

CHAPTER 20

In this chapter we have,

- I.** Christ's answer to the chief priests' question concerning his authority (v. 1-8).
- II.** The parable of the vineyard let out to the unjust and rebellious husbandmen (v. 9-19).
- III.** Christ's answer to the question proposed to him concerning the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar (v. 20-26).
- IV.** His vindication of that great fundamental doctrine of the Jewish and Christian institutes — the resurrection of the dead and the future state, from the foolish cavils of the Sadducees (v. 27-38).
- V.** His puzzling the scribes with a question concerning the Messiah's being the Son of David (v. 39-44).
- VI.** The caution he gave his disciples to take heed of the scribes (v. 45-47). All which passages we had before in Matthew and Mark, and therefore need not enlarge upon them here, unless on those particulars which we had not there.

◀ LUKE 20:1-8

CHRIST'S ENEMIES NONPLUSSED

In this passage of story nothing is added here to what we had in the other evangelists; but only in the first verse, where we are told,

I. That he was now *teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel*. Note, Christ was a preacher of his own gospel. He not only *purchased* the salvation for us, but *published* it to us, which is a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel, and gives abundant encouragement to us to receive it, for it is a sign that the heart of Christ was much upon it, to have it received. This likewise puts an honour upon the preachers of the gospel, and upon their office and work, how much soever they are despised by a vain world. It puts an honour upon the *popular preachers* of

the gospel; Christ condescended to the capacities of the *people* in preaching the gospel, and *taught them*. And observe, when he was *preaching the gospel to the people* he had this interruption given him. Note, Satan and his agents do all they can to hinder the *preaching of the gospel to the people*, for nothing weakens the interest of Satan's kingdom more.

II. That his enemies are here said to *come upon him* — *epestesan*. The word is used only here, and it intimates,

1. That they thought to surprise him with this question; they *came upon him* suddenly, hoping to catch him unprovided with an answer, as if this were not a thing he had himself thought of.

2. That they thought to frighten him with this question. They *came upon him* in a body, with violence. But how could he be terrified with the *wrath of men*, when it was in his *own power to restrain it*, and make it turn to his praise? From this story itself we may learn,

(1.) That it is not to be thought strange, if even that which is evident to a demonstration be disputed, and called in question, as a doubtful thing, by those that shut their eyes against the light. Christ's miracles plainly showed *by what authority he did these things*, and sealed his commission; and yet this is that which is here *arraigned*.

(2.) Those that question Christ's authority, if they be but catechized themselves in the plainest and most evident principles of religion, will have their folly made manifest unto all men. Christ answered these priests and scribes with a question concerning the baptism of John, a plain question, which the meanest of the common people could answer: *Was it from heaven or of men?* They all knew it was *from heaven*; there was nothing in it that had an earthly relish or tendency, but it was all heavenly and divine. And this question gravelled them, and ran them aground, and served to shame them before the people.

(3.) It is not strange if those that are governed by reputation and secular interest imprison the plainest truths, and smother and stifle the strongest convictions, as these priests and scribes did, who, to save their credit, would not own that John's baptism was *from heaven*, and had no other reason why they did not say it was *of men* but because they *feared the people*. What good can be expected from men of such a spirit?

(4.) Those that bury the knowledge they have are justly denied further knowledge. It was just with Christ to refuse to give an account of his authority to them that knew the baptism of John to be from heaven and would not believe in him, nor own their knowledge, v. 7, 8.

LUKE 20:9-19

THE HUSBANDMEN AND THE VINEYARD

Christ spoke this parable against those who were resolved not to own his authority, though the evidence of it was ever so full and convincing; and it comes very seasonably to show that by questioning his authority they forfeited their own. Their disowning the lord of their vineyard was a defeasance of their lease of the vineyard, and giving up of all their title.

I. The parable has nothing added here to what we had before in Matthew and Mark. The scope of it is to show that the Jewish nation, by persecuting the prophets, and at length Christ himself, had provoked God to take away from them all their church privileges, and to abandon them to ruin. It teaches us,

1. That those who enjoy the privileges of the visible church are as tenants and farmers that have a vineyard to look after, and rent to pay for it. God, by setting up revealed religion and instituted orders in the world, hath planted a vineyard, which he lets out to those people among whom his tabernacle is, v. 9. And they have *vineyard-work* to do, needful and constant work, but pleasant and profitable. Whereas man was, for sin, condemned to *till the ground*, they that have a place in the church are restored to that which was Adam's work in innocency, to *dress the garden*, and to keep it; for the church is a paradise, and Christ the tree of life in it. They have also *vineyard-fruits* to present to the Lord of the vineyard. There are rents to be paid and services to be done, which, though bearing no proportion to the value of the premises, yet must be *done* and must be *paid*.

