more wrong, or endured it more patiently than he. Yet the Saviour and the apostle were not passionate. They bore all patiently. They did not press their rights through thick and thin, or trample down the rights of others to secure their own.

Meekness is the reception of injuries with a belief that God will vindicate us. “Vengeance is his; he will repay,” Rom. 12:19. It little becomes us to take his place, and to do what he has promised to do.

Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled; that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him. He is like “the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

**They shall inherit the earth**—This might have been translated the land. It is probable that here is a reference to the manner in which the Jews commonly expressed themselves to denote any great blessing. It was promised to them that they should inherit the land of Canaan. For a long time the patriarchs looked forward to this, Gen. 15:7-8; Exo. 32:13. They regarded it as a great blessing. It was so spoken of in the journey in the wilderness, and their hopes were crowned when they took possession of the promised land, Deut. 1:38; 16:20. In the time of our Saviour they were in the constant habit of using the Old Testament, where this promise perpetually occurs, and they used it “as a proverbial expression to denote any great blessing, perhaps as the sum of all blessings,” Ps. 37:20; Isa.

60:21. Our Saviour used it in this sense, and meant to say, not that the meek would own great property or have many lands, but that they would possess special blessings. The Jews also considered the land of Canaan as a type of heaven, and of the blessings under the Messiah. To inherit the land became, therefore, an expression denoting those blessings. When our Saviour uses this language here, he means that the meek shall be received into his kingdom, and partake of its blessings here, and of the glories of the heavenly Canaan hereafter. The value of meekness, even in regard to worldly property and success in life, is often exhibited in the Scriptures, Prov. 22:24-25; 15:1; 25:8, 15. It is also seen in common life that a meek, patient, mild man is the most prospered. An impatient and quarrelsome man raises up enemies; often loses property in lawsuits; spends his time in disputes and broils rather than in sober, honest industry; and is harassed, vexed, and unsuccessful in all that he does. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. 4:8. Compare 1 Tim. 6:3-6.

### **Matthew 5:6**

#### **MATTHEW 5:6**

**Blessed are they which do hunger ...**—Hunger and thirst, here, are expressive of strong desire. Nothing would better express the strong desire which we ought to feel to obtain righteousness than hunger and thirst. No needs are so keen, none so imperiously demand supply, as these. They occur daily, and when long continued, as in case of those shipwrecked, and doomed to wander months or years over burning sands, with scarcely any drink or food, nothing is more distressing. An ardent desire for anything is often represented in the Scriptures by hunger and thirst, Ps. 42:1-2; 63:1-2. A desire for the blessings of pardon and peace; a deep sense of sin, and want, and wretchedness, is also represented by thirsting, Isa. 55:1-2.

**They shall be filled**—They shall be satisfied as a hungry man is when supplied with food, or a thirsty man when supplied with drink. Those who are perishing for want of righteousness; those who feel that they are lost sinners and strongly desire to be holy, shall be thus satisfied. Never was there a desire to be holy which God was not willing to gratify, and the gospel of Christ has made provision to satisfy all who truly desire to be holy. See Isa. 55:1-3; 65:13; John 4:14; 6:35; 7:37-38; Ps. 17:15.

### **Matthew 5:7**

#### **MATTHEW 5:7**

**Blessed are the merciful**—That is, those who are so affected by the sufferings of others as to be disposed to alleviate them. This is given as an evidence of piety, and it is said that they who show mercy to others shall obtain it. The same sentiment is found in Matt. 10:42: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say

unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.” See also Matt. 25:34-40. This should be done with a wish to glorify God; that is, in obedience to his commandments, and with a desire that he should be honored, and with a feeling that we are benefiting one of his creatures. Then he will regard it as done to him, and will reward us. See the sentiment of this verse, that the merciful shall obtain mercy, more fully expressed in 2 Sam. 22:26-27; and in Ps. 18:25-26.

Nowhere do we imitate God more than in showing mercy. In nothing does God delight more than in the exercise of mercy, Exo. 34:6; Ezek. 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9. To us, guilty sinners; to us, wretched, dying, and exposed to eternal woe, he has shown his mercy by giving his Son to die for us; by expressing his willingness to pardon and save us; and by sending his Spirit to renew and sanctify our hearts. Each day of our life, each hour, and each moment, we partake of his undeserved mercy. All the blessings we enjoy are proofs of his mercy. If we, then, show mercy to the poor, the wretched, the guilty, it shows that we are like God. We have his spirit, and shall not lose our reward. And we have abundant opportunity to do it. Our world is full of guilt and woe, which we may help to relieve; and every day of our lives we have opportunity, by helping the poor and wretched, and by forgiving those who injure us, to show that we are like God. See the notes at Matt. 6:14-15.

### **Matthew 5:8**

#### **MATTHEW 5:8**

**Blessed are the pure in heart**—That is, whose minds, motives, and principles are pure; who seek not only to have the external actions correct, but who desire to be holy in heart, and who are so. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

**They shall see God**—There is a sense in which all will see God, Rev. 1:7. That is, they will behold him as a Judge, not as a Friend. In this place it is spoken of as a special favor. So also in Rev. 22:4, “And they shall see his face.” To see the face of one, or to be in the presence of any one, were terms among the Jews expressive of great favor. It was regarded as a high honor to be in the presence of kings and princes, and to be permitted to see them, Prov. 22:29, “He shall stand before kings.” See also 2 Kings 25:19, “Those that stood in the king’s presence;” in the Hebrew, those that saw the face of the king; that is, who were his favorites and friends. So here, to see God, means to be his friends and favorites, and to dwell with him in his kingdom.

### **Matthew 5:9**

#### **MATTHEW 5:9**

**Blessed are the peacemakers**—Those who strive to prevent contention, strife, and war; who use their influence to reconcile opposing parties, and to prevent lawsuits and hostilities in families and neighborhoods. Every man may do something of this; and no man is more like God than he who does it. There ought

not to be unlawful and officious interference in that which is none of our business; but without any danger of acquiring this character, every man has many opportunities of reconciling opposing parties. Friends, neighbors, people of influence, lawyers, physicians, ministers of the gospel, may do much to promote peace. And it should be taken in hand in the beginning. “The beginning of strife,” says Solomon, “is like the letting out of water.” “An ounce of prevention,” says the English proverb, “is worth a pound of cure.” Long and most deadly quarrels might often be prevented by a little kind interference in the beginning.

**Children of God**—See the notes at Matt. 1:1. Those who resemble God, or who manifest a spirit like his. He is the Author of peace 1 Cor. 14:33; and all those who endeavor to promote peace are like him, and are worthy to be called his children.

### **Matthew 5:10**

#### **MATTHEW 5:10**

**Blessed are they which are persecuted**—To persecute means literally to pursue; follow after, as one does a flying enemy. Here it means to vex, or oppress one, on account of his religion. They persecute others who injure their names, reputation, property, or who endanger or take their life, on account of their religious opinions.

**For righteousness’ sake**—Because they are righteous, or are the friends of God. We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by strange sentiments or conduct; by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be Christians, and to live the life of Christians, others persecute and revile us, we are to consider this as a blessing. It is an evidence that we are the children of God, and that he will defend us. “All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. 3:12.

**Theirs is the kingdom of heaven**—They have evidence that they are Christians, and that they will be brought to heaven.

### **Matthew 5:11**

#### **MATTHEW 5:11**

**Blessed are ye when men shall revile you**—Reproach you; call you by evil and contemptuous names; ridicule you because you are Christians. Thus, they said of Jesus that he was a Samaritan and had a devil John 8:48; that he was mad John 10:20; and thus they reviled and mocked him on the cross, Matt. 27:39-44. But, being reviled, he reviled not again 1 Pet. 2:23; and thus being reviled, we should bless 1 Cor. 4:12; and thus, though the contempt of the world is not in itself desirable, yet it is blessed to tread in the footsteps of Jesus, to imitate his example, and even to suffer for his sake, Phil 1:29.

**All manner of evil against you falsely**—An emphasis should be laid on the word falsely in this passage. It is not blessed to have evil spoken of us if we

deserve it; but if we deserve it not, then we should not consider it as a calamity. We should take it patiently, and show how much the Christian, under the consciousness of innocence, can bear, 1 Pet. 3:13-18.

**For my sake**—Because you are attached to me; because you are Christians. We are not to seek such things. We are not to do things to offend others; to treat them harshly or unkindly, and, to court revilings. We are not to say or do things, though they may be on the subject of religion, designed to disgust or offend. But if, in the faithful endeavor to be Christians, we are reviled, as our Master was, then we are to take it with patience, and to remember that thousands before us have been treated in like manner. When thus reviled or persecuted, we are to be meek, patient, humble; not angry; not reviling again; but endeavoring to do good to our persecutors and slanderers, 2 Tim. 2:24-25. In this way many have been convinced of the power and excellence of that religion which they were persecuting and reviling. They have seen that nothing else but Christianity could impart such patience and meekness to the persecuted; and have, by this means, been constrained to submit themselves to the gospel of Jesus. Long since it became a proverb, “that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

### **Matthew 5:12**

#### **MATTHEW 5:12**

**Rejoice, and be exceeding glad**—Regard it as a great privilege thus to be persecuted and to suffer—a thing not to be mourned over, but as among the chief blessings of life.

**For great is your reward in heaven**—That is, your reward will be great in the future world. To those who suffer most, God imparts the highest rewards. Hence, the crown of martyrdom has been thought to be the brightest that any of the redeemed shall wear; and hence many of the early Christians sought to become martyrs, and threw themselves in the way of their persecutors, that they might be put to death. They literally rejoiced, and leaped for joy, at the prospect of death for the sake of Jesus. Though God does not require us to seek persecution, yet all this shows that there is something in religion to sustain the soul which the world does not possess. Nothing but the consciousness of innocence, and the presence of God, could bear up the sufferers in the midst of these trials; and the flame, therefore, kindled to consume the martyr, has also been a bright light, showing the truth and power of the gospel of Jesus.

**The prophets ...**—The holy men who came to predict future events, and who were the religious teachers of the Jews. For an account of their persecution, see Heb. 11.

### **Matthew 5:13**

#### **MATTHEW 5:13**

**Ye are the salt of the earth**—Salt renders food pleasant and palatable, and preserves from putrefaction. So Christians, by their lives and instructions, are to

keep the world from entire moral corruption. By bringing down the blessing of God in answer to their prayers, and by their influence and example, they save the world from universal vice and crime.

**Salt have lost its savour**—That is, if it has become tasteless, or has lost its preserving properties. The salt used in this country is a chemical compound—chloride of sodium—and if the saltiness were lost, or it were to lose its savor, there would be nothing remaining. It enters into the very nature of the substance. In eastern countries, however, the salt used was impure, or mingled with vegetable or earthy substances, so that it might lose the whole of its saltiness, and a considerable quantity of earthy matter remain. This was good for nothing, except that it was used to place in paths, or walks, as we use gravel. This kind of salt is common still in that country. It is found in the earth in veins or layers, and when exposed to the sun and rain, loses its saltiness entirely. Maundrell says, “I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savor. The inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savor, as I found by proof. So Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. ii. pp. 43, 44) says, “I have often seen just such salt, and the identical disposition of it that our Lord has mentioned. A merchant of Sidon having farmed of the government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over an immense quantity from the marshes of Cyprus—enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for at least 20 years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the government out of some small percentage. Sixty-five houses in June—Lady Stanhope’s village were rented and filled with salt. These houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground, in a few years, entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the street, to be trodden underfoot by people and beasts. It was ‘good for nothing.’

“It should be stated in this connection that the salt used in this country is not manufactured by boiling clean salt water, nor quarried from mines, but is obtained from marshes along the seashore, as in Cyprus, or from salt lakes in the interior, which dry up in summer, as the one in the desert north of Palmyra, and the great lake of Jebbul, southeast of Aleppo.

“Maundrell, who visited the lake at Jebbul, tells us that he found salt there which had entirely ‘lost its savor,’ and the same abounds among the debris at Usdum, and in other localities of rocksalt at the south end of the Dead Sea. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the salt of this country, when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all, and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street. There is a sort of verbal verisimilitude in the manner in which our Lord alludes to the act: ‘it is cast out’ and ‘trodden under foot;’ so troublesome is this corrupted salt, that it is

carefully swept up, carried forth, and thrown into the street. There is no place about the house, yard, or garden where it can be tolerated. No man will allow it to be thrown on to his field, and the only place for it is the street, and there it is cast to be trodden underfoot of men.”

### **Matthew 5:14**

#### **MATTHEW 5:14**

**The light of the world**—The light of the world often denotes the sun, John 11:9. The sun renders objects visible, shows their form, their nature, their beauties, their deformities. The term light is often applied to religious teachers. See Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 1:4; 8:12; Isa. 49:6. It is pre-eminently applied to Jesus in these places, because he is, in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world. The apostles, Christian ministers, and all Christians, are lights of the world, because they, by their instructions and example, show what God requires, what is the condition of man, what is the way of duty, peace, and happiness the way that leads to heaven.

**A city that is set on a hill ...**—Many of the cities of Judea were placed on the summits or sides of mountains, and could be seen from afar. Perhaps Jesus pointed to such a city, and told his disciples that they were like it. Their actions could not be hid. The eyes of the world were upon them. They must be seen; and as this was the case, they ought to be holy, harmless, and undefiled.

Maundrell, Jowett, and others suppose that the Sermon on the Mount was delivered in the vicinity of the present city of Safed, or “the Horns of Huttin” (see the notes at Matt. 5:1), and that this city may have been in his eye, and may have been directly referred to by the Saviour when he uttered this sentiment. It would give additional force and beauty to the passage to suppose that he pointed to the city. Of this Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. pp. 420, 421) says, “The shape of the hill is a well-described oval, and the wall corresponds to it. The bottom of the outer ditch is now a very flourishing vineyard, and the entire circuit is not far from half a mile. The wall is mostly modern, but built on one more ancient, portions of which can be seen on the east side. The interior summit rises about a hundred feet higher than this wall, and was a separate castle, strongly defended. Here are beveled stones, as heavy, and as aged in appearance, as those of the most celebrated ruins in the country; and they prove that this has been a place of importance from a remote age. These ancient parts of the castle render it all but certain that there was then a city or citadel on this most conspicuous ‘hill’ top; and our Lord might well point to it to illustrate and confirm his precept. The present Hebrew name is Zephath, and may either refer to its elevation like a watchtower, or to the beauty and grandeur of the surrounding prospects. Certainly they are quite sufficient to suggest the name. There lies Gennesaret, like a mirror set in framework of dark mountains and many-faced hills. Beyond is the vast plateau of the Hauran, faintly shading with its rocky ranges the utmost horizon eastward. Thence the eye sweeps over Gilead and Bashan, Samaria and Carmel, the plains of Galilee, the coasts of Phoenicia,

the hills of Naphtali, the long line of Lebanon, and the lofty head of Hermon—a vast panorama, embracing a thousand points of historic and sacred interest.”

### **Matthew 5:15**

#### **MATTHEW 5:15**

**Neither do men light a candle ...**—The word rendered “candle” means any portable light, as a lamp, candle, lantern. Compare Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 12:35. Jesus proceeded here to show them that the very reason why they were enlightened was that others might also see the light, and be benefited by it. When people light a candle, they do not conceal the light, but place it where it may be of use. So it is with religion. It is given that we may benefit others. It is not to be concealed, but suffered to show itself, and to shed light on a surrounding wicked world.

