

Adam Clarkes Commentary on Matthew 4:17 thru 7:29 Clarke, Adam

Matthew 4:17

Matthew 4:17

Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent—See on Matthew 3:1, 2 (note). Every preacher commissioned by God to proclaim salvation to a lost world, begins his work with preaching the doctrine of repentance. This was the case with all the prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, all the apostles, and all their genuine successors in the Christian ministry. The reasons are evident in the notes already referred to; and for the explanation of the word κηρυσσεν, preaching or proclaiming as a herald, see at the end of chap. 3 (note).

Matthew 4:18

Matthew 4:18

Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother—Why did not Jesus Christ call some of the eminent Scribes or Pharisees to publish his Gospel, and not poor unlearned fishermen, without credit or authority? Because it was the kingdom of heaven they were to preach, and their teaching must come from above: besides, the conversion of sinners, though it be effected instrumentally by the preaching of the Gospel, yet the grand agent in it is the Spirit of God. As the instruments were comparatively mean, and, the work which was accomplished by them was grand and glorious, the excellency of the power at once appeared to be of GOD, and not of man; and thus the glory, due alone to his name, was secured, and the great Operator of all good had the deserved praise. Seminaries of learning, in the order of God's providence and grace, have great and important uses; and, in reference to such uses, they should be treated with great respect: but to make preachers of the Gospel is a matter to which they are utterly inadequate; it is a prerogative that God never did, and never will, delegate to man.

Where the seed of the kingdom of God is sowed, and a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to a man, a good education may be of great and general use: but it no more follows, because a man has had a good education, that therefore he is qualified to preach the Gospel, than it does, that because he has not had that, therefore he is unqualified; for there may be much ignorance of Divine things where there is much human learning; and a man may be well taught in the things of God, and be able to teach others, who has not had the advantages of a liberal education.

Men-made ministers have almost ruined the heritage of God. To prevent this, our Church requires that a man be inwardly moved to take upon himself this

ministry, before he can be ordained to it. And he who cannot say, that he trusts (has rational and Scriptural conviction) that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself this office, is an intruder into the heritage of God, and his ordination, ipso facto, vitiated and of none effect. See the truly apostolic Ordination Service of the Church of England.

Fishers—Persons employed in a lawful and profitable avocation, and faithfully discharging their duty in it. It was a tradition of the elders, that one of Joshua's ten precepts was, that all men should have an equal right to spread their nets and fish in the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee. The persons mentioned here were doubtless men of pure morals; for the minister of God should have a good report from them that are without.

Matthew 4:19

Matthew 4:19

Follow me—Come after me, δευτε οπισω μου. Receive my doctrines, imitate me in my conduct—in every respect be my disciples. We may observe that most of the calls of God to man are expressed in a few solemn words, which alarm, the conscience, and deeply impress the heart.

I will make you fishers of men—Ezekiel 47:8-10, casts much light on this place; and to this prophet our Lord probably alludes. To follow Christ, and be admitted into a partnership of his ministry, is a great honor; but those only who are by himself fitted for it, God calls. Miserable are those who do not wait for this call—who presume to take the name of fishers of men, and know not how to cast the net of the Divine word, because not brought to an acquaintance with the saving power of the God who bought them. Such persons, having only their secular interest in view, study not to catch men, but to catch money: and though, for charity's sake, it may be said of a pastor of this spirit, he does not enter the sheepfold as a thief, yet he certainly lives as a hireling. See Quesnel.

Some teach to work, but have no hands to row;
Some will be eyes, but have no light to see;
Some will be guides, but have no feet to go;
Some deaf, yet ears, some dumb, yet tongues will be;
Dumb, deaf, lame, blind, and maimed, yet fishers all!
Fit for no use but store an hospital.

Fletcher's Piscatory Eclogues. Ec iv. 5, 18.

Following a person, in the Jewish phrase, signifies being his disciple or scholar. See a similar mode of speech, 2 Kings 6:19.

Matthew 4:20

Matthew 4:20

They straightway left their nets—A change, as far as it respected secular things, every way to their disadvantage. The proud and the profane may exult and

say, “Such preachers as these cannot be much injured by their sacrifices of secular property—they have nothing but nets, etc., to leave.” Let such carpers at the institution of Christ know, that he who has nothing but a net, and leaves that for the sake of doing good to the souls of men, leaves his ALL: besides, he lived comfortably by his net before; but, in becoming the servant of all for Christ’s sake, he often exposes himself to the want of even a morsel of bread. See on Matthew 19:27 (note).

Matthew 4:22

Matthew 4:22

Left the ship and their father—By the ship, το πλοιον, we are to understand the mere fishing-boat, used for extending their nets in the water and bringing the hawser or rope of the farther end to shore, by which the net was pulled to land. But why should these be called to leave their employment and their father, probably now aged? To this I answer, that to be obedient to, provide for, and comfort our parents, is the highest duty we owe or can discharge, except that to God. But, when God calls to the work of the ministry, father and mother and all must be left. Were we necessary to their comfort and support before? Then God, if he call us into another work or state, will take care to supply to them our lack of service some other way; and, if this be not done, it is a proof we have mistaken our call. Again, were our parents necessary to us, and in leaving them for the sake of the Gospel, or in obedience to a Divine command, do we deprive ourselves of the comforts of life? No matter: we should prefer the honor of serving the Most High, even in poverty and humility, to all the comforts of a father’s house. But what an honor was the vocation of James and John, to old Zebedee their father! His sons are called to be heralds of the God of heaven! Allowing him to have been a pious man, this must have given him unutterable delight.

Matthew 4:23

Matthew 4:23

Teaching in their synagogues—Synagogue, συναγωγη, from συν, together, and αγω, I bring, a public assembly of persons, or the place where such persons publicly assembled. Synagogues, among the Jews, were not probably older than the return from the Babylonish captivity. They were erected not only in cities and towns, but in the country, and especially by rivers, that they might have water for the convenience of their frequent washings.

Not less than ten persons of respectability composed a synagogue; as the rabbins supposed that this number of persons, of independent property, and well skilled in the law, were necessary to conduct the affairs of the place, and keep up the Divine worship. See Lightfoot. Therefore, where this number could not be found, no synagogue was built; but there might be many synagogues in one city or town, provided it were populous. Jerusalem is said to have contained 480. This need not be wondered at, when it is considered that every Jew was obliged to

worship God in public, either in a synagogue or in the temple.

The chief things belonging to a synagogue were:

- 1st. The ark or chest, made after the mode of the ark of the covenant, containing the Pentateuch.
- 2dly. The pulpit and desk, in the middle of the synagogue, on which he stood who read or expounded the law.
- 3dly. The seats or pews for the men below, and the galleries for the women above.
- 4thly. The lamps to give light in the evening service, and at the feast of the dedication.
- 5thly. Apartments for the utensils and alms-chests.

The synagogue was governed by a council or assembly, over whom was a president, called in the Gospels, the ruler of the synagogue. These are sometimes called chiefs of the Jews, the rulers, the priests or elders, the governors, the overseers, the fathers of the synagogue. Service was performed in them three times a day—morning, afternoon, and night. Synagogue, among the Jews, had often the same meaning as congregation among us, or place of judicature, see James 2:2.

Preaching the Gospel of the kingdom—Or, proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom. See the preceding notes. Behold here the perfect pattern of an evangelical preacher:

1. He goes about seeking sinners on every side, that he may show them the way to heaven.
2. He proclaims the glad tidings of the kingdom, with a freedom worthy of the King whom he serves.
3. He makes his reputation and the confidence of the people subservient not to his own interest, but to the salvation of souls.
4. To his preaching he joins, as far as he has ability, all works of mercy, and temporal assistance to the bodies of men.
5. He takes care to inform men that diseases, and all kinds of temporal evils, are the effects of sin, and that their hatred to iniquity should increase in proportion to the evils they endure through it.
6. And that nothing but the power of God can save them from sin and its consequences.

For glad tidings, or Gospel, see chap. 1. title (note). Proclaiming, see Matthew 3:1 (note), and end (note); and for the meaning of kingdom, see Matthew 3:2 (note).

All manner of sickness, and all manner of disease—There is a difference between νοσος, translated here sickness, and μαλακία, translated disease. The first is thus defined: νοσος, την χρονιαν κακοπαθειαν, a disease of some standing, a chronic disorder.

Infirmary, μαλακία, την προσκαιρον ανωμαλιαν τοι σωματος, a temporary disorder of the body. Theophylact. This is a proper distinction, and is necessary to be observed.

Matthew 4:24

Matthew 4:24

Sick people—Τους, κακως εχοντας, those who felt ill—were afflicted with any species of malady.

And torments—βασανους, from βασανιζω, to examine by torture, such as cholics, gouts, and rheumatisms, which racked every joint.

Possessed with devils—Daemoniacs. Persons possessed by evil spirits. This is certainly the plain obvious meaning of daemonic in the Gospels.

Many eminent men think that the sacred writers accommodated themselves to the unfounded prejudices of the common people, in attributing certain diseases to the influence of evil spirits, which were merely the effects of natural causes: but that this explanation can never comport with the accounts given of these persons shall be proved as the places occur.

Our common version, which renders the word, those possessed by devils, is not strictly correct; as the word devil, διαβολος, is not found in the plural in any part of the Sacred Writings, when speaking of evil spirits: for though there are multitudes of daemons, Mark 5:9, yet it appears there is but one DEVIL, who seems to be supreme, or head, over all the rest. Διαβολος signifies an accuser or slanderer, 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3. Perhaps Satan was called so,

- 1st. because he accused or slandered God in paradise, as averse from the increase of man's knowledge and happiness, Genesis 3:5; John 8:44; and
- 2dly. because he is the accuser of men, Revelation 12:9, 10. See also Job 1:2.

The word comes from δια, through, and βαλλειν, to cast, or shoot, because of the influence of his evil suggestions; compared, Ephesians 6:16, to fiery darts; and thus it is nearly of the same meaning with ο πειραζων, he who pierces through. See on Matthew 4:3 (note).

Lunatic—Persons afflicted with epileptic or other disorders, which are always known to have a singular increase at the change and full of the moon. This undoubtedly proceeds from the superadded attractive influence of the sun and moon upon the earth's atmosphere, as, in the periods mentioned above, these two luminaries are both in conjunction; and their united attractive power being exerted on the earth at the same time, not only causes the flux and reflux of the ocean, but occasions a variety of important changes in the bodies of infirm

persons, of animals in general, but more particularly in those who are more sensible of these variations. And is this any wonder, when it is well known, that a very slight alteration in the atmosphere causes the most uncomfortable sensations to a number of invalids! But sometimes even these diseases were caused by demons. See on Matthew 8:16, 34 (note), and Matthew 17:15 (note).

Palsy—Palsy is defined, a sudden loss of tone and vital power in a certain part of the human body. This may affect a limb, the whole side, the tongue, or the whole body. This disorder is in general incurable, except by the miraculous power of God, unless in its slighter stages.

He healed them—Either with a word or a touch; and thus proved that all nature was under his control.

Matthew 4:25

Matthew 4:25

This verse is immediately connected with the fifth chapter, and should not be separated from it.

Great multitudes—This, even according to the Jews, was one proof of the days of the Messiah: for they acknowledged that in his time there should be a great famine of the word of God; and thus they understood Amos, Amos 8:11. Behold, the days come—that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread—but of hearing the words of the Lord. And as the Messiah was to dispense this word, the bread of life, hence they believed that vast multitudes from all parts should be gathered together to him. See Schoettgenius on this place.

Decapolis—A small country, situated between Syria and Galilee of the nations. It was called Decapolis, Δεκαπολις, from δεκα, ten, and πολις, a city, because it contained only ten cities; the metropolis, and most ancient of which, was Damascus.

From beyond Jordan—Or, from the side of Jordan. Probably this was the country which was occupied anciently by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; for the country of Decapolis lay on both sides of the river Jordan. See Numbers 32:5, 33.

THE account of our Lord's temptation, as given by the evangelist, is acknowledged on all hands to be extremely difficult. Two modes of interpretation have been generally resorted to, in order to make the whole plain and intelligible: viz. the literal and allegorical. In all cases, where it can possibly apply, I prefer the first: the latter should never be used, unless obviously indicated in the text itself; or so imperiously necessary that no other mode of interpretation can possibly apply. In the preceding observations, I have taken up the subject in a literal point of view; and it is hoped that most of the difficulties in the relation have been removed, or obviated, by this plan. An ingenious correspondent has favored me with some observations on the subject, which have much more than

the merit of novelty to recommend them. I shall give an abstract of some of the most striking; and leave the whole to the reader's farther consideration.

The thoughts in this communication proceed on this ground: "These temptations were addressed to Christ as a public person, and respected his conduct in the execution of his ministry; and are reported to his Church as a forcible and practical instruction, concerning the proper method of promoting the kingdom of God upon earth. They are warnings against those Satanic illusions, by which the servants of Christ are liable to be hindered in their great work, and even stopped in the prosecution of it.

1. "As our Lord had, at his baptism, been declared to be the SON of God, i.e. the promised Messiah, this was probably well known to Satan, who did not mean to insinuate any thing to the contrary, when he endeavored to engage him to put forth an act of that power which he possessed as the Messiah. The mysterious union of the Divine with the human nature, in our Lord's state of humiliation, Satan might think possible to be broken; and therefore endeavored, in the first temptation, Command these stones to be made bread, to induce our Lord to put forth a separate, independent act of power; which our Lord repelled, by showing his intimate union with the Divine will, which he was come to fulfill—Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thus showing, as he did on another occasion, that it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father.
- "2. The ground of the temptation was then changed; and the fulfillment of the Divine will, in the completion of a prophetic promise, was made the ostensible object of the next attack. Cast thyself down—for it is WRITTEN, He will give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, etc. This our Lord repelled with—Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God—as Satan had designed to induce him to seek this public miraculous confirmation of God's peculiar care over him, as the promised Messiah, of his being which, according to the hypothesis above, Satan had no doubt. Moses, being appointed to a great and important work, needed miraculous signs to strengthen his faith; but the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord needed them not; nor did his wisdom judge that such a sign from heaven was essential to the instruction of the people.
- "3. The last temptation was the most subtle and the most powerful—All these will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. To inherit all nations, had been repeatedly declared to be the birthright of the Messiah. His right to universal empire could not be controverted; nor could Satan presume to make the investiture. What, then, was his purpose? Satan had hitherto opposed, and that with considerable success, the kingdom of God upon earth; and what he appears to propose here, were terms of peace, and an honorable retreat. The worship which he exacted was an act of homage, in return for his cession of that ascendancy which, through the sin of man,

he had obtained in the world. Having long established his rule among men, it was not at first to be expected that he would resign it without a combat: but the purpose of this last temptation appears to be an offer to decline any farther contest; and, yet more, if his terms were accepted, apparently to engage his influence to promote the kingdom of the Messiah. And as the condition of this proposed alliance, he required, not Divine worship, but such an act of homage as implied amity and obligation; and if this construction be allowed, he may be supposed to have enforced the necessity of the measure, by every suggestion of the consequences of a refusal. The sufferings which would inevitably result from a provoked opposition, which would render the victory, though certain to Christ himself, dearly bought; added to which, the conflict he was prepared to carry on through succeeding ages, in which all his subtlety and powers should be employed to hinder the progress of Christ's cause in the earth, and that with a considerable degree of anticipated success. Here the devil seems to propose to make over to Christ the power and influence he possessed in this world, on condition that he would enter into terms of peace with him; and the inducement offered was, that thereby our Lord should escape those sufferings, both in his own person, and in that of his adherents, which a provoked contest would ensure. And we may suppose that a similar temptation lies hid in the desires excited even in some of the servants of Christ, who may feel themselves often induced to employ worldly influence and power for the promotion of his kingdom, even though, in so doing, an apparent communion of Christ and Belial is the result: for it will be found that neither worldly riches, nor power, can be employed in the service of Christ, till, like the spoils taken in war, Deuteronomy 31:21-23, they have passed through the fire and water, as, without a Divine purification, they are not fit to be employed in the service of God and his Church.

“Hence we may conclude, that the first temptation had for its professed object, 1st, our Lord's personal relief and comfort, through the inducement of performing a separate and independent act of power.—The second temptation professed to have in view his public acknowledgment by the people, as the MESSIAH: for, should they see him work such a miracle as throwing himself down from the pinnacle of the temple without receiving any hurt, they would be led instantly to acknowledge his Divine mission; and the evil of this temptation may be explained, as seeking to secure the success of his mission by other means than those which, as the Messiah, he had received from the Father. Compare John 14:31. The third temptation was a subtle attempt to induce Christ to acknowledge Satan as an ally, in the establishment of his kingdom.” E. M. B.

The above is the substance of the ingenious theory of my correspondent, which may be considered as a third mode of interpretation, partaking equally of the allegoric and literal. I still, however, think, that the nearer we keep to the letter in all such difficult cases, the more tenable is our ground, especially where the

subject itself does not obviously require the allegorical mode of interpretation. Among many things worthy of remark in the preceding theory the following deserves most attention: That Satan is ever ready to tempt the governors and ministers of the Christian Church to suppose that worldly means, human policy, secular interest and influence, are all essentially necessary for the support and extension of that kingdom which is not of this world! Such persons can never long preserve hallowed hands: they bring the world into the Church; endeavor to sanctify the bad means they use, by the good end they aim at; and often, in the prosecution of their object, by means which are not of God's devising, are driven into straits and difficulties, and to extricate themselves, tell lies for God's sake. This human policy is from beneath—God will neither sanction nor bless it. It has been the bane of true religion in all ages of the world; and, in every country where the cause of Christianity has been established, such schemers and plotters in the Church of God are as dangerous to its interests as a plague is to the health of society. The governors and ministers of the Christian Church should keep themselves pure, and ever do God's work in his own way. If the slothful servant should be cast out of the vineyard, he that corrupts the good seed of the Divine field, or sows tares among the wheat, should be considered as an enemy to righteousness, and be expelled from the sacred pale as one who closes in with the temptation—"All these things (the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them) will I give unto THEE, if thou wilt fall down and worship ME." However necessary the Church may be to the state, and the state to the Church, as some people argue, yet the latter is never in so much danger as when the former smiles upon it.

Matthew 5:1

Matthew 5

Christ begins his sermon on the mount, vv. 1, 2. The beatitudes, vv. 3-12. The disciples the salt of the earth, and light of the world, vv. 13-16. Christ is not come to destroy, but confirm and fulfill, the Law and the Prophets, vv. 17-19. Of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, v. 20. Interpretation of the precepts relative to murder, anger, and injurious speaking, vv. 21, 22. Of reconciliation, vv. 23-26. Of impure acts and propensities, and the necessity of mortification, vv. 27-30. Of divorce, vv. 31, 32. Of oaths and profane swearing, vv. 33-37. Of bearing injuries and persecution, vv. 38-41. Of borrowing and lending, v. 42. Of love and hatred, vv. 43-46. Of civil respect, v. 47. Christ's disciples must resemble their heavenly Father, v. 48.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 5

Matthew 5:1

Matthew 5:1

And seeing the multitudes—Τους οχλους, these multitudes, viz. those mentioned in the preceding verse, which should make the first verse of this chapter.

He went up into a mountain—That he might have the greater advantage of speaking, so as to be heard by that great concourse of people which followed him. It is very probable that nothing more is meant here than a small hill or eminence. Had he been on a high mountain they could not have heard; and, had he been at a great distance, he would not have sat down. See the note on Matthew 5:14.

And when he was set—The usual posture of public teachers among the Jews, and among many other people. Hence sitting was a synonymous term for teaching among the rabbins.

His disciples—The word μαθητης signifies literally a scholar. Those who originally followed Christ, considered him in the light of a Divine teacher; and conscious of their ignorance, and the importance of his teaching, they put themselves under his tuition, that they might be instructed in heavenly things. Having been taught the mysteries of the kingdom of God, they became closely attached to their Divine Master, imitating his life and manners; and recommending his salvation to all the circle of their acquaintance. This is still the characteristic of a genuine disciple of Christ.

Matthew 5:3

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit, etc.—Or, happy, μακαριοι from μα or μη, not, and κηρ, fate, or death: intimating, that such persons were endued with immortality, and consequently were not liable to the caprices of fate. Homer, Iliad i, 330, calls the supreme gods, Θεων μακαρων, the ever happy and IMMORTAL gods, and opposes them to θνητων ανθρωπων, mortal men.

τω δ' αυτω μαρτυροι εστων
Προς τε Θεων μακαρων, προς τε θνητων ανθρωπων

“Be ye witnesses before the immortal gods, and before mortal men.”

From this definition we may learn, that the person whom Christ terms happy is one who is not under the influence of fate or chance, but is governed by an all-wise providence, having every step directed to the attainment of immortal glory, being transformed by the power into the likeness of the ever-blessed God. Though some of the persons, whose states are mentioned in these verses, cannot be said to be as yet blessed or happy, in being made partakers of the Divine nature; yet they are termed happy by our Lord, because they are on the straight way to this blessedness.

Taken in this light the meaning is similar to that expressed by the poet when describing a happy man.

