

CHAPTER 6

In this chapter we have,

- I. The miracle of the loaves (v. 1-14).
- II. Christ's walking upon the water (v. 15-21).
- III. The people's flocking after him to Capernaum (v. 22-25).
- IV. His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproofs them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food (v. 26, 27), showing them how they must labour for spiritual food (v. 28, 29), and what that spiritual food is (v. 30-59).
- V. Their discontent at what he said, and the reproof he gave them for it (v. 60-65).
- VI. The apostasy of many from him, and his discourse with his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion (v. 66-71).

JOHN 6:1-14

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, which miracle is in *this* respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of *Christ's life* that is recorded by all the four evangelists. John, who does not usually relate what had been recorded by those who wrote before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it. Observe,

- I. The *place* and *time* where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, nobody knows where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be enquired into.
1. The country that Christ was in (v. 1): *He went over the sea of Galilee*, called elsewhere *the lake of Gennesareth*, here *the sea of Tiberias*, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called

so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and probably had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over cross this inland sea, but made a *coasting* voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God to choose to go *by water*, when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we might go *by land*; for Christ never *tempted the Lord his God*, ^{<4017>}Matthew 4:7.

2. The company that he was attended with: *A great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles*, v. 2. Note,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus, while he went about *doing good*, lived continually in a *crowd*, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of a *hurry* of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to *enjoy ourselves* when we come to that world where we shall *enjoy God*.

(2.) Christ's miracles drew many *after him* that were not effectually drawn *to him*. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ's posting himself advantageously to entertain them (v. 3): *He went up into a mountain*, and there he *sat with his disciples*, that he might the more conveniently be seen and heard by the multitude that crowded after him; this was a *natural* pulpit, and not, like Ezra's, made *for the purpose*. Christ was now driven to be a *field preacher*; but his word was never the worse, nor the less acceptable, for that, to those who knew how to value it, who followed him still, not only when he *went out* to a desert place, but when he *went up* to a mountain, though *up-hill* be *against heart*. He *sat* there, as teachers do *in cathedra* — *in the chair of instruction*. He did not sit at ease, not sit in state, yet he sat as one having authority, sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him; whoever would might come, and find him there. He sat *with his disciples*; he condescended to take them to *sit with him*, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to *sit with him*, ^{<4016>}Ephesians 2:6.

4. The time when it was. The first words, *After those things*, do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter, for it was a considerable time after, and they signify no more than in process of time; but we are told (v. 4) that it was *when the passover was nigh*, which is here noted,

(1.) Because, perhaps, that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem, to keep the feast.

(2.) Because it was a custom with the Jews religiously to observe the approach of the passover *thirty days* before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before they had it in their eye, repaired the roads, mended bridges, if there was occasion, and discoursed of the passover and the institution of it.

(3.) Because, perhaps, the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities should quicken us to improve them with double diligence; and, when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the word of Christ.

II. The miracle itself. And here observe,

1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him (v. 5): He *lifted up his eyes*, and *saw a great company come to him*, poor, mean, ordinary people, no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country; yet Christ showed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare, to teach us to *condescend to those of low estate*, and not to *set those with the dogs of our flock* whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The enquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had seen all his miracles, and particularly that of his turning water into wine, and therefore it might be expected that he should have said, "Lord, if thou wilt, it is easy to thee to feed them all." Those that, like Israel, have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in the benefit of them, are inexcusable if they say, *Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?* Philip was of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which town Christ now was, and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision at the best hand; and probably much of the company was known to him, and he was concerned for them. Now Christ asked, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*

(1.) He takes it for granted that they must all *eat with him*. One would think that when he had taught and healed them he had done his part; and that now they should rather have been contriving how to treat him and his disciples, for some of the people were probably *rich*, and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were *poor*; yet he is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's spiritual gifts, instead of *paying* for them, shall be *paid* for their acceptance of them. Christ, having fed their souls with the bread of life, feeds their bodies also with *food convenient*, to show that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread, and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, ^{<3015>}James 2:15, 16.

(2.) His enquiry is, *Whence shall we buy bread?* One would think, considering his poverty, that he should rather have asked, *Where shall we have money to buy for them?* But he will rather lay out all he has than they shall want. He will buy to give, and we must *labour*, that we may give, ^{<4008>}Ephesians 4:28.

3. The design of this enquiry; it was only to try the faith of Philip, *for he himself knew what he would do*, v. 6. Note,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus is never at a loss in his counsels; but, how difficult soever the case is, he knows what he has to do and what course he will take, ^{<4158>}Acts 15:18. *He knows the thoughts he has towards his people* (^{<2911>}Jeremiah 29:11) and is never at uncertainty; when we know not, he *himself knows what he will do*.

(2.) When Christ is pleased to *puzzle* his people, it is only with a design to *prove* them. The question put Philip to a nonplus, yet Christ proposed it, to try whether he would say, “Lord, if thou wilt exert thy power for them, we need not buy bread.”

4. Philip's answer to this question: “*Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient*, v. 7. Master, it is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we afford to lay out so much money; ask Judas, who carries the bag.” Two hundred pence of *their* money amount to about six pounds of *ours*, and, if they lay out all that at once, it will exhaust their fund, and break them, and they must starve themselves. Grotius computes that *two hundred pennyworth of bread* would scarcely reach to *two thousand*, but Philip would go as near hand as he could, would have *every one to take a little*; and nature, we say,

is content with a little. See the weakness of Philip's faith, that in this strait, as if the Master of the family had been an *ordinary person*, he looked for supply only in an *ordinary way*. Christ might now have said to him, as he did afterwards, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Or, as God to Moses in a like case, *Is the Lord's hand waxen short?* We are apt thus to distrust God's power when visible and ordinary means fail, that is, to trust him no further than we can see him.

5. The information which Christ received from another of his disciples concerning the provision they had. It was Andrew, here said to be *Simon Peter's brother*; though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterwards so far outshone him that he is described by his relation to Peter: he acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and in this we may see,

(1.) The *strength* of his *love* to those for whom he saw his Master concerned, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though he knew not but they might want themselves, and any one would have said, *Charity begins at home*. He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the master was, but honestly gives in an account of all they had. There is a lad here, *paidarion* — *a little lad*, probably one that used to follow this company, as settlers do the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoken what he had for themselves; and it was *five barley-loaves*, and two small fishes. Here,

[1.] The provision was *coarse and ordinary*; they were *barley loaves*. Canaan was a *land of wheat* (^{<1788>}Deuteronomy 8:8); its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat (^{<1816>}Psalms 81:16), the kidneys of wheat (^{<1524>}Deuteronomy 32:14); yet Christ and his disciples were glad of *barley-bread*. It does not follow hence that we should tie ourselves to such coarse fare, and place religion in it (when God brings that which is finer to our hands, let us receive it, and be thankful); but it does follow that therefore we must not be *desirous of dainties* (^{<1278>}Psalms 23:3); nor murmur if we be reduced to coarse fare, but be content and thankful, and well reconciled to it; barley-bread is what Christ *had*, and better than we *deserve*. Nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, nor look upon it with contempt, remembering how Christ was provided for.

[2.] It was but *short and scanty*; there were but *five loaves*, and those so small that one little lad carried them all; and we find (^{<1242>}2 Kings 4:42, 43) that *twenty barley-loaves*, with some other provision to help out, would

not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those *small* ones (*dyo opsaria*), so small that one of them was but a morsel, *pisciculi assati*. I take the fish to have been *pickled*, or *soused*, for they had not fire to dress them with. The provision of *bread* was *little*, but that of *fish* was *less* in proportion to it, so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat before they could make a meal of this provision; but they were content with it. *Bread* is meat for our hunger; but of those that murmured for flesh it is said, *They asked meat for their lust*, ^{<4988>}Psalm 78:18. Well, Andrew was willing that the people should have this, as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

(2.) See here the *weakness* of his *faith* in that word, “*But what are they among so many?*” To offer this to such a multitude is but to mock them.” Philip and he had not that actual consideration of the power of Christ (of which they had had such large experience) which they should have had. Who fed the camp of Israel in the wilderness? He that could make *one man chase a thousand* could make one loaf feed a thousand.

6. The directions Christ gave the disciples to seat the guests (v. 10): “*Make the men sit down*, though you have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that.” This was like *sending providence to market*, and going to buy without money: Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe,

(1.) The furniture of the dining-room: *there was much grass in that place*, though a desert place; see how bountiful nature is, it *makes grass to grow upon the mountains*, ^{<4178>}Psalm 147:8. This grass was uneaten; God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching; the gospel brings other blessings along with it: *Then shall the earth yield her increase*, ^{<4506>}Psalm 67:6. This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious for those that must sit on the ground, and served them for cushions, or *beds* (as they called what they sat on at meat, ^{<4006>}Esther 1:6), and, considering what Christ says of the grass of the field (^{<4059>}Matthew 6:29, 30), these beds excelled those of Ahasuerus: nature's pomp is the most glorious.

(2.) The number of the guests: *About five thousand*: a great entertainment, representing that of the gospel, which is a *feast for all nations* (^{<2306>}Isaiah 25:6), a feast for all *comers*.

7. The distribution of the provision, v. 11. Observe,

(1.) It was done with thanksgiving: *He gave thanks*. Note,

[1.] We ought to give thanks to God for our food, for it is a mercy to have it, and we have it from the hand of God, and must *receive it with thanksgiving*, ^{<500>}1 Timothy 4:4, 5. And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with *matter*, and give us occasion, for that excellent duty of thanksgiving.

