

CHAPTER 5

This chapter, and the two that follow it, are a sermon; a famous sermon; the sermon upon the mount. It is the longest and fullest continued discourse of our Saviour that we have upon record in all the gospels. It is a practical discourse; there is not much of the credenda of Christianity in it — the things to be believed, but it is wholly taken up with the agenda — the things to be done; these Christ began with in his preaching; for if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. The circumstances of the sermon being accounted for (v. 1, 2), the sermon itself follows, the scope of which is, not to fill our heads with notions, but to guide and regulate our practice.

I. He proposes blessedness as the end, and gives us the character of those who are entitled to blessedness (very different from the sentiments of a vain world), in eight beatitudes, which may justly be called paradoxes (v. 3-12).

II. He prescribes duty as the way, and gives us standing rules of that duty. He directs his disciples,

1. To understand what they are — the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world (v. 13-16).

2. To understand what they have to do — they are to be governed by the moral law. Here is,

(1.) A general ratification of the law, and a recommendation of it to us, as our rule (v. 17-20).

(2.) A particular rectification of divers mistakes; or, rather, a reformation of divers wilful, gross corruptions, which the scribes and Pharisees had introduced in their exposition of the law; and an authentic explication of divers branches which most needed to be explained and vindicated (v. 20).

Particularly, here is an explication,

[1.] Of the sixth commandment, which forbids murder (v. 21-26).

[2.] Of the seventh commandment, against adultery (v. 27-32).

[3.] Of the third commandment (v. 33-37).

[4.] Of the law of retaliation (v. 38-42).

[5.] Of the law of brotherly love (v. 43-48). And the scope of the whole is, to show that the law is spiritual.

~~411~~ MATTHEW 5:1-2

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

We have here a general account of this sermon.

I. *The Preacher* was our Lord Jesus, the Prince of preachers, the great Prophet of his church, who *came into the world*, to be *the Light of the world*. The prophets and John had *done virtuously* in preaching, *but Christ excelled them all*. He is the eternal Wisdom, *that lay in the bosom of the Father, before all worlds*, and perfectly knew his will (~~418~~ John 1:18); and he is the eternal Word, by whom he *has in these last days spoken to us*. The many miraculous cures wrought by Christ in Galilee, which we read of in the close of the foregoing chapter, were intended to make way for this sermon, and to dispose people to receive instructions from one in whom there appeared so much of a divine power and goodness; and, probably, this sermon was the summary, or rehearsal, of what he had preached up and down in the synagogues of Galilee. His text was, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. This is a sermon on the former part of that text, showing what it is to *repent*; it is to reform, both in judgment and practice; and here he tells us wherein, in answer to that question (~~419~~ Malachi 3:7), *Wherein shall we return?* He afterward preached upon the latter part of the text, when, in divers parables, he showed what the kingdom of heaven is like, Matthew 13.

II. *The place* was a mountain in Galilee. As in other things, so in this, our Lord Jesus was but ill accommodated; he had no convenient place to preach in, any more than *to lay his head on*. While the scribes and Pharisees had Moses' chair to sit in, with all possible ease, honour, and state, and there corrupted the law; our Lord Jesus, the great Teacher of truth, is driven out to the desert, and finds no better a pulpit than *a mountain* can afford; and not one of the *holy mountains* neither, not one of *the mountains of Zion*, but a common *mountain*; by which Christ would intimate that there is no such distinguishing holiness of places now, under the gospel, as there was under the law; but that it is *the will of God that men should pray and preach every where*, any where, provided it be decent

and convenient. Christ preached this sermon, which was an exposition of the law, upon a mountain, because upon a *mountain* the law was given; and this was also a solemn promulgation of the Christian law. But observe the difference: when *the law was given*, the Lord *came down* upon the *mountain*; now the Lord *went up*: then, he spoke *in thunder and lightning*; now, *in a still small voice*: then the people were ordered to keep their distance; now they are invited to draw near: a blessed change! If God's grace and goodness are (as they certainly are) his glory, then the glory of the gospel is the glory that excels, for *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, ^{<40E>}2 Corinthians 3:7; ^{<40D>}Hebrews 12:18, etc. It was foretold of Zebulun and Issachar, two of the tribes of Galilee (^{<40B>}Deuteronomy 33:19), that *they shall call the people to the mountain*; to this *mountain* we are called, to learn *to offer the sacrifices of righteousness*. Now was this *the mountain of the Lord*, where he *taught us his ways*, ^{<40D>}Isaiah 2:2, 3; ^{<40E>}Micah 4:1, 2.

III. *The auditors were his disciples, who came unto him*; came at his call, as appears by comparing ^{<40B>}Mark 3:13, ^{<40B>}Luke 6:13. To them he directed his speech, because they followed him for love and learning, while others attended him only for cures. *He taught them*, because they were willing to be *taught (the meek will he teach his way)*; because they would *understand* what he taught, which to others was foolishness; and because they were to teach others; and it was therefore requisite that they should have a clear and distinct knowledge of these things themselves. The duties prescribed in this sermon were to be conscientiously performed by all those that would *enter into that kingdom of heaven* which they were sent to set up, with hope to have the benefit of it. But though this discourse was directed to the disciples, it was in the hearing of *the multitude*; for it is said (^{<40B>}Matthew 7:28), *The people were astonished*. No bounds were set about *this mountain*, to keep the people off, as were about *mount Sinai* (^{<40D>}Exodus 19:12); for, through Christ, we have access to God, not only to speak to him, but to hear from him. Nay, he had an eye to the *multitude*, in preaching this sermon. When the fame of his miracles had brought a vast crowd together, he took the opportunity of so great a confluence of people, to instruct them. Note, It is an encouragement to a faithful minister to cast the net of the gospel where there are a great many fishes, in hope that some will be caught. The sight of a *multitude* puts life into a preacher, which yet must arise from a desire of their profit, not his own praise.

IV. *The solemnity of his sermon is intimated in that word, when he was set.* Christ preached many times occasionally, and by interlocutory discourses; but this was a set sermon, *kathisantos autou*, when he had placed himself so as to be best heard. He sat down as a Judge or Lawgiver. It intimates with what sedateness and composure of mind the things of God should be spoken and heard. *He sat, that the scriptures might be fulfilled* (^{308B}Malachi 3:3), *He shall sit as a refiner*, to purge away the dross, the corrupt doctrines of the sons of Levi. *He sat as in the throne, judging right* (^{490A}Psalms 9:4); *for the word he spoke shall judge us.* That phrase, *He opened his mouth*, is only a Hebrew periphrasis of speaking, as ^{388E}Job 3:1. Yet some think it intimates the solemnity of this discourse; the congregation being large, he raised his voice, and spoke louder than usual. He had spoken long *by his servants the prophets, and opened their mouths* (^{264E}Ezekiel 3:27; 24:27; 33:22); but now *he opened his own*, and spoke with freedom, *as one having authority.* One of the ancients has this remark upon it; *Christ taught much without opening his mouth.* that is, by his holy and exemplary life; nay, *he taught*, when, *being led as a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth*, but now *he opened his mouth, and taught, that the scriptures might be fulfilled*, ^{308E}Proverbs 8:1, 2, 6. *Doth not wisdom cry — cry on the top of high places? And the opening of her lips shall be right things.* *He taught them*, according to the promise (^{254E}Isaiah 54:13), *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*; for this purpose he had *the tongue of the learned* (^{280A}Isaiah 50:4), and *the Spirit of the Lord*, ^{260E}Isaiah 61:1. *He taught them*, what was the evil they should abhor, and what was the good they should abide and abound in; for Christianity is not a matter of speculation, but is designed to regulate the temper of our minds and the tenour of our conversations; gospel-time is a time of reformation (^{500E}Hebrews 9:10); and by the gospel we must be reformed, must be made good, must be made better. *The truth, as it is in Jesus, is the truth which is according to godliness*, ^{500E}Titus 1:1.

^{408E}MATTHEW 5:3-12

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Christ begins his sermon with blessings, for *he came into the world to bless us* (^{448E}Acts 3:26), as *the great High Priest of our profession*; as *the blessed Melchizedec*; as *He in whom all the families of the earth should be*

blessed, ⁽¹¹⁷⁾Genesis 12:3. He came not only to purchase blessings for us, but to pour out and pronounce blessings on us; and here he does it *as one having authority*, as one that can *command the blessing, even life for evermore*, and that is the blessing here again and again promised to the good; his pronouncing them happy makes them so; for those whom he blesses, are blessed indeed. The Old Testament ended with a curse (⁽³⁰⁶⁾Malachi 4:6), the gospel begins with a blessing; for *hereunto are we called, that we should inherit the blessing*. Each of the blessings Christ here pronounces has a double intention:

1. To show who they are that are to be accounted truly happy, and what their characters are.
2. What that is wherein true happiness consists, in the promises made to persons of certain characters, the performance of which will make them happy. Now,

1. This is designed to rectify the ruinous mistakes of a blind and carnal world. Blessedness is the thing which men pretend to pursue; *Who will make us to see good?* ⁽³⁹⁶⁾Psalms 4:6. But most mistake the end, and form a wrong notion of happiness; and then no wonder that they miss the way; they choose their own delusions, and court a shadow. The general opinion is, *Blessed are they that are rich, and great, and honourable in the world*; they spend their days in mirth, and their years in pleasure; they eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and carry all before them with a high hand, and have every sheaf bowing to their sheaf; *happy the people that is in such a case*; and their designs, aims, and purposes are accordingly; they *bless the covetous* (⁽⁴⁰³⁾Psalms 10:3); *they will be rich*. Now our Lord Jesus comes to correct this fundamental error, to advance a new hypothesis, and to give us quite another notion of blessedness and blessed people, which, however paradoxical it may appear to those who are prejudiced, yet is in itself, and appears to be to all who are savingly enlightened, a rule and doctrine of eternal truth and certainty, by which we must shortly be judged. If this, therefore, be the beginning of Christ's doctrine, the beginning of a Christian's practice must be to take his measures of happiness from those maxims, and to direct his pursuits accordingly.

2. It is designed to remove the discouragements of the weak and poor who receive the gospel, by assuring them that his gospel did not make those only happy that were eminent in gifts, graces, comforts, and usefulness;

but that even *the least in the kingdom of heaven*, whose heart was upright with God, was happy in the honours and privileges of that kingdom.

3. It is designed to invite souls to Christ, and to make way for his law into their hearts. Christ's pronouncing these blessings, not at the end of his sermon, to dismiss the people, but at the beginning of it, to prepare them for what he had further to say to them, may remind us of mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, on which the blessings and cursings of the law were read, ⁽⁵⁷²⁾Deuteronomy 27:12, etc. *There* the curses are expressed, and the blessings only implied; *here* the blessings are expressed, and the curses implied: in both, *life and death are set before us*; but the law appeared more as a ministration of death, to deter us from sin; the gospel as a dispensation of life, to allure us to Christ, in whom alone all good is to be had. And those who had seen the gracious cures wrought by his hand (⁽⁴⁰³⁾Matthew 4:23, 24), and now heard *the gracious words proceeding out of his mouth*, would say that he was all of a piece, made up of love and sweetness.

4. It is designed to settle and sum up the articles of agreement between God and man. The scope of the divine revelation is to let us know what God expects from us, and what we may then expect from him; and no where is this more fully set forth in a few words than here, nor with a more exact reference to each other; and this is that gospel which we are required to believe; for what is faith but a conformity to these characters, and a dependence upon these promises? The way to happiness is here opened, and made a *highway* (⁽²³⁸⁾Isaiah 35:8); and this coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ, it is intimated that from him, and by him, we are to receive both the seed and the fruit, both the grace required, and the glory promised. Nothing passes between God and fallen man, but through his hand. Some of the wiser heathen had notions of blessedness different from the rest of mankind, and looking toward this of our Saviour. Seneca, undertaking to describe a blessed man, makes it out, that it is only an honest, good man that is to be so called: *De Vitf Beatf. cap. 4. Cui nullum bonum malumque sit, nisi bonus malusque animus — Quem nec extollant fortuita, nec frangant — Cui vera voluptas erit voluptatum contemptio — Cui unum bonum honestas, unum malum turpitude. — In whose estimation nothing is good or evil, but a good or evil heart — Whom no occurrences elate or deject — Whose true pleasure consists in a contempt of pleasure — To whom the only good is virtue, and the only evil vice.*

Our Saviour here gives us eight characters of blessed people; which represent to us the principal graces of a Christian. On each of them a present blessing is pronounced; *Blessed are* they; and to each a future blessing is promised, which is variously expressed, so as to suit the nature of the grace or duty recommended.