FELIX, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas: Atque
metus omnes et inexorabile FATUM

Subjecit pedibus; strepitumque Acherontis avari!
Virg. Geor. ii. v. 490

Which may be thus paraphrased:—

“Happy is he who gains the knowledge of the first cause of all things; who can trample on every fear, and the doctrine of inexorable FATE; and who is not terrified by death, nor by the threatened torments of the invisible world!”

Poor in spirit—One who is deeply sensible of his spiritual poverty and wretchedness. Πτωχος, a poor man, comes from πτωσσω, to tremble, or shrink with fear. Being destitute of the true riches, he is tremblingly alive to the necessities of his soul, shrinking with fear lest he should perish without the salvation of God. Such Christ pronounces happy, because there is but a step between them and that kingdom which is here promised. Some contend, that μακαριοι should be referred to πνευματι, and the verse translated thus: Happy, or blessed in spirit, are the poor. But our Lord seems to have the humiliation of the spirit particularly in view.

Kingdom of heaven—Or, των ουρανων, of the heavens. A participation of all the blessings of the new covenant here, and the blessings of glory above. See this phrase explained, Matthew 3:2 (note). Blessed are the poor! This is God’s word; but who believes it? Do we not say, Yea, rather, Blessed is the rich?

The Jewish rabbins have many good sayings relative to that poverty and humility of spirit which Christ recommends in this verse. In the treatise called Bammidbar Rabbi, s. 20, we have these words: There were three (evils) in Balaam: the evil eye, (envy), the towering spirit, (pride), and the extensive mind (avarice).

Tanchum, fol. 84. The law does not abide with those who have the extensive mind, (avarice), but with him only who has a contrite heart.

Rabbi Chanina said, “Why are the words of the law compared to water? Because as waters flow from heights, and settle in low places, so the words of the law rest only with him who is of an humble heart.” See Schoettgen.

Matthew 5:4

Matthew 5:4

Blessed are they that mourn—That is, those who, feeling their spiritual poverty, mourn after God, lamenting the iniquity that separated them from the fountain of blessedness. Every one flies from sorrow, and seeks after joy, and yet true joy must necessarily be the fruit of sorrow. The whole need not (do not feel the need of) the physician, but they that are sick do; i.e. they who are sensible of their disease. Only such persons as are deeply convinced of the sinfulness of sin, feel the plague of their own heart, and turn with disgust from all worldly consolations, because of their insufficiency to render them happy, have God’s

promise of solid comfort. They SHALL BE comforted, says Christ, παρακληθησονται, from παρα, near, and καλεω, I call. He will call them to himself, and speak the words of pardon, peace, and life eternal, to their hearts. See this notion of the word expressed fully by our Lord, Matthew 11:28, COME UNTO ME all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 5:5

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek—Happy, οι πραεις, from ραος, easy, those who are of a quiet, gentle spirit, in opposition to the proud and supercilious Scribes and Pharisees and their disciples. We have a compound word in English, which once fully expressed the meaning of the original, viz. gentleman; but it has now almost wholly lost its original signification. Our word meek comes from the old Anglo-saxon *meca*, or *meccea*, a companion or equal, because he who is of a meek or gentle spirit, is ever ready to associate with the meanest of those who fear God, feeling himself superior to none; and well knowing that he has nothing of spiritual or temporal good but what he has received from the mere bounty of God, having never deserved any favor from his hand.

For they shall inherit the earth—Or, την γην, the land. Under this expression, which was commonly used by the prophets to signify the land of Canaan, in which all temporal good abounded, Judges 18:9, 10, Jesus Christ points out that abundance of spiritual good, which was provided for men in the Gospel. Besides, Canaan was a type of the kingdom of God; and who is so likely to inherit glory as the man in whom the meekness and gentleness of Jesus dwell? In some good MSS. and several ancient versions, the fourth and fifth verses are transposed: see the authorities in the various readings in Professor Griesbach's edition. The present arrangement certainly is most natural:

1. Poverty, to which the promise of the kingdom is made.
2. Mourning or distress, on account of this impoverished state, to which consolation is promised. And
3. Meekness established in the heart by the consolations received.

Matthew 5:6

Matthew 5:6

They which do hunger and thirst—As the body has its natural appetites of hunger and thirst for the food and drink suited to its nourishment, so has the soul. No being is indestructible or unailing in its nature but GOD; no being is independent but him: as the body depends for its nourishment, health, and strength upon the earth, so does the soul upon heaven. Heavenly things cannot support the body; they are not suited to its nature: earthly things cannot support the soul, for the same reason. When the uneasy sensation termed hunger takes place in the stomach, we know we must get food or perish. When the soul is

awakened to a tense of its wants, and begins to hunger and thirst after righteousness or holiness, which is its proper food, we know that it must be purified by the Holy Spirit, and be made a partaker of that living bread, John 8:48, or perish everlastingly. Now, as God never inspires a prayer but with a design to answer it, he who hungers and thirsts after the full salvation of God, may depend on being speedily and effectually blessed or satisfied, well-fed, as the word *χορτασθησονται* implies. Strong and intense desire after any object has been, both by poets and orators, represented metaphorically by hunger and thirst. See the well-known words of Virgil, Aeneid iii. 55.

—Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra FAMES!

“O cursed hunger after gold! what canst thou not influence the hearts of men to perpetrate?”

How frequently do we find, *inexplebilis honorum FAMES-SITIENS virtutis-famae SITUS*, the insatiable hunger after honor, a thirst for virtue, thirst after fame, and such like! Righteousness here is taken for all the blessings of the new covenant—all the graces of the Messiah’s kingdom—a full restoration to the image of God!

Matthew 5:7

Matthew 5:7

The merciful—The word mercy, among the Jews, signified two things: the pardon of injuries, and almsgiving. Our Lord undoubtedly takes it in its fullest latitude here. To know the nature of mercy, we have only to consult the grammatical meaning of the Latin word *miseri cordia*, from which ours is derived. It is composed of two words: *miserans*, pitying, and *cor*, the heart; or *miseria cordis*, pain of heart. Mercy supposes two things:

1. A distressed object: and,
2. A disposition of the heart, through which it is affected at the sight of such an object.

This virtue, therefore, is no other than a lively emotion of the heart, which is excited by the discovery of any creature’s misery; and such an emotion as manifests itself outwardly, by effects suited to its nature. The merciful man is here termed by our Lord *ελεημων*, from *ελεος*, which is generally derived from the Hebrew *חיל* *chil*, to be in pain, as a woman in travail: or from *גלל* *galal*, to cry, or lament grievously; because a merciful man enters into the miseries of his neighbor, feels for and mourns with him.

They shall obtain mercy—Mercy is not purchased but at the price of mercy itself; and even this price is a gift of the mercy of God. What mercy can those vindictive persons expect, who forgive nothing, and are always ready to improve

every advantage they have of avenging themselves? Whatever mercy a man shows to another, God will take care to show the same to him. The following elegant and nervous saying of one of our best poets is worthy of the reader's most serious attention:—

“The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him who gives, and him who takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown
It is an attribute of God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.—
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.—
Why, all the souls that are, were forfeit once:
And he who might the 'vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He who is the top of judgment should
But judge you as you are? O! think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man, new made
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?”

In the tract Shabbath, fol. 151, there is a saying very like this of our Lord.

“He who shows mercy to men, God will show mercy to him: but to him who shows no mercy to man, God will show no mercy.

Matthew 5:8

Matthew 5:8

Pure in heart—In opposition to the Pharisees, who affected outward purity, while their hearts were full of corruption and defilement. A principal part of the Jewish religion consisted in outward washings and cleansings: on this ground they expected to see God, to enjoy eternal glory: but Christ here shows that a purification of the heart, from all vile affections and desires, is essentially requisite in order to enter into the kingdom of God. He whose soul is not delivered from all sin, through the blood of the covenant, can have no Scriptural hope of ever being with God. There is a remarkable illustration of this passage, quoted by Mr. Wakefield from Origen, *Contra Cels.* lib. vi. “God has no body,

and therefore is invisible: but men of contemplation can discern him with the heart and understanding. But A DEFILED HEART CANNOT SEE GOD: BUT HE MUST BE PURE WHO WISHES TO ENJOY A PROPER VIEW OF A PURE BEING.”

Shall see God—This is a Hebraism, which signifies, possess God, enjoy his felicity: as seeing a thing, was used among the Hebrews for possessing it. See Psalm 16:10. Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption, i.e. he shall not be corrupted. So John 3:3: Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God, i.e. he cannot enjoy it. So John 3:16. He that believeth not the Son, shall not SEE life, i. e. shall not be put in possession of eternal glory. The Hindoo idolaters vainly boast of what the genuine followers of Christ actually enjoy—having the Divine favor witnessed to their souls by the Holy Spirit. The Hindoos pretend that some of their sages have been favored with a sight of their guardian deity.—See WARD’S Customs.

Probably our Lord alludes to the advantages those had, who were legally pure, of entering into the sanctuary, into the presence of God, while those who had contracted any legal defilement were excluded from it. This also was obviously typical.

Matthew 5:9

Matthew 5:9

The peace-makers—Εἰρηνη, peace, is compounded of εἰρεῖν (εἰς) ἓν, connecting into one: for as WAR distracts and divides nations, families, and individuals, from each other, inducing them to pursue different objects and different interests, so PEACE restores them to a state of unity, giving them one object, and one interest. A peace-maker is a man who, being endowed with a generous public spirit, labors for the public good, and feels his own interest promoted in promoting that of others: therefore, instead of fanning the fire of strife, he uses his influence and wisdom to reconcile the contending parties, adjust their differences, and restore them to a state of unity. As all men are represented to be in a state of hostility to God and each other, the Gospel is called the Gospel of peace, because it tends to reconcile men to God and to each other. Hence our Lord here terms peace-makers the children of God: for as he is the Father of peace, those who promote it are reputed his children. But whose children are they who foment divisions in the Church, the state, or among families? Surely they are not of that GOD, who is the Father of peace, and lover of concord; of that CHRIST, who is the sacrifice and mediator of it; of that SPIRIT, who is the nourisher and bond of peace; nor of that CHURCH of the Most High, which is the kingdom and family of peace.

St. Clement, Strom. lib. iv. s. 6, in fin. says, that “Some who transpose the Gospels add this verse: Happy they who are persecuted by justice, for they shall be perfect: happy they who are persecuted on my account, for they shall have a place where they shall not be persecuted.”

Matthew 5:10

Matthew 5:10

They which are persecuted—Δεδιωγμενοι, they who are hard pressed upon and pursued with repeated acts of enmity. Parkhurst. They are happy who suffer, seems a strange saying: and that the righteous should suffer, merely because they are such, seems as strange. But such is the enmity of the human heart to every thing of God and goodness, that all those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution in one form or other. As the religion of Christ gives no quarter to vice, so the vicious will give no quarter to this religion, or to its professors.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven—That spiritual kingdom, explained Matthew 3:2, and that kingdom of glory which is its counterpart and consequence.

Matthew 5:11

Matthew 5:11

When men shall revile you, and persecute—The persecution mentioned in the preceding verse comprehends all outward acts of violence—all that the hand can do. This comprehends all calumny, slander, etc., all that the tongue can effect. But as διωξειν, which we render to persecute, is a forensic term, and signifies legal persecutions and public accusations, which, though totally unsubstantiated, were the means of destroying multitudes of the primitive Christians, our Lord probably refers to such. No Protestant can think, without horror, of the great numbers burnt alive in this country, on such accusations, under the popish reign of her who is emphatically called Bloody Queen Mary.

Matthew 5:12

Matthew 5:12

Rejoice—In the testimony of a good conscience; for, without this, suffering has nothing but misery in it.

Be exceeding glad—Αγαλλιασθε, leap for joy. There are several cases on record, where this was literally done by the martyrs, in Queen Mary's days.

Great is your reward in heaven—In the Talmudical tract Pirkey Aboth, are these words: "Rabbi Tarpon said, The day is short: the work is great: the laborers are slow: the REWARD IS GREAT: and the father of the family is urgent."

The followers of Christ are encouraged to suffer joyfully on two considerations.

1. They are thereby conformed to the prophets who went before.
2. Their reward in heaven is a great one.

God gives the grace to suffer, and then crowns that grace with glory; hence it is plain, the reward is not of debt, but of grace: Romans 6:23.

Matthew 5:13

Matthew 5:13

Ye are the salt of the earth—Our Lord shows here what the preachers of the Gospel, and what all who profess to follow him, should be; the salt of the earth, to preserve the world from putrefaction and destruction. See the note on Leviticus 2:13.

But if the salt have lost his savor—That this is possible in the land of Judea, we have proof from Mr. Maundrell, who, describing the Valley of Salt, speaks thus: “Along, on one side of the valley, toward Gibul, there is a small precipice about two men’s lengths, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt; and, in this, you may see how the veins of it lie. 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 SAVOUR: the inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savor, as I found by proof.” See his Trav., 5th edit., last page. A preacher, or private Christian, who has lost the life of Christ, and the witness of his Spirit, out of his soul, may be likened to this salt. He may have the sparks and glittering particles of true wisdom, but without its unction or comfort. Only that which is connected with the rock, the soul that is in union with Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, can preserve its savor, and be instrumental of good to others.

To be trodden underfoot—There was a species of salt in Judea, which was generated at the lake Asphaltites, and hence called bituminous salt, easily rendered vapid, and of no other use but to be spread in a part of the temple, to prevent slipping in wet weather. This is probably what our Lord alludes to in this place. The existence of such a salt, and its application to such a use, Schoettgenius has largely proved in his *Horae Hebraicae*, vol. i. p. 18, etc.

Matthew 5:14

Matthew 5:14

Ye are the light of the world—That is, the instruments which God chooses to make use of to illuminate the minds of men; as he uses the sun (to which probably he pointed) to enlighten the world. Light of the world, **נר עולם** *ner olam*, was a title applied to the most eminent rabbins. Christ transfers the title from these, and gives it to his own disciples, who, by the doctrines that he taught them, were to be the means of diffusing the light of life throughout the universe.

A city that is set on a hill—This place may receive light from the following passage in Maundrell’s Travels. “A few points toward the north (of Tabor) appears that which they call the Mount of Beatitudes, a small rising, from which our blessed Savior delivered his sermon in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew. (See the note on Matthew 5:5). Not far from this little hill is the city Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. It stands upon a very eminent and conspicuous mountain, and is SEEN FAR and NEAR. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city, in these words of his, A city set on a hill cannot be

hid?” p. 115. Quesnell remarks here: “The Christian life is something very high and sublime, to which we cannot arrive without pains: while it withdraws us from the earth, and carries us nearer heaven, it places us in view, and as a mark, to the malice of carnal men.”

Matthew 5:15

Matthew 5:15

Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel—A bushel *μοδιος*;—a measure both among the Greeks and Romans, containing a little more than a peck English. From some ancient writers we learn, that only those who had bad designs hid a candle under a bushel; that, in the dead of the night, when all were asleep, they might rise up, and have light at hand to help them to effect their horrid purposes of murder, etc. See Wetstein, Kypke, Wolf, etc.

Matthew 5:16

Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine—Or more literally, Thus let your light shine, *Ουτω λαμψατω το φως*. As the sun is lighted up in the firmament of heaven to diffuse its light and heat freely to every inhabitant of the earth; and as the lamp is not set under the bushel, but placed upon the lamp-stand that it may give light to all in the house; THUS let every follower of Christ, and especially every preacher of the Gospel, diffuse the light of heavenly knowledge, and the warmth of Divine love through the whole circle of their acquaintance.

That they may see your good works—It is not sufficient to have light—we must walk in the light, and by the light. Our whole conduct should be a perpetual comment on the doctrine we have received, and a constant exemplification of its power and truth.

And glorify your Father—The following curious saying is found in Bammidbar Rabba, s. 15. “The Israelites said to the holy blessed God, Thou commandest us to light lamps to thee; and yet thou art the, Light of the world, and with thee the light dwelleth. The holy blessed God answered, I do not command this because I need light; but that you may reflect light upon me, as I have illuminated you:—that the people may say, Behold, how the Israelites illustrate him, who illuminates them in the sight of the whole earth.” See more in Schoettgen. Real Christians are the children of God—they are partakers of his holy and happy nature: they should ever be concerned for their Father’s honor, and endeavor so to recommend him, and his salvation, that others may be prevailed on to come to the light, and walk in it. Then God is said to be glorified, when the glorious power of his grace is manifested in the salvation of men.

Matthew 5:17

Matthew 5:17

Think not that I am come to destroy the law—Do not imagine that I am come to violate the law καταλυσαι, from κατα, and λυω, I loose, violate, or dissolve—I am not come to make the law of none effect—to dissolve the connection which subsists between its several parts, or the obligation men are under to have their lives regulated by its moral precepts; nor am I come to dissolve the connecting reference it has to the good things promised. But I am come, πληρωσαι, to complete—to perfect its connection and reference, to accomplish every thing shadowed forth in the Mosaic ritual, to fill up its great design; and to give grace to all my followers, πληρωσαι, to fill up, or complete, every moral duty. In a word, Christ completed the law:

- 1st. In itself, it was only the shadow, the typical representation, of good things to come; and he added to it that which was necessary to make it perfect, HIS OWN SACRIFICE, without which it could neither satisfy God, nor sanctify men.
- 2dly. He completed it in himself by submitting to its types with an exact obedience, and verifying them by his death upon the cross.
- 3dly. He completes this law, and the sayings of his prophets, in his members, by giving them grace to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves; for this is all the law and the prophets.

It is worthy of observation, that the word גמַר gamar, among the rabbins, signifies not only to fulfill, but also to teach; and, consequently, we may infer that our Lord intimated, that the law and the prophets were still to be taught or inculcated by him and his disciples; and this he and they have done in the most pointed manner. See the Gospels and epistles; and see especially this sermon on the mount, the Epistle of James, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. And this meaning of the word gives the clear sense of the apostle's words, Colossians 1:25. Whereof I am made a minister, πληρωσαι τον λογον του Θεου, to fulfill the word of God, i.e. to teach the doctrine of God.

Matthew 5:18

Matthew 5:18

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven—In the very commencement of his ministry, Jesus Christ teaches the instability of all visible things. “The heaven which you see, and which is so glorious, and the earth which you inhabit and love, shall pass away; for the things which are seen are temporal, προσωκαιρα, are for a time; but the things which are not seen are eternal αιωνια, ever-during,” 2 Corinthians 4:18. And the WORD of the Lord endureth for ever.

One jot or one tittle—One yod, (י), the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. One tittle or point, κεραια, either meaning those points which serve for vowels in this language, if they then existed; or the seraphs, or points of certain

letters, such as ר resh, or ד daleth, ה he, or ח cheth (as the change of any of these into the other would make a most essential alteration in the sense, or, as the rabbins say, destroy the world). Or our Lord may refer to the little ornaments which certain letters assume on their tops, which cause them to appear like small branches. The following letters only can assume coronal apices, ך tsaddi—ג gimel—ז zain—נ nun—ט teth—ע ayin—ש shin. These, with the coronal apices, often appear in MSS.

That this saying, one jot or one tittle, is a proverbial mode of expression among the Jews, and that it expressed the meaning given to it above, is amply proved by the extracts in Lightfoot and Schoettgen. The reader will not be displeased to find a few of them here, if he can bear with the allegorical and strongly figurative language of the rabbins.

“The book of Deuteronomy came and prostrated itself before the Lord, and said: ‘O Lord of the world, thou hast written in me thy law; but now, a Testament defective in some parts is defective in all. Behold, Solomon endeavors to root the letter yod out of me.’ (In this text, Deuteronomy 17:5. לא ירבה נשים lo yirbeh, nashim, he shall not multiply wives). The holy blessed God answered, ‘Solomon and a thousand such as he shall perish, but the least word shall not perish out of thee.’”

In Shir Hashirim Rabba, are these words:

“Should all the inhabitants of the earth gather together, in order to whiten one feather of a crow, they could not succeed: so, if all the inhabitants of the earth should unite to abolish one ך yod, which is the smallest letter in the whole law, they should not be able to effect it.”

In Vayikra Rabba, s. 19, it is said:

“Should any person in the words of Deuteronomy 6:4, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is אחד achad, ONE Lord, change the ד daleth into a ר resh, he would ruin the world.” [Because, in that case, the word אחר achar, would signify a strange or false God].

“Should any one, in the words of Exodus 34:14, Thou shalt worship no OTHER, אחר achar, God, change ר resh into ד daleth, he would ruin the world.” [Because the command would then run, Thou shalt not worship the ONLY or true God].

“Should any one in the words of Leviticus 22:32, Neither shall ye PROFANE תחללו techelelu, my holy name, change ח cheth into ה he, he would ruin the world.” [Because the sense of the commandment would then be, Neither shall ye PRAISE my holy name].

“Should any one, in the words of Psalm 150:6, Let every thing that hath breath PRAISE, תהלל tehalel, the Lord, change ה he into ח cheth, he would ruin the world.” [Because the command would then run, Let every thing that hath breath PROFANE the Lord].

“Should any one, in the words of Jeremiah 5:10, They lied AGAINST the Lord, ביהוה beihovah, change ב beth into כ caph, he would ruin the world.” [For then the words would run, They lied LIKE the Lord].

“Should any one, in the words of Hosea, Hosea 5:7, They have dealt treacherously, ביהוה beihovah, AGAINST the Lord, change ב beth into כ caph, he would ruin the world.” [For then the words would run, They have dealt treacherously LIKE the Lord].