[2.] Though our provision be coarse and scanty, though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have.

(2.) It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, v. 11. Note,

[1.] All our comforts come to us *originally* from the hand of Christ; whoever *brings* them, it is he that *sends* them, he distributes to those who distribute to us.

[2.] In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministration of his disciples; they are the servitors at Christ's table, or rather rulers in his household, to give to *every one his portion of meat in due season*.

(3.) It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had *as much as they would*; not a short allowance, but a full meal; and considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to have been, above common food, it was not a little that served them when they ate as much as they would and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life he does not stint, ^{<380>}Psalm 81:10. There were but *two small fishes*, and yet they had *of them too as much as they would*. He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. Those who call feeding upon fish *fasting* reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a *full feast*.

8. The care that was taken of the broken meat.

(1.) The orders Christ gave concerning it (v. 12): *When they were filled*, and every man had within him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ *said to the disciples*, the servants he employed, *Gather up the fragments*. Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of

any of God's good creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, *wilful waste only excepted*. It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, nor let it fall to the ground, to be trodden upon. *Qui panem contemnit in gravem incidit paupertatem* — *He who despises bread falls into the depths of poverty*, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be *charitable* must be *provident*. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men is wasted and lost if it be thrown to the brute-creatures. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard and lay up till all is laid out that ought to be, for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, “How much less should we lose God's word, or helps, or our time, or such greater mercies!”

(2.) The observance of these orders (v. 13): *They filled twelve baskets with the fragments*, which was an evidence not only of the *truth* of the miracle, that they were fed, not with fancy, but with real food (witness those remains), but of the *greatness* of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above. See how large the divine bounty is; it not only *fills* the cup, but makes it *run over*; bread enough, and to spare, in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repaid with interest for their willingness to part with what they had for public service; see ^{<4911>}2 Chronicles 31:10. The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves, when they have eaten a meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest; for it is a curse upon the wicked man (^{<8121>}Job 20:21) that *there shall none of his meat be left*.

III. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people who tasted of the benefit of it (v. 14): *They said, This is of a truth that prophet*. Note,

1. Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a *great prophet*, They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as *not knowing the*

law; but, it should seem, they knew more of him that is the *end of the law* than the Pharisees did.

2. The miracles which Christ wrought did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a teacher come from God, the great prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was he that should come. There were many who were convinced he was that prophet that should come into the world who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt unsanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that prophet, and yet to turn a deaf ear to him.

JOHN 6:15-21

CHRIST WALKS ON THE WATER

Here is,

I. Christ's retirement from the multitude.

1. Observe what induced him to retire; because he perceived that those who acknowledged him to be that prophet that should come into the world would come, and *take him by force, to make him a king*, v. 15. Now here we have an instance,

(1.) Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers; nothing would serve but they would make him *a king*. Now,

[1.] This was *an act of zeal* for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned to see so great a benefactor to the world so little esteemed in it; and therefore, since royal titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a king, knowing that the Messiah was to be a king; and if a prophet, like Moses, then a sovereign prince and lawgiver, like him; and, if they cannot set him up *upon the holy hill of Zion, a mountain* in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the royal dainties of heaven should, in return for his favour, make him *their king*, and set him upon the throne in their souls: let him that has *fed us rule us*.

But,

[2.] It was an *irregular* zeal; for *First*, It was grounded upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be *of this world*, and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his foot; such a king as this they would make him, which was as great a disparagement to his glory as it would be to lacquer gold or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for advancing it. *Secondly*, It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make *him* their king who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of *eating their bread in the sweat of their face*. *Thirdly*, It was intended to carry on a *secular* design; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, of which they were weary. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to *serve a turn*, ^{<518>}Romans 16:18. *Vix quaritur Jesus propter Jesum, sed propter aliud* — *Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake.* — Augustine. Nay, *Fourthly*, It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. *Fifthly*, It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him *by force*, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. Those that say *I am of Christ*, in opposition to those that are of Apollos and Cephas (so making Christ the head of a party), take him by force, to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.

(2.) Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that, when they would have made him a king, he *departed*; so far was he from countenancing the design that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony,

[1.] Against ambition and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more industrious to abscond than he was when they would make him a king. Let us not then covet to be the *idols of the crowd*, nor be *desirous of vainglory*.

[2.] Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears that he was no enemy to Caesar, nor would have his followers be so, but the *quiet in the land*; that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition, or looks *towards* it, and improve their interest only for their work's sake.

2. Observe *whither* he retired: *He departed again into a mountain, eis to oros* — into the mountain, the mountain where he had preached (v. 3), whence he came down into the plain, to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls; and *never less alone*, says the serious Christian, *than when alone*. Public services must not jostle out private devotions.

II. Here is the disciples' distress at sea. *They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord, for he raiseth the stormy wind,* ~~407~~ Psalm 17:23, 24. Apply this to these disciples.

1. Here is their *going down to the sea* in a ship (v. 16, 17): *When even was come*, and they had done their day's work, it was time to look homeward, and therefore they went aboard, and set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular direction from their Master, with design (as it should seem) to get them out of the way of the temptation of countenancing those that would have made him a king.

2. Here is the *stormy wind* arising and *fulfilling the word of God*. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them; and yet they were in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table; but after the sun-shine of comfort expect a storm.

(1.) *It was now dark*; this made the storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be.

(2.) *Jesus was not come to them*. When they were in that storm (~~408~~ Matthew 8:23, etc.) *Jesus was with them*; but now their beloved had

withdrawn himself, and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians.

(3.) The *sea arose by reason of a great wind*. It was calm and fair when they put to sea (they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm), but it arose when they were *at sea*. In times of tranquillity we must prepare for trouble, for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea. Though in a storm, and *in the dark*, they are no worse off than Christ's disciples were. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light, and of the day.

3. Here is Christ's seasonable approach to them when they were in this peril, v. 19. *They had rowed* (being forced by the contrary winds to betake themselves to their oars) *about twenty-five or thirty furlongs*. The Holy Spirit that indicted this could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely, but this, being only circumstantial, is left to be expressed according to the conjecture of the penman. And, when they were got off a good way at sea, they *see Jesus walking on the sea*. See here,

(1.) The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to control and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked *upon* the water as upon dry land, which was more than Moses's dividing the water and walking *through* the water.

(2.) The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress: *He drew nigh to the ship; for therefore he walked upon the water, as he rides upon the heavens, for the help of his people,* ~~(v. 26)~~ Deuteronomy 33:26. He will not leave them comfortless when they seem to be *tossed with tempests and not comforted*. When they are banished (as John) into remote places, or shut up (as Paul and Silas) in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them.

(3.) The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. They *were afraid*, more afraid of an apparition (for so they supposed him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note,

[1.] Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy.

[2.] Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often so misconstrued as to become the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only *worse frightened than hurt*, but *then* most frightened when we are ready to be *helped*. But, when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word (v. 20), *It is I, be not afraid!* Nothing is more powerful to convince sinners than that word, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*; nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, "*I am Jesus whom thou lovest*; it is I that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of me, nor of the storm." When trouble is nigh Christ is nigh.

4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, v. 17.

(1.) They *welcomed* Christ into the ship; they *willingly received him*. Note, Christ's absenting himself for a time is but so much the more to *endear himself*, at his return, to his disciples, who value his presence above any thing; see ^{20th} Song of Solomon 3:4.

(2.) Christ brought them safely to the shore: *Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went*. Note,

[1.] The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have *embarked* themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; *tossed* at sea, but not *lost*; cast down, but not destroyed; the bush burning, but not consumed.

[2.] The power and presence of the church's King shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was *done suddenly*. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, that we shall be at shore shortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware.

CHRIST'S DISCOURSE WITH THE MULTITUDE

In these verses we have,

I. The careful enquiry which the people made after Christ, v. 23, 24. They saw the disciples go to sea; they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that he desired to be private for some time; but, their hearts being set upon *making him a king*, they way-laid his return, and *the day following*, the hot fit of their zeal still continuing,

1. They were *much at a loss* for him. He was gone, and they knew not what was become of him. They saw there was *no boat there* but that in which the disciples went off, Providence so ordering it for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also that *Jesus did not go with his disciples*, but that they went off alone, and left him among *them on their side* of the water. Note, Those that would find Christ must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence, that they may steer accordingly.

2. They were very *industrious in seeking* him. They searched the places thereabouts, and when *they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples* (neither he nor any one that could give tidings of him), they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those that would find Christ must accomplish a diligent search, must seek till they find, must go from sea to sea, to seek the word of God, rather than live without it; and those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life should have their souls carried out in earnest desires towards him. Much would have more, in communion with Christ. Now,

(1.) They resolved to go to Capernaum in quest of him. There were his head-quarters, where he usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone; and they knew he would not be long absent from *them*. Those that would find Christ must go forth by the footsteps of the flock.

(2.) Providence favoured them with an opportunity of going thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for there *came other boats from Tiberias*, which lay further off upon the same shore, *nigh*, though not so nigh to the

place where they did *eat bread*, in which they might soon make a trip to Capernaum, and probably the boats were bound for that port. Note, Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and seek opportunities of converse with him, are commonly owned and assisted by Providence in those pursuits. The evangelist, having occasion to mention their eating the *multiplied* bread, adds, *After that the Lord had given thanks*, v. 11. So much were the disciples affected with their Master's giving thanks that they could never forget the impressions made upon them by it, but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. This was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable; their hearts burned within them.

