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**COMMENTARY**

**COMMENTARY ON THE  
NEW TESTAMENT**

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AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF  
 THE GOSPEL  
 ACCORDING TO  
 ST. MATTHEW

Matthew, surnamed Levi, before his conversion was a publican, or tax-gatherer under the Romans at Capernaum. He is generally allowed to have written his Gospel before any other of the evangelists. The contents of this Gospel, and the evidence of ancient writers, show that it was written primarily for the use of the Jewish nation. The fulfillment of prophecy was regarded by the Jews as strong evidence, therefore this is especially dwelt upon by St. Matthew. Here are particularly selected such parts of our Savors history and discourses as were best suited to awaken the Jewish nation to a sense of their sins; to remove their erroneous expectations of an earthly kingdom; to abate their pride and self-conceit; to teach them the spiritual nature and extent of the gospel; and to prepare them for the admission of the Gentiles into the church.

## CHAPTER 1

*The genealogy of Jesus. (1-17) An angel appears to Joseph. (18-25)*

**Matthew 1:1**

**Vs. 1-17:** Concerning this genealogy of our Savior, observe the chief intention. It is not a needless genealogy. It is not a vain-glorious one, as those of great men often are. It proves that our Lord Jesus is of the nation and family out of which the Messiah was to arise. The promise of the blessing was made to Abraham and his seed; of the dominion, to David and his seed. It was promised to Abraham that Christ should descend from him, <sup><0118></sup>Genesis 12:3; <sup><0228></sup>22:18; and to David that he should descend from him, <sup><0170></sup>2 Samuel 7:12; <sup><0300></sup>Psalms 89:3, etc.; <sup><0421></sup>132:11; and, therefore, unless

Jesus is a son of David, and a son of Abraham, he is not the Messiah. Now this is here proved from well-known records. When the Son of God was pleased to take our nature, he came near to us, in our villainy, wretched condition; but he was perfectly free from sin: and while we read the names in his genealogy, we should not forget how low the Lord of glory stooped to save the human race.

**Matthew 1:18**

**Vs. 18-25:** Let us look to the circumstances under which the Son of God entered into this lower world, till we learn to despise the vain honors of this world, when compared with piety and holiness. The mystery of Christ's becoming man is to be adored, not curiously inquired into. It was so ordered that Christ should partake of our nature, yet that he should be pure from the defilement of original sin, which has been communicated to all the race of Adam. Observe, it is the thoughtful, not the unthinking, whom God will guide. God's time to come with instruction to his people, is when they are at a loss. Divine comforts most delight the soul when under the pressure of perplexed thoughts. Joseph is told that Mary should bring forth the Savior of the world. He was to call his name Jesus, a Savior. Jesus is the same name with Joshua. And the reason of that name is clear, for those whom Christ saves, he saves from their sins; from the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, and from the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace. In saving them from sin, he saves them from wrath and the curse, and all misery, here and hereafter. Christ came to save his people, not in their sins, but from their sins; and so to redeem them from among men, to himself, who is separate from sinners. Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, speedily, without delay, and cheerfully, without dispute. By applying the general rules of the written word, we should in all the steps of our lives, particularly the great turns of them, take direction from God, and we shall find this safe and comfortable.

## CHAPTER 2

*The wise men's search after Christ. (1-8) The wise men worship Jesus. (9-12) Jesus carried into Egypt. (13-15) Herod causes the infants of Bethlehem to be massacred. (16-18) Death of Herod, Jesus brought to Nazareth. (19-23)*

### ◀**Matthew 2:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** Those who live at the greatest distance from the means of grace often use most diligence, and learn to know the most of Christ and his salvation. But no curious arts, or mere human learning, can direct men unto him. We must learn of Christ by attending to the word of God, as a light that shineth in a dark place, and by seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And those in whose hearts the day-star is risen, to give them any thing of the knowledge of Christ, make it their business to worship him. Though Herod was very old, and never had shown affection for his family, and was not himself likely to live till a new-born infant had grown up to manhood, he began to be troubled with the dread of a rival. He understood not the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom. Let us beware of a dead faith. A man may be persuaded of many truths, and yet may hate them, because they interfere with his ambition, or sinful indulgences. Such a belief will make him uneasy, and the more resolved to oppose the truth and the cause of God; and he may be foolish enough to hope for success therein.

### ◀**Matthew 2:9**

**Vs. 9-12:** What joy these wise men felt upon this sight of the star, none know so well as those who, after a long and melancholy night of temptation and desertion, under the power of a spirit of bondage, at length receive the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God. We may well think what a disappointment it was to them, when they found a cottage was his palace, and his own poor mother the only attendant he had. However, these wise men did not think themselves baffled; but having found the King they sought, they presented their gifts to him. The humble inquirer after Christ will not be stumbled at finding him and his disciples in obscure cottages, after having in vain

sought them in palaces and populous cities. Is a soul busy, seeking after Christ? Would it worship him, and does it say, Alas! I am a foolish and poor creature, and have nothing to offer? Nothing! Hast thou not a heart, though unworthy of him, dark, hard, and foul? Give it to him as it is, and be willing that he use and dispose of it as it pleases him; he will take it, and will make it better, and thou shalt never repent having given it to him. He shall frame it to his own likeness, and will give thee himself, and be thine for ever. The gifts the wise men presented were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Providence sent these as a seasonable relief to Joseph and Mary in their present poor condition. Thus our heavenly Father, who knows what his children need, uses some as stewards to supply the wants of others, and can provide for them, even from the ends of the earth.

### ◀1123 Matthew 2:13

**Vs. 13-15:** Egypt had been a house of bondage to Israel, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel; yet it is to be a place of refuge to the holy Child Jesus. God, when he pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes. This was a trial of the faith of Joseph and Mary. But their faith, being tried, was found firm. If we and our infants are at any time in trouble, let us remember the straits in which Christ was when an infant.

### ◀1124 Matthew 2:16

**Vs. 16-18:** Herod killed all the male children, not only in Bethlehem, but in all the villages of that city. Unbridled wrath, armed with an unlawful power, often carries men to absurd cruelties. It was no unrighteous thing with God to permit this; every life is forfeited to his justice as soon as it begins. The diseases and deaths of little children are proofs of original sin. But the murder of these infants was their martyrdom. How early did persecution against Christ and his kingdom begin! Herod now thought that he had baffled the Old Testament prophecies, and the efforts of the wise men in finding Christ; but whatever crafty, cruel devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

### ◀1125 Matthew 2:19

**Vs. 19-23:** Egypt may serve to sojourn in, or take shelter in, for awhile, but not to abide in. Christ was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,

to them he must return. Did we but look upon the world as our Egypt, the place of our bondage and banishment, and heaven only as our Canaan, our home, our rest, we should as readily arise and depart thither, when we are called for, as Joseph did out of Egypt. The family must settle in Galilee. Nazareth was a place held in bad esteem, and Christ was crucified with this accusation, Jesus the Nazarene. Wherever Providence allots the bounds of our habitation, we must expect to share the reproach of Christ; yet we may glory in being called by his name, sure that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him.

## CHAPTER 3

*John the Baptist, His preaching, manner of life, and baptism. (1-6)  
John reproves the Pharisees and Sadducees. (7-12) The baptism of  
Jesus. (13-17)*

### ◀491▶ **Matthew 3:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** After Malachi there was no prophet until John the Baptist came. He appeared first in the wilderness of Judea. This was not an uninhabited desert, but a part of the country not thickly peopled, nor much unequaled. No place is so remote as to shut us out from the visits of Divine grace. The doctrine he preached was repentance; “Repent ye.” The word here used, implies a total alteration in the mind, a change in the judgment, disposition, and affection, another and a better bias of the soul. Consider your ways, change your minds: you have thought amiss; think again, and think aright. True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, sin and holiness, of this world and the other, than they had. The change of the mind produces a change of the way. That is gospel repentance, which flows from a sight of Christ, from a sense of his love, and from hopes of pardon and forgiveness through him. It is a great encouragement to us to repent; repent, for your sins shall be pardoned upon your repentance. Return to God in a way of duty, and he will, through Christ, return unto you in the way of mercy. It is still as necessary to repent and humble ourselves, to prepare the way of the Lord, as it then was. There is a great deal to be done, to make way for Christ into a soul, and nothing is more needful than the discovery of sin, and a conviction that we cannot be saved by our own righteousness. The way of sin and Satan is a crooked way; but to prepare a way for Christ, the paths must be made straight, ◀5213▶ Hebrews 12:13. Those whose business it is to call others to mourn for sin, and to mortify it, ought themselves to live a serious life, a life of self-denial, and contempt of the world. By giving others this example, John made way for Christ. Many came to John’s baptism, but few kept to the profession they made. There may be many forward hearers, where there are few true believers. Curiosity, and love for novelty and variety, may bring many to attend on good preaching, and to be affected for a while, who never are subject to the power of it. Those who received John’s doctrine, testified

their repentance by confessing their sins. Those only are ready to receive Jesus Christ as their righteousness, who are brought with sorrow and shame to own their guilt. The benefits of the kingdom of heaven, now at hand, were thereupon sealed to them by baptism. John washed them with water, in token that God would cleanse them from all their iniquities, thereby intimating, that by nature and practice all were polluted, and could not be admitted among the people of God, unless washed from their sins in the fountain Christ was to open, <sup><3830></sup>Zechariah 13:1.

### <sup><1010></sup>Matthew 3:7

**Vs. 7-12:** To make application to the souls of the hearers, is the life of preaching; so it was of John's preaching. The Pharisees laid their chief stress on outward observances, neglecting the weightier matters of the moral law, and the spiritual meaning of their legal ceremonies. Others of them were detestable hypocrites, making their pretenses to holiness a cloak for iniquity. The Sadducees ran into the opposite extreme, denying the existence of spirits, and a future state. They were the scornful infidels of that time and country. There is a wrath to come. It is the great concern of every one to flee from that wrath. God, who delights not in our ruin, has warned us; he warns by the written word, by ministers, by conscience. And those are not worthy of the name of penitents, or their privileges, who say they are sorry for their sins, yet persist in them. It becomes penitents to be humble and low in their own eyes, to be thankful for the least mercy, patient under the greatest affliction, to be watchful against all appearances of sin, to abound in every duty, and to be charitable in judging others. Here is a word of caution, not to trust in outward privileges. There is a great deal which carnal hearts are apt to say within themselves, to put aside the convincing, commanding power of the word of God. Multitudes, by resting in the honors and mere advantages of their being members of an outward church, come short of heaven. Here is a word of terror to the careless and secure. Our corrupt hearts cannot be made to produce good fruit, unless the regenerating Spirit of Christ graft the good word of God upon them. And every tree, however high in gifts and honors, however green in outward professions and performances, if it bring not forth good fruit, the fruits meet for repentance, is hewn down and cast into the fire of God's wrath, the fittest place for barren trees: what else are they good for? If not fit for fruit, they are fit for fuel. John shows the design and intention



of Christ's appearing, which they were now speedily to expect. No outward forms can make us clean. No ordinances, by whomsoever administered, or after whatever mode, can supply the want of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. The purifying and cleansing power of the Holy Spirit alone can produce that purity of heart, and those holy affection, which accompany salvation. It is Christ who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. This he did in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit sent upon the apostles, <sup><4104></sup>Acts 2:4. This he does in the graces and comforts of the Spirit, given to those that ask him, <sup><4113></sup>Luke 11:13; <sup><4138></sup>John 7:38,39; see <sup><4116></sup>Acts 11:16. Observe here, the outward church is Christ's floor, <sup><4210></sup>Isaiah 21:10. True believers are as wheat, substantial, useful, and valuable; hypocrites are as chaff, light and empty, useless and worthless, carried about with every wind; these are mixed, good and bad, in the same outward communion. There is a day coming when the wheat and chaff shall be separated. The last judgment will be the distinguishing day, when saints and sinners shall be parted for ever. In heaven the saints are brought together, and no longer scattered; they are safe, and no longer exposed; separated from corrupt neighbors without, and corrupt affection within, and there is no chaff among them. Hell is the unquenchable fire, which will certainly be the portion and punishment of hypocrites and unbelievers. Here life and death, good and evil, are set before us: according as we now are in the field, we shall be then in the floor.

### <sup><4183></sup>Matthew 3:13

**Vs. 13-17:** Christ's gracious condescensions are so surprising, that even the strongest believers at first can hardly believe them; so deep and mysterious, that even those who know his mind well, are apt to start objections against the will of Christ. And those who have much of the Spirit of God while here, see that they need to apply to Christ for more. Christ does not deny that John had need to be baptized of him, yet declares he will now be baptized of John. Christ is now in a state of humiliation. Our Lord Jesus looked upon it as well becoming him to fulfill all righteousness, to own every Divine institution, and to show his readiness to comply with all God's righteous precepts. In and through Christ, the heavens are opened to the children of men. This descent of the Spirit upon Christ, showed that he was endued with his sacred influences without measure. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. At Christ's baptism there was a manifestation of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity. The Father confirming the Son to be Mediator; the Son solemnly entering upon the work; the Holy Spirit descending on him, to be through his mediation communicated to his people. In Him our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable, for He is the altar that sanctifies every gift, ~~and~~ 1 Peter 2:5. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire, but in Christ, a reconciled Father. This is the sum of the gospel, which we must by faith cheerfully embrace.

## CHAPTER 4

*The temptation of Christ. (1-11) The opening of Christ's ministry in Galilee. (12-17) Call of Simon and others. (18-22) Jesus teaches and works miracles. (23-25)*

### ◀401▶ **Matthew 4:1**

**Vs. 1-11:** Concerning Christ's temptation, observe, that directly after he was declared to be the Son of God, and the Savior of the world, he was tempted; great privileges, and special tokens of Divine favor, will not secure any from being tempted. But if the Holy Spirit witness to our being adopted as children of God, that will answer all the suggestions of the evil spirit. Christ was directed to the combat. If we presume upon our own strength, and tempt the devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us to ourselves. Others are tempted, when drawn aside of their own lust, and enticed, <sup>◀504▶</sup>James 1:14; but our Lord Jesus had no corrupt nature, therefore he was tempted only by the devil. In the temptation of Christ it appears that our enemy is subtle, spiteful, and very daring; but he can be resisted. It is a comfort to us that Christ suffered, being tempted; for thus it appears that our temptations, if not yielded to, are not sins, they are afflictions only. Satan aimed in all his temptations, to bring Christ to sin against God.

**1.** He tempted him to despair of his Father's goodness, and to distrust his Father's care concerning him. It is one of the wiles of Satan to take advantage of our outward condition; and those who are brought into straits have need to double their guard. Christ answered all the temptations of Satan with "It is written;" to set us an example, he appealed to what was written in the Scriptures. This method we must take, when at any time we are tempted to sin. Let us learn not to take any wrong courses for our supply, when our wants are ever so pressing: in some way or other the Lord will provide.

**2.** Satan tempted Christ to presume upon his Father's power and protection, in a point of safety. Nor are any extremes more dangerous than despair and presumption, especially in the affairs of our souls. Satan has no objection to holy places as the scene of his assaults. Let

us not, in any place, be off our watch. The holy city is the place, where he does, with the greatest advantage, tempt men to pride and presumption. All high places are slippery places; advancements in the world makes a man a mark for Satan to shoot his fiery darts at. Is Satan so well versed in Scripture as to be able to quote it readily? He is so. It is possible for a man to have his head full of Scripture notions, and his mouth full of Scripture expressions, while his heart is full of bitter enmity to God and to all goodness. Satan misquoted the words. If we go out of our way, out of the way of our duty, we forfeit the promise, and put ourselves out of God's protection. This passage, ~~XXX~~ Deuteronomy 8:3, made against the tempter, therefore he left out part. This promise is firm and stands good. But shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? No.

**3.** Satan tempted Christ to idolatry with the offer of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. The glory of the world is the most charming temptation to the unthinking and unwary; by that men are most easily imposed upon. Christ was tempted to worship Satan. He rejected the proposal with abhorrence. "Get thee hence, Satan!" Some temptations are openly wicked; and they are not merely to be opposed, but rejected at once. It is good to be quick and firm in resisting temptation. If we resist the devil he will flee from us. But the soul that deliberates is almost overcome.


We find but few who can decidedly reject such baits as Satan offers; yet what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Christ was succored after the temptation, for his encouragement to go on in his undertaking, and for our encouragement to trust in him; for as he knew, by experience, what it was to suffer, being tempted, so he knew what it was to be succored, being tempted; therefore we may expect, not only that he will feel for his tempted people, but that he will come to them with seasonable relief.

### ~~XXX~~ **Matthew 4:12**

**Vs. 12-17:** It is just with God to take the gospel and the means of grace, from those that slight them and thrust them away. Christ will not stay long where he is not welcome. Those who are without Christ, are in the dark. They were sitting in this condition, a contented posture; they chose

it rather than light; they were willingly ignorant. When the gospel comes, light comes; when it comes to any place, when it comes to any soul, it makes day there. Light discovers and directs; so does the gospel. The doctrine of repentance is right gospel doctrine. Not only the austere John the Baptist, but the gracious Jesus, preached repentance. There is still the same reason to do so. The kingdom of heaven was not reckoned to be fully come, till the pouring out of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension.

### **Matthew 4:18**

**Vs. 18-22:** When Christ began to preach, he began to gather disciples, who should be hearers, and afterwards preachers of his doctrine, who should be witnesses of his miracles, and afterwards testify concerning them. He went not to Herod's court, not to Jerusalem, among the chief priests and the elders, but to the sea of Galilee, among the fishermen. The same power which called Peter and Andrew, could have wrought upon Annas and Caiaphas, for with God nothing is impossible. But Christ chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Diligence in an honest calling is pleasing to Christ, and it is no hindrance to a holy life. Idle people are more open to the temptations of Satan than to the calls of God. It is a happy and hopeful thing to see children careful of their parents, and dutiful. When Christ comes, it is good to be found doing. Am I in Christ? is a very needful question to ask ourselves; and, next to that, Am I in my calling? They had followed Christ before, as common disciples,  John 1:37; now they must leave their calling. Those who would follow Christ aright, must, at his command, leave all things to follow him, must be ready to part with them. This instance of the power of the Lord Jesus encourages us to depend upon his grace. He speaks, and it is done.