“Should any one, in the words of 1 Samuel 2:2, There is none holy AS the Lord, change כ caph into ב beth, he would ruin the world.” [For then the words would mean, There is no holiness IN the Lord].

These examples fully prove that the $\mu\alpha\ \kappa\epsilon\rho\alpha\iota\alpha$ of our Lord, refers to the apices, points, or corners, that distinguish כ beth from כ caph; ח cheth from ה he; and ר resh from ד daleth. For the reader will at once perceive, how easily a כ caph may be turned into a ב beth; a ה he into a ח cheth; and a ר resh into a ד daleth: and he will also see of what infinite consequence it is to write and print such letters correctly.

Till all be fulfilled—Or, accomplished. Though all earth and hell should join together to hinder the accomplishment of the great designs of the Most High, yet it shall all be in vain—even the sense of a single letter shall not be lost. The words of God, which point out his designs, are as unchangeable as his nature itself. Every sinner, who perseveres in his iniquity, shall surely be punished with separation from God and the glory of his power; and every soul that turns to God, through Christ, shall as surely be saved, as that Jesus himself hath died.

Matthew 5:19

Matthew 5:19

Whosoever—shall break one of these least commandments—The Pharisees were remarkable for making a distinction between weightier and lighter matters in the law, and between what has been called, in a corrupt part of the Christian Church, mortal and venial sins. See on Matthew 22:36 (note).

Whosoever shall break. What an awful consideration is this! He who, by his mode of acting, speaking, or explaining the words of God, sets the holy precept aside, or explains away its force and meaning, shall be called least—shall have no place in the kingdom of Christ here, nor in the kingdom of glory above. That this is the meaning of these words is evident enough from the following verse.

Matthew 5:20

Matthew 5:20

Except your righteousness shall exceed—περισσευση, Unless your righteousness abound more—unless it take in, not only the letter, but the spirit and design of the moral and ritual precept; the one directing you how to walk so as to please God; the other pointing out Christ, the great Atonement, through and by which a sinner is enabled to do so—more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who only attend to the letter of the law, and had indeed made even that of no effect by their traditions—ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. This fully explains the meaning of the preceding verse. The old English word is right-wiseness, i.e. complete, thorough, excellent Wisdom. For a full explanation of this verse, see Luke 18:10, etc.

Matthew 5:21

Matthew 5:21

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time—τοις αρχαιοις, to or by the ancients. By the ancients, we may understand those who lived before the law, and those who lived under it; for murder was, in the most solemn manner, forbidden before, as well as under, the law, Genesis 9:5, 6.

But it is very likely that our Lord refers here merely to traditions and glosses relative to the ancient Mosaic ordinance; and such as, by their operation, rendered the primitive command of little or no effect. Murder from the beginning has been punished with death; and it is, probably, the only crime that should be punished with death. There is much reason to doubt, whether the punishment of death, inflicted for any other crime, is not in itself murder, whatever the authority may be that has instituted it. GOD, and the greatest legislators that have ever been in the universe, are of the same opinion. See Montesquieu, Blackstone, and the Marquis Beccaria, and the arguments and testimonies lately produced by Sir Samuel Romilly, in his motion for the amendment of the criminal laws of this kingdom. It is very remarkable, that the criminal code published by Joseph II., late emperor of Germany, though it consists of seventy-one capital crimes, has

not death attached to any of them. Even murder, with all intention to rob, is punished only with “imprisonment for thirty years, to lie on the floor, to have no nourishment but bread and water, to be closely chained, and to be publicly whipped once a year, with less than one hundred lashes.” See Colquhoun on the Police of the City of London, p. 272.

Matthew 5:22

Matthew 5:22

Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause—ὁ οργιζομενος—εικη, who is vainly incensed. “This translation is literal; and the very objectionable phrase, without a cause, is left out, εικη being more properly translated by that above.” What our Lord seems here to prohibit, is not merely that miserable facility which some have of being angry at every trifle, continually taking offense against their best friends; but that anger which leads a man to commit outrages against another, thereby subjecting himself to that punishment which was to be inflicted on those who break the peace. Εικη, vainly, or, as in the common translation, without a cause, is wanting in the famous Vatican MS. and two others, the Ethiopic, latter Arabic, Saxon, Vulgate, two copies of the old Itala, J. Martyr, Ptolomeus, Origen, Tertullian, and by all the ancient copies quoted by St. Jerome. It was probably a marginal gloss originally, which in process of time crept into the text.

Shall be in danger of the judgment—ενοχος εδτοι, shall be liable to the judgment. That is, to have the matter brought before a senate, composed of twenty-three magistrates, whose business it was to judge in cases of murder and other capital crimes. It punished criminals by strangling or beheading; but Dr. Lightfoot supposes the judgment of God to be intended. See at the end of this chapter.

Raca—רַקַּה from the Hebrew רַקַּ rak, to be empty. It signifies a vain, empty, worthless fellow, shallow brains, a term of great contempt. Such expressions were punished among the Gentoos by a heavy fine. See all the cases, Code of Gentoo Laws, chap. 15: sec. 2.

The council—Συνεδριον, the famous council, known among the Jews by the name of Sanhedrin. It was composed of seventy-two elders, six chosen out of each tribe. This grand Sanhedrin not only received appeals from the inferior Sanhedrins, or court of twenty-three mentioned above; but could alone take cognizance, in the first instance, of the highest crimes, and alone inflict the punishment of stoning.

Thou fool—Moreh, probably from מָרָה marah, to rebel, a rebel against God, apostate from all good. This term implied, among the Jews, the highest enormity, and most aggravated guilt. Among the Gentoos, such an expression was punished by cutting out the tongue, and thrusting a hot iron, of ten fingers breadth, into the mouth of the person who used it. Code of Gentoo Laws, chap. 15: sec. 2. p. 212.

Shall be in danger of hell fire—ενοχος εδται εις την γεενναν του πυρος, shall be liable to the hell of fire. Our Lord here alludes to the valley of the son of Hinnom, גי הנום Ghi hinom. This place was near Jerusalem, and had been formerly used for those abominable sacrifices, in which the idolatrous Jews had caused their children to pass through the fire to Molech. A particular place in this valley was called Tophet, from תפת tophet, the fire stove, in which some supposed they burnt their children alive to the above idol. See 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; Jeremiah 7:31, 32. From the circumstances of this valley having been the scene of those infernal sacrifices, the Jews, in our Savior's time, used the word for hell, the place of the damned. See the word applied in this sense by the Targum, on Ruth 2:12; Psalm 140:12; Genesis 3:24; 15:17. It is very probable that our Lord means no more here than this: if a man charge another with apostasy from the Jewish religion, or rebellion against God, and cannot prove his charge, then he is exposed to that punishment (burning alive) which the other must have suffered, if the charge had been substantiated. There are three kinds of offenses here, which exceed each other in their degrees of guilt.

- 1st. Anger against a man, accompanied with some injurious act.
- 2dly. Contempt, expressed by the opprobrious epithet *raka*, or shallow brains.
- 3dly. Hatred and mortal enmity, expressed by the term *moreh*, or apostate, where such apostasy could not be proved.

Now, proportioned to these three offenses were three different degrees of punishment, each exceeding the other in its severity, as the offenses exceeded each other in their different degrees of guilt.

- 1st. The judgment, the council of twenty-three, which could inflict the punishment of strangling.
- 2dly. The Sanhedrin, or great council, which could inflict the punishment of stoning. And
- 3dly. The being burnt alive in the valley of the son of Hinnom. This appears to be the meaning of our Lord.

Now, if the above offenses were to be so severely punished, which did not immediately affect the life of another, how much sorer must the punishment of murder be! Matthew 5:21. And as there could not be a greater punishment inflicted than death, in the above terrific forms, and this was to be inflicted for minor crimes; then the punishment of murder must not only have death here, but a hell of fire in the eternal world, attached to it. It seems that these different degrees of guilt, and the punishment attached to each, had not been properly distinguished among the Jews. Our Lord here calls their attention back to them, and gives them to understand, that in the coming world there are different degrees of punishment prepared for different degrees of vice; and that not only the outward act of iniquity should be judged and punished by the Lord, but that

injurious words, and evil passions, should all meet their just recompense and reward. Murder is the most punishable of all crimes, according to the written law, in respect both of our neighbors and civil society. But he who sees the heart, and judges it by the eternal law, punishes as much a word or a desire, if the hatred whence they proceed be complete and perfected. Dr. Lightfoot has some curious observations on this passage in the preface to his Harmony of the Evangelists. See his works, vol. ii., and the conclusion of this chapter.

Matthew 5:23

Matthew 5:23

Therefore if thou bring thy gift—Evil must be nipped in the bud. An unkind thought of another may be the foundation of that which leads to actual murder. A Christian, properly speaking, cannot be an enemy to any man; nor is he to consider any man his enemy, without the fullest evidence: for surmises to the prejudice of another can never rest in the bosom of him who has the love of God in his heart, for to him all men are brethren. He sees all men as children of God, and members of Christ, or at least capable of becoming such. If a tender forgiving spirit was required, even in a Jew, when he approached God's altar with a bullock or a lamb, how much more necessary is this in a man who professes to be a follower of the Lamb of God; especially when he receives the symbols of that Sacrifice which was offered for the life of the world, in what is commonly called the sacrament of the Lord's supper!

Matthew 5:24

Matthew 5:24

Leave there thy gift before the altar—This is as much as to say, "Do not attempt to bring any offering to God while thou art in a spirit of enmity against any person; or hast any difference with thy neighbor, which thou hast not used thy diligence to get adjusted." It is our duty and interest, both to bring our gift, and offer it too; but God will not accept of any act of religious worship from us, while any enmity subsists in our hearts towards any soul of man; or while any subsists in our neighbor's heart towards us, which we have not used the proper means to remove. A religion, the very essence of which is love, cannot suffer at its altars a heart that is revengeful and uncharitable, or which does not use its utmost endeavors to revive love in the heart of another. The original word, δωρον, which we translate gift, is used by the rabbins in Hebrew letters דורון *doron*, which signifies not only a gift, but a sacrifice offered to God. See several proofs in Schoettgen.

Then come and offer thy gift—Then, when either thy brother is reconciled to thee, or thou hast done all in thy power to effect this reconciliation. My own obstinacy and uncharitableness must render me utterly unfit to receive any good from God's hands, or to worship him in an acceptable manner; but the

wickedness of another can be no hinderance to me, when I have endeavored earnestly to get it removed, though without effect.

Matthew 5:25

Matthew 5:25

Agree with thine adversary quickly—Adversary, ἀντιδικος, properly a plaintiff in law—a perfect law term. Our Lord enforces the exhortation given in the preceding verses, from the consideration of what was deemed prudent in ordinary law-suits. In such cases, men should make up matters with the utmost speed, as running through the whole course of a law-suit must not only be vexatious, but be attended with great expense; and in the end, though the loser may be ruined, yet the gainer has nothing. A good use of this very prudential advice of our Lord is this: Thou art a sinner; God hath a controversy with thee. There is but a step between thee and death. Now is the accepted time. Thou art invited to return to God by Christ Jesus. Come immediately at his call, and he will save thy soul. Delay not! Eternity is at hand; and if thou die in thy sins, where God is thou shalt never come.

Those who make the adversary, God; the judge, Christ; the officer, Death; and the prison, Hell, abuse the passage, and highly dishonor God.

Matthew 5:26

Matthew 5:26

The uttermost farthing—Κοδραντην. The rabbins have this Greek word corrupted into קרדיונטס kordiontes, and קונטריק, kontrik, and say, that two פרוטות prutoth make a kontarik, which is exactly the same with those words in Mark 12:42, λεπτα δυο, ο εστι κοδραντης, two mites, which are one farthing. Hence it appears that the λεπτον lepton was the same as the prutah. The weight of the prutah was half a barley-corn, and it was the smallest coin among the Jews, as the kodrantes, or farthing, was the smallest coin among the Romans. If the matter issue in law, strict justice will be done, and your creditor be allowed the fullness of his just claim; but if, while you are on the way, going to the magistrate, you come to a friendly agreement with him, he will relax in his claims, take a part for the whole, and the composition be, in the end, both to his and your profit.

This text has been considered a proper foundation on which to build not only the doctrine of a purgatory, but also that of universal restoration. But the most unwarrantable violence must be used before it can be pressed into the service of either of the above antisciptural doctrines. At the most, the text can only be considered as a metaphorical representation of the procedure of the great Judge; and let it ever be remembered, that by the general consent of all (except the basely interested) no metaphor is ever to be produced in proof of any doctrine. In the things that concern our eternal salvation, we need the most pointed and express evidence on which to establish the faith of our souls.

Matthew 5:27

Matthew 5:27

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old—By the ancients, τοις αρχαιοις, is omitted by nearly a hundred MSS., and some of them of the very greatest antiquity and authority; also by the Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Gothic, and Slavonian versions; by four copies of the old Itala; and by Origen, Cyril, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Hilary. On this authority Wetstein and Griesbach have left it out of the text.

Matthew 5:28

Matthew 5:28

Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her—Επιθυμησαι αυτην, earnestly to covet her. The verb, επιθυμew, is undoubtedly used here by our Lord, in the sense of coveting through the influence of impure desire. The word is used in precisely the same sense, on the same subject, by Herodotus, book the first, near the end. I will give the passage, but I dare not translate it. To the learned reader it will justify my translation, and the unlearned must take my word. Της ΕΠΙΘΥΜΗΣΕΙ γυναικος Μασσαγετης ανηρ, μισγεται αδεως, Raphelius, on this verse, says, επιθυμειν hoc loco, est turpi cupiditate mulieris potiundae flagrare. In all these cases, our blessed Lord points out the spirituality of the law; which was a matter to which the Jews paid very little attention. Indeed it is the property of a Pharisee to abstain only from the outward crime. Men are very often less inquisitive to know how far the will of God extends, that they may please him in performing it, than they are to know how far they may satisfy their lusts without destroying their bodies and souls, utterly, by an open violation of his law.

Hath committed adultery with her already in his heart—It is the earnest wish or desire of the soul, which, in a variety of cases, constitutes the good or evil of an act. If a man earnestly wish to commit an evil, but cannot, because God puts time, place, and opportunity out of his power, he is fully chargeable with the iniquity of the act, by that God who searches and judges the heart. So, if a man earnestly wish to do some kindness, which it is out of his power to perform, the act is considered as his; because God, in this case, as in that above, takes the will for the deed. If voluntary and deliberate looks and desires make adulterers and adulteresses, how many persons are there whose whole life is one continued crime! whose eyes being full of adultery, they cannot cease from sin, 2 Peter 2:14. Many would abhor to commit one external act before the eyes of men, in a temple of stone; and yet they are not afraid to commit a multitude of such acts in the temple of their hearts, and in the sight of God!

Matthew 5:29

Matthew 5:29-30

Pluck it out—cut it off—We must shut our senses against dangerous objects, to avoid the occasions of sin, and deprive ourselves of all that is most dear and profitable to us, in order to save our souls, when we find that these dear and profitable things, however innocent in themselves, cause us to sin against God.

It is profitable for thee that one of thy members—Men often part with some members of the body, at the discretion of a surgeon, that they may preserve the trunk, and die a little later; and yet they will not deprive themselves of a look, a touch, a small pleasure, which endanger the eternal death of the soul. It is not enough to shut the eye, or stop the hand; the one must be plucked out, and the other cut off. Neither is this enough, we must cast them both from us. Not one moment's truce with an evil passion, or a sinful appetite. If you indulge them, they will gain strength, and you shall be ruined. The rabbins have a saying similar to this: "It is better for thee to be scorched with a little fire in this world, than to be burned with a devouring fire in the world to come."

Matthew 5:31

Matthew 5:31

Whosoever shall put away his wife—The Jewish doctors gave great license in the matter of divorce. Among them, a man might divorce his wife if she displeased him even in the dressing of his victuals!

Rabbi Akiba said, "If any man saw a woman handsomer than his own wife, he might put his wife away; because it is said in the law, If she find not favor in his eyes." Deuteronomy 24:1.

Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in his Life, tells us, with the utmost coolness and indifference, "About this time I put away my wife, who had borne me three children, not being pleased with her manners."

These two cases are sufficient to show to what a scandalous and criminal excess this matter was carried among the Jews. However, it was allowed by the school of Shammai, that no man was to put away his wife unless for adultery. The school of Hillel gave much greater license.

A writing of divorcement—The following is the common form of such a writing. See Maimonides and Lightfoot.

"On the day of the week A. in the month B. in the year C. from the beginning of the world, according to the common computation in the province of D., I, N. the son of N. by whatever name I am called, of the city E. with entire consent of mind, and without any compulsion, have divorced, dismissed, and expelled thee—thee, I say, M. the daughter of M. by whatever name thou art called, of the city E. who wast heretofore my wife: but now I have dismissed thee—thee, I say, M. the daughter of M. by whatever name thou art called, of the city E. so as to be free, and at thine own disposal, to marry whomsoever thou pleasest, without hinderance from any

one, from this day for ever. Thou art therefore free for any man. Let this be thy bill of divorce from me, a writing of separation and expulsion, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

REUBEN, son of Jacob, Witness.

ELIEZAR, son of Gilead, Witness.”

God permitted this evil to prevent a greater; and, perhaps, to typify his repudiating the Jews, who were his first spouse.

Matthew 5:32

Matthew 5:32

Saving for the cause of fornication—Λογου πορνείας, on account of whoredom. As fornication signifies no more than the unlawful connection of unmarried persons, it cannot be used here with propriety, when speaking of those who are married. I have therefore translated λογου πορνείας, on account of whoredom. It does not appear that there is any other case in which Jesus Christ admits of divorce. A real Christian ought rather to beg of God the grace to bear patiently and quietly the imperfections of his wife, than to think of the means of being parted from her. “But divorce was allowed by Moses;” yes, for the hardness of their hearts it was permitted: but what was permitted to an uncircumcised heart among the Jews, should not serve for a rule to a heart in which the love of God has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. Those who form a matrimonial connection in the fear and love of God, and under his direction, will never need a divorce. But those who marry as passion or money lead the way, may be justly considered adulterers and adulteresses as long as they live.

Matthew 5:33

Matthew 5:33

Thou shalt not forswear thyself—They dishonor the great God, and break this commandment, who use frequent oaths and imprecations, even in reference to things that are true; and those who make vows and promises, which they either cannot perform, or do not design to fulfill, are not less criminal. Swearing in civil matters is become so frequent, that the dread and obligation of an oath are utterly lost in it. In certain places, where oaths are frequently administered, people have been known to kiss their thumb or pen, instead of the book, thinking thereby to avoid the sin of perjury; but this is a shocking imposition on their own souls. See the notes on Deuteronomy 4:26; 6:13.

Perform unto the Lord thine oaths—The morality of the Jews on this point was truly execrable: they maintained, that a man might swear with his lips, and annul it in the same moment in his heart. Rab. Akiba is quoted as an example of this kind of swearing. See Schoettgen.

Matthew 5:34

Matthew 5:34-35

Neither by heaven, etc.—It was a custom among the Scythians, when they wished to bind themselves in the most solemn manner, to swear by the king's throne; and if the king was at any time sick, they believed it was occasioned by some one's having taken the oath falsely. Herod. l. iv.

Who is there among the traders and people of this world who obey this law? A common swearer is constantly perjuring himself: such a person should never be trusted. When we make any promise contrary to the command of God, taking, as a pledge of our sincerity, either GOD, or something belonging to him, we engage that which is not ours, without the Master's consent. God manifests his glory in heaven, as upon his throne; he imprints the footsteps of his perfections upon the earth, his footstool; and shows that his holiness and his grace reign in his temple as the place of his residence. Let it be our constant care to seek and honor God in all his works.

Matthew 5:36

Matthew 5:36

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head—For these plain reasons:

1st. God commands thee not to do it.

2dly. Thou hast nothing which is thy own, and thou shouldst not pledge another's property.

3dly. It never did, and never can, answer any good purpose. And

4thly. Being a breach of the law of God, it is the way to everlasting misery.

Matthew 5:37

Matthew 5:37

Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay—That is, a positive affirmation, or negation, according to your knowledge of the matter concerning which you are called to testify. Do not equivocate; mean what you assert, and adhere to your assertion. Hear what a heathen says on this subject:—

Εχθρος γαρ μοι κεινος ὁμως αιδαο πυλησιν,
Ος χ'ετερον μεν κευθει ενι φρεσιν, αλλο δε βαζει.
Hom. Il. ix. 312

“He whose words agree not with his private thoughts is as detestable to me as the gates of hell.”

See on Joshua 2 (note) at the end.

See the subject of swearing particularly considered in the note at the

conclusion of Deuteronomy 6 (note).

Whatever is more than these—That is, more than a bare affirmation or negation, according to the requirements of Eternal Truth, cometh of evil; or, is of the wicked one—*εκ του πονηρου εδιν*, i.e. the devil, the father of superfluities and lies. One of Selden's MSS. and Gregory Nyssen, a commentator of the fourth century, have *εκ του διαβολου εδιν*, is of the devil.