3. They laid hold of the opportunity that offered itself, and *they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus*. They did not defer, in hopes to see him again *on this side the water*; but their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crushed, and come to nothing, for want of being *prosecuted in time*. They came to Capernaum, and, for aught that appears, these unsound hypocritical followers of Christ had a *calm* and *pleasant* passage, while his sincere disciples had a *rough* and *stormy* one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They *came, seeking Jesus*. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and, as here, to *compass* sea and land to seek and serve him who came from heaven to earth to seek and save us.

II. The success of this enquiry: *They found him on the other side of the sea*, v. 25. Note, Christ will be found of those that seek him, first or last; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay, to go *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. These people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not actuated by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have *no more* to show for their love to Christ than their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this *eager crowd*. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him. If we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet, while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them from our communion, much less when we do not know their hearts.

III. The question they put to him when they found him: *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* It should seem by v. 59 that they found him *in the synagogue*. They knew this was the likeliest place to seek Christ in, for it was *his custom* to attend public assemblies for religious worship, ^{<406>}Luke 4:16. Note, Christ must be sought, and will be found, in the congregations of his people and in the administration of his ordinances; public worship is what Christ chooses to own and grace with his presence and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him was, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of this, but call him Rabbi, their teacher. Their enquiry refers not only to the *time*, but to the *manner*, of his conveying himself thither; not only *When*, but, “*How*, camest thou thither?” for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

IV. The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question (what was it to them *when* and *how* he came thither?) but such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the *corrupt principle* they acted from in following him (v. 26): “*Verily, verily, I say unto you*, I that search the heart, and know what is in man, I the Amen, the faithful witness, ^{<404>}Revelation 3:14, 15. *You seek me*; that is well, but it is not from a good principle.” Christ knows not only *what* we do, but *why* we do it. These followed Christ,

(1.) Not for his doctrine's sake: *Not because you saw the miracles*. The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine; Nicodemus sought for him for the sake of them (^{<402>}John 3:2), and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these were so stupid and mindless that they never considered this. But,

(2.) It was for their own bellies' sake: *Because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled*; not because he taught them, but because he fed them. He had given them,

[1.] A full meal's meat: *They did eat, and were filled*; and some of them perhaps were so poor that they had not known of a long time before now what it was to have enough, to eat and leave.

[2.] A *dainty* meal's meat; it is probable that, as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food more than usually pleasant.

[3.] A *cheap* meal's meat, that cost them nothing; no reckoning was brought in. Note, Many follow Christ for *loaves*, and not for *love*. Thus those do who aim at secular advantage in their profession of religion, and follow it because by this craft they get their preferments. *Quantis profuit nobis haec fabula de Christo* — *This fable respecting Christ, what a gainful concern we have made of it!* said one of the popes. These people *complimented* Christ with Rabbi, and showed him great respect, yet he told them thus faithfully of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be *bribed* by fair words to cry *peace* to all that cry *rabbi* to them, but to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them.

2. He directs them to better principles (v. 27): *Labour for that meat which endures to everlasting life*. With the woman of Samaria he had discoursed of spiritual things under the similitude of *water*; here he speaks of them under the similitude of *meat*, taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is,

(1.) To moderate our worldly pursuits: *Labour not for the meat that perishes*. This does not forbid honest labour for food convenient, ~~SRD~~ 2 Thessalonians 3:12. But we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note,

[1.] The things of the world are *meat that perishes*. Worldly wealth, honour, and pleasure, are *meat*; they *feed the fancy* (and many times this is all) and *fill the belly*. These are things which mean *hunger* after as *meat*, and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart, as long as they last, may make a shift to live upon; but they *perish*, are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them and lose them when they die.

[2.] It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labour after them. *First*, We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, *for this perishing meat*, with an eye to this; we must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at *secular advantages* in *sacred exercises*. *Secondly*, We must not at all *labour* for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our *chief good*, nor make our care and pains

about them our *chief business*; not seek those things *first* and *most*,
✠ Proverbs 23:4, 5.

(2.) To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits: “Bestow your pains to better purpose, and *labour for that meat* which belongs to the soul,” of which he shows,

[1.] That it is *unspeakably desirable*: It is meat which *endures to everlasting life*; it is a happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our preservative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.

[2.] It is *undoubtedly attainable*. Shall all the treasures of the world be ransacked, and all the fruits of the earth gathered together, to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No, *The sea saith, It is not in me*, among all the treasures hidden in the sand. *It cannot be gotten for gold*; but it is that *which the Son of man shall give*; *hen dosei*, either which *meat*, or which *life*, the Son of man shall give. Observe here, *First*, Who gives this meat: the *Son of man*, the great householder and master of the stores, who is entrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God among men, and the dispensation of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it and preparatives for it. We are told to *labour for it*, as if it were to be got by our own industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration, as the heathen said, *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt — The gods sell all advantages to the industrious*. But when we have laboured ever so much for it, we have not merited it as our *hire*, but the Son of man *gives it*. And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement that he who has the giving of it is the *Son of man*, for then we may hope the *sons of men* that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it. *Secondly*, What authority he has to give it; for *him has God the Father sealed, touton gar ho Pater esphragisen, ho Theos — for him the Father has sealed* (proved and evidenced) *to be God*; so some read it; he has declared him to be the Son of God with power. He has *sealed him*, that is, has given him full authority to deal between God and man, as God's *ambassador* to man and man's *intercessor* with God, and has proved his commission by miracles. Having given him *authority*, he has given us *assurance* of it; having entrusted him with *unlimited powers*, he has satisfied us with *undoubted proofs* of them; so that as he might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so

may we in our resignations to him. *God the Father* sealed him with the Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony he bore to him in signs and wonders. Divine revelation is perfected in him, in him the *vision and prophecy is sealed up* (~~2024~~ Daniel 9:24), to him all believers *seal* that he is true (~~483~~ John 3:33), and in him they are all *sealed*, ~~402~~ 2 Corinthians 1:22.

~~483~~ JOHN 6:28-59

CHRIST THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Whether this conference was with the Capernaïtes, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with those who came from the other side of the sea, is not certain nor material; however, it is an instance of Christ's condescension that he gave them leave to ask him questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront, no, not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach must be swift to hear, and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even impertinent unprofitable questions, thence to take occasion to answer in that which is profitable, that the question may be rejected, but not the request. Now,

I. Christ having told them that *they must work for the meat* he spoke of, must *labour* for it, they enquire what work they must do, and he answers them, v. 28, 29.

1. Their *enquiry* was *pertinent* enough (v. 28): *What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?* Some understand it as a pert question: “What works of God can we do more and better than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses?” But I rather take it as a humble serious question, showing them to be, at least for the present, in a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty; and I imagine that those who asked this question, How and What (v. 30), and made the request (v. 34), were not the same persons with those that murmured (v. 41, 42), and strove (v. 52), for those are expressly called *the Jews*, who came out of Judea (for those were strictly called Jews) to cavil, whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates that they were convinced that those who would obtain this everlasting meat,

(1.) Must aim to do something great. Those who *look high* in their expectations, and hope to enjoy the *glory of God*, must *aim high* in those endeavours, and study to *do the works of God*, works which he requires and will accept, *works of God*, distinguished from the works of worldly men in their worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the words of God, but we must do the works of God.

(2.) Must be willing to do any thing: *What shall we do?* Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou shalt appoint, though ever so displeasing to flesh and blood, ⁴⁹⁶Acts 9:6.

2. Christ's answer was plain enough (v. 29): *This is the work of God that ye believe.* Note,

(1.) The work of faith is the work of God. They enquire after the *works* of God (in the plural number), being careful about *many things*; but Christ directs them to one work, which includes all, the one thing needful: that *you believe*, which supersedes all the works of the ceremonial law; the work which is necessary to the acceptance of all the other works, and which produces them, for without faith you cannot please God. It is *God's work*, for it is of his *working in us*, it subjects the soul to his working on us, and quickens the soul in working *for him*,

(2.) That faith is the work of God which closes with Christ, and relies upon him. It is to *believe on him* as one whom God *hath sent*, as God's commissioner in the great affair of peace between God and man, and as such to *rest* upon him, and *resign ourselves* to him. See ⁵⁴¹John 14:1.

II. Christ having told them that the *Son of man* would *give them this meat*, they enquire concerning him, and he answers their enquiry.

1. Their enquiry is after *a sign* (v. 30): *What sign showest thou?* Thus far they were right, that, since he required them to give him *credit*, he should produce his *credentials*, and make it out by miracle that he was *sent of God*. Moses having confirmed his mission by *signs*, it was requisite that Christ, who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in like manner confirm his: "*What dost thou work? What doest thou drive at? What lasting characters of a divine power does thou design to leave upon thy doctrine?*" But *herein* they missed it,

(1.) That they overlooked the many miracles which they had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant proof of his divine mission.

Is this a time of day to ask, “What sign showest thou?” especially at Capernaum, the *staple* of miracles, where he had done so *many mighty works, signs* so significant of his office and undertaking? Were not these very persons but the other day miraculously fed by him? None so blind as they that will not see; for they may be so blind as to question whether it be day or no, when the sun shines in their faces.