Do we ask then who are happy? It is answered,

I. *The poor in spirit* are happy, v. 3. There is a poor-spiritedness that is so far from making men blessed that it is a sin and a snare — cowardice and base fear, and a willing subjection to the lusts of men. But this poverty of spirit is a gracious disposition of soul, by which we are emptied of self, in order to our being filled with Jesus Christ. To be *poor in spirit* is,

1. To be contentedly poor, willing to be emptied of worldly wealth, if God orders that to be our lot; to bring our mind to our condition, when it is a low condition. Many are poor in the world, but high in spirit, poor and proud, murmuring and complaining, and blaming their lot, but we must accommodate ourselves to our poverty, must *know how to be abased*, ~~SC012~~Philippians 4:12. Acknowledging the wisdom of God in appointing us to poverty, we must be easy in it, patiently bear the inconveniences of it, be thankful for what we have, and make the best of that which is. It is to sit loose to all worldly wealth, and not set our hearts upon it, but cheerfully to bear losses and disappointments which may befall us in the most prosperous state. It is not, in pride or pretence, to make ourselves poor, by throwing away what God has given us, especially as those in the church of Rome, who vow poverty, and yet engross the wealth of the nations; but if we be rich in the world we must be *poor in spirit*, that is, we must condescend to the poor and sympathize with them, as being touched with the feeling of their infirmities; we must expect and prepare for poverty; must not inordinately fear or shun it, but must bid it welcome, especially when it comes upon us for keeping a good conscience, ~~SC013~~Hebrews 10:34. Job was *poor in spirit*, when he blessed God in *taking away*, as well as giving.

2. It is to be humble and lowly in our own eyes. To be *poor in spirit*, is to think meanly of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do; the poor are often taken in the Old Testament for the humble and self-denying, as opposed to those that are at ease, and the proud; it is to be as little children in our opinion of ourselves, weak, foolish, and insignificant, ~~SC014~~Matthew

18:4; 19:14. Laodicea was *poor in spirituals*, wretchedly and miserably poor, and yet *rich in spirit*, so well increased with goods, as to *have need of nothing*, ⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ Revelation 3:17. On the other hand, Paul was rich in *spirituals*, excelling most in gifts and graces, and yet *poor in spirit*, *the least of the apostles*, less than the least of all saints, and *nothing* in his own account. It is to look with a holy contempt upon ourselves, to value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison of them. It is to be willing to make ourselves cheap, and mean, and little, to do good; to *become all things to all men*. It is to acknowledge that God is great, and we are mean; that he is holy and we are sinful; that he is all and we are nothing, less than nothing, worse than nothing; and to humble ourselves before him, and under his mighty hand.

3. It is to come off from all confidence in our own righteousness and strength, that we may depend only upon the merit of Christ for our justification, and the spirit and grace of Christ for our sanctification. That *broken and contrite spirit* with which the publican cried for mercy to a poor sinner, is that poverty of spirit. We must call ourselves poor, because always in want of God's grace, always begging at God's door, always hanging on in his house.

Now,

(1.) This poverty in spirit is put first among the Christian graces. The philosophers did not reckon humility among their moral virtues, but Christ puts it first. Self-denial is the first lesson to be learned in his school, and poverty of spirit entitled to the first beatitude. The foundation of all other graces is laid in humility. Those who would build high must begin low; and it is an excellent preparative for the entrance of gospel-grace into the soul; it fits the soil to receive the seed. Those *who are weary and heavy laden*, are *the poor in spirit*, and they shall find rest with Christ.

(2.) They are *blessed*. Now they are so, in this world. God looks graciously upon them. They are his little ones, and have their angels. To them he gives more grace; they live the most comfortable lives, and are easy to themselves and all about them, and nothing comes amiss to them; while high spirits are always uneasy.

(3.) *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. The kingdom of *grace* is composed of such; they only are fit to be members of Christ's church, which is called *the congregation of the poor* (⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾ Psalm 74:19); the kingdom of *glory* is

prepared for them. Those who thus humble themselves, and comply with God when he humbles them, shall be thus exalted. The great, high spirits go away with the glory of *the kingdoms of the earth*; but the humble, mild, and yielding souls obtain the glory of *the kingdom of heaven*. We are ready to think concerning those who are rich, and do good with their riches, that, no doubt, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; for they can thus lay up in store a good security *for the time to come*; but what shall the poor do, who have not wherewithal to do good? Why, the same happiness is promised to those who are contentedly poor, as to those who are usefully rich. If I am not able to *spend* cheerfully for his sake, if I can but *want* cheerfully for his sake, even that shall be recompensed. And do not we serve a good master then?

II. *They that mourn are happy* (v. 4); *Blessed are they that mourn*. This is another strange blessing, and fitly follows the former. The poor are accustomed to mourn, the graciously poor mourn graciously. We are apt to think, Blessed are the *merry*; but Christ, who was himself a great mourner, says, Blessed are the *mourners*. There is a sinful mourning, which is an enemy to blessedness — *the sorrow of the world*; despairing melancholy upon a spiritual account, and disconsolate grief upon a temporal account. There is a natural mourning, which may prove a friend to blessedness, by the grace of God working with it, and sanctifying the afflictions to us, for which we mourn. But there is a gracious mourning, which qualifies for blessedness, an habitual seriousness, the mind mortified to mirth, and an actual sorrow.

1. A penitential mourning for our own sins; this is *godly sorrow*, a sorrow according to God; sorrow for sin, with an eye to Christ, ³⁸²⁰Zechariah 12:10. Those are God's mourners, who live a life of repentance, who lament the corruption of their nature, and their many actual transgressions, and God's withdrawals from them; and who, out of regard to God's honour, mourn also for the sins of others, and *sigh and cry for their abominations*, ³⁸⁰⁴Ezekiel 9:4.

2. A sympathizing mourning for the afflictions of others; the mourning of those who *weep with them that weep*, are sorrowful *for the solemn assemblies, for the desolations of Zion* (³⁸¹⁸Zephaniah 3:18; ⁴¹⁰¹Psalms 137:1), especially who look with compassion on perishing souls, and *weep over them*, as Christ *over Jerusalem*.

Now these gracious mourners,

(1.) *Are blessed.* As in vain and sinful *laughter the heart is sorrowful*, so in gracious mourning *the heart* has a serious joy, a secret satisfaction, which a *stranger does not intermeddle with*. They are *blessed*, for they are like the Lord Jesus, who *was a man of sorrows*, and of whom we never read that he laughed, but often that he wept. They are armed against the many temptations that attend vain mirth, and are prepared for the comforts of a sealed pardon and a settled peace.

(2.) *They shall be comforted.* Though perhaps they are not immediately comforted, yet plentiful provision is made for their comfort; light is sown for them; and in heaven, it is certain, *they shall be comforted*, as Lazarus, ^{<265>}Luke 16:25. Note, The happiness of heaven consists in being perfectly and eternally comforted, and in the *wiping away of all tears from their eyes*. It is *the joy of our Lord; a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore*; which will be doubly sweet to those who have been prepared for them by this *godly sorrow*. Heaven will be a heaven indeed to those who go mourning thither; it will be a harvest of joy, the return of a seed-time of tears (^{<105>}Psalm 126:5, 6); a mountain of joy, to which our way lies through a vale of tears. See ^{<360>}Isaiah 66:10.

III. *The meek are happy* (v. 5); *Blessed are the meek*. The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to his word and to his rod, who follow his directions, and comply with his designs, and are *gentle towards all men* (^{<300>}Titus 3:2); who can bear provocation without being inflamed by it; are either silent, or return a soft answer; and who can show their displeasure when there is occasion for it, without being transported into any indecencies; who can be cool when others are hot; and in their patience keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of any thing else. *They are the meek*, who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified; and who would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one, having the rule of their own spirits.

These meek ones are here represented as happy, even in this world.

1. They are *blessed*, for they are like the blessed Jesus, in that wherein particularly they are to learn of him, ^{<119>}Matthew 11:29. They are like the blessed God himself, who is Lord of his anger, and in whom fury is not. They are *blessed*, for they have the most comfortable, undisturbed

enjoyment of themselves, their friends, their God; they are fit for any relation, and condition, any company; fit to live, and fit to die.

2. *They shall inherit the earth*; it is quoted from ^{<1871>}Psalm 37:11, and it is almost the only express temporal promise in all the New Testament. Not that they shall always have much of *the earth*, much less that they shall be put off with that only; but this branch of godliness has, in a special manner, *the promise of life that now is*. Meekness, however ridiculed and run down, has a real tendency to promote our health, wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world. *The meek* and quiet are observed to live the most easy lives, compared with the froward and turbulent. Or, *They shall inherit the land* (so it may be read), *the land of Canaan*, a type of heaven. So that all the blessedness of heaven above, and all the blessings of earth beneath, are the portion of the meek.

IV. *They that hunger and thirst after righteousness* are happy, v. 6. Some understand this as a further instance of our outward poverty, and a low condition in this world, which not only exposes men to injury and wrong, but makes it in vain for them to seek to have justice done to them; they *hunger and thirst after* it, but such is the power on the side of their oppressors, that they cannot have it; they desire only that which is just and equal, but it is denied them by those that *neither fear God nor regard men*. This is a melancholy case! Yet, *blessed are they*, if they suffer these hardships for and with a good conscience; let them hope in God, who will see justice done, right take place, and will deliver the poor from their oppressors, ^{<1916>}Psalm 103:6. Those who contentedly bear oppression, and quietly refer themselves to God to plead their cause, shall in due time be satisfied, abundantly satisfied, in the wisdom and kindness which shall be manifested in his appearances for them. But it is certainly to be understood spiritually, of such a desire as, being terminated on such an object, is gracious, and the work of God's grace in the soul, and qualifies for the gifts of the divine favour.

1. *Righteousness* is here put for all spiritual blessings. See ^{<1915>}Psalm 24:5; ch. 6:33. They are purchased for us by *the righteousness of Christ*; conveyed and secured by the imputation of that righteousness to us; and confirmed by the faithfulness of God. To have Christ *made of God to us righteousness*, and to be *made the righteousness of God in him*; to have *the whole man renewed in righteousness*, so as to become a new man, and

to bear the image of God; to have an interest in Christ and the promises — this is *righteousness*.

2. These we must *hunger and thirst after*. We must truly and really desire them, as one who is hungry and thirsty desires meat and drink, who cannot be satisfied with any thing but meat and drink, and will be satisfied with them, though other things be wanting. Our desires of spiritual blessings must be earnest and importunate; “*Give me these, or else I die; every thing else is dross and chaff, unsatisfying; give me these, and I have enough, though I had nothing else.*” *Hunger and thirst* are appetites that return frequently, and call for fresh satisfactions; so these holy desires rest not in any thing attained, but are carried out toward renewed pardons, and daily fresh supplies of grace. The quickened soul calls for constant meals of righteousness, grace to do the work of every day in its day, as duly as the living body calls for food. Those who *hunger and thirst* will labour for supplies; so we must not only desire spiritual blessings, but take pains for them in the use of the appointed means. Dr. Hammond, in his practical Catechism, distinguishes between *hunger and thirst*. *Hunger* is a desire of food to sustain, such as *sanctifying righteousness*. *Thirst* is the desire of drink to refresh, such as *justifying righteousness*, and the sense of our pardon.

Those who *hunger and thirst* after spiritual blessings, *are blessed* in those desires, and *shall be filled* with those blessings.

(1.) They are *blessed* in those desires. Though all desires of grace are not grace (feigned, faint desires are not), yet such a desire as this is; it is an *evidence* of something *good*, and an *earnest* of something *better*. It is a desire of God's own raising, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands. Something or other the soul will be *hungering* and *thirsting* after; therefore *they* are blessed who fasten upon the right object, which is satisfying, and not deceiving; and do not *pant after the dust of the earth*, ^{<101E>}Amos 2:7; ^{<251D>}Isaiah 55:2.

(2.) They *shall be filled* with those blessings. God will give them what they desire to complete their satisfaction. It is God only who can *fill a soul*, whose grace and favour are adequate to its just desires; and he will fill those with *grace for grace*, who, in a sense of their own emptiness, have recourse to his fulness. He *fills the hungry* (^{<101E>}Luke 1:53), *satiates* them, ^{<251D>}Jeremiah 31:25. The happiness of heaven will certainly fill the

soul; their righteousness shall be complete, the favour of God and his image, both in their full perfection.