That the Jews were notoriously guilty of common swearing, for which our Lord particularly reprehends them, and warns his disciples against, and that they swore by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, by their head, etc., the following extracts, made by Dr. Lightfoot from their own writings, amply testify:—

“It was customary and usual among them to swear by the creatures. ‘If any swear by heaven, by earth, by the sun, etc., although the mind of the swearer be, under these words, to swear by HIM who created them, yet this is not an oath. Or, if any swear by some of the prophets, or by some of the books of the Scripture, although the sense of the swearer be to swear by HIM that sent that prophet, or that gave that book, nevertheless, this is not an oath. MAIMONIDES.’

“If any adjure another by heaven or earth, he is not guilty. TALMUD.

“They swore by HEAVEN, *השמים בן הוא* *hashshamayim, ken hu*, ‘By heaven, so it is.’ BAB. BERAC.

“They swore by the TEMPLE. ‘When turtles and young pigeons were sometimes sold at Jerusalem for a penny of gold, Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said, *המעו הוה* By this habitation (that is, by this TEMPLE) I will not rest this night, unless they be sold for a penny of silver.’ CHERITUTH, cap. i.

“R. Zechariah ben Ketsab said, *המעו הוה* ‘By this TEMPLE, the hand of the woman departed not out of my hand.’

R. Jochanan said, *היכלא* ‘By the TEMPLE, it is in our hand, etc.’ KETUBOTH and BAB. KIDUSHIN.

“Bava ben Buta swore by the TEMPLE in the end of the tract Cherithuth, and Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel in the beginning, *וזה מנהג בישראל* And so was the custom in Israel.—Note this, so was the custom.

JUCAS. fol. 56.

“They swore by the city Jerusalem. R. Judah saith, ‘He that saith, By JERUSALEM, saith nothing, unless with an intent purpose he shall vow towards Jerusalem.’ Where also, after two lines coming between those forms of swearing and vowing, are added, **ירושלם לירושלם בירושלם היכל להיכל בהיכל** ‘Jerusalem, For Jerusalem, By Jerusalem.—The Temple, For the temple, By the temple.—The Altar, For the altar, By the altar.—The Lamb, For the Lamb, By the Lamb.—The Chambers of the Temple, For the chambers of the temple, By the chambers of the temple.—The Word, For the Word, By the Word.—The Sacrifices on Fire, For the sacrifices on fire, By the sacrifices on fire.—The Dishes, For the dishes, By the dishes.—By all these things, that I will do this to you.’ TOSAPHT. ad. NEDARIM.

“They swore by their own HEADS. ‘One is bound to swear to his neighbor, and he saith, **רִיד לִי כְתִי רֵאשֶׁךְ** Vow (or swear) to me by the life of thy head, etc. SANHEDR. cap. 3.

“One of the holiest of their precepts relative to swearing was this: ‘Be not much in oaths, although one should swear concerning things that are true; for in much swearing it is impossible not to profane.’ Tract. DEMAI.”—See Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 149.

They did not pretend to forbid ALL common swearing, but only what they term MUCH. A Jew might swear, but he must not be too abundant in the practice. Against such permission, our Lord opposes his Swear NOT AT ALL! He who uses any oath, except what he is solemnly called by the magistrate to make, so far from being a Christian, he does not deserve the reputation, either of decency or common sense. In some of our old elementary books for children, we have this good maxim: “Never swear: for he that swears will lie; and he that lies will steal; and, if so, what bad things will he not do!” READING MADE EASY.

Matthew 5:38

Matthew 5:38

An eye for an eye—Our Lord refers here to the law of retaliation mentioned See Exodus 21:24, (see the note there, and see Leviticus 24:20 (note)), which obliged the offender to suffer the same injury he had committed. The Greeks and Romans had the same law. So strictly was it attended to at Athens, that if a man put out the eye of another who had but one, the offender was condemned to lose both his eyes, as the loss of one would not be an equivalent misfortune. It seems that the Jews had made this law (the execution of which belonged to the civil magistrate) a ground for authorizing private resentments, and all the excesses committed by a vindictive spirit. Revenge was often carried to the utmost

extremity, and more evil returned than what had been received. This is often the case among those who are called Christians.

Matthew 5:39

Matthew 5:39

Resist not evil—Or, the evil person. So, I am fully persuaded, τῷ πονηρῷ ought to be translated. Our Lord's meaning is, "Do not repel one outrage by another." He that does so makes himself precisely what the other is, a wicked person.

Turn to him the other also—That is, rather than avenge thyself, be ready to suffer patiently a repetition of the same injury. But these exhortations belong to those principally who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Let such leave the judgment of their cause to Him for whose sake they suffer. The Jews always thought that every outrage should be resented; and thus the spirit of hatred and strife was fostered.

Matthew 5:40

Matthew 5:40

And if any man will sue thee at the law—Every where our blessed Lord shows the utmost disapprobation of such litigations as tended to destroy brotherly kindness and charity. It is evident he would have his followers to suffer rather the loss of all their property than to have recourse to such modes of redress, at so great a risk. Having the mind averse from contentions, and preferring peace and concord to temporal advantages, is most solemnly recommended to all Christians. We are great gainers when we lose only our money, or other property, and risk not the loss of our souls, by losing the love of God and man.

Coat—Χιτῶνα, upper garment.—Cloke, ἱματίον, under garment. What we call strait coat, and great coat.—See on Luke 6:29 (note).

Matthew 5:41

Matthew 5:41

Shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—ἀγγαρευσεῖ. This word is said to be derived from the Persians, among whom the king's messengers, or posts, were called Ἀγγαποῖ, or *angari*. This definition is given both by Hesychius and Suidas.

The Persian messengers had the royal authority for pressing horses, ships, and even men, to assist them in the business on which they were employed. These *angari* are now termed *chappars*, and serve to carry despatches between the court and the provinces. When a *chappar* sets out, the master of the horse furnishes him with a single horse; and, when that is weary, he dismounts the first man he meets, and takes his horse. There is no pardon for a traveler that refuses to let a *chappar* have his horse, nor for any other who should deny him the best horse in his stable. See Sir J. Chardin's and Hanway's Travels. For pressing post

horses, etc., the Persian term is *Sukhreh geriften*. I find no Persian word exactly of the sound and signification of *Ἀγγαρος*; but the Arabic *agharet* signifies spurring a horse, attacking, plundering, etc. The Greek word itself is preserved among the rabbins in Hebrew characters, **אנגריא** *angaria*, and it has precisely the same meaning: viz. to be compelled by violence to do any particular service, especially of the public kind, by the king's authority. Lightfoot gives several instances of this in his *Horae Talmudicae*.

We are here exhorted to patience and forgiveness:

First, When we receive in our persons all sorts of insults and affronts, Matthew 5:39.

Secondly, When we are despoiled of our goods, Matthew 5:40.

Thirdly, When our bodies are forced to undergo all kinds of toils, vexations, and torments, Matthew 5:41.

The way to improve the injustice of man to our own advantage, is to exercise under it meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, without which disposition of mind, no man can either be happy here or hereafter; for he that avenges himself must lose the mind of Christ, and thus suffer an injury ten thousand times greater than he can ever receive from man. Revenge, at such an expense, is dear indeed.

Matthew 5:42

Matthew 5:42

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow—To give and lend freely to all who are in need, is a general precept from which we are only excused by our inability to perform it. Men are more or less obliged to it as they are more or less able, as the want is more or less pressing, as they are more or less burthened with common poor, or with necessitous relatives. In all these matters, both prudence and charity must be consulted. That God, who makes use of the beggar's hand to ask our charity, is the same from whom we ourselves beg our daily bread: and dare we refuse HIM! Let us show at least mildness and compassion, when we can do no more; and if we cannot or will not relieve a poor man, let us never give him an ill word nor an ill look. If we do not relieve him, we have no right to insult him.

To give and to lend, are two duties of charity which Christ joins together, and which he sets on equal footing. A rich man is one of God's stewards: God has given him money for the poor, and he cannot deny it without an act of injustice. But no man, from what is called a principle of charity or generosity, should give that in alms which belongs to his creditors. Generosity is godlike; but justice has ever, both in law and Gospel, the first claim.

A loan is often more beneficial than an absolute gift: first, because it flatters less the vanity of him who lends; secondly, it spares more the shame of him who is in real want; and, thirdly, it gives less encouragement to the idleness of him

who may not be very honest. However, no advantage should be taken of the necessities of the borrower: he who does so is, at least, half a murderer. The lending which our Lord here inculcates is that which requires no more than the restoration of the principal in a convenient time: otherwise to live upon trust is the sure way to pay double.

Matthew 5:43

Matthew 5:43

Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy—Instead of πλησιον neighbor, the Codex Graevii, a MS. of the eleventh century, reads φιλον friend. Thou shalt love thy friend, and hate thine enemy. This was certainly the meaning which the Jews put on it: for neighbor, with them, implied those of the Jewish race, and all others were, considered by them as natural enemies. Besides, it is evident that πλησιον, among the Hellenistic Jews, meant friend merely: Christ uses it precisely in this sense in Luke 10:36, in answer to the question asked by a certain lawyer, Matthew 5:29. Who of the three was neighbor (πλησιον friend) to him who fell among the thieves? He who showed him mercy; i.e. he who acted the friendly part. In Hebrew, רֵעַ re'ea , signifies friend, which word is translated πλησιον by the LXX. in more than one hundred places. Among the Greeks it was a very comprehensive term, and signified every man, not even an enemy excepted, as Raphelius, on this verse, has shown from Polybius. The Jews thought themselves authorized to kill any Jew who apostatized; and, though they could not do injury to the Gentiles, in whose country they sojourned, yet they were bound to suffer them to perish, if they saw them in danger of death. Hear their own words: “A Jew sees a Gentile fall into the sea, let him by no means lift him out; for it is written, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor:—but this is not thy neighbor.” Maimon. This shows that by neighbor they understood a Jew; one who was of the same blood and religion with themselves.

Matthew 5:44

Matthew 5:44

Love your enemies—This is the most sublime piece of morality ever given to man. Has it appeared unreasonable and absurd to some? It has. And why? Because it is natural to man to avenge himself, and plague those who plague him; and he will ever find abundant excuse for his conduct, in the repeated evils he receives from others; for men are naturally hostile to each other. Jesus Christ design's to make men happy. Now he is necessarily miserable who hates another. Our Lord prohibits that only which, from its nature, is opposed to man's happiness. This is therefore one of the most reasonable precepts in the universe. But who can obey it? None but he who has the mind of Christ. But I have it not. Seek it from God; it is that kingdom of heaven which Christ came to establish upon earth. See on Matthew 3:2 (note). This one precept is a sufficient proof of the holiness of the Gospel, and of the truth of the Christian religion. Every false

religion flatters man, and accommodates itself to his pride and his passions. None but God could have imposed a yoke so contrary to self-love; and nothing but the supreme eternal love can enable men to practice a precept so insupportable to corrupt nature. Sentiments like this are found among Asiatic writers, and in select cases were strongly applied; but as a general command this was never given by them, or any other people. It is not an absolute command in any of the books which they consider to be Divinely inspired. Sir William Jones lays by far too much stress on the casual introduction of such sentiments as this in the Asiatic writers. See his WORKS, vol. i. p. 168, where the sentiment is connected with circumstances both extravagant and unnatural; and thus it is nullified by the pretended recommendation.

Bless them that curse you—Ευλογειτε, give them good words for their bad words. See the note on Genesis 2:3.

Do good to them that hate you—Give your enemy every proof that you love him. We must not love in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Pray for them which despitefully use you—Επηρεαζοντων from επι against, and Αρης Mars, the heathen god of war. Those who are making continual war upon you, and constantly harassing and calumniating you. Pray for them—This is another exquisitely reasonable precept. I cannot change that wicked man's heart; and while it is unchanged he will continue to harass me: God alone can change it: then I must implore him to do that which will at once secure the poor man's salvation, and contribute so much to my own peace.

And persecute you—Διωκοντων, those who press hard on and pursue you with hatred and malice accompanied with repeated acts of enmity.

In this verse our Lord shows us that a man may be our enemy in three different ways.

First, in his heart, by hatred.

Secondly, in his words by cursing or using direful imprecations
(καταρωμενους) against us.

Thirdly, in his actions, by continually harassing and abusing us.

He shows us also how we are to behave to those.

The hatred of the first we are to meet with love.

The cursings or evil words of the second, we are to meet with good words and blessings.

And the repeated injurious acts of the third, we are to meet with continual prayer to God for the man's salvation.

Matthew 5:45

Matthew 5:45

That ye may be the children of your Father—Instead of υιοι children, some MSS., the latter Persic version, and several of the primitive fathers, read δμοιοι,

that ye may be like to, or resemble, your Father who is in heaven. This is certainly our Lord's meaning. As a man's child is called his, because a partaker of his own nature, so a holy person is said to be a child of God, because he is a partaker of the Divine nature.

He maketh his sun to rise on the evil—"There is nothing greater than to imitate God in doing good to our enemies. All the creatures of God pronounce the sentence of condemnation on the revengeful: and this sentence is written by the rays of the sun, and with the drops of rain, and indeed by all the natural good things, the use of which God freely gives to his enemies." If God had not loved us while we were his enemies, we could never have become his children: and we shall cease to be such, as soon as we cease to imitate him.

Matthew 5:46

Matthew 5:46

For if ye love them which love you—He who loves only his friends, does nothing for God's sake. He who loves for the sake of pleasure or interest, pays himself. God has no enemy which he hates but sin; we should have no other.

The publicans—That is, tax-gatherers, τελωναι, from τελος a tax, and ωνεομαι I buy or farm. A farmer or collector of the taxes or public revenues. Of these there were two classes; the superior, who were Romans of the equestrian order; and the inferior, those mentioned in the Gospels, who it appears were mostly Jews.

This class of men was detestable among the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews, for their intolerable rapacity and avarice. They were abhorred in an especial manner by the Jews, to whom the Roman government was odious: these, assisting in collecting the Roman tribute, were considered as betrayers of the liberties of their country, and abettors of those who enslaved it. They were something like the tythe-farmers of certain college-livings in some counties of England, as Lancashire, etc.—a principal cause of the public burthens and discontent. One quotation, of the many produced by Kypke, will amply show in what detestation they were held among the Greeks. Theocritus being asked, Which of the wild beasts were the most cruel? answered, Εν μεν τοις ορεισιν αρκτοι και λεοντες: εν δε ταις πολεσιν, ΤΕΛΩΝΑΙ και συκοφανται. Bears and lions, in the mountains; and TAX-GATHERERS and calumniators, in cities.

Matthew 5:47

Matthew 5:47

And if ye salute your brethren only—Instead of αδελφους brethren, upwards of one hundred MSS., and several of them of great authority and antiquity, have φιλους friends. The Armenian Slavonic, and Gothic versions, with the later Syriac, and some of the primitive fathers, agree in this reading. I scarcely know which to prefer; as brother is more conformable to the Jewish

mode of address, it should be retained in the text: the other reading, however, tends to confirm that of the Codex Graevii on Matthew 5:43.

On the subject of giving and receiving salutations in Asiatic countries, Mr. Harmer, *Observat.* vol. ii. p. 327, etc., edit. 1808, has collected much valuable information: the following extract will be sufficient to elucidate our Lord's meaning.

“Dr. Doddridge supposes that the salutation our Lord refers to, Matthew 5:47, *If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?* means embracing, though it is a different word. I would observe, that it is made use of in the Septuagint to express that action of endearment; and which is made use of by an apocryphal writer, (Ecclus. 30:19), whereas, the word we translate salute is of a much more general nature: this, I apprehend, arose from his being struck with the thought, that it could never be necessary to caution his disciples, not to restrain the civilities of a common salutation to those of their own religious party. Juvenal, when he satirizes the Jews of the apostolic age for their religious opinions, and represents them as unfriendly, and even malevolent, to other people, *Sat. xiv.*, and when he mentions their refusing to show travelers the way, *Non monstrare vias*, etc., or to point out to them where they might find water to drink when thirsty with journeying, takes no notice of their not saluting those of another nation; yet there is no reason to believe, from these words of CHRIST, that many of them at least would not, and that even a Jewish publican received no salutations from one of his own nation, excepting brother publicans.

“Nor shall we wonder at this, or think it requisite to suppose the word we translate salute (*ασπασζομαι*) and which certainly, sometimes at least, signifies nothing more than making use of some friendly words upon meeting with people, must here signify something more particular, since we find some of the present inhabitants of the east seem to want this admonition of our Lord. ‘When the Arabs salute one another,’ according to Niebuhr, ‘it is generally in these terms, *Salam aleikum*, Peace be with you; in speaking which words they lay the right hand on the heart. The answer is, *Aleikum essalam*, With you be peace. Aged people are inclined to add to these words, And the mercy and blessing of God. The Mohammedans of Egypt and Syria never salute a Christian in this manner; they content themselves with saying to them, Good day to you; or, Friend, how do you do? The Arabs of Yemen, who seldom see any Christians, are not so

zealous but that sometimes they will give them the Salam aleikum.’

“Presently after he says: ‘For a long time I thought the Mohammedan custom, of saluting Christians in a different manner from that made use of to those of their own profession, was an effect of their pride and religious bigotry. I saluted them sometimes with the Salam aleikum, and I had often only the common answer. At length I observed in Natolia, that the Christians themselves might probably be the cause that Mohammedans did not make the same return to their civilities that they did to those of their own religion. For the Greek merchants, with whom I traveled in that country, did not seem pleased with my saluting Mohammedans in the Mohammedan manner. And when they were not known to be Christians, by those Turks whom they met with in their journeying, (it being allowed Christian travelers in these provinces to wear a white turban, Christians in common being obliged to wear the sash of their turbans white striped with blue, that banditti might take them at a distance for Turks, and people of courage), they never answered those that addressed them with the compliment of Salam aleikum. One would not, perhaps, suspect that similar customs obtain in our times, among Europeans: but I find that the Roman Catholics of some provinces of Germany never address the Protestants that live among them with the compliment JESUS CHRIST be praised; and, when such a thing happens by mistake, the Protestants do not return it after the manner in use among Catholics, For ever and ever. Amen!’

“After this, the words of our Lord in the close of the fifth of Matthew want no farther commentary. The Jews would not address the usual compliment of Peace be to you, to either heathens or publicans; the publicans of the Jewish nation would use it to their countrymen that were publicans, but not to heathens; though the more rigid Jews would not do it to them, any more than to heathens: our Lord required his disciples to lay aside the moroseness of Jews, and express more extensive benevolence in their salutations. There seems to be nothing of embracing thought of in this case, though that, doubtless, was practised anciently among relations, and intimate friends, as it is among modern Asiatics.”

If not to salute be a heathenish indifference, to hide hatred under outward civilities is a diabolic treachery. To pretend much love and affection for those for whom we have neither—to use towards them complimentary phrases, to which

we affix no meaning, but that they mean, nothing, is highly offensive in the sight of that God by whom actions are weighed and words judged.

Do not—the publicans—Τελωναι,—but εθνικοι heathens, is adopted by Griesbach, instead of τελωναι, on the authority of Codd. Vatican. & Bezae, and several others; together with the Coptic, Syriac later, and Syriac Jerusalem; two Arabic, Persic, Slavonic; all the Itala but one; Vulgate, Saxon, and several of the primitive fathers.

Matthew 5:48

Matthew 5:48

Be ye therefore perfect—as your Father—God himself is the grand law, sole giver, and only pattern of the perfection which he recommends to his children. The words are very emphatic, εσεσθε ουν υμεις τελειοι, Ye shall be therefore perfect—ye shall be filled with the spirit of that God whose name is Mercy, and whose nature is love. God has many imitators of his power, independence, justice, etc., but few of his love, condescension, and kindness. He calls himself LOVE, to teach us that in this consists that perfection, the attainment of which he has made both our duty and privilege: for these words of our Lord include both a command and a promise.

“Can we be fully saved from sin in this world?” is an important question, to which this text gives a satisfactory answer: “Ye shall be perfect, as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.”—As in his infinite nature there is no sin, nothing but goodness and love, so in your finite nature there shall dwell no sin, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make you free from the law of sin and death, Romans 8:2. God shall live in, fill, and rule your hearts; and, in what He fills and influences, neither Satan nor sin can have any part. If men, slighting their own mercies, cry out, This is impossible!—whom does this arguing reprove—God, who, on this ground, has given a command, the fulfillment of which is impossible. “But who can bring a clean out of an unclean thing?” God Almighty—and, however inveterate the disease of sin may be, the grace of the Lord Jesus can fully cure it; and who will say, that he who laid down his life for our souls will not use his power completely to effect that salvation which he has died to procure. “But where is the person thus saved?” Wherever he is found who loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself; and, for the honor of Christianity and its AUTHOR, may we not hope there are many such in the Church of God, not known indeed by any profession of this kind which they make, but by a surer testimony, that of uniformly holy tempers, piety to God, and beneficence to man?

Dr. Lightfoot is not perfectly satisfied with the usual mode of interpreting the 22nd verse of this chapter. I subjoin the substance of what he says. Having given a general exposition of the word brother, which the Jews understood as signifying none but an Israelite—ενοχος, which we translate is in danger of, and which he shows the Jews used to signify, is exposed to, merits, or is guilty of—

and the word gehenna, hell—fire, which he explains as I have done above, he comes to the three offenses, and their sentences.