(2.) That they preferred the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought (v. 31): *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert*; and, to strengthen the objection, they quote a scripture for it: *He gave them bread from heaven* (taken from ^{402B}Psalm 78:24), *he gave them of the corn of heaven*. What a good use might be made of this story to which they here refer! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God (Nehemiah 19:20, 21), yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it.

[1.] Christ reprov'd them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bade them not set their hearts upon *meat which perisheth*; “Why,” say they, “*meat for the belly* was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert; and why should not we then labour for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us?”

[2.] Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and had given them that as one sign to prove him *sent of God*; but, under colour of *magnifying* the miracles of Moses, they tacitly *undervalue* this miracle of Christ, and *evade* the evidence of it. “Christ fed his thousands; but Moses his hundreds of thousands; Christ fed them but once, and then reprov'd those who followed him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and miracles were not their rarities, but their daily bread: Christ fed them with bread out of *the earth*, barley-bread, and fishes out of *the sea*; but Moses fed Israel with bread *from heaven*, angel's food.” Thus big did these Jews talk of the *manna* which *their fathers did eat*; but their fathers had slighted it as much as they did now the barley-loaves, and called *light bread*, ^{402C}Numbers 21:5. Thus apt are we to slight and overlook the appearances of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders of which *our fathers told us*. Suppose *this* miracle of Christ was outdone by that of Moses, yet there were other instances in which Christ's miracles outshone his; and, besides, all true miracles prove a divine

doctrine, though not equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were ever *diversified* according as the occasion did require. As much as the manna excelled the barley-loaves, so much, and much more, did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensation.

2. Here is Christ's reply to this enquiry, wherein,

(1.) He *rectifies* their *mistake* concerning the *typical* manna. It was true that their fathers did eat *manna* in the desert. But,

[1.] It was not Moses that gave it to them, nor were they obliged to him for it; he was but the instrument, and therefore they must look beyond him to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray to God for the *manna*; and he spoke unadvisedly when he said, *Must we fetch water out of the rock?* Moses gave them not either *that* bread or *that* water.

[2.] It was not given them, as they imagined, *from heaven*, from the highest heavens, but only from *the clouds*, and therefore not so much superior to that which had its rise from the earth as they thought. Because the scripture saith, *He gave them bread from heaven*, it does not follow that it was *heavenly bread*, or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding scripture language occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

(2.) He *informs* them concerning the *true* manna, of which that was a type: *But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven*; that which is truly and properly the *bread from heaven*, of which the manna was but a shadow and figure, is *now given*, not to *your fathers*, who are dead and gone, but to *you* of this present age, for whom the *better things were reserved*: he is *now giving* you that *bread from heaven*, which is *truly* so called. As much as the throne of God's glory is above the clouds of the air, so much does the *spiritual bread* of the everlasting gospel excel the *manna*. In calling God *his Father*, he proclaims himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a *Son*,
☞ Hebrews 3:5, 6.

III. Christ, having replied to their enquiries, takes further occasion from their objection concerning the *manna* to discourse of *himself* under the similitude of *bread*, and of *believing* under the similitude of *eating and drinking*; to which, together with his putting both together in the *eating* of

his flesh and drinking of his blood, and with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

1. Christ having spoken of *himself* as the great *gift of God*, and the *true bread* (v. 32), largely *explains* and *confirms* this, that we may rightly know him.

(1.) He here shows that he is the *true bread*; this he repeats again and again, v. 33, 35, 48-51. Observe,

[1.] That Christ is *bread* is that to the soul which bread is to the body, nourishes and supports the spiritual life (is the staff of it) as bread does the bodily life; *it is the staff of life*. The doctrines of the gospel concerning Christ — that he is the mediator between God and man, that he is our peace, our righteousness, our Redeemer; *by these things do men live*. Our bodies could better live without food than our souls without Christ. *Bread-corn is bruised* (~~2333~~ Isaiah 28:28), so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, the *house of bread*, and typified by the *show-bread*.

[2.] That he is the *bread of God* (v. 33), divine bread; it is he that is *of God* (v. 46), bread which my Father gives (v. 32), which he has made to be the food of our souls; the bread of God's family, his *children's bread*. The Levitical sacrifices are called the *bread of God* (~~4821~~ Leviticus 21:21, 22), and Christ is the great sacrifice; Christ, in his word and ordinances, the *feast upon the sacrifice*.

[3.] That he is the *bread of life* (v. 35, and again, v. 48), *that bread of life*, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, *Do this and live*, of which he might *eat and live*. Christ is the bread of life, for he is the fruit of the *tree of life*. *First*, He is the *living bread* (so he explains himself, v. 51): *I am the living bread*. Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourishes not but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is himself *living bread*, and nourishes by his own power. Manna was a dead thing; if kept but one night, it putrefied and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds, nor waxes old. The doctrine of Christ crucified is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. *Secondly*, *He gives life unto the world* (v. 33), spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The *manna*

did only reserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ *gives* life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the *life of the world*; none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to *put life* into the minds of men, principles productive of acceptable performances.

[4.] That he is the *bread which came down from heaven*; this is often repeated here, v. 33, 50, 51, 58. This denotes, *First*, The divinity of Christ's person. As God, he had a being in heaven, whence he came to take our nature upon him: *I came down from heaven*, whence we may infer his *antiquity*, he was in the beginning with God; his *ability*, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his *authority*, he came with a divine commission. *Secondly*, The divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He *comes*, not only *katabas* — *that came down* (v. 51), but *katabainoi* — *that comes down*; he is descending, denoting a constant communication of light, life, and love, from God to believers through Christ, as the *manna* descended daily; see ~~400~~ Ephesians 1:3. *Omnia desuper* — *All things from above*.

[5.] That he is *that bread* of which the *manna* was a type and figure (v. 58), *that bread*, the true bread, v. 32. As the rock that they drank of was Christ, so was the manna they ate of *spiritual bread*, ~~400~~ 1 Corinthians 10:3, 4. *Manna* was given to Israel; so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was *manna* enough for them all; so in Christ a fulness of grace for all believers; he that *gathers much* of this *manna* will have none to spare when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find that *he has no lack*. *Manna* was to be gathered in the morning; and those that would find Christ must *seek him early*. *Manna* was sweet, and, as the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* tells us (Wisd. 16:20), was agreeable to every palate; and to those that believe Christ is *precious*. Israel lived upon *manna* till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our life. There was a memorial of the *manna* preserved in the ark; so of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of souls.

(2.) He here shows what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, v. 38-40.

[1.] He assures us, in general, that he came from heaven upon his Father's business (v. 38), not *do his own will, but the will of him that sent him*. He

came from heaven, which bespeaks him an intelligent active being, who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great step downward, considering the glories of the world he came from and the calamities of the world he came to; we may well ask with wonder, “What moved him to such an expedition?” Here he tells that he came to do, not *his own will*, but the will of his Father; not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but those to whom he spoke suspected he might. “No,” saith he, “my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to *do the will of him that sent me*.” That is, *First*, Christ did not come into the world as a *private* person, that acts for himself only, but under a *public character*, to act for others as an ambassador, or plenipotentiary, authorized by a public commission; he came into the world as God's great agent and the world's great physician. It was not any private business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties no less considerable than the great Creator and the whole creation. *Secondly*, Christ, when he was in the world, did not carry on any *private* design, nor had any *separate interest* at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God and do good to men. He therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet; but, when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature which startled at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will as man into the will of God: *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*.

[2.] He acquaints us, in particular, with that will of the Father which he came to do; he here *declares the decree*, the instructions he was to pursue.

First, The *private instructions* given to Christ, that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the *covenant of redemption* between the Father and the Son (v. 38): “*This is the Father's will, who hath sent me; this is the charge I am entrusted with, that of all whom he hath given me I should lose none.*” Note,

1. There is a certain number of the children of men *given* by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise; given him for *an inheritance*, for a possession. Let him do all that for them which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to, eternal life, and then let him make his best of them. The Father might dispose of them as he pleased: as creatures, their lives and

beings were *derived from* him; as sinners, their lives and beings were *forfeited to him*. He might have sold them for the satisfaction of his justice, and delivered them *to the tormentors*; but he pitched upon them to be the monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

2. Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will *lose none* of those that were thus *given him* of the Father. The *many sons* whom he was to *bring to glory* shall all be forth-coming, and none of them missing, ^{<184>}Matthew 18:14. None of them shall be lost, for want of a sufficient grace to sanctify them. *If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever,* ^{<185>}Genesis 43:9.

3. Christ's undertaking for those that are given him extends to the resurrection of their bodies. *I will raise it up again at the last day*, which supposes all that goes before, but this is to crown and complete the undertaking. The body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it shall not be *lost*. The undertaking is not only that he shall *lose none*, no *person*, but that he shall *lose nothing*, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be re-united and gathered to Christ, that he may present them to the Father: *Behold I, and the children that thou has given me,* ^{<186>}Hebrews 2:13; ^{<187>}2 Timothy 1:12.