### **Matthew 4:23**

**Vs. 23-25:** Wherever Christ went, he confirmed his Divine mission by miracles, which were emblems of the healing power of his doctrine, and the influences of the Spirit which accompanied it. We do not now find the Saviors miraculous healing power in our bodies; but if we are cured by medicine, the praise is equally his. Three general words are here used. He healed every sickness or disease; none was too bad; none too hard, for Christ to heal with a word. Three diseases are named; the palsy, which is the greatest weakness of the body; lunacy, which is the greatest malady of

the mind; and possession of the devil, which is the greatest misery and calamity of both; yet Christ healed all, and by thus curing bodily diseases, showed that his great errand into the world was to cure spiritual maladies. Sin is the sickness, disease, and torment of the soul: Christ came to take away sin, and so to heal the soul.

## CHAPTER 5

*Christ's sermon on the mount. (1,2) Who are blessed. (3-12) Exhortations and warnings. (13-16) Christ came to confirm the law. (17-20) The sixth commandment. (21-26) The seventh commandment. (27-32) The third commandment. (33-37) The law of retaliation. (38-42) The law of love explained. (43-48)*

### **Matthew 5:1**

**Vs. 1-2** None will find happiness in this world or the next, who do not seek it from Christ by the rule of his word. He taught them what was the evil they should abhor, and what the good they should seek and abound in.

### **Matthew 5:3**

**Vs. 3-12:** Our Savior here gives eight characters of blessed people, which represent to us the principal graces of a Christian.

- 1.** The poor in spirit are happy. These bring their minds to their condition, when it is a low condition. They are humble and lowly in their own eyes. They see their want, bewail their guilt, and thirst after a Redeemer. The kingdom of grace is of such; the kingdom of glory is for them.
- 2.** Those that mourn are happy. That godly sorrow which worketh true repentance, watchfulness, a humble mind, and continual dependence for acceptance on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, with constant seeking the Holy Spirit, to cleanse away the remaining evil, seems here to be intended. Heaven is the joy of our Lord; a mountain of joy, to which our way is through a vale of tears. Such mourners shall be comforted by their God.
- 3.** The meek are happy. The meek are those who quietly submit to God; who can bear insult; are silent, or return a soft answer; who, in their patience, keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else. These meek ones are happy, even in this world. Meekness promotes wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world.

**4.** Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are happy. Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings. These are purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ, confirmed by the faithfulness of God. Our desires of spiritual blessings must be earnest. Though all desires for grace are not grace, yet such a desire as this, is a desire of God's own raising, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands.

**5.** The merciful are happy. We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must do all we can to help those who are in misery. We must have compassion on the souls of others, and help them; pity those who are in sin, and seek to snatch them as brands out of the burning.

**6.** The pure in heart are happy; for they shall see God. Here holiness and happiness are fully described and put together. The heart must be purified by faith, and kept for God. Create in me such a clean heart, O God. None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would heaven be happiness to the impure. As God cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so they cannot look upon his purity.

**7.** The peace-makers are happy. They love, and desire, and delight in peace; and study to be quiet. They keep the peace that it be not broken, and recover it when it is broken. If the peace-makers are blessed, woe to the peace-breakers!

**8.** Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are happy. This saying is peculiar to Christianity; and it is more largely insisted upon than any of the rest. Yet there is nothing in our sufferings that can merit of God; but God will provide that those who lose for him, though life itself, shall not lose by him in the end. Blessed Jesus! how different are thy maxims from those of men of this world! They call the proud happy, and admire the gay, the rich, the powerful, and the victorious. May we find mercy from the Lord; may we be owned as his children, and inherit his kingdom. With these enjoyments and hopes, we may cheerfully welcome low or painful circumstances.



### ◀153 Matthew 5:13

**Vs. 13-16:** Ye are the salt of the earth. Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, were as a vast heap, ready to putrefy; but Christ sent forth his disciples, by their lives and doctrines to season it with knowledge and grace. If they are not such as they should be, they are as salt that has lost its savor. If a man can take up the profession of Christ, and yet remain graceless, no other doctrine, no other means, can make him profitable. Our light must shine, by doing such good works as men may see. What is between God and our souls, must be kept to ourselves; but that which is of itself open to the sight of men, we must study to make suitable to our profession, and praiseworthy. We must aim at the glory of God.

### ◀157 Matthew 5:17

**Vs. 17-20:** Let none suppose that Christ allows his people to trifle with any commands of God's holy law. No sinner partakes of Christ's justifying righteousness, till he repents of his evil deeds. The mercy revealed in the gospel leads the believer to still deeper self-abhorrence. The law is the Christian's rule of duty, and he delights therein. If a man, pretending to be Christ's disciple, encourages himself in any allowed disobedience to the holy law of God, or teaches others to do the same, whatever his station or reputation among men may be, he can be no true disciple. Christ's righteousness, imputed to us by faith alone, is needed by every one that enters the kingdom of grace or of glory; but the new creation of the heart to holiness, produces a thorough change in a man's temper and conduct.

### ◀162 Matthew 5:21

**Vs. 21-26:** The Jewish teachers had taught, that nothing except actual murder was forbidden by the sixth commandment. Thus they explained away its spiritual meaning. Christ showed the full meaning of this commandment; according to which we must be judged hereafter, and therefore ought to be ruled now. All rash anger is heart murder. By our brother, here, we are to understand any person, though ever so much below us, for we are all made of one blood. "Raca," is a scornful word, and comes from pride: "Thou fool," is a spiteful word, and comes from hatred. Malicious slanders and censures are poison that kills secretly and slowly.

Christ told them that how light soever they made of these sins, they would certainly be called into judgment for them. We ought carefully to preserve Christian love and peace with all our brethren; and if at any time there is a quarrel, we should confess our fault, humble ourselves to our brother, making or offering satisfaction for wrong done in word or deed: and we should do this quickly; because, till this is done, we are unfit for communion with God in holy ordinances. And when we are preparing for any religious exercises, it is good for us to make that an occasion of serious reflection and self-examination. What is here said is very applicable to our being reconciled to God through Christ. While we are alive, we are in the way to his judgment-seat; after death, it will be too late. When we consider the importance of the case, and the uncertainty of life, how needful it is to seek peace with God, without delay!

### **Matthew 5:27**

**Vs. 27-32:** Victory over the desires of the heart, must be attended with painful exertions. But it must be done. Every thing is bestowed to save us from our sins, not in them. All our senses and powers must be kept from those things which lead to transgression. Those who lead others into temptation to sin, by dress or in other ways, or leave them in it, or expose them to it, make themselves guilty of their sin, and will be accountable for it. If painful operations are submitted to, that our lives may be saved, what ought our minds to shrink from, when the salvation of our souls is concerned? There is tender mercy under all the Divine requirements, and the grace and consolations of the Spirit will enable us to attend to them.

### **Matthew 5:33**

**Vs. 33-37:** There is no reason to consider that solemn oaths in a court of justice, or on other proper occasions, are wrong, provided they are taken with due reverence. But all oaths taken without necessity, or in common conversation, must be sinful, as well as all those expressions which are appeals to God, though persons think thereby to evade the guilt of swearing. The worse men are, the less they are bound by oaths; the better they are, the less there is need for them. Our Lord does not enjoin the precise terms wherein we are to affirm or deny, but such a constant regard to truth as would render oaths unnecessary.

◀158 **Matthew 5:38**

**Vs. 38-42:** The plain instruction is, Suffer any injury that can be born, for the sake of peace, committing your concerns to the Lord's keeping. And the sum of all is, that Christians must avoid disputing and striving. 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; and those who act upon right principles will have most peace and comfort.

◀158 **Matthew 5:43**

**Vs. 43-48:** The Jewish teachers by "neighbor" understood only those who were of their own country, nation, and religion, whom they were pleased to look upon as their friends. The Lord Jesus teaches that we must do all the real kindness we can to all, especially to their souls. We must pray for them. While many will render good for good, we must render good for evil; and this will speak a nobler principle than most men act by. Others salute their brethren, and embrace those of their own party, and way, and opinion, but we must not so confine our respect. It is the duty of Christians to desire, and aim at, and press towards perfection in grace and holiness. And therein we must study to conform ourselves to the example of our heavenly Father, ◀4015 1 Peter 1:15,16. Surely more is to be expected from the followers of Christ than from others; surely more will be found in them than in others. Let us beg of God to enable us to prove ourselves his children.

## CHAPTER 6

*Against hypocrisy in alms giving. (1-4) Against hypocrisy in prayer. (5-8) How to pray. (9-15) Respecting fasting. (16-18) Evil of being worldly-minded. (19-24) Trust in God commended. (25-34)*

### ◀101 Matthew 6:1

**Vs. 1-4:** Our Lord next warned against hypocrisy and outward show in religious duties. What we do, must be done from an inward principle, that we may be approved of God, not that we may be praised of men. In these verses we are cautioned against hypocrisy in giving alms. Take heed of it. It is a subtle sin; and vain-glory creeps into what we do, before we are aware. But the duty is not the less necessary and excellencies for being abused by hypocrites to serve their pride. The doom Christ passes, at first may seem a promise, but it is their reward; not the reward God promises to those who do good, but the reward hypocrites promise themselves, and a poor reward it is; they did it to be seen of men, and they are seen of men. When we take least notice of our good deeds ourselves, God takes most notice of them. He will reward thee; not as a master who gives his servant what he earns, and no more, but as a Father who gives abundantly to his son that serves him.

### ◀105 Matthew 6:5

**Vs. 5-8:** It is taken for granted that all who are disciples of Christ pray. You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray. If prayerless, then graceless. The Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of two great faults in prayer, vain-glory and vain repetitions. “Verily they have their reward;” if in so great a matter as is between us and God, when we are at prayer, we can look to so poor a thing as the praise of men, it is just that it should be all our reward. Yet there is not a secret, sudden breathing after God, but he observes it. It is called a reward, but it is of grace, not of debt; what merit can there be in begging? If he does not give his people what they ask, it is because he knows they do not need it, and that it is not for their good. So far is God from being wrought upon by the length or words of our prayers, that the

most powerful intercessions are those which are made with groanings that cannot be uttered. Let us well study what is shown of the frame of mind in which our prayers should be offered, and learn daily from Christ how to pray.

### **Matthew 6:9**

**Vs. 9-15:** Christ saw it needful to show his disciples what must commonly be the matter and method of their prayer. Not that we are tied up to the use of this only, or of this always; yet, without doubt, it is very good to use it. It has much in a little; and it is used acceptably no further than it is used with understanding, and without being needlessly repeated. The petitions are six; the first three relate more expressly to God and his honor, the last three to our own concerns, both temporal and spiritual. This prayer teaches us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and that all other things shall be added. After the things of God's glory, kingdom, and will, we pray for the needful supports and comforts of this present life. Every word here has a lesson in it. We ask for bread; that teaches us sobriety and temperance: and we ask only for bread; not for what we do not need. We ask for our bread; that teaches us honesty and industry: we do not ask for the bread of others, nor the bread of deceit, <sup>1817</sup>Proverbs 20:17; nor the bread of idleness, <sup>1827</sup>Proverbs 31:27, but the bread honestly gotten. We ask for our daily bread; which teaches us constantly to depend upon Divine Providence. We beg of God to give it us; not sell it us, nor lend it us, but give it. The greatest of men must be beholden to the mercy of God for their daily bread. We pray, Give it to us. This teaches us a compassion for the poor. Also that we ought to pray with our families. We pray that God would give it us this day; which teaches us to renew the desires of our souls toward God, as the wants of our bodies are renewed. As the day comes we must pray to our heavenly Father, and reckon we could as well go a day without food, as without prayer. We are taught to hate and dread sin while we hope for mercy, to distrust ourselves, to rely on the providence and grace of God to keep us from it, to be prepared to resist the tempter, and not to become tempters of others. Here is a promise, If you forgive, your heavenly Father will also forgive. We must forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Those who desire to find mercy with God, must show mercy to their brethren. Christ came into

the world as the great Peace-maker, not only to reconcile us to God, but one to another.

### **Matthew 6:16**

**Vs. 16-18:** Religious fasting is a duty required of the disciples of Christ, but it is not so much a duty itself, as a means to dispose us for other duties. Fasting is the humbling of the soul, <sup><BIB></sup>Psalm 35:13; that is the inside of the duty; let that, therefore, be thy principal care, and as to the outside of it, covet not to let it be seen. God sees in secret, and will reward openly.

### **Matthew 6:19**

**Vs. 19-24:** Worldly-mindedness is a common and fatal symptom of hypocrisy, for by no sin can Satan have a surer and faster hold of the soul, under the cloak of a profession of religion. Something the soul will have, which it looks upon as the best thing; in which it has pleasure and confidence above other things. Christ counsels to make our best things the joys and glories of the other world, those things not seen which are eternal, and to place our happiness in them. There are treasures in heaven. It is our wisdom to give all diligence to make our title to eternal life sure through Jesus Christ, and to look on all things here below, as not worthy to be compared with it, and to be content with nothing short of it. It is happiness above and beyond the changes and chances of time, an inheritance incorruptible. The worldly man is wrong in his first principle; therefore all his reasonings and actions therefrom must be wrong. It is equally to be applied to false religion; that which is deemed light is thick darkness. This is an awful, but a common case; we should therefore carefully examine our leading principles by the word of God, with earnest prayer for the teaching of his Spirit. A man may do some service to two masters, but he can devote himself to the service of no more than one. God requires the whole heart, and will not share it with the world. When two masters oppose each other, no man can serve both. He who holds to the world and loves it, must despise God; he who loves God, must give up the friendship of the world.

◀163 **Matthew 6:25**

**Vs. 25-34:** There is scarcely any sin against which our Lord Jesus more warns his disciples, than disquieting, distracting, distrustful cares about the things of this life. This often ensnares the poor as much as the love of wealth does the rich. But there is a carefulness about temporal things which is a duty, though we must not carry these lawful cares too far. Take no thought for your life. Not about the length of it; but refer it to God to lengthen or shorten it as he pleases; our times are in his hand, and they are in a good hand. Not about the comforts of this life; but leave it to God to make it bitter or sweet as he pleases. Food and raiment God has promised, therefore we may expect them. Take no thought for the morrow, for the time to come. Be not anxious for the future, how you shall live next year, or when you are old, or what you shall leave behind you. As we must not boast of tomorrow, so we must not care for tomorrow, or the events of it. God has given us life, and has given us the body. And what can he not do for us, who did that? If we take care about our souls and for eternity, which are more than the body and its life, we may leave it to God to provide for us food and raiment, which are less. Improve this as an encouragement to trust in God. We must reconcile ourselves to our worldly estate, as we do to our stature. We cannot alter the disposals of Providence, therefore we must submit and resign ourselves to them. Thoughtfulness for our souls is the best cure of thoughtfulness for the world. Seek first the kingdom of God, and make religion your business: say not that this is the way to starve; no, it is the way to be well provided for, even in this world. The conclusion of the whole matter is, that it is the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that by daily prayers we may get strength to bear us up under our daily troubles, and to arm us against the temptations that attend them, and then let none of these things move us. Happy are those who take the Lord for their God, and make full proof of it by trusting themselves wholly to his wise disposal. Let thy Spirit convince us of sin in the want of this disposition, and take away the worldliness of our hearts.

## CHAPTER 7

*Christ reproves rash judgment. (1-6) Encouragements to prayer. (7-11) The broad and narrow way. (12-14) Against false prophets. (15-20) To be doers of the word, not hearers only. (21-29)*

### ◀**Matthew 7:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** We must judge ourselves, and judge of our own acts, but not make our word a law to everybody. We must not judge rashly, nor pass judgment upon our brother without any ground. We must not make the worst of people. Here is a just reproof to those who quarrel with their brethren for small faults, while they allow themselves in greater ones. Some sins are as motes, while others are as beams; some as a gnat, others as a camel. Not that there is any sin little; if it be a mote, or splinter, it is in the eye; if a gnat, it is in the throat; both are painful and dangerous, and we cannot be easy or well till they are got out. That which charity teaches us to call but a splinter in our brother's eye, true repentance and godly sorrow will teach us to call a beam in our own. It is as strange that a man can be in a sinful, miserable condition, and not be aware of it, as that a man should have a beam in his eye, and not consider it; but the God of this world blinds their minds. Here is a good rule for reprovers; first reform thyself.

### ◀**Matthew 7:7**

**Vs. 7-11:** Prayer is the appointed means for obtaining what we need. Pray; pray often; make a business of prayer, and be serious and earnest in it. Ask, as a beggar asks alms. Ask, as a traveler asks the way. Seek, as for a thing of value that we have lost; or as the merchantman that seeks goodly pearls. Knock, as he that desires to enter into the house knocks at the door. Sin has shut and barred the door against us; by prayer we knock. Whatever you pray for, according to the promise, shall be given you, if God see it fit for you, and what would you have more? This is made to apply to all that pray aright; every one that asketh receiveth, whether Jew or Gentile, young or old, rich or poor, high or low, master or servant, learned or unlearned, all are alike welcome to the throne of grace, if they come in faith. It is explained by a comparison taken from earthly parents,



and their readiness to give their children what they ask. Parents are often foolishly fond, but God is all-wise; he knows what we need, what we desire, and what is fit for us. Let us never suppose our heavenly Father would bid us pray, and then refuse to hear, or give us what would be hurtful.

### **Matthew 7:12**

**Vs. 12-14:** Christ came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do; not only toward God, but toward men; not only toward those of our party and persuasion, but toward men in general, all with whom we have to do. We must do that to our neighbor which we ourselves acknowledge to be fit and reasonable. We must, in our dealings with men, suppose ourselves in the same case and circumstances with those we have to do with, and act accordingly. There are but two ways right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven and the way to hell; in the one or other of these all are walking: there is no middle place hereafter, no middle way now. All the children of men are saints or sinners, godly or ungodly. See concerning the way of sin and sinners, that the gate is wide, and stands open. You may go in at this gate with all your lusts about you; it gives no check to appetites or passions. It is a broad way; there are many paths in it; there is choice of sinful ways. There is a large company in this way. But what profit is there in being willing to go to hell with others, because they will not go to heaven with us? The way to eternal life is narrow. We are not in heaven as soon as we are got through the strait gate. Self must be denied, the body kept under, and corruptions mortified. Daily temptations must be resisted; duties must be done. We must watch in all things, and walk with care; and we must go through much tribulation. And yet this way should invite us all; it leads to life: to present comfort in the favor of God, which is the life of the soul; to eternal bliss, the hope of which at the end of our way, should make all the difficulties of the road easy to us. This plain declaration of Christ has been disregarded by many who have taken pains to explain it away; but in all ages the real disciple of Christ has been looked on as a singular, unfashionable character; and all that have sided with the greater number, have gone on in the broad road to destruction. If we would serve God, we must be firm in our religion. Can we often hear of the strait gate and the narrow way, and how few there are

that find it, without being in pain for ourselves, or considering whether we are entered on the narrow way, and what progress we are making in it?