The FIRST is causeless anger, which he thinks too plain to require explanation; but into the two following he enters in considerable detail:—

“The SECOND. Whosoever shall say to his brother, ‘Racha,’ a nickname, or scornful title usual, which they disdainfully put one upon another, and very commonly; and therefore our Savior has mentioned this word, the rather because it was of so common use among them. Take these few examples:—

“A certain man sought to betake himself to repentance (and restitution). His wife said to him, ‘Rekah, if thou make restitution, even thy girdle about thee is not thine own, etc.’ Tanchum, fol. 5.

“Rabbi Jochanan was teaching concerning the building of Jerusalem with sapphires and diamonds, etc. One of his scholars laughed him to scorn. But afterwards, being convinced of the truth of the thing, he saith to him, ‘Rabbi, do thou expound, for it is fit for thee to expound: as thou saidst, so have I seen it.’ he saith to him, ‘Rekah, hadst thou not seen, thou wouldst not have believed, etc.’ Midras Tillin, fol. 38, col. 4.

“To what is the thing like? To a king of flesh and blood, who took to wife a king’s daughter: he saith to her, ‘Wait and fill me a cup;’ but she would not: whereupon he was angry, and put her away; she went, and was married to a sordid fellow; and he saith to her, ‘Wait, and fill me a cup;’ she said unto him, ‘Rekah, I am a king’s daughter, etc.’ Idem in Psalm 137.

“A Gentile saith to an Israelite, ‘I have a choice dish for thee to eat of.’ He saith, ‘What is it?’ He answers, ‘Swine’s flesh.’ he saith to him, ‘Rekah, even what you kill of clean beasts is forbidden us, much more this.’ Tanchum, fol. 18, col. 4.

“The THIRD offense is to say to a brother, ‘Thou fool,’ which, how to distinguish from racha, which signifies an empty fellow, were some difficulty, but that Solomon is a good dictionary here for us, who takes the term continually here for a wicked wretch and reprobate, and in opposition to spiritual wisdom: so that in the first clause is condemned causeless anger; in the second, scornful taunting and reproaching of a brother; and, in the last, calling him a reprobate and wicked, or uncharitably censuring his spiritual and eternal estate. And this last does more especially hit the scribes and Pharisees, who arrogated to themselves only to be called חכמים chocamim, wise men, but of all others

they had this scornful and uncharitable opinion, ‘This people, that knoweth not the law, is cursed,’ John 7:49.

“And now for the penalties denounced upon these offenses, let us look upon them, taking notice of these two traditions of the Jews, which our Savior seems to face, and to contradict.

“1st. That they accounted the command, Thou shalt not kill, to aim only at actual murder. So that in their collecting the six hundred and thirteen precepts out of the law, they understand that command to mean but this: ‘That one should not kill an Israelite,’ and accordingly they allotted this only violation of it to judgments; against this wild gloss and practice, he speaks in the first clause: Ye have heard it said, Thou shalt not kill, and he that killeth, or committeth actual murder, is liable to judgment, and ye extend the violation of that command no farther; but I say to you, that causeless anger against thy brother is a violation of that command, and even that maketh a man liable to judgment.

2nd. They allotted that murder only to be judged by the council, or Sanhedrin, that was committed by a man in *propria persona*: let them speak their own sense, etc. Talm. in Sanhedrin, per. 9.

“Any one that kills his neighbor with his hand, as if he strike him with a sword, or with a stone that kills him, or strangle him till he die, or burn him in the fire, seeing that he kills him any how in his own person, lo! such a one must be put to death by the Sanhedrin; but he that hires another to kill his neighbor, or that sends his servants, and they kill him, or that violently thrusts him before a lion, or the like, and the beast kills him—any one of these is a shedder of blood, and the guilt of shedding of blood is upon him, and he is liable to death by the hand of Heaven, but he is not to be put to death by the Sanhedrin. And whence is the proof that it must be thus! Because it is said, He that sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed. This is he that slays a man himself, and not by the hand of another. Your blood of your lives will I require. This is he that slays himself. At the hand of every beast will I require it. This is he that delivers up his neighbor before a beast to be rent in pieces. At the hand of man, even at the hand of every man’s brother, will I require the life of man. This is he that hires others to kill his neighbor: In this interpretation, requiring is spoken of all the three; behold, their judgment is delivered over to Heaven (or God). And all these man-slayers and the like, who are not liable to death by the Sanhedrin, if the king of Israel will slay them by the judgment of the kingdom, and the law of nations, he may, etc.’ Maym. ubi supr. per. 2.

“You may observe in these wretched traditions a twofold killing, and a twofold judgment: a man’s killing another in his own person, and with his own hand, and such a one liable to the judgment of the Sanhedrin, to be put to death by them, as a murderer; and a man that killed another by proxy, not with his own hand, not hiring another to kill him, or turning a beast or serpent upon him to kill him. This man is not to be judged and executed by the Sanhedrin, but, referred and reserved only to the judgment of God. So that we see plainly, from hence, in what sense

the word judgment is used in the latter end of the preceding verse, and the first clause of this, namely, not for the judgment of any one of the Sanhedrins, as it is commonly understood, but for the judgment of God. In the former verse, Christ speaks their sense, and in the first clause of this, his own, in application to it. Ye have heard it said, that any man that kills is liable to the judgment of God; but I say unto you, that he that is but angry with his brother without a cause is liable to the judgment of God. You have heard it said, that he only that commits murder with his own hand is liable to the council, or Sanhedrin, as a murderer; but I say unto you, that he that but calls his brother *racha*, as common a word as ye make it, and a thing of nothing, he is liable to be judged by the Sanhedrin.

“Lastly, he that saith to his brother, Thou fool, wicked one, or cast-away, shall be in danger of hell-fire, *ενοχος εις γεενναν πυρος*. There are two observable things in the words. The first is the change of case from what was before; there it was said *τη κρισει τω συνεδριω*, but here, *εις γεενναν*. It is but an emphatical raising of the sense, to make it the more feeling and to speak home. He that saith to his brother, *Raka*, shall be in danger of the council; but he that says, Thou fool, shall be in danger of a penalty even to hell-fire. And thus our Savior equals the sin and penalty in a very just parable. In just anger, with God’s just anger and judgment; public reproach, with public correction by the council; and censuring for a child of hell, to the fire of hell.

“2nd. It is not said *εις πυρ γεεννης*, To the fire of hell, but *εις γεεννας πυρος*, To a hell of fire; in which expression he sets the emphasis still higher. And, besides the reference to the valley of Hinnom, he seems to refer to that penalty used by the Sanhedrin of burning—the most bitter death that they used to put men to; the manner of which was thus: They set the malefactor in a dunghill up to the knees; and they put a towel about his neck, and one pulled one way, and another the opposite, till, by thus strangling him, they forced him to open his mouth. Then they poured boiling lead into his mouth, which went down into his belly, and so burnt his bowels. Talm. in Sanhedrin. per. 7.

“Now, having spoken in the clause before, of being judged by the Sanhedrin, whose most terrible penalty was this burning, he doth in this clause raise the penalty higher; namely, of burning in hell; not with a little scalding lead, but even with a hell of fire.” It is possible that our Lord might have reference to such customs as these.

Matthew 6:1

Matthew 6

Of alms-giving, vv. 1-5. Of prayer, vv. 6-8. The Lord’s prayer, or model according to which Christians should pray, vv. 9-13. Of forgiveness, vv. 14, 15. Of fasting, vv. 16, 17. Of laying up treasures, vv. 18-21. Of the single eye, vv. 22, 23. The impossibility of serving two masters, v. 24. Of contentment and confidence in the Divine providence, vv. 25-32. Directions about seeking the kingdom of God, vv. 33, 34.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 6

Matthew 6:1

Matthew 6:1

That ye do not your alms—Δικαιοσυνην υμων μη ποιειν, perform not your acts of righteousness—such as alms-giving, fasting, and prayer, mentioned immediately after. Instead of δικαιοσυνην, righteousness, or acts of righteousness, the reading in the text, that which has been commonly received is ελεημοσυνην, alms. But the first reading has been inserted in several editions, and is supported by the Codd. Vatican and Bezae, some others, and several versions, all the Itala except one, and the Vulgate. The Latin fathers have *justitiam*, a word of the same meaning. Mr. Gregory has amply proved, צדקה *tsidekeh*, righteousness, was a common word for alms among the Jews. Works, 4th. p. 58, 1671. R. D. Kimchi says that צדקה *tsidekeh*, Isaiah 59:14, means alms-giving; and the phrase נתן צדקה *natan tsidekah*, is used by the Jews to signify the giving of alms. The following passages from Dr. Lightfoot show that it was thus commonly used among the Jewish writers:—

“It is questioned,” says he, “whether Matthew wrote Ελεημοσυνην, alms, or Δικαιοσυνην, righteousness. I answer:—

“I. That, our Savior certainly said צדקה *tsidekah*, righteousness, (or, in Syriac אַדְקָתָא *zidkatha*), I make no doubt at all; but, that that word could not be otherwise understood by the common people than of alms, there is as little doubt to be made. For although the word צדקה *tsidekah*, according to the idiom of the Old Testament, signifies nothing else than righteousness; yet now, when our Savior spoke these words, it signified nothing so much as alms.

“II. Christ used also the same word אַדְקָתָא *zidkatha*, righteousness, in time three verses next following, and Matthew used the word ελεημοσυνην, alms; but by what right, I beseech you, should he call it δικαιοσυνην, righteousness, in the first verse, and ελεημοσυνην, alms, in the following; when Christ every where used one and the same word? Matthew might not change in Greek, where our Savior had not changed in Syriac: therefore we must say that the Lord Jesus used the word צדקה *tsidekeh* or אַדְקָתָא *zidkatha*, in these four first verses; but that, speaking in the dialect of common people, he was understood by the common people to speak of alms. Now they called alms by the name of righteousness, for the fathers of the traditions taught, and the common people believed, that alms contributed very much to justification. Hear the Jewish chair in this matter—

For one farthing given to a poor man in alms, a man is made partaker of the beatific vision: where it renders these words, Psalm 17:15, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, after this manner, I shall behold thy face, BECAUSE OF ALMS. Bava. Bathra.

“This money goeth for alms, that my sons may live, and that I may obtain the world to come. Bab. Rosh. Hashshanah.

“A man’s table now expiates by alms, as heretofore the altar did by sacrifice. Beracoth.

“If you afford alms out of your purse, God will keep you from all damage and harm. Hieros. Peah.

“MONOBAZES the king bestowed his goods liberally upon the poor, and had these words spoken to him by his kinsmen and friends—

‘Your ancestors increased both their own riches, and those that were left them by their fathers; but you waste both your own and those of your ancestors.’

To whom he answered—

‘My fathers laid up their wealth on earth: I lay up mine in heaven. As it is written, Truth shall flourish out of the earth, but Righteousness shall look down from heaven. My fathers laid up treasures that bear no fruit; but I lay up such as bear fruit. As it is said, It shall be well with the just, for they shall eat the fruit of their own works. My fathers treasured up, when power was in their hands; but I where it is not.

As it is said, Justice and judgment is the habitation of his throne. My fathers heaped up for others; I for myself. As it is said, And this shall be to thee for righteousness. They scraped together for this world. I for the world to come. As it is said, Righteousness shall deliver from death.’ Ibid.

These things are also recited in the Babylonian Talmud.

“You see plainly in what sense he understands righteousness, namely, in the sense of alms: and that sense not so much framed in his own imagination, as in that of the whole nation, and which the royal catachumen had imbibed from the Pharisees his teachers.

“Behold the justifying and saving virtue of alms, from the very work done according to the doctrine of the Pharisaical chair! And hence, the opinion of this efficacy of alms so far prevailed with the deceived people, that they pointed out alms by no other name (confined within one single word) than צדקה tsidekah, righteousness. Perhaps those words of our Savior are spoken in derision of this doctrine. Yea, give those things which ye have in

alms, and behold all things shall be clean to you, Luke 11:41. With good reason indeed exhorting them to give alms; but yet withal striking at the covetousness of the Pharisees, and confuting their vain opinion of being clean by the washing of their hands, from their own opinion of the efficacy of alms. As if he had said, “Ye assert that alms justifies and saves, and therefore ye call it by the name of righteousness; why therefore do ye affect cleanliness by the washing of hands; and not rather by the performance of charity?” LIGHTFOOT’S Works, vol. ii. p. 153.

Before men—Our Lord does not forbid public alms-giving, fasting, and prayer, but simply censures those vain and hypocritical persons who do these things publicly that they may be seen of men, and receive from them the reputation of saints, etc.

Matthew 6:2

Matthew 6:2

Therefore when thou doest thine alms—In the first verse the exhortation is general: Take YE heed. In this verse the address is pointed—and THOU—man—woman—who readest—hearest.

Do not sound a trumpet—It is very likely that this was literally practised among the Pharisees, who seemed to live on the public esteem, and were excessively self-righteous and vain. Having something to distribute by way of alms, it is very probable they caused this to be published by blowing a trumpet or horn, under pretense of collecting the poor; though with no other design than to gratify their own ambition. There is a custom in the east not much unlike this. “The derveeshes carry horns with them, which they frequently blow, when any thing is given to them, in honor of the donor. It is not impossible that some of the poor Jews who begged alms might be furnished like the Persian derveeshes, who are a sort of religious beggars, and that these hypocrites might be disposed to confine their alms-giving to those that they knew would pay them this honor.” HARMER’S Observat. vol. i. p. 474.

It must be granted, that in the Jewish writings there is no such practice referred to as that which I have supposed above, viz. blowing a trumpet to gather the poor, or the poor blowing a horn when relieved. Hence some learned men have thought that the word שופר *shopher*, a trumpet, refers to the hole in the public alms chest, into which the money was dropped which was allotted for the service of the poor. Such holes, because they were wide at one end and grew gradually narrow towards the other, were actually termed שופרות *shopheroth*, trumpets, by the rabbins; of this Schoettgen furnishes several examples. An ostentatious man, who wished to attract the notice of those around him, would throw in his money with some force into these trumpet-resembling holes, and thus he might be said שופר *σαλπίζειν*, to sound the trumpet. The Jerusalem

Gemara, tract Shekalim, describes these שופרות shopheroth thus—These trumpet holes were crooked, narrow above and wide below, in order to prevent fraud. As our Lord only uses the words, μη σαλπισης, it may be tantamount to our term jingle. Do not make a public ostentatious jingle of that money which you give to public charities. Pride and hypocrisy are the things here reprehended. The Pharisees, no doubt, felt the weight of the reproof. Still the words may be taken in their literal meaning, as we know that the Moslimans, who nearly resemble the ancient Pharisees in the ostentation, bigotry, and cruelty of their character, are accustomed, in their festival of Muhurram, to erect stages in the public streets, and, by the sound of a trumpet, call the poor together to receive alms of rice, and other kinds of food. See WARD.

Works of charity and mercy should be done as much in private as is consistent with the advancement of the glory of God, and the effectual relief of the poor.

In the synagogues and in the streets—That such chests or boxes, for receiving the alms of well-disposed people, were placed in the synagogues, we may readily believe; but what were the streets? Schoettgen supposes that courts or avenues in the temple and in the synagogues may be intended—places where the people were accustomed to walk, for air, amusement, etc., for it is not to be supposed that such chests were fixed in the public streets.

They have their reward—That is, the honor and esteem of men which they sought. God is under no obligation to them—they did nothing with an eye to his glory, and from HIM they can expect no recompense. They had their recompense in this life; and could expect none in the world to come.

Matthew 6:3

Matthew 6:3

Let not thy left hand know—In many cases, works of charity must be hidden from even our nearest relatives, who, if they knew, would hinder us from doing what God has given us power and inclination to perform. We must go even farther; and conceal them as far as is possible from ourselves, by not thinking of them, or eyeing them with complacency. They are given to GOD, and should be hidden in HIM.

Matthew 6:4

Matthew 6:4

Which seeth in secret—We should ever remember that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and that he sees not only the act, but also every motive that led to it.

Shall reward thee openly—Will give thee the fullest proofs of his acceptance of thy work of faith, and labor of love, by increasing that substance which, for his sake, thou sharest with the poor; and will manifest his approbation in thy own heart, by the witness of his Spirit.

Matthew 6:5

Matthew 6:5

And when thou prayest—Όταν προσευχη. Προσευχη, prayer, is compounded of προς with, and ευχη a vow, because to pray right, a man binds himself to God, as by a vow, to live to his glory, if he will grant him his grace, etc. Ευχομαι signifies to pour out prayers or vows, from ευ well, and χεω, I pour out; probably alluding to the offerings or libations which were poured out before, or on the altar. A proper idea of prayer is, a pouring out of the soul unto God, as a free-will offering, solemnly and eternally dedicated to him, accompanied with the most earnest desire that it may know, love, and serve him alone. He that comes thus to God will ever be heard and blessed. Prayer is the language of dependence; he who prays not, is endeavoring to live independently of God: this was the first curse, and continues to be the great curse of mankind. In the beginning, Satan said, Eat this fruit; ye shall then be as God; i.e. ye shall be independent: the man hearkened to his voice, sin entered into the world, and notwithstanding the full manifestation of the deception, the ruinous system is still pursued; man will, if possible, live independently of God; hence he either prays not at all, or uses the language without the spirit of prayer. The following verses contain so fine a view, and so just a definition, of prayer, that I think the pious reader will be glad to find them here.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast:

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward gleaming of an eye,
When none but God is near

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high:

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watch-word at the gates of death,
He enters heaven by prayer

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,

And say, Behold he prays!

The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, in deed, in mind,
When with the Father and the Son
Their fellowship they find

Nor prayer is made on earth alone:
The Holy Spirit pleads;
And Jesus, on th' eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes

“O Thou, by whom we come to God!
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod,
Lord, teach us how to pray!”

MONTGOMERY

Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites—Υποκριται. From υπο under, and κρινομαι to be judged, thought: properly a stage-player, who acts under a mask, personating a character different from his own; a counterfeit, a dissembler; one who would be thought to be different from what he really is. A person who wishes to be taken for a follower of God, but who has nothing of religion except the outside.

Love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets—The Jewish phylacterical prayers were long, and the canonical hours obliged them to repeat these prayers wherever they happened to be; and the Pharisees, who were full of vain glory, contrived to be overtaken in the streets by the canonical hour, that they might be seen by the people, and applauded for their great and conscientious piety. See Lightfoot. As they had no piety but that which was outward, they endeavored to let it fully appear, that they might make the most of it among the people. It would not have answered their end to kneel before God, for then they might have been unnoticed by men; and consequently have lost that reward which they had in view: viz. the esteem and applause of the multitude. This hypocritical pretension to devotion is common among the Asiatics. Both Hindoos and Mohammedans love to pray in the most public places, at the landing places of rivers, in the public streets, on the roofs of the covered boats, without the least endeavor to conceal their outside devotion, that they may be seen of men.

Matthew 6:6

Matthew 6:6

But thou, when thou prayest—This is a very impressive and emphatic address. But THOU! whosoever thou art, Jew, Pharisee, Christian—enter into thy

closet. Prayer is the most secret intercourse of the soul with God, and as it were the conversation of one heart with another. The world is too profane and treacherous to be of the secret. We must shut the door against it: endeavor to forget it, with all the affairs which busy and amuse it. Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart; for this may be fitly termed the closet in the house of God, which house the body of every real Christian is, 1 Corinthians 3:16. To this closet we ought to retire even in public prayer, and in the midst of company.

Reward thee openly—What goodness is there equal to this of God to give, not only what we ask, and more than we ask, but to reward even prayer itself! How great advantage is it to serve a prince who places prayers in the number of services, and reckons to his subjects' account, even their trust and confidence in begging all things of him!

Matthew 6:7

Matthew 6:7

Use not vain repetitions—Μη βαττολογησητε, Suidas explains this word well: “πολλολογια, much speaking, from one Battus, who made very prolix hymns, in which the same idea frequently recurred.” “A frequent repetition of awful and striking words may often be the result of earnestness and fervor. See Daniel 9:3-20; but great length of prayer, which will of course involve much sameness and idle repetition, naturally creates fatigue and carelessness in the worshipper, and seems to suppose ignorance or inattention in the Deity; a fault against which our Lord more particularly wishes to secure them.” See Matthew 6:8. This judicious note is from the late Mr. Gilbert Wakefield, who illustrates it with the following quotation from the Heautontimorumenos of Terence:

Ohe! jam decine Deos, uxor, gratulando
OBTUNDERE,
Tuam esse inventam gnatum: nisi illos ex TUO
INGENIO judicas,
Ut nil credas INTELLIGERE, nisi idem DICTUM SIT
CENTIES

“Pray thee, wife, cease from STUNNING the gods with thanksgivings, because thy child is in safety; unless thou judgest of them from thyself, that they cannot UNDERSTAND a thing, unless they are told of it a HUNDRED TIMES.” Heaut. ver. 880.

Prayer requires more of the heart than of the tongue. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of desire, and the simplicity of faith. The abundance of fine thoughts, studied and vehement motions, and the order and politeness of the expressions, are things which compose a mere human harangue, not an humble and Christian prayer. Our trust and confidence ought to proceed from that which God is able to do in us, and not from that which we can say to him. It is abominable, says the HEDAYAH, that a person offering up prayers to God, should

say, "I beseech thee, by the glory of thy heavens!" or, "by the splendor of thy throne!" for a style of this nature would lead to suspect that the Almighty derived glory from the heavens; whereas the heavens are created, but God with all his attributes is eternal and inimitable. HEDAYAH, vol. iv. p. 121.