V. The *merciful* are happy, v. 7. This, like the rest, is a paradox; for the merciful are not taken to be the wisest, nor are likely to be the richest; yet Christ pronounces them *blessed*. Those are the *merciful*, who are piously and charitably inclined to pity, help, and succour persons in misery. A man may be truly *merciful*, who has not wherewithal to be bountiful or liberal; and then God accepts the willing mind. We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must, by Christian sympathy, partake of the afflictions of our brethren; pity must be shown (^{<R64>}Job 6:14), and *bowels of mercy put on* (^{<S12>}Colossians 3:12); and, being put on, they must put forth themselves in contributing all we can for the assistance of those who are any way in misery. We must have compassion on the souls of others, and help them; pity the ignorant, and instruct them; the careless, and warn them; those who are in a state of sin, and snatch them as *brands out of the burning*. We must have compassion on those who are melancholy and in sorrow, and comfort them (^{<R65>}Job 16:5); on those whom we have advantage against, and not be rigorous and severe with them; on those who are in want, and supply them; which if we refuse to do, whatever we pretend, we *shut up the bowels of our compassion*, ^{<S15>}James 2:15, 16; ^{<G17>}John 3:17. *Draw out they soul by dealing thy bread to the hungry*, ^{<S17>}Isaiah 58:7, 10. Nay, a *good man is merciful to his beast*.

Now as to the merciful.

1. They are *blessed*; so it was said in the Old Testament; *Blessed is he that considers the poor*, ^{<S11>}Psalms 41:1. Herein they resemble God, whose goodness is his glory; in being *merciful as he is merciful*, we are, in our measure, *perfect as he is perfect*. It is an evidence of love to God; it will be a satisfaction to ourselves, to be any way instrumental for the benefit of others. One of the purest and most refined delights in this world, is that of *doing good*. In this word, *Blessed are the merciful*, is included that saying of Christ, which otherwise we find not in the gospels, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, ^{<A15>}Acts 20:35.

2. They shall obtain mercy; mercy with men, when they need it; *he that watereth, shall be watered also himself* (we know not how soon we may stand in need of kindness, and therefore should be kind); but especially mercy with God, for *with the merciful he will show himself merciful*,

^{<1825>}Psalm 18:25. The most *merciful* and charitable cannot pretend to *merit*, but must fly to mercy. The merciful shall find with God *sparing* mercy (^{<1814>}Matthew 6:14), *supplying* mercy (^{<2017>}Proverbs 19:17), *sustaining* mercy (^{<1810>}Psalm 41:2), mercy in that day (^{<5018>}2 Timothy 1:18); may, they shall *inherit the kingdom prepared for them* (^{<1824>}Matthew 25:34, 35); whereas *they* shall have *judgment without mercy* (which can be nothing short of *hell-fire*) who have *shown no mercy*.

VI. The *pure in heart* are happy (v. 8); *Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God*. This is the most comprehensive of all the beatitudes; here holiness and happiness are fully described and put together.

1. Here is the most *comprehensive character* of the blessed: they are *pure in heart*. Note, True religion consists in heart-purity. Those who are inwardly pure, show themselves to be under the power of *pure and undefiled* religion. True Christianity lies in the heart, in the *purity of heart*; the *washing* of that *from wickedness*, ^{<2014>}Jeremiah 4:14. We must lift up to God, not only clean hands, but a pure heart, ^{<1824>}Psalm 24:4, 5; ^{<5015>}1 Timothy 1:5. The heart must be *pure*, in opposition to *mixture* — an honest heart that aims well; and pure, in opposition to *pollution and defilement*; as wine *unmixed*, as water *unmuddied*. The heart must be kept *pure* from *fleshly lusts*, all unchaste thoughts and desires; and from *worldly lusts*; covetousness is called *filthy lucre*; from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, all that which come *out of the heart*, and *defiles the man*. The heart must be *purified by faith*, and entire for God; must be presented and preserved a chaste virgin to Christ. *Create in me such a clean heart, O God!*

2. Here is the most *comprehensive comfort* of the blessed; They shall see God. Note,

(1.) It is the perfection of the soul's happiness to *see God*; *seeing him*, as we may by faith in our present state, is a *heaven upon earth*; and seeing him as we shall in the future state, in the *heaven of heaven*. To see him *as he is*, face to face, and no longer through a glass darkly; to see him as ours, and to see him and enjoy him; to see him and be like him, and be satisfied with that likeness (^{<1815>}Psalm 17:15); and to see him for ever, and never lose the sight of him; this is heaven's happiness.

(2.) The happiness of seeing God is promised to those, and those only, who are *pure in heart*. None but the *pure* are capable of *seeing* God, nor

would it be a felicity to the impure. What pleasure could an unsanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God? As *he* cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, *so they* cannot endure to look upon his purity; nor shall any unclean thing enter into the new Jerusalem; but all that are *pure in heart*, all that are truly sanctified, have desires wrought in them, which nothing but the sight of God will sanctify; and divine grace will not leave those desires unsatisfied.

VII. The *peace-makers* are happy, v. 9. The wisdom that is from above is first *pure*, and then *peaceable*; the blessed ones are *pure* toward God, and *peaceable* toward men; for with reference to both, conscience must be kept *void of offence*. The *peace-makers* are those who have,

1. A *peaceable disposition*: as, to *make a lie*, is to be given and addicted to lying, so, to *make peace*, is to have a strong and hearty affection to peace. *I am for peace*, ⁴⁰⁰Psalm 120:7. It is to love, and desire, and delight in peace; to be put in it as in our element, and to study to be quiet.

2. A *peaceable conversation*; industriously, as far as we can, to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken; to hearken to proposals of peace ourselves, and to be ready to make them to others; where distance is among brethren and neighbours, to do all we can to accommodate it, and to be *repairers of the breaches*. *The making of peace* is sometimes a *thankless office*, and it is the lot of him who parts a fray, to have *blows on both sides*; yet it is a good office, and we must be forward to it. Some think that this is intended especially as a lesson for ministers, who should do all they can to reconcile those who are at variance, and to promote Christian love among those under their charge.

Now,

(1.) Such persons are *blessed*; for they have the satisfaction of *enjoying themselves*, by keeping the peace, and of being truly serviceable to others, by disposing them to peace. They are working together with Christ, who came into the world to *slay all enmities*, and to proclaim *peace on earth*.

(2.) *They shall be called the children of God*; it will be an evidence to themselves that they are so; God will own them as such, and herein they will resemble him. He is the God of peace; the Son of God is the Prince of peace; the Spirit of adoption is a Spirit of peace. Since God has declared himself reconcilable to us all, he will not own those for his children who

are implacable in their enmity to one another; for if the peacemakers are blessed, woe to the peace-breakers! Now by this it appears, that Christ never intended to have his religion propagated by fire and sword, or penal laws, or to acknowledge bigotry, or intemperate zeal, as the mark of his disciples. The children of this world love to fish in troubled waters, but the children of God are the peace-makers, the *quiet in the land*.

VIII. Those who are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, are happy. This is the greatest paradox of all, and peculiar to Christianity; and therefore it is put last, and more largely insisted upon than any of the rest, v. 10-12. This beatitude, like Pharaoh's dream, is doubled, because hardly credited, and yet *the thing is certain*; and in the latter part there is change of the person, "Blessed are *ye* — ye my disciples, and immediate followers. This is that which you, who excel in virtue, are more immediately concerned in; for you must reckon upon hardships and troubles more than other men." Observe here,

1. The case of suffering saints described; and it is a hard case, and a very piteous one.

(1.) They are persecuted, hunted, pursued, run down, as noxious beasts are, that are sought for to be destroyed; as if a Christian did *caput gerere lupinum* — *bear a wolf's head*, as an outlaw is said to do — any one that finds him may slay him; they are abandoned as the *offscouring of all things*; fined, imprisoned, banished, stripped of their estates, excluded from all places of profit and trust, scourged, racked, tortured, always delivered to death, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter. This has been the effect of the enmity of the serpent's seed against the holy seed, ever since the time of *righteous Abel*. It was so in *Old-Testament* times, as we find, ^{<815>}Hebrews 11:35, etc. Christ has told us that it would much more be so with the Christian church, and we are not to think it strange, ^{<813>}1 John 3:13. He has left us an example.

(2.) They are *reviled, and have all manner of evil said against them falsely*. Nicknames, and names of reproach, are fastened upon them, upon particular persons, and upon the generation of the righteous in the gross, to render them odious; sometimes to make them formidable, that they may be powerfully assailed; things are laid to their charge that they knew not, ^{<851>}Psalms 35:11; ^{<208>}Jeremiah 20:18; ^{<476>}Acts 17:6, 7. Those who have had no power in their hands to do them any other mischief, could yet do this;

and those who have had power to *persecute*, had found it necessary to *do this too*, to justify themselves in their barbarous usage of them; they could not have baited them, if they had not dressed them in bear-skins; nor have given them the worst of treatment, if they had not first represented them as the worst of men. They will *revile you, and persecute you*. Note, *Reviling the saints is persecuting them*, and will be found so shortly, when *hard speeches* must be accounted for (^{<4015>}Jude 1:15), and *cruel mockings*, ^{<3115>}Hebrews 11:36. They will say *all manner of evil of you falsely*; sometimes before the *seat of judgment*, as witnesses; sometimes in the *seat of the scornful*, with *hypocritical mockers at feasts*; they are the *song of the drunkards*; sometimes to face their faces, as Shimei cursed David; sometimes behind their backs, as the enemies of Jeremiah did. Note, There is no evil so black and horrid, which, at one time or other, has not been said, falsely, of Christ's disciples and followers.

(3.) All this is *for righteousness' sake* (v. 10); *for my sake*, v. 11. If for *righteousness' sake*, then for *Christ's sake*, for he is nearly interested in the work of righteousness. Enemies to righteousness are enemies to Christ. This precludes those from the blessedness who suffer *justly*, and are evil spoken of *truly* for their real crimes; let such be ashamed and confounded, it is part of their punishment; it is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes the martyr. Those suffer for *righteousness' sake*, who suffer because they will not sin against their consciences, and who suffer for doing that which is good. Whatever pretence persecutors have, it is the power of godliness that they have an enmity to; it is really Christ and his righteousness that are maligned, hated, and persecuted; *For thy sake I have borne reproach*, ^{<4900>}Psalms 69:9; ^{<4185>}Romans 8:36.

2. The comforts of suffering saints laid down.

(1.) They are *blessed*; for they now, in their life-time, receive *their evil things* (^{<2125>}Luke 16:25), and receive them upon a good account. They are *blessed*; for it is an honour to them (^{<4451>}Acts 5:41); it is an opportunity of glorifying Christ, of doing good, and of experiencing special comforts and visits of grace and tokens of his presence, ^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 1:5; ^{<2185>}Daniel 3:25; ^{<4189>}Romans 8:29.

(2.) They shall be *recompensed*; Theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*. They have at present a sure title to it, and sweet foretastes of it; and shall ere long be in possession of it. Though there be nothing in those sufferings than can, in strictness, merit of God (for the sins of the best deserve the

worst), yet this is here promised as a *reward* (v. 12); *Great is your reward in heaven*: so great, as far to transcend the service. It is *in heaven*, future, and out of sight; but well secured, out of the reach of chance, fraud, and violence. Note, God will provide that those who lose *for* him, though it be life itself, shall not lose *by* him in the end. Heaven, at last, will be an abundant recompence for all the difficulties we meet with in our way. This is that which has borne up the suffering saints in all ages — this *joy set before them*.

(3.) “*So persecuted they the prophets that were before you*, v. 12. They were *before you* in excellency, above what you are yet arrived at; they were *before you* in time, that they might be examples to you of *suffering affliction* and of *patience*, ^{<485>}James 5:10. They were in like manner persecuted and abused; and can you expect to go to heaven in a way by yourself? Was not Isaiah mocked for his *line upon line*? *Elisha* for his *bald head*? Were not all the prophets thus treated? Therefore *marvel not* at it as a *strange* thing, *murmur not* at it as a *hard* thing; it is a comfort to see the way of suffering a beaten road, and an honour to follow such leaders. That grace which was *sufficient for them*, to carry them through their sufferings, shall not be *deficient to you*. Those who are your enemies are the seed and successors of them who of old mocked the messengers of the Lord,” ^{<486>}2 Chronicles 36:16; ^{<488>}Matthew 23:31; ^{<489>}Acts 7:52.

(4.) Therefore *rejoice and be exceeding glad*, v. 12. It is not enough to be patient and content under these sufferings as under common afflictions, and not to render railing for railing; but we must rejoice, because the honour and dignity, the pleasure and advantage, of suffering for Christ, are much more considerable than the pain or shame of it. Not that we must take a *pride* in our sufferings, (that spoils all), but we must take a *pleasure* in them, as Paul (^{<490>}2 Corinthians 12:10); as knowing that Christ is herein *before-hand* with us, and that he will not be *behind-hand* with us, ^{<491>}1 Peter 4:12, 13.