### **Matthew 7:15**

**Vs. 15-20:** Nothing so much prevents men from entering the strait gate, and becoming true followers of Christ, as the carnal, soothing, flattering doctrines of those who oppose the truth. They may be known by the drift and effects of their doctrines. Some part of their temper and conduct is contrary to the mind of Christ. Those opinions come not from God that lead to sin.

### **Matthew 7:21**

**Vs. 21-29:** Christ here shows that it will not be enough to own him for our Master, only in word and tongue. It is necessary to our happiness that we believe in Christ, that we repent of sin, that we live a holy life, that we love one another. This is his will, even our sanctification. Let us take heed of resting in outward privileges and doings, lest we deceive ourselves, and perish eternally, as multitudes do, with a lie in our right hand. Let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from all sin. There are others, whose religion rests in bare hearing, and it goes no further; their heads are filled with empty notions. These two sorts of hearers are represented as two builders. This parable teaches us to hear and do the sayings of the Lord Jesus: some may seem hard to flesh and blood, but they must be done. Christ is laid for a foundation, and every thing besides Christ is sand. Some build their hopes upon worldly prosperity; others upon an outward profession of religion. Upon these they venture; but they are all sand, too weak to bear such a fabric as our hopes of heaven. There is a storm coming that will try every man's work. When God takes away the soul, where is the hope of the hypocrite? The house fell in the storm, when the builder had most need of it, and expected it would be a shelter to him. It fell when it was too late to build another. May the Lord make us wise builders for eternity. Then nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ Jesus. The multitudes were astonished at the wisdom and power of Christ's doctrine. And this sermon, ever so often read over, is always new. Every word proves its Author to be Divine. Let us be more and more decided and earnest, making some one or other of these blessednesses and Christian graces the main subject of our thoughts, even for weeks together.

Let us not rest in general and confused desires after them, whereby we grasp at all, but catch nothing.

## CHAPTER 8

*Multitudes follow Christ. (1) He heals a leper. (2-4) A centurion's servant healed. (5-13) Cure of Peter's wife's mother. (14-17) The scribe's zealous proposal. (18-22) Christ in a storm. (23-27) He heals two possessed with devils. (28-34)*

### ◀1881 Matthew 8:1

**Vs. 1:** This verse refers to the close of the foregoing sermon. Those to whom Christ has made himself known, desire to know more of him.

### ◀1882 Matthew 8:2

**Vs. 2-4:** In these verses we have an account of Christ's cleansing a leper, who came and worshipped him, as one clothed with Divine power. This cleansing directs us, not only to apply to Christ, who has power over bodily diseases, for the cure of them, but it also teaches us in what manner to apply to him. When we cannot be sure of God's will, we may be sure of his wisdom and mercy. No guilt is so great, but there is that in Christ's blood which atones for it; no corruption so strong, but there is that in his grace which can subdue it. To be made clean we must commend ourselves to his pity; we cannot demand it as a debt, but we must humbly request it as a favor. Those who by faith apply to Christ for mercy and grace, may be sure that he is freely willing to give them the mercy and grace they thus seek. And those afflictions are blessed that bring us to know Christ, and cause us to seek help and salvation from him. Let those who are cleansed from their spiritual leprosy, go to Christ's ministers and open their case, that they may advise, comfort, and pray for them.

### ◀1885 Matthew 8:5

**Vs. 5-13:** This centurion was a heathen, a Roman soldier. Though he was a soldier, yet he was a godly man. No man's calling or place will be an excuse for unbelief and sin. See how he states his servant's case. We should concern ourselves for the souls of our children and servants, who are spiritually sick, who feel not spiritual evils, who know not that which is spiritually good; and we should bring them to Christ by faith and

prayers. Observe his self-abasement. Humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious dealings with them. Observe his great faith. The more diffident we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our confidence in Christ. Herein the centurion owns him to have Divine power, and a full command of all the creatures and powers of nature, as a master over his servants. Such servants we all should be to God; we must go and come, according to the directions of his word and the disposals of his providence. But when the Son of man comes he finds little faith, therefore he finds little fruit. An outward profession may cause us to be called children of the kingdom; but if we rest in that, and have nothing else to show, we shall be cast out. The servant got a cure of his disease, and the master got the approval of his faith. What was said to him, is said to all, Believe, and ye shall receive; only believe. See the power of Christ, and the power of faith. The healing of our souls is at once the effect and evidence of our interest in the blood of Christ.

#### **Matthew 8:14**

**Vs. 14-17:** Peter had a wife, yet was an apostle of Christ, who showed that he approved of the married state, by being thus kind to Peter's wife's relations. The church of Rome, which forbids ministers to marry, goes contrary to that apostle upon whom they rest so much. He had his wife's mother with him in his family, which is an example to be kind to our relations. In spiritual healing, the Scripture speaks the word, the Spirit gives the touch, touches the heart, touches the hand. Those who recover from fevers, commonly are weak and feeble some time after; but to show that this cure was above the power of nature, the woman was at once so well as to go about the business of the house. The miracles which Jesus did being noised abroad, many thronged to him. He healed all that were sick, though the patient was ever so mean, and the case ever so bad. Many are the diseases and calamities to which we are liable in the body; and there is more, in those words of the gospel, that Jesus Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, to support and comfort us under them, than in all the writings of the philosophers. Let us not grudge labor, trouble, or expense in doing good to others.

### ◀188 Matthew 8:18

**Vs. 18-22** One of the scribes was too hasty in promising; he proffers himself to be a close follower of Christ. He seems to be very resolute. Many resolutions for religion are produced by sudden conviction, and taken up without due consideration; these come to nothing. When this scribe offered to follow Christ, one would think he should have been encouraged; one scribe might do more credit and service than twelve fishermen; but Christ saw his heart, and answered to its thoughts, and therein teaches all how to come to Christ. His resolve seems to have been from a worldly, covetous principle; but Christ had not a place to lay his head on, and if he follows him, he must not expect to fare better than he fared. We have reason to think this scribe went away. Anther was too slow. Delay in doing is as bad on the one hand, as hastiness in resolving is on the other. He asked leave to attend his father to his grave, and then he would be at Christ's service. This seemed reasonable, yet it was not right. He had not true zeal for the work. Burying the dead, especially a dead father, is a good work, but it is not thy work at this time. If Christ requires our service, affection even for the nearest and dearest relatives, and for things otherwise our duty, must give way. An unwilling mind never wants an excuse. Jesus said to him, Follow me; and, no doubt, power went with this word to him as to others; he did follow Christ, and cleaved to him. The scribe said, I will follow thee; to this man Christ said, Follow me; comparing them together, it shows that we are brought to Christ by the force of his call to us, ▶189 Romans 9:16.

### ◀188 Matthew 8:23

**Vs. 23-27:** It is a comfort to those who go down to the sea in ships, and are often in perils there, to reflect that they have a Savior to trust in and pray to, who knows what it is to be on the water, and to be in storms there. Those who are passing with Christ over the ocean of this world, must expect storms. His human nature, like to ours in every thing but sin, was wearied, and he slept at this time to try the faith of his disciples. They, in their fear, came to their Master. Thus is it in a soul; when lusts and temptations are swelling and raging, and God is, as it were, asleep to it, this brings it to the brink of despair. Then it cries for a word from his mouth, Lord Jesus, keep not silence to me, or I am undone. Many that

have true faith, are weak in it. Christ's disciples are apt to be disquieted with fears in a stormy day; to torment themselves that things are bad with them, and with dismal thoughts that they will be worse. Great storms of doubt and fear in the soul, under the power of the spirit of bondage, sometimes end in a wonderful calm, created and spoken by the Spirit of adoption. They were astonished. They never saw a storm so turned at once into a perfect calm. He that can do this, can do any thing, which encourages confidence and comfort in him, in the most stormy day, within or without, <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 26:4.

### <sup><1183></sup>Matthew 8:28

**Vs. 28-34:** The devils have nothing to do with Christ as a Savior; they neither have, nor hope for any benefit from him. Oh the depth of this mystery of Divine love; that villainy man has so much to do with Christ, when villainy angels have nothing to do with him! <sup><3126></sup>Hebrews 2:16. Surely here was torment, to be forced to own the excellencies that is in Christ, and yet they had no part in him. The devils desire not to have any thing to do with Christ as a Ruler. See whose language those speak, who will have nothing to do with the gospel of Christ. But it is not true that the devils have nothing to do with Christ as a Judge; for they have, and they know it, and thus it is with all the children of men. Satan and his instruments can go no further than he permits; they must quit possession when he commands. They cannot break his hedge of protection about his people; they cannot enter even a swine without his leave. They had leave. God often, for wise and holy ends, permits the efforts of Satan's rage. Thus the devil hurries people to sin; hurries them to what they have resolved against, which they know will be shame and grief to them: miserable is the condition of those who are led captive by him at his will. There are a great many who prefer their swine before the Savior, and so come short of Christ and salvation by him. They desire Christ to depart out of their hearts, and will not suffer his word to have place in them, because he and his word would destroy their brutish lusts, those swine which they give themselves up to feed. And justly will Christ forsake all that are weary of him; and say hereafter, Depart, ye cursed, to those who now say to the Almighty, Depart from us.

## CHAPTER 9

*Jesus returns to Capernaum, and heals a paralytic. (1-8) Matthew called. (9) Matthew, or Levi's feast. (10-13) Objections of John's disciples. (14-17) Christ raises the daughter of Jairus, He heals the issue of blood. (18-26) He heals two blind men. (27-31) Christ casts out a dumb spirit. (32-34) He sends forth the apostles. (35-38)*

### ◀1001 Matthew 9:1

**Vs. 1-8:** The faith of the friends of the paralytic in bringing him to Christ, was a strong faith; they firmly believed that Jesus Christ both could and would heal him. A strong faith regards no obstacles in pressing after Christ. It was a humble faith; they brought him to attend on Christ. It was an active faith. Sin may be pardoned, yet the sickness not be removed; the sickness may be removed, yet the sin not pardoned: but if we have the comfort of peace with God, with the comfort of recovery from sickness, this makes the healing a mercy indeed. This is no encouragement to sin. If thou bring thy sins to Jesus Christ, as thy malady and misery to be cured of, and delivered from, it is well; but to come with them, as thy darlings and delight, thinking still to retain them and receive him, is a gross mistake, a miserable delusion. The great intention of the blessed Jesus in the redemption he wrought, is to separate our hearts from sin. Our Lord Jesus has perfect knowledge of all that we say within ourselves. There is a great deal of evil in sinful thoughts, which is very offensive to the Lord Jesus. Christ designed to show that his great errand to the world was, to save his people from their sins. He turned from disputing with the scribes, and spake healing to the sick man. Not only he had no more need to be carried upon his bed, but he had strength to carry it. God must be glorified in all the power that is given to do good.

### ◀1002 Matthew 9:9

**Vs. 9:** Matthew was in his calling, as the rest of those whom Christ called. As Satan comes with his temptations to the idle, so Christ comes with his calls to those who are employed. We are all naturally averse from thee, O God; do thou bid us to follow thee; draw us by thy powerful word, and



we shall run after thee. Speak by the word of the Spirit to our hearts, the world cannot hold us down, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall arise and follow thee. A saving change is wrought in the soul, by Christ as the author, and his word as the means. Neither Matthew's place, nor his gains by it, could detain him, when Christ called him. He left it, and though we find the disciples, who were fishers, occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never more find Matthew at his sinful gain.

### **Matthew 9:10**

**Vs. 10-13:** Some time after his call, Matthew sought to bring his old associates to hear Christ. He knew by experience what the grace of Christ could do, and would not despair concerning them. Those who are effectually brought to Christ, cannot but desire that others also may be brought to him. Those who suppose their souls to be without disease will not welcome the spiritual Physician. This was the case with the Pharisees; they despised Christ, because they thought themselves whole; but the poor publicans and sinners felt that they wanted instruction and amendment. It is easy, and too common, to put the worst constructions upon the best words and actions. It may justly be suspected that those have not the grace of God themselves, who are not pleased with others' obtaining it. Christ's conversing with sinners is here called mercy; for to promote the conversion of souls is the greatest act of mercy. The gospel call is a call to repentance; a call to us to change our minds, and to change our ways. If the children of men had not been sinners, there had been no need for Christ to come among them. Let us examine whether we have found out our sickness, and have learned to follow the directions of our great Physician.

### **Matthew 9:14**

**Vs. 14-17:** John was at this time in prison; his circumstances, his character, and the nature of the message he was sent to deliver, led those who were peculiarly attached to him, to keep frequent fasts. Christ referred them to John's testimony of him, **John 3:29**. Though there is no doubt that Jesus and his disciples lived in a spare and frugal manner, it would be improper for his disciples to fast while they had the comfort of his presence. When he is with them, all is well. The presence of the sun makes day, and its absence produces night. Our Lord further reminded

them of common rules of prudence. It was not usual to take a piece of rough woolen cloth, which had never been prepared, to join to an old garment, for it would not join well with the soft, old garment, but would tear it further, and the rent would be made worse. Nor would men put new wine into old leathern bottles, which were going to decay, and would be liable to burst from the fermenting of the wine; but putting the new wine into strong, new, skin bottles, both would be preserved. Great caution and prudence are necessary, that young converts may not receive gloomy and forbidding ideas of the service of our Lord; but duties are to be urged as they are able to bear them.

### ◀188 Matthew 9:18

**Vs. 18-26:** The death of our relations should drive us to Christ, who is our life. And it is high honor to the greatest rulers to attend on the Lord Jesus; and those who would receive mercy from Christ, must honor him. The variety of methods Christ took in working his miracles, perhaps was because of the different frames and tempers of mind, which those were in who came to him, and which He who searches the heart perfectly knew. A poor woman applied herself to Christ, and received mercy from him by the way. If we do but touch, as it were, the hem of Christ's garment by living faith, our worst evils will be healed; there is no other real cure, nor need we fear his knowing things which are a grief and burden to us, but which we would not tell to any earthly friend. When Christ entered the ruler's house, he said, Give place. Sometimes, when the sorrow of the world prevails, it is difficult for Christ and his comforts to enter. The ruler's daughter was really dead, but not so to Christ. The death of the righteous is in a special manner to be looked on as only a sleep. The words and works of Christ may not at first be understood, yet they are not therefore to be despised. The people were put forth. Scorners who laugh at what they do not understand, are not proper witnesses of the wonderful works of Christ. Dead souls are not raised to spiritual life, unless Christ take them by the hand: it is done in the day of his power. If this single instance of Christ's raising one newly dead so increased his fame, what will be his glory when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation!

### ◀102▶ **Matthew 9:27**

**Vs. 27-31:** At this time the Jews expected Messiah would appear; these blind men knew and proclaimed in the streets of Capernaum that he was come, and that Jesus was he. Those who, by the providence of God, have lost their bodily sight, may, by the grace of God, have the eyes of their understanding fully enlightened. And whatever our wants and burdens are, we need no more for supply and support, than to share in the mercy of our Lord Jesus. In Christ is enough for all. They followed him crying aloud. He would try their faith, and would teach us always to pray, and not to faint, though the answer does not come at once. They followed Christ, and followed him crying; but the great question is, Do ye believe? Nature may make us earnest, but it is only grace that can work faith. Christ touched their eyes. He gives sight to blind souls by the power of his grace going with his word, and he puts the cure upon their faith. Those who apply to Jesus Christ, shall be dealt with, not according to their fancies, nor according to their profession, but according to their faith. Christ sometimes concealed his miracles, because he would not indulge the conceit which prevailed among the Jews, that their Messiah should be a temporal prince, and so give occasion to the people to attempt tumults and seditions.

### ◀103▶ **Matthew 9:32**

**Vs. 32-34:** Of the two, better a dumb devil than a blaspheming one. Christ's cures strike at the root, and remove the effect by taking away the cause; they open the lips, by breaking Satan's power in the soul. Nothing can convince those who are under the power of pride. They will believe anything, however false or absurd, rather than the Holy Scriptures; thus they show the enmity of their hearts against a holy God.

### ◀104▶ **Matthew 9:35**

**Vs. 35-38:** Jesus visited not only the great and wealthy cities, but the poor, obscure villages; and there he preached, there he healed. The souls of the meanest in the world are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as the souls of those who make the greatest figure. There were priests, Levites, and scribes, all over the land; but they were idol shepherds, ◀8117▶ Zechariah 11:17; therefore Christ had compassion on the people as

sheep scattered, as men perishing for lack of knowledge. To this day vast multitudes are as sheep not having a shepherd, and we should have compassion and do all we can to help them. The multitudes desirous of spiritual instruction formed a plenteous harvest, needing many active laborers; but few deserved that character. Christ is the Lord of the harvest. Let us pray that many may be raised up and sent forth, who will labor in bringing souls to Christ. It is a sign that God is about to bestow some special mercy upon a people, when he stirs them up to pray for it. And commissions given to laborers in answer to prayer, are most likely to be successful.

## CHAPTER 10

*The apostles called. (1-4) The apostles instructed and sent forth. (5-15) Directions to the apostles. (16-42)*

### ☞ **Matthew 10:1**


**Vs. 1-4:** The word “apostle” signifies messenger; they were Christ’s messengers, sent forth to proclaim his kingdom. Christ gave them power to heal all manner of sickness. In the grace of the gospel there is a slave for every sore, a remedy for every malady. There is no spiritual disease, but there is power in Christ for the cure of it. Their names are recorded, and it is their honor; yet they had more reason to rejoice that their names were written in heaven, while the high and mighty names of the great ones of the earth are buried in the dust.

### ☞ **Matthew 10:5**

**Vs. 5-15:** The Gentiles must not have the gospel brought them, till the Jews have refused it. This restraint on the apostles was only in their first mission. Wherever they went they must proclaim, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. They preached, to establish the faith; the kingdom, to animate the hope; of heaven, to inspire the love of heavenly things, and the contempt of earthly; which is at hand, that men may prepare for it without delay. Christ gave power to work miracles for the confirming of their doctrine. This is not necessary now that the kingdom of God is come. It showed that the intent of the doctrine they preached, was to heal sick souls, and to raise those that were dead in sin. In proclaiming the gospel of free grace for the healing and saving of men’s souls, we must above all avoid the appearance of the spirit of an hireling. They are directed what to do in strange towns and cities. The servant of Christ is the ambassador of peace to whatever place he is sent. His message is even to the vilest sinners, yet it behooves him to find out the best persons in every place. It becomes us to pray heartily for all, and to conduct ourselves courteously to all. They are directed how to act as to those that refused them. The whole counsel of God must be declared, and those who will not attend to the gracious message, must be shown that their state is dangerous. This

should be seriously laid to heart by all that hear the gospel, lest their privileges only serve to increase their condemnation.