This is the sentiment of a Mohammedan; and yet for this vain repetition the Mohammedans are peculiarly remarkable; they often use such words as the following:—

O God, O God, O God, O God!—
O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!—
O living, O immortal, O living, O immortal,
O living, O immortal, O living, O immortal!—
O Creator of the heavens and the earth!—
O thou who art endowed with majesty and authority!
O wonderful, etc.

I have extracted the above from a form of prayer used by Tippo Sahib, which I met with in a book of devotion in which there were several prayers written with his own hand, and signed with his own name.

Of this vain repetition in civil matters, among the Jews, many instances might be given, and not a few examples might be found among Christians. The heathens abounded with them: see several quoted by Lightfoot.—

Let the parricide be dragged!
We beseech thee, Augustus, let the parricide be dragged!
This is the thing we ask, let the parricide be dragged!
Hear us, Caesar; let the false accusers be cast to the lion!
Hear us, Caesar, let the false accusers be condemned to the lion!
Hear us, Caesar, etc.

It was a maxim among the Jews, that "he who multiplies prayer, must be heard."

This is correct, if it only imply perseverance in supplication; but if it be used to signify the multiplying of words, or even forms of prayer, it will necessarily produce the evil which our Lord reprehends: Be not as the heathen—use not vain repetition, etc. Even the Christian Churches in India have copied this vain repetition work; and in it the Roman Catholic, the Armenian, and the Greek Churches strive to excel.

As the heathen—The Vatican MS. reads υποκριται, like the hypocrites. Unmeaning words, useless repetitions, and complimentary phrases in prayer, are in general the result of heathenism, hypocrisy, or ignorance.

Matthew 6:8

Matthew 6:8

Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of—Prayer is not designed to inform God, but to give man a sight of his misery; to humble his heart, to excite his desire, to inflame his faith, to animate his hope, to raise his soul from earth to heaven, and to put him in mind that THERE is his Father, his country, and inheritance.

In the preceding verses we may see three faults, which our Lord commands us to avoid in prayer:—

1st. HYPOCRISY. Be not as the hypocrites. Matthew 6:5.

2ndly. DISSIPATION. Enter into thy closet. Matthew 6:6.

3rdly. MUCH SPEAKING, or UNMEANING REPETITION, Be not like the heathens. Matthew 6:7.

Matthew 6:9

Matthew 6:9

After this manner therefore pray ye—Forms of prayer were frequent among the Jews; and every public teacher gave one to his disciples. Some forms were drawn out to a considerable length, and from these abridgments were made: to the latter sort the following prayer properly belongs, and consequently, besides its own very important use, it is a plan for a more extended devotion. What satisfaction must it be to learn from God himself, with what words, and in what manner, he would have us pray to him, so as not to pray in vain! A king, who draws up the petition which he allows to be presented to himself, has doubtless the fullest determination to grant the request. We do not sufficiently consider the value of this prayer; the respect and attention which it requires; the preference to be given to it; its fullness and perfection: the frequent use we should make of it; and the spirit which we should bring with it. “Lord, teach us how to pray!” is a prayer necessary to prayer; for unless we are divinely instructed in the manner, and influenced by the spirit of true devotion, even the prayer taught us by Jesus Christ may be repeated without profit to our souls.

Our Father—It was a maxim of the Jews, that a man should not pray alone, but join with the Church; by which they particularly meant that he should, whether alone or with the synagogue, use the plural number as comprehending all the followers of God. Hence, they say, Let none pray the short prayer, i.e. as the gloss expounds it, the prayer in the singular, but in the plural number. See Lightfoot on this place.

This prayer was evidently made in a peculiar manner for the children of God. And hence we are taught to say, not MY Father, but OUR Father.

The heart, says one, of a child of God, is a brotherly heart, in respect of all other Christians: it asks nothing but in the spirit of unity, fellowship, and Christian charity; desiring that for its brethren which it desires for itself.

The word Father, placed here at the beginning of this prayer, includes two grand ideas, which should serve as a foundation to all our petitions:

1st. That tender and respectful love which we should feel for God, such as that which children feel for their fathers.

2dly. That strong confidence in God's love to us, such as fathers have for their children.

Thus all the petitions in this prayer stand in strictest reference to the word Father; the first three referring to the love we have for God; and the three last, to that confidence which we have in the love he bears to us.

The relation we stand in to this first and best of beings dictates to us reverence for his person, zeal for his honor, obedience to his will, submission to his dispensations and chastisements, and resemblance to his nature.

Which art in heaven—The phrase **אבינו שבשמים**, *abinu sheboshemayim*, our Father who art in heaven, was very common among the ancient Jews; and was used by them precisely in the same sense as it is used here by our Lord.

This phrase in the Scriptures seems used to express:

1st. His OMNIPRESENCE. The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. 1 Kings 8:27: that is, Thou fillest immensity.

2dly. His MAJESTY and DOMINION over his creatures. Art thou not God in heaven, and rulest thou not over all the kingdoms of the heathen? 2 Chronicles 20:6.

3dly. His POWER and MIGHT. Art thou not God in heaven, and in thy hand is there not power and might, so that no creature is able to withstand thee! 2 Chronicles 20:6. Our God is in heaven, and hath done whatsoever he pleased. Psalm 115:3.

4thly. His OMNISCIENCE. The Lord's throne is in heaven, his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men. Psalm 11:4. The Lord looketh down from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men. Psalm 33:13-15.

5thly. His infinite PURITY and HOLINESS. Look down from thy holy habitation, etc. Deuteronomy 26:15. Thou art the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. Isaiah 57:15.

Hallowed—**ἁγιασθητω**. **ἁγιαζω** from **α** negative, and **γη**, the earth, a thing separated from the earth, or from earthly purposes and employments. As the word sanctified, or hallowed, in Scripture, is frequently used for the consecration of a thing or person to a holy use or office, as the Levites, first-born, tabernacle, temple, and their utensils, which were all set apart from every earthly, common, or profane use, and employed wholly in the service of God, so the Divine Majesty may be said to be sanctified by us, in analogy to those things, viz. when, we separate him from, and in our conceptions and desires exalt him above, earth and all things.

Thy name—That is, GOD himself, with all the attributes of his Divine nature—his power, wisdom, justice, mercy, etc.

We hallow God's name,

1st. With our lips, when all our conversation is holy, and we speak of those things which are meet to minister grace to the hearers.

2dly. In our thoughts, when we suppress every rising evil, and have our tempers regulated by his grace and Spirit.

3dly. In our lives, when we begin, continue, and end our works to his glory. If we have an eye to God in all we perform, then every act of our common employment will be an act of religious worship.

4thly. In our families, when we endeavor to bring up our children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord; instructing also our servants in the way of righteousness.

5thly. In a particular calling or business, when we separate the falsity, deception, and lying, commonly practised, from it; buying and selling as in the sight of the holy and just God.

Matthew 6:10

Matthew 6:10

Thy kingdom come—The ancient Jews scrupled not to say: He prays not at all, in whose prayers there is no mention of the kingdom of God. Hence, they were accustomed to say, "Let him cause his kingdom to reign, and his redemption to flourish: and let the Messiah speedily come and deliver his people."

The universal sway of the scepter of Christ:—God has promised that the kingdom of Christ shall be exalted above all kingdoms. Daniel 7:14-27. That it shall overcome all others, and be at last the universal empire. Isaiah 9:7. Connect this with the explanation given of this phrase, Matthew 3:2.

Thy will be done—This petition is properly added to the preceding; for when the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit, is established in the heart, there is then an ample provision made for the fulfillment of the Divine will.

The will of God is infinitely good, wise, and holy; to have it fulfilled in and among men, is to have infinite goodness, wisdom, and holiness diffused throughout the universe; and earth made the counterpart of heaven.

As it is in heaven—The Jews maintained, that they were the angels of God upon earth, as these pure spirits were angels of God in heaven; hence they said, "As the angels sanctify the Divine name in heaven, so the Israelites sanctify the Divine name, upon earth." See Schoettgen.

Observe,

- 1st. The salvation of the soul is the result of two wills conjoined: the will of God, and the will of man. If God will not the salvation of man, he cannot be saved: If, man will not the salvation God has prepared for him, he cannot be delivered from his sins.
- 2dly. This petition certainly points out a deliverance from all sin; for nothing that is unholy can consist with the Divine will, and if this be fulfilled in man, surely sin shall be banished from his soul.
- 3dly. This is farther evident from these words, as it is in heaven; i.e. as the angels do it: viz. with all zeal, diligence, love, delight, and perseverance.
- 4thly. Does not the petition plainly imply, we may live without sinning against God? Surely the holy angels never mingle iniquity with their loving obedience; and as our Lord teaches us to pray, that we do his will here as they do it in heaven, can it be thought he would put a petition in our mouths, the fulfillment of which was impossible?
- 5thly. This certainly destroys the assertion: “There is no such state of purification, to be attained here, in which it may be said, the soul is redeemed from sinful passions and desires;” for it is on EARTH that we are commanded to pray that this will, which is our sanctification, may be done.
- 6thly. Our souls can never be truly happy, till our WILLS be entirely subjected to, and become one with, the will of God.
- 7thly. How can any person offer this petition to his Maker, who thinks of nothing less than the performance of the will of God, and of nothing more than doing his own?

Some see the mystery of the Trinity in the three preceding petitions. The first being, addressed to the Father, as the source of all holiness. The second, to the Son, who establishes the kingdom of God upon earth. The third, to the Holy Spirit, who by his energy works in men to will and to perform.

To offer these three petitions with success at the throne of God, three graces, essential to our salvation, must be brought into exercise; and, indeed, the petitions themselves necessarily suppose them.

FAITH, Our Father—for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is.

HOPE, Thy kingdom come—For this grace has for its object good things to come.

LOVE, Thy will be done—For love is the incentive to and principle of all obedience to God, and beneficence to man.

Matthew 6:11

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread—The word *ἐπιουσιαν* has greatly perplexed critics and commentators. I find upwards of thirty different explanations of it. It

is found in no Greek writer before the evangelists, and Origen says expressly, that it was formed by them, ἀλλ' εἰκε πεπλασθαι ὑπο τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν. The interpretation of Theophylact, one of the best of the Greek fathers, has ever appeared to me to be the most correct, Ἄρτος ἐπὶ τῆ οὐσίᾳ καὶ συστάσει ἡμῶν αὐταρκεῖς, Bread, sufficient for our substance and support, i.e. That quantity of food which is necessary to support our health and strength, by being changed into the substance of our bodies. Its composition is of ἐπι and οὐσία, proper or sufficient for support. Mr. Wakefield thinks it probable, that the word was originally written ἐπι οὐσίαν, which coalesced by degrees, till they became the ἐπιουσιον of the MSS. There is probably an allusion here to the custom of travelers in the east, who were wont to reserve a part of the food given them the preceding evening to serve for their breakfast or dinner the next day. But as this was not sufficient for the whole day, they were therefore obliged to depend on the providence of God for the additional supply. In Luke 15:12, 13, οὐσία signifies, what a person has to live on; and nothing can be more natural than to understand the compound ἐπιουσιος, of that additional supply which the traveler needs, to complete the provision necessary for a day's eating, over and above what he had then in his possession. See Harmer.

The word is so very peculiar and expressive, and seems to have been made on purpose by the evangelists, that more than mere bodily nourishment seems to be intended by it. Indeed, many of the primitive fathers understood it as comprehending that daily supply of grace which the soul requires to keep it in health and vigor: He who uses the petition would do well to keep both in view. Observe

1. God is the author and dispenser of all temporal as well as spiritual good.
2. We have merited no kind of good from his hand, and therefore must receive it as a free gift: Give us, etc.
3. We must depend on him daily for support; we are not permitted to ask any thing for to-morrow: give us to-day.
4. That petition of the ancient Jews is excellent: "Lord, the necessities of thy people Israel are many, and their knowledge small, so that they know not how to disclose their necessities: Let it be thy good pleasure to give to every man, what sufficeth for food!" Thus they expressed their dependence, and left it to God to determine what was best and most suitable.

We must ask only that which is essential to our support, God having promised neither luxuries nor superfluities.

Matthew 6:12

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts—Sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and as our sins are many, they are called here debts. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does any thing that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice, how much more is he debtor when he breaks the law by actual transgression! It has been justly observed, “All the attributes of God are reasons of obedience to man; those attributes are infinite; every sin is an act of ingratitude or rebellion against all these attributes; therefore sin is infinitely sinful.”

Forgive us—Man has nothing to pay: if his debts are not forgiven, they must stand charged against him for ever, as he is absolutely insolvent. Forgiveness, therefore, must come from the free mercy of God in Christ: and how strange is it we cannot have the old debt canceled, without (by that very means) contracting a new one, as great as the old! but the credit is transferred from Justice to Mercy. While sinners we are in debt to infinite Justice; when pardoned, in debt to endless Mercy: and as a continuance in a state of grace necessarily implies a continual communication of mercy, so the debt goes on increasing ad infinitum. Strange economy in the Divine procedure, which by rendering a man an infinite debtor, keeps him eternally dependent on his Creator! How good is God! And what does this state of dependence imply? A union with, and participation of, the fountain of eternal goodness and felicity!

As we forgive our debtors—It was a maxim among the ancient Jews, that no man should lie down in his bed, without forgiving those who had offended him. That man condemns himself to suffer eternal punishment, who makes use of this prayer with revenge and hatred in his heart. He who will not attend to a condition so advantageous to himself (remitting a hundred pence to his debtor, that his own creditor may remit him 10,000 talents) is a madman, who, to oblige his neighbor to suffer an hour, is himself determined to suffer everlastingly! This condition of forgiving our neighbor, though it cannot possibly merit any thing, yet it is that condition without which God will pardon no man. See Matthew 6:14, 15.

Matthew 6:13

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation—That is, bring us not in to sore trial. Πειρασμον, which may be here rendered sore trial, comes from πειρω, to pierce through, as with a spear, or spit, used so by some of the best Greek writers. Several of the primitive fathers understood it something in this way; and have therefore added *quam ferre non possimus*, “which we cannot bear.” The word not only implies violent assaults from Satan, but also sorely afflictive circumstances, none of which we have, as yet, grace or fortitude sufficient to bear. Bring us not in, or lead us not in. This is a mere Hebraism: God is said to do a thing which he only permits or suffers to be done.

The process of temptation is often as follows:

1st. A simple evil thought.

2ndly. A strong imagination, or impression made on the imagination, by the thing to which we are tempted.

3dly. Delight in viewing it.

4thly. Consent of the will to perform it. Thus lust is conceived, sin is finished, and death brought forth. James 1:15.

See also on Matthew 4:1 (note). A man may be tempted without entering into the temptation: entering into it implies giving way, closing in with, and embracing it.

But deliver us from evil—Απο του πονηρου, from the wicked one. Satan is expressly called ο πονηρος, the wicked one. Matthew 13:19, 38, compare with Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12. This epithet of Satan comes from πονος, labor, sorrow, misery, because of the drudgery which is found in the way of sin, the sorrow that accompanies the commission of it, and the misery which is entailed upon it, and in which it ends.

It is said in the MISHNA, Titus. Beracoth, that Rabbi Judah was wont to pray thus: “Let it be thy good pleasure to deliver us from impudent men, and from impudence: from an evil man and an evil chance; from an evil affection, an evil companion, and an evil neighbor: from Satan the destroyer, from a hard judgment, and a hard adversary.” See Lightfoot.

Deliver us—Ρυσαι ημας—a very expressive word—break our chains, and loose our bands—snatch, pluck us from the evil, and its calamitous issue.

For thine is the kingdom, etc.—The whole of this doxology is rejected by Wetstein, Griesbach, and the most eminent critics. The authorities on which it is rejected may be seen in Griesbach and, Wetstein, particularly in the second edition of Griesbach’s Testament, who is fully of opinion that it never made a part of the sacred text. It is variously written in several MSS., and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin. As the doxology is at least very ancient, and was in use among the Jews, as well as all the other petitions of this excellent prayer, it should not, in my opinion, be left out of the text, merely because some MSS. have omitted it, and it has been variously written in others. See various forms of this doxology, taken from the ancient Jewish writers, in Lightfoot and Schoettgen.

By the kingdom, we may understand that mentioned Matthew 6:10, and explained Matthew 3:2.

By power, that energy by which the kingdom is governed and maintained.

By glory, the honor that shall redound to God in consequence of the maintenance of the kingdom of grace, in the salvation of men.

For ever and ever—Εις τους αιωνας, to the for evers. Well expressed by our common translation—ever in our ancient use of the word taking in the whole duration of time; the second ever, the whole of eternity. May thy name have the glory both in this world, and in that which is to come! The original word αιων comes from αιει always, and ων being, or existence. This is Aristotle’s definition

of it. See the note on Genesis 21:33. There is no word in any language which more forcibly points out the grand characteristic of eternity—that which always exists. It is often used to signify a limited time, the end of which is not known; but this use of it is only an accommodated one; and it is the grammatical and proper sense of it which must be resorted to in any controversy concerning the word. We sometimes use the phrase for evermore: i.e. for ever and more, which signifies the whole of time, and the more or interminable duration beyond it. See on Matthew 25:46 (note).

Amen—This word is Hebrew, אָמֵן, and signifies faithful or true. Some suppose the word is formed from the initial letters of אֲדוֹנֵי מֶלֶךְ נֹאֵם adoni melech neetnan, My Lord, the faithful King. The word itself implies a confident resting of the soul in God, with the fullest assurance that all these petitions shall be fulfilled to every one who prays according to the directions given before by our blessed Lord.

The very learned Mr. Gregory has shown that our Lord collected this prayer out of the Jewish Euchologies, and gives us the whole form as follows:—

“Our Father who art in heaven, be gracious unto us! O Lord our God, hallowed be thy name, and let the remembrance of Thee be glorified in heaven above, and in the earth here below! Let thy kingdom reign over us now, and for ever! The holy men of old said, remit and forgive unto all men whatsoever they have done against me! And lead us not into the hands of temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing! For thine is the kingdom, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and for evermore.” Gregory’s Works, 4th. 1671, p. 162.

See this proved at large in the collections of Lightfoot and Schoettgenius.

Matthew 6:14

Matthew 6:14

If ye forgive men—He who shows mercy to men receives mercy from God. For a king to forgive his subjects a hundred millions of treasons against his person and authority, on this one condition, that they wilt henceforth live peaceably with him and with each other, is what we shall never see; and yet this is but the shadow of that which Christ promises on his Father’s part to all true penitents. A man can have little regard for his salvation, who refuses to have it on such advantageous terms. See Quesnel.

Matthew 6:15

Matthew 6:15

But if ye forgive not—He who does not awake at the sound of so loud a voice, is not asleep but dead. A vindictive man excludes himself from all hope of eternal life, and himself seals his own damnation.

Trespases—Παραπτώματα, from παρα and πιπτω, to fall off. What a remarkable difference there is between this word and οφειλήματα, debts, in Matthew 6:12! Men's sins against us are only their stumblings, or fallings off from the duties they owe us; but our's are debts to God's justice, which we can never discharge. It can be no great difficulty to forgive those, especially when we consider that in many respects we have failed as much, in certain duties which we owed to others, as they have done in those which they owed us. "But I have given him no provocation." Perhaps thou art angry, and art not a proper judge in the matter; but, however it may be, it is thy interest to forgive, if thou expectest forgiveness from God. On this important subject I will subjoin an extract from Mason's Self-knowledge, page 248, 1755.

“Athenodorus, the philosopher by reason of his old age, begged leave to retire from the court of Augustus, which the emperor granted. In his compliments of leave, he said, ‘Remember, Caesar, whenever thou art angry, that thou say or do nothing before thou hast distinctly repeated to thyself the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.’ On which Caesar caught him by the hand, and said, ‘I have need of thy presence still.’ and kept him a year longer. This was excellent advice from a heathen; but a Christian may prescribe to himself a wiser rule. When thou art angry, answer not till thou hast repeated the fifth petition of our Lord's prayer—Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: and our Lord's comment upon it—For if ye forgive not men their trespases, neither will your heavenly father forgive your trespases.”

PRAYER to God is considered among the Mohammedans in a very important point of view. It is declared by the Mosliman doctors to be the corner stone of RELIGION, and the pillar of FAITH. It is not, say they, a thing of mere form, but requires that the heart and understanding should accompany it, without which they pronounce it to be of no avail. They direct prayer to be performed five times in the twenty-four hours.

1. Between day-break and sun-rise;
2. Immediately after noon;
3. Immediately before sun-set;
4. In the evening before dark; and
5. Before the first watch of the night.

They hold the following points to be essentially requisite to the efficacy of prayer:—

1. That the person be free from every species of defilement.
2. That all sumptuous and gaudy apparel be laid aside.
3. That the attention accompany the act, and be not suffered to wander to any other object.
4. That the prayer be performed with the face toward the temple of MECCA.
HEDAYAH. Prel. Dis. pp. 53, 54.

There are few points here but the follower of Christ may seriously consider and profitably practice.