^{<493>}MATTHEW 5:13-16

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Christ had lately called his disciples, and told them that they should be *fishers of men*; here he tells them further what he designed them to be —

the salt of the earth, and lights of the world, that they might be indeed what it was expected they should be.

I. *Ye are the salt of the earth.* This would encourage and support them under their sufferings, that, though they should be treated with contempt, yet they should really be blessings to the world, and the more so for their suffering thus. The prophets, who went before them, were the salt of the land of Canaan; but the apostles were the salt of *the whole earth*, for they must *go into all the world to preach the gospel*. It was a discouragement to them that they were so *few* and so *weak*. What could they do in so large a province as *the whole earth*? Nothing, if they were to work by force of arms and dint of sword; but, being to work silent as salt, one handful of that salt would diffuse its savour far and wide; would go a great way, and work insensibly and irresistibly as leaven, ^{<4133>}Matthew 13:33. The doctrine of the gospel is as *salt*; it is penetrating, *quick*, and *powerful* (^{<3042>}Hebrews 4:12); it reaches *the heart* ^{<4127>}Acts 2:37. It is cleansing, it is relishing, and preserves from putrefaction. We read of the *savour of the knowledge of Christ* (^{<4124>}2 Corinthians 2:14); for all other learning is insipid without that. An everlasting covenant is called a *covenant of salt* (^{<4129>}Numbers 18:19); and the gospel is an everlasting gospel. Salt was required in all the sacrifices (^{<4123>}Leviticus 2:13), in Ezekiel's mystical temple, ^{<3424>}Ezekiel 43:24. Now Christ's disciples having themselves learned the doctrine of the gospel, and being employed to teach it to others, were as salt. Note, Christians, and especially ministers, are the salt of the earth.

1. If they be as they should be they are *as good salt*, white, and small, and broken into many grains, but very useful and necessary. Pliny says, *Sine sale, vita humana non potest degere* — *Without salt human life cannot be sustained*. See in this,

(1.) What they are to be in themselves — seasoned with the gospel, with the salt of grace; thoughts and affections, words and actions, all seasoned with grace, ^{<5046>}Colossians 4:6. *Have salt in yourselves*, else you cannot diffuse it among others, ^{<4116>}Mark 9:50.

(2.) What they are to be to others; they must not only *be* good but *do* good, must insinuate themselves into the minds of the people, not to serve any secular interest of their own, but that they might transform them into the taste and relish of the gospel.

(3.) What great blessings they are to the world. Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, were a vast heap of unsavoury stuff, ready to putrefy; but Christ sent forth his disciples, by their lives and doctrines, to season it with knowledge and grace, and so to render it acceptable to God, to the angels, and to all that relish divine things.

(4.) How they must expect to be disposed of. They must not be laid on a heap, must not continue always together at Jerusalem, but must be scattered as salt upon the meat, here a grain and there a grain; as the Levites were dispersed in Israel, that, wherever they live, they may communicate their savour. Some have observed, that whereas it is foolishly called an ill omen to have the salt fall towards us, it is really an ill omen to have the salt fall from us.

2. If they be not, they are as *salt* that has *lost its savour*. If you, who should season others, are yourselves unsavoury, void of spiritual life, relish, and vigour; if a Christian be so, especially if a minister be so, his condition is very sad; for,

(1.) He is *irrecoverable*: *Wherewith shall it be salted?* Salt is a remedy for *unsavoury meat*, but there is no remedy for *unsavoury salt*. Christianity will give a man a relish; but if a man can take up and continue the profession of it, and yet remain flat and foolish, and graceless and insipid, no other doctrine, no other means, can be applied, to make him savoury. If Christianity do not do it, nothing will.

(2.) He is *unprofitable*: *It is thenceforth good for nothing*; what use can it be put to, in which it will not do more hurt than good? As a man without reason, so is a Christian without grace. A wicked man is the worst of creatures; a wicked Christian is the worst of men; and a wicked minister is the worst of Christians.

(3.) He is doomed to ruin and rejection; He shall be *cast out* — expelled the church and the communion of the faithful, to which he is a blot and a burden; and he shall be *trodden under foot of men*. Let God be glorified in the shame and rejection of those by whom he has been reproached, and who have made themselves fit for nothing but to be trampled upon.

II. *Ye are the light of the world*, v. 14. This also bespeaks them useful, as the former (*Sole et sale nihil utilius* — *Nothing more useful than the sun and salt*), but more glorious. All Christians are *light in the Lord*

(^{<418>}Ephesians 5:8), and must *shine as lights* (^{<3415>}Philippians 2:15), but ministers in a special manner. Christ call himself *the Light of the world* (^{<418>}John 8:12), and they are *workers together with him*, and have some of his honour put upon them. Truly *the light is sweet*, it is welcome; the light of the first day of the world was so, when it *shone out of darkness*; so is the morning light of every day; so is the gospel, and those that spread it, to all sensible people. The *world sat in darkness*, Christ raised up his disciples to shine in it; and, that they may do so, from him they borrow and derive their light.

This similitude is here explained in two things:

1. As *the lights of the world*, they are illustrious and conspicuous, and have many eyes upon them. A city that is *set on a hill cannot be hid*. The disciples of Christ, especially those who are forward and zealous in his service, become remarkable, and are taken notice of as beacons. They are for *signs* (^{<2378>}Isaiah 7:18), *men wondered at* (^{<3188>}Zechariah 3:8); all their neighbours have any eye upon them. Some admire them, commend them, rejoice in them, and study to imitate them; others envy them, hate them, censure them, and study to blast them. They are concerned therefore to *walk circumspectly*, because of *their observers*; they are as *spectacles to the world*, and must take heed of every thing that *looks ill*, because they are so much *looked at*. The disciples of Christ were obscure men before he called them, but the character he put upon them dignified them, and as preachers of the gospel they made a figure; and though they were reproached for it by some, they were respected for it by others, advanced to thrones, and made judges (^{<4231>}Luke 22:30); for Christ will honour those that honour him.

2. As the *lights of the world*, they are intended to illuminate and give light to others (v. 15), and therefore,

(1.) They shall be *set up* as lights. Christ has lighted these candles, they shall not be put under a bushel, not confined always, as they are now, to the cities of Galilee, or the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but they shall be sent into all the world. The churches are the candlesticks, the golden candlesticks, in which these lights are placed, that they light may be diffused; and the gospel is so strong a light, and carries with it so much of its own evidence, that, *like a city on a hill, it cannot be hid*, it cannot but appear to be from God, to all those who do not wilfully shut their eyes against it. It will *give light to all that are in the house*, to all that will draw

near to it, and come where it is. Those to whom it does not give light, must thank themselves; they will not be in the house with it; will not make a diligent and impartial enquiry into it, but are prejudiced against it.

(2.) They must *shine* as lights,

[1.] By their *good preaching*. The knowledge they have, they must communicate for the good of others; not put it *under a bushel*, but spread it. The talent must not be buried in a napkin, but traded with. The disciples of Christ must not muffle themselves up in privacy and obscurity, under pretence of contemplation, modesty, or self-preservation, but, *as they have received the gift, must minister the same*, ^{<417>}Luke 12:3.

[2.] By their *good living*. They must be *burning and shining lights* (^{<415>}John 5:35); must evidence, in their whole conversation, that they are indeed followers of Christ, ^{<413>}James 3:13. They must be to others for instruction, direction, quickening, and comfort, ^{<431>}Job 29:11.

See here, *First, How* our light must shine — by doing such *good works* as men *may see*, and may approve of; such works as are of *good report* among them that are without, and as will therefore give them cause to think well of Christianity. We must do good works *that may be seen* to the edification of others, but not *that they may be seen* to our own ostentation; we are bid to pray in secret, and what lies between God and our souls, must be kept to ourselves; but that which is of itself open and obvious to the sight of men, we must study to make *congruous* to our profession, and praiseworthy, ^{<408>}Philippians 4:8. Those about us must not only *hear* our good words, but *see* our good works; that they may be convinced that religion is more than a bare name, and that we do not only make a profession of it, but abide under the power of it.

Secondly, For what *end* our light must shine — “That those who see your good works may be brought, not to glorify *you* (which was the things the Pharisees aimed at, and it spoiled all their performances), but to *glorify your Father which is in heaven*.” Note, The glory of God is the great thing we must aim at in every thing we do in religion, ^{<404>}1 Peter 4:11. In this centre the lines of all our actions must meet. We must not only endeavor to glorify God ourselves, but we must do all we can to bring others to glorify him. The sight of our *good works* will do this, by furnishing them,

1. With *matter for praise*. “Let them see *your good works*, that they may see the power of God's grace in you, and may thank him for it, and give him the glory of it, who has given such power unto men.”

2. With *motives of piety*. “Let them see your good works, that they may be convinced of the truth and excellency of the Christian religion, may be provoked by a holy emulation to imitate your good works, and so may glorify God.” Note, The holy, regular, and exemplary conversation of the saints, may do much towards the conversion of sinners; those who are unacquainted with religion, may hereby be brought to know what it is. Examples teach. And those who are prejudiced against it, may hereby be brought in love with it, and thus there is a winning virtue in a godly conversation.

~~4057~~ MATTHEW 5:17-20

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Those to whom Christ preached, and for whose use he gave these instructions to his disciples, were such as in their religion had an eye,

1. To the *scriptures* of the *Old Testament* as their rule, and therein Christ here shows them they were in the right:

2. To the scribes and the Pharisees as their *example*, and therein Christ here shows them they were in the wrong; for,

I. The rule which Christ came to establish exactly agreed with the scriptures of the Old Testament, here called *the law* and *the prophets*. The *prophets* were commentators upon the law, and both together made up that rule of faith and practice which Christ found upon the throne in the Jewish church, and here he keeps it on the throne.

1. He protests against the thought of cancelling and weakening the *Old Testament*; *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets.*

(1.) “Let not the pious Jews, who have an affection for the *law and the prophets*, fear that I come to *destroy* them.” Let them be not prejudiced against Christ and his doctrine, from a jealousy that this kingdom he came to set up, would derogate from the honour of the scriptures, which they

had embraced as coming from God, and of which they had experienced the power and purity; no, let them be satisfied that Christ has no ill design upon the law and the prophets. “Let not the profane Jews, who have a disaffection to the law and the prophets, and are weary of that yoke, hope that I am come to destroy them.” Let not carnal libertines imagine that the Messiah is come to discharge them from the obligation of divine precepts and yet to secure to them divine promises, to make the happy and yet to give them leave to live as they list. Christ commands nothing now which was forbidden either by the law of nature or the moral law, nor forbids any thing which those laws had enjoined; it is a great mistake to think he does, and he here takes care to rectify the mistake; *I am not come to destroy*. The Saviour of souls is the *destroyer* of nothing but the *works of the devil*, of nothing that comes from God, much less of those excellent dictates which we have from Moses and the prophets. No, he came to *fulfil* them. That is,

[1.] To obey the commands of the law, for he was *made under the law*, ~~ROM~~ Galatians 4:4. He in all respects yielded obedience to the law, honoured his parents, sanctified the sabbath, prayed, gave alms, and did that which never any one else did, obeyed perfectly, and never broke the law in any thing.

[2.] To make good the promises of the law, and the predictions of the prophets, which did all bear witness to him. The covenant of grace is, for substance, the same now that it was then, and Christ the Mediator of it.

[3.] To answer the types of the law; thus (as bishop Tillotson expresses it), he did not make *void*, but make *good*, the ceremonial law, and manifested himself to be the Substance of all those shadows.

[4.] To fill up the defects of it, and so to complete and perfect it. Thus the word *plerosai* properly signifies. If we consider the law as a vessel that had some water in it before, he did not come to pour out the water, but to fill the vessel up to the brim; or, as a picture that is first rough-drawn, displays some outlines only of the piece intended, which are afterwards filled up; so Christ made an improvement of the law and the prophets by his additions and explications.

[5.] To carry on the same design; the Christian institutes are so far from thwarting and contradicting that which was the main design of the Jewish religion, that they promote it to the highest degree. The gospel is the *time*

of reformation (⁸⁹⁰Hebrews 9:10), not the repeal of the law, but the amendment of it, and, consequently, its establishment.