### **Matthew 10:16**

**Vs. 16-42:** Our Lord warned his disciples to prepare for persecution. They were to avoid all things which gave advantage to their enemies, all meddling with worldly or political concerns, all appearance of evil or selfishness, and all underhand measures. Christ foretold troubles, not only that the troubles might not be a surprise, but that they might confirm their faith. He tells them what they should suffer, and from whom. Thus Christ has dealt fairly and faithfully with us, in telling us the worst we can meet with in his service; and he would have us deal so with ourselves, in sitting down and counting the cost. Persecutors are worse than beasts, in that they prey upon those of their own kind. The strongest bonds of love and duty, have often been broken through from enmity against Christ. Sufferings from friends and relations are very grievous; nothing cuts more. It appears plainly, that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; and we must expect to enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations. With these predictions of trouble, are counsels and comforts for a time of trial. The disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as serpents, and their ruin is sought, and they need the serpent's wisdom. Be ye harmless as doves. Not only, do nobody any hurt, but bear nobody any ill-will. Prudent care there must be, but not an anxious, perplexing thought; let this care be cast upon God. The disciples of Christ must think more how to do well, than how to speak well. In case of great peril, the disciples of Christ may go out of the way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty. No sinful, unlawful means may be used to escape; for then it is not a door of God's opening. The fear of man brings a snare, a perplexing snare, that disturbs our peace; an entangling snare, by which we are drawn into sin; and, therefore, it must be striven and prayed against. Tribulation, distress, and persecution cannot take away God's love to them, or theirs to him. Fear Him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. They must deliver their message publicly, for all are deeply concerned in the doctrine of the gospel. The whole counsel of God must be made known,  Acts 20:27. Christ shows them why they should be of good cheer. Their sufferings witnessed against those who oppose his gospel. When God calls us to

speaking for him, we may depend on him to teach us what to say. A believing prospect of the end of our troubles, will be of great use to support us under them. They may be born to the end, because the sufferers shall be born up under them. The strength shall be according to the day. And it is great encouragement to those who are doing Christ's work, that it is a work which shall certainly be done. See how the care of Providence extends to all creatures, even to the sparrows. This should silence all the fears of God's people; Ye are of more value than many sparrows. And the very hairs of your head are all numbered. This denotes the account God takes and keeps of his people. It is our duty, not only to believe in Christ, but to profess that faith, in suffering for him, when we are called to it, as well as in serving him. That denial of Christ only is here meant which is persisted in, and that confession only can have the blessed recompense here promised, which is the real and constant language of faith and love. Religion is worth every thing; all who believe the truth of it, will come up to the price, and make every thing else yield to it. Christ will lead us through sufferings, to glory with him. Those are best prepared for the life to come, that sit most loose to this present life. Though the kindness done to Christ's disciples be ever so small, yet if there be occasion for it, and ability to do no more, it shall be accepted. Christ does not say that they deserve a reward; for we cannot merit any thing from the hand of God; but they shall receive a reward from the free gift of God. Let us boldly confess Christ, and show love to him in all things.

## CHAPTER 11

*Christ's preaching. (1) Christ's answer to John's disciples. (2-6) Christ's testimony to John the Baptist. (7-15) The perverseness of the Jews. (16-24) The gospel revealed to the simple. The heavy-laden invited. (25-30)*

### ◀▶ Matthew 11:1

**Vs. 1:** Our Divine Redeemer never was weary of his labor of love; and we should not be weary of well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

### ◀▶ Matthew 11:2

**Vs. 2-6:** Some think that John sent this inquiry for his own satisfaction. Where there is true faith, yet there may be a mixture of unbelief. The remaining unbelief of good men may sometimes, in an hour of temptation, call in question the most important truths. But we hope that John's faith did not fail in this matter, and that he only desired to have it strengthened and confirmed. Others think that John sent his disciples to Christ for their satisfaction. Christ points them to what they heard and saw. Christ's gracious condescensions and compassions to the poor, show that it was he that should bring to the world the tender mercies of our God. Those things which men see and hear, if compared with the Scriptures, direct in what way salvation is to be found. It is difficult to conquer prejudices, and dangerous not to conquer them; but those who believe in Christ, their faith will be found so much the more to praise, and honor, and glory.

### ◀▶ Matthew 11:7

**Vs. 7-15:** What Christ said concerning John, was not only for his praise, but for the people's profit. Those who attend on the word will be called to give an account of their improvements. Do we think when the sermon is done, the care is over? No, then the greatest of the care begins. John was a self-denying man, dead to all the pomp of the world and the pleasures of sense. It becomes people, in all their appearances, to be consistent with their character and their situation. John was a great and good man, yet not



perfect; therefore he came short of glorified saints. The least in heaven knows more, loves more, and does more in praising God, and receives more from him, than the greatest in this world. But by the kingdom of heaven here, is rather to be understood the kingdom of grace, the gospel dispensation in its power and purity. What reason we have to be thankful that our lot is cast in the days of the kingdom of heaven, under such advantages of light and love! Multitudes were wrought upon by the ministry of John, and became his disciples. And those strove for a place in this kingdom, that one would think had no right nor title to it, and so seemed to be intruders. It shows us what fervency and zeal are required of all. Self must be denied; the bent, the frame and temper of the mind must be altered. Those who will have an interest in the great salvation, will have it upon any terms, and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a blessing. The things of God are of great and common concern. God requires no more from us than the right use of the faculties he has given us. People are ignorant, because they will not learn.

### **Matthew 11:16**

**Vs. 16-24:** Christ reflects on the scribes and Pharisees, who had a proud conceit of themselves. He likens their behavior to children's play, who being out of temper without reason, quarrel with all the attempts of their fellows to please them, or to get them to join in the plays for which they used to assemble. The cavils of worldly men are often very trifling and show great malice. Something they have to urge against every one, however excellencies and holy. Christ, who was undefiled, and separate from sinners, is here represented as in league with them, and polluted by them. The most unspotted innocence will not always be a defense against reproach. Christ knew that the hearts of the Jews were more bitter and hardened against his miracles and doctrines, than those of Tyre and Sidon would have been; therefore their condemnation would be the greater. The Lord exercises his almighty power, yet he punishes none more than they deserve, and never withholds the knowledge of the truth from those who long after it.

### **Matthew 11:25**

**Vs. 25-30:** It becomes children to be grateful. When we come to God as a Father, we must remember that he is Lord of heaven and earth, which

obliges us to come to him with reverence as to the sovereign Lord of all; yet with confidence, as one able to defend us from evil, and to supply us with all good. Our blessed Lord added a remarkable declaration, that the Father had delivered into his hands all power, authority, and judgment. We are indebted to Christ for all the revelation we have of God the Father's will and love, ever since Adam sinned. Our Savior has invited all that labor and are heavy-laden, to come unto him. In some senses all men are so. Worldly men burden themselves with fruitless cares for wealth and honors; the gay and the sensual labor in pursuit of pleasures; the slave of Satan and his own lusts, is the merest drudge on earth. Those who labor to establish their own righteousness also labor in vain. The convinced sinner is heavy-laden with guilt and terror; and the tempted and afflicted believer has labors and burdens. Christ invites all to come to him for rest to their souls. He alone gives this invitation; men come to him, when, feeling their guilt and misery, and believing his love and power to help, they seek him in fervent prayer. Thus it is the duty and interest of weary and heavy-laden sinners, to come to Jesus Christ. This is the gospel call; Whoever will, let him come. All who thus come will receive rest as Christ's gift, and obtain peace and comfort in their hearts. But in coming to him they must take his yoke, and submit to his authority. They must learn of him all things, as to their comfort and obedience. He accepts the willing servant, however imperfect the services. Here we may find rest for our souls, and here only. Nor need we fear his yoke. His commandments are holy, just, and good. It requires self-denial, and exposes to difficulties, but this is abundantly repaid, even in this world, by inward peace and joy. It is a yoke that is lined with love. So powerful are the assistances he gives us, so suitable the encouragements, and so strong the consolations to be found in the way of duty, that we may truly say, it is a yoke of pleasantness. The way of duty is the way of rest. The truths Christ teaches are such as we may venture our souls upon. Such is the Redeemer's mercy; and why should the laboring and burdened sinner seek for rest from any other quarter? Let us come to him daily, for deliverance from wrath and guilt, from sin and Satan, from all our cares, fears, and sorrows. But forced obedience, far from being easy and light, is a heavy burden. In vain do we draw near to Jesus with our lips, while the heart is far from him. Then come to Jesus to find rest for your souls.

## CHAPTER 12

*Jesus defends his disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath day.*

*(1-8) Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.*

*(9-13) The malice of the Pharisees. (14-21) Jesus heals a demoniac. (22-30) Blasphemy of the Pharisees. (31,32) Evil words proceed from an evil heart. (33-37) The scribes and Pharisees reproved for seeking a sign. (38-45) The disciples of Christ are his nearest relations. (46-50)*

### Matthew 12:1

**Vs. 1-8:** Being in the corn-fields, the disciples began to pluck the ears of corn: the law of God allowed it, <sup>(12:25)</sup>Deuteronomy 23:25. This was slender provision for Christ and his disciples; but they were content with it. The Pharisees did not quarrel with them for taking another man's corn, but for doing it on the Sabbath day. Christ came to free his followers, not only from the corruptions of the Pharisees, but from their unscriptural rules, and justified what they did. The greatest shall not have their lusts indulged, but the meanest shall have their wants considered. Those labors are lawful on the Sabbath day which are necessary, and Sabbath rest is to forward, not to hinder Sabbath worship. Needful provision for health and food is to be made; but when servants are kept at home, and families become a scene of hurry and confusion on the Lord's day, to furnish a feast for visitors, or for indulgence, the case is very different. Such things as these, and many others common among professors, are to be blamed. The resting on the Sabbath was ordained for man's good, <sup>(12:34)</sup>Deuteronomy 5:14. No law must be understood so as to contradict its own end. And as Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, it is fit the day and the work of it should be dedicated to him.

### Matthew 12:9

**Vs. 9-13:** Christ shows that works of mercy are lawful and proper to be done on the Lord's day. There are more ways of doing well upon Sabbath days, than by the duties of worship: attending the sick, relieving the poor, helping those who need speedy relief, teaching the young to care for their souls; these are doing good: and these must be done from love and charity,

with humility and self-denial, and shall be accepted, <sup><0007</sup>Genesis 4:7. This, like other cures which Christ wrought, had a spiritual meaning. By nature our hands are withered, and we are unable of ourselves to do any thing that is good. Christ only, by the power of his grace, cures us; he heals the withered hand by putting life into the dead soul, works in us both to will and to do: for, with the command, there is a promise of grace given by the word.

#### <sup><0124</sup>Matthew 12:14

**Vs. 14-21:** The Pharisees took counsel to find some accusation, that Jesus might be condemned to death. Aware of their design, as his time was not come, he retired from that place. Face does not more exactly answer to face in water, than the character of Christ drawn by the prophet, to his temper and conduct as described by the evangelists. Let us with cheerful confidence commit our souls to so kind and faithful a Friend. Far from breaking, he will strengthen the bruised reed; far from quenching the smoking flax, or wick nearly out, he will rather blow it up into a flame. Let us lay aside contentious and angry debates; let us receive one another as Christ receives us. And while encouraged by the gracious kindness of our Lord, we should pray that his Spirit may rest upon us, and make us able to copy his example.

#### <sup><0122</sup>Matthew 12:22

**Vs. 22-30:** A soul under Satan's power, and led captive by him, is blind in the things of God, and dumb at the throne of grace; sees nothing, and says nothing to the purpose. Satan blinds the eyes by unbelief, and seals up the lips from prayer. The more people magnified Christ, the more desirous the Pharisees were to vilify him. It was evident that if Satan aided Jesus in casting out devils, the kingdom of hell was divided against itself; how then could it stand! And if they said that Jesus cast out devils by the prince of the devils, they could not prove that their children cast them out by any other power. There are two great interests in the world; and when unequalled spirits are cast out by the Holy Spirit, in the conversion of sinners to a life of faith and obedience, the kingdom of God is come unto us. All who do not aid or rejoice in such a change are against Christ.

### ◀123 Matthew 12:31

**Vs. 31, 32:** Here is a gracious assurance of the pardon of all sin upon gospel terms. Christ herein has set an example to the sons of men, to be ready to forgive words spoken against them. But humble and conscientious believers, at times are tempted to think they have committed the unpardonable sin, while those who have come the nearest to it, seldom have any fear about it. We may be sure that those who indeed repent and believe the gospel, have not committed this sin, or any other of the same kind; for repentance and faith are the special gifts of God, which he would not bestow on any man, if he were determined never to pardon him; and those who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. The trembling, contrite sinner, has the witness in himself that this is not his case.

### ◀123 Matthew 12:33

**Vs. 33-37:** Men's language discovers what country they are of, likewise what manner of spirit they are of. The heart is the fountain, words are the streams. A troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring, must send forth muddy and unpleasant streams. Nothing but the salt of grace, cast into the spring, will heal the waters, season the speech, and purify the corrupt communication. An evil man has an evil treasure in his heart, and out of it brings forth evil things. Lusts and corruptions, dwelling and reigning in the heart, are an evil treasure, out of which the sinner brings forth bad words and actions, to dishonor God, and hurt others. Let us keep constant watch over ourselves, that we may speak words agreeable to the Christian character.

### ◀123 Matthew 12:38

**Vs. 38-45:** Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet those who ask amiss, ask and have not. Signs were granted to those who desired them to confirm their faith, as Abraham and Gideon; but denied to those who demanded them to excuse their unbelief. The resurrection of Christ from the dead by his own power, called here the sign of the prophet Jonah, was the great proof of Christ's being the Messiah. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale, and then came out again alive, thus Christ would be so long in the grave, and then

rise again. The Ninevites would shame the Jews for not repenting; the queen of Sheba, for not believing in Christ. And we have no such cares to hinder us, we come not to Christ upon such uncertainties. This parable represents the case of the Jewish church and nation. It is also applicable to all those who hear the word of God, and are in part reformed, but not truly converted. The unequaled spirit leaves for a time, but when he returns, he finds Christ is not there to shut him out; the heart is swept by outward reformation, but garnished by preparation to comply with evil suggestions, and the man becomes a more decided enemy of the truth. Every heart is the residence of unequaled spirits, except those which are temples of the Holy Ghost, by faith in Christ.

 **Matthew 12:46**

**Vs. 46-50:** Christ's preaching was plain, easy, and familiar, and suited to his hearers. His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, when they should have been standing within, desiring to hear him. Frequently, those who are nearest to the means of knowledge and grace are most negligent. We are apt to neglect that which we think we may have any day, forgetting that tomorrow is not ours. We often meet with hindrances in our work from friends about us, and are taken off by care for the things of this life, from the concerns of our souls. Christ was so intent on his work, that no natural or other duty took him from it. Not that, under pretense of religion, we may be disrespectful to parents, or unkind to relations; but the lesser duty must stand by, while the greater is done. Let us cease from men, and cleave to Christ; let us look upon every Christian, in whatever condition of life, as the brother, sister, or mother of the Lord of glory; let us love, respect, and be kind to them, for his sake, and after his example.

## CHAPTER 13

*The parable of the sower. (1-23) The parable of the tares. (24-30; 36-43) The parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven. (31-35) The parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the net cast into the sea, and the householder. (44-52) Jesus is again rejected at Nazareth. (53-58)*

### ◀ **Matthew 13:1**

**Vs. 1-23:** Jesus entered into a boat that he might be the less pressed, and be the better heard by the people. By this he teaches us in the outward circumstances of worship not to covet that which is stately, but to make the best of the conveniences God in his providence allots to us. Christ taught in parables. Thereby the things of God were made more plain and easy to those willing to be taught, and at the same time more difficult and obscure to those who were willingly ignorant. The parable of the sower is plain. The seed sown is the word of God. The sower is our Lord Jesus Christ, by himself, or by his ministers. Preaching to a multitude is sowing the corn; we know not where it will light. Some sort of ground, though we take ever so much pains with it, brings forth no fruit to purpose, while the good soil brings forth plentifully. So it is with the hearts of men, whose different characters are here described by four sorts of ground. Careless, trifling hearers, are an easy prey to Satan; who, as he is the great murderer of souls, so he is the great thief of sermons, and will be sure to rob us of the word, if we take not care to keep it. Hypocrites, like the stony ground, often get the start of true Christians in the shows of profession. Many are glad to hear a good sermon, who do not profit by it. They are told of free salvation, of the believer's privileges, and the happiness of heaven; and, without any change of heart, without any abiding conviction of their own depravity, their need of a Savior, or the excellencies of holiness, they soon profess an unwarranted assurance. But when some heavy trial threatens them, or some sinful advantage may be had, they give up or disguise their profession, or turn to some easier system. Worldly cares are fitly compared to thorns, for they came in with sin, and are a fruit of the curse; they are good in their place to stop a gap, but a man must be well armed that has much to do with them; they are entangling, vexing, scratching, and

their end is to be burned, <sup><300></sup>Hebrews 6:8. Worldly cares are great hindrances to our profiting by the word of God. The deceitfulness of riches does the mischief; they cannot be said to deceive us unless we put our trust in them, then they choke the good seed. What distinguished the good ground was fruitfulness. By this true Christians are distinguished from hypocrites. Christ does not say that this good ground has no stones in it, or no thorns; but none that could hinder its fruitfulness. All are not alike; we should aim at the highest, to bring forth most fruit. The sense of hearing cannot be better employed than in hearing God's word; and let us look to ourselves that we may know what sort of hearers we are.

### <sup><123></sup>Matthew 13:24

**Vs. 24-30, 36-43:** This parable represents the present and future state of the gospel church; Christ's care of it, the devil's enmity against it, the mixture there is in it of good and bad in this world, and the separation between them in the other world. So prone is villainy man to sin, that if the enemy sow the tares, he may go his way, they will spring up, and do hurt; whereas, when good seed is sown, it must be tended, watered, and fenced. The servants complained to their master; Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? No doubt he did; whatever is amiss in the church, we are sure it is not from Christ. Though gross transgressors, and such as openly oppose the gospel, ought to be separated from the society of the faithful, yet no human skill can make an exact separation. Those who oppose must not be cut off, but instructed, and that with meekness. And though good and bad are together in this world, yet at the great day they shall be parted; then the righteous and the wicked shall be plainly known; here sometimes it is hard to distinguish between them. Let us, knowing the terrors of the Lord, not do iniquity. At death, believers shall shine forth to themselves; at the great day they shall shine forth before all the world. They shall shine by reflection, with light borrowed from the Fountain of light. Their sanctification will be made perfect, and their justification published. May we be found of that happy number.