4. The spring and original of all this is the *sovereign will of God*, the counsels of his will, according to which he works all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son, when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

Secondly, The *public instructions* which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the *covenant of grace* between God and man. Who the particular persons were that were given to Christ is a *secret*: *The Lord knows them that are his*, we do not, nor is it fit we should; but, though their names are concealed, their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left inexcusable (v. 40): *“This is the will, the revealed will, of him that sent me, the method agreed upon,*

upon which to proceed with the children of men, that *every one*, Jew or Gentile, that *sees the Son, and believes on him*, may have *everlasting life*, and *I will raise him up*.” This is *gospel* indeed, good news. Is it now reviving to hear this?

1. That *eternal life* may be had, if it be not our own fault; that whereas, upon the sin of the first Adam, the *way of the tree of life* was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid upon again. The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain.

2. Every one may have it. This gospel is to be preached, this offer made, to all, and none can say, “It belongs not to me,” ~~Rev~~ Revelation 22:17.

3. This everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that *sees the Son, and believes on him*, shall be saved. Some understand this *seeing* as a *limitation* of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves this so well as to *believe* in him, shall have everlasting life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief (however they maybe for other sins) but those who have had the gospel preached to them, who, like these Jews here (v. 36), have *seen*, and yet have *not* believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in him. But I rather understand *seeing* here to mean the same thing with *believing*, for it is *theonon*, which signifies not so much the sight of the eye (as v. 36, *heorakate me* — *ye have seen me*) as the *contemplation of the mind*. Every one that *sees the Son*, that is, *believes on him*, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a *blind* faith that Christ requires, that we should be willing to have our *eyes put out*, and then follow him, but that we should *see him*, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is *then* right when it is not taken up upon *hearsay* (believing as the church believes), but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility: *Now mine eye sees thee. We have heard him ourselves.*

4. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had

it in charge as his Father's will (v. 39), and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking: I *will raise him up*, which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the *whole man* into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

2. Now Christ discoursing thus concerning himself, as the *bread of life* that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it.

(1.) When they heard of such a thing as the *bread of God*, which *gives life*, they heartily prayed for it (v. 34): *Lord, evermore give us this bread*. I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it: "Give us such bread as this, if thou canst; let us be fed with it, not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but *evermore*;" as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief: *If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us*. But I take this request to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him *Lord*, and desire a share in what he *gives*, whatever he means by it. General and confused notions of divine things produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires towards them, and wishes of them; like Balaam's wish, to die the *death of the righteous*. Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see men as trees walking, make, as I may call them, *inarticulate* prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favour of God a *good thing*, and heaven a *fine place*, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value nor desire at all for that holiness which is necessary both to the one and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the word of God, and Christ in the word? Let us say, "*Lord, evermore give us this bread*"; let the bread of life be our daily bread, the heavenly manna our continual feast, and let us never know the want of it."

(2.) But, when they understood that by this *bread of life* Jesus meant *himself*, then they *despised* it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it (v. 34), or some others of the company, does not appear; it seems to be some others, for they are called *Jews*. Now it is said (v. 41), *They murmured at him*. This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration which Christ had made of God's will and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation (v. 39, 40), which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all acceptance. One

would think that, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus *visited* them, they should have *bowed their heads and worshipped*; but on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they *murmured*, quarrelled with what Christ said, and, though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ (their cavils are so weak and groundless that they are either ashamed to own them or afraid to have them silenced), yet say in their hearts that they *do not like it*. Now,

[1.] That which offended them was Christ's asserting his origin to be *from heaven*, v. 41, 42. How is it that he saith, *I came down from heaven*? They had heard of angels coming down *from heaven*, but never of a man, overlooking the proofs he had given them of his being more than a man.

[2.] That which they thought justified them herein was that they knew his extraction on earth: *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know*? They took it amiss that he should say that he came down from heaven, when he was *one of them*. They speak slightly of his blessed name, *Jesus: Is not this Jesus*. They take it for granted that Joseph was really his father, though he was only *reputed* to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with the other sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to *raise us up at the last day*.

3. Christ, having spoken of faith as the great *work of God* (v. 29), discourses largely concerning this work, instructing and encouraging us in it.

(1.) He shows what it is to *believe in Christ*.

[1.] To believe in Christ is to *come to Christ*. He that *comes to me* is the same with him that *believes in me* (v. 35), and again (v. 37): *He that comes unto me*; so v. 44, 45. Repentance towards God is *coming to him* (²⁴⁸²Jeremiah 3:22) as our chief good and highest end; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to him as our prince and Saviour, and our way to the Father. It denotes the out-goings of our affection towards him,

for these are the motions of the soul, and actions agreeable; it is to *come off* from all those things that stand in opposition to him or competition with him, and to *come up* to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now more than coming to his word and ordinances.

[2.] It is to *feed upon Christ* (v. 51): *If any man eat of this bread*. The former denotes applying ourselves to Christ; this denotes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life, and strength, and comfort from him. To feed on him as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the *fleshpots* of Egypt, and not depending on the *labour of their hands* (to eat of that), but living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

(2.) He shows what is to be got by believing in Christ. What will he give us if we *come to him*? What shall we be the better of we *feed upon him*? *Want* and *death* are the chief things we dread; may we but be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of these comforts, we have enough; now these two are here secured to true believers.

[1.] They shall never want, *never hunger, never thirst*, v. 35. Desires they have, earnest desires, but these so suitably, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which are uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna, and drink of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards. Manna surfeited them; water out of the rock failed them. But there is such an *over-flowing fulness* in Christ as can never be *exhausted*, and there are such *ever-flowing communications* from him as can never be interrupted.

[2.] They shall *never die*, not die eternally; for, *First*, He that believes on Christ *has everlasting life* (v. 47); he has the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and first-fruits. Union with Christ and communion with God in Christ are *everlasting life* begun. *Secondly*, Whereas they that did *eat manna* died, Christ is such bread as a man may eat of and never die, v. 49, 50. Observe here,

1. The insufficiency of the typical manna: *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead*. There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers; their graves speak to us, and their monuments

are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest *plenty* of the most *dainty* food will neither prolong the thread of life nor avert the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, angel's food, died like other men. There could be nothing amiss in their diet, to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life (for they neither sowed nor reaped), and *yet they died*.

(1.) Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for, *though they did eat that spiritual meat*, yet with many of them God *was not well-pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness*, ⁴⁰⁸1 Corinthians 10:3-5. Their eating manna was no security to *them* from the *wrath of God*, as believing in Christ is to *us*.

(2.) The rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcasses fell, under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did *eat manna*. In that very age when miracles were *daily bread* was the life of man reduced to the stint it now stands at, as appears, ⁴⁹⁰Psalm 90:10. Let them not then boast so much of *manna*.

2. The all-sufficiency of the true *manna*, of which the other was a type: *This is the bread that cometh down from heaven*, that truly divine and heavenly food, *that a man may eat thereof and not die*; that is, not fall under the wrath of God, which is killing to the soul; *not die* the second death; no, nor the first death finally and irrecoverably. *Not die*, that is, not perish, not come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of *faith*, though they had *manna*. This is further explained by that promise in the next words: *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*, v. 51. This is the meaning of this *never dying*: though he go down *to death*, he shall pass through it to that world where there shall be *no more death*. To *live for ever* is not to *be* for ever (the damned in hell shall *be* for ever, the soul of man was made for an endless state), but to be *happy* for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too (as before, v. 44, *I will raise him up at the last day*); and even that shall live for ever.

(3.) He shows what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who *had seen him and yet believed not*, v. 36. They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the

soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and yet, instead of *believing* in him, they *belied* him; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ: and, by the operation of the Spirit of grace, those that *have not seen have yet believed*. Two things we are here assured of, to encourage our faith: —

[1.] That the Son will bid all those welcome that come to him (v. 37): *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. How welcome should this word be to our souls which bids us welcome to Christ! *Him* that cometh; it is in the singular number, denoting favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, *First*, The duty required is a pure gospel duty: to *come to Christ*, that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractives, must *draw* us to him; sense of need and fear of danger must *drive* us to him; any thing to bring us to Christ. *Secondly*, The promise is a pure gospel promise: *I will in no wise cast out* — *ou me ekbago exo*. There are two negatives: *I will not, no, I will not*.

1. Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should *cast us out*. Considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming, we may justly expect that he should frown upon us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he *will not* do it; will not disdain us though we are mean, will not reject us though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him to be taught? Though they be dull and slow, he will not *cast them out*. Do poor *patients* come to him to be *cured*, poor *clients* come to him to be *advised*? Though their case be bad, and though they come empty-handed, he will *in no wise cast them out*. But,

2. More favour is implied than is expressed; when it is said that he will not cast them out the meaning is, He will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for. As he will not refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterwards, upon every displeasure, cast them out. *His gifts and callings are without repentance*.