**A bushel**—Greek, a measure containing nearly a peck. It denotes anything, here, that might conceal the light.

### **Matthew 5:16**

#### **MATTHEW 5:16**

**Let your light so shine ...**—Let your holy life, your pure conversation, and your faithful instructions, be everywhere seen and known. Always, in all societies, in all business, at home and abroad, in prosperity and adversity, let it be seen that you are real Christians.

**That they may see your good works**—The proper motive to influence us is not simply that we may be seen (compare Matt. 6:1), but it should be that our heavenly Father may be glorified. The Pharisees acted to be seen of men, true Christians act to glorify God, and care little what people may think of them, except as by their conduct others may be brought to honor God, yet they should so live that people may see from their conduct what is the proper nature of their religion.

**Glorify your Father**—Praise, or honor God, or be led to worship him. Seeing in your lives the excellency of religion, and the power and purity of the gospel, they may be won to be Christians also, and give praise and glory to God for his mercy to a lost world.

We learn here:

1. That religion, if it exists, cannot be concealed.
  2. That where it is not manifest in the life, it does not exist.
  3. That “professors” of religion, who live like other people, give evidence that they have never been truly converted.
  4. That to attempt to conceal or hide our Christian knowledge or experience is to betray our trust, injure the cause of piety, and to render our lives useless.
- And,

5. That good actions will be seen, and will lead people to honor God. If we have no other way of doing good—if we are poor, and unlearned, and unknown yet we may do good by our lives. No sincere and humble Christian lives in vain. The feeblest light at midnight is of use.

“How far the little candle throws his beams!  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world!”

### **Matthew 5:17**

#### **MATTHEW 5:17**

**Think not that I am come ...**—Our Saviour was just entering on his work. It was important for him to state what he came to do. By his setting up to be a teacher in opposition to the scribes and Pharisees, some might charge him with an intention to destroy their law, and to abolish the customs of the nation. He therefore told them that he did not come for that end, but really to fulfill or accomplish what was in the law and the prophets.

**To destroy**—To abrogate; to deny their divine authority; to set people free from the obligation to obey them. “The law.” The five books of Moses called the law. See the notes at Luke 24:44.

**The Prophets**—The books which the prophets wrote. These two divisions here seem to comprehend the Old Testament, and Jesus says that he came not to do away or destroy the authority of the Old Testament.

**But to fulfil**—To complete the design; to fill up what was predicted; to accomplish what was intended in them. The word “fulfill” also means sometimes “to teach” or “to inculcate,” Col. 1:25. The law of Moses contained many sacrifices and rites which were designed to shadow forth the Messiah. See the notes at Heb. 9. These were fulfilled when he came and offered himself a sacrifice to God,

“A sacrifice of nobler name.  
And richer blood than they.”

The prophets contained many predictions respecting his coming and death. These were all to be fulfilled and fully accomplished by his life and his sufferings.

### **Matthew 5:18**

#### **MATTHEW 5:18**

**Verily**—Truly, certainly. A word of strong affirmation.

**Till heaven and earth pass**—This expression denotes that the law never would be destroyed until it should be all fulfilled. It is the same as saying everything else may change; the very earth and heaven may pass away, but the law of God shall not be destroyed until its whole design has been accomplished.

**One jot**—The word “jot,” or  $\gamma\omicron\delta$  (יָוֶד), is the name of the Hebrew letter I, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

**One tittle**—The word used here, in the Greek, means literally a little horn, then a point, an extremity. Several of the Hebrew letters were written with small points or apices, as in the Hebrew letter, shin (שׁ שֵׁן), or the Hebrew letter, sin (שׁוֹן שֵׁן), which serve to distinguish one letter from another. To change a small point of one letter, therefore, might vary the meaning of a word, and destroy the sense. The name “little horn” was given to these points probably from the manner in which they were written, resembling a little horn. Professor Hackett says of a manuscript which he saw a Jew transcribing: “One peculiarity, that struck me at once as I cast my eye over the parchment, was the horn-like appearance attached to some of the letters. I had seen the same mark, before this, in Hebrew manuscripts, but never where it was so prominent as here. The sign in question, as connected with the Hebrew Letter Lamedh (לָמֶד) in particular, had almost the appearance of an intentional imitation of a ram’s head. It was to that appendage of the Hebrew letters that the Saviour referred when he said, “‘Not one jot or little horn’ (as the Greek term signifies, which our version renders ‘tittle,’) ‘shall pass from the law until all be fulfilled.’”—*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 234. Hence, the Jews were exceedingly cautious in writing these letters, and considered the smallest change or omission a reason for destroying the whole manuscript when they were transcribing the Old Testament. The expression, “one jot or tittle,” became proverbial, and means that the smallest part of the law should not be destroyed.

The laws of the Jews are commonly divided into moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The moral laws are such as grow out of the nature of things, and which cannot, therefore, be changed—such as the duty of loving God and his creatures. These cannot be abolished, as it can never be made right to hate God, or to hate our fellow-men. Of this kind are the ten commandments, and these our Saviour has neither abolished nor superseded. The ceremonial laws are such as are appointed to meet certain states of society, or to regulate the religious rites and ceremonies of a people. These can be changed when circumstances are changed, and yet the moral law be untouched. A general in an army may command his soldiers to appear sometimes in a red coat and sometimes in blue or in yellow. This would be a ceremonial law, and might be changed as he pleased. The duty of obeying him, and of being faithful to his country, could not be changed.

This is a moral law. A parent might permit his children to have 50 different dresses at different times, and love them equally in all. The dress is a mere matter of ceremony, and may be changed. The child, in all these garments, is bound to love and obey his father. This is a moral law, and cannot be changed. So the laws of the Jews. Those designed to regulate mere matters of ceremony and rites of worship might be changed. Those requiring love and obedience to God and love to people could not be changed, and Christ did not attempt it, Matt. 19:19; 22:37-39; Luke 10:27; Rom. 13:9. A third species of law was the judicial, or those laws

regulating courts of justice which are contained in the Old Testament. These were of the nature of the ceremonial law, and might also be changed at pleasure. The judicial law of the Hebrews was adapted to their own civil society. When the form of their polity was changed this was of course no longer binding. The ceremonial law was fulfilled by the coming of Christ: the shadow was lost in the substance, and ceased to be binding. The moral law was confirmed and unchanged.

### **Matthew 5:19**

#### **MATTHEW 5:19**

**Whosoever therefore shall break**—Shall violate or disobey.

**One of these least commandments**—The Pharisees, it is probable, divided the precepts of the law into lesser and greater, teaching that they who violated the former were guilty of a trivial offence only. See Matt. 23:23. Christ teaches that in his kingdom they who make this distinction, or who taught that any laws of God might be violated with impunity, should be called least; while they should be held in high regard who observed all the laws of God without distinction.

**Shall be called least**—That is, shall be least. See Matt. 5:9. The meaning of this passage seems to be this: in the kingdom of heaven, that is, in the kingdom of the Messiah, or in the church which he is about to establish (see the notes at Matt. 3:2), he that breaks the least of these commandments shall be in no esteem, or shall not be regarded as a proper religious teacher. The Pharisees, by dividing the law into greater and lesser precepts, made no small part of it void by their traditions and divisions, Matt. 23:23; 15:3-6. Jesus says that in his kingdom all this vain division and tradition would cease. Such divisions and distinctions would be a small matter. He that attempted it should be the least of all. People would be engaged in yielding obedience to all the law of God without any such vain distinctions.

**Shall be called great**—He that teaches that all the law of God is binding, and that the whole of it should be obeyed, without attempting to specify what is most important, shall be a teacher worthy of his office, and shall be called great.

Hence, we learn:

1. That all the law of God is binding on Christians. Compare James 2:10.
2. That all the commands of God should be preached, in their proper place, by Christian ministers.
3. That they who pretend that there are any laws of God so small that they need not obey them, are unworthy of his kingdom. And,
4. That true piety has respect to all the commandments of God. Compare Ps. 119:6.

### **Matthew 5:20**

#### **MATTHEW 5:20**

**Your righteousness**—Your holiness; your views of the nature of righteousness, and your conduct and lives. Unless you are more holy than they are, you cannot be saved.

**Shall exceed**—Shall excel, or abound more. The righteousness of true Christians is seated in the heart, and is therefore genuine. Jesus means that unless they had more real holiness of character than the scribes and Pharisees, they could not be saved.

**The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**—See the notes at Matt. 3:7. Their righteousness consisted in outward observances of the ceremonial and traditional law. They offered sacrifices, fasted often, prayed much, were punctilious about ablutions, and tithes, and the ceremonies of religion, but neglected justice, truth, purity, and holiness of heart. See Matt. 23:13-33. The righteousness that Jesus required in his kingdom was purity, chastity, honesty, temperance, the fear of God, and the love of man. It is pure, eternal, reaching the motives, and making the life holy.

**The kingdom of heaven**—See the notes at Matt. 3:2. Shall not be a suitable subject of his kingdom here, or saved in the world to come.

## **Matthew 5:21**

### **MATTHEW 5:21**

**Ye have heard**—Or, this is the common interpretation among the Jews. Jesus proceeds here to comment on some prevailing opinions among the Jews; to show that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was defective; and that people needed a better righteousness, or they could not be saved. He illustrates what he meant by that better righteousness by showing that the common opinions of the scribes were erroneous.

**By them of old time**—This might be translated to the ancients, referring to Moses and the prophets. But it is more probable that Jesus here refers to the interpreters of the law and the prophets. He did not set himself against the law of Moses, but against the false and pernicious interpretations of the law prevalent in his time.

**Thou shalt not kill**—See Exo. 20:13. This properly denotes taking the life of another with malice, or with an intention to murder him. The Jews understood it as meaning no more. The comment of our Saviour shows that it was spiritual, and was designed to extend to the thoughts and feelings as well as the external act.

**Shall be in danger of**—Shall be held guilty, and be punished by. The law of Moses declared that the murderer should be put to death, Lev. 24:21; Num. 35:16. It did not say, however, by whom this should be done, and it was left to the Jews to organize courts to have cognizance of such crimes, Deut. 16:18.

**The judgment**—This was the tribunal that had cognizance of cases of murder, etc. It was a court that sat in each city or town, and consisted commonly of seven members. It was the lowest court among the Jews, and from it an appeal might be taken to the Sanhedrin.

## **Matthew 5:22**

### **MATTHEW 5:22**

**But I say unto you**—Jesus being God as well as man John 1:1, 14, and therefore, being the original giver of the law, had a right to expound it or change it as he pleased. Compare Matt. 12:6, 8. He therefore spoke here and elsewhere as having authority, and not as the scribes. It may be added here that no mere man ever spake as Jesus did, when explaining or enforcing the law. He did it as having a right to do it; and he that has a right to ordain and change laws in the government of God must be himself divine.

**Is angry with His brother without a cause**—Anger, or that feeling which we have when we are injured, and which prompts us to defend ourselves when in danger, is a natural feeling, given to us:

1. As a proper expression of our disapprobation of a course of evil conduct;  
and
2. That we may defend ourselves when suddenly attacked.

When excited against sin, it is lawful. God is angry with the wicked, Ps. 7:11. Jesus looked on the hypocritical Pharisees with anger, Mark 3:5. So it is said, “Be ye angry, and sin not, Eph. 4:26. This anger, or indignation against sin, is not what our Saviour speaks of here. What he condemns here is anger without a cause; that is, unjustly, rashly, hastily, where no offence has been given or intended. In that case it is evil; and it is a violation of the sixth commandment, because “he that hateth his brother, is a murderer,” 1 John 3:15. He has a feeling which would lead him to commit murder, if it were fully acted out. The word “brother” here refers not merely to one to whom we are nearly related, having the same parent or parents, as the word is commonly used, but includes also a neighbor, or perhaps anyone with whom we may be associated. As all people are descended from one Father and are all the creatures of the same God, so they are all brethren: and so every man should be regarded and treated as a brother, Heb. 11:16.

**Raca**—This is a Syriac word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be empty, vain; and hence, as a word of contempt, denotes senseless, stupid, shallow-brains. Jesus teaches here that to use such words is a violation of the spirit of the sixth commandment, and if indulged, may lead to a more open and dreadful infraction of that law. Children should learn that to use such words is highly offensive to God, for we must give an account for every idle word which we speak in the day of judgment, Matt. 12:36.

**In danger of the council**—The word translated “council” is in the original Sanhedrin, and there can be no doubt that the Saviour refers to the Jewish tribunal of that name. This was instituted in the time of the Maccabees, probably about 200 years before Christ. It was composed of 72 judges: the high priest was the president of this tribunal. The 72 members were made up of the chief priests and elders of the people and the scribes. The chief priests were such as had

discharged the office of the high priest, and those who were the heads of the twenty-four classes of priests, who were called in an honorary way high or chief priests. See Matt. 2:4. The elders were the princes of the tribes or heads of the family associations. It is not to be supposed that all the elders had a right to a seat here, but such only as were elected to the office. The scribes were learned people of the nation elected to this tribunal, being neither of the rank of priests or elders. This tribunal had cognizance of the great affairs of the nation. Until the time when Judea was subjected to the Romans, it had the power of life and death. It still retained the power of passing sentence, though the Roman magistrate held the right of execution. It usually sat in Jerusalem, in a room near the temple. It was before this tribunal that our Saviour was tried. It was then assembled in the palace of the high priest, Matt. 26:3-57; John 18:24.

**Thou fool**—This term expressed more than want of wisdom. It was expressive of the highest guilt. It had been commonly used to denote those who were idolaters Deut. 22:21, and also one who is guilty of great crimes, Josh. 7:15; Ps. 14:1.

**Hell fire**—The original of this is “the GEHENNAH of fire.” The word GEHENNA, γέεννα *geenna*, commonly translated “hell,” is made up of two Hebrew words, and signifies the valley of Hinnom. This was formerly a pleasant valley near to Jerusalem, on the south. A small brook or torrent usually ran through it and partly encompassed the city. This valley the idolatrous Israelites devoted formerly to the horrid worship of Moloch, 2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chr. 28:3. In that worship, the ancient Jewish writers inform us, the idol of Moloch was of brass, adorned with a royal crown, having the head of a calf, and his arms extended as if to embrace anyone. When they offered children to him they heated the statue within by a great fire, and when it was burning hot they put the miserable child into his arms, where it was soon consumed by the heat; and, in order that the cries of the child might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments about the idol. These drums were called תוף *toph*, and hence a common name of the place was Tophet, תַּפֶּת *Tophet*, Jer. 7:31-32.

After the return of the Jews from captivity, this place was held in such abhorrence that, by the example of Josiah 2 Kings 23:10, it was made the place where to throw all the dead carcasses and filth of the city, and was not unfrequently the place of public executions. It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the sight was terrific; the air was polluted and pestilential; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fires continually burning there. The extreme loathsomeness of the place; the filth and putrefaction; the corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and night, made it one of the most appalling and terrific objects with which a Jew was acquainted. It was called the GEHENNA of fire, and was the image which our Saviour often employed to denote the future punishment of the wicked.

In this verse it denotes a degree of suffering higher than the punishment inflicted by the “court of seventy,” or the Sanhedrin, and the whole verse may

therefore mean, “He that hates his brother without a cause is guilty of a violation of the sixth commandment, and shall be punished with a severity similar to that inflicted by the court of judgment. He that shall suffer his passions to transport him still further, so that he shall make his brother an object of derision and contempt, shall be exposed to severer punishment, corresponding to that which the Sanhedrin (council) inflicts. But he who shall load his brother with odious appellations and abusive language shall incur the severest degree of punishment, represented by being burned alive in the horrid and awful valley of Hinnom.”