### <sup><123></sup>Matthew 13:31

**Vs. 31-35:** The scope of the parable of the seed sown, is to show that the beginnings of the gospel would be small, but its latter end would greatly increase; in this way the work of grace in the heart, the kingdom of God



within us, would be carried on. In the soul where grace truly is, it will grow really; though perhaps at first not to be discerned, it will at last come to great strength and usefulness. The preaching of the gospel works like leaven in the hearts of those who receive it. The leaven works certainly, so does the word, yet gradually. It works silently, and without being seen, <sup><104></sup>Mark 4:26-29, yet strongly; without noise, for so is the way of the Spirit, but without fail. Thus it was in the world. The apostles, by preaching the gospel, hid a handful of leaven in the great mass of mankind. It was made powerful by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, who works, and none can hinder. Thus it is in the heart. When the gospel comes into the soul, it works a thorough change; it spreads itself into all the powers and faculties of the soul, and alters the property even of the members of the body, <sup><105></sup>Romans 6:13. From these parables we are taught to expect a gradual progress; therefore let us inquire, Are we growing in grace? and in holy principles and habits?

### <sup><106></sup>Matthew 13:44

**Vs. 44-52:** Here are four parables.

- 1.** That of the treasure hid in the field. Many slight the gospel, because they look only upon the surface of the field. But all who search the Scriptures, so as in them to find Christ and eternal life, <sup><107></sup>John 5:39, will discover such treasure in this field as makes it unspeakably valuable; they make it their own upon any terms. Though nothing can be given as a price for this salvation, yet much must be given up for the sake of it.
- 2.** All the children of men are busy; one would be rich, another would be honorable, another would be learned; but most are deceived, and take up with counterfeits for pearls. Jesus Christ is a Pearl of great price; in having him, we have enough to make us happy here and for ever. A man may buy gold too dear, but not this Pearl of great price. When the convinced sinner sees Christ as the gracious Savior, all things else become worthless to his thoughts.
- 3.** The world is a vast sea, and men, in their natural state, are like the fishes. Preaching the gospel is casting a net into this sea, to catch something out of it, for His glory who has the sovereignty of this sea.

Hypocrites and true Christians shall be parted: miserable is the condition of those that shall then be cast away.

**4.** A skillful, faithful minister of the gospel, is a scribe, well versed in the things of the gospel, and able to teach them. Christ compares him to a good householder, who brings forth fruits of last year's growth and this year's gathering, abundance and variety, to entertain his friends. Old experiences and new observations, all have their use. Our place is at Christ's feet, and we must daily learn old lessons over again, and new ones also.

 **Matthew 13:53**

**Vs. 53-58:** Christ repeats his offer to those who have repulsed them. They upbraid him, Is not this the carpenter's son? Yes, it is true he was reputed to be so; and no disgrace to be the son of an honest tradesman; they should have respected him the more because he was one of themselves, but therefore they despised him. He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. Unbelief is the great hindrance to Christ's favors. Let us keep faithful to him as the Savior who has made our peace with God.

## CHAPTER 14

*Death of John the Baptist. (1-12) Five thousand people miraculously fed. (13-21) Jesus walks upon the sea. (22-33) Jesus healing the sick. (34-36)*

### ◀H3> Matthew 14:1

**Vs. 1-12:** The terror and reproach of conscience, which Herod, like other daring offenders, could not shake off, are proofs and warnings of a future judgment, and of future misery to them. But there may be the terror of convictions, where there is not the truth of conversion. When men pretend to favor the gospel, yet live in evil, we must not favor their self-delusion, but must deliver our consciences as John did. The world may call this rudeness and blind zeal. False professors, or timid Christians, may censure it as want of civility; but the most powerful enemies can go no further than the Lord sees good to permit. Herod feared that the putting of John to death might raise a rebellion among the people, which it did not; but he never feared it might stir up his own conscience against him, which it did. Men fear being hanged for what they do not fear being damned for. And times of carnal mirth and jollity are convenient times for carrying on bad designs against God's people. Herod would profusely reward a worthless dance, while imprisonment and death were the recompense of the man of God who sought the salvation of his soul. But there was real malice to John beneath his consent, or else Herod would have found ways to get clear of his promise. When the under shepherds are smitten, the sheep need not be scattered while they have the Great Shepherd to go to. And it is better to be drawn to Christ by want and loss, than not to come to him at all.

### ◀H3> Matthew 14:13

**Vs. 13-21:** When Christ and his word withdraw, it is best for us to follow, seeking the means of grace for our souls before any worldly advantages. The presence of Christ and his gospel, makes a desert not only tolerable, but desirable. This little supply of bread was increased by Christ's creating power, till the whole multitude were satisfied. In seeking the welfare of men's souls, we should have compassion on their bodies

likewise. Let us also remember always to crave a blessing on our meals, and learn to avoid all waste, as frugality is the proper source of liberality. See in this miracle an emblem of the Bread of life, which came down from heaven to sustain our perishing souls. The provisions of Christ's gospel appear mean and scanty to the world, yet they satisfy all that feed on him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

**Matthew 14:22**

**Vs. 22-33:** Those are not Christ's followers who cannot enjoy being alone with God and their own hearts. It is good, upon special occasions, and when we find our hearts enlarged, to continue long in secret prayer, and in pouring out our hearts before the Lord. It is no new thing for Christ's disciples to meet with storms in the way of duty, but he thereby shows himself with the more grace to them and for them. He can take what way he pleases to save his people. But even appearances of deliverance sometimes occasion trouble and perplexity to God's people, from mistakes about Christ. Nothing ought to affright those that have Christ near them, and know he is theirs; not death itself. Peter walked upon the water, not for diversion or to boast of it, but to go to Jesus; and in that he was thus wonderfully born up. Special supports are promised, and are to be expected, but only in spiritual pursuits; nor can we ever come to Jesus, unless we are upheld by his power. Christ bade Peter come, not only that he might walk upon the water, and so know his Lord's power, but that he might know his own weakness. And the Lord often lets his servants have their choice, to humble and prove them, and to show the greatness of his power and grace. When we look off from Christ, and look at the greatness of opposing difficulties, we shall begin to fall; but when we call to him, he will stretch out his arm, and save us. Christ is the great Savior; those who would be saved, must come to him, and cry to him, for salvation; we are never brought to this, till we find ourselves sinking: the sense of need drives us to him. He rebuked Peter. Could we but believe more, we should suffer less. The weakness of faith, and the prevailing of our doubts, displease our Lord Jesus, for there is no good reason why Christ's disciples should be of a doubtful mind. Even in a stormy day he is to them a very present help. None but the world's Creator could multiply the loaves, none but its Governor could tread upon the waters of the sea: the disciples yield to the evidence, and confess their faith. They were suitably

affected, and worshipped Christ. He that comes to God, must believe; and he that believes in God, will come, ~~scrips~~ Hebrews 11:6.

~~scrips~~ **Matthew 14:34**

**Vs. 34-36:** Whithersoever Christ went, he was doing good. They brought unto him all that were diseased. They came humbly beseeching him to help them. The experiences of others may direct and encourage us in seeking for Christ. As many as he touched, were made perfectly whole. Those whom Christ heals, he heals perfectly. Were men more acquainted with Christ, and with the diseased state of their souls, they would flock to receive his healing influences. The healing virtue was not in the finger, but in their faith; or rather, it was in Christ, whom their faith took hold upon.

## CHAPTER 15

*Jesus discourses about human traditions. (1-9) He warns against things which really defile. (10-20) He heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman. (21-28) Jesus heals the sick, and miraculously feeds four thousand. (29-39)*

### Ⓞ Matthew 15:1

**Vs. 1-9:** Additions to God's laws reflect upon his wisdom, as if he had left out something which was needed, and which man could supply; in one way or other they always lead men to disobey God. How thankful ought we to be for the written word of God! Never let us think that the religion of the Bible can be improved by any human addition, either in doctrine or practice. Our blessed Lord spoke of their traditions as inventions of their own, and pointed out one instance in which this was very clear, that of their transgressing the fifth commandment. When a parent's wants called for assistance, they pleaded, that they had devoted to the temple all they could spare, even though they did not part with it, and therefore their parents must expect nothing from them. This was making the command of God of no effect. The doom of hypocrites is put in a little compass; "In vain do they worship me." It will neither please God, nor profit themselves; they trust in vanity, and vanity will be their recompense.

### Ⓞ Matthew 15:10

**Vs. 10-20:** Christ shows that the defilement they ought to fear, was not from what entered their mouths as food, but from what came out of their mouths, which showed the wickedness of their hearts. Nothing will last in the soul but the regenerating graces of the Holy Spirit; and nothing should be admitted into the church but what is from above; therefore, whoever is offended by a plain, seasonable declaration of the truth, we should not be troubled at it. The disciples ask to be better taught as to this matter. Where a weak head doubts concerning any word of Christ, an upright heart and a willing mind seek for instruction. It is the heart that is desperately wicked, <sup>247B</sup>Jeremiah 17:9, for there is no sin in word or deed, which was not first in the heart. They all come out of the man, and are fruits of that wickedness which is in the heart, and is wrought there. When Christ

teaches, he will show men the deceitfulness and wickedness of their own hearts; he will teach them to humble themselves, and to seek to be cleansed in the Fountain opened for sin and unequalled.

### **Matthew 15:21**

**Vs. 21-28:** The dark corners of the country, the most remote, shall share Christ's influences; afterwards the ends of the earth shall see his salvation. The distress and trouble of her family brought a woman to Christ; and though it is need that drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from him. She did not limit Christ to any particular instance of mercy, but mercy, mercy, is what she begged for: she pleads not merit, but depends upon mercy. It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, and to be earnest in prayer for them, especially for their souls. Have you a son, a daughter, grievously vexed with a proud devil, an unequalled devil, a malicious devil, led captive by him at his will? this is a case more deplorable than that of bodily possession, and you must bring them by faith and prayer to Christ, who alone is able to heal them. Many methods of Christ's providence, especially of his grace, in dealing with his people, which are dark and perplexing, may be explained by this story, which teaches that there may be love in Christ's heart while there are frowns in his face; and it encourages us, though he seems ready to slay us, yet to trust in him. Those whom Christ intends most to honor, he humbles to feel their own unworthiness. A proud, unhumiliated heart would not have born this; but she turned it into an argument to support her request. The state of this woman is an emblem of the state of a sinner, deeply conscious of the misery of his soul. The least of Christ is precious to a believer, even the very crumbs of the Bread of life. Of all graces, faith honors Christ most; therefore of all graces Christ honors faith most. He cured her daughter. He spake, and it was done. From hence let such as seek help from the Lord, and receive no gracious answer, learn to turn even their unworthiness and discouragements into pleas for mercy.

### **Matthew 15:29**

**Vs. 29-39:** Whatever our case is, the only way to find ease and relief, is to lay it at Christ's feet, to submit it to him, and refer it to his disposal. Those who would have spiritual healing from Christ, must be ruled as he pleases. See what work sin has made; what various diseases human bodies

are subject to. Here were such diseases as fancy could neither guess the cause nor the cure of, yet these were subject to the command of Christ. The spiritual cures that Christ works are wonderful. When blind souls are made to see by faith, the dumb to speak in prayer, the maimed and the lame to walk in holy obedience, it is to be wondered at. His power was also shown to the multitude, in the plentiful provision he made for them: the manner is much the same as before. All did eat, and were filled. Those whom Christ feeds, he fills. With Christ there is bread enough, and to spare; supplies of grace for more than seek it, and for those that seek for more. Christ sent away the people. Though he had fed them twice, they must not look for miracles to find their daily bread. Let them go home to their callings and their own tables. Lord, increase our faith, and pardon our unbelief, teaching us to live upon thy fullness and bounty, for all things pertaining to this life, and that which is to come.



## CHAPTER 16

*The Pharisees and Sadducees ask a sign. (1-4) Jesus cautions against the doctrine of the Pharisees. (5-12) Peter's testimony that Jesus was the Christ. (13-20) Christ foretells his sufferings, and rebukes Peter. (21-23) The necessity of self-denial. (24-28)*

### **Matthew 16:1**

**Vs. 1-4:** The Pharisees and Sadducees were opposed to each other in principles and in conduct; yet they joined against Christ. But they desired a sign of their own choosing; they despised those signs which relieved the necessity of the sick and sorrowful, and called for something else which would gratify the curiosity of the proud. It is great hypocrisy, when we slight the signs of God's ordaining, to seek for signs of our own devising.

### **Matthew 16:5**

**Vs. 5-12:** Christ speaks of spiritual things under a similitude, and the disciples misunderstand him of carnal things. He took it ill that they should think him as thoughtful about bread as they were; that they should be so little acquainted with his way of preaching. Then understood they what he meant. Christ teaches by the Spirit of wisdom in the heart, opening the understanding to the Spirit of revelation in the word.

### **Matthew 16:13**

**Vs. 13-20:** Peter, for himself and his brethren, said that they were assured of our Lord's being the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. This showed that they believed Jesus to be more than man. Our Lord declared Peter to be blessed, as the teaching of God made him differ from his unbelieving countrymen. Christ added that he had named him Peter, in allusion to his stability or firmness in professing the truth. The word translated "rock," is not the same word as Peter, but is of a similar meaning. Nothing can be more wrong than to suppose that Christ meant the person of Peter was the rock. Without doubt Christ himself is the Rock, the tried foundation of the church; and woe to him that attempts to lay any other! Peter's confession is this rock as to doctrine. If Jesus be not

the Christ, those that own him are not of the church, but deceivers and deceived. Our Lord next declared the authority with which Peter would be invested. He spoke in the name of his brethren, and this related to them as well as to him. They had no certain knowledge of the characters of men, and were liable to mistakes and sins in their own conduct; but they were kept from error in stating the way of acceptance and salvation, the rule of obedience, the believer's character and experience, and the final doom of unbelievers and hypocrites. In such matters their decision was right, and it was confirmed in heaven. But all pretensions of any man, either to absolve or retain men's sins, are blasphemous and absurd. None can forgive sins but God only. And this binding and loosing, in the common language of the Jews, signified to forbid and to allow, or to teach what is lawful or unlawful.

### **Matthew 16:21**

**Vs. 21-23:** Christ reveals his mind to his people gradually. From that time, when the apostles had made the full confession of Christ, that he was the Son of God, he began to show them of his sufferings. He spake this to set right the mistakes of his disciples about the outward pomp and power of his kingdom. Those that follow Christ, must not expect great or high things in this world. Peter would have Christ to dread suffering as much as he did; but we mistake, if we measure Christ's love and patience by our own. We do not read of any thing said or done by any of his disciples, at any time, that Christ resented so much as this. Whoever takes us from that which is good, and would make us fear to do too much for God, speaks Satan's language. Whatever appears to be a temptation to sin, must be resisted with abhorrence, and not be parleyed with. Those that decline suffering for Christ, savor more of the things of man than of the things of God.

### **Matthew 16:24**

**Vs. 24-28:** A true disciple of Christ is one that does follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory. He is one that walks in the same way Christ walked in, is led by his Spirit, and treads in his steps, whithersoever he goes. "Let him deny himself." If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practiced, to redeem us, and to teach us. "Let him take up his cross." The cross is here put for every trouble that

befalls us. We are apt to think we could bear another's cross better than our own; but that is best which is appointed us, and we ought to make the best of it. We must not by our rashness and folly pull crosses down upon our own heads, but must take them up when they are in our way. If any man will have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow Christ in the work and duty of a disciple. If all worldly things are worthless when compared with the life of the body, how forcible the same argument with respect to the soul and its state of never-ending happiness or misery! Thousands lose their souls for the most trifling gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, often from mere sloth and negligence. Whatever is the object for which men forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan buys their souls. Yet one soul is worth more than all the world. This is Christ's judgment upon the matter; he knew the price of souls, for he redeemed them; nor would he underrate the world, for he made it. The dying transgressor cannot purchase one hour's respite to seek mercy for his perishing soul. Let us then learn rightly to value our souls, and Christ as the only Savior of them.

## CHAPTER 17

*The transfiguration of Christ. (1-13) Jesus casts out a dumb and deaf spirit. (14-21) He again foretells his sufferings. (22,23) He works a miracle to pay the tribute money. (24-27)*

### Matthew 17:1

**Vs. 1-13:** Now the disciples beheld somewhat of Christ's glory, as of the only begotten of the Father. It was intended to support their faith, when they would have to witness his crucifixion; and would give them an idea of the glory prepared for them, when changed by his power and made like him. The apostles were overcome by the glorious sight. Peter thought that it was most desirable to continue there, and to go no more down to meet the sufferings of which he was so unwilling to hear. In this he knew not what he said. We are wrong, if we look for a heaven here upon earth.

Whatever tabernacles we propose to make for ourselves in this world, we must always remember to ask Christ's leave. That sacrifice was not yet offered, without which the souls of sinful men could not have been saved; and important services were to be done by Peter and his brethren. While Peter spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, an emblem of the Divine presence and glory. Ever since man sinned, and heard God's voice in the garden, unusual appearances of God have been terrible to man. They fell prostrate to the earth, till Jesus encouraged them; when looking round, they beheld only their Lord as they commonly saw him. We must pass through varied experiences in our way to glory; and when we return to the world after an ordinance, it must be our care to take Christ with us, and then it may be our comfort that he is with us.

### Matthew 17:14

**Vs. 14-21:** The case of afflicted children should be presented to God by faithful and fervent prayer. Christ cured the child. Though the people were perverse, and Christ was provoked, yet care was taken of the child. When all other helps and succors fail, we are welcome to Christ, may trust in him, and in his power and goodness. See here an emblem of Christ's undertaking as our Redeemer. It encourages parents to bring children to Christ, whose souls are under Satan's power; he is able to heal them, and

as willing as he is able. Not only bring them to Christ by prayer, but bring them to the word of Christ; to means by which Satan's strong-holds in the soul are beaten down. It is good for us to distrust ourselves and our own strength; but it is displeasing to Christ when we distrust any power derived from him, or granted by him. There was also something in the malady which rendered the cure difficult. The extraordinary power of Satan must not discourage our faith, but quicken us to more earnestness in praying to God for the increase of it. Do we wonder to see Satan's bodily possession of this young man from a child, when we see his spiritual possession of every son of Adam from the fall!