Matthew 6:16

Matthew 6:16

When ye fast—A fast is termed by the Greeks νηδς, from νη not, and εσθειν to eat; hence fast means, a total abstinence from food for a certain time.

Abstaining from flesh, and living on fish, vegetables, etc., is no fast, or may be rather considered a burlesque on fasting. Many pretend to take the true definition of a fast from Isaiah 58:3, and say that it means a fast from sin. This is a mistake; there is no such term in the Bible as fasting from sin; the very idea is ridiculous and absurd, as if sin were a part of our daily food. In the fast mentioned by the prophet, the people were to divide their bread with the hungry, Isaiah 58:7; but could they eat their bread, and give it too? No man should save by a fast: he should give all the food he might have eaten to the poor. He who saves a day's expense by a fast, commits an abomination before the Lord. See more on Matthew 9:15 (note).

As the hypocrites—of a sad countenance—Σκυθρωποι, either from σκυθρος sour, crabbed, and ωψ the countenance; or from Σκυθης a Scythian, a morose, gloomy, austere phiz, like that of a Scythian or Tartar. A hypocrite has always a difficult part to act: when he wishes to appear as a penitent, not having any godly sorrow at heart, he is obliged to counterfeit it the best way he can, by a gloomy and austere look.

Matthew 6:17

Matthew 6:17

Anoint thine head and wash thy face—These were forbidden in the Jewish canon on days of fasting and humiliation; and hypocrites availed themselves of this ordinance, that they might appear to fast. Our Lord, therefore, cautions us against this: as if he had said, Affect nothing—dress in thy ordinary manner, and let the whole of thy deportment prove that thou desirest to recommend my soul to God, and not thy face to men. That factitious mourning, which consists in putting on black clothes, crapes, etc., is utterly inconsistent with the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ; and if practised in reference to spiritual matters, is certainly forbidden here: but sin is so common, and so boldly persisted in, that not even a

crape is put on, as an evidence of deploring its influence, or of sorrow for having committed it.

Matthew 6:18

Matthew 6:18

Thy father which seeth in secret—Let us not be afraid that our hearts can be concealed from God; but let us fear lest he perceive them to be more desirous of the praise of men than they are of that glory which comes from Him.

Openly—Εν τῷ φανερω. These words are omitted by nine MSS. in uncial letters; and by more than one hundred others, by most of the versions, and by several of the primitive fathers. As it is supported by no adequate authority, Bengel, Wetstein, Griesbach, and others, have left it out of the text.

Matthew 6:19

Matthew 6:19

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth—What blindness is it for a man to lay up that as a treasure which must necessarily perish! A heart designed for God and eternity is terribly degraded by being fixed on those things which are subject to corruption. “But may we not lay up treasure innocently?” Yes.

1st. If you can do it without setting your heart on it, which is almost impossible: and

2dly. If there be neither widows nor orphans, destitute nor distressed persons in the place where you live.

“But there is a portion which belongs to my children; shall I distribute that among the poor?” If it belongs to your children, it is not yours, and therefore you have no right to dispose of it. “But I have a certain sum in stock, etc.; shall I take that and divide it among the poor?” By no means; for, by doing so, you would put it out of your power to do good after the present division: keep your principal, and devote, if you possibly can spare it, the product to the poor; and thus you shall have the continual ability to do good. In the mean time take care not to shut up your bowels of compassion against a brother in distress; if you do, the love of God cannot dwell in you.

Rust—Or canker, βρωσις, from βρωσσω, I eat, consume. This word cannot be properly applied to rust, but to any thing that consumes or cankers clothes or metals. There is a saying exactly similar to this in the Institutes of MENU: speaking of the presents made to Brahmins, he says, “It is a gem which neither thieves nor foes take away, and which never perishes.” Chapter of Government, Institute 83.

Where thieves do not break through—Διορυσσοῦσι, literally dig through, i.e. the wall, in order to get into the house. This was not a difficult matter, as the

house was generally made of mud and straw, kneaded together like the cobb houses in Cornwall, and other places. See Clarke on Matthew 7:27 (note).

Matthew 6:20

Matthew 6:20

Lay up—treasures in heaven—“The only way to render perishing goods eternal, to secure stately furniture from moths, and the richest metals from canker, and precious stones from thieves, is to transmit them to heaven by acts of charity. This is a kind of bill of exchange which cannot fail of acceptance, but through our own fault.” Quesnel.

It is certain we have not the smallest portion of temporal good, but what we have received from the unmerited bounty of God: and if we give back to him all we have received, yet still there is no merit that can fairly attach to the act, as the goods were the Lord’s; for I am not to suppose that I can purchase any thing from a man by his own property. On this ground the doctrine of human merit is one of the most absurd that ever was published among men, or credited by sinners. Yet he who supposes he can purchase heaven by giving that meat which was left at his own table, and that of his servants; or by giving a garment which he could no longer in decency wear, must have a base ignorant soul, and a very mean opinion of the heaven he hopes for. But shall not such works as these be rewarded? Yes, yes, God will take care to give you all that your refuse victuals and old clothes are worth. Yet he, who through love to God and man, divides his bread with the hungry, and covers the naked with a garment, shall not lose his reward; a reward which the mercy of God appoints, but to which, in strict justice, he can lay no claim.

Matthew 6:21

Matthew 6:21

Where your treasure is—If God be the treasure of our souls, our hearts, i.e. our affections and desires will be placed on things above. An earthly minded man proves that his treasure is below; a heavenly minded man shows that his treasure is above.

Matthew 6:22

Matthew 6:22

The light of the body is the eye—That is, the eye is to the body what the sun is to the universe in the day time, or a lamp or candle to a house at night.

If—thine eye be single—*Ἀπλοῦς*, simple, uncompounded; i.e. so perfect in its structure as to see objects distinctly and clearly, and not confusedly, or in different places to what they are, as is often the case in certain disorders of the eye; one object appearing two or more—or else in a different situation, and of a different color to what it really is. This state of the eye is termed, Matthew 6:23, *πονηρὸς* evil, i.e. diseased or defective. An evil eye was a phrase in use, among

the ancient Jews, to denote an envious, covetous man or disposition; a man who repined at his neighbor's prosperity, loved his own money, and would do nothing in the way of charity for God's sake. Our blessed Lord, however, extends and sublimates this meaning, and uses the sound eye as a metaphor to point out that simplicity of intention, and purity of affection with which men should pursue the supreme good. We cannot draw more than one straight line between two indivisible points. We aim at happiness: it is found only in one thing, the indivisible and eternal GOD. If the line of simple intention be drawn straight to him, and the soul walk by it, with purity of affection, the whole man shall be light in the Lord; the rays of that excellent glory shall irradiate the mind, and through the whole spirit shall the Divine nature be transfused. But if a person who enjoyed this heavenly treasure permit his simplicity of intention to deviate from heavenly to earthly good; and his purity of affection to be contaminated by worldly ambition, secular profits, and animal gratifications; then, the light which was in him becomes darkness, i.e. his spiritual discernment departs, and his union with God is destroyed: all is only a palpable obscure; and, like a man who has totally lost his sight, he walks without direction, certainty, or comfort. This state is most forcibly intimated in our Lord's exclamation, How great a darkness! Who can adequately describe the misery and wretchedness of that soul which has lost its union with the fountain of all good, and, in losing this, has lost the possibility of happiness till the simple eye be once more given, and the straight line once more drawn.

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 6:24

No man can serve two masters—The master of our heart may be fitly termed the love that reigns in it. We serve that only which we love supremely. A man cannot be in perfect indifference betwixt two objects which are incompatible: he is inclined to despise and hate whatever he does not love supremely, when the necessity of a choice presents itself.

He will hate the one and love the other—The word hate has the same sense here as it has in many places of Scripture; it merely signifies to love less—so Jacob loved Rachel, but hated Leah; i.e. he loved Leah much less than he loved Rachel. God himself uses it precisely in the same sense: Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; i.e. I have loved the posterity of Esau less than I have loved the posterity of Jacob: which means no more than that God, in the course of his providence, gave to the Jews greater earthly privileges than he gave to the Edomites, and chose to make them the progenitors of the Messiah, though they ultimately, through their own obstinacy, derived no more benefit from this privilege than the Edomites did. How strange is it, that with such evidence before their eyes, men will apply this loving and hating to degrees of inclusion and exclusion, in which neither the justice nor mercy of God are honored!

Ye cannot serve God and mammon—מַמּוֹן mamon is used for money in the Targum of Onkelos, Exodus 18:21; and in that of Jonathan, Judges 5:19; 1

Samuel 8:3. The Syriac word מַמּוֹנָא mamona is used in the same sense, Exodus 21:30. Dr. Castel deduces these words from the Hebrew אָמַן aman, to trust, confide; because men are apt to trust in riches. Mammon may therefore be considered any thing a man confides in. Augustine observes, “that mammon, in the Punic or Carthaginian language, signified gain.” *Lucrum Punic' e8 mammon dicitur*. The word plainly denotes riches, Luke 16:9, 11, in which latter verse mention is made not only of the deceitful mammon, (τω αδικω), but also of the true (το αληθινον). St. Luke’s phrase, μαμωνα αδικιας, very exactly answers to the Chaldee מַמּוֹן דְּשִׁקְרָא mamon dishekar, which is often used in the Targums. See more in Wetstein and Parkhurst.

Some suppose there was an idol of this name, and Kircher mentions such a one in his *Oedip. Egyptiacus*. See Castel.

Our blessed Lord shows here the utter impossibility of loving the world and loving God at the same time; or, in other words, that a man of the world cannot be a truly religious character. He who gives his heart to the world robs God of it, and, in snatching at the shadow of earthly good, loses substantial and eternal blessedness. How dangerous is it to set our hearts upon riches, seeing it is so easy to make them our God!

Matthew 6:25

Matthew 6:25

Therefore—Δια τουτο, on this account; viz., that ye may not serve mammon, but have unshaken confidence in God, I say unto you,—

Take no thought—Be not anxiously careful, μη μεριμνατε; this is the proper meaning of the word. μεριμνα anxious solicitude, from μεριζειν τον νοου dividing or distracting the mind. My old MS. Bible renders it, *be not bussy to your liif*. Prudent care is never forbidden by our Lord, but only that anxious distracting solicitude, which, by dividing the mind, and drawing it different ways, renders it utterly incapable of attending to any solemn or important concern. To be anxiously careful concerning the means of subsistence is to lose all satisfaction and comfort in the things which God gives, and to act as a mere infidel. On the other hand, to rely so much upon providence as not to use the very powers and faculties with which the Divine Being has endowed us, is to tempt God. If we labor without placing our confidence in our labor, but expect all from the blessing of God, we obey his will, co-operate with his providence, set the springs of it a-going on our behalf, and thus imitate Christ and his followers by a sedate care and an industrious confidence.

In this and the following verses, our Lord lays down several reasons why men should not disquiet themselves about the wants of life, or concerning the future.

The first is, the experience of greater benefits already received. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Can he who gave us our body, and breathed into it the breath of life, before we could ask them from him, refuse us

that which is necessary to preserve both, and when we ask it in humble confidence?

The clause what ye must eat, is omitted by two MSS., most of the ancient versions, and by many of the primitive fathers. Griesbach has left it in the text with a note of doubtfulness. It occurs again in Matthew 6:31, and there is no variation in any of the MSS. in that place. Instead of, Is not the life more than, etc., we should read, Of more value; so the word *πλεον* is used in Numbers 22:15, and by the best Greek writers; and in the same sense it is used in Matthew 21:37. See the note there.

Matthew 6:26

Matthew 6:26

Behold the fowls of the air—The second reason why we should not be anxiously concerned about the future, is the example of the smaller animals, which the providence of God feeds without their own labor; though he be not their father. We never knew an earthly father take care of his fowls, and neglect his children; and shall we fear this from our heavenly Father? God forbid! That man is utterly unworthy to have God for his father, who depends less upon his goodness, wisdom, and power, than upon a crop of corn, which may be spoiled either in the field or in the barn. If our great Creator have made us capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying himself eternally, what may we not expect from him, after so great a gift?

They sow not, neither do they reap—There is a saying among the rabbins almost similar to this—“Hast thou ever seen a beast or a fowl that had a workshop? yet they are fed without labor and without anxiety. They were created for the service of man, and man was created that he might serve his Creator. Man also would have been supported without labor and anxiety, had he not corrupted his ways. Hast thou ever seen a lion carrying burthens, a stag gathering summer fruits, a fox selling merchandise, or a wolf selling oil, that they might thus gain their support? And yet they are fed without care or labor. Arguing therefore from the less to the greater, if they which were created that they might serve me, are nourished without labor and anxiety, how much more I, who have been created that I might serve my Maker! What therefore is the cause, why I should be obliged to labor in order to get my daily bread? Answer, SIN.” This is a curious and important extract, and is highly worthy of the reader’s attention. See Schoettgen.

Matthew 6:27

Matthew 6:27

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?—The third reason against these carking cares is the unprofitableness of human solicitude, unless God vouchsafe to bless it. What can our uneasiness do but render us still more unworthy of the Divine care? The passage from distrust to

apostasy is very short and easy; and a man is not far from murmuring against Providence, who is dissatisfied with its conduct. We should depend as fully upon God for the preservation of his gifts as for the gifts themselves.

Cubit unto his stature?—I think ηλικιαν should be rendered age here, and so our translators have rendered the word in John 9:21, αυτος ηλικιαν εχει he is of age. A very learned writer observes, that no difficulty can arise from applying πηχυν a cubit, a measure of extension, to time, and the age of man: as place and time are both quantities, and capable of increase and diminution, and, as no fixed material standard can be employed in the mensuration of the fleeting particles of time, it was natural and necessary, in the construction of language, to apply parallel terms to the discrimination of time and place. Accordingly, we find the same words indifferently used to denote time and place in every known tongue. Lord, let me know the MEASURE of my days! Thou hast made my days HAND-BREADTHS, Psalm 39:5. Many examples might be adduced from the Greek and Roman writers. Besides, it is evident that the phrase of adding one cubit is proverbial, denoting something minute; and is therefore applicable to the smallest possible portion of time; but, in a literal acceptation, the addition of a cubit to the stature, would be a great and extraordinary accession of height. See Wakefield.

Matthew 6:28

Matthew 6:28

And why take ye thought for raiment?—Or, why are ye anxiously careful about raiment? The fourth reason against such inquietudes is the example of inanimate creatures: The herbs and flowers of the field have their being, nourishment, exquisite flavors, and beautiful hues from God himself. They are not only without anxious care, but also without care or thought of every kind. Your being, its excellence and usefulness, do not depend on your anxious concern: they spring as truly from the beneficence and continual superintendence of God, as the flowers of the field do; and were you brought into such a situation, as to be as utterly incapable of contributing to your own preservation and support as the lilies of the field are to theirs, your heavenly Father could augment your substance, and preserve your being, when for his glory and your own advantage.

Consider—Diligently consider this, καταμαθετε, lay it earnestly to heart, and let your confidence be unshaken in the God of infinite bounty and love.

Matthew 6:29

Matthew 6:29

Solomon in all his glory—Some suppose that as the robes of state worn by the eastern kings were usually white, as were those of the nobles among the Jews, that therefore the lily was chosen for the comparison.

Matthew 6:30

Matthew 6:30

If God so clothe the grass of the field—Christ confounds both the luxury of the rich in their superfluities, and the distrust of the poor as to the necessities of life. Let man, who is made for God and eternity, learn from a flower of the field how low the care of Providence stoops. All our inquietudes and distrusts proceed from lack of faith: that supplies all wants. The poor are not really such, but because they are destitute of faith.

To-morrow is cast into the oven—The inhabitants of the east, to this day, make use of dry straw, withered herbs, and stubble, to heat their ovens. Some have translated the original word κλιβανον, a still, and intimate that our Lord alludes to the distillation of herbs for medicinal purposes; but this is certainly contrary to the scope of our Lord's argument, which runs thus: If God covers with so much glory things of no farther value than to serve the meanest uses, will he not take care of his servants, who are so precious in his sight, and designed for such important services in the world? See Harmer's Observations.

Matthew 6:31

Matthew 6:31

What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? etc.—These three inquiries engross the whole attention of those who are living without God in the world. The belly and back of a worldling are his compound god; and these he worships in the lust of the flesh, in the lust of the eye, and in the pride of life.

Matthew 6:32

Matthew 6:32

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek—The fifth reason against solicitude about the future is—that to concern ourselves about these wants with anxiety, as if there was no such thing as a providence in the world; with great affection towards earthly enjoyments, as if we expected no other; and without praying to God or consulting his will, as if we could do any thing without him: this is to imitate the worst kind of heathens, who live without hope, and without God in the world.

Seek—Επιζητει from επι, intensive, and ζητω, I seek, to seek intensely, earnestly, again and again: the true characteristic of the worldly man; his soul is never satisfied—give! give! is the ceaseless language of his earth-born heart.

Your heavenly Father knoweth, etc.—The sixth reason against this anxiety about the future is—because God, our heavenly Father, is infinite in wisdom, and knows all our wants. It is the property of a wise and tender father to provide necessities, and not superfluities, for his children. Not to expect the former is an offense to his goodness; to expect the latter is injurious to his wisdom.

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God—See on Matthew 3:7 (note).

His righteousness—That holiness of heart and purity of life which God requires of those who profess to be subjects of that spiritual kingdom mentioned above. See on Matthew 5:20 (note).

The seventh reason against these worldly cares and fears is—because the business of our salvation ought to engross us entirely: hither all our desires, cares, and inquiries ought to tend. Grace is the way to glory—holiness the way to happiness. If men be not righteous, there is no heaven to be had: if they be, they shall have heaven and earth too; for godliness has the promise of both lives. 1 Timothy 6:3.

All these things shall be added unto you—The very blunt note of old Mr. Trapp, on this passage, is worthy of serious attention. All things shall be added. “They shall be cast in as an overplus, or as small advantages to the main bargain; as paper and pack-thread are given where we buy spice and fruit, or an inch of measure to an ell of cloth.” This was a very common saying among the Jews: “Seek that, to which other things are necessarily connected.” “A king said to his particular friend, ‘Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it unto thee.’ He thought within himself, ‘If I ask to be made a general I shall readily obtain it. I will ask something to which all these things shall be added:’ he therefore said, ‘Give me thy daughter to wife.’ This he did knowing that all the dignities of the kingdom should be added unto this gift.” See in Schoettgen.

To this verse, probably, belong the following words, quoted often by Clement, Origen, and Eusebius, as the words of Christ: *αιτειτε τα μεγαλα, και τα μικρα υμιν προστεθησεται και αιτειτε τα επουρανια, και τα επιγεια προστεθησεται υμιν.* “Ask great things, and little things shall be added unto you; ask heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you.”

Matthew 6:34

Matthew 6:34

Take therefore no thought—That is, Be not therefore anxiously careful.

The eighth and last reason, against this preposterous conduct, is—that carking care is not only useless in itself, but renders us miserable beforehand. The future falls under the cognizance of God alone: we encroach, therefore, upon his rights, when we would fain foresee all that may happen to us, and secure ourselves from it by our cares. How much good is omitted, how many evils caused, how many duties neglected, how many innocent persons deserted, how many good works destroyed, how many truths suppressed, and how many acts of injustice authorized by those timorous forecasts of what may happen; and those faithless apprehensions concerning the future! Let us do now what God requires of us, and trust the consequences to him. The future time which God would have us foresee and provide for is that of judgment and eternity: and it is about this alone that we are careless!

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof—*Αρκητον τη ημερα η κακια αυτης*, Sufficient for each day is its own calamity. Each day has its peculiar

trials: we should meet them with confidence in God. As we should live but a day at a time, so we should take care to suffer no more evils in one day than are necessarily attached to it. He who neglects the present for the future is acting opposite to the order of God, his own interest, and to every dictate of sound wisdom. Let us live for eternity, and we shall secure all that is valuable in time.

There are many valuable reflections in the Abbe Quesnel's work, on this chapter; and from it several of the preceding have been derived.

Matthew 7:1

Matthew 7

Our Lord warns men against rash judgment and uncharitable censures, vv. 1-5. Shows that holy things must not be profaned, v. 6; gives encouragement to fervent persevering prayer, vv. 7-11. Shows how men should deal with each other, v. 12. Exhorts the people to enter in at the strait gate, vv. 13, 14; to beware of false teachers, who are to be known by their fruits, vv. 15-20. Shows that no man shall be saved by his mere profession of Christianity, however specious, vv. 22, 23. The parable of the wise man who built his house upon a rock, vv. 24, 25. Of the foolish man who built his house, without a foundation, on the sand, vv. 26, 27. Christ concludes his sermon, and the people are astonished at his doctrine, vv. 28, 29.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 7

Matthew 7:1

Matthew 7:1

Judge not, that ye be not judged—These exhortations are pointed against rash, harsh, and uncharitable judgments, the thinking evil, where no evil seems, and speaking of it accordingly. The Jews were highly criminal here, and yet had very excellent maxims against it, as may be seen in Schoettgen. This is one of the most important exhortations in the whole of this excellent sermon. By a secret and criminal disposition of nature, man endeavors to elevate himself above others, and, to do it more effectually, depresses them. His jealous and envious heart wishes that there may be no good quality found but in himself, that he alone may be esteemed. Such is the state of every unconverted man; and it is from this criminal disposition, that evil surmises, rash judgments, precipitate decisions, and all other unjust procedures against our neighbor, flow.