The amount, then, of this difficult and important verse is this: The Jews considered but one crime a violation of the sixth commandment, namely, actual murder, or willful, unlawful taking life. Jesus says that the commandment is much broader. It relates not only to the external act, but to the feelings and words. He specifies three forms of such violation:

1. Unjust anger.
2. Anger accompanied with an expression of contempt.
3. Anger, with an expression not only of contempt, but wickedness.

Among the Jews there were three degrees of condemnation: that by the “judgment,” the “council,” and the “fire of Hinnom.” Jesus says likewise there shall be grades of condemnation for the different ways of violating the sixth commandment. Not only murder shall be punished by God, but anger and contempt shall be regarded by him as a violation of the law, and punished according to the offence. As these offences were not actually cognizable before the Jewish tribunals, he must mean that they will be punished hereafter, and all these expressions therefore relate to degrees of punishment proportionate to crime in the future world—the world of justice and of woe.

### **Matthew 5:23**

#### **MATTHEW 5:23-24**

**Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar ...**—The Pharisees were intent only on the external act in worship. They looked not at all to the internal state of the mind. If a man conformed to the external rites of religion, however much envy, and malice, and secret hatred he might have, they thought he was doing well. Our Saviour taught a different doctrine. It was of more consequence to have the heart right than to perform the outward act. If, therefore, says he, a man has gone so far as to bring his gift to the very altar, and should remember that anyone had anything against him, it was his duty there to leave his offering and go and be reconciled. While a difference of this nature existed, his offering could not be acceptable. He was not to wait until the offended brother should come to him; he was to go and seek him out, and be reconciled. So now the worship of God will not be acceptable, however well performed externally, until we are at peace with those that we have injured. “To obey is better than sacrifice,” 1 Sam. 15:22. He that comes to worship his Maker filled with malice, and hatred, and envy, and at

war with his brethren, is a hypocritical worshipper, and must meet with God's displeasure. God is not deceived, and he will not be mocked.

**Thy gift**—Thy sacrifice. What thou art about to devote to God as an offering.

**To the altar**—The altar was situated in front of the temple, and was the place on which sacrifices were made. See the notes on plan, Matt. 21:12. To bring a gift to the altar was expressive of worshipping God, for this was the way in which he was formerly worshipped.

**Thy brother**—Any man, especially any fellow-worshipper. Anyone of the same religious society.

**Hath aught**—Is offended, or thinks he has been injured by you in any manner.

**First be reconciled**—This means to settle the difficulty; to make proper acknowledgment or satisfaction for the injury. If you have wronged him, make restitution. If you owe him a debt which ought to be paid, pay it. If you have injured his character, confess it and seek pardon. If he is under an erroneous impression, if your conduct has been such as to lead him to suspect that you have injured him, make an explanation. Do all in your power; and all you ought to do, to have the matter settled. From this we learn:

1. That, in order to worship God acceptably, we must do justice to our fellow-men.
2. Our worship will not be acceptable unless we do all we can to live peaceably with others.
3. It is our duty to seek reconciliation with others when we have injured them.
4. This should be done before we attempt to worship God.
5. This is often the reason why God does not accept our offerings, and we go empty away from our devotions. We do not do what we ought to others; we cherish improper feelings or refuse to make proper acknowledgments, and God will not accept such attempts to worship him.

## **Matthew 5:25**

### **MATTHEW 5:25-26**

**Agree with thine adversary quickly**—This is still an illustration of the sixth commandment. To be in hostility, to go to law, to be litigious, is a violation always, on one side or the other, of the law requiring us to love our neighbor, and our Saviour regards it as a violation of the sixth commandment. While you are in the way with him, says he, that is, while you are going to the court, before the trial has taken place, it is your duty, if possible, to come to an agreement. It is wrong to carry the contention to a court of law. See 1 Cor. 6:6-7. The consequence of not being reconciled, he expresses in the language of courts. The adversary shall deliver to the judge, and he to the executioner, and he shall throw you into prison. He did not mean to say that this would be literally the way with God, but that His dealings with those that harbored these feelings, and would not be reconciled with their brethren, were represented by the punishment inflicted

by human tribunals. That is, he would hold all such as violators of the sixth commandment, and would punish them accordingly.

There is no propriety in the use sometimes made of this verse, in representing God as the “adversary” of the sinner, and urging him to be reconciled to God while in the way to judgment. Nor does the phrase “thou shalt by no means come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing” refer to the eternity of future punishment. It is language taken from courts of justice, to illustrate the truth that God will punish people according to justice for not being reconciled to him. The punishment in the future world will be eternal indeed Matt. 25:46, but this passage does not prove it.

**Thine adversary**—A man that is opposed to us in law. It here means a creditor; a man who has a just claim on us.

**In the way with him**—While you are going before the court. Before the trial comes on. It is remarkable that this very direction is found in the Roman law of the Twelve Tables, which expressly directed the plaintiff and defendant to make up the matter while they were in the way, or going to the praetor—in via, *rem uti pacunt orato*.—*Blackstone’s Commentary*, iii. p. 299. Whether the Saviour had any reference to this cannot be determined. As the Roman laws prevailed to some extent in Palestine, however, it is possible that there was such an allusion.

**The officer**—The executioner; or, as we should say, the sheriff.

**The uttermost farthing**—The last farthing. All that is due. The farthing was a small coin used in Judea, equal to two mites. It was not quite equal to half a farthing of British money.

## Matthew 5:27

### MATTHEW 5:27-28

**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery**—See the notes at Matt. 5:21. Our Saviour in these verses explains the seventh commandment. It is probable that the Pharisees had explained this commandment, as they had the sixth, as extending only to the external act; and that they regarded evil thoughts and a wanton imagination as of little consequence, or as not forbidden by the law. Our Saviour assures them that the commandment did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the eye. He declares that they who indulge a wanton desire, that they who look on a woman to increase their lust, have already, in the sight of God, violated the commandment, and committed adultery in the heart. Such was the guilt of David, whose deep and awful crime fully shows the danger of indulging in evil desires, and in the roving of a wanton eye. See 2 Sam. 11; Ps. 51. See also 2 Pet. 2:14. So exceeding strict and broad is the law of God! And so heinous in his sight are thoughts and feelings which may be forever concealed from the world!

## **Matthew 5:29**

### **MATTHEW 5:29**

**Thy right eye**—The Hebrews, like others, were accustomed to represent the affections of the mind by the members or parts of the body, Rom. 7:23; 6:13. Thus, the bowels denoted compassion; the heart, affection or feeling; the reins, understanding, secret purpose. An evil eye denotes sometimes envy Matt. 20:15, and sometimes an evil passion, or sin in general. Mark 7:21-22: “out of the heart proceedeth an evil eye.” In this place, as in 2 Pet. 2:14, the expression is used to denote strong adulterous passion, unlawful desire, or wicked inclination. The right eye and hand are mentioned, because they are of most use to us, and denote that, however strong the passion may be, or difficult to part with, yet that we should do it.

**Offend thee**—The noun from which the verb “offend,” in the original, is derived, commonly means a stumbling-block, or a stone placed in the way, over which one might fall. It also means a net, or a certain part of a net against which, if a bird strikes, it springs the net, and is taken. It comes to signify, therefore, anything by which we fall, or are ensnared; and applied to morals, means anything by which we fall into sin, or by which we are ensnared. The English word “offend” means now, commonly, to displease; to make angry; to affront. This is by no means the sense of the word in Scripture. It means to cause to fall into sin. The eye does this when it wantonly looks upon a woman to lust after her.

**Pluck it out ...**—It cannot be supposed that Christ intended this to be taken literally. His design was to teach that the dearest objects, if they cause us to sin, are to be abandoned; that by all sacrifices and self-denials we must overcome the evil propensities of our nature, and resist our wanton imaginations. Some of the fathers, however, took this commandment literally. Our Saviour several times repeated this sentiment. See Matt. 18:9; Mark 9:43-47. Compare also Col. 3:5.

**It is profitable for thee**—It is better for thee. You will have gained by it.

**One of thy members perish**—It is better to deny yourself the gratification of an evil passion here, however much it may cost you, than to go down to hell forever.

**Thy whole body should be cast into hell**—Thy body, with all its unsubdued and vicious propensities. This will constitute no small part of the misery of hell. The sinner will be sent there as he is, with every evil desire, every unsubdued propensity, every wicked and troublesome passion, and yet with no possibility of gratification. It constitutes our highest notions of misery when we think of a man filled with anger, pride, malice, avarice, envy and lust, and with no opportunity of gratifying them forever. This is all that is necessary to make an eternal hell. On the word hell, see the notes at Matt. 5:22.

## **Matthew 5:30**

### **MATTHEW 5:30**

**And if thy right hand offend thee**—The right hand is selected for the same reason as the right eye, because it is one of the most important members of the human body. The idea is, that the dearest earthly objects are to be sacrificed rather than that we should commit sin; that the most rigid self-denial should be practiced, and that the most absolute self-government should be maintained at any sacrifice, rather than that we should suffer the mind to be polluted by unholy thoughts and impure desires.

### **Matthew 5:31**

#### **MATTHEW 5:31-32**

**It hath been said ...**—That is, by Moses, Deut. 24:1-2. The husband was directed, if he put his wife away, to give her a bill of divorce, that is a certificate of the fact she had been his wife, and that he had dissolved the marriage. There was considerable difference of opinion among the Jews for what causes the husband was permitted to do this. One of their famous schools maintained that it might be done for any cause, however trivial. The other maintained that adultery only could justify it. The truth was, however, that the husband exercised this right at pleasure; that he was judge in the case, and dismissed his wife when and for what cause he chose. And this seems to be agreeable to the law in Deuteronomy. Our Saviour in Mark 10:1-12, says that this was permitted on account of the hardness of their hearts, but that in the beginning it was not so. God made a single pair, and ordained marriage for life. But Moses found the people so much hardened; so long accustomed to the practice, and so rebellious, that, as a matter of civil appointment, he thought it best not to attempt any change. Our Saviour brought marriage back to its original intention, and declared that whosoever put away his wife henceforward, except for one offence, should be guilty of adultery. This is now the law of God. This was the original institution. This is the only law that is productive of peace and good morals, and that secures the respect due to a wife, and the good of children. Nor has any man or set of men—any legislature or any court, civil or ecclesiastical—a right to interfere, and declare that divorces may be granted for any other cause. They, therefore, whoever they may be, who are divorced for any cause except the single one of adultery, if they marry again, are, according to the Scriptures, living in adultery. No earthly laws can trample down the laws of God, or make that right which he has solemnly pronounced wrong.

### **Matthew 5:33**

#### **MATTHEW 5:33**

**Thou shalt not forswear thyself**—Christ here proceeds to correct another false interpretation of the law. The law respecting oaths is found in Lev. 19:12, and Deut. 23:23. By those laws people were forbid to perjure themselves, or to forswear, that is, swear falsely.

**Perform unto the Lord**—Perform literally, really, and religiously what is promised in an oath.

**Thine oaths**—An oath is a solemn affirmation or declaration, made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed, and imprecating his vengeance, and renouncing his favor if what is affirmed is false. A false oath is called perjury, or, as in this place, forswearing.

It appears, however, from this passage, as well as from the ancient writings of the Jewish rabbins, that while the Jews professedly adhered to the law, they had introduced a number of oaths in common conversation, and oaths which they by no means considered to be binding. For example, they would swear by the temple, by the head, by heaven, by the earth. So long as they kept from swearing by the name Yahweh, and so long as they observed the oaths publicly taken, they seemed to consider all others as allowable, and allowedly broken. This is the abuse which Christ wished to correct. “It was the practice of swearing in common conversation, and especially swearing by created things.” To do this, he said that they were mistaken in their views of the sacredness of such oaths. They were very closely connected with God; and to trifle with them was a species of trifling with God. Heaven is his throne; the earth his footstool; Jerusalem his special abode; the head was made by him, and was so much under his control that we could not make one hair white or black. To swear by these things, therefore, was to treat irreverently objects created by God, and could not be without guilt. It is remarkable that the sin here condemned by the Saviour prevails still in Palestine in the same form and manner referred to here. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. ii. p. 284) says, “The people now use the very same sort of oaths that are mentioned and condemned by our Lord. They swear by the head, by their life, by heaven, and by the temple, or what is in its place, the church. The forms of cursing and swearing, however, are almost infinite, and fall on the pained ear all day long.”

Our Saviour here evidently had no reference to judicial oaths, or oaths taken in a court of justice. It was merely the foolish and wicked habit of swearing in private conversation; of swearing on every occasion and by everything that he condemned. This he does condemn in a most unqualified manner. He himself, however, did not refuse to take an oath in a court of law, Matt. 26:63-64. So Paul often called God to witness his sincerity, which is all that is meant by an oath. See Rom. 1:9; 9:1; Gal. 1:20; Heb. 6:16. Oaths were, moreover, prescribed in the law of Moses, and Christ did not come to repeal those laws. See Exo. 22:11; Lev. 5:1; Num. 5:19; Deut. 29:12, 14.

### **Matthew 5:34**

#### **MATTHEW 5:34-35**

**But I say unto you, Swear not at all**—That is, in the manner which he proceeds to specify. Swear not in any of the common and profane ways customary at that time.

**By heaven; for it is God's throne**—To swear by that was, if it meant anything, to swear by Him that sitteth thereon, Matt. 23:22.

**Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool**—Swearing by that, therefore, is really swearing by God. Or perhaps it means:

1. That we have no right to pledge, or swear by, what belongs to God; and,
2. That oaths by inanimate objects are unmeaningful and wicked.

If they are real oaths, they are by a living Being, who has power to take vengeance. A footstool is that on which the feet rest when sitting. The term is applied to the earth to denote how lowly and humble an object it is when compared with God.

**Jerusalem**—See the notes at Matt. 2:1.

**City of the Great King**—That is, of God; called the Great King because he was the King of the Israelites, and Jerusalem was the capital of the nation, and the place where he was especially honored as king. Compare Ps. 46:4; 48:1-2; 87:3.

### **Matthew 5:36**

#### **MATTHEW 5:36**

**Neither shalt thou swear by thy head**—This was a common oath. The Gentiles also used this oath. To swear by the head was the same as to swear by the life; or to say, I will forfeit my life if what I say is not true. God is the Author of the life, and to swear by that, therefore, is the same as to swear by him.

**Because thou canst not make one hair white or black**—You have no control or right over your own life. You cannot even change one single hair. God has all that control; and it is therefore improper and profane to pledge what is God's gift and God's property; and it is the same as swearing by God himself.

### **Matthew 5:37**

#### **MATTHEW 5:37**

**But let your communication**—Your word; what you say.

**Be, Yea**—Yes. This does not mean that we should always use the word "yea," for it might as well have been translated "yes"; but it means that we should simply affirm or declare that a thing is so.

**More than these**—More than these affirmations.

**Cometh of evil**—Is evil. Proceeds from some evil disposition or purpose. And from this we may learn:

1. That profane swearing is always the evidence of a depraved heart. To trifle with the name of God, or with any of his works, is itself most decided proof of depravity.
2. That no man is believed any sooner in common conversation because he swears to a thing. When we hear a man swear to a thing, it is pretty good

evidence that he knows what he is saying to be false, and we should be on our guard. He that will break the third commandment will not hesitate to break the ninth also. And this explains the fact that profane swearers are seldom believed. The man who is always believed is he whose character is beyond suspicion in all things, who obeys all the laws of God, and whose simple declaration, therefore, is enough. A man that is truly a Christian, and leads a Christian life, does not need oaths and profaneness to make him believed.