2. That the work of God's ministers is to call upon those who enjoy the privileges of the church to *bring forth fruit* accordingly. They are God's rent-gatherers, to put the husbandmen in mind of their arrears, or rather to put them in mind that they have a landlord who expects to hear from them,

and to receive some acknowledgment of their dependence on him, and obligations to him, v. 10. The Old-Testament prophets were sent on this errand to the Jewish church, to demand from them the duty and obedience they owed to God.

3. That it has often been the lot of God's faithful servants to be wretchedly abused by his own tenants; they have been *beaten* and *treated* shamefully by those that resolved to *send them empty* away. They that are resolved not to do their duty to God cannot bear to be called upon to do it. Some of the best men in the world have had the hardest usage from it, for their best services.

4. That God sent his Son into the world to carry on the same work that the prophets were employed in, to *gather the fruits of the vineyard* for God; and one would have thought that he would have been revered and received. The prophets spoke as *servants*, *Thus saith the Lord*; but Christ *as a Son*, among his own, *Verily, I say unto you*. Putting such an honour as this upon them, to send him, one would have thought, should have won upon them.

5. That those who reject Christ's ministers would reject Christ himself if he should come to them; for it has been tried, and found that the persecutors and murderers of his servants the prophets were the persecutors and murderers of himself. They said, *This is the heir, come let us kill him*. When they slew the servants, there were other servants sent. "But, if we can but be the death of the son, there is never another son to be sent, and then we shall be no longer molested with these demands; we may have a quiet possession of the vineyard for ourselves." The scribes and Pharisees promised themselves that, if they could but get Christ out of the way, they should for ever ride masters in the Jewish church; and therefore they took the bold step, they *cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him*.

6. That the putting of Christ to death filled up the measure of the Jewish iniquity, and brought upon them ruin without remedy. No other could be expected than that God should *destroy those wicked husbandmen*. They began in *not paying their rent*, but then proceeded to beat and kill the servants, and at length their young Master himself. Note, Those that live in the neglect of their duty to God know not what degrees of sin and destruction they are running themselves into.

II. To the application of the parable is added here, which we had not before, their deprecation of the doom included in it (v. 16): *When they heard it, they said, God forbid, Me genoito — Let not this be done*, so it should be read. Though they could not but own that for such a sin such a punishment was just, and what might be expected, yet they could not bear to hear of it. Note, It is an instance of the folly and stupidity of sinners that they proceed and persevere in their sinful ways though at the same time they have a foresight and dread of the destruction that is at the end of those ways. And see what a cheat they put themselves, to think to avoid it by a cold *God forbid*, when they do nothing towards the preventing of it; but will this make the threatening of no effect? No, they shall know whose word shall stand, God's or theirs. Now observe what Christ said, in answer to this childish deprecation of their ruin.

1. He *beheld them*. This is taken notice of only by this evangelist, v. 17. He *looked upon* them with pity and compassion, grieved to see them cheat themselves thus to their own ruin. He *beheld them*, to see if they would blush at their own folly, or if he could discern in their countenances any indication of relenting.

2. He referred them to the scripture: "*What is this then that is written? How can you escape the judgment of God, when you cannot prevent the exaltation of him whom you despise and reject? The word of God hath said it, that the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.*" The Lord Jesus will be exalted to the Father's right hand. He has all judgment and all power committed to him; he is the corner-stone and top-stone of the church, and, if so, his enemies can expect no other than to be destroyed. Even those that slight him, that stumble at him, and are offended in him, *shall be broken* — it will be their ruin; but as to those that not only reject him, but hate and persecute him, as the Jews did, he will fall upon them and crush them to pieces — will *grind them to powder*. The condemnation of spiteful persecutors will be much sorer than that of careless unbelievers.