[2.] That the Father will, without fail, bring all those to him in due time that were given him. In the federal transactions between the Father and the Son, relating to man's redemption, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation, of all that should come to him

“Let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me”), so the Father, the fountain and original of being, life, and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given him, and bring them to him. Now,

First, He here assures us that this shall be done: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*, v. 37. Christ had complained (v. 36) of those who, though they had *seen* him, yet would not believe on him; and then he adds this,

a. For *their* conviction and awakening, plainly intimating that their not coming to him, and believing on him, if they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? ^{<611>}2 Peter 1:10.

b. For *his own* comfort and encouragement: *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious. The election has obtained, and shall though multitudes be blinded*, ^{<611>}Romans 11:7. Though he lose many of his *creatures*, yet none of his *charge*: *All that the Father gives him shall come to him* notwithstanding. Here we have,

(a.) The election described: *All that the father giveth me, [pan ho didosi](#) — every thing which the Father giveth to me*; the persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests. As all that he has is *theirs*, so all that they have is *his*, and he speaks of them as his all: they were given him in full recompense of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things, are gathered together in Christ (^{<411>}Ephesians 1:10) and reconciled, ^{<511>}Colossians 1:20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of (v. 39) as a thing *done*; he *hath given* them. Here it is spoken of as a thing *in the doing*; he *giveth them*; because, *when the first begotten was brought into the world*, it should seem, there was a renewal of the grant; see ^{<311>}Hebrews 10:5, etc. God was now about to *give him the heathen for his inheritance* (^{<411>}Psalms 2:8), to put him in possession of *the desolate heritages* (^{<211>}Isaiah 49:8), to *divide him a portion with the great*, ^{<2511>}Isaiah 53:12. And though the Jews, who *saw* him, *believed not* on him, yet these (saith he) shall *come to me*; the other sheep, which are not of this fold, shall be *brought*, ^{<611>}John 10:15, 16. See ^{<411>}Acts 13:45-48.

(b.) The effect of it secured: *They shall come to me*. This is not in the nature of a *promise*, but a *prediction*, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are *scattered*, are mingled among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten; not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, as is promised, ^{<3009>}Amos 9:9. They are by nature *alienated* from Christ, and averse to him, and yet *they shall come*. As God's omniscience is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not, They shall be *driven*, to me, but, They shall come freely, shall be made *willing*.

Secondly, He here *acquaints* us *how* it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it: —

a. Their *understandings* shall be *enlightened*; this is promised, v. 45, 46. It is written in the prophets, who spoke of these things before, *And they shall be all taught of God*; this we find, ^{<2513>}Isaiah 54:13, and ^{<2513>}Jeremiah 31:34. *They shall all know me*. Note,

(a.) In order to our *believing in Jesus Christ*, it is necessary that we be *taught of God*; that is,

[a.] That there be a *divine revelation made to us*, discovering to us both what we are to believe concerning Christ and why we are to believe it. There are some things which *even nature teaches*, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light.

[b.] That there be a *divine work wrought in us*, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teaches us more than the *beasts of the earth*; but in giving us faith he teaches more than the *natural man*. Thus all the church's children, all that are *genuine*, are *taught of God*; he hath undertaken their education.

(b.) It follows then, by way of inference from this, that *every man* that has *heard and learned of the Father comes to Christ*, v. 45.

[a.] It is here implied that none will come to Christ but those that have *heard and learned of the Father*. We shall never be brought to Christ but under a divine conduct; except God by his grace enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes, and not only

tell us that we may *hear*, but teach us, that we may *learn* the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ.

[b.] That this *divine teaching* does so necessarily produce the *faith of God's elect* that we may conclude that those who do not *come to Christ* have never *heard* nor *learned* of the Father; for, if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be *taught of God* if they believe not in Christ, for he teaches no other lesson, <R1B>Galatians 1:8, 9. See how God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the *cords of a man*, opens the understanding first, and then by that, in a regular way, influences the inferior faculties; thus he comes in by the door, but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way. But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men (to teach them these things), and entertain any gross conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds (v. 46): *Not that any man hath seen the Father*; it is implied, nor *can* see him, with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him as Moses did, to whom he spoke *face to face*; but God, in enlightening men's eyes and teaching them, works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon, men's spirits, undiscerned. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon, men's spirits, undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face have felt his power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he *who is of God*, Christ himself, he hath *seen the Father*, <R1B>John 1:18. Note, *First*, Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, light of light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. *Secondly*, It is the prerogative of Christ to have *seen the Father*, perfectly to know him and his counsels. *Thirdly*, Even that illumination which is preparative to faith is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that *learn of the Father*, forasmuch as they cannot see him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all divine powers are exerted.

b. Their *wills* shall be *bowed*. If the soul of man had now its original rectitude there needed no more to influence the will than the illumination of the understanding; but in the depraved soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity* itself to the divine light and law. It is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will,

which is here called *drawing*, (v. 44): *No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him*. The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ; not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did. Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said (v. 43), “*Murmur not among yourselves; lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it were because you find it generally distasted; no, it is owing to yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a moral impotency; your antipathies to the truths of God, and prejudices against them, are so strong that nothing less than a divine power can conquer them.*” And this is the case of all mankind: “*No man can come to me, can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the gospel, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him,*” v. 44. Observe,

(a.) The nature of the work: It is *drawing*, which denotes not a *force* put upon the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias is given to the soul, by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than a *moral suasion*, for by that it is in the power to *draw*; yet it is not to be called a *physical impulse*, for it lies out of the road of *nature*; but he that *formed the spirit of man within him* by his creating power, and *fashions the hearts of men* by his providential influence, knows how to new-mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a *compliance*, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency: *Draw us, and we will run after thee*.

(b.) The necessity of it: *No man*, in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. As we *cannot* do any natural action without the concurrence of *common providence*, so we cannot do any action morally good without the influence of *special grace*, in which the *new man* lives, and moves, and has its being, as much as the *mere man* has in the divine providence.

(c.) The author of it: The *Father who hath sent me*. The Father, having sent Christ, will succeed him, for he would not send him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised him, in order thereunto, to bring them to him, and so to give him possession of those to whom he had given him a right. God, having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length *draw the*

hearts of the people to him; so, having sent Christ to save souls, he sends souls to him to be saved by him.

(d.) The crown and perfection of this work: *And I will raise him up at the last day.* This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate and preparatory workings of divine grace. When he *raises them up at the last day*, he will put the *last hand* to his undertaking, will *bring forth the topstone*. If he undertakes this, surely he *can* do any thing, and will do every thing that is necessary in order to do it. Let our expectations be carried out towards a happiness reserved for the *last day*, when all the years of time shall be fully complete and ended.

4. Christ, having thus spoken of himself as the *bread of life*, and of faith as *the work of God*, comes more particularly to show *what of himself* is this bread, namely, his flesh, and that to believe is to eat of that, v. 51-58, where he still prosecutes the metaphor of food. Observe, here, the *preparation* of this food: *The bread that I will give is my flesh* (v. 51), *the flesh of the Son of man and his blood*, v. 53. *His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*, v. 55. observe, also, the *participation* of this food: We must *eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood* (v. 53); and again (v. 54), *Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood*; and the same words (v. 56, 57), he that *eateth me*. This is certainly a parable or figurative discourse, wherein the actings of the soul upon things spiritual and divine are represented by bodily actions about things sensible, which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, ~~Mark~~ Mark 4:11-12. Now,

(1.) Let us see how this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that *men might see, and not perceive*.

[1.] It was misconstrued by the carnal *Jews*, to whom it was first delivered (v. 52): *They strove among themselves*; they whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction: *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* Christ spoke (v. 51) of giving his flesh *for us*, to suffer and die; but they, without due consideration, understood it of his giving it *to us*, to be eaten, which gave occasion to Christ to tell them that, however what he said was otherwise intended, yet even that also of *eating of his flesh* was no such absurd thing (if rightly understood) as *prima facie* — *in the first instance*, they took it to be.

[2.] It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome for the support of their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, John 3, 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a *spiritual* eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a *sacramental*.

[3.] It is misunderstood by many ignorant carnal people, who hence infer that, if they take the sacrament when they die, they shall certainly go to heaven, which, as it makes many that are weak causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked causelessly easy if they have it. Therefore,

(2.) Let us see how this discourse of Christ is to be understood.

[1.] What is meant by the *flesh and blood of Christ*. It is called (v. 53), *The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his* as Messiah and Mediator: the *flesh and blood* which he *assumed* in his incarnation (³⁰²⁴ Hebrews 2:14), and which he *gave up* in his *death and suffering*: *my flesh which I will give* to be crucified and slain. It is said to be *given for the life of the world*, that is, *First, Instead of the life of the world*, which was *forfeited* by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counterprice. Christ was our bail, bound *body for body* (as we say), and therefore *his* life must go for *ours*, that ours may be spared. *Here am I, let these go their way*. *Secondly, In order to the life of the world*, to purchase a *general* offer of eternal life to all the world, and the *special* assurances of it to all believers. So that the *flesh and blood* of the Son of man denote the Redeemer *incarnate and dying*; Christ and *him crucified*, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption: pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons, access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life; these are called *the flesh and blood* of Christ,

1. Because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium sanguinis* — *the price of blood*.

2. Because they are meat and drink to our souls. *Flesh with the blood* was prohibited (^{<099>}Genesis 9:4), but the privileges of the gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of our souls. He had before compared himself to *bread*, which is necessary food; here to *flesh*, which is delicious. It is a *feast of fat things*, ^{<236>}Isaiah 25:6. The soul is satisfied with Christ as *with marrow and fatness*, ^{<665>}Psalms 63:5. It is *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed; truly so*, that is spiritually; so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the *true vine*; or *truly meat*, in opposition to the shows and shadows with which the world shams off those that feed upon it. In Christ and his gospel there is real supply, solid satisfaction; that is *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed*, which satiates and replenishes, ^{<2625>}Jeremiah 31:25, 26.