3. It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The most worthless and vile, the refuse of mankind, the drunkard and the prostitute, swear as well as the best dressed and educated gentleman. No particular endowments are requisite to give finish to the art of cursing. The basest and meanest of mankind swear with as much tact and skill as the most refined, and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame should learn to be a common swearer. Any person has talents enough to learn to curse God and his fellowmen, and to pray—for every man who swears prays—that God would sink him and others into hell. No profane person knows but that God will hear his prayer, and send him to the regions of woe.

4. Profaneness does no one any good. Nobody is the richer, or wiser, or happier for it. It helps no one's morals or manners. It commends no one to any society. The profane man must be, of course, shut out from female society, and no refined conversation can consist with it. It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious in society; and awful in the sight of God.

5. God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless. Wantonly to profane His name, to call His vengeance down, to curse Him on His throne, to invoke damnation, is perhaps of all offences the most awful. And there is not in the universe more cause of amazement at His forbearance, than that God does not rise in vengeance, and smite the profane swearer at once to hell. Verily, in a world like this, where His name is profaned every day, and hour, and moment by thousands, God shows that He is slow to anger, and that His mercy is without bounds!

### **Matthew 5:38**

#### **MATTHEW 5:38-41**

**An eye for an eye ...**—This command is found in Exo. 21:24; Lev. 24:20, and Deut. 19:21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for burning. As a judicial rule it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But instead of confining it to magistrates, the Jews had extended it to private conduct, and made it the rule by which to take revenge. They considered themselves justified by this rule to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Our Saviour remonstrates against this. He declares that the law had no reference to

private revenge, that it was given only to regulate the magistrate, and that their private conduct was to be governed by different principles.

The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not to resist evil; that is, as it is in the Greek, nor to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or be murdered ourselves; rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and divine, justify self-defense when life is in danger. It cannot surely be the intention to teach that a father should sit by coolly and see his family butchered by savages, and not be allowed to defend them. Neither natural nor revealed religion ever did, or ever can, inculcate this doctrine. Our Saviour immediately explains what he means by it. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely have mentioned it. Such a case was far more worthy of statement than those which he did mention.

A doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed. and that the best people had acted on, deserved to be formally stated. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says that in these we had better take wrong than to enter into strife and lawsuits. The first case is where we are smitten on the cheek. Rather than contend and fight, we should take it patiently, and turn the other cheek. This does not, however, prevent our remonstrating firmly yet mildly on the injustice of the thing, and insisting that justice should be done us, as is evident from the example of the Saviour himself. See John 18:23. The second evil mentioned is where a man is litigious and determined to take all the advantage the law can give him, following us with vexatious and expensive lawsuits. Our Saviour directs us, rather than to imitate him rather than to contend with a revengeful spirit in courts of justice to take a trifling injury, and yield to him. This is merely a question about property, and not about conscience and life.

**Coat**—The Jews wore two principal garments, an interior and an exterior. The interior, here called the “coat,” or the tunic, was made commonly of linen, and encircled the whole body, extending down to the knees. Sometimes beneath this garment, as in the case of the priests, there was another garment corresponding to pantaloons. The coat, or tunic, was extended to the neck. and had long or short sleeves. Over this was commonly worn an upper garment, here called “cloak,” or mantle. It was made commonly nearly square, of different sizes, 5 or 6 cubits long and as many broad, and was wrapped around the body, and was thrown off when labor was performed. If, said Christ, an adversary wished to obtain, at law, one of these garments, rather than contend with him let him have the other also. A reference to various articles of apparel occurs frequently in the New Testament, and it is desirable to have a correct view of the ancient mode of dress. in order to a proper understanding of the Bible. The Asiatic modes of dress are nearly the same from age to age, and hence it is not difficult to illustrate the passages where such a reference occurs. The ordinary dress consisted of the inner

garment, the outer garment, the girdle (belt), and the sandals. In regard to the sandals, see the notes at Matt. 3:11.

In the girdle (belt) was the place of the pouch Matt. 10:9, and to it the sword and dirk were commonly attached. Compare 2 Sam. 20:8. In modern times the pistols are also fastened to the belt. It is the usual place for the handkerchief, smoking materials, inkhorn, and, in general, the implements of one's profession. The belt served to confine the loose-flowing robe or outer garment to the body. It held the garment when it was tucked up, as it was usually in walking or in labor. Hence, "to gird up the loins" became a significant figurative expression, denoting READINESS for service, activity, labor, and watchfulness; and "to loosen the loins" denoted the giving way to repose and indolence, 2 Kings 4:29; Job 38:3; Isa. 5:27; Luke 12:35; John 21:7.

**Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile**—The word translated "shall compel" is of Persian origin. Post-offices were then unknown. In order that the royal commands might be delivered with safety and despatch in different parts of the empire, Cyrus stationed horsemen at proper intervals on all the great public highways. One of those delivered the message to another, and intelligence was thus rapidly and safely communicated. These heralds were permitted to compel any person, or to press any horse, boat, ship, or other vehicle that they might need for the quick transmission of the king's commandments. It was to this custom that our Saviour refers. Rather, says he, than resist a public authority requiring your attendance and aid for a certain distance, go peaceably twice the distance.

**A mile**—A Roman mile was 1,000 paces.

**Twain**—Two.

### **Matthew 5:42**

#### **MATTHEW 5:42**

**Give to him that asketh thee**—This is the general rule. It is better to give sometimes to an undeserving person than to turn away one who is really in need. It is good to be in the habit of giving. At the same time, the rule must be interpreted so as to be consistent with our duty to our families 1 Tim. 5:8 and with other objects of justice and charity. It is seldom, perhaps never, good to give to a person who is able to work, 2 Thes 3:10. To give to such is to encourage laziness, and to support the idle at the expense of the industrious. If such a one is indeed hungry, feed him; if he needs anything further, give him employment. If a widow, an orphan, a man of misfortune, or an infirmed man, lame, or sick, is at your door, never send any of them away empty. See Heb. 13:2; Matt. 25:35-45. So this is true of a poor and needy friend that wishes to borrow. We are not to turn away or deny him. This deserves, however, some limitation. It must be done in consistency with other duties. To lend to every worthless man would be to throw away our property, encourage laziness and crime, and ruin our own families. It should be done consistently with every other obligation, and of this

everyone is to be the judge. Perhaps our Saviour meant to teach that where there was a deserving friend or brother in need, we should lend to him without usury, and without standing much about the security.

### **Matthew 5:43**

#### **MATTHEW 5:43**

**Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy**—The command to love our neighbor was a law of God, Lev. 19:18. That we must therefore hate our enemy was an inference drawn from it by the Jews. They supposed that if we loved the one, we must of course hate the other. They were total strangers to that great, special law of religion which requires us to love both. A neighbor is literally one that lives near to us; then, one who is near to us by acts of kindness and friendship. This is its meaning here. See also Luke 10:36.

### **Matthew 5:44**

#### **MATTHEW 5:44**

**Love your enemies**—There are two kinds of love, involving the same general feeling, or springing from the same fountain of good-will to all mankind, but differing so far as to admit of separation in idea. The one is that feeling by which we approve of the conduct of another, commonly called the love of complacency; the other, that by which we wish well to the person of another, though we cannot approve his conduct. This is the love of benevolence, and this love we are to bear toward our enemies. It is impossible to love the conduct of a person who curses and reviles us, who injures our person or property, or who violates all the laws of God; but, though we may hate his conduct, and suffer keenly when WE are affected by it, yet we may still wish well to the PERSON; we may pity his madness and folly; we may speak kindly *of* him and *to* him; we may return good for evil; we may aid him in the time of trial; we may seek to do him good here and to promote his eternal welfare hereafter, Rom. 12:17-20. This seems to be what is meant by loving our enemies; and this is a special law of Christianity, and the highest possible test of piety, and probably the most difficult of all duties to be performed.

**Bless them that curse you**—The word “bless” here means to “speak well of” or “speak well to:”—not to curse again or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can commend in an enemy; or, if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him. The word “bless,” spoken of God, means to regard with favor or to confer benefits, as when God is said to bless his people. When we speak of our “blessing God,” it means to praise Him or give thanks to Him. When we speak of blessing people, it “unites” the two meanings, and signifies to confer favor, to thank, or to speak well of.

**Despitefully use you**—The word thus translated means, first, to injure by prosecution in law; then, wantonly and unjustly to accuse, and to injure in any way. This seems to be its meaning here.

**Persecute**—See the notes at Matt. 5:10.

#### **Matthew 5:45**

#### **MATTHEW 5:45**

**That ye may be the children of your Father**—In Greek, the sons of your Father. The word “son” has a variety of significations. See the notes at Matt. 1:1. Christians are called the “sons” or “children” of God in several of these senses: as his offspring; as adopted; as his disciples; as imitators of Him. In this passage the word is applied to them because, in doing good to enemies, they resemble God. He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and good, and sends rain, without distinction, on the just and unjust. So His people should show that they imitate or resemble Him, or that they possess His spirit, by doing good in a similar way.

#### **Matthew 5:46**

#### **MATTHEW 5:46**

**What reward have ye?**—The word “reward” seems to be used in the sense of “deserving of praise.” If you only love those that love you, you are selfish; it is not genuine love for the “character,” but love for the “benefit,” and you deserve no commendation. The very “publicans” would do the same.

**The publicans**—The publicans were tax-gatherers. Judea was a province of the Roman empire. The Jews bore this foreign yoke with great impatience, and paid their taxes with great reluctance. It happened, therefore, that those who were appointed to collect taxes were objects of great detestation. They were, besides, people who would be supposed to execute their office at all hazards; men who were willing to engage in an odious and hated employment; people often of abandoned character, oppressive in their exactions, and dissolute in their lives. By the Jews they were associated in character with thieves and adulterers; with the profane and the dissolute. Christ says that even these wretched people would love their benefactors.

#### **Matthew 5:47**

#### **MATTHEW 5:47**

**And if you salute your brethren ...**—The word “salute” here means to show the customary tokens of civility, or to treat with the common marks of friendship. See the notes at Luke 10:4. The Saviour says that the worst men, the very publicans, would do this. Christians should do more; they should show that they have a different spirit; they should treat their “enemies” as well as wicked people do their “friends.” This should be done:

1. Because it is “right;” it is the only really amiable spirit; and,

2. We should show that religion is not selfish, and is superior to all other principles of action.

### **Matthew 5:48**

#### **MATTHEW 5:48**

**Be ye therefore perfect ...**—The Saviour concludes this part of the discourse by commanding his disciples to be “perfect.” This word commonly means “finished, complete, pure, holy.” Originally, it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to people, it refers to completeness of parts, or perfection, where no part is defective or wanting. Thus, Job Job 1:1 is said to be “perfect;” that is, not holy as God, or “sinless”—for fault is afterward found with him Job 9:20; 42:6; but his piety was “proportionate”—had a completeness of parts was consistent and regular. He exhibited his religion as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was not merely a pious man in one place, but uniformly. He was consistent everywhere. See the notes at that passage. This is the meaning in Matthew. Be not religious merely in loving your friends and neighbors, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies; imitate God; let your piety be “complete, proportionate, regular.” This every Christian may be; this every Christian **MUST** be.

#### **REMARKS ON MATTHEW 5**

1. The gospel pronounces blessings on things far different from what the world has thought to be a source of happiness. People suppose that happiness is to be found in mirth, in wealth, in honor, in esteem, in freedom from persecution. Christ says that it is to be sought in the reverse. Often people are most happy in poverty, in sickness, in persecution, when supported by the presence and promises of a merciful God. And if God appoints our station there, we should submit to it, and learn therewith to be content.

2. We may see the evil of anger. It is a species of murder. If secretly cherished, or exhibited by contempt and injury, it must bring down the displeasure of God. It is a source of misery. True enjoyment is found in meekness, peace, calmness, and benevolence. In such a firmness, and steadiness, and dependence on God as to keep the soul unruffled in the midst of provocation, is happiness. Such was Christ.

3. We see the evil of indelicacy of feeling and sentiment, and the strictness and severity of the law respecting the contact of the sexes Matt. 5:28. And yet what law is more frequently violated? By obscene anecdotes and tales; by songs and gibes; by double meanings and innuendoes; by looks and gestures; by conversation, and obscene books and pictures, this law of our Saviour is perpetually violated. If there is any one sentiment of most value for the comfort, the character, the virtuous sociability of the young—one that will shed the greatest charm over society, and make it the most pure, it is that which inculcates “perfect delicacy” and “purity” in the contact of the sexes. Virtue of any kind

never blooms where this is not cherished. Modesty and purity once gone, every flower that would diffuse its fragrance over life withers and dies with it. There is no one sin that so withers and blights EVERY virtue, none that so enfeebles and prostrates every ennobling feeling of the soul, as the violation of the seventh commandment in spirit or in form, in thought or in act. How should purity dwell in the heart, breathe from the lips, kindle in the eye, live in the imagination, and dwell in the conversation of all the young! An eternal, avenging God is near to every wanton thought, marks every eye that kindles with impure desire, rolls the thunder of justice over every polluted soul, and is preparing woe for every violator of the laws of purity and chastity, Prov. 7:22-23; 5:5; 2:18.

4. Revenge is equally forbidden. Persecution, slander, a spirit of litigation, anger, personal abuse, dueling, suicide, murder, are all violations of the law of God, and all must call down His vengeance.

5. We are bound to love our enemies. This is a law of Christianity, original and unique. No system of religion but Christianity has required it, and no act of Christian piety is more difficult. None shows more the power of the grace of God; none is more ornamental to the character; none more like God; and none furnishes better evidence of piety. He that can meet a man kindly who is seeking his hurt; who can speak well of one that is perpetually slandering and cursing him; that can pray for a man that abuses, injures, and wounds him: and that can seek heaven for him that wishes HIS damnation, is in the way to life. This is religion, beautiful as its native skies; pure like its Source; kind like its Author; fresh like the dews of the morning; clear and diffusive like the beams of the rising sun; and holy like the feelings and words that come from the bosom of the Son of God. He that can do this need not doubt that he is a Christian. He has caught the very spirit of the Saviour, and he MUST inherit eternal life.

**Matthew 6:1**

**Matthew 6**

**Matthew 6:1**

**MATTHEW 6:1**

**Take heed that ye do not your alms**—The word “alms” here denotes liberality to the poor and needy. In the margin, as in the best editions of the Greek it is “righteousness;” either referring to almsgiving as eminently a righteous act, or more probably including all that is specified in this and the following verses—almsgiving, prayer, fasting, Matt. 6:2-18. Our Saviour here does not positively command his disciples to aid the poor, but supposes that they WOULD DO it of course, and gives them directions HOW to do it. It is the nature of religion to help those who are really needy; and a real Christian does not wait to be “commanded” to do it, but only asks for the opportunity. See Gal. 2:10; James 1:27; Luke 19:8.

**Before men ...**—Our Lord does not require us never to give alms before people, but only forbids our doing it “to be seen of them,” for the purposes of ostentation and to seek their praise. To a person who is disposed to do good from a right motive, it matters little whether it be in public or in private. The only thing that renders it even desirable that our good deeds should be seen is that God may be glorified. See Matt. 5:16.

**Otherwise**—If your only motive for doing it is to be seen by people, God will not reward you. Take heed, therefore, that you do not do it to be seen, “otherwise” God will not reward you.