Lastly, We are told how the chief priests and scribes were exasperated by this parable (v. 19): *They perceived that he had spoken this parable against them; and so he had*. A guilty conscience needs no accuser; but they, instead of yielding to the convictions of conscience, fell into a rage at him who awakened that sleeping lion in their bosoms, and *sought to lay hands on him*. Their corruptions rebelled against their convictions, and got

the victory. And it was not because they had any fear of God or of his wrath before their eyes, but only because they *feared the people*, that they did not now fly in his face, and take him by the throat. They were just ready to make his words good: *This is the heir, come let us kill him*. Note, When the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil, the fairest warnings both of the sin they are about to commit and of the consequences of it make no impression upon them. Christ tells them that instead of *kissing the Son of God* they would *kill him*, upon which they should have said, *What, is thy servant a dog?* But they do, in effect, say this: “And so we will; have at him now.” And, though they deprecate the punishment of the sin, in the next breath they are projecting the commission of it.

◀LUKE 20:20-26

THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST NONPLUSSED

We have here Christ's evading a snare which his enemies laid for him, by proposing a question to him about tribute. We had this passage before, both in Matthew and Mark. Here is,

I. The mischief designed him, and that is more fully related here than before. The plot was to *deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor*, v. 20. They could not themselves put him to death by course of law, nor otherwise than by a *popular tumult*, which they could not depend upon; and, since they could not be his judges, they would willingly condescend to be his prosecutors and accusers, and would themselves *inform* against him. They hoped to gain their point, if they could but incense the governor against him. Note, It has been the common artifice of persecuting church-rulers to make the secular powers the tools of their malice, and oblige the *kings of the earth to do* their drudgery, who, if they had not been instigated, would have let their neighbours live quietly by them, as Pilate did Christ till the chief priests and the scribes presented Christ to him. But thus Christ's word must be fulfilled by their cursed politics, that he should be *delivered into the hands of the Gentiles*.

II. The persons they employed. Matthew and Mark told us that they were disciples of the Pharisees, with some Herodians. Here it is added, They

were *spies, who should feign themselves just men*. Note, It is no new thing for *bad men* to feign themselves *just men*, and to cover the most wicked projects with the most specious and plausible pretences. The devil can *transform himself into an angel of light*, and a Pharisee appear in the garb, and speak the language, of a disciple of Christ. A spy must go in disguise. These spies must take on them to have a value for Christ's judgment, and to depend upon it as an oracle, and therefore must desire his advice in a case of conscience. Note, Ministers are concerned to stand upon their guard against some that feign themselves to be *just men*, and to be *wise as serpents* when they are in the midst of a *generation of vipers and scorpions*.

III. The question they proposed, with which they hoped to ensnare him.

1. Their preface is very courtly: *Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly*, v. 21. Thus they thought to flatter him into an incautious freedom and openness with them, and so to gain their point. They that are proud, and love to be commended, will be brought to do any thing for those that will but flatter them, and speak kindly to them; but they were much mistaken who thought thus to impose upon the humble Jesus. He was not pleased with the testimony of such hypocrites, nor thought himself honoured by it. It is true that he *accepts not the person of any*, but it is as true that he knows the hearts of all, and knew theirs, and the *seven abominations* that were there, though they *spoke fair*. It was certain that he *taught the way of God truly*; but he knew that they were unworthy to be taught by him, who came to *take hold of his words*, not to be *taken hold of* by them.

2. Their case is very nice: “Is it lawful *for us*” (this is added here in Luke) “*to give tribute to Caesar* — for us Jews, us the free-born seed of Abraham, us that pay the Lord's tribute, may give tribute to Caesar?” Their pride and covetousness made them loth to pay taxes, and then they would have it a question whether it was lawful or no. Now if Christ should say that *it was lawful* the people would take it ill, for they expected that he who set up to be the Messiah should in the first place free them from the Roman yoke, and stand by them in denying tribute to Caesar. But if he should say that *it was not lawful*, as they expected he would (for if he had not been of that mind they thought he could not have been so much the darling of the people as he was), then they should have something to accuse him of to the governor, which was what they wanted.

IV. His evading the snare which they laid for him: *He perceived their craftiness*, v. 23. Note, Those that are most crafty in their designs against Christ and his gospel cannot with all their art conceal them from his cognizance. He can see through the most politic disguises, and so break through the most dangerous snare; for *surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird*. He did not give them a direct answer, but reprov'd them for offering to impose upon him — *Why tempt ye me?* and called for a *piece of money*, current money with the merchants — *Show me a penny*; and asked them whose money it was, whose stamp it bore, who coined it. They owned, “It is Caesar’s money.” “Why them,” saith Christ, “you should first have asked whether it was lawful to *pay* and *receive* Caesar’s money among yourselves, and to admit that to be the instrument of your commerce. But, having granted this by a common consent, you are concluded by your own act, and, no doubt, you ought to give tribute to him who furnished you with this convenience for your trade, protects you in it, and lends you the sanction of his authority for the value of your money. You must therefore *render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s*. In civil things you ought to submit to the civil powers, and so, if Caesar protects you in your civil rights by laws and the administration of justice, you ought to *pay him tribute*; but in sacred things God only is your King. You are not bound to be of Caesar’s religion; you must *render to God the things that are God’s*, must worship and adore him only, and not any golden image that Caesar sets up;” and we must worship and adore him in such way as he had appointed, and not according to the inventions of Caesar. It is God only that has authority to say *My son, give me thy heart*.