Matthew 7:2

Matthew 7:2

For with what judgment—He who is severe on others will naturally excite their severity against himself. The censures and calumnies which we have suffered are probably the just reward of those which we have dealt out to others.

Matthew 7:3

Matthew 7:3

And why beholdest thou the mote—Καρφος might be translated the splinter: for splinter bears some analogy to beam, but mote does not. I should prefer this word (which has been adopted by some learned men) on the authority of Hesychius, who is a host in such matters; Καρφος, κεραια ξυλου λεπτη, Karpfos is a thin piece of wood, a splinter. It often happens that the faults which we consider as of the first enormity in others are, to our own iniquities, as a chip is, when compared to a large beam. On one side, self-love blinds us to ourselves; and, on the other, envy and malice give us piercing eyes in respect of others. When we shall have as much zeal to correct ourselves, as we have inclination to reprove and correct others, we shall know our own defects better than now we know those of our neighbor. There is a caution very similar to this of our Lord given by a heathen:—

Cum tua praevideas oculis mala lippus inunctis:
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum,
Quam aut aquila, aut serpens Epidaurius?
Hor. Sat. lib. 1. sat. 3. l. 25-27

“When you can so readily overlook your own wickedness, why are you more clear-sighted than the eagle or serpent of Epidaurus, in spying out the failings of your friends?”

But the saying was very common among the Jews, as may be seen in Lightfoot.

Matthew 7:4

Matthew 7:4

Or how wilt thou say—That man is utterly unfit to show the way of life to others who is himself walking in the way of death.

Matthew 7:5

Matthew 7:5

Thou hypocrite—A hypocrite, who professes to be what he is not, (viz. a true Christian), is obliged, for the support of the character he has assumed, to imitate all the dispositions and actions of a Christian; consequently he must reprove sin, and endeavor to show an uncommon affection for the glory of God. Our Lord unmasks this vile pretender to saintship, and shows him that his hidden hypocrisy, covered with the garb of external sanctity, is more abominable in the sight of God than the openly professed and practised iniquity of the profligate.

In after times, the Jews made a very bad use of this saying: “I wonder,” said Rabbi Zarphon, “whether there be any in this age that will suffer reproof? If one say to another, Cast out the mote out of thine eye, he is immediately ready to answer, Cast out the beam that is in thine own eye.”

This proverbial mode of speech the Gloss interprets thus: “Cast out? קסִים *kisim*, the mote, that is, the little sin, that is in thy hand: to which he answered, Cast out the great sin that is in thine. So they could not reprove, because all were sinners.” See Lightfoot.

Matthew 7:6

Matthew 7:6

Give not that which is holy—To ἁγιον, the holy or sacred thing; i.e. any thing, especially, of the sacrificial kind, which had been consecrated to God. The members of this sentence should be transposed thus:—

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

The propriety of this transposition is self-evident. There are many such transpositions as these, both in sacred and profane writers. The following is very remarkable:—

“I am black but comely;
“As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”

That is,

“I am black as the tents of Kedar,
“Comely as the curtains of Solomon.”

See many proofs of this sort of writing in Mr. WAKEFIELD’S Commentary.

As a general meaning of this passage, we may just say: “The sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and other holy ordinances which are only instituted for the genuine followers of Christ, are not to be dispensed to those who are continually returning like the snarling ill-natured dog to their easily predominant sins of rash judgment, barking at and tearing the characters of others by evil speaking, back biting and slandering; nor to him who, like the swine, is frequently returning to wallow in the mud of sensual gratifications and impurities.”

Matthew 7:7

Matthew 7:7

Ask—seek—knock—These three words include the ideas of want, loss, and earnestness.

Ask: turn, beggar at, the door of mercy; thou art destitute of all spiritual good, and it is God alone who can give it to thee; and thou hast no claim but what his mercy has given thee on itself.

Seek: Thou hast lost thy God, thy paradise, thy soul.—Look about thee—leave no stone unturned there is no peace, no final salvation for thee till thou get thy soul restored to the favor and image of God.

Knock: Be in earnest—be importunate: Eternity is at hand! and, if thou die in thy sins, where God is thou shalt never come.

Ask with confidence and humility.

Seek with care and application.

Knock with earnestness and perseverance.

Matthew 7:8

Matthew 7:8

For every one that asketh receiveth—Prayer is always heard after one manner or other. No soul can pray in vain that prays as directed above. The truth and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus are pledged for its success.—Ye SHALL receive—ye SHALL find—it SHALL be opened. These words are as strongly binding on the side of God, as thou shalt do no murder is on the side of man. Bring Christ's word, and Christ's sacrifice with thee, and not one of Heaven's blessings can be denied thee. See on Luke 11:9 (note).

Matthew 7:9

Matthew 7:9

Or what man is there—whom if his son—Men are exhorted to come unto God, with the persuasion that he is a most gracious and compassionate Parent, who possesses all heavenly and earthly good, knows what is necessary for each of his creatures, and is infinitely ready to communicate that which they need most.

Will he give him a stone?—Will he not readily give him bread if he have it? This was a proverb in other countries; a benefit grudgingly given by an avaricious man is called by Seneca, *panem lapidosum*, stony bread. Hence that saying in Plautus: *Altera manu, fert lapidem, panem ostentat altera.*—In one hand he brings a stone, and stretches out bread in the other.

Matthew 7:11

Matthew 7:11

If ye, then, being evil—Πονηροὶ οὐτεες, who are radically and diabolically depraved, yet feel yourselves led, by natural affection, to give those things to your children which are necessary to support their lives, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, whose nature is infinite goodness, mercy, and grace, give good things—his grace and Spirit (πνεῦμα ἁγίου, the Holy Ghost, Luke 11:13), to them who ask him? What a picture is here given of the goodness of God! Reader, ask thy soul, could this heavenly Father reprobate to

unconditional eternal damnation any creature he has made? He who can believe that he has, may believe any thing: but still GOD IS LOVE.

Matthew 7:12

Matthew 7:12

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men—This is a most sublime precept, and highly worthy of the grandeur and beneficence of the just God who gave it. The general meaning of it is this: “Guided by justice and mercy, do unto all men as you would have them to do to you, were your circumstances and theirs reversed.” Yet this saying may be misunderstood. “If the prisoner should ask the judge, ‘whether he would be content to be hanged, were he in his case,’ he would answer, ‘No.’ Then, says the prisoner, do as you would be done to.—Neither of them must do as private men; but the judge must do by him as they have publicly agreed: that is, both judge and prisoner have consented to a law, that if either of them steal he shall be hanged.”—Selden. None but he whose heart is filled with love to God and all mankind can keep this precept, either in its spirit or letter. Self-love will feel itself sadly cramped when brought within the limits of this precept; but God hath spoken it: it is the spirit and design of the law and the prophets; the sum of all that is laid down in the Sacred Writings, relative to men’s conduct toward each other. It seems as if God had written it upon the hearts of all men, for sayings of this kind may be found among all nations, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen. See many examples in Wetstein’s notes.

Matthew 7:13

Matthew 7:13

Enter ye in at the strait gate—Our Savior seems to allude here to the distinction between the public and private ways mentioned by the Jewish lawyers. The public roads were allowed to be sixteen cubits broad, the private ways only four. The words in the original are very emphatic: Enter in (to the kingdom of heaven) through THIS strait gate, *δια της στενης πυλης*, i.e. of doing to every one as you would he should do unto you; for this alone seems to be the strait gate which our Lord alludes to.

For wide is the gate—And very broad, *ευρυχωρος*, from *ευρυς*, broad, and *χωρος*, a place, a spacious roomy place, that leadeth forward, *απαγουσα*, into THAT destruction, *εις την απωλειαν*, meaning eternal misery; intimating, that it is much more congenial, to the revengeful, covetous heart of fallen man, to take every advantage of another, and to enrich himself at his expense, rather than to walk according to the rule laid down before, by our blessed Lord, and that acting contrary to it is the way to everlasting misery. With those who say it means repentance, and forsaking sin, I can have no controversy. That is certainly a gate, and a strait one too, through which every sinner must turn to God, in order to find salvation. But the doing to every one as we would they should do unto us, is a gate extremely strait, and very difficult, to every unregenerate mind.

Matthew 7:14

Matthew 7:14

Because strait is the gate—Instead of οτι because, I should prefer τι how, which reading is supported by a great majority of the best MSS., versions, and fathers. How strait is that gate! This mode of expression more forcibly points out the difficulty of the way to the kingdom. How strange is it that men should be unwilling to give up their worldly interests to secure their everlasting salvation! And yet no interest need be abandoned, but that which is produced by injustice and unkindness. Reason, as well as God, says, such people should be excluded from a place of blessedness. He who shows no mercy (and much more he who shows no justice) shall have judgment without mercy. James 2:13.

Few there be that find it—The strait gate, στενη πυλη, signifies literally what we call a wicket, i.e. a little door in a large gate. Gate, among the Jews, signifies, metaphorically, the entrance, introduction, or means of acquiring any thing. So they talk of the gate of repentance, the gate of prayers, and the gate of tears. When God, say they, shut the gate of paradise against Adam, He opened to him the gate of repentance. The way to the kingdom of God is made sufficiently manifest—the completest assistance is promised in the way, and the greatest encouragement to persevere to the end is held out in the everlasting Gospel. But men are so wedded to their own passions, and so determined to follow the imaginations of their own hearts, that still it may be said: There are few who find the way to heaven; fewer yet who abide any time in it; fewer still who walk in it; and fewest of all who persevere unto the end. Nothing renders this way either narrow or difficult to any person, but sin. Let all the world leave their sins, and all the world may walk abreast in this good way.

Matthew 7:15

Matthew 7:15

Beware of false prophets—By false prophets we are to understand teachers of erroneous doctrines, who come professing a commission from God, but whose aim is not to bring the heavenly treasure to the people, but rather to rob them of their earthly good. Teachers who preach for hire, having no motive to enter into the ministry but to get a living, as it is ominously called by some, however they may bear the garb and appearance of the innocent useful sheep, the true pastors commissioned by the Lord Jesus, or to whatever name, class or party they may belong, are, in the sight of the heart-searching God, no other than ravenous wolves, whose design is to feed themselves with the fat, and clothe themselves with the fleece, and thus ruin, instead of save, the flock.

Matthew 7:16

Matthew 7:16

Ye shall know them by their fruits—Fruits, in the Scripture and Jewish phraseology, are taken for works of any kind. “A man’s works,” says one, “are the tongue of his heart, and tell honestly whether he is inwardly corrupt or pure.” By these works you may distinguish (επιγνωσεσθε) these ravenous wolves from true pastors. The judgment formed of a man by his general conduct is a safe one: if the judgment be not favorable to the person, that is his fault, as you have your opinion of him from his works, i.e. the confession of his own heart.

Matthew 7:17

Matthew 7:17

So every good tree—As the thorn can only produce thorns, not grapes; and the thistle, not figs, but prickles; so an unregenerate heart will produce fruits of degeneracy. As we perfectly know that a good tree will not produce bad fruit, and the bad tree will not, cannot produce good fruit, so we know that the profession of godliness, while the life is ungodly, is imposture, hypocrisy, and deceit. A man cannot be a saint and a sinner at the same time. Let us remember, that as the good tree means a good heart, and the good fruit, a holy life, and that every heart is naturally vicious; so there is none but God who can pluck up the vicious tree, create a good heart, plant, cultivate, water, and make it continually fruitful in righteousness and true holiness.

Matthew 7:18

Matthew 7:18

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit—Love to God and man is the root of the good tree; and from this principle all its fruit is found. To teach, as some have done, that a state of salvation may be consistent with the greatest crimes, (such as murder and adultery in David), or that the righteous necessarily sin in all their best works, is really to make the good tree bring forth bad fruit, and to give the lie to the Author of eternal truth.

Matthew 7:19

Matthew 7:19

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit—What a terrible sentence is this against Christless pastors, and Christless hearers! Every tree that produceth not good fruit, εκκοπτεται, is to be now cut down; the act of excision is now taking place: the curse of the Lord is even now on the head and the heart of every false teacher, and impenitent hearer.

Matthew 7:20

Matthew 7:20

Wherefore by their fruits, etc.—This truth is often repeated, because our eternal interests depend so much upon it. Not to have good fruit is to have evil:

there can be no innocent sterility in the invisible tree of the heart. He that brings forth no fruit, and he that brings forth bad fruit, are both only fit for the fire.

Matthew 7:21

Matthew 7:21

Not every one—Ου πας, a Hebraism, say some, for no person. It is a Graecism and a Latinism too: ου παντων θεων, not ALL of the gods, i.e. not ANY of the gods, HOM. Odys. Z. 240. So TERENCE *Sine omni periculo*, without ALL danger, i.e. without ANY danger. And JUVENAL: *Sine omni labe*, without ALL imperfection, i.e. without ANY. See more in Mr. Wakefield. The sense of this verse seems to be this: No person, by merely acknowledging my authority, believing in the Divinity of my nature, professing faith in the perfection of my righteousness, and infinite merit of my atonement, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven—shall have any part with God in glory; but he who doeth the will of my Father—he who gets the bad tree rooted up, the good tree planted, and continues to bring forth fruit to the glory and praise of God. There is a good saying among the rabbins on this subject. “A man should be as vigorous as a panther, as swift as an eagle, as fleet as a stag, and as strong as a lion, to do the will of his Creator.”

Matthew 7:22

Matthew 7:22

Many will say to me in that day—Εκεινη τη ημερα, in that very day, viz. the day of judgment—have we not prophesied, taught, publicly preached, in thy name; acknowledging thee to be the only Savior, and proclaiming thee as such to others; cast out demons, impure spirits, who had taken possession of the bodies of men; done many miracles, being assisted by supernatural agency to invert even the course of nature, and thus prove the truth of the doctrine we preached?

Matthew 7:23

Matthew 7:23

Will I profess—Ομολογησω, I will fully and plainly tell them, I never knew you—I never approved of you; for so the word is used in many places, both in the Old and New Testaments. You held the truth in unrighteousness, while you preached my pure and holy doctrine; and for the sake of my own truth, and through my love to the souls of men, I blessed your preaching; but yourselves I could never esteem, because you were destitute of the spirit of my Gospel, unholy in your hearts, and unrighteous in your conduct. Alas! alas! how many preachers are there who appear prophets in their pulpits; how many writers, and other evangelical workmen, the miracles of whose labor, learning, and doctrine, we admire, who are nothing, and worse than nothing, before God, because they perform not his will, but their own? What an awful consideration, that a man of eminent gifts, whose talents are a source of public utility, should be only as a

way-mark or finger-post in the way to eternal bliss, pointing out the road to others, without walking in it himself!

Depart from me—What a terrible word! What a dreadful separation! Depart from ME! from the very Jesus whom you have proclaimed in union with whom alone eternal life is to be found. For, united to Christ, all is heaven; separated from him, all is hell.

Matthew 7:24

Matthew 7:24

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine—That is, the excellent doctrines laid down before in this and the two preceding chapters. There are several parables or similitudes like to this in the rabbins. I shall quote but the two following:—

Rabbi Eleasar said, “The man whose knowledge exceeds his works, to whom is he like? He is like a tree which had many branches, and only a few roots; and, when the stormy winds came, it was plucked up and eradicated. But he whose good works are greater than his knowledge, to what is he like? He is like a tree which had few branches, and many roots; so that all the winds of heaven could not move it from its place.” Pirke Aboth.

Elisha, the son of Abuja, said, “The man who studies much in the law, and maintains good works, is like to a man who built a house, laying stones at the foundation, and building brick upon them; and, though many waters come against it, they cannot move it from its place. But the man who studies much in the law, and does not maintain good words, is like to a man who, in building his house, put brick at the foundation, and laid stones upon them, so that even gentle waters shall overthrow that house.” Aboth Rab. Nath.

Probably our Lord had this or some parable in his eye: but how amazingly improved in passing through his hands! In our Lord’s parable there is dignity, majesty, and point, which we seek for in vain in the Jewish archetype.

I will liken him unto a wise man—To a prudent man—*ανδρι φρονιμω*, to a prudent man, a man of sense and understanding, who, foreseeing the evil hideth himself, who proposes to himself the best end, and makes use of the proper means to accomplish it. True wisdom consists in getting the building of our salvation completed: to this end we must build on the Rock, CHRIST JESUS, and make the building firm, by keeping close to the maxims of his Gospel, and having our tempers and lives conformed to its word and spirit; and when, in order to this, we lean on nothing but the grace of Christ, we then build upon a solid rock.

Matthew 7:25**Matthew 7:25**

And the rain descended—floods came—winds blew—In Judea, and in all countries in the neighborhood of the tropics, the rain sometimes falls in great torrents, producing rivers, which sweep away the soil from the rocky hills; and the houses, which are built of brick only dried in the sun, of which there are whole villages in the east, literally melt away before those rains, and the land-floods occasioned by them. There are three general kinds of trials to which the followers of God are exposed; and to which, some think, our Lord alludes here: First, those of temporal afflictions, coming in the course of Divine Providence: these may be likened to the torrents of rain. Secondly, those which come from the passions of men, and which may be likened to the impetuous rivers. Thirdly, those which come from Satan and his angels, and which, like tempestuous whirlwinds, threaten to carry every thing before them. He alone, whose soul is built on the Rock of ages, stands all these shocks; and not only stands in, but profits by them.

Matthew 7:26**Matthew 7:26**

And every one that heareth—and doeth them not—Was there ever a stricter system of morality delivered by God to man, than in this sermon? He who reads or hears it, and does not look to God to conform his soul and life to it, and notwithstanding is hoping to enter into the kingdom of heaven, is like the fool who built his house on the sand. When the rain, the rivers, and the winds come, his building must fall, and his soul be crushed into the nethermost pit by its ruins. Talking about Christ, his righteousness, merits, and atonement, while the person is not conformed to his word and spirit, is no other than solemn self-deception.

Let it be observed, that it is not the man who hears or believes these sayings of Christ, whose building shall stand, when the earth and its works are burnt up; but the man who DOES them.

Many suppose that the law of Moses is abolished, merely because it is too strict, and impossible to be observed; and that the Gospel was brought in to liberate us from its obligations; but let all such know, that in the whole of the old covenant nothing can be found so exceedingly strict and holy as this sermon, which Christ lays down as the rule by which we are to walk. “Then, the fulfilling of these precepts is the purchase of glory.” No, it is the WAY only to that glory which has already been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. To him that believes, all things are possible.

Matthew 7:27**Matthew 7:27**

And the rain descended, and the floods came, etc.—A fine illustration of this may be seen in the case of the fishermen in Bengal, who, in the dry season, build their huts on the beds of sand from which the rivers had retired: but when the rain sets in suddenly; as it often does, accompanied with violent northwest winds, and the waters pour down in torrents from the mountains; in one night, multitudes of these buildings are swept away, and the place where they stood is on the next morning indiscoverable.

Matthew 7:28

Matthew 7:28

The people were astonished—Οἱ ὄχλοι, the multitudes; for vast crowds attended the ministry of this most popular and faithful of all preachers. They were astonished at his doctrine. They heard the law defined in such a manner as they had never thought of before; and this sacred system of morality urged home on their consciences with such clearness and authority as they had never felt under the teaching of their scribes and Pharisees. Here is the grand difference between the teaching of scribes and Pharisees, the self-created or men-made ministers, and those whom GOD sends. The first may preach what is called very good and very sound doctrine; but it comes with no authority from God to the souls of the people: therefore, the unholy is unholy still; because preaching can only be effectual to the conversion of men, when the unction of the Holy Spirit is in it; and as these are not sent by the Lord, therefore they shall not profit the people at all. Jeremiah 23:32.

From one of the royal household of George III., I have received the following anecdote:—

The late Bishop F. of Salisbury having procured a young man of promising abilities to preach before the king, and the young man having, to his lordship's apprehension, acquitted himself well, the Bishop, in conversation with the king afterwards, wishing to get the king's opinion, took the liberty to say, "Does not your majesty think that the young man who had the honor to preach before your majesty, is likely to make a good clergyman, and has this morning delivered a very good sermon?" To which the king, in his blunt manner, hastily replied, "It might have been a good sermon, my lord, for aught I know; but I consider no sermon good that has nothing of Christ in it!"

Matthew 7:29

Matthew 7:29

Having authority—They felt a commanding power and authority in his word, i.e. his doctrine. His statements were perspicuous; his exhortations persuasive; his doctrine sound and rational; and his arguments irresistible. These they never

felt in the trifling teachings of their most celebrated doctors, who consumed their own time, and that of their disciples and hearers, with frivolous cases of conscience, ridiculous distinctions, and puerile splittings of controversial hairs—questions not calculated to minister grace to the hearers.

Several excellent MSS. and almost all the ancient versions read, καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, and the Pharisees. He taught them as one having authority, like the most eminent and distinguished teacher, and not as the scribes and Pharisees, who had no part of that unction which he in its plenitude possessed. Thus ends a sermon the most strict, pure, holy, profound, and sublime, ever delivered to man; and yet so amazingly simple is the whole that almost a child may apprehend it! Lord! write all these thy sayings upon our hearts, we beseech thee! Amen.