2. He asserts the perpetuity of it; that not only he designed not the abrogation of it, but that it never should be abrogated (v. 18); “*Verily I say unto you, I, the Amen, the faithful Witness, solemnly declare it, that till heaven and earth pass, when time shall be no more, and the unchangeable state of recompences shall supersede all laws, one jot, or one tittle, the least and most minute circumstance, shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;*” for what is it that God is doing in all the operations both of providence and grace, but fulfilling the scripture? Heaven and earth shall come together, and all the fulness thereof be wrapped up in ruin and confusion, rather than any word of God shall fall to the ground, or be in vain. *The word of the Lord endures for ever*, both that of the law, and that of the gospel. Observe, The care of God concerning his law extends itself even to those things that seem to be of least account in it, the iotas and the tittles; for whatever belongs to God, and bears his stamp, be it ever so little, shall be preserved. The laws of men are conscious to themselves of so much imperfection, that they allow it for a maxim, *Apices juris non sunt jura* — *The extreme points of the law are not the law*, but God will stand by and maintain every iota and every tittle of his law.

3. He gives it in charge to his disciples, carefully to preserve the law, and shows them the danger of the neglect and contempt of it (v. 19); *Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments of the law of Moses, much more any of the greater, as the Pharisees did, who neglected the weightier matters of the law, and shall teach men so as they did, who made void the commandment of God with their traditions* (⁴¹⁵Matthew 15:3), *he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.* Though the Pharisees be cried up for such teachers as should be, they shall not be employed as teachers in Christ's kingdom; but *whosoever shall do and teach them*, as Christ's disciples would, and thereby prove themselves better friends to the *Old Testament* than the Pharisees were, they, though despised by men, shall be *called great in the kingdom of heaven.* Note,

(1.) Among the commands of God there are some less than others; none absolutely little, but comparatively so. The Jews reckon the least of the commandments of the law to be that of the bird's nest (⁴²¹Deuteronomy 22:6, 7); yet even that had a significance and an intention very great and considerable.

(2.) It is a dangerous thing, in doctrine or practice, to disannul the least of God's commands; to break them, that is, to go about either to *contract the extent*, or *weaken the obligation* of them; whoever does so, will find it is at his peril. Thus to vacate any of the ten commandments, is too bold a stroke for the jealous God to pass by. it is something more than transgressing the law, it is making void the law, ⁽³⁹²⁵⁾Psalm 119:126.

(3.) That the further such corruptions as they spread, the worse they are. It is impudence enough to break the command, but is a greater degree of it to teach men so. This plainly refers to those who at this time sat in Moses' seat, and by their comments corrupted and perverted the text. Opinions that tend to the destruction of serious godliness and the vitals of religion, by corrupt glosses on the scripture, are bad when they are held, but worse when they are propagated and taught, as the word of God. He that does so, shall be called *least in the kingdom of heaven*, in the kingdom of glory; he shall never come thither, but be eternally excluded; or, rather, in the kingdom of the gospel-church. He is so far from deserving the dignity of a teacher in it, that he shall not so much as be accounted a member of it. The prophet that teaches these lies shall be the tail in that kingdom (⁽²⁹⁰⁵⁾Isaiah 9:15); when truth shall appear in its own evidence, such corrupt teachers, though cried up as the Pharisees, shall be of no account with the wise and good. Nothing makes ministers more contemptible and base than corrupting the law, ⁽³⁹²⁸⁾Malachi 2:8, 11. Those who extenuate and encourage sin, and discountenance and put contempt upon strictness in religion and serious devotion, are the dregs of the church. But, on the other hand, Those are truly honourable, and of great account in the church of Christ, who lay out themselves by their life and doctrine to promote the purity and strictness of practical religion; who both do and teach that which is good; for those who do not as they teach, pull down with one hand what they build up with the other, and give themselves the lie, and tempt men to think that all religion is a delusion; but those who speak from experience, who live up to what they preach, are truly great; they honour God, and God will honour them (⁽⁴⁹²³⁾1 Samuel 2:30), and hereafter they shall shine as the *stars in the kingdom of our Father*.

II. The righteousness which Christ came to establish by this rule, must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, v. 20. This was strange doctrine to those who looked upon the scribes and Pharisees as having arrived at the highest pitch of religion. The scribes were the most noted teachers of the law, and the Pharisees the most celebrated professors of it, and they

both sat in Moses' chair (~~402~~ Matthew 23:2), and had such a reputation among the people, that they were looked upon as super-conformable to the law, and people did not think themselves obliged to be as good as they; it was therefore a great surprise to them, to hear that they must be better than they, or they should not go to heaven; and therefore Christ here avers it with solemnity; *I say unto you*, It is so. The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to Christ and his doctrine, and were great oppressors; and yet it must be owned, that there was something commendable in them. They were much in fasting and prayer, and giving of alms; they were punctual in observing the ceremonial appointments, and made it their business to teach others; they had such an interest in the people that they ought, if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee; and yet our Lord Jesus here tells his disciples, that the religion he came to establish, did not only exclude the badness, but excel the goodness, of the scribes and Pharisees. We must do more than they, and better than they, or we shall come short of heaven. They were *partial in the law*, and laid most stress upon the ritual part of it; but we must be *universal*, and not think it enough to give the priest his tithe, but must give God our hearts. They minded only the *outside*, but we must make conscience of *inside* godliness. They aimed at the *praise and applause of men*, but we must aim at *acceptance with God*: they were *proud* of what they did in religion, and trusted to it as a *righteousness*; but we, when we have done all, must *deny ourselves*, and say, *We are unprofitable servants*, and trust only to the *righteousness of Christ*; and thus we may go beyond the scribes and Pharisees.

~~402~~ MATTHEW 5:21-26

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Christ having laid down these principles, that Moses and the prophets were still to be their rulers, but that the scribes and Pharisees were to be no longer their rulers, proceeds to expound the law in some particular instances, and to vindicate it from the corrupt glosses which those expositors had put upon it. He adds not any thing new, only limits and restrains some permissions which had been abused: and as to the precepts, shows the breadth, strictness, and spiritual nature of them, adding such explanatory statutes as made them more clear, and tended much toward the perfecting of our obedience to them. In these verses, he explains the

law of the sixth commandment, according to the true intent and full extent of it.

I. Here is the *command itself* laid down (v. 12); *We have heard it*, and remember it; he speaks *to them who know the law*, who had Moses read to them in their synagogues every sabbath-day; you have heard that it was said *by them*, or rather as it is in the margin, *to them of old time*, to your forefathers the Jews, *Thou shalt not kill*. Note, The laws of God are not novel, upstart laws, but were delivered to them of old time; they are ancient laws, but of that nature as never to be *antiquated* nor grow *obsolete*. The moral law agrees with the law of nature, and the eternal rules and reasons of good and evil, that is, the rectitude of the eternal Mind. *Killing* is here forbidden, killing ourselves, killing any other, directly or indirectly, or being any way accessory to it. The law of God, the God of life, is a hedge of protection about our lives. It was one of the precepts of Noah, ~~GEN~~Genesis 9:5, 6.

II. The exposition of this command which the Jewish teachers contended themselves with; their comment upon it was, *Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment*. This was all they had to say upon it, that wilful murderers were liable to the sword of justice, and casual ones to the judgment of the city of refuge. The courts of judgment sat in the gate of their principal cities; the judges, ordinarily, were in number twenty-three; these tried, condemned, and executed murderers; so that whoever killed, was in danger of their judgment. Now this gloss of theirs upon this commandment was faulty, for it intimated,

1. That the law of the sixth commandment was only external, and forbade no more than the act of murder, and laid to restraint upon the inward lusts, from which *wars and fightings come*. This was indeed the *proton pseudos* — *the fundamental error* of the Jewish teachers, that the divine law prohibited only the sinful act, not the sinful thought; they were disposed *haerere in cortice* — *to rest in the letter* of the law, and they never enquired into the spiritual meaning of it. Paul, while a Pharisee, did not, till, by the key of the tenth commandment, divine grace let him into the knowledge of the spiritual nature of all the rest, ~~ROM~~Romans 7:7, 14.

2. Another mistake of theirs was, that this law was merely *political* and *municipal*, given for them, and intended as a directory for their courts, and

no more; as if they only were the people, and the wisdom of the law must die with them.

III. The exposition which Christ gave of this commandment; and we are sure that according to his exposition of it we must be judged hereafter, and therefore ought to be ruled now. *The commandment is exceeding broad,* and not to be limited by the will of the flesh, or the will of men.

1. Christ tells them that *rash anger is heart-murder* (v. 22); *Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause,* breaks the sixth commandment. By our *brother* here, we are to understand any person, though ever so much our inferior, as a child, a servant, for we are all *made of one blood*. Anger is a natural passion; there are cases in which it is lawful and laudable; but it is then *sinful*, when we are angry without cause. The word is *eike*, which signifies, *sine causâ, sine effectu, et sine modo* — *without cause, without any good effect, without moderation*; so that the anger is then sinful,

(1.) When it is without any just provocation given; either for no cause, or no good cause, or no great and proportionable cause; when we are angry at children or servants for that which could not be helped, which was only a piece of forgetfulness or mistake, that we ourselves might easily have been guilty of, and for which we should not have been angry at ourselves; when we are angry upon groundless surmises, or for trivial affronts not worth speaking of.

(2.) When it is without any good end aimed at, merely to show our authority, to gratify a brutish passion, to let people know our resentments, and excite ourselves to revenge, then it is in vain, it is to do hurt; whereas if we are at any time angry, it should be to awaken the offender to repentance, and prevent his doing so again; to clear ourselves (☞ 2 Corinthians 7:11), and to give warning to others.

(3.) When it exceeds due bounds; when we are hardy and headstrong in our anger, violent and vehement, outrageous and mischievous, and when we seek the hurt of those we are displeased at. This is a breach of the sixth commandment, for he that is thus angry, would kill if he could and durst; he has taken the first step toward it; Cain's killing his brother began in anger; he is a murderer in the account of God, who knows his heart, whence murder proceeds, ☞ Matthew 15:19.

2. He tells them, that given opprobrious language to our brother is tongue-murder, calling him, *Raca*, and, *Thou fool*. When this is done with mildness and for a good end, to convince others of their vanity and folly, it is not sinful. Thus James says, *O vain man*; and Paul, *Thou fool*; and Christ himself, *O fools, and slow of heart*. But when it proceeds from anger and malice within, it is the smoke of that fire which is kindled from hell, and falls under the same character.

(1.) *Raca* is a scornful word, and comes from pride, “Thou empty fellow;” it is the language of that which Solomon calls *proud wrath* (~~134B~~ Proverbs 21:24), which tramples upon our brother — disdains *to set him even with the dogs of our flock*. *This people who knoweth not the law, is cursed*, is such language, ~~134B~~ John 7:49.

(2.) *Thou fool*, is a spiteful word, and comes from hatred; looking upon him, not only as mean and not to be honoured, but as vile and not to be loved; “Thou wicked man, thou reprobate.” The former speaks a man without sense, this (in scripture language) speaks a man without grace; the more the reproach touches his spiritual condition, the worse it is; the former is a haughty taunting of our brother, this is a malicious censuring and condemning of him, as abandoned of God. Now this is a breach of the sixth commandment; malicious slanders and censures are *poison under the tongue*, that kills secretly and slowly; *bitter words* are as *arrows* that would suddenly (~~134B~~ Psalm 64:3), or as a sword in the bones. The good name of our neighbour, which is better than life, is thereby stabbed and murdered; and it is an evidence of such an ill-will to our neighbour as would strike at his life, if it were in our power.

3. He tells them, that how light soever they made of these sins, they would certainly be reckoned for; he *that is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment* and anger of God; he that calls him *Raca*, *shall be in danger of the council*, of being punished by the Sanhedrim for reviling an Israelite; *but whosoever saith, Thou fool*, thou profane person, thou child of hell, *shall be in danger of hell-fire*, to which he condemns his brother; so the learned Dr. Whitby. Some think, in allusion to the penalties used in the several courts of judgment among the Jews, Christ shows that the sin of rash anger exposes men to lower or higher punishments, according to the degrees of its proceeding. The Jews had three capital punishments, each worse than the other; beheading, which was inflicted by the judgment; stoning, by the council or chief Sanhedrim; and burning *in*

the valley of the son of Hinnom, which was used only in extraordinary cases: it signifies, therefore, that rash anger and reproachful language are damning sins; but some are more sinful than others, and accordingly there is a greater damnation, and a sorer punishment reserved for them: Christ would thus show which sin was most sinful, by showing which it was the punishment whereof was most dreadful.