V. The confusion they were hereby put into, v. 26.

- 1.** The snare is broken; *They could not take hold of his words before the people*. They could not fasten upon any thing wherewith to incense either the governor or the people against him.
- 2.** Christ is honoured; even the wrath of man is made to praise him. They *marvelled at his answer*, it was so discreet and unexceptionable, and such an evidence of that wisdom and sincerity which make the face to shine.
- 3.** Their mouths are stopped; they *held their peace*. They had nothing to object, and durst ask him nothing else, lest he should shame and expose them.

THE CAVIL OF THE SADDUCEES

This discourse with the Sadducees we had before, just as it is here, only that the description Christ gives of the future state is somewhat more full and large here. Observe here,

I. In every age there have been men of corrupt minds, that have endeavoured to subvert the fundamental principles of revealed religion. As there are deists now, who call themselves *free*-thinkers, but are really *false*-thinkers; so there were Sadducees in our Saviour's time, who bantered the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, though they were plainly revealed in the Old Testament, and were articles of the Jewish faith. The Sadducees deny that *there is any resurrection, any future state*, so *anastasis* may signify; not only no return of the body *to life*, but no continuance of the soul *in life*, no world of spirits, no state of recompence and retribution for what was done in the body. Take away this, and all religion falls to the ground.

II. It is common for those that design to undermine any truth of God to perplex it, and load it with difficulties. So these Sadducees did; when they would weaken people's faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, they put a question upon the supposition of it, which they thought could not be answered either way to satisfaction. The case perhaps was matter of fact, at least it might be so, of a woman that had *seven husbands*. Now in the resurrection *whose wife shall she be?* whereas it was not at all material whose she was, for when death puts an end to that relation it is not to be resumed.

III. There is a great deal of difference between the state of the children of men on earth and that of the children of God in heaven, a vast unlikeness between *this world* and *that world*; and we wrong ourselves, and wrong the truth of Christ, when we form our notions of that world of spirits by our present enjoyments in this world of sense.

1. The children of men in this world *marry, and are given in marriage, hyioi tou aionos toutou* — *the children of this age, this generation*, both good and bad, marry themselves and give their children in marriage. Much of our business in this world is to raise and build up families, and to

provide for them. Much of our pleasure in this world is in our relations, our wives and children; nature inclines to it. Marriage is instituted for the comfort of human life, here in this state where we carry bodies about with us. It is likewise a remedy against fornication, that natural desires might not become brutal, but be under direction and control. The *children of this world* are dying and going off the stage, and *therefore* they marry and give their children in marriage, that they may furnish the world of mankind with needful recruits, that as one generation passeth away another may come, and that they may have some of their own offspring to leave the fruit of their labours to, especially that the chosen of God in future ages may be introduced, for it is a *godly seed* that is sought by *marriage* (^{<4025>}Malachi 2:15), a seed to serve the Lord, that shall be a *generation to him*.

2. The world to come is quite another thing; it is called *that world*, by way of emphasis and eminency. Note, There are more worlds than one; a present visible world, and a future invisible world; and it is the concern of every one of us to compare worlds, *this world* and *that world*, and give the preference in our thoughts and cares to that which deserves them. Now observe,

(1.) Who shall be the inhabitants of *that world*: They that shall be *accounted worthy to obtain it*, that is, that are interested in *Christ's merit*, who *purchased it for us*, and have a holy *meetness* for it wrought in them by the Spirit, whose business it is to prepare us for it. They have not a *legal* worthiness, upon account of any thing in them or done by them, but an *evangelical* worthiness, upon account of the inestimable price which Christ paid for the *redemption of the purchased possession*. It is a worthiness imputed by which we are glorified, as well as righteousness imputed by which we are justified; *kataxiouthentes*, they are *made agreeable to that world*. The disagreeableness that there is in the corrupt nature is taken away, and the dispositions of the soul are by the grace of God conformed to that state. They are by grace made and *counted worthy to obtain that world*; it intimates some *difficulty* in reaching after it, and danger of coming short. We must *so run* as that we may obtain. They shall obtain the *resurrection from the dead*, that is, the blessed resurrection; for that of *condemnation* (as Christ calls it, ^{<4029>}John 5:29), is rather a resurrection *to death*, a second death, an eternal death, than *from death*.