### **Matthew 6:2**

#### **MATTHEW 6:2**

**Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do**—The word “hypocrite” is taken from “stage-players,” who act the part of others, or speak not their own sentiments, but the sentiments of others. It means here, and in the New Testament generally, those who “dissemble” or hide their real sentiments, and assume or express other feelings than their own—those who, for purposes of ostentation, gain, or applause, put on the appearance of religion. It is probable that such persons, when they were about to bestow alms, caused a trumpet to be sounded, professedly to call the poor together to receive it, but really to call the people to see the proofs of their liberality and piety; or perhaps it may mean that they should not make a great noise about it, like sounding a trumpet.

**In the synagogues**—The word “synagogue” commonly means the place of assembling for religious worship known by that name. See the notes at Matt. 4:23. It might mean, however, any “collection of people” assembled for any purpose, and it is not improbable that it has that meaning here. It does not appear that they made a noise in bestowing charity in the synagogues, or that charity was commonly bestowed there; but it was probably done on occasion of any great assemblage, in any place of concourse, and at the corners of the streets, where it could be seen by many.

**They have their reward**—That is, they obtain the applause they seek the reputation of being charitable; and as this applause was all they wished, there is, of course, no further reward to be looked for or obtained.

### **Matthew 6:3**

#### **MATTHEW 6:3-4**

**Let not thy left hand know ...**—This is a proverbial expression, signifying that the action should be done as secretly as possible. The Hebrews often attribute actions to members which properly belong to persons. The encouragement for performing our acts of charity in secret is that it will be pleasing to God; that he will see the act, however secret it may be, and will openly reward it. If the reward is not granted in this life, it will be in the life to come. In multitudes of cases, however, alms given to the poor are “lent to the

Lord” Prov. 19:17, and will be repaid in this life. Rarely, perhaps never, has it been found that the man who is liberal to the poor has ever suffered by it in his worldly circumstances.

### **Matthew 6:5**

#### **MATTHEW 6:5**

**And when thou prayest ...**—Hypocrites manifested the same spirit about prayer as almsgiving; it was done in public places. The word “synagogues,” here, clearly means, not the place of worship of that name, but places where many were accustomed to assemble—near the markets or courts, where they could be seen of many. Our Lord evidently could not mean to condemn prayers in the synagogues. It might be said that he condemned OSTENTATIOUS prayer there, while they neglected SECRET prayer; but this does not appear to be his design. The Jews were much in the habit of praying in public places. At certain times of the day they always offered their prayers. Wherever they were, they suspended their employment and paid their devotions. This is also practiced now everywhere by Muslims, and in many places by Roman Catholics. It seems, also, that they sought publicity, and regarded it as proof of great piety.

### **Matthew 6:6**

#### **MATTHEW 6:6**

**Enter into thy closet**—Every Jewish house had a place for secret devotion. The roofs of their houses were FLAT places, well adapted for walking, conversation, and meditation. See the notes at Matt. 9:2. Professor Hackett (*“Illustrations of Scripture,”* p. 82) says: “On the roof of the house in which I lodged at Damascus were chambers and rooms along the side and at the corners of the open space or terrace, which constitutes often a sort of upper story. I observed the same thing in connection with other houses.” Over the porch, or entrance of the house, there was frequently a small room of the size of the porch, raised a story above the rest of the house, expressly appropriated for the place of retirement. Here, in secrecy and solitude, the pious Jew might offer his prayers, unseen by any but the Searcher of hearts. To this place, or to some similar place, our Saviour directed his disciples to repair when they wished to hold communion with God. This is the place commonly mentioned in the New Testament as the “upper room,” or the place for secret prayer.

The meaning of the Saviour is, that there should be some place where we may be in secret—where we may be alone with God. There should be some “place” to which we may resort where no ear will hear us but “His” ear, and no eye can see us but HIS eye. Unless there is such a place, secret prayer will not be long or strictly maintained. It is often said that we have no such place, and can secure none. We are away from home; we are traveling; we are among strangers; we are in stages and steamboats, and how can we find such places of retirement? I answer, the desire to pray, and the love of prayer, will create such places in

abundance. The Saviour had all the difficulties which we can have, but yet he lived in the practice of secret prayer. To be alone, he rose up “a great while before day,” and went into a solitary place and prayed, Mark 1:35. With him a grove, a mountain, a garden, furnished such a place, and, though a traveler, and among strangers, and without a house, he lived in the habit of secret prayer. What excuse can they have for not praying who have a home, and who spend the precious hours of the morning in sleep, and who will practice no self-denial that they may be alone with God? O Christian! thy Saviour would have broken in upon these hours, and would have trod his solitary way to the mountain or the grove that he might pray. He did do it. He did it to pray for thee, too indolent and too unconcerned about thy own salvation and that of the world to practice the least self-denial in order to commune with God! How can religion live thus? How can such a soul be saved?

The Saviour does not specify the TIMES when we should pray in secret. He does not say how OFTEN it should be done. The reasons may have been:

- (1) That he designed that his religion should be “voluntary,” and there is not a better “test” of true piety than a disposition to engage often in secret prayer. He intended to leave it to his people to show attachment to him by coming to God often, and as often as they chose.
- (2) An attempt to specify the times when this should be done would tend to make religion formal and heartless. Mohammed undertook to regulate this, and the consequence is a cold and formal prostration at the appointed hours of prayer all over the land where his religion has spread.
- (3) The periods are so numerous, and the seasons for secret prayer vary so much, that it would not be easy to fix rules WHEN this should be done.

Yet without giving rules, where the Saviour has given none, we may suggest the following as times when secret prayer is proper:

1. In the morning. Nothing can be more appropriate when we have been preserved through the night, and when we are about to enter upon the duties and dangers of another day, than to render to our great Preserver thanks, and to commit ourselves to His fatherly care.

2. In the evening. When the day has closed, what would be more natural than to offer thanksgiving for the mercies of the day, and to implore forgiveness for what we have said or done amiss? And when about to lie down again to sleep, not knowing but it may be our LAST sleep and that we may awake in eternity, what more proper than to commend ourselves to the care of Him “who never slumbers nor sleeps?”

3. We should pray in times of embarrassment and perplexity. Such times occur in every man’s life, and it is then a privilege and a duty to go to God and seek his direction. In the most difficult and embarrassed time of the American Revolution, Washington was seen to retire to a grove in the vicinity of the camp at Valley Forge. Curiosity led a man to observe him, and the father of his country was seen on his knees supplicating the God of hosts in prayer. Who can tell how much the

liberty of this nation is owing to the answer to the secret prayer of Washington?

4. We should pray when we are beset with strong temptations. So the Saviour prayed in the garden of Gethsemane (compare Heb. 5:7-8), and so we should pray when we are tempted.

5. We should pray when the Spirit prompts us to pray; when we feel lust like praying; when nothing can satisfy the soul but prayer. Such times occur in the life of every Christian, (and they are “spring-times” of piety—favorable gales to waft us on to heaven. Prayer to the Christian, at such times, is just as congenial as conversation with a friend when the bosom is filled with love; as the society of father, mother, sister, child is, when the heart glows with attachment; as the strains of sweet music are to the ear best attuned to the love of harmony; as the most exquisite poetry is to the heart enamored with the muses; and as the most delicious banquet is to the hungry.

Prayer, then, is the element of being—the breath the vital air; and, then, the Christian must and should pray. He is the most eminent Christian who is most favored with such strong emotions urging him to prayer. The heart is then full; the soul is tender; the sun of glory shines with unusual splendor; no cloud intervenes; the Christian rises above the world, and pants for glory. THEN we may go to be alone with God. We may enter the closet, and breathe forth our warm desires into his ever-open ear, and He who sees in secret will reward us openly.

**In secret**—Who is unseen.

**Who seeth in secret**—Who sees what the human eye cannot see; who sees the real designs and desires of the heart. Prayer should always be offered, remembering that God is acquainted with our real desires; and that it is those real desires, and not the words of prayer, that he will answer.

### **Matthew 6:7**

#### **MATTHEW 6:7**

**Use not vain repetitions**—The original word here is supposed to be derived from the name of a Greek poet, who made long and weary verses, declaring by many forms and endless repetitions the same sentiment. Hence, it means to repeat a thing often; to say the same thing in different words, or to repeat the same words, as though God did not hear at first. An example of this we have in 1 Kings 18:26: “They called on Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us!”<sup>o</sup> It may serve to illustrate this passage, and to show how true is the description here of prevailing modes of prayer, to refer to the forms and modes of devotion still practiced in Palestine by the Muslims. Dr. Thomson (“*The Land and the Book*”) gives the following description of what actually occurs: “See those men on that elevated terrace. One has spread his cloak, other their Persian rugs toward the south. They are Muslims, preparing to SAY prayers—rather PERFORM them, in this most public place, and in the midst of all this noise and confusion.

“Let us stop and watch the ceremony as it goes on. That man next us raises his open hands until the thumbs touch the ears, exclaiming aloud, “Allah-hu-akbar”—‘God is great.’ After uttering mentally a few short petitions, the hands are brought down and folded Together near the girdle, while he recites the first chapter of the Koran, and two or three other brief passages from the same book. And now he bends forward, rests his hands upon his knees, and repeats three times a formula of praise to ‘God most great.’ Then, standing erect, he cries “Allah-hu-akbar,” as at the beginning. Then see him drop upon his knees, and bend forward until his nose and forehead touch the ground directly between his expanded hands. This he repeats three times, muttering all the while the same short formulas of prayer and praise. The next move will bring him to his knees, and then, settling back upon his heels, he will mumble over various small petitions, with sundry grunts and exclamations, according to taste and habit. He has now gone through one regular *Rek’ah*; and, standing up as at the first, and on exactly the same spot, he will perform a second, and even a third, if specially devout, with precisely the same genuflections.

“They are obliged to repeat some expressions thirty times, others many hundred times. Would that these remarks did not apply to nominal Christians in this land as well as to Muslims!”

**The heathen do**—The original word is that which is commonly translated “Gentile.” The world was divided into two parts, the Jews and the Gentiles; that is, in the original, the “nations,” the nations destitute of the true religion. Christ does not fix the length of our prayers. He says that we should not repeat the same thing, as though God did not hear; and it is not improbable that he intended to condemn the practice of long prayers. His own supplications were remarkably short.

### **Matthew 6:9**

#### **MATTHEW 6:9-13**

This passage contains the Lord’s prayer, a composition unequalled for comprehensiveness and for beauty. It is supposed that some of these petitions were taken from those in common use among the Jews. Indeed some of them are still to be found in Jewish writings, but they did not exist in this beautiful combination. This prayer is given as a “model.” It is designed to express the “manner” in which we are to pray, evidently not the precise words or petitions which we are to use. The substance of the prayer is recorded by Luke, Luke 11:2-4. In Luke, however, it varies from the form given in Matthew, showing that he intended not to prescribe this as a form of prayer to be used always, but to express the substance of our petitions, or to show what petitions it would be proper to present to God. That he did not intend to prescribe this as a form to be invariably used is further evident from the fact that there is no proof that either he or his disciples ever used exactly this form of prayer, but clear evidence that they prayed often in other language. See Matt. 26:39-42, 44; Luke 22:42; John 17; Acts 1:24.

## **Matthew 6:9**

### **Verse 9**

**Our Father**—God is called a Father,

1. As he is the Creator and the Great Parent of all;
2. The Preserver of the human family and the Provider for their wants, Matt. 5:45; 6:32;
3. In a special sense he is the Father of those who are adopted into his family; who put confidence in him; who are the true followers of Christ, and made heirs of life, Rom. 8:14-17.

**Hallowed be thy name**—The word “hallowed” means to render or pronounce holy. God’s name is essentially holy; and the meaning of this petition is, “Let thy name be celebrated, venerated, and esteemed as holy everywhere, and receive from all people proper honor.” It is thus the expression of a wish or desire, on the part of the worshipper, that the name of God, or that God himself, should be held everywhere in proper veneration.

## **Matthew 6:10**

### **Verse 10**

**Thy kingdom come**—The word “kingdom” here means “reign.” Note, Matt. 3:2. The petition is the expression of a wish that God may “reign” everywhere; that his laws may be obeyed; and especially that the gospel of Christ may be advanced everywhere, until the world shall be filled with his glory.

**Thy will be done**—The will of God is, that people should obey his law, and be holy. The word “will,” here, has reference to his law, and to what would be “acceptable” to him. To pray, then, that his will may be done, on earth as in heaven, is to pray that his “law,” his “revealed will,” may be obeyed and loved. His law is perfectly obeyed in heaven, and his true children most ardently desire and pray that it may also be obeyed on the earth.

The object of these three “first” petitions, is, that God’s name should be glorified and his kingdom established; and by being placed first, we learn that his glory and kingdom are of more consequence than our wants, and that these should be first in our hearts and petitions before a throne of grace. °

## **Matthew 6:11**

### **Verse 11**

**Give us this day ...**—The word “bread,” here, denotes doubtless everything necessary to sustain life. See the notes at Matt. 4:4. Compare Deut. 8:3. This petition implies our dependence on God for the supply of our wants. As we are dependent on him one day as much as another, it was evidently the intention of the Saviour that prayer should be offered every day. The petition, moreover, is expressed in the plural number—give US—and it is evidently therefore, intended

to be used by more than one, or by some community of people. No community or congregation can meet every day for worship but families. It is therefore evident that this prayer contains a strong implied command for daily family prayer. It can nowhere else be used so as fully to come up to the meaning of the original intention; and nowhere else can it be breathed forth with so much propriety and beauty as from the lips of a father, the venerable priest of his household, and the pleader with God for those rich blessings which a parental bosom desires on his beloved offspring.

## **Matthew 6:12**

### **Verse 12**

**And forgive us our debts ...**—The word “debts” is used here figuratively.

It does not mean “literally” that we are “debtors to God,” but that our sins have a resemblance to debts. Debtors are those who are bound to others for some claim in commercial transactions; for something which we have had, and for which we are bound to pay according to contract. “Literally” there can be no such transaction between God and us. It must be used figuratively. We have not met the claims of law. We have violated its obligations. We are exposed to its penalty. We are guilty, and God only can forgive, in the same way as none but a “creditor” can forgive a debtor. The word “debts” here, therefore, means “sins,” or offences against God—offences which none but God can forgive. In the parallel place in Luke 11:4, the word sins is used. The measure by which we may expect forgiveness is that which we use in reference to others See Ps. 18:25-26; Matt. 18:23; Mark 11:26; Luke 11:4.

This is the invariable rule by which God dispenses pardon He that comes before him unwilling to forgive, harboring dark and revengeful thoughts, how can he expect that God will show him that mercy which he is unwilling to show to others? It is not, however, required that we should forgive “debts” in a pecuniary sense. To them we have a right, though they should not be pushed with an overbearing and oppressive spirit; not so as to sacrifice the feelings of mercy in order to secure the claims of justice. No one has a right to oppress; and when a debt cannot be paid, or when it would greatly distress a debtor’s wife and children, or a widow and an orphan, or when calamity has put it out of the power of an honest man to pay the debt, the spirit of Christianity requires that it should be forgiven. To such cases this petition in the Lord’s prayer doubtless extends. But it was probably intended to refer principally to injuries of character or person which we have received from others. If we cannot from the heart forgive them, we have the assurance that God will never forgive us.