**Matthew 17:22**

**Vs. 22, 23:** Christ perfectly knew all things that should befall him, yet undertook the work of our redemption, which strongly shows his love. What outward debasement and Divine glory was the life of the Redeemer! And all his humiliation ended in his exaltation. Let us learn to endure the cross, to despise riches and worldly honors, and to be content with his will.

**Matthew 17:24**

**Vs. 24-27:** Peter felt sure that his Master was ready to do what was right. Christ spoke first to give him proof that no thought can be withholden from him. We must never decline our duty for fear of giving offense; but we must sometimes deny ourselves in our worldly interests, rather than give offense. However the money was lodged in the fish, He who knows all things alone could know it, and only almighty power could bring it to Peter's hook. The power and the poverty of Christ should be mentioned together. If called by providence to be poor, like our Lord, let us trust in his power, and our God shall supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. In the way of obedience, in the course, perhaps, of our usual calling, as he helped Peter, so he will help us. And if any sudden call should occur, which we are not prepared to meet, let us not apply to others, till we first seek Christ.

## CHAPTER 18

*The importance of humility. (1-6) Caution against offenses. (7-14)  
The removal of offenses. (15-20) Conduct towards brethren, The  
parable of the unmerciful servant. (21-35)*

### ◀**Matthew 18:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** Christ spoke many words of his sufferings, but only one of his glory; yet the disciples fasten upon that, and overlook the others. Many love to hear and speak of privileges and glory, who are willing to pass by the thoughts of work and trouble. Our Lord set a little child before them, solemnly assuring them, that unless they were converted and made like little children, they could not enter his kingdom. Children, when very young, do not desire authority, do not regard outward distinctions, are free from malice, are teachable, and willingly dependent on their parents. It is true that they soon begin to show other dispositions, and other ideas are taught them at an early age; but these are marks of childhood, and render them proper emblems of the lowly minds of true Christians. Surely we need to be daily renewed in the spirit of our minds, that we may become simple and humble, as little children, and willing to be the least of all. Let us daily study this subject, and examine our own spirits.

### ◀**Matthew 18:7**

**Vs. 7-14:** Considering the cunning and malice of Satan, and the weakness and depravity of men's hearts, it is not possible but that there should be offenses. God permits them for wise and holy ends, that those who are sincere, and those who are not, may be made known. Being told before, that there will be seducers, tempters, persecutors, and bad examples, let us stand on our guard. We must, as far as lawfully we may, part with what we cannot keep without being entangled by it in sin. The outward occasions of sin must be avoided. If we live after the flesh, we must die. If we, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. Christ came into the world to save souls, and he will reckon severely with those who hinder the progress of others who are setting their faces heavenward. And shall any of us refuse attention to those whom the Son of God came

to seek and to save? A father takes care of all his children, but is particularly tender of the little ones.

### **Matthew 18:15**

**Vs. 15-20:** If a professed Christian is wronged by, he ought not to complain of it to others, as is often done merely upon report, but to go to the offender privately, state the matter kindly, and show him his conduct. This would generally have all the desired effect with a true Christian, and the parties would be reconciled. The principles of these rules may be practiced every where, and under all circumstances, though they are too much neglected by all. But how few try the method which Christ has expressly enjoined to all his disciples! In all our proceedings we should seek direction in prayer; we cannot too highly prize the promises of God. Wherever and whenever we meet in the name of Christ, we should consider him as present in the midst of us.

### **Matthew 18:21**

**Vs. 21-35:** Though we live wholly on mercy and forgiveness, we are backward to forgive the offenses of our brethren. This parable shows how much provocation God has from his family on earth, and how untoward his servants are. There are three things in the parable:

- 1.** The master's wonderful clemency. The debt of sin is so great, that we are not able to pay it. See here what every sin deserves; this is the wages of sin, to be sold as a slave. It is the folly of many who are under strong convictions of their sins, to fancy they can make God satisfaction for the wrong they have done him.
- 2.** The servant's unreasonable severity toward his fellow-servant, notwithstanding his Lord's clemency toward him. Not that we may make light of wronging our neighbor, for that is also a sin against God; but we should not aggravate our neighbor's wronging us, nor study revenge. Let our complaints, both of the wickedness of the wicked, and of the afflictions of the afflicted, be brought to God, and left with him.
- 3.** The master reproved his servant's cruelty. The greatness of sin magnifies the riches of pardoning mercy; and the comfortable sense of

pardoning mercy, does much to dispose our hearts to forgive our brethren.

We are not to suppose that God actually forgives men, and afterwards reckons their guilt to them to condemn them; but this latter part of the parable shows the false conclusions many draw as to their sins being pardoned, though their after-conduct shows that they never entered into the spirit, or experienced the sanctifying grace of the gospel. We do not forgive our offending brother aright, if we do not forgive from the heart. Yet this is not enough; we must seek the welfare even of those who offend us. How justly will those be condemned, who, though they bear the Christian name, persist in unmerciful treatment of their brethren! The humbled sinner relies only on free, abounding mercy, through the ransom of the death of Christ. Let us seek more and more for the renewing grace of God, to teach us to forgive others as we hope for forgiveness from him.



## CHAPTER 19

*Jesus enters Judea. (1, 2) The Pharisees' question about divorces. (3-12) Young children brought to Jesus. (13-15) The rich young man's inquiry. (16-22) The recompense of Christ's followers. (23-30)*

### ☞ **Matthew 19:1**

**Vs. 1, 2:** Great multitudes followed Christ. When Christ departs, it is best for us to follow him. They found him as able and ready to help elsewhere, as he had been in Galilee; wherever the Sun of Righteousness arose, it was with healing in his wings.

### ☞ **Matthew 19:3**

**Vs. 3-12:** The Pharisees were desirous of drawing something from Jesus which they might represent as contrary to the law of Moses. Cases about marriage have been numerous, and sometimes perplexed; made so, not by the law of God, but by the lusts and follies of men; and often people fix what they will do, before they ask for advice. Jesus replied by asking whether they had not read the account of the creation, and the first example of marriage; thus pointing out that every departure therefrom was wrong. That condition is best for us, and to be chosen and kept to accordingly, which is best for our souls, and tends most to prepare us for, and preserve us to, the kingdom of heaven. When the gospel is really embraced, it makes men kind relatives and faithful friends; it teaches them to bear the burdens, and to bear with the infirmities of those with whom they are connected, to consider their peace and happiness more than their own. As to ungodly persons, it is proper that they should be restrained by laws, from breaking the peace of society. And we learn that the married state should be entered upon with great seriousness and earnest prayer.

### ☞ **Matthew 19:13**

**Vs. 13-15:** It is well when we come to Christ ourselves, and bring our children. Little children may be brought to Christ as needing, and being capable of receiving blessings from him, and having an interest in his

intercession. We can but beg a blessing for them: Christ only can command the blessing. It is well for us, that Christ has more love and tenderness in him than the best of his disciples have. And let us learn of him not to discountenance any willing, well-meaning souls, in their seeking after Christ, though they are but weak. Those who are given to Christ, as part of his purchase, he will in no wise cast out. Therefore he takes it ill of all who forbid, and try to shut out those whom he has received. And all Christians should bring their children to the Savior that he may bless them with spiritual blessings.

### **Matthew 19:16**

**Vs. 16-22:** Christ knew that covetousness was the sin which most easily beset this young man; though he had got honestly what he possessed, yet he could not cheerfully part with it, and by this his want of sincerity was shown. Christ's promises make his precepts easy, and his yoke pleasant and very comfortable; yet this promise was as much a trial of the young man's faith, as the precept was of his charity and contempt of the world. It is required of us in following Christ, that we duly attend his ordinances, strictly follow his pattern, and cheerfully submit to his disposals; and this from love to him, and in dependence on him. To sell all, and give to the poor, will not serve, but we are to follow Christ. The gospel is the only remedy for lost sinners. Many abstain from gross vices who do not attend to their obligations to God. Thousands of instances of disobedience in thought, word, and deed, are marked against them in the book of God. Thus numbers forsake Christ, loving this present world: they feel convictions and desires, but they depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. It behooves us to try ourselves in these matters, for the Lord will try us.

### **Matthew 19:23**

**Vs. 23-30:** Though Christ spoke so strongly, few that have riches do not trust in them. How few that are poor are not tempted to envy! But men's earnestness in this matter is like their toiling to build a high wall to shut themselves and their children out of heaven. It should be satisfaction to those who are in a low condition, that they are not exposed to the temptations of a high and prosperous condition. If they live more hardly in this world than the rich, yet, if they get more easily to a better world, they have no reason to complain. Christ's words show that it is hard for a

rich man to be a good Christian, and to be saved. The way to heaven is a narrow way to all, and the gate that leads into it, a strait gate; particularly so to rich people. More duties are expected from them than from others, and more sins easily beset them. It is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world. Rich people have a great account to make up for their opportunities above others. It is utterly impossible for a man that sets his heart upon his riches, to get to heaven. Christ used an expression, denoting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the power of man. Nothing less than the almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. Who then can be saved? If riches hinder rich people, are not pride and sinful lusts found in those not rich, and as dangerous to them? Who can be saved? say the disciples. None, saith Christ, by any created power. The beginning, progress, and perfecting the work of salvation, depend wholly on the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible. Not that rich people can be saved in their worldliness, but that they should be saved from it. Peter said, We have forsaken all. Alas! it was but a poor all, only a few boats and nets; yet observe how Peter speaks, as if it had been some mighty thing. We are too apt to make the most of our services and sufferings, our expenses and losses, for Christ. However, Christ does not upbraid them; though it was but little that they had forsaken, yet it was their all, and as dear to them as if it had been more. Christ took it kindly that they left it to follow him; he accepts according to what a man hath. Our Lord's promise to the apostles is, that when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, he will make all things new, and they shall sit with him in judgment on those who will be judged according to their doctrine. This sets forth the honor, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry. Our Lord added, that every one who had forsaken possessions or comforts, for his sake and the gospel, would be recompense at last. May God give us faith to rest our hope on this his promise; then we shall be ready for every service or sacrifice. Our Savior, in the last verse, does away a mistake of some. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly ones are, but according to God's pleasure. Let us not trust in promising appearances or outward profession. Others may, for ought we know, become eminent in faith and holiness.

## CHAPTER 20

*The parable of the laborers in the vineyard. (1-16) Jesus again foretells his sufferings. (17-19) The ambition of James and John. (20-28) Jesus gives sight to two blind men near Jericho. (29-34)*

### Matthew 20:1

**Vs. 1-16:** The direct object of this parable seems to be, to show that though the Jews were first called into the vineyard, at length the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and they should be admitted to equal privileges and advantages with the Jews. The parable may also be applied more generally, and shows,

1. That God is debtor to no man.
2. That many who begin last, and promise little in religion, sometimes, by the blessing of God, arrive at a great deal of knowledge, grace, and usefulness.
3. That the recompense of reward will be given to the saints, but not according to the time of their conversion.

It describes the state of the visible church, and explains the declaration that the last shall be first, and the first last, in its various references. Till we are hired into the service of God, we are standing all the day idle: a sinful state, though a state of drudgery to Satan, may be called a state of idleness. The market-place is the world, and from that we are called by the gospel. Come, come from this market-place. Work for God will not admit of trifling. A man may go idle to hell, but he that will go to heaven, must be diligent. The Roman penny was seven pence halfpenny in our money, wages then enough for the day's support. This does not prove that the reward of our obedience to God is of works, or of debt; when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; but it signifies that there is a reward set before us, yet let none, upon this presumption, put off repentance till they are old. Some were sent into the vineyard at the eleventh hour; but nobody had hired them before. The Gentiles came in at the eleventh hour; the gospel had not been before preached to them. Those that have had

gospel offers made them at the third or sixth hour, and have refused them, will not have to say at the eleventh hour, as these had, No man has hired us. Therefore, not to discourage any, but to awaken all, be it remembered, that now is the accepted time. The riches of Divine grace are loudly murmured at, among proud Pharisees and nominal Christians. There is great proneness in us to think that we have too little, and others too much of the tokens of God's favor; and that we do too much, and others too little in the work of God. But if God gives grace to others, it is kindness to them, and no injustice to us. Carnal worldliness agree with God for their penny in this world; and choose their portion in this life. Obedient believers agree with God for their penny in the other world, and must remember they have so agreed. Didst not thou agree to take up with heaven as thy portion, thy all; wilt thou seek for happiness in the creature? God punishes none more than they deserve, and recompense every service done for him; he therefore does no wrong to any, by showing extraordinary grace to some. See here the nature of envy. It is an evil eye, which is displeased at the good of others, and desires their hurt. It is a grief to ourselves, displeasing to God, and hurtful to our neighbors: it is a sin that has neither pleasure, profit, nor honor. Let us forego every proud claim, and seek for salvation as a free gift. Let us never envy or grudge, but rejoice and praise God for his mercy to others as well as to ourselves.

### **Matthew 20:17**

**Vs. 17-19:** Christ is more particular here in foretelling his sufferings than before. And here, as before, he adds the mention of his resurrection and his glory, to that of his death and sufferings, to encourage his disciples, and comfort them. A believing view of our once crucified and now glorified Redeemer, is good to humble a proud, self-justifying disposition. When we consider the need of the humiliation and sufferings of the Son of God, in order to the salvation of perishing sinners, surely we must be aware of the freeness and richness of Divine grace in our salvation.

### **Matthew 20:20**

**Vs. 20-28:** The sons of Zebedee abused what Christ said to comfort the disciples. Some cannot have comforts but they turn them to a wrong purpose. Pride is a sin that most easily besets us; it is sinful ambition to outdo others in pomp and grandeur. To put down the vanity and ambition

of their request, Christ leads them to the thoughts of their sufferings. It is a bitter cup that is to be drunk of; a cup of trembling, but not the cup of the wicked. It is but a cup, it is but a draught, bitter perhaps, but soon emptied; it is a cup in the hand of a Father, <sup><4881></sup>John 18:11. Baptism is an ordinance by which we are joined to the Lord in covenant and communion; and so is suffering for Christ, <sup><4217></sup>Ezekiel 20:37; <sup><2480></sup>Isaiah 48:10. Baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; and so is suffering for Christ, for unto us it is given, <sup><4022></sup>Philippians 1:29. But they knew not what Christ's cup was, nor what his baptism. Those are commonly most confident, who are least acquainted with the cross. Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, than desire of greatness. And we never find Christ's disciples quarreling, but something of this was at the bottom of it. That man who labors most diligently, and savors most patiently, seeking to do good to his brethren, and to promote the salvation of souls, most resembles Christ, and will be most honored by him to all eternity. Our Lord speaks of his death in the terms applied to the sacrifices of old. It is a sacrifice for the sins of men, and is that true and substantial sacrifice, which those of the law faintly and imperfectly represented. It was a ransom for many, enough for all, working upon many; and, if for many, then the poor trembling soul may say, Why not for me?

### <sup><4112></sup>Matthew 20:29

**Vs. 29-34:** It is good for those under the same trial, or infirmity of body or mind, to join in prayer to God for relief, that they may quicken and encourage one. There is mercy enough in Christ for all that ask. They were earnest in prayer. They cried out as men in earnest. Cold desires beg denials. They were humble in prayer, casting themselves upon, and referring themselves cheerfully to, the Mediator's mercy. They showed faith in prayer, by the title they gave to Christ. Surely it was by the Holy Ghost that they called Jesus, Lord. They persevered in prayer. When they were in pursuit of such mercy, it was no time for timidity or hesitation: they cried earnestly. Christ encouraged them. The wants and burdens of the body we are soon sensible of, and can readily relate. Oh that we did as feelingly complain of our spiritual maladies, especially our spiritual blindness! Many are spiritually blind, yet say they see. Jesus cured these blind men; and when they had received sight, they followed him. None

follow Christ blindly. He first by his grace opens men's eyes, and so draws their hearts after him. These miracles are our call to Jesus; may we hear it, and make it our daily prayer to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 21

*Christ enters Jerusalem. (1-11) He drives out those who profaned the temple. (12-17) The barren fig-tree cursed. (18-22) Jesus' discourse in the temple. (23-27) The parable of the two sons. (28-32) The parable of the wicked husbandmen. (33-46)*

### Matthew 21:1

**Vs. 1-11:** This coming of Christ was described by the prophet Zechariah, <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:9. When Christ would appear in his glory, it is in his meekness, not in his majesty, in mercy to work salvation. As meekness and outward poverty were fully seen in Zion's King, and marked his triumphal entrance to Jerusalem, how wrong covetousness, ambition, and the pride of life must be in Zion's citizens! They brought the ass, but Jesus did not use it without the owner's consent. The trappings were such as came to hand. We must not think the clothes on our backs too dear to part with for the service of Christ. The chief priests and the elders afterwards joined with the multitude that abused him upon the cross; but none of them joined the multitude that did him honor. Those that take Christ for their King, must lay their all under his feet. Hosanna signifies, Save now, we beseech thee! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! But of how little value is the applause of the people! The changing multitude join the cry of the day, whether it be Hosanna, or Crucify him. Multitudes often seem to approve the gospel, but few become consistent disciples. When Jesus was come into Jerusalem all the city was moved; some perhaps were moved with joy, who waited for the Consolation of Israel; others, of the Pharisees, were moved with envy. So various are the motions in the minds of men upon the approach of Christ's kingdom.

### Matthew 21:12

**Vs. 12-17:** Christ found some of the courts of the temple turned into a market for cattle and things used in the sacrifices, and partly occupied by the money-changers. Our Lord drove them from the place, as he had done at his entering upon his ministry, <sup><400></sup>John 2:13-17. His works testified of him more than the hosannas; and his healing in the temple was the fulfilling of the promise, that the glory of the latter house should be greater than the



glory of the former. If Christ came now into many parts of his visible church, how many secret evils he would discover and cleanse! And how many things daily practiced under the cloak of religion, would he show to be more suitable to a den of thieves than to a house of prayer!

### **Matthew 21:18**

**Vs. 18-22:** This cursing of the barren fig-tree represents the state of hypocrites in general, and so teaches us that Christ looks for the power of religion in those who profess it, and the savor of it from those that have the show of it. His just expectations from flourishing professors are often disappointed; he comes to many, seeking fruit, and finds leaves only. A false profession commonly withers in this world, and it is the effect of Christ's curse. The fig-tree that had no fruit, soon lost its leaves. This represents the state of the nation and people of the Jews in particular. Our Lord Jesus found among them nothing but leaves. And after they rejected Christ, blindness and hardness grew upon them, till they were undone, and their place and nation rooted up. The Lord was righteous in it. Let us greatly fear the doom denounced on the barren fig-tree.