(2.) What shall be the happy state of the inhabitants of that world we cannot express or conceive, ⁴¹⁹1 Corinthians 2:9. See what Christ here says of it.

[1.] They *neither marry nor are given in marriage*. Those that have entered into the joy of their Lord are entirely taken up with that, and need not the joy of the bridegroom in his bride. The love in that world of love is all seraphic, and such as eclipses and loses the purest and most pleasing loves we entertain ourselves with in this world of sense. Where the body itself shall be a spiritual body, the delights of sense will all be banished; and where there is a perfection of holiness there is no occasion for marriage as a preservative from sin. Into the *new Jerusalem* there enters nothing that defiles.

[2.] They cannot *die any more*; and this comes in as a reason why they do not *marry*. In this dying world there must be marriage, in order to the filling up of the vacancies made by death; but, where there are no burials, there is no need of weddings. This crowns the comfort of that world that there is no more death there, which sullies all the beauty, and damps all the comforts, of this world. Here death reigns, but thence it is for ever excluded.

[3.] They are *equal unto the angels*. In the other evangelists it was said, They are *as the angels* — *os angeloï*, but here they are said to be *equal to the angels*, *isangeloi* — *angels' peers*; they have a glory and bliss no way inferior to that of the holy angels. They shall see the same sight, be employed in the same work, and share in the same joys, with the holy angels. Saints, when they come to heaven, shall be *naturalized*, and, though by nature strangers, yet, having *obtained this freedom* with a *great sum*, which Christ paid for them, they have in all respects equal privileges with them that were free-born, the angels that are the natives and aborigines of that country. They shall be companions with the angels, and converse with those blessed spirits that love them dearly, and with an innumerable company, to whom they are now come in faith, hope, and love.

[4.] They are *the children of God*, and so they are as the angels, who are called the *sons of God*. In the *inheritance of sons*, the *adoption of sons* will be completed. Hence believers are said to *wait for the adoption*, even the *redemption of the body*, ⁴¹⁹Romans 8:23. For till the body is redeemed from the grave the adoption is not completed. *Now are we the sons of*

God, ^{<ART>}1 John 3:2. We have the nature and disposition of sons, but that will not be *perfected* till we come to heaven.

[5.] They are the *children of the resurrection*, that is, they are made capable of the employments and enjoyments of the future state; they are *born to that world*, belong to that family, had their education for it here, and shall there have their inheritance in it. They are the *children of God*, being the *children of the resurrection*. Note, God owns those only for his children that are the children of the resurrection, that are born from above, are allied to the world of spirits, and prepared for that world, the children of that family.

IV. It is an undoubted truth that there is another life after this, and there were eminent discoveries made of this truth in the early ages of the church (v. 37, 38): *Moses showed this, as it was shown to Moses at the bush*, and he hath shown it to us, when *he calleth the Lord*, as the Lord calleth himself, the *God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were then *dead* as to our world; they had departed out of it many years before, and their bodies were turned into dust in the cave of Machpelah; how then could God say, not *I was*, but *I am* the *God or Abraham*? It is absurd that the living God and Fountain of life should continue related to them as their God, if there were no more of them in being than what lay in that cave, undistinguished from common dust. We must therefore conclude that they were then in being in another world; for *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*. Luke here adds, *For all live unto him*, that is, all who, like them, are true believers; though they are dead, yet they *do live*; their souls, which *return to God who gave them* (^{<ART>}Ecclesiastes 12:7), live to him as the Father of spirits: and their bodies shall live again at the end of time by the power of God; for he calleth things that are not as though they were, because he is the God that *quickens the dead*, ^{<ART>}Romans 4:17. But there is more in it yet; when God called himself *the God* of these patriarchs, he meant that he was their felicity and portion, a *God all-sufficient to them* (^{<ART>}Genesis 17:1), their *exceeding great reward*, ^{<ART>}Genesis 15:1. Now it is plain by their history that he never did that for them in this world which would answer the *true intent* and *full extent* of that great undertaking, and therefore there must be another life after this, in which he will do that for them that will amount to a *discharge in full* of that promise — that he would be to them a God, which he is able to do, for *all live to him*, and he has wherewithal to make every soul happy that lives to him; enough for *all*, enough for *each*.