[2.] What is meant by *eating this flesh* and *drinking this blood*, which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain that it means neither more nor less than believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: and *believing in Christ* includes these four things, which *eating and drinking* do: — *First*, It implies an *appetite* to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with *hungering* and *thirsting* (^{<4865>}Matthew 5:6), earnest and importunate desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: “Give me Christ or else I die.” *Secondly*, An *application* of Christ to ourselves. *Meat looked upon* will not nourish us, but *meat fed upon*, and so made *our own*, and as it were *one with us*. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to ourselves: *my Lord, and my God*, ^{<4885>}John 20:28. *Thirdly*, A *delight* in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be *meat and drink* to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the *New Testament in the blood of Christ*, taking as great a complacency in the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken to redeem and save us as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of nature. *Fourthly*, A *derivation of nourishment* from him and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To *feed upon Christ* is to do all *in his name*, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so we know and find; so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor (as very significant and expressive) that, when afterwards he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our *communicating* of the

benefits of his death, he chose those of *eating* and *drinking*, and made them *sacramental* actions.

(3.) Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads: —

[1.] The *necessity* of our *feeding upon Christ* (v. 53): *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* That is, *First*, “It is a certain sign that you *have no spiritual life* in you if you have no *desire* towards Christ, nor *delight* in him.” If the soul does not *hunger* and *thirst*, certainly it does not *live*: it is a sign that we are dead indeed if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When *artificial* bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be *distinguished* from *natural* ones (they say), it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to, but the artificial ones minded not, for *they had no life in them.* *Secondly*, “It is certain that you *can have no spiritual life*, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing.” Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens* — *the first living principle* of grace; without it we have not the *truth* of *spiritual* life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat as our souls without Christ.

[2.] The *benefit* and *advantage* of it, in two things: —

First, We shall be *one with Christ*, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested (v. 56): *He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, that lives by faith in Christ crucified* (it is spoken of as a continued act), he *dwelleth in me, and I in him.* By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is *in us*, and we *in him*, ^{<B172>}John 17:21-23; ^{<G124>}1 John 3:24. Believers dwell in Christ as their stronghold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he *sups* with them upon their bitter herbs, and *they with him* upon his *rich dainties*. It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and digested food, ^{<R35>}Romans 8:35; ^{<G413>}1 John 4:13.

Secondly, We shall *live*, shall live eternally, *by him*, as our bodies live by our food.

a. We shall live by him (v. 57): *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* We have here the series and order of the divine life.

(a.) God is the *living Father*, hath life in and of himself. *I am that I am* is his name for ever.

(b.) Jesus Christ, as Mediator, lives by *the Father*; he has life in himself (^{<485>}John 5:26), but he has it of the Father. He that sent him, not only qualified him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of divine life to us; he breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives.

(c.) True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, ^{<487>}John 17:21. For therefore *he that eateth me*, or feeds on me, *even he shall live by me*: those that live upon Christ shall live by him. The life of believers is *had from Christ* (^{<486>}John 1:16); it is *hid with Christ* (^{<504>}Colossians 3:4), we live by *him* as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives, we shall live also.

b. We shall live *eternally* by him (v. 54): *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood*, as prepared in the gospel to be the food of souls, he *hath eternal life*, he hath it now, as v. 40. He has that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live *for ever*, v. 58. His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.

Lastly, The historian concludes with an account *where* Christ had this discourse with the Jews (v. 59): *In the synagogue as he taught*, implying that he taught them many other things besides these, but this was that in his discourse which was new. He adds this, that he said these things *in the synagogue*, to show,

1. The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths sought no corners, but were publicly preached in mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe and impartial test. Christ pleaded this upon his trial (^{<488>}John 18:20): *I ever taught in the synagogue.*

2. The credibility of this narrative of it. To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

JOHN 6:60-71

CHRIST'S DISCOURSE WITH HIS DISCIPLES

We have here an account of the effects of Christ's discourse. Some were offended and others edified by it; some driven *from him* and others brought nearer *to him*.

I. To some it was a *savour of death unto death*; not only to the Jews, who were professed enemies to him and his doctrine, but even to many of *his disciples*, such as were disciples *at large*, who were his frequent hearers, and followed him *in public*; a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the discontents. Now here we have,

1. Their murmurings at the doctrine they heard (v. 60): *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?*

(1.) They do not like it themselves: “What stuff is this? *Eat the flesh, and drink the blood, of the Son of man!* If it is to be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must we turn cannibals? Can we not be religious, but we must be barbarous?” *Si Christiani adorant quod comedunt* (said Averroes), *sit anima mea cum philosophis* — *If Christians adore what they eat, my mind shall continue with the philosophers*. Now, when they found it a hard saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have *declared unto them this parable*, he would have opened it, and their understandings too; for *the meek will he teach his way*. But they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained to them, because they would not lose *this* pretence for rejecting them — that they were *hard sayings*.

(2.) They think it impossible that any one else should like it: “*Who can hear it? Surely none can.*” Thus the scoffers at religion are ready to undertake that all the intelligent part of mankind concur with them. They conclude with great assurance that no *man of sense* will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any *man of spirit* submit to his laws. Because they cannot

bear to be so *tutored*, so *tied up*, themselves, they think none else can: *Who can hear it?* Thanks be to God, thousands have *heard* these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy, but pleasant, as their *necessary food*.

2. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurings.

(1.) He well enough knew their murmurings, v. 61. Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. But,

[1.] Christ *knew* them; he saw them, he heard them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open *defiances* that are done to his name and glory by *daring sinners*, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; he knows that which the *fool saith in his heart*, and cannot for shame *speak out*; he observes how his doctrine is *resented* by those to whom it is *preached*; who *rejoice* in it, and who *murmur* at it; who are reconciled to it, and bow before it, and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though ever so secretly.

[2.] He knew it *in himself*, not by any information given him, nor any external indication of the thing, but by his own divine omniscience. He knew it not as the prophets, by a *divine revelation* made to him (that which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as ¹⁰⁰⁷2 Kings 4:27), but by a *divine knowledge* in him. He is that essential Word that *discerns the thoughts of the heart*, ⁸⁰¹²Hebrews 4:12, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think.

(2.) He well enough knew how to answer them: “*Doth this offend you? Is this a stumbling-block to you?*” See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves: they take offence where there is none given, and even make it where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder: “*Doth this offend you?*” Now, in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure (*Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi — If you are unwilling to be understood, you ought to be neglected*),

[1.] He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give an irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine (v. 62):

What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? And what then? *First*, “If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying that you cannot hear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning *to* heaven, whence I came down?” See ^{<RB2>}John 3:12. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties should consider how they will get over greater. *Secondly*, “When you see the Son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it;” so Dr. Whitby. Or, *Thirdly*, “When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much upon me when I say, *I came down from heaven*, for it was with this that you quarrelled (v. 42); but will you think so when you see me return to heaven?” If he *ascended*, certainly he *descended*, ^{<RB3>}Ephesians 4:9, 10. Christ did often refer himself thus to *subsequent* proofs, as ^{<RB4>}John 1:50, 51; 2:14; ^{<RB5>}Matthew 12:40; 26:64. Let us wait awhile, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see that there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

[2.] He gives them a general key to this and all such parabolical discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner: *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*, v. 63. As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven it, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing (what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit), so it is with the soul. *First*, The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, *profits nothing*; the word and ordinances, if the Spirit works with them, are as food to a living man, if not, they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and enforce the powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. *Secondly*, The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, *profits nothing*, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense or meaning of it quickens the soul, makes it *alive* and *lively*; for so it follows: *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. To eat the flesh of Christ!* this is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for me, to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my

approaches to God, my oppositions to sin and preparations for a future state, this is the *spirit and life* of that saying, and, construing it thus, it is an excellent saying. The reason why men *dislike* Christ's sayings is because they *mistake* them. The literal sense of a parable does us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. *Thirdly*, The flesh profits nothing — those that *are in the flesh* (so some understand it), that are under the power of a carnal mind, *profit not* by Christ's discourses; but *the Spirit quickeneth* — those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, are quickened and enlivened by them; for they are received *ad modum recipientis* — *so as to correspond with the state of the receiver's mind*. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to *sensual* minds that spiritual things are *senseless* and *sapless*, spiritual minds *relish* them; see ^{<4124>}1 Corinthians 2:14, 15.

[3.] He gives them an intimation of his *knowledge of them*, and that he had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, v. 64, 65. Now was fulfilled that of the prophet, speaking of Christ and his doctrine (^{<2511>}Isaiah 53:1), *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Both these Christ here takes notice of.