## **Matthew 6:13**

### **Verse 13**

**And lead us not into temptation**—A petition similar to this is offered by David, Ps. 141:4: “Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked

works with the workers of iniquity.” God tempts no man. See James 1:13. This phrase, then, must be used in the sense of “permitting.” Do not “suffer” us, or “permit” us, to be tempted to sin. In this it is implied that God has such control over the tempter as to save us from his power if we call upon him. The word “temptation,” however (see the note at Matt. 4:1), means sometimes “trial, affliction,” anything that “tests” our virtue. If this be the meaning here, as it may be, then the import of the prayer is, “Do not afflict or try us.” It is not wrong to pray that we may be saved from suffering if it be the will of God. See Luke 22:42.

**Deliver us from evil**—The original in this place has the article—deliver us from THE evil—that is, as has been supposed, the Evil One, or Satan. He is elsewhere called, by way of eminence, the “Evil One,” Matt. 13:19; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12. The meaning here is, “deliver us from his power, his snares, his arts, his temptations.” He is supposed to be the great parent of evil, and to be delivered from him is to be safe. Or it may mean, “deliver us from the various evils and trials which beset us, the heavy and oppressive calamities into which we are continually liable to fall.”

**Thine is the kingdom**—That is, thine is the reign or dominion. Thou hast control over all these things, and canst so order them as to answer these petitions.

**Thine is the power**—Thou hast power to accomplish what we ask. We are weak, and cannot do it; but thou art Almighty, and all things are possible with thee.

**Thine is the glory**—That is, thine is the honor or praise. Not for “our honor,” but that thy glory, thy goodness, may be displayed in providing for our wants; thy power exerted in defending us; thy praise be celebrated by causing thy kingdom to spread through the earth.

This “doxology,” or ascription of praise, is connected with the prayer by the word “for,” to signify that all these things—the reign, power, and glory of God—will be manifested by granting these petitions. It is not because we are to be benefited, but that God’s name and perfections may be manifested. His glory is, then, the first and principal thing which we are to seek when we approach him. We are to suffer our concerns to be lost sight of in the superior glory and honor of his name and dominion. We are to seek temporal and eternal life chiefly because the honor of our Maker will be promoted, and his name be more illustriously displayed to his creatures. He is to be “first, last, supremest, best,” in our view; and all selfish and worldly views are to be absorbed in that one great desire of the soul that God may be “all in all.” Approaching him with these feelings, our prayers will be answered; our devotions will ascend like incense, and the lifting up our hands will be like the evening sacrifice.

**Amen**—This is a word of Hebrew origin, from a verb signifying “to be firm, secure, to be true and faithful.” It is a word expressing consent or strong approbation; a word of strong asseveration. It means “verily, certainly, so be it.” It is probable that this word was used by the people in the synagogue to signify

their assent to the prayer that was uttered by the minister, and, to some extent, it was probably so used in the Christian Church. See 1 Cor. 14:16.

It may be proper to remark that this doxology, “for thine is the kingdom,” etc., is missing in many manuscripts, and that its authenticity is doubtful.

#### **Matthew 6:14**

#### **MATTHEW 6:14-15**

**For if ye forgive men their trespasses**—If ye forgive others when they offend or injure you.

**Your heavenly Father will also forgive you**—This is constantly required in the Bible. See the notes at Matt. 6:12. Our Saviour says we should forgive even if the offence be committed seventy times seven times, Matt. 18:22. By this is meant, that when a man asks forgiveness, we are cordially and forever to pardon the offence; we are to declare our willingness to forgive him. If he does not ask forgiveness, yet we are still to treat him kindly; not to harbor malice, not to speak ill of him, to be ready to do him good, and be always prepared to declare him forgiven when he asks it, and if we are not ready and willing to forgive him; we are assured that God will not forgive us.

#### **Matthew 6:16**

#### **MATTHEW 6:16**

**Moreover, when ye fast**—The word “fast” literally signifies to abstain from food and drink, whether from necessity or as a religious observance. It is, however, commonly applied in the Bible to the latter. It is, then, an expression of grief or sorrow. Such is the constitution of the body, that in a time of grief or sorrow we are not disposed to eat; or, we have no appetite. The grief of the “soul” is so absorbing as to destroy the natural appetites of the “body.” People in deep affliction eat little, and often pine away and fall into sickness, because the body refuses, on account of the deep sorrow of the mind, to discharge the functions of health. “Fasting, then, is the natural expression of grief.” It is not arbitrary; it is what every person in sorrow naturally does. This is the foundation of its being applied to religion as a sacred rite. It is because the soul, when oppressed and burdened by a sense of sin, is so filled with grief that the body refuses food. It is, therefore, appropriate to scenes of penitence, of godly sorrow, of suffering, and to those facts connected with religion which are suited to produce grief, as the prevalence of iniquity, or some dark impending calamity, or storm, or tempest, pestilence, plague, or famine. It is also useful to humble us, to bring us to reflection, to direct the thoughts away from the allurements of this world to the bliss of a better. It is not acceptable except it be the “real expression,” of sorrow; the natural effect of the feeling that we are burdened with crime.

The Jews fasted often. They had four “annual” fasts in commemoration of the capture of Jerusalem Jer. 52:7, of the burning of the temple Zech. 7:3, of the

death of Gedaliah Jer. 41:4, and of the commencement of the attack on Jerusalem Zech. 8:19. In addition to these, they had a multitude of occasional fasts. It was customary, also, for the Pharisees to fast twice a week, Luke 18:12.

**Of a sad countenance**—That is, sour, morose; with assumed expressions of unfeigned sorrow.

**They disfigure their faces**—That is, they do not anoint and wash themselves as usual: they are uncombed, filthy, squalid, and haggard. It is said that they were often in the habit of throwing ashes on their heads and faces; and this, mixing with their tears, served still further to disfigure their faces. So much pains will people take, and so much suffering will they undergo, and so much that is ridiculous will they assume, to impose on God and people. But they deceive neither. God sees through the flimsy veil. Human eyes can pierce a disguise so thin. Hypocrites overact their part. Not having the genuine principles of piety at heart, they know not what is its proper expression, and hence they appear supremely contemptible and abominable. Never should people exhibit outwardly more than they feel; and never should they attempt to exhibit anything for the mere sake of ostentation.

**They have their reward**—They have all that they desired—the praise of men and “the pleasure of ostentation.” See the notes at Matt. 6:2.

### **Matthew 6:17**

#### **MATTHEW 6:17-18**

**But thou when thou fastest, anoint ...**—That is, appear as you do daily. Do not assume any new appearance, or change your visage or dress. The Jews and all neighboring nations were much in the habit of washing and anointing their bodies. This washing was performed at every meal; and where it could be effected, the head, or other parts of the body, was daily anointed with sweet or olive oil. In a warm climate, exposed to the great heat of the sun, this practice conduced much to health, preserved the skin smooth and tender, and afforded a most grateful sensation and odor. See Mark 7:2-3; James 5:14; Mark 11:13; John 12:3.

The meaning of this whole commandment is, when you regard it to be your duty to fast, do it as a thing expressing deep feeling or sorrow for sin, not by assuming unfeigned gravity and moroseness, but in your ordinary dress and appearance; not to attract attention, but as an expression of feeling toward God, and he will approve and reward it.

### **Matthew 6:19**

#### **MATTHEW 6:19**

**Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth**—Treasures, or wealth, among the ancients, consisted in clothes or changes of raiment, as well as in gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. It meant an abundance of “anything” that was held to be conducive to the ornament or comfort of life. As the Orientals

delighted much in display, in splendid equipage, and costly garments, their treasures, in fact, consisted much in beautiful and richly-ornamented articles of apparel. See Gen. 45:22, where Joseph gave to his brethren “changes of raiment;” Jos. 7:21, where Achan coveted and secreted “a goodly Babylonian garment.” Compare also Judg. 14:12. This fact will account for the use of the word “moth.” When we speak of “wealth,” we think at once of gold, and silver, and lands, and houses. When a Hebrew or an Orientalist spoke of wealth, he thought first of what would make a “display;” and included, as an essential part, splendid articles of dress. The “moth” is a small insect that finds its way to clothes and garments, and destroys them. The “moth” would destroy their apparel, the “rust” their silver and gold; thus all their treasure would waste away. The word rendered “rust” signifies anything which “eats into,” and hence, anything which would consume one’s property, and may have a wider signification than mere rust.

**And where thieves break through and steal**—The houses in the East were not unfrequently made of clay hardened in the sun, or of loose stones, and hence it was comparatively easy, as it was not uncommon, for thieves to “dig through” the wall, and effect an entrance in that way. See the notes at Job 24:16.

### **Matthew 6:20**

#### **MATTHEW 6:20-21**

**Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**—That is, have provision made for your eternal felicity. Do not exhaust your strength and spend your days in providing for the life here, but let your chief anxiety be to be prepared for eternity. Compare the notes at Isa. 55:2. In heaven nothing corrupts; nothing terminates; no enemies plunder or destroy. To have treasure in heaven is to possess evidence that its purity and joys will be ours. It is to be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1:4. The heart, or affections, will of course be fixed on the treasure. To regulate the heart, it is therefore important that the treasure, or object of attachment, should be right.

### **Matthew 6:22**

#### **MATTHEW 6:22-23**

**The light of the body ...**—The sentiment stated in the preceding verses—the duty of fixing the affections on heavenly things—Jesus proceeds to illustrate by a reference to the “eye.” When the eye is directed steadily toward an object, and is in health, or is single, everything is clear and plain. If it vibrates, flies to different objects, is fixed on no one singly, or is diseased, nothing is seen clearly. Everything is dim and confused. The man, therefore, is unsteady. The eye regulates the motion of the body. To have an object distinctly in view is necessary in order to correct and regulate action. Rope-dancers, that they may steady themselves, fix the eye on some object on the wall, and look steadily at that. If they should look down on the rope or the people, they might become

dizzy and fall. A man crossing a stream on a log, if he will look across at some object steadily, will be in little danger. If he looks down on the dashing and rolling waters, he will become dizzy, and fall. So Jesus says, in order that the conduct may be right, it is important to fix the affections on heaven. Having the affections there—having the eye of faith single, steady, unwavering—all the conduct will be correspondent.

**Single**—Steady, directed to one object. Not confused, as persons' eyes are when they see double.

**Thy body shall be full of light**—Your conduct will be regular and steady. All that is needful to direct the body is that the eye be fixed right. No other light is required. So all that is needful to direct the soul and the conduct is, that the eye of faith be fixed on heaven; that the affections be there.

**If, therefore, the light that is in thee ...**—The word “light,” here, signifies “the mind,” or principles of the soul. If this is dark, how great is that darkness! The meaning of this passage may be thus expressed: The light of the body, the guide and director, is the eye. All know how calamitous it is when that light is irregular or extinguished, as when the eye is diseased or lost. So the light that is in us is the soul. If that soul is debased by attending exclusively to earthly objects—if it is diseased, and not fixed on heaven how much darker and more dreadful will it be than any darkness of the eye! Avarice darkens the mind, obscures the view, and brings in a dreadful and gloomy night over all the faculties.

### **Matthew 6:24**

#### **MATTHEW 6:24**

**No man can serve two masters ...**—Christ proceeds to illustrate the necessity of laying up treasures in heaven from a well-known fact, that a servant cannot serve two masters at the same time. His affections and obedience would be divided, and he would fail altogether in his duty to one or the other. One he would love, the other he would hate. To the interests of the one he would adhere, the interests of the other he would neglect. This is a law of human nature. The supreme affections can be fixed on only one object. So, says Jesus, the servant of God cannot at the same time obey him, and be avaricious, or seek treasures supremely on earth. One interferes with the other, and one or the other will be, and must be, surrendered.

**Mammon**—Mammon is a Syriac word, a name given to an idol worshipped as the god of riches. It has the same meaning as Plutus among the Greeks. It is not known that the Jews ever formally worshipped this idol, but they used the word to denote wealth. The meaning is, ye cannot serve the true God, and at the same time be supremely engaged in obtaining the riches of this world. One must interfere with the other. See Luke 16:9-11.

### **Matthew 6:25**

## MATTHEW 6:25

**Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought ...**—The general design of this paragraph, which closes the chapter, is to warn his disciples against avarice, and, at the same time, against anxiety about the supply of their needs. This he does by four arguments or considerations, expressing by unequalled beauty and force the duty of depending for the things which we need on the providence of God. The “first” is stated in Matt. 6:25: “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” In the beginning of the verse he charged his disciples to take “no thought”—that is, not to be “anxious” about the supply of their wants. In illustration of this he says that God has given “life,” a far greater blessing than “meat;” that he has created the body, of far more consequence than raiment. Shall not he who has conferred the “greater” blessing be willing to confer the “less?” Shall not he who has formed the body so curiously, and made in its formation such a display of power and goodness, see that it is properly protected and clothed? He who has displayed “so great” goodness as to form the body, and breathe into it the breath of life, will surely “follow up” the blessing, and confer the “smaller” favor of providing that that body shall be clothed, and that life preserved.

**No thought**—The word “thought,” when the Bible was translated, meant “anxiety,” and is so used frequently in Old English authors. Thus, Bacon says, “Haweis died with ‘thought’ and anguish before his business came to an end.” As such it is used here by our translators, and it answers exactly to the meaning of the original. Like many other words, it has since somewhat changed its signification, and would convey to most readers an improper idea. The word “anxiety” would now exactly express the sense, and is precisely the thing against which the Saviour would guard us. See Luke 8:14; 21:34; Phil 4:6. “Thought” about the future is right; “anxiety, solicitude, trouble” is wrong. There is a degree of “thinking” about the things of this life which is proper. See 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Thes 3:10; Rom. 12:11. But it should not be our supreme concern; it should not lead to anxiety; it should not take time that ought to be devoted to religion.

**For your life**—For what will “support” your life.

**Meat**—This word here means “food” in general, as it does commonly in the Bible. We confine it now to animal food. When the Bible was translated, it denoted all kinds of food, and is so used in the old English writers. It is one of the words which has changed its meaning since the translation of the Bible was made.

**Raiment**—Clothing.

## Matthew 6:26

## MATTHEW 6:26

**Behold the fowls of the air**—The second argument for confidence in the providence of God is derived from a beautiful reference to the fowls or feathered tribes. See, said the Saviour, see the fowls of the air: they have no anxiety about

the supply of their wants; they do not sow or reap; they fill the grove with music, and meet the coming light of the morning with their songs, and pour their notes on the zephyrs of the evening, unanxious about the supply of their needs; yet how few die with hunger! How regularly are they fed from the hand of God! How he ministers to their unnumbered wants! How cheerfully and regularly are their necessities supplied! You, said the Saviour to his disciples, you are of more consequence than they are; and shall God feed them in such numbers, and suffer you to want? It cannot be. Put confidence, then, in that Universal Parent that feeds all the fowls of the air, and do not fear but that he will also supply your needs.

**Better than they**—Of more consequence. Your lives are of more importance than theirs, and God will therefore provide for them.

### **Matthew 6:27**

#### **MATTHEW 6:27**

**Which of you, by taking thought**—The third argument is taken from their extreme weakness and helplessness. With all your care you cannot increase your stature a single cubit. God has ordered your height. Beyond his appointment your powers are of no avail, and you can do nothing. So of raiment. He, by His providence, orders and arranges the circumstances of your life. “Beyond” that appointment of His providence, beyond HIS care for you, your efforts avail nothing. Seeing, then, that HE alike orders your growth and the supply of your needs, how obvious is the duty of **DEPENDING** upon him, and of beginning all your efforts, feeling that He only can grant you the means of preserving life.