LUKE 20:39-47

THE SCRIBES CONFOUNDED

The scribes were *students* in the law, and *expositors* of it to the people, men in reputation for wisdom and honour, but the generality of them were enemies to Christ and his gospel. Now here we have some of them attending him, and four things we have in these verses concerning them, which we had before: —

I. We have them here commending the reply which Christ made to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection: *Certain of the scribes said, Master, thou hast well said*, v. 39. Christ had the testimony of his adversaries that he said well; and *therefore* the scribes were his enemies because he would not *conform* to the traditions of the elders, but yet when he vindicated the fundamental practices of religion, and appeared in the defence of them, even the scribes commended his performance, and owned that he said well. Many that call themselves Christians come short even of this spirit.

II. We have them here struck with an awe of Christ, and of his wisdom and authority (v. 40): *They durst not ask him any questions at all*, because they say that he was too hard for all that contended with him. His own disciples, though weak, yet, being willing to receive his doctrine, durst *ask him any question*; but the Sadducees, who contradicted and cavilled at his doctrine, durst ask him none.

III. We have them here *puzzled* and run aground with a question concerning the Messiah, v. 41. It was plain by many scriptures that Christ was to be the *Son of David*; even the blind man knew this (²⁸⁹ Luke 18:39); and yet it was plain that David called the Messiah *his Lord* (v. 42, 44), his owner, and ruler, and benefactor: *The Lord said to my Lord*. God said it to the Messiah, (³¹⁰ Psalm 110:1. Now if he be *his Son*, why doth he call him *his Lord*? If he be *his Lord*, why do we call him *his Son*? This he left them to consider of, but they could not reconcile this seeming contradiction; thanks be to God, we can; that Christ, *as God*, was David's Lord, but Christ, *as man*, was David's Son. He was both the *root* and the *offspring of David*, (²⁸⁶ Revelation 22:16. By his *human nature* he was the *offspring of David*, a branch of his family; by his *divine nature* he was the

root of David, from whom he had his being and life, and all the supplies of grace.

IV. We have them here described in their black characters, and a public caution given to the disciples to take heed of them, v. 45-47. This we had, just as it is here, ^{<4128>}Mark 12:38, and more largely Matthew 23. Christ bids his disciples *beware of the scribes*, that is,

1. “Take heed of being drawn *into sin* by them, of learning their way, and going into their measures; beware of such a spirit as they are governed by. Be not you such in the Christian church as they are in the Jewish church.”
2. “Take heed of being *brought into trouble* by them,” in the same sense that he had said (^{<4117>}Matthew 10:17), “*Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils*; beware of the scribes, for they will do so. Beware of them, for,”

(1.) “They are *proud and haughty*. They *desire* to walk about the streets in *long robes*, as those that are above business (for men of business went with their *loins girt up*), and as those that take state, and take place.” *Cedant arma togae* — *Let arms yield to the gown*. They loved in their hearts to have people make their obeisance to them *in the markets*, that many might see what respect was paid them; and were very proud of the precedency that was given them in all places of concourse. They *loved the highest seats in the synagogues* and *the chief rooms at feasts*, and, when they were placed in them, looked upon themselves with great conceit and upon all about them with great contempt. *I sit as a queen*.

(2.) “They are *covetous and oppressive*, and make their religion a cloak and cover for crime.” They *devour widows' houses*, get their estates into their hands, and then by some trick or other make them their own, or they live upon them, and eat up what they have; and *widows* are an easy prey to them, because they are apt to be deluded by their specious pretences: *for a show they make long prayers*, perhaps long prayers with the widows when they are in sorrow, as if they had not only a *piteous* but a *pious* concern for them, and thus endeavour to ingratiate themselves with them, and get their money and effects into their hands. Such devout men may surely be trusted with *untold gold*; but they will give such an account of it as they think fit.

Christ reads them their doom in a few words: *These shall receive a more abundant judgment*, a double damnation, both for their abuse of the poor widows, whose houses they devoured, and for their abuse of religion, and particularly of prayer, which they had made use of as a pretence for the more plausible and effectual carrying on of their worldly and wicked projects; for *dissembled piety is double iniquity*.