First, They did not *believe his report*: “There are *some of you* who said you would leave all to follow me who yet *believe not*;” and this was the reason why the *word preached did not profit them*, because it was *not mixed with faith*, ^{<3042>}Hebrews 4:2. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine he preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it *dark, and hard to be understood*. *Oportet discentum credere* — *Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teacher's word*. Note,

1. Among those who are *nominal Christians*, there are many who are *real infidels*.
2. The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He *knew from the beginning* who they were of the multitudes that followed him that *believed*, and who of the twelve should betray him; he *knew from the beginning* of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pang of their zeal, who were sincere, as Nathanael (^{<4142>}John 1:47), and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by an

overt act, he could infallibly distinguish *who believed* and who did not, whose love was *counterfeit* and whose *cordial*. We may gather hence,

(1.) That the apostasy of those who have long made a plausible profession of religion is a certain proof of their constant hypocrisy, and that *from the beginning they believed not*, but is not a proof of the possibility of the total and final apostasy of any true believers: such revolts are not to be called the fall of real saints, but the discovery of pretended ones; see ~~1~~ John 2:19. *Stella cadens non stella fuit — The star that falls never was a star.*

(2.) That it is Christ's prerogative to *know the heart*; he knows who they are that *believe not*, but dissemble in their profession, and yet continues them room in his church, the use of his ordinances, and the credit of his name, and does not discover them in this world, unless they by their own wickedness discover themselves; because such is the constitution of his visible church, and the discovering day is yet to come. But, if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are often deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and *his judgment is according to truth.*

Secondly, The reason why they did not believe his report was because the *arm of the Lord* was not revealed to them (v. 65): *Therefore said I unto you that no man can come to me, except it be given unto him of my Father*; referring to v. 44. Christ therefore could not but know who believed and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said that none could *come to him, except the Father draw him*; here he saith, *except it be given him of my Father*, which shows that God *draws* souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come, without which, such is the moral impotency of man, in his fallen state, that he *cannot come*.

3. We have here their final apostasy from Christ hereupon: *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him*, v. 66. When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then *entering into temptation*; it is as the letting forth of water; it is *looking back*, which, if infinite mercy prevent

not, will end in *drawing back*; therefore *Obsta principiis* — *Take heed of the beginnings* of apostasy.

(1.) See here the *backsliding* of these *disciples*. *Many of them went back* to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; *went back*, one to his farm and another to his merchandise; *went back*, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, ^{<8015}Ruth 1:15. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they *went back*, did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing that we need not be surprised at it. Here were *many* that *went back*. It is often so; when some backslide many backslide with them; the disease is infectious.

(2.) The occasion of this backsliding: *From that time*, from the time that Christ preached this comfortable doctrine, that he is the *bread of life*, and that those who by faith feed *upon him* shall live *by him* (which, one would think, should have engaged them to cleave more closely to him) — from *that time* they withdrew. Note, The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence which is indeed matter of the greatest comfort. Christ foresaw that they would thus take offence at what he said, and yet he said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ must be faithfully delivered, whoever may be offended at it. Men's humours must be captivated to God's word, and not God's word accommodated to men's humours.

(3.) The degree of their apostasy: *They walked no more with him*, returned no more to him and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those who have been *once enlightened*, and have *tasted the good word of God*, if they fall away, to *renew them again to repentance*, ^{<8016}Hebrews 6:4-6.

II. This discourse was to others a *savour of life unto life*. *Many went back*, but, thanks be to God, all did not; even then the *twelve* stuck to him. Though the *faith of some be overthrown*, yet the *foundation of God stands sure*. Observe here,

1. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve (v. 67): *Will you also go away?* He saith nothing to those who went back. *If the unbelieving depart, let them depart*; it was no great *loss* of those whom he never *had*; lightly come, lightly go; but he takes this occasion to speak to

the twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their stedfastness the more to fix them: *Will you also go away?*

(1.) “It is *at your choice* whether you will or no; if you will forsake me, now is the time, when so many do: it is an hour of temptation; if you will go back, go now.” Note, Christ will detain none with him against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had now had time enough to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine, and that none of them might afterwards say that they were trepanned into discipleship, and if it were to do again they would not do it, he here allows them a power of revocation, and leaves them at their liberty; as ^{<6215>}Joshua 24:15; ^{<8015>}Ruth 1:15.

(2.) “It is *at your peril* if you do go away.” If there was any secret inclination in the heart of any of them to depart from him, he stops it with this awakening question, “*Wilt you also go away?* Think not that you hang at as loose an end as they did, and may go away as easily as they could. They have not been so intimate with me as you have been, nor received so many favours from me; they are gone, but will *you* also go? Remember your character, and say, Whatever others do, we will never go away. *Should such a man as I flee?*” ^{<4611>}Nehemiah 6:11. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ and the longer we have been with him, the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him, the greater will be our sin if we desert him.

(3.) “I have reason *to think you will not*. Will you go away? No, I have faster hold of you than so; *I hope better things of you* (^{<3809>}Hebrews 6:9), *for you are they that have continued with me,*” ^{<4228>}Luke 22:28. When the apostasy of some is a grief to the Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honour, and he is pleased with it accordingly. Christ and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

2. The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, v. 68, 69. Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice whom they would serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord*, Peter was upon all occasions the *mouth of the rest*, not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved and sometimes reprimanded (^{<4117>}Matthew 16:17, 23) — the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well; and

probably he said it by the direction, and with the express assent, of his fellow-disciples; at least he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best.

(1.) Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and so expressed as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him: “*Lord, to whom shall we go?* It were folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to better ourselves; no, Lord, we like our choice too well to change.” Note, Those who leave Christ would do well to consider to whom they will go, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in him. See ^{<177>}Psalm 73:27, 28; ^{<309>}Hosea 2:9. “*Whither shall we go?* Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly *deceive* us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly *destroy* us. Shall we leave the *fountain of living waters* for *broken cisterns*?” The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their guide, for they can never have a better. “Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations, and, professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee.” Note, Christ's holy religion appears to great advantage when it is compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let those who find fault with this religion find a better before they quit it. A divine teacher we must have; can we find a better than Christ? A divine revelation we cannot be without; if the scripture be not such a one, where else may we look for it?

(2.) Here is a good reason for this resolution. It was not the inconsiderate resolve of a blind affection, but the result of mature deliberation. The disciples were resolved never to go away from Christ,

[1.] Because of the *advantage* they promised themselves by him: *Thou hast the words of eternal life*. They themselves did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle to them; but in the general they were satisfied that *he had the words of eternal life*, that is, *First*, That the word of his doctrine showed the way to *eternal life*, set it before us, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it.

Secondly, That the word of his *determination* must confer eternal life. His *having the words of eternal life* is the same with his having *power to give eternal life to as many as were given him*, ~~☞~~ John 17:2. He had in the foregoing discourse assured *eternal life* to his followers; these disciples fastened upon this plain saying, and therefore resolved to stick to him, when the others overlooked this, and fastened upon the *hard sayings*, and therefore forsook him. Though we cannot account for every mystery, every obscurity, in Christ's doctrine, yet we know, in the general, that it is the word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it; for if we forsake Christ *we forsake our own mercies*.

[2.] Because of the assurance they had concerning him (v. 69): *We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ*. if he be the promised Messiah, he must *bring in an everlasting righteousness* (~~☞~~ Daniel 9:24), and therefore has the *words of eternal life*, for *righteousness reigns to eternal life*, ~~☞~~ Romans 5:21. observe, *First*, The *doctrine* they believed: that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers and expected by them, and that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, the same to whom God had said, *Thou art my Son*, ~~☞~~ Psalm 2:7. In times of temptation to apostasy it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and stick to them; and, if we faithfully abide by that which is *past dispute*, we shall be the better able both to *find* and to *keep* the truth in matters of doubtful disputation. *Secondly*, The *degree* of their faith: it rose up to a full assurance: *We are sure*. We have known it *by experience*; this is the best knowledge. We should take occasion from others' wavering to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the gospel of Christ as boldly to venture our souls *upon it*, knowing *whom we have believed*, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

3. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's (v. 70, 71): *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* And the evangelist tells us whom he meant: *he spoke of Judas Iscariot*. Peter had undertaken for them all that they would be faithful to their Master. Now Christ does not condemn his charity (it is always good to hope the best), but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows those that are his; we do not. Observe here,

(1.) Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only *had* a devil, but he *was* a devil. One of you is a *false accuser*; so *diabolos* sometimes signifies (^{GRK}2 Timothy 3:3); and it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to them as a bad man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it: *He is a devil*, a devil incarnate, a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, did his lusts, was in his interests, as Cain, (^{GRK}1 John 3:12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil are never called *devils* (*demoniacs*, but not *devils*); but Judas, into whose *heart* Satan entered, and filled it, is called a *devil*.

(2.) Many that are *seeming* saints are *real* devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles; his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He *cast out devils*, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet was himself a devil all the while. Not only he *will be* one shortly, but he *is one* now. It is *strange*, and to be wondered at; Christ speaks of it with wonder: *Have not I?* It is *sad*, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism.

(3.) The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eye sees through them. He can call those *devils* that call themselves *Christians*, like the prophet's greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in masquerade (^{HEB}1 Kings 14:6): *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam*. Christ's *divine sight*, far better than any *double sight*, can see spirits.

(4.) There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services who yet prove false to him: *I have chosen you to the apostleship*, for it is expressly said that Judas was not chosen to eternal life (^{GRK}John 13:18), and yet one of *you* is a devil. Note, Advancement to places of honour and trust in the church is no certain evidence of saving grace. *We have prophesied in thy name*.

(5.) In the most *select* societies on this side heaven it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an *incarnate Deity*, as great an honour and privilege as ever men were chosen to, one was an *incarnate devil*. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was *one of the twelve* that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not reject and unchurch the

twelve because *one of them is a devil*, nor say that they are all cheats and hypocrites because one of them was so; let those that are so bear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil into which no unclean thing shall enter, a church of first-born, in which are no *false brethren*.