IV. From all this it is here inferred, that we ought carefully to preserve Christian love and peace with our brethren, and that if at any time a breach happens, we should labour for a reconciliation, by confessing our fault, humbling ourselves to our brother, begging his pardon, and making restitution, or offering satisfaction for wrong done in word or deed, according as the nature of the thing is; and that we should do this quickly for two reasons:

1. Because, till this be done, we are utterly unfit for communion with God in holy ordinances, v. 23, 24. The case supposed is, “*That thy brother have somewhat against thee,*” that thou has injured and offended him, either really or in his apprehension; if thou are the party offended, there needs not this delay; if thou *have aught against thy brother*, make short work of it; no more is to be done but to forgive him (⁴¹¹⁵Mark 11:25), and forgive the injury; but if the quarrel began on thy side, and the fault was either at first or afterwards thine, *so that thy brother has a controversy with thee, go and be reconciled to him before thou offer thy gift at the altar*, before thou approach solemnly to God in the gospel-services of prayer and praise, hearing the word or the sacraments. Note,

(1.) When we are addressing ourselves to any religious exercises, it is good for us to take that occasion of serious reflection and self-examination: there are many things to be *remembered*, when we *bring our gift to the altar*, and this among the rest, whether *our brother hath aught against us*; then, if ever, we are disposed to be serious, and therefore should then call ourselves to an account.

(2.) Religious exercises are not acceptable to God, if they are performed when we are in wrath; envy, malice, and uncharitableness, are sins so displeasing to God, that nothing pleases him which comes from a heart wherein they are predominant, ⁵¹¹⁸1 Timothy 2:8. Prayers made in wrath are written in gall, ²³¹⁵Isaiah 1:15; 58:4.

(3.) Love or charity is so much *better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifice*, that God will have reconciliation made with an offended brother before the gift be offered; he is content to stay for the gift, rather than have it offered while we are under guilt and engaged in a quarrel.

(4.) Though we are unfitted for communion with God, by a continual quarrel with a brother, yet that can be no excuse for the omission or neglect of our duty: "*Leave there thy gift before the altar*, lest otherwise, when thou has gone away, thou be tempted not to come again." Many give this as a reason why they do not come to church or to the communion, because they are at variance with some neighbour; and whose fault is that? One sin will never excuse another, but will rather double the guilt. Want of charity cannot justify the want of piety. The difficulty is easily got over; those who have wronged us, we must forgive; and those whom we have wronged, we must make satisfaction to, or at least make a tender of it, and desire a renewal of the friendship, so that if reconciliation be not made, it may not be our fault; *and then come, come and welcome, come and offer thy gift*, and it shall be accepted. *Therefore* we must *not let the sun go down upon our wrath* any day, because we must go to prayer before we go to sleep; much less let the sun rise *upon our wrath* on a sabbath-day, because it is a day of prayer.

2. Because, till this be done, we lie exposed to much danger, v. 25, 26. It is at our peril if we do not labour after an agreement, and that quickly, upon two accounts:

(1.) Upon a temporal account. If the offence we have done to our brother, in his body, goods, or reputation, be such as will bear action, in which he may recover considerable damages, it is our wisdom, and it is our duty to our family, to prevent that by a humble submission and a just and peaceable satisfaction; lest otherwise he recover it by law, and put us to the extremity of a prison. In such a case it is better to compound and make the best terms we can, than to stand it out; for it is in vain to contend with the law, and there is danger of our being crushed by it. Many ruin their estates by an obstinate persisting in the offences they have given, which would soon have been pacified by a little yielding at first. Solomon's advice in case of suretyship is, *Go, humble thyself*, and so secure *and deliver thyself*, ²⁰⁶¹ Proverbs 6:1-5. It is good to agree, for the law is costly. Though we must be merciful to those we have advantage against, yet we must be just to those that have advantage against us, as far as we are able.

“Agree, and compound with thine adversary quickly, lest he be exasperated by thy stubbornness, and provoked to insist upon the utmost demand, and will not make thee the abatement which at first he would have made.” A prison is an uncomfortable place to those who are brought to it by their own pride and prodigality, their own wilfulness and folly.

(2.) Upon a spiritual account. “Go, and be reconciled to thy brother, be just to him, be friendly with him, because while the quarrel continues, as thou art unfit to bring thy gift to the altar, unfit to come to the table of the Lord, so thou art unfit to die: if thou persist in this sin, there is danger lest thou be suddenly snatched away by the wrath of God, whose judgment thou canst not escape nor except against; and if that iniquity be laid to thy charge, thou art undone for ever.” Hell is a prison for all that live and die in malice and uncharitableness, for all that are contentious (⁴¹⁸Romans 2:8), and out of that prison there is no rescue, no redemption, no escape, to eternity.

This is very applicable to the great business of our reconciliation to God through Christ; Agree with him quickly, whilst thou art in the way. Note,

[1.] The great God is an Adversary to all sinners, *antidikos* — a law-adversary; he has a controversy with them, an action against them.

[2.] It is our concern to agree with him, to acquaint ourselves with him, that we may be at peace, (⁸²⁷Job 22:21; ⁴⁵⁰2 Corinthians 5:20.

[3.] It is our wisdom to do this quickly, while we are in the way. While we are alive, we are in the way; after death, it will be too late to do it; therefore give not sleep to thine eyes till it be done.

[4.] They who continue in a state of enmity to God, are continually exposed to the arrests of his justice, and the most dreadful instances of his wrath. Christ is the Judge, to whom impenitent sinners will be delivered; for all judgment is committed to the Son; he that was rejected as a Saviour, cannot be escaped as a Judge, (⁴¹⁶Revelation 6:16, 17. It is a fearful thing to be thus turned over to the Lord Jesus, when the Lamb shall become the Lion. Angels are the officers to whom Christ will deliver them (⁴¹³Matthew 13:41, 42); devils are so too, having the power of death as executioners to all unbelievers, (³⁰⁴Hebrews 2:14. Hell is the prison, into which those will be cast that continue in a state of enmity to God, (⁴²⁴2 Peter 2:4.

[5.] Damned sinners must remain in it to eternity; they shall not *depart till they have paid the uttermost farthing*, and that will not be to the utmost ages of eternity: divine justice will be for ever in the satisfying, but never satisfied.

~~4052~~ MATTHEW 5:27-32

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

We have here an exposition of the seventh commandment, given us by the same hand that made the law, and therefore was fittest to be the interpreter of it: it is the law against uncleanness, which fitly follows upon the former; *that* laid a restraint upon sinful passions, *this* upon sinful appetites, both which ought always to be under the government of reason and conscience, and if indulged, are equally pernicious.

I. The command is here laid down (v. 17), (v. 27), *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; which includes a prohibition of all other acts of uncleanness, and the desire of them: but the Pharisees, in their expositions of this command, made it to extend no further than the act of adultery, suggesting, that if the iniquity was only *regarded in the heart*, and went no further, God could not hear it, would not regard it (~~4068~~ Psalm 66:18), and therefore they thought it enough to be able to say that they were *no adulterers*, ~~4281~~ Luke 18:11.

II. It is here explained in the strictness of it, in three things, which would seem new and strange to those who had been always governed by the tradition of the elders, and took all for oracular that they taught.

1. We are here taught, that there is such a thing as *heart-adultery*, adulterous thoughts and dispositions, which never proceed to the act of adultery or fornication; and perhaps the defilement which these give to the soul, that is here so clearly asserted, was not only included in the seventh commandment, but was signified and intended in many of those ceremonial pollutions under the law, for which they were to *wash their clothes, and bathe their flesh in water*. *Whosoever looketh on a woman (not only another man's wife, as some would have it, but any woman), to lust after her, has committed adultery with her in his heart*, v. 28. This command forbids not only the acts of fornication and adultery, but,

(1.) All appetites to them, all lusting after the forbidden object; this is the beginning of the sin, *lust conceiving* (~~5015~~ James 1:15); it is a bad step towards the sin; and where the lust is dwelt upon and approved, and the wanton desire is rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, it is the commission of sin, as far as the heart can do it; there wants nothing but convenient opportunity for the sin itself. *Adultera mens est — The mind is debauched.* Ovid. Lust is conscience baffled or biassed: biassed, if it say nothing against the sin; baffled, if it prevail not in what it says.

(2.) All approaches toward them; feeding the eye with the sight of the forbidden fruit; not only looking for that end, that I may lust; but looking till I do lust, or looking to gratify the lust, where further satisfaction cannot be obtained. The eye is both the inlet and outlet of a great deal of wickedness of this kind, witness Joseph's mistress (~~6307~~ Genesis 39:7), Samson (~~0761~~ Judges 16:1), David, ~~4112~~ 2 Samuel 11:2. We read the *eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin*, ~~6244~~ 2 Peter 2:14. What need have we, therefore, with holy Job, to *make a covenant with our eyes*, to make this bargain with them that they should have the pleasure of beholding the light of the sun and the works of God, provided they would never fasten or dwell upon any thing that might occasion impure imaginations or desires; and under this penalty, that if they did, they must smart for it in penitential tears! ~~8307~~ Job 31:1. What have we the covering of the eyes for, but to restrain corrupt glances, and to keep out of their defiling impressions? This forbids also the using of any other of our senses to stir up lust. If ensnaring looks are forbidden fruit, much more unclean discourses, and wanton dalliances, the fuel and bellows of this hellish fire. These precepts are hedges about the law of heart-purity, v. 8. And if looking be lust, they who dress and deck, and expose themselves, with design to be looked at and lusted after (like Jezebel, that *painted her face and tired her head, and looked out at the window*) are no less guilty. Men sin, but devils tempt to sin.

2. That such looks and such dalliances are so very dangerous and destructive to the soul, that it is better to lose the eye and the hand that thus offend than to give way to the sin, and perish eternally in it. This lesson is here taught us, v. 29, 30. Corrupt nature would soon object against the prohibition of heart-adultery, that it is impossible to be governed by it; “*It is a hard saying, who can bear it? Flesh and blood cannot but look with pleasure upon a beautiful woman; and it is impossible to forbear lusting after and dallying with such an object.*” Such pretences as these

will scarcely be overcome by reason, and therefore must be argued against with *the terrors of the Lord*, and so they are here argued against.

(1.) It is a severe operation that is here prescribed for the preventing of these fleshly lusts. *If thy right eye offend thee, or cause thee to offend*, by wanton glances, or wanton gazings, upon forbidden objects; *if thy right hand offend thee, or cause thee to offend*, by wanton dalliances; and if it were indeed impossible, as is pretended, to govern the eye and the hand, and they have been so accustomed to these wicked practices, that they will not be withheld from them; if there be no other way to restrain them (which, blessed be God, through his grace, there is), it were better for us to *pluck out the eye*, and *cut off the hand*, though the *right eye*, and *right hand*, the more honourable and useful, than to indulge them in sin to the ruin of the soul. And if this must be submitted to, at the thought of which nature startles, much more must we resolve to *keep under the body, and to bring it into subjection*; to live a life of mortification and self-denial; to keep a constant watch over our own hearts, and to suppress the first rising of lust and corruption there; to avoid the occasions of sin, to resist the beginnings of it, and to decline the company of those who will be a snare to us, though ever so pleasing; to keep out of harm's way, and abridge ourselves in the use of lawful things, when we find them temptations to us; and to seek unto God for his grace, and depend upon that grace daily, and so to *walk in the Spirit*, as that we may not *fulfil the lusts of the flesh*; and this will be as effectual as *cutting off a right hand* or *pulling out a right eye*; and perhaps as much against the grain to flesh and blood; it is the destruction of the old man.

(2.) It is a startling argument that is made use of to enforce this prescription (v. 29), and it is repeated in the same words (v. 30), because we are loth to hear such rough things; ²³⁰⁰ *Isaiah 30:10. It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish*, though it be an eye or a hand, which can be worse spared, *and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell*. Note,

[1.] It is not unbecoming a minister of the gospel to preach of hell and damnation; nay, he *must* do it, for Christ himself did it; and we are unfaithful to our trust, if we give not warning of *the wrath to come*.

[2.] There are some sins from which we need to be *saved with fear*, particularly *fleshly lusts*, which are such *natural brute beasts* as cannot be

checked, but by being frightened; cannot be kept from a forbidden tree, but by *cherubim, with a flaming sword*.

[3.] When we are tempted to think it hard to *deny ourselves*, and to *crucify fleshly lusts*, we ought to consider how much harder it will be to lie for ever in *the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*; those do not know or do not believe what hell is, that will rather venture their eternal ruin in those flames, than deny themselves the gratification of a base and brutish lust.

[4.] In hell there will be torments for the body; the *whole body will be cast into hell*, and there will be torment in every part of it; so that if we have a care of our own bodies, we shall *possess them in sanctification and honour*, and *not in the lusts of uncleanness*.