### **Matthew 21:23**

**Vs. 23-27:** As our Lord now openly appeared as the Messiah, the chief priests and scribes were much offended, especially because he exposed and removed the abuses they encouraged. Our Lord asked what they thought of John's ministry and baptism. Many are more afraid of the shame of lying than of the sin, and therefore scruple not to speak what they know to be false, as to their own thoughts, affection, and intentions, or their remembering and forgetting. Our Lord refused to answer their inquiry. It is best to shun needless disputes with wicked opposers.

### **Matthew 21:28**

**Vs. 28-32:** Parables which give reproof, speak plainly to the offenders, and judge them out of their own mouths. The parable of the two sons sent to work in the vineyard, is to show that those who knew not John's baptism to be of God, were shamed by those who knew it, and owned it. The whole human race are like children whom the Lord has brought up, but they have rebelled against him, only some are more plausible in their disobedience than others. And it often happens, that the daring rebel is

brought to repentance and becomes the Lord's servant, while the formalist grows hardened in pride and enmity.

 **Matthew 21:33**

**Vs. 33-46:** This parable plainly sets forth the sin and ruin of the Jewish nation; and what is spoken to convict them, is spoken to caution all that enjoy the privileges of the outward church. As men treat God's people, they would treat Christ himself, if he were with them. How can we, if faithful to his cause, expect a favorable reception from a wicked world, or from ungodly professors of Christianity! And let us ask ourselves, whether we who have the vineyard and all its advantages, render fruits in due season, as a people, as a family, or as separate persons. Our Savior, in his question, declares that the Lord of the vineyard will come, and when he comes he will surely destroy the wicked. The chief priests and the elders were the builders, and they would not admit his doctrine or laws; they threw him aside as a despised stone. But he who was rejected by the Jews, was embraced by the Gentiles. Christ knows who will bring forth gospel fruits in the use of gospel means. The unbelief of sinners will be their ruin. But God has many ways of restraining the remainders of wrath, as he has of making that which breaks out redound to his praise. May Christ become more and more precious to our souls, as the firm Foundation and Cornerstone of his church. May we be willing to follow him, though despised and hated for his sake.

## CHAPTER 22

*The parable of the marriage feast. (1-14) The Pharisees question Jesus as to the tribute. (15-22) The question of the Sadducees as to the resurrection. (23-33) The substance of the commandments. (34-40) Jesus questions the Pharisees. (41-46)*

### ◀121▶ **Matthew 22:1**

**Vs. 1-14:** The provision made for perishing souls in the gospel, is represented by a royal feast made by a king, with eastern liberality, on the marriage of his son. Our merciful God has not only provided food, but a royal feast, for the perishing souls of his rebellious creatures. There is enough and to spare, of every thing that can add to our present comfort and everlasting happiness, in the salvation of his Son Jesus Christ. The guests first invited were the Jews. When the prophets of the Old Testament prevailed not, nor John the Baptist, nor Christ himself, who told them the kingdom of God was at hand, the apostles and ministers of the gospel were sent, after Christ's resurrection, to tell them it was come, and to persuade them to accept the offer. The reason why sinners come not to Christ and salvation by him, is, not because they cannot, but because they will not. Making light of Christ, and of the great salvation wrought out by him, is the damning sin of the world. They were careless. Multitudes perish for ever through mere carelessness, who show no direct aversion, but are careless as to their souls. Also the business and profit of worldly employments hinder many in closing with the Savior. Both farmers and merchants must be diligent; but whatever we have of the world in our hands, our care must be to keep it out of our hearts, lest it come between us and Christ. The utter ruin coming upon the Jewish church and nation, is here represented. Persecution of Christ's faithful ministers fills up the measure of guilt of any people. The offer of Christ and salvation to the Gentiles was not expected; it was such a surprise as it would be to wayfaring men, to be invited to a royal wedding-feast. The design of the gospel is to gather souls to Christ; all the children of God scattered abroad, ◀806▶ John 10:16; ◀815▶ 11:52. The case of hypocrites is represented by the guest that had not on a wedding-garment. It concerns all to prepare for the scrutiny; and those, and those only, who put on the

Lord Jesus, who have a Christian temper of mind, who live by faith in Christ, and to whom he is all in all, have the wedding-garment. The imputed righteousness of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, are both alike necessary. No man has the wedding-garment by nature, or can form it for himself. The day is coming, when hypocrites will be called to account for all their presumptuous intruding into gospel ordinances, and usurpation of gospel privileges. Take him away. Those that walk unworthy of Christianity, forfeit all the happiness they presumptuously claimed. Our Savior here passes out of the parable into that which it teaches. Hypocrites go by the light of the gospel itself down to utter darkness. Many are called to the wedding-feast, that is, to salvation, but few have the wedding-garment, the righteousness of Christ, the sanctification of the Spirit. Then let us examine ourselves whether we are in the faith, and seek to be approved by the King.

#### **Matthew 22:15**

**Vs. 15-22:** The Pharisees sent their disciples with the Herodians, a party among the Jews, who were for full subjection to the Roman emperor. Though opposed to each other, they joined against Christ. What they said of Christ was right; whether they knew it or not, blessed be God we know it. Jesus Christ was a faithful Teacher, and a bold reprove. Christ saw their wickedness. Whatever mask the hypocrite puts on, our Lord Jesus sees through it. Christ did not interpose as a judge in matters of this nature, for his kingdom is not of this world, but he enjoins peaceable subjection to the powers that be. His adversaries were reproved, and his disciples were taught that the Christian religion is no enemy to civil government. Christ is, and will be, the wonder, not only of his friends, but of his enemies. They admire his wisdom, but will not be guided by it; his power, but will not submit to it.

#### **Matthew 22:23**

**Vs. 23-33:** The doctrines of Christ displeased the infidel Sadducees, as well as the Pharisees and Herodians. He carried the great truths of the resurrection and a future state, further than they had yet been revealed. There is no arguing from the state of things in this world, as to what will take place hereafter. Let truth be set in a clear light, and it appears in full strength. Having thus silenced them, our Lord proceeded to show the truth

of the doctrine of the resurrection from the books of Moses. God declared to Moses that he was the God of the patriarchs, who had died long before; this shows that they were then in a state of being, capable of enjoying his favor, and proves that the doctrine of the resurrection is clearly taught in the Old Testament as well as in the New. But this doctrine was kept for a more full revelation, after the resurrection of Christ, who was the first-fruits of them that slept. All errors arise from not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God. In this world death takes away one after, and so ends all earthly hopes, joys, sorrows, and connections. How wretched are those who look for nothing better beyond the grave!

### ◀123▶ **Matthew 22:34**

**Vs. 34-40:** An interpreter of the law asked our Lord a question, to try, not so much his knowledge, as his judgment. The love of God is the first and great commandment, and the sum of all the commands of the first table. Our love of God must be sincere, not in word and tongue only. All our love is too little to bestow upon him, therefore all the powers of the soul must be engaged for him, and carried out toward him. To love our neighbor as ourselves, is the second great commandment. There is a self-love which is corrupt, and the root of the greatest sins, and it must be put off and mortified; but there is a self-love which is the rule of the greatest duty: we must have a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies. And we must love our neighbor as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves; in many cases we must deny ourselves for the good of others. By these two commandments let our hearts be formed as by a mold.

### ◀124▶ **Matthew 22:41**

**Vs. 41-46:** When Christ baffled his enemies, he asked what thoughts they had of the promised Messiah? How he could be the Son of David and yet his Lord? He quotes Psalms 110:1. If the Christ was to be a mere man, who would not exist till many ages after David's death, how could his forefather call him Lord? The Pharisees could not answer it. Nor can any solve the difficulty except he allows the Messiah to be the Son of God, and David's Lord equally with the Father. He took upon him human nature, and so became God manifested in the flesh; in this sense he is the Son of man and the Son of David. It behooves us above all things seriously to inquire, "What think we of Christ?" Is he altogether glorious in our

eyes, and precious to our hearts? May Christ be our joy, our confidence, our all. May we daily be made more like to him, and more devoted to his service.

## CHAPTER 23

*Jesus reproveth the scribes and Pharisees. (1-12) Crimes of the Pharisees. (13-33) The guilt of Jerusalem. (34-39)*

### ◀121▶ **Matthew 23:1**

**Vs. 1-12:** The scribes and Pharisees explained the law of Moses, and enforced obedience to it. They are charged with hypocrisy in religion. We can only judge according to outward appearance; but God searches the heart. They made phylacteries. These were scrolls of paper or parchment, wherein were written four paragraphs of the law, to be worn on their foreheads and left arms, <sup>◀122▶</sup>Exodus 13:2-10; <sup>◀123▶</sup>13:11-16; <sup>◀124▶</sup>Deuteronomy 6:4-9; <sup>◀125▶</sup>11:13-21. They made these phylacteries broad, that they might be thought more zealous for the law than others. God appointed the Jews to make fringes upon their garments, <sup>◀126▶</sup>Numbers 15:38, to remind them of their being a peculiar people; but the Pharisees made them larger than common, as if they were thereby more religious than others. Pride was the darling, reigning sin of the Pharisees, the sin that most easily beset them, and which our Lord Jesus takes all occasions to speak against. For him that is taught in the word to give respect to him that teaches, is commendable; but for him that teaches, to demand it, to be puffed up with it, is sinful. How much is all this against the spirit of Christianity! The consistent disciple of Christ is pained by being put into chief places. But who that looks around on the visible church, would think this was the spirit required? It is plain that some measure of this antichristian spirit prevails in every religious society, and in every one of our hearts.

### ◀127▶ **Matthew 23:13**

**Vs. 13-33:** The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to the gospel of Christ, and therefore to the salvation of the souls of men. It is bad to keep away from Christ ourselves, but worse also to keep others from him. Yet it is no new thing for the show and form of godliness to be made a cloak to the greatest enormities. But dissembled piety will be reckoned double iniquity. They were very busy to turn souls to be of their party. Not for the glory of God and the good of souls, but that they might have the credit and advantage of making converts. Gain being their godliness, by a thousand

devices they made religion give way to their worldly interests. They were very strict and precise in smaller matters of the law, but careless and loose in weightier matters. It is not the scrupling a little sin that Christ here reproves; if it be a sin, though but a gnat, it must be strained out; but the doing that, and then swallowing a camel, or, committing a greater sin. While they would seem to be godly, they were neither sober nor righteous. We are really, what we are inwardly. Outward motives may keep the outside clean, while the inside is filthy; but if the heart and spirit be made new, there will be newness of life; here we must begin with ourselves. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was like the ornaments of a grave, or dressing up a dead body, only for show. The deceitfulness of sinners' hearts appears in that they go down the streams of the sins of their own day, while they fancy that they should have opposed the sins of former days. We sometimes think, if we had lived when Christ was upon earth, that we should not have despised and rejected him, as men then did; yet Christ in his Spirit, in his word, in his ministers, is still no better treated. And it is just with God to give those up to their hearts' lusts, who obstinately persist in gratifying them. Christ gives men their true characters.

### **Matthew 23:34**

**Vs. 34-39:** Our Lord declares the miseries the inhabitants of Jerusalem were about to bring upon themselves, but he does not notice the sufferings he was to undergo. A hen gathering her chickens under her wings, is an apt emblem of the Saviors tender love to those who trust in him, and his faithful care of them. He calls sinners to take refuge under his tender protection, keeps them safe, and nourishes them to eternal life. The present dispersion and unbelief of the Jews, and their future conversion to Christ, were here foretold. Jerusalem and her children had a large share of guilt, and their punishment has been signal. But ere long, deserved vengeance will fall on every church which is Christian in name only. In the mean time the Savior stands ready to receive all who come to him. There is nothing between sinners and eternal happiness, but their proud and unbelieving unwillingness.



## CHAPTER 24

*Christ foretells the destruction of the temple. (1-3) The troubles before the destruction of Jerusalem. (4-28) Christ foretells other signs and miseries, to the end of the world. (29-41) Exhortations to watchfulness. (42-51)*

### ◀BIB▶ **Matthew 24:1**

**Vs. 1-3:** Christ foretells the utter ruin and destruction coming upon the temple. A believing foresight of the defacing of all worldly glory, will help to keep us from admiring it, and overvaluing it. The most beautiful body soon will be food for worms, and the most magnificent building a ruinous heap. See ye not all these things? It will do us good so to see them as to see through them, and see to the end of them. Our Lord having gone with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, he set before them the order of the times concerning the Jews, till the destruction of Jerusalem; and as to men in general till the end of the world.

### ◀BIB▶ **Matthew 24:4**

**Vs. 4-28:** The disciples had asked concerning the times, When these things should be? Christ gave them no answer to that; but they had also asked, What shall be the sign? This question he answers fully. The prophecy first respects events near at hand, the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish church and state, the calling of the Gentiles, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; but it also looks to the general judgment; and toward the close, points more particularly to the latter. What Christ here said to his disciples, tended more to promote caution than to satisfy their curiosity; more to prepare them for the events that should happen, than to give a distinct idea of the events. This is that good understanding of the times which all should covet, thence to infer what Israel ought to do. Our Savior cautions his disciples to stand on their guard against false teachers. And he foretells wars and great commotions among nations. From the time that the Jews rejected Christ, and he left their house desolate, the sword never departed from them. See what comes of refusing the gospel. Those who will not hear the messengers of peace, shall be made to hear the messengers of war. But where the heart is fixed, trusting

in God, it is kept in peace, and is not afraid. It is against the mind of Christ, that his people should have troubled hearts, even in troublous times. When we looked forward to the eternity of misery that is before the obstinate refusers of Christ and his gospel, we may truly say, The greatest earthly judgments are but the beginning of sorrows. It is comforting that some shall endure even to the end. Our Lord foretells the preaching of the gospel in all the world. The end of the world shall not be till the gospel has done its work. Christ foretells the ruin coming upon the people of the Jews; and what he said here, would be of use to his disciples, for their conduct and for their comfort. If God opens a door of escape, we ought to make our escape, otherwise we do not trust God, but tempt him. It becomes Christ's disciples, in times of public trouble, to be much in prayer: that is never out of season, but in a special manner seasonable when we are distressed on every side. Though we must take what God sends, yet we may pray against sufferings; and it is very trying to a good man, to be taken by any work of necessity from the solemn service and worship of God on the Sabbath day. But here is one word of comfort, that for the elect's sake these days shall be made shorter than their enemies designed, who would have cut all off, if God, who used these foes to serve his own purpose, had not set bounds to their wrath. Christ foretells the rapid spreading of the gospel in the world. It is plainly seen as the lightning. Christ preached his gospel openly. The Romans were like an eagle, and the ensign of their armies was an eagle. When a people, by their sin, make themselves as loathsome carcasses, nothing can be expected but that God should send enemies to destroy them. It is very applicable to the day of judgment, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day, <sup>2</sup> Thessalonians 2:1. Let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure; then may we know that no enemy or deceiver shall ever prevail against us.

### **Matthew 24:29**

**Vs. 29-41:** Christ foretells his second coming. It is usual for prophets to speak of things as near and just at hand, to express the greatness and certainty of them. Concerning Christ's second coming, it is foretold that there shall be a great change, in order to the making all things new. Then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds. At his first coming, he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, but at his second coming,

a sign that should be admired. Sooner or later, all sinners will be mourners; but repenting sinners look to Christ, and mourn after a godly sort; and those who sow in those tears shall shortly reap in joy. Impenitent sinners shall see Him whom they have pierced, and, though they laugh now, shall mourn and weep in endless horror and despair. The elect of God are scattered abroad; there are some in all places, and all nations; but when that great gathering day comes, there shall not one of them be missing. Distance of place shall keep none out of heaven. Our Lord declares that the Jews should never cease to be a distinct people, until all things he had been predicting were fulfilled. His prophecy reaches to the day of final judgment; therefore he here, ver. 34, foretells that Judah shall never cease to exist as a distinct people, so long as this world shall endure. Men of the world scheme and plan for generation upon generation here, but they plan not with reference to the overwhelming, approaching, and most certain event of Christ's second coming, which shall do away every human scheme, and set aside for ever all that God forbids. That will be as surprising a day, as the deluge to the old world. Apply this, first, to temporal judgments, particularly that which was then hastening upon the nation and people of the Jews. Secondly, to the eternal judgment. Christ here shows the state of the old world when the deluge came. They were secure and careless; they knew not, until the flood came; and they believed not. Did we know aright that all earthly things must shortly pass away, we should not set our eyes and hearts so much upon them as we do. The evil day is not the further off for men's putting it far from them. What words can more strongly describe the suddenness of our Savors coming! Men will be at their respective businesses, and suddenly the Lord of glory will appear. Women will be in their house employments, but in that moment every other work will be laid aside, and every heart will turn inward and say, It is the Lord! Am I prepared to meet him? Can I stand before him? And what, in fact, is the day of judgment to the whole world, but the day of death to every one?