**One cubit**—The cubit was originally the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The cubit of the Scriptures is not far from 22 inches. Terms of “length” are often applied to life, and it is thought by many to be so here. Thus, it is said, “Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth” Ps. 39:5; “Teach me the **MEASURE** of my days” Ps. 39:4. In this place it is used to denote a “small length.” You cannot increase your stature even a cubit, or in the smallest degree. Compare Luke 12:26.

**Stature**—This word means “height.” The original word, however, means oftener “age,” John 9:21: “He is of age;” so also John 9:23. If this be its meaning here, as is probable (compare Robinson, *Lexicon*), it denotes that a man cannot increase the length of his life at all. The utmost anxiety will not prolong it one hour beyond the time appointed for death.

### **Matthew 6:28**

#### **MATTHEW 6:28-29**

**Consider the lilies of the field**—The fourth consideration is taken from the care which God bestows on lilies. Watch the growing of the lily. It toils not, and it spins not; yet night and day it grows. With a beauty with which the most splendid monarch of the East was never adorned. it expands its blossom and fills

the air with fragrance. Yet this beauty is of short continuance. Soon it will fade, and the beautiful flower will be cut down and burned. God “so little” regards the bestowment of beauty and ornament as to give the highest adorning to this which is soon to perish. When He thus clothes a lily—a fair flower, soon to perish—will he be unmindful of his children? Shall THEY dear to His heart and imbued with immortality—lack that which is proper for them, and shall THEY in vain trust the God that decks the lily of the valley?

**Even Solomon in all his glory ...**—The common dress of Eastern kings was purple, but they sometimes wore white robes. See Est. 8:15; Dan. 7:9. It is to this that Christ refers. Solomon, says he, the richest and most magnificent king of Israel, was not clothed in a robe of “so pure a white” as the lily that grows wild in the field.

### **Matthew 6:30**

#### **MATTHEW 6:30**

**Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field**—What grows up in the field, or grows wild and without culture. The word “grass,” applied here to the lily, denotes merely that it is a vegetable production, or that it is among the things which grow wild, and which are used for fuel.

**Which today is**—It lives today, or it lives for a day. It is short-lived, and seems to be a thing of no value, and is so treated.

**Is cast into the oven**—The Jews had different modes of baking. In early times they frequently baked in the sand, warmed with the heat of the sun. They constructed, also, movable ovens made of clay, brick, or plates of iron. But the most common kind, and the one here probably referred to, was made by excavating the ground 2 1/2 feet in diameter, and from 5 to 6 feet deep. This kind of oven still exists in Persia. The bottom was paved with stones. It was heated by putting wood or dry grass into the oven, and, when heated, the ashes were removed and the bread was placed on the heated stones. Frequently, however, the oven was an earthen vessel without a bottom, about 3 feet high, smeared outside and inside with clay, and placed upon a frame or support. Fire was made within or below it. When the sides were sufficiently heated, thin patches of dough were spread on the inside, and the top was covered, without removing the fire as in the other cases, and the bread was quickly baked.

### **Matthew 6:32**

#### **MATTHEW 6:32-33**

**For after all these things do the Gentiles seek**—That is, those destitute of the true doctrines of religion, and unacquainted with proper dependence on Divine Providence, make it their chief anxiety thus to seek food and clothing. But YOU, who have a knowledge of your Father in heaven; who know that He will provide for your needs, should not be anxious. Seek first His kingdom; seek first to be righteous, and to become interested in His favor, and all necessary things will be

added to you. He has control over all things, and He can give you what you need. He WILL give you what HE deems best for you.

### **Matthew 6:34**

#### **MATTHEW 6:34**

**Take therefore no thought ...**—That is, no anxiety. Commit your way to God. The evil, the trouble, the anxiety of each day as it comes, is sufficient without perplexing the mind with restless cares about another day. It is wholly uncertain whether you live to see another day. If you do, it will bring its own trouble, and it will also bring the proper supply of your needs. God will be the same Father then as today, and will make then, as he does now, proper provision for your wants.

**The morrow shall take thought**—The morrow will have anxieties and cares of its own, but it will also bring the proper provision for those cares. Though you will have needs, yet God will provide for them as they occur. Do not, therefore, increase the cares of TODAY by borrowing trouble from the FUTURE. Do your duty faithfully NOW, and depend upon the mercy of God and his divine help for the troubles which are yet to come.

#### **REMARKS ON MATTHEW 6**

1. Christ has here forcibly taught the necessity of charity, of prayer, and of all religious duties.

2. We see the necessity of sincerity and honesty in our religious duties. They are not to be done to be seen by people. If they are, they cannot be performed acceptably. God looks upon the heart, nor is it possible to deceive Him. And of what avail is it to deceive people? How poor and pitiable is the reward of a hypocrite! How contemptible the praise of people when God is displeased! How awful will be the condition of such a one beyond the grave!

3. Christ has here, in a particular manner, urged the duty of prayer. He has given a model for prayer. Nothing can equal this composition in simplicity, beauty, and comprehensiveness. At the same time that it is so simple that it can be understood by a child, it contains the expression of all the needs of man at any age and in every rank of life.

The duty of prayer is urged by every consideration. None but God can provide for us; none but He can forgive, and guide, and support us; none but He can bring us into heaven. He is always ready to hear us. The humble He sends not empty away. Those who ask receive, and they who seek find. How natural and proper, then, is prayer! How strange that any man can live, and not pour out his desires to God! How strange that anyone is willing to go to eternity with this sad reflection: "I have gone through this world, spent my probation, wasted my strength, and am dying, and have never prayed!" How awful will be the reflection of the soul through all eternity: "I was offered eternal life, but I never asked for it. I lived from day to day and from year to year in God's world,

breathed His air, rioted on His beneficence, forgot His goodness, and never once asked Him to save my soul!" Who will be to blame if the prayerless soul is lost?

Secret and family prayer should be daily. We daily have the same necessities, are exposed to the same dangers, tread upon the borders of the same heaven or hell. How should the voice of praise and prayer go up as incense in the morning, and rise as a rich perfume in the shades of each evening! What more lovely object on earth is there than that of one in the bloom of health and the dew of youth, bending with reverence before the King of heaven, seeking forgiveness, peace, guidance, and salvation! And what a strange, misguided, and piteous object is a soul that never prays!

4. Forgiveness is essential in prayer. If we come to God harboring malice and unwilling to forgive, we have his solemn assurance that we shall not be ourselves forgiven.

5. "Avarice" is alike foolish and an insult to God, Matt. 6:19-24. It is the parent of many foolish and hurtful lusts. It alienates the affections from God produces envy of another's prosperity; leads to fraud, deception, and crime to obtain wealth, and degrades the soul. Man is formed for nobler pursuits than the mere desire to be rich. He lives for eternity, where silver will not be needed and where gold will be of no value. That eternity is near; and though we have wealth like Solomon, and though we be adorned as the lily, yet like Solomon we must soon die, and like the lily our beauty will soon fade. Death will lay us alike low; the rich and the poor will sleep together; and the worm will feed no more sweetly on the unfed and unclothed son of poverty, than on the man clothed in fine linen, and the daughter of beauty and pride. As avarice is moreover the parent of discontent, he only that is contented with the allotments of Providence, and is not restless for a change, is happy. After all, this is the true source of enjoyment. Anxiety and care, perplexity and disappointment, find their way more readily to the mansions of the rich than to the cottages of the poor. It is the mind, not mansions, and gold, and adorning, that gives ease; and he that is content with his situation will "smile upon his stool, while Alexander weeps upon the throne of the world."

6. We see how comparatively valueless is "beauty." How little it is regarded by God! He gives it to the lily, and in a day it fades and is gone. He gives it to the wings of the butterfly, and soon it dies and its beauty is forgotten. He gives it to the flowers of the spring, soon to fall; to the leaves of the forest, soon to grow yellow and decay in the autumn. How many lilies and roses does he cause to blossom in solitude where no man is, where they "waste their sweetness on the desert air!" How many streams ripple in the wilderness, and how many cataracts age after age, have poured their thunders on the air, unheard and unseen by mortals! So little does God think of beauty. So the human form and "face divine." How soon is all that beauty marred; and, as in the lily, how soon is its last trace obliterated! In the cold grave, among the undistinguished multitudes of the dead, who can tell which of all the mouldering host was blessed with a "lovely set of features or complexion?" Alas, all has faded like the morning

flower. How vain, then, to set the affections on so frail a treasure!

7. We see the duty and privilege of depending for our daily needs on the bounties of Providence. Satisfied with the troubles of today, let us not add to those troubles by anxieties about tomorrow. The pagan, and they who know not God, will be anxious about the future; but they who know him, and have caught the spirit of Jesus, may surely trust him for the supply of their wants. The young lions do roar, and seek their meat at the hand of God, Ps. 104:21. The fowls of heaven are daily supplied. Shall man only, of all the creatures on earth, vex himself and be filled with anxious cares about the future? Rather, like the rest of the creation, let us depend on the aid of the universal Parent, and feel that he who hears the young ravens which cry will also supply our necessities.

8. Especially is the remark just made of value in reference to those in early life. Life is a stormy ocean. Over that ocean no being presides but God. He holds the winds in his hands, and can still their howlings, and calm the heaving billows. On that ocean the young have just launched their frail bark. Daily they will need protection; daily will they need supplies; daily will they be in danger, and exposed to the rolling of the billows that may engulf them forever. Ignorant, inexperienced, and in danger, how should they look to God to guide and aid them! Instead of vexing themselves with anxious cares about the future, how should they place humble reliance on God! Safe in His hand, we shall outride the storm and come to a haven of peace. He will supply our wants if we trust him, as he does those of the songsters of the grove. He will be the guide of our youth and the strength of our manhood. If we seek Him, He will be found of us; if we forsake Him, He will cast us off forever, 1 Chr. 28:9.

9. From all this, how manifest is the propriety of seeking first the kingdom of God! First in our affections, first in the objects of pursuit, first in the feelings and associations of each morning, be the desire and the aim for heaven. Having this, we have assurance of all that we need. God, “our” Father, will then befriend us, and in life and death all will be well.

**Matthew 7:1**

**Matthew 7**

**Matthew 7:1**

**MATTHEW 7:1**

**Judge not ...**—This command refers to rash, censorious, and unjust judgment. See Rom. 2:1. Luke Luke 6:37 explains it in the sense of “condemning.” Christ does not condemn judging as a magistrate, for that, when according to justice, is lawful and necessary. Nor does he condemn our “forming an opinion” of the conduct of others, for it is impossible “not” to form an opinion of conduct that we know to be evil. But what he refers to is a habit of forming a judgment hastily, harshly, and without an allowance for every palliating circumstance, and a habit of “expressing” such an opinion harshly and unnecessarily when formed. It rather

refers to private judgment than “judicial,” and perhaps primarily to the customs of the scribes and Pharisees.

### **Matthew 7:2**

#### **MATTHEW 7:2**

**With what judgment ...**—This was a proverb among the Jews. It expressed a truth; and Christ did not hesitate to adopt it as conveying his own sentiments. It refers no less to the way in which people will judge of us, than to the rule by which God will judge us. See 2 Sam. 22:27; Mark 4:24; James 2:13.

**Mete**—Measure. You shall be judged by the same rule which you apply to others.

### **Matthew 7:3**

#### **MATTHEW 7:3**

**And why beholdest thou the mote ...**—A mote signifies any “light substance,” as dry chaff, or fine spires of grass or grain. It probably most usually signified the small “spiculae” or “beards” on a head of barley or wheat. It is thus placed in opposition to the word “beam.”

**Beam**—The word used here signifies a large piece of squared timber. The one is an exceedingly small object, the other a large one. The meaning is, that “we are much more quick and acute to judge of small offences in others, than of much larger offences in ourselves.” Even a very “small” object in the eye of another we discern much more quickly than a much larger one in our own; a small fault in our neighbor we see much more readily than a large one in ourselves. This was also a proverb in frequent use among the Jews, and the same sentiment was common among the Greeks, and deserves to be expressed in every language.

### **Matthew 7:5**

#### **MATTHEW 7:5**

**Thou hypocrite, first cast out ...**—Christ directs us to the proper way of forming an opinion of others, and of reproof and correcting them. By first amending our own faults, or casting the beam out of our eye, we can “consistently” advance to correct the faults of others. There will then be no hypocrisy in our conduct. We shall also “see clearly” to do it. The beam, the thing that obscured our sight, will be removed, and we shall more clearly discern the “small” object that obscures the sight of our brother. The sentiment is, that the readiest way to judge of the imperfections of others is to be free from greater ones ourselves. This qualifies us for judging, makes us candid and consistent, and enables us to see things as they are, and to make proper allowances for frailty and imperfection.

### **Matthew 7:6**

## MATTHEW 7:6

**Give not that which is holy ...**—By some the word “holy” has been supposed to mean “flesh offered in sacrifice,” made holy, or separated to a sacred use; but it probably means here “anything connected with religion”—admonition, precept, or doctrine. Pearls are precious stones found in shell-fish, chiefly in India, in the waters that surround Ceylon. They are used to denote anything especially precious, Rev. 17:4; 18:12-16; Matt. 13:45. In this place they are used to denote the doctrines of the gospel. “Dogs” signify people who spurn, oppose, and abuse that doctrine; people of special sourness and malignity of temper, who meet it like growling and quarrelsome curs, Phil 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:22; Rev. 22:15. “Swine” denote those who would trample the precepts underfoot; people of impurity of life; those who are corrupt, polluted, profane, obscene, and sensual; those who would not know the value of the gospel, and who would tread it down as swine would pearls, 2 Pet. 2:22; Prov. 11:22. The meaning of this proverb, then, is, do not offer your doctrine to those violent and abusive people who would growl and curse you; nor to those especially debased and profligate who would not perceive its value, would trample it down, and would abuse you. This verse furnishes a beautiful instance of what has been called the “introverted parallelism.” The usual mode of poetry among the Hebrews, and a common mode of expression in proverbs and apothegms, was by the parallelism, where one member of a sentence answered to another, or expressed substantially the same sense with some addition or modification. See the Introduction to the Book of Job. Sometimes this was alternate, and sometimes it was introverted—where the first and fourth lines would correspond, and the second and third. This is the case here. The dogs would tear, and not the swine; the swine would trample the pearls under their feet, and not the dogs. It may be thus expressed:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,  
Neither cast ye your pearls before swine,  
Lest they (that is, the swine) trample them under their feet,  
And turn again (that is, the dogs) and rend you.

## Matthew 7:7

### MATTHEW 7:7-11

**Ask, and it shall be given you ...**—There are here three different forms presented of seeking the things which we need from God—asking, ‘seeking, and knocking. The latter is taken from the act of knocking at a door for admittance. See Luke 13:25; Rev. 3:20. The phrases signify to seek with earnestness, diligence, and perseverance. The promise is, that what we seek shall be given us. It is of course implied that we seek with a proper spirit, with humility, sincerity, and perseverance. It is implied, also, that we ask the things which it may be consistent for God to give—that is, things which he has promised to give, and which would be best for us, and most for his own honor, 1 John 5:14. Of that

God is to be the judge. And here there is the utmost latitude which a creature can ask. God is willing to provide for us, to forgive our sins, to save our souls, to befriend us in trial, to comfort us in death, to extend the gospel through the world. Man “can” ask no higher things of God; and these he may ask, assured that he is willing to grant them.

Christ encourages us to do this by the conduct of parents. No parent turns away his child with that which would be injurious. He would not give him a stone instead of bread, or a serpent instead of a fish. God is better and kinder than the most tender earthly parents; and with what confidence, therefore, may we come as his children, and ask what we need! Parents, he says, are evil; that is, are imperfect, often partial, and not unfrequently passionate; but God is free from all this, and therefore is ready and willing to aid us.