[5.] Even those duties that are most unpleasant to flesh and blood, are *profitable for us*; and our Master requires nothing from us but what he knows to be for our advantage.

3. That men's divorcing of their wives upon dislike, or for any other cause except adultery, however tolerated and practised among the Jews, was a violation of the seventh commandment, as it opened a door to adultery, v. 31, 32. Here observe,

(1.) How the matter now stood with reference to divorce. *It hath been said* (he does not say as before, *It hath been said by them of old time*, because this was not a precept, as those were, though the Pharisees were willing so to understand it, ⁴⁰⁰Matthew 19:7, but only a permission), "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce*; let him not think to do it by word of mouth, when he is in a passion; but let him do it deliberately, by a legal instrument in writing, attested by witnesses; if he will dissolve the matrimonial bond, let him do it solemnly." Thus the law had prevented rash and hasty divorces; and perhaps at first, when writing was not so common among the Jews, that made divorces rare things; but in process of time it became very common, and this direction of how to do it, when there was just cause for it, was construed into a permission of it for any cause, ⁴⁰⁰Matthew 19:3.

(2.) How this matter was rectified and amended by our Saviour. He reduced the ordinance of marriage to its primitive institution: *They two shall be one flesh*, not to be easily separated, and therefore divorce is not

to be allowed, except in case of adultery, which breaks the marriage covenant; but he that puts away his wife upon any other pretence, *causeth her to commit adultery*, and him also that shall marry her when she is thus divorced. Note, Those who lead others into temptation to sin, or leave them in it, or expose them to it, make themselves guilty of their sin, and will be accountable for it. This is one way of being *partaker with adulterers* ^{<418>}Psalm 50:18.

^{<418>}MATTHEW 5:33-37

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

We have here an exposition of the third commandment, which we are the more concerned right to understand, because it is particularly said, that *God will not hold him guiltless*, however he may hold himself, who breaks this commandment, by *taking the name of the Lord in vain*. Now as to this command,

I. It is agreed on all hands that it forbids perjury, forswearing, and the violation of oaths and vows, v. 33. This was said to them of old time, and is the true intent and meaning of the third commandment. *Thou shalt not use, or take up, the name of God* (as we do by an oath) *in vain, or unto vanity, or a lie*. *He hath not lift up his soul unto vanity*, is expounded in the next words, *nor sworn deceitfully*, ^{<424>}Psalm 24:4. Perjury is a sin condemned by the light of nature, as a complication of impiety toward God and injustice toward man, and as rendering a man highly obnoxious to the divine wrath, which was always judged to follow so infallibly upon that sin, that the forms of swearing were commonly turned into execrations or imprecations; as that, *God do so to me, and more also*; and with us, *So help me God*; wishing I may never have any help from God, if I swear falsely. Thus, by the consent of nations, have men cursed themselves, not doubting but that God would curse them, if they lied against the truth then, when they solemnly called God to witness to it.

It is added, from some other scriptures, *but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths* (^{<480>}Numbers 30:2); which may be meant, either,

1. Of those promises to which God is a party, vows made to God; these must be punctually paid (^{<494>}Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5): or,

2. Of those promises made to our brethren, to which God was a Witness, he being appealed to concerning our sincerity; these must be *performed to the Lord*, with an eye to him, and for his sake: for to him, by ratifying the promises with an oath, we have made ourselves debtors; and if we break a promise so ratified, *we have not lied unto men only, but unto God*.

II. It is here added, that the commandment does not only forbid false swearing, but all rash, unnecessary swearing: *Swear not at all*, v. 34; Compare ³⁴⁵²James 5:12. Not that all swearing is sinful; so far from that, if rightly done, it is a part of religious worship, and we in it *give unto God the glory due to his name*. See ⁴⁰⁶³Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; ²³⁵³Isaiah 45:23; ²⁴⁴²Jeremiah 4:2. We find Paul confirming what he said by such solemnities (⁴⁰²³2 Corinthians 1:23), when there was a necessity for it. In swearing, we pawn the truth of something known, to confirm the truth of something doubtful or unknown; we appeal to a greater knowledge, to a higher court, and imprecate the vengeance of a righteous Judge, if we swear deceitfully.

Now the mind of Christ in this matter is,

1. That we must *not swear at all*, but when we are duly called to it, and justice or charity to our brother, or respect to the commonwealth, make it necessary for *the end of strife* (³⁰⁶⁶Hebrews 6:16), of which necessity the civil magistrate is ordinarily to be the judge. We may be sworn, but we must now swear; we may be adjured, and so obliged to it, but we must not thrust ourselves upon it for our own worldly advantage.

2. That we must not swear lightly and irreverently, in common discourse: it is a very great sin to make a ludicrous appeal to the glorious Majesty of heaven, which, being a sacred thing, ought always to be very serious: it is a gross profanation of God's holy name, and of one of the holy things which the *children of Israel sanctify to the Lord*: it is a sin that has no cloak, no excuse for it, and therefore a sign of a graceless heart, in which enmity to God reigns: *Thine enemies take thy name in vain*.

3. That we must in a special manner avoid promissory oaths, of which Christ more particularly speaks here, for they are oaths that are to be performed. The influence of an affirmative oath immediately ceases, when we have faithfully discovered the truth, and the whole truth; but a promissory oath binds so long, and may be so many ways broken, by the surprise as well as strength of a temptation, that it is not to be used but

upon great necessity: the frequent requiring and using of oaths, is a reflection upon Christians, who should be of such acknowledged fidelity, as that their sober words should be as sacred as their solemn oaths.

4. That we must not swear by any other creature. It should seem there were some, who, in civility (as they thought) to the name of God, would not make use of that in swearing, but would swear *by heaven or earth, etc.* This Christ forbids here (v. 34) and shows that there is nothing we can swear by, but it is some way or other related to God, who is the Fountain of all beings, and therefore that it is as dangerous to swear by them, as it is to swear by God himself: it is the verity of the creature that is laid at stake; now that cannot be an instrument of testimony, but as it has regard to God, who is the *summum verum* — *the chief Truth*. As for instance,

(1.) *Swear not by the heaven;* “As sure as there is a heaven, this is true;” *for it is God's throne*, where he resides, and in a particular manner manifests his glory, as a Prince upon his throne: this being the inseparable dignity of the upper world, you cannot *swear by heaven*, but you swear by God himself.

(2.) *Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool.* He governs the motions of this lower world; as he rules in heaven, so he rules over the earth; and though under his feet, yet it is also under his eye and care, and stands in relation to him as his, ^{<121>}Psalm 24:1. *The earth is the Lord's;* so that in swearing by it, you swear by its Owner.

(3.) *Neither by Jerusalem*, a place for which the Jews had such a veneration, that they could not speak of any thing more sacred to *swear by*; but beside the common reference Jerusalem has to God, as part of the earth, it is in special relation to him, *for it is the city of the great King* (^{<122>}Psalm 48:2), *the city of God* (^{<123>}Psalm 46:4), he is therefore interested in it, and in every oath taken by it.

(4.) “*Neither shalt thou swear by the head;* though it be near thee, and an essential part of thee, yet it is more God's than thine; for he made it, and formed all the springs and powers of it; whereas thou thyself canst not, from any natural intrinsic influence, change the colour of *one hair*, so as to make it *white or black*; so that thou canst not *swear by thy head*, but thou swearest by him who is the *Life of thy head*, and *the Lifter up of it.*”
^{<124>}Psalm 3:3.

5. That therefore in all our communications we must content ourselves with, *Yea, yea, and nay, nay*, v. 37. In ordinary discourse, if we affirm a thing, let us only say, *Yea*, it is so; and, if need be, to evidence our assurance of a thing, we may double it, and say, *Yea, yea*, indeed it is so: *Verily, verily*, was our Saviour's *yea, yea*. So if we deny a thing, let it suffice to say, *No*; or if it be requisite, to repeat the denial, and say, *No, no*; and if our fidelity be known, that will suffice to gain us credit; and if it be questioned, to back what we say with swearing and cursing, is but to render it more suspicious. They who can *swallow* a profane oath, will not *strain at a lie*. It is a pity that this, which Christ puts in the mouths of all his disciples, should be fastened, as a name of reproach, upon a sect faulty enough other ways, when (as Dr. Hammond says) we are not forbidden any more than *yea* and *nay*, but are in a manner directed to the use of that.

The reason is observable; *For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*, though it do not amount to the iniquity of an oath. It comes *ek tou Diabolou*; so an ancient copy has it: it comes *from the Devil*, the evil one; it comes from the corruption of men's nature, from passion and vehemence; from a reigning vanity in the mind, and a contempt of sacred things: it comes from that deceitfulness which is in men, *All men are liars*; therefore men use these protestations, because they are distrustful one of another, and think they cannot be believed without them. Note, Christians should, for the credit of their religion, avoid not only that which is in itself evil, but *that which cometh of evil*, and has *the appearance of it*. That may be suspected as a bad thing, which comes from a bad cause. An oath is physic, which supposes a disease.

4158 MATTHEW 5:38-42

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In these verses the law of retaliation is expounded, and in a manner repealed. Observe,

I. What the *Old-Testament permission* was, in case of injury; and here the expression is only, *Ye have heard that is has been said*; not, as before, concerning the commands of the decalogue, *that it has been said by, or to, them of old time*. It was a command, that every one should of necessity require such satisfaction; but they might lawfully insist upon it, if they

pleased; *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*. This we find, ^{<B27>}Exodus 21:24; ^{<B28>}Leviticus 24:20; ^{<B29>}Deuteronomy 19:21; in all which places it is appointed to be done by the magistrate, who *bears not the sword in vain, but is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath*, ^{<B30>}Romans 13:4. It was a direction to the judges of the Jewish nation what punishment to inflict in case of maims, for terror to such as would do mischief on the one hand, and for a restraint to such as have mischief done to them on the other hand, that they may not insist on a greater punishment than is proper: it is not *a life for an eye, nor a limb for a tooth*, but observe a proportion; and it is intimated (^{<B31>}Numbers 35:31), that the forfeiture in this case might be redeemed with money; for when it is provided that *no ransom shall be taken for the life of a murderer*, it is supposed that for maims a pecuniary satisfaction was allowed.

But some of the Jewish teachers, who were not the most compassionate men in the world, insisted upon it as necessary that such revenge should be taken, even by private persons themselves, and that there was no room left for remission, or the acceptance of satisfaction. Even now, when they were under the government of the Roman magistrates, and consequently the judicial law fell to the ground of course, yet they were still zealous for any thing that looked harsh and severe.

Now, so far this is in force with us, as a direction to magistrates, to use the sword of justice according to the good and wholesome laws of the land, for the terror of evil-doers, and the vindication of the oppressed. That judge *neither feared God nor regarded man*, who would not *avenge* the poor widow of her adversary, ^{<B32>}Luke 18:2, 3. And it is in force as a rule to lawgivers, to provide accordingly, and wisely to apportion punishments to crimes, for the restraint of rapine and violence, and the protection of innocency.

II. What the *New-Testament precept* is, as to the complainant himself, his duty is, to *forgive the injury* as done to himself, and no further to insist upon the punishment of it than is necessary to the public good: and this precept is consonant to the meekness of Christ, and the gentleness of his yoke.

Two things Christ teaches us here:

1. We must not be revengeful (v. 39); *I say unto you, that ye resist not evil*; — the evil person that is injurious to you. The resisting of any ill

attempt upon us, is here as generally and expressly forbidden, as *the resisting of the higher powers* is (^{41P}Romans 13:2); and yet this does not repeal the law of self-preservation, and the care we are to take of our families; we may *avoid evil*, and may *resist* it, so far as is necessary to our own security; but we must not *render evil for evil*, must not bear a grudge, nor avenge ourselves, nor study to be even with those that have treated us unkindly, but we must go beyond them by forgiving them, ^{31P}Proverbs 20:22; 24:29; 25:21, 22; ^{41P}Romans 12:7. The law of retaliation must be made consistent with the law of love: nor, if any have injured us, is our recompence in our own hands, but in the hands of God, to whose wrath we must give place; and sometimes in the hands of his viceregents, where it is necessary for the preservation of the public peace; but it will not justify us in hurting our brother to say that he began, for it is the second blow that makes the quarrel; and when we were injured, we had an opportunity not to justify our injuring him, but to show ourselves the true disciples of Christ, by forgiving him.

Three things our Saviour specifies, to show that Christians must patiently yield to those who bear hard upon them, rather than contend; and these include others.