**Every one that asketh receiveth**—That is, every one that asks aright; that prays in faith, and in submission to the will of God. He does not always give the very thing which we ask, but he gives what would be better. A parent will not always confer the “very thing” which a child asks, but he will seek the welfare of the child, and give what he thinks will be most for its good. Paul asked that the thorn from his flesh might be removed. God did not “literally” grant the request, but told him that his “grace” should be “sufficient” for him. See the notes at 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

**A fish**—A fish has some resemblance to a serpent; yet no parent would attempt to deceive his child in this. So God will not give to us that which might appear to be of use, but which would be injurious.

## **Matthew 7:12**

### **MATTHEW 7:12**

**All things whatsoever ...**—This command has been usually called the “Saviour’s golden rule,” a name given to it on account of its great value. All that you “expect” or “desire” of others in similar circumstances, do to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him. This would make you impartial, candid, and just. It would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, slander, theft, adultery, and murder. It has been well said that this law is what the balance-wheel is to machinery. It would prevent all irregularity of movement in the moral world, as that does in a steam-engine. It is easily applied, its justice is seen by all people, and all must acknowledge its force and value.

**This is the law and the prophets**—That is, this is the sum or substance of the Old Testament. It is nowhere found in so many words, but it is a summary expression of all that the law required. The sentiment was in use among the Jews. Hillel, an ancient Rabbi, said to a man who wished to become a proselyte, and who asked him to teach him the whole law, “Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to another.” Something of the same sentiment was found among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and is found in the writings of Confucius.

### Matthew 7:13

#### MATTHEW 7:13-14

**Enter ye in at the strait gate**—Christ here compares the way to life to an entrance through a gate. The words “straight” and “strait” have very different meanings. The former means “not crooked;” the latter, “pent up, narrow, difficult to be entered.” This is the word used here, and it means that the way to heaven is “pent up, narrow, close,” and not obviously entered. The way to death is open, broad, and thronged. The Saviour here referred probably to ancient cities. They were surrounded with walls and entered through gates. Some of those, connected with the great avenues to the city, were broad and admitted a throng; others, for more private purposes, were narrow, and few would be seen entering them. So, says Christ, is the path to heaven. It is narrow. It is not “the great highway” that people tread. Few go there. Here and there one may be seen—traveling in solitude and singularity. The way to death, on the other hand, is broad. Multitudes are in it. It is the great highway in which people go. They fall into it easily and without effort, and go without thought. If they wish to leave that and go by a narrow gate to the city, it would require effort and thought. So, says Christ, “diligence” is needed to enter life. See Luke 13:24. None go of course. All must strive, to obtain it; and so narrow, unfrequented, and solitary is it, that few find it. This sentiment has been beautifully versified by Watts:

“Broad is the road that leads to death,  
And thousands walk together there;  
But wisdom shows a narrower path,  
With here and there a traveler.”

### Matthew 7:15

#### MATTHEW 7:15

**False prophets**—The word prophet originally means one who foretells future events. As prophets, however, were commonly regarded as public instructors on the subject of religion, the word came to denote all who were religious teachers. See the notes at Rom. 12:6. In this sense it is probably used here. A false prophet is a teacher of incorrect doctrine, or one falsely and unjustly laying claims to divine inspiration. It probably had reference to the false teachers then among the Jews.

**Who come in sheep’s clothing**—The sheep is an emblem of innocence, sincerity, and harmlessness. To come in sheep’s clothing is to assume the appearance of sanctity and innocence, when the heart is evil.

**Ravening wolves**—Rapacious; voraciously devouring; hungry even to rage. Applied to the false teachers, it means that they assumed the appearance of holiness in order that they might the more readily get the property of the people. They were full of extortion and excess. See Matt. 23:25.

**Matthew 7:16****MATTHEW 7:16**

**Ye shall know them by their fruits**—The Saviour gives the proper test of their character. People do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears. The flowers may be beautiful and fragrant, the foliage thick and green; but these are merely ornamental. It is the “fruit” that is of chief service to man; and he forms his opinion of the nature and value of the tree by that fruit. So of pretensions to religion. The profession may be fair; but the “conduct”—the fruit—is to determine the nature of the principles.

**Matthew 7:17****MATTHEW 7:17**

**A corrupt tree**—The word “corrupt” here does not signify, as our translation would seem to indicate, that the tree “had been” good, but had become “vitiating;” but that it was a tree of a useless character, of a nature that produced nothing beneficial.

**Matthew 7:21****MATTHEW 7:21**

**Not every one that saith ...**—The Saviour goes on to say that many, on the ground of a mere profession such as he had just referred to, would claim admittance into his kingdom. Many would plead that they had done miracles, and preached or prophesied much, and on the ground of that would demand an entrance into heaven. The power of working miracles had no necessary connection with piety. God may as well, if he chooses, give the power of raising the dead to a wicked man, as the skill of healing to a wicked physician. A miracle is a display “of his own power” through the medium of another. An act of healing the sick is also a display of “his power” through the agency of another. In neither of these cases is there any necessary connection with moral character. So of preaching or prophesying. God may use the agency of a man of talents, though not pious, to carry forward His purposes. Saving power on the mind is the work of God, and he may convey it by any agency which he chooses. Accordingly, many may be found in the day of judgment who may have been endowed with powers of prophecy or miracle, as Balaam or the magicians of Egypt; in the same way as many people of distinguished talents may be found, yet destitute of piety, and who will be shut out of his kingdom. See Matt. 7:21; 1 Cor. 1:26; 13:1-3. In this last place Paul says that, though he spoke with the tongue of angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and could remove mountains, and had not charity or love, all would be of no avail. See the notes at 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

**Matthew 7:22****MATTHEW 7:22**

**In that day**—That is, in the last day, the day of judgment; the time when the principles of all pretenders to prophecy and piety shall be tried.

### **Matthew 7:23**

#### **MATTHEW 7:23**

**Profess unto them**—Say unto them; plainly declare.

**I never knew you**—That is, I never approved of your conduct; never loved you; never regarded you as my friends. See Ps. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:3. This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ. Jesus will not then say to false prophets and false professors of religion that he had once known them and then rejected them; that they had been once Christians and then had fallen away; that they had been pardoned and then had apostatized but that he had never known them—they had never been true christians. Whatever might have been their pretended joys, their raptures, their hopes, their self-confidence, their visions, their zeal, they had never been regarded by the Saviour as his true friends. I do not know of a more decided proof that Christians do not fall from grace than this text. It settles the question; and proves that whatever else such people had, they never had any true religion. See 1 John 2:19.

### **Matthew 7:24**

#### **MATTHEW 7:24-27**

Jesus closes the sermon on the mount by a beautiful comparison, illustrating the benefit of attending to his words. It was not sufficient to “hear” them; they must be “obeyed.” He compares the man who should hear and obey him to a man who built his house on a rock. Palestine was to a considerable extent a land of hills and mountains. Like other countries of that description, it was subject to sudden and violent rains. The Jordan, the principal stream, was annually swollen to a great extent, and became rapid and furious in its course. The streams which ran among the hills, whose channels might have been dry during some months of the year, became suddenly swollen with the rain, and would pour down impetuously into the plains below. Everything in the way of these torrents would be swept off. Even houses, erected within the reach of these sudden inundations, and especially if founded on sand or on any unsolid basis, would not stand before them. The rising, bursting stream would shake it to its foundation; the rapid torrent would gradually wash away its base; it would totter and fall. Rocks in that country were common, and it was easy to secure for their houses a solid foundation. No comparison could, to a Jew, have been more striking. So tempests, and storms of affliction and persecution, beat around the soul. Suddenly, when we think we are in safety, the heavens may be overcast, the storm may lower, and calamity may beat upon us. In a moment, health, friends, comforts may be gone. How desirable, then, to be possessed of something that the tempest cannot reach! Such is an interest in Christ, reliance on his promises,

confidence in his protection, and a hope of heaven through his blood. Earthly calamities do not reach these; and, possessed of religion, all the storms and tempests of life may beat harmlessly around us.

There is another point in this comparison. The house built upon the sand is beat upon by the floods and rains; its foundation gradually is worn away; it falls, and is borne down the stream and is destroyed. So falls the sinner. The floods are wearing away his sandy foundation; and soon one tremendous storm shall beat upon him, and he and his hopes shall fall, for ever fall. Out of Christ; perhaps having “heard” his words from very childhood; perhaps having taught them to others in the Sunday school; perhaps having been the means of laying the foundation on which others shall build for heaven, he has laid for himself no foundation, and soon an eternal tempest shall beat around his naked soul. How great will be that fall! What will be his emotions when sinking forever in the flood, and when he realizes that he is destined forever to live and writhe in the peltings of that ceaseless storm that shall beat when “God shall rain snares, fire, and a horrible tempest” upon the wicked!

### **Matthew 7:28**

#### **MATTHEW 7:28-29**

**His doctrine**—His teaching.

**As one having authority, and not as the scribes**—The scribes were the learned people and teachers of the Jewish nation, and were principally Pharisees. They taught chiefly the sentiments of their Rabbis, and the traditions which had been delivered; they consumed much of their time in useless disputes and “vain jangling.” Jesus was open, plain, grave, useful, delivering truth as “became” the oracles of God; not spending his time in trifling disputes and debating questions of no importance, but confirming his doctrine by miracles and argument; teaching “as having power,” as it is in the original, and not in the vain and foolish manner of the Jewish doctors. He showed that he had authority to explain, to enforce, and to “change” the ceremonial laws of the Jews. He came with authority such as no “man” could have, and it is not remarkable that his explanations astonished them. From this chapter we may learn,

1. The evil of censorious judging, Matt. 7:1-5. We cannot see the heart. We have ourselves possibly greater faults than the persons that we condemn. They may possibly be of a different kind; but it is nevertheless not uncommon for persons to be very censorious toward faults in others, which they have to much greater extent themselves.

2. We see how we are to treat people who are opposers of the gospel, Matt. 7:6. We are not to present it to them when we know they will despise it and abuse us. We should, however, be cautious in forming that opinion of them. Many people may be far more ready to hear the gospel than we imagine, and a word seasonably and kindly spoken may be the means of saving them, Prov. 25:11; Eccl. 11:6. We should not meet violent and wicked opposers of the gospel with a

harsh, overbearing, and lordly spirit—a spirit of dogmatizing and anger; nor should we violate the laws of social contact under the idea of “faithfulness.” Religion gains nothing by outraging the established laws of social life, 1 Pet. 3:8. If people will not hear us when we speak to them kindly and respectfully, we may be sure they will not when we abuse them and become angry. We harden them against the truth, and confirm them in the opinion that religion is of no value. Our Saviour was always mild and kind, “and in not a single instance did he do violence to the laws of social intercourse, or fail in the respect due from one man to another.” When with harshness people speak to their superiors; when they abuse them with unkind words, coarse epithets, and unfeeling denunciations; when children and youth forget their station, and speak in harsh, authoritative tones to the aged, they are violating the very first principles of the gospel—meekness, respect, and love. Give honor to whom honor is due, and be kind, be courteous.

3. Christ gives special encouragement to prayer, Matt. 7:7-11. Especially his remarks apply to the young. What child is there that would not go to his parent and ask him for things which were necessary? What child doubts the willingness of a kind parent to give what he thinks will be best for him? But God is more willing to give than the best parent. We need of “him” gifts of far more importance than we ever can of an earthly father. None but God can forgive, enlighten, sanctify, and save us. How strange that many ask favors of an “earthly” parent daily and hourly, and never ask of the Great Universal Father a single blessing for time or eternity!

4. There is danger of losing the soul, Matt. 7:13-14. The way to ruin is broad; the path to heaven is narrow. People naturally and readily go in the former; they never go in the latter without design. When we enter on the journey of life, we naturally fall into the broad and thronged way to ruin. Our original propensity, our native depravity, our disinclination to God and religion, lead us to that, and we never leave it without effort. How much more natural to tread in a way in which multitudes go, than in one where there are few travelers, and which requires an effort to find it! And how much danger is there that we shall continue to walk in that way until it terminates in our ruin! No one is saved without effort. No one enters on the narrow way without design; no one by following his natural inclination and propensities. And yet how indisposed we are to effort! how unwilling to listen to the exhortations which would call us from the broad path to a narrower and less frequented course! How prone are people to feel that they are safe if they are with the many, and that the multitude that attend them constitute a safeguard from danger!

“Encompassed by a throng,  
On ‘numbers’ they depend;  
They say so many can’t be wrong,  
And miss a happy end.”

Yet did God ever spare a guilty city because it was large? Did he save the army of Sennacherib from the destroying angel because it was mighty? Does he hesitate to cut people down by the plague, the pestilence, and by famine, because they are numerous? Is he deterred from consigning people to the grave because they swarm upon the earth, and because a mighty throng is going to death? So in the way to hell. Not numbers, nor power, nor might, nor talent will make that way safe; nor will the path to heaven be a dangerous road because few are seen traveling there. The Saviour knew and felt that people are in danger; and hence, with much solemnity, he warned them when he lived, and now warns us, to strive to enter in at the narrow gate.

5. Sincerity is necessary in religion, Matt. 7:15-23. Profession is of no value without it. God sees the heart, and the day is near when He will cut down and destroy all those who do not bring forth the fruits of righteousness in their lives. If in anything we should be honest and sincere, surely it should be in the things of religion. God is never deceived Gal. 6:7, and the things of eternity are of too much consequence, to be lost by deluding ourselves or others. We may deceive our fellowmen, but we do not deceive our Maker; and soon He will strip off our thin covering, and show us as we are to the universe. If anything is of prominent value in religion, it is “honesty”—honesty to ourselves, to our fellow-men, and to God. Be willing to know the worst of your case. Be willing to be thought of, by God and people, “as you are.” Assume nothing which you do not possess, and pretend to nothing which you have not. Judge of yourselves as you do of others—not by words and promises, but by the life. Judge of yourselves as you do of trees; not by leaves and flowers, but by the fruit.

6. We may learn the importance of building our hopes of heaven on a firm foundation, Matt. 7:24-27. No other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3:11. He is the tried Corner Stone, 1 Pet. 2:6; Eph. 2:20. On an edifice raised on that foundation the storms of persecution and calamity will beat in vain. Hopes thus reared will sustain us in every adversity, will remain unshaken by the terrors of death, and will secure us from the tempests of wrath that shall beat upon the guilty. How awful, in the day of judgment, will it be to have been deceived! How dreadful the shock to find then that the house has been built on the sand! How dreadful the emotions, to see our hopes totter on the brink of ruin; to see sand after sand washed away, and the dwelling reel over the heaving deep, and fall into the abyss to rise no more! Ruin, awful and eternal ruin, awaits those who thus deceive themselves, and who trust to a name to live, while they are dead.

7. Under what obligations are we for this “Sermon on the Mount!” In all languages there is not a discourse to be found that can be compared with it for purity, and truth, and beauty, and dignity. Were there no other evidence of the divine mission of Christ, this alone would be sufficient to prove that he was sent from God. Were these doctrines obeyed and loved, how pure and peaceful would be the world! How would hypocrisy be abashed and confounded! How would impurity hang its head! How would peace reign in every family and nation! How

would anger and wrath flee! And how would the race—the lost and benighted tribes of people, the poor, and needy, and sorrowful—bend themselves before their common Father, and seek peace and eternal life at the hands of a merciful and faithful God!