(1.) A blow on the cheek, which is an injury to me in my body; “*Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek,*” which is not only a hurt, but an affront and indignity (^{41P}2 Corinthians 11:20), if a man in anger or scorn thus abuse thee, “*turn to him the other cheek;*” that is, “instead of avenging that injury, prepare for another, and bear it patiently: give not the rude man as good as he brings; do not challenge him, nor enter an action against him; if it be necessary to the public peace that he be bound to his good behaviour, leave that to the magistrate; but for thine own part, it will ordinarily be the wisest course to pass it by, and take no further notice of it: there are no bones broken, no great harm done, forgive it and forget it; and if proud fools think the worse of thee, and laugh at thee for it, all wise men will value and honour thee for it, as a follower of the blessed Jesus, who, though he was the Judge of Israel, did not smite those who smote him on the cheek,” ^{31P}Micah 5:1. Though this may perhaps, with some base spirits, expose us to the like affront another time, and so it is, in effect, to *turn the other cheek*, yet let not that disturb us, but let us trust God and his providence to protect us in the way of our duty. Perhaps, the forgiving of one injury may prevent another, when the avenging of it would but draw on another; some will be overcome by submission, who

by resistance would but be the more exasperated, ¹⁵²Proverbs 25:22. However, our recompence is in Christ's hands, who will reward us with eternal glory for the shame we thus patiently endure; and though it be not directly inflicted, it if be quietly borne for conscience' sake, and in conformity to Christ's example, it shall be put upon the score of suffering for Christ.

(2.) The loss of a coat, which is a wrong to me in my estate (v. 40); *If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat.* It is a hard case.

Note, It is common for legal processes to be made use of for the doing of greatest injuries. Though judges be just and circumspect, yet it is possible for bad men who make no conscience of oaths and forgeries, by course of law to force off the coat from a man's back. *Marvel not at the matter* (¹⁵³Ecclesiastes 5:8), but, in such a case, rather than go to the law by way of revenge, rather than exhibit a cross bill, or stand out to the utmost, in defence of that which is thy undoubted right, *let him even take thy cloak also.* If the matter be small, which we may lose without an considerable damage to our families, it is good to submit to it for peace' sake. "It will not cost thee so much to buy another cloak, as it will cost thee by course of law to recover that; and therefore unless thou canst get it again by fair means, it is better to let him take it."

(3.) The going a mile by constraint, which is a wrong to me in my liberty (v. 41); "*Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, to run an errand for him, or to wait upon him, grudge not at it, but go with him two miles rather than fall out with him:*" say not, "I would do it, if I were not compelled to it, but I hate to be forced;" rather say, "Therefore I will do it, for otherwise there will be a quarrel;" and it is better to serve him, than to serve thy own lusts of pride and revenge. Some give this sense of it: The Jews taught that the disciples of the wise, and the students of the law, were not to be pressed, as others might, by the king's officers, to travel upon the public service; but Christ will not have his disciples to insist upon this privilege, but to comply rather than offend the government. The sum of all is, that Christians must not be litigious; small injuries must be submitted to, and no notice taken of them; and if the injury be such as requires us to seek reparation, it must be for a good end, and without thought of revenge: though we must not invite injuries, yet we must meet them cheerfully in the way of duty, and make the best of them. If any say, Flesh and blood cannot pass by such an affront, let them remember, that *flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

2. We must be charitable and beneficent (v. 42); must not only do no hurt to our neighbours, but labour to do them all the good we can.

(1.) We must be ready to give; “*Give to him that asketh thee.* If thou has an ability, look upon the request of the poor as giving thee an opportunity for the duty of almsgiving.” When a real object of charity presents itself, we should give at the first word: *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight*; yet the affairs of our charity must be *guided with discretion* (~~415~~ Psalm 112:5), lest we give that to the idle and unworthy, which should be given to those that are necessitous, and deserve well. What God says to us, we should be ready to say to our poor brethren, *Ask, and it shall be given you.*

(2.) We must be ready to lend. This is sometimes as great a piece of charity as giving; as it not only relieves the present exigency, but obliges the borrower to providence, industry, and honesty; and therefore, “*From him that would borrow of thee something to live on, or something to trade on, turn not thou away*: shun not those that thou knowest have such a request to make of thee, nor contrive excuses to shake them off.” Be easy of access to him *that would borrow*: though he be bashful, and have not confidence to make known his case and beg the favour, yet thou knowest both his need and his desire, and therefore offer him the kindness. *Exorabor antequam rogor; honestis precibus occuram — I will be prevailed on before I am entreated; I will anticipate the becoming petition.* Seneca, *De Vitæ Beatf.* It becomes us to be thus forward in acts of kindness, for before we call, God hears us, and *prevents us with the blessings of his goodness.*

~~415~~ MATTHEW 5:43-48

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

We have here, lastly, an exposition of that great fundamental law of the second table, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, which was the fulfilling of the law.

I. See here how this law was corrupted by the comments of the Jewish teachers, v. 43. God said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*; and by *neighbour* they understood those only of their own country, nation, and religion; and

those only that they were pleased to look upon as their friends: yet this was not the worst; from this command, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, they were willing to infer what God never designed; *Thou shalt hate thine enemy*; and they looked upon whom they pleased as their enemies, thus making void the great command of God by their traditions, though there were express laws to the contrary, ⁽¹²³⁴⁾Exodus 23:4, 5; ⁽¹²³⁵⁾Deuteronomy 23:7. *Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, nor an Egyptian*, though these nations had been as much enemies to Israel as any whatsoever. It was true, God appointed them to destroy the seven devoted nations of Canaan, and not to make leagues with them; but there was a particular reason for it — to make room for Israel, and that they might not be *snares to them*; but it was very ill-natured from hence to infer, that they must hate all their enemies; yet the moral philosophy of the heathen then allowed this. It is Cicero's rule, *Nemini nocere nisi prius lacessitum injurif* — *To injure no one, unless previously injured. De Offic.* See how willing corrupt passions are to fetch countenance from the word of God, and to *take occasion by the commandment* to justify themselves.

II. See how it is cleared by the command of the Lord Jesus, who teaches us another lesson: “*But I say unto you, I, who come to be the great Peace-Maker, the general Reconciler, who loved you when you were strangers and enemies, I say, Love your enemies,*” v. 44. Though men are ever so bad themselves, and carry it ever so basely towards us, yet that does not discharge us from the great debt we owe them, of love to our kind, love to our kin. We cannot but find ourselves very prone to wish the hurt, or at least very coldly to desire the good, of those *that hate* us, and have been abusive to us; but that which is at the bottom hereof is a root of bitterness, which must be plucked up, and a remnant of corrupt nature which grace must conquer. Note, it is the great duty of Christians to *love their enemies*; we cannot have complacency in one that is openly wicked and profane, nor put a confidence in one that we know to be deceitful; nor are we to love all alike; but we must pay respect to the human nature, and so far *honour all men*: we must take notice, with pleasure, of that even in our enemies which is amiable and commendable; ingenuousness, good temper, learning, and moral virtue, kindness to others, profession of religion, etc., and love that, though they are our enemies. We must have a compassion for them, and a good will toward them. We are here told,

1. That we must *speak* well of them: *Bless them that curse you*. When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly

words, and *not render railing for railing*; behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any thing more. See ~~xxx~~1 Peter 3:9. They, in whose tongues is *the law of kindness*, can give good words to those who give bad words to them.

2. That we must *do well* to them: “*Do good to them that hate you*, and that will be a better proof of love than good words. Be ready to do them all the real kindness that you can, and glad of an opportunity to do it, in their bodies, estates, names, families; and especially to do good to their souls.” It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, that the way to make him a friend was to do him an ill turn; so many did he serve who had disoblged him.

3. We must *pray for them*: *Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you*. Note,

(1.) It is no new thing for the most excellent saints to be hated, and cursed, and persecuted, and despitefully used, by wicked people; Christ himself was so treated.

(2.) That when at any time we meet with such usage, we have an opportunity of showing our conformity both to the precept and to the example of Christ, by praying for them who thus abuse us. If we cannot otherwise testify our love to them, yet this way we may without ostentation, and it is such a way as surely we durst not dissemble in. We must pray that God will forgive them, that they may never fare the worse for any thing they have done against us, and that he would make them to be at peace with us; and this is one way of making them so. Plutarch, in his Laconic Apophthegms, has this of Aristo; when one commended Cleomenes's saying, who, being asked *what a good king should do*, replied, *Tous men philous euergetein, tous de echthrous kakos poiein* — *Good turns to his friends, and evil to his enemies*; he said, How much better is it *tous men philous euergetein, tous de echthrous philous poiein* — *to do good to our friends, and make friends of our enemies*. This is *heaping coals of fire on their heads*.

Two reasons are here given to enforce this command (which sounds so harsh) of *loving our enemies*. We must do it,

[1.] That we may be *like God our Father*; “that ye may be, may approve yourselves to be, *the children of your Father which is in heaven*.” Can we

write a better copy? It is a copy in which love to the worst of enemies is reconciled to, and consistent with, infinite purity and holiness. God *maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth rain, on the just and the unjust*, v. 45. Note, *First*, *Sunshine* and *rain* are great blessings to the world, and they come from God. It is *his sun* that *shines*, and the rain is sent by him. They do not come of course, or by chance, but from God. *Secondly*, Common mercies must be valued as instances and proofs of the goodness of God, who in them shows himself a bountiful Benefactor to the world of mankind, who would be very miserable without these favours, and are utterly unworthy of the least of them. *Thirdly*, These gifts of common providence are dispensed indifferently to *good* and *evil, just* and *unjust*; so that we cannot know *love* and *hatred* by what is *before us*, but by what is *within us*; not by the shining of the sun on our heads, but by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in our hearts. *Fourthly*, The worst of men partake of the comforts of this life in common with others, though they abuse them, and fight against God with his own weapons; which is an amazing instance of God's patience and bounty. It was but once that God forbade his sun to shine on the Egyptians, when the Israelites had *light in their dwellings*; God could make such a distinction every day. *Fifthly*, The gifts of God's bounty to wicked men that are in rebellion against him, teach us to *do good to those that hate us*; especially considering, that though there is in us a carnal mind which is enmity to God, yet we share in his bounty. *Sixthly*, Those only will be accepted as the children of God, who study to resemble him, particularly in his goodness.

[2.] That we may herein *do more than others*, v. 46, 47. *First*, *Publicans love their friends*. Nature inclines them to it; interest directs them to it. To do good to them who do good to us, is a common piece of humanity, which even those whom the Jews hated and despised could give as good proofs as of the best of them. The publicans were men of no good fame, yet they were grateful to such as had helped them to their places, and courteous to those they had a dependence upon; and shall we be no better than they? In doing this we serve ourselves and consult our own advantage; and what reward can we expect for that, unless a regard to God, and a sense of duty, carrying us further than our natural inclination and worldly interest? *Secondly*, We must therefore love our enemies, that we may exceed them. If we must go beyond scribes and Pharisees, much more beyond publicans. Note, Christianity is something more than humanity. It is a serious question, and which we should frequently put to

ourselves, “*What do we more than others? What excellent thing do we do? We know more than others; we talk more of the things of God than others; we profess, and have promised, more than others; God has done more for us, and therefore justly expects more from us than from others; the glory of God is more concerned in us than in others; but what do we more than others? Wherein do we live above the rate of the children of this world? Are we not carnal, and do we not walk as men, below the character of Christians? In this especially we must do more than others, that while every one will render good for good, we must render good for evil; and this will speak a nobler principle, and is consonant to a higher rule, than the most of men act by. Others salute their brethren, they embrace those of their own party, and way, and opinion; but we must not so confine our respect, but love our enemies, otherwise what reward have we? We cannot expect the reward of Christians, if we rise no higher than the virtue of publicans.*” Note, Those who promise themselves a reward above others must study to *do more than others.*

Lastly, Our Saviour concludes this subject with this exhortation (v. 48), *Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Which may be understood,

1. In general, including all those things wherein we must be *followers of God as dear children.* Note, It is the duty of Christians to desire, and aim at, and press toward a perfection in grace and holiness, ^{<1182>}Philippians 3:12-14. And therein we must study to conform ourselves to the example of our heavenly Father, ^{<1115>}1 Peter 1:15, 16. Or, **2.** In this particular before mentioned, of *doing good to our enemies;* see ^{<1165>}Luke 6:36. It is God's perfection to *forgive injuries* and to *entertain strangers*, and to do good to the evil and unthankful, and it will be ours to be like him. We that owe *so much*, that owe *our all*, to the divine bounty, ought to copy it out as well as we can.