### **Matthew 24:42**

**Vs. 42-51:** To watch for Christ's coming, is to maintain that temper of mind which we would be willing that our Lord should find us in. We know we have but a little time to live, we cannot know that we have a long time to live; much less do we know the time fixed for the judgment. Our Lord's

coming will be happy to those that shall be found ready, but very dreadful to those that are not. If a man, professing to be the servant of Christ, be an unbeliever, covetous, ambitious, or a lover of pleasure, he will be cut off. Those who choose the world for their portion in this life, will have hell for their portion in the other life. May our Lord, when he cometh, pronounce us blessed, and present us to the Father, washed in his blood, purified by his Spirit, and fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

## CHAPTER 25

*The parable of the ten virgins. (1-13) The parable of the talents. (14-30) The judgment. (31-46)*

### ◀<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25:1

**Vs. 1-13:** The circumstances of the parable of the ten virgins were taken from the marriage customs among the Jews, and explain the great day of Christ's coming. See the nature of Christianity. As Christians we profess to attend upon Christ, to honor him, also to be waiting for his coming. Sincere Christians are the wise virgins, and hypocrites the foolish ones. Those are the truly wise or foolish that are so in the affairs of their souls. Many have a lamp of profession in their hands, but have not, in their hearts, sound knowledge and settled resolution, which are needed to carry them through the services and trials of the present state. Their hearts are not stored with holy dispositions, by the new-creating Spirit of God. Our light must shine before men in good works; but this is not likely to be long done, unless there is a fixed, active principle in the heart, of faith in Christ, and love to God and our brethren. They all slumbered and slept. The delay represents the space between the real or apparent conversion of these professors, and the coming of Christ, to take them away by death, or to judge the world. But though Christ tarry past our time, he will not tarry past the due time. The wise virgins kept their lamps burning, but they did not keep themselves awake. Too many real Christians grow remiss, and one degree of carelessness makes way for. Those that allow themselves to slumber, will scarcely keep from sleeping; therefore dread the beginning of spiritual decays. A startling summons was given. Go ye forth to meet Him, is a call to those prepared. The notice of Christ's approach, and the call to meet him, will awaken. Even those best prepared for death have work to do to get actually ready, <sup>◀<sup>2</sup></sup> 2 Peter 3:14. It will be a day of search and inquiry; and it concerns us to think how we shall then be found. Some wanted oil to supply their lamps when going out. Those that take up short of true grace, will certainly find the want of it one time or other. An outward profession may light a man along this world, but the damps of the valley of the shadow of death will put out such a light. Those who care not to live the life, yet would die the death of the righteous. But those that

would be saved, must have grace of their own; and those that have most grace, have none to spare. The best need more from Christ. And while the poor alarmed soul addresses itself, upon a sickbed, to repentance and prayer, in awful confusion, death comes, judgment comes, the work is undone, and the poor sinner is undone for ever. This comes of having oil to buy when we should burn it, grace to get when we should use it. Those, and those only, shall go to heaven hereafter, that are made ready for heaven here. The suddenness of death and of Christ's coming to us then, will not hinder our happiness, if we have been prepared. The door was shut. Many will seek admission into heaven when it is too late. The vain confidence of hypocrites will carry them far in expectations of happiness. The unexpected summons of death may alarm the Christian; but, proceeding without delay to trim his lamp, his graces often shine more bright; while the mere professor's conduct shows that his lamp is going out. Watch therefore, attend to the business of your souls. Be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

#### **Matthew 25:14**

**Vs. 14-30:** Christ keeps no servants to be idle: they have received their all from him, and have nothing they can call their own but sin. Our receiving from Christ is in order to our working for him. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. The day of account comes at last. We must all be reckoned with as to what good we have got to our own souls, and have done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed. It is not meant that the improving of natural powers can entitle a man to Divine grace. It is the real Christian's liberty and privilege to be employed as his Redeemer's servant, in promoting his glory, and the good of his people: the love of Christ constrains him to live no longer to himself, but to Him that died for him, and rose again. Those who think it impossible to please God, and in vain to serve him, will do nothing to purpose in religion. They complain that He requires of them more than they are capable of, and punishes them for what they cannot help. Whatever they may pretend, the fact is, they dislike the character and work of the Lord. The slothful servant is sentenced to be deprived of his talent. This may be applied to the blessings of this life; but rather to the means of grace. Those who know not the day of their visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. His doom is, to be cast into outer

darkness. It is a usual way of expressing the miseries of the damned in hell. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Savior goes out of the parable into the thing intended by it, and this serves as a key to the whole. Let us not envy sinners, or covet any of their perishing possessions.

### **Matthew 25:31**

**Vs. 31-46:** This is a description of the last judgment. It is as an explanation of the former parables. There is a judgment to come, in which every man shall be sentenced to a state of everlasting happiness, or misery. Christ shall come, not only in the glory of his Father, but in his own glory, as Mediator. The wicked and godly here dwell together, in the same cities, churches, families, and are not always to be known the one from the other; such are the weaknesses of saints, such the hypocrisies of sinners; and death takes both: but in that day they will be parted for ever. Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd; he will shortly distinguish between those that are his, and those that are not. All other distinctions will be done away; but the great one between saints and sinners, holy and unholy, will remain for ever. The happiness the saints shall possess is very great. It is a kingdom; the most valuable possession on earth; yet this is but a faint resemblance of the blessed state of the saints in heaven. It is a kingdom prepared. The Father provided it for them in the greatness of his wisdom and power; the Son purchased it for them; and the blessed Spirit, in preparing them for the kingdom, is preparing it for them. It is prepared for them: it is in all points adapted to the new nature of a sanctified soul. It is prepared from the foundation of the world. This happiness was for the saints, and they for it, from all eternity. They shall come and inherit it. What we inherit is not got by ourselves. It is God that makes heirs of heaven. We are not to suppose that acts of bounty will entitle to eternal happiness. Good works done for God's sake, through Jesus Christ, are here noticed as marking the character of believers made holy by the Spirit of Christ, and as the effects of grace bestowed on those who do them. The wicked in this world were often called to come to Christ for life and rest, but they turned from his calls; and justly are those bid to depart from Christ, that would not come to him. Condemned sinners will in vain offer excuses. The punishment of the wicked will be an everlasting punishment; their state cannot be altered. Thus life and death, good and evil, the

blessing and the curse, are set before us, that we may choose our way, and as our way so shall our end be.



## CHAPTER 26

*The rulers conspire against Christ. (1-5) Christ anointed at Bethany. (6-13) Judas bargains to betray Christ. (14-16) The Passover. (17-25) Christ institutes his holy supper. (26-30) He warns his disciples. (31-35) His agony in the garden. (36-46) He is betrayed. (47-56) Christ before Caiaphas. (57-68) Peter denies him. (69-75)*

### ◀▶▶ Matthew 26:1

**Vs. 1-5:** Our Lord had often told of his sufferings as at a distance, now he speaks of them as at hand. At the same time the Jewish council consulted how they might put him to death secretly. But it pleased God to defeat their intention. Jesus, the true paschal Lamb, was to be sacrificed for us at that very time, and his death and resurrection rendered public.

### ◀▶▶ Matthew 26:6

**Vs. 6-13:** The pouring ointment upon the head of Christ was a token of the highest respect. Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good to bestow upon him. The more Christ's servants and their services are caviled at, the more he manifests his acceptance. This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that it would be reported, as a memorial of Mary's faith and love, to all future ages, and in all places where the gospel should be preached. This prophecy is fulfilled.

### ◀▶▶ Matthew 26:14

**Vs. 14-16:** There were but twelve called apostles, and one of them was like a devil; surely we must never expect any society to be quite pure on this side heaven. The greater profession men make of religion, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God. Observe, that Christ's own disciple, who knew so well his doctrine and manner of his life, and was false to him, could not charge him with any thing criminal, though it would have served to justify his treachery. What did Judas want? Was not he welcome wherever his Master was? Did he not fare as Christ fared? It is not the lack, but the love of money, that is

the root of all evil. After he had made that wicked bargain, Judas had time to repent, and to revoke it; but when lesser acts of dishonesty have hardened the conscience men do without hesitation that which is more shameful.

 **Matthew 26:17**

**Vs. 17-25:** Observe, the place for their eating the Passover was pointed out by Christ to the disciples. He knows those hidden ones who favor his cause, and will graciously visit all who are willing to receive him. The disciples did as Jesus had appointed. Those who would have Christ's presence in the gospel Passover, must do what he says. It well becomes the disciples of Christ always to be jealous over themselves, especially in trying times. We know not how strongly we may be tempted, nor how far God may leave us to ourselves, therefore we have reason not to be high-minded, but to fear. Heart-searching examination and fervent prayer are especially proper before the Lord's supper, that, as Christ our Passover is now sacrificed for us, we may keep this feast, renewing our repentance, our faith in his blood, and surrendering ourselves to his service.

 **Matthew 26:26**

**Vs. 26-30:** This ordinance of the Lord's supper is to us the Passover supper, by which we commemorate a much greater deliverance than that of Israel out of Egypt. Take, eat; accept of Christ as he is offered to you; receive the atonement, approve of it, submit to his grace and his government. Meat looked upon, be the dish ever so well garnished, will not nourish; it must be fed upon: so must the doctrine of Christ. This is my body; that is, spiritually, it signifies and represents his body. We partake of the sun, not by having the sun put into our hands, but the beams of it darted down upon us; so we partake of Christ by partaking of his grace, and the blessed fruits of the breaking of his body. The blood of Christ is signified and represented by the wine. He gave thanks, to teach us to look to God in every part of the ordinance. This cup he gave to the disciples with a command, Drink ye all of it. The pardon of sin is that great blessing which is, in the Lord's supper, conferred on all true believers; it is the foundation of all other blessings. He takes leave of such communion; and assures them of a happy meeting again at last; "Until that

day when I drink it new with you”, may be understood of the joys and glories of the future state, which the saints shall partake with the Lord Jesus. That will be the kingdom of his Father; the wine of consolation will there be always new. While we look at the outward signs of Christ’s body broken and his blood shed for the remission of our sins, let us recollect that the feast cost him as much as though he had literally given his flesh to be eaten and his blood for us to drink.

 **Matthew 26:31**

**Vs. 31-35:** Improper self-confidence, like that of Peter, is the first step to a fall. There is a proneness in all of us to be over-confident. But those fall soonest and foulest, who are the most confident in themselves. Those are least safe, who think themselves most secure. Satan is active to lead such astray; they are most off their guard: God leaves them to themselves, to humble them.

 **Matthew 26:36**

**Vs. 36-46:** He who made atonement for the sins of mankind, submitted himself in a garden of suffering, to the will of God, from which man had revolted in a garden of pleasure. Christ took with him into that part of the garden where he suffered his agony, only those who had witnessed his glory in his transfiguration. Those are best prepared to suffer with Christ, who have by faith beheld his glory. The words used denote the most entire dejection, amazement, anguish, and horror of mind; the state of one surrounded with sorrows, overwhelmed with miseries, and almost swallowed up with terror and dismay. He now began to be sorrowful, and never ceased to be so till he said, It is finished. He prayed that, if possible, the cup might pass from him. But he also showed his perfect readiness to bear the load of his sufferings; he was willing to submit to all for our redemption and salvation. According to this example of Christ, we must drink of the bitterest cup which God puts into our hands; though nature struggle, it must submit. It should be more our care to get troubles sanctified, and our hearts satisfied under them, than to get them taken away. It is well for us that our salvation is in the hand of One who neither slumbers nor sleeps. All are tempted, but we should be much afraid of entering into temptation. To be secured from this, we should watch and pray, and continually look unto the Lord to hold us up that we may be

safe. Doubtless our Lord had a clear and full view of the sufferings he was to endure, yet he spoke with the greatest calmness till this time. Christ was a Surety, who undertook to be answerable for our sins. Accordingly he was made sin for us, and suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust; and Scripture ascribes his heaviest sufferings to the hand of God. He had full knowledge of the infinite evil of sin, and of the immense extent of that guilt for which he was to atone; with awful views of the Divine justice and holiness, and the punishment deserved by the sins of men, such as no tongue can express, or mind conceive. At the same time, Christ suffered being tempted; probably horrible thoughts were suggested by Satan that tended to gloom and every dreadful conclusion: these would be the more hard to bear from his perfect holiness. And did the load of imputed guilt so weigh down the soul of Him of whom it is said, He upholdeth all things by the word of his power? into what misery then must those sink whose sins are left upon their own heads! How will those escape who neglect so great salvation?

 **Matthew 26:47**

**Vs. 47-56:** No enemies are so much to be abhorred as those professed disciples that betray Christ with a kiss. God has no need of our services, much less of our sins, to bring about his purposes. Though Christ was crucified through weakness, it was voluntary weakness; he submitted to death. If he had not been willing to suffer, they could not conquer him. It was a great sin for those who had left all to follow Jesus; now to leave him for they knew not what. What folly, for fear of death to flee from Him, whom they knew and acknowledged to be the Fountain of life!

 **Matthew 26:57**

**Vs. 57-68:** Jesus was hurried into Jerusalem. It looks ill, and bodes worse, when those who are willing to be Christ's disciples, are not willing to be known to be so. Here began Peter's denying him: for to follow Christ afar off, is to begin to go back from him. It is more our concern to prepare for the end, whatever it may be, than curiously to ask what the end will be. The event is God's, but the duty is ours. Now the Scriptures were fulfilled, which said, False witnesses are risen up against me. Christ was accused, that we might not be condemned; and if at any time we suffer thus, let us remember we cannot expect to fare better than our Master.

When Christ was made sin for us, he was silent, and left it to his blood to speak. Hitherto Jesus had seldom professed expressly to be the Christ, the Son of God; the tenor of his doctrine spoke it, and his miracles proved it; but now he would not omit to make an open confession of it. It would have looked like declining his sufferings. He thus confessed, as an example and encouragement to his followers, to confess him before men, whatever hazard they ran. Disdain, cruel mocking, and abhorrence, are the sure portion of the disciple as they were of the Master, from such as would buffet and deride the Lord of glory. These things were exactly foretold in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah. Let us confess Christ's name, and bear the reproach, and he will confess us before his Father's throne.

 **Matthew 26:69**

**Vs. 69-75:** Peter's sin is truly related, for the Scriptures deal faithfully. Bad company leads to sin: those who needlessly thrust themselves into it, may expect to be tempted and ensnared, as Peter. They scarcely can come out of such company without guilt or grief, or both. It is a great fault to be shy of Christ; and to dissemble our knowledge of him, when we are called to own him, is, in effect, to deny him. Peter's sin was aggravated; but he fell into the sin by surprise, not as Judas, with design. But conscience should be to us as the crowing of the cock, to put us in mind of the sins we had forgotten. Peter was thus left to fall, to abate his self-confidence, and render him more modest, humble, compassionate, and useful to others. The event has taught believers many things ever since, and if infidels, Pharisees, and hypocrites stumble at it or abuse it, it is at their peril. Little do we know how we should act in very difficult situations, if we were left to ourselves. Let him, therefore, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall; let us all distrust our own hearts, and rely wholly on the Lord. Peter wept bitterly. Sorrow for sin must not be slight, but great and deep. Peter, who wept so bitterly for denying Christ, never denied him again, but confessed him often in the face of danger. True repentance for any sin will be shown by the contrary grace and duty; that is a sign of our sorrowing not only bitterly, but sincerely.

## CHAPTER 27

*Christ delivered to Pilate, The despair of Judas. (1-10) Christ before Pilate. (11-25) Barabbas loosed, Christ mocked. (26-30) Christ led to be crucified. (31-34) He is crucified. (35-44) The death of Christ. (45-50) Events at the crucifixion. (51-56) The burial of Christ. (57-61) The sepulchre secured. (62-66)*

### ◀171▶ **Matthew 27:1**

**Vs. 1-10:** Wicked men see little of the consequences of their crimes when they commit them, but they must answer for them all. In the fullest manner Judas acknowledged to the chief priests that he had sinned, and betrayed an innocent person. This was full testimony to the character of Christ; but the rulers were hardened. Casting down the money, Judas departed, and went and hanged himself, not being able to bear the terror of Divine wrath, and the anguish of despair. There is little doubt but that the death of Judas was before that of our blessed Lord. But was it nothing to them that they had thirsted after this blood, and hired Judas to betray it, and had condemned it to be shed unjustly? Thus do fools make a mock at sin. Thus many make light of Christ crucified. And it is a common instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts, to make light of our own sin by dwelling upon other people's sins. But the judgment of God is according to truth. Many apply this passage of the buying the piece of ground, with the money Judas brought back, to signify the favor intended by the blood of Christ to strangers, and sinners of the Gentiles. It fulfilled a prophecy, ◀3112▶ Zechariah 11:12. Judas went far toward repentance, yet it was not to salvation. He confessed, but not to God; he did not go to him, and say, I have sinned, Father, against heaven. Let none be satisfied with such partial convictions as a man may have, and yet remain full of pride, enmity, and rebellion.

### ◀171▶ **Matthew 27:11**

**Vs. 11-25:** Having no malice against Jesus, Pilate urged him to clear himself, and labored to get him discharged. The message from his wife was a warning. God has many ways of giving checks to sinners, in their sinful pursuits, and it is a great mercy to have such checks from Providence,

from faithful friends, and from our own consciences. O do not this abominable thing which the Lord hates! is what we may hear said to us, when we are entering into temptation, if we will but regard it. Being overruled by the priests, the people made choice of Barabbas. Multitudes who choose the world, rather than God, for their ruler and portion, thus choose their own delusions. The Jews were so bent upon the death of Christ, that Pilate thought it would be dangerous to refuse. And this struggle shows the power of conscience even on the worst men. Yet all was so ordered to make it evident that Christ suffered for no fault of his own, but for the sins of his people. How vain for Pilate to expect to free himself from the guilt of the innocent blood of a righteous person, whom he was by his office bound to protect! The Jews' curse upon themselves has been awfully answered in the sufferings of their nation. None could bear the sin of others, except Him that had no sin of his own to answer for. And are we not all concerned? Is not Barabbas preferred to Jesus, when sinners reject salvation that they may retain their darling sins, which rob God of his glory, and murder their souls? The blood of Christ is now upon us for good, through mercy, by the Jews' rejection of it. O let us flee to it for refuge!

**Matthew 27:26**

**Vs. 26-30:** Crucifixion was a death used only among the Romans; it was very terrible and miserable. A cross was laid on the ground, to which the hands and feet were nailed, it was then lifted up and fixed upright, so that the weight of the body hung on the nails, till the sufferer died in agony. Christ thus answered the type of the brazen serpent raised on a pole. Christ underwent all the misery and shame here related, that he might purchase for us everlasting life, and joy, and glory.

**Matthew 27:31**

**Vs. 31-34:** Christ was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, as a Sacrifice to the altar. Even the mercies of the wicked are really cruel. Taking the cross from him, they compelled one Simon to bear it. Make us ready, O Lord, to bear the cross thou hast appointed us, and daily to take it up with cheerfulness, following thee. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? And when we behold what manner of death he died, let us in that behold with

what manner of love he loved us. As if death, so painful a death, were not enough, they added to its bitterness and terror in several ways.

### **Matthew 27:35**

**Vs. 35-44:** It was usual to put shame upon malefactors, by a writing to notify the crime for which they suffered. So they set up one over Christ's head. This they designed for his reproach, but God so overruled it, that even his accusation was to his honor. There were crucified with him at the same time, two robbers. He was, at his death, numbered among the transgressors, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints. The taunts and jeers he received are here recorded. The enemies of Christ labor to make others believe that of religion and of the people of God, which they themselves know to be false. The chief priests and scribes, and the elders, upbraid Jesus with being the King of Israel. Many people could like the King of Israel well enough, if he would but come down from the cross; if they could but have his kingdom without the tribulation through which they must enter into it. But if no cross, then no Christ, no crown. Those that would reign with him, must be willing to suffer with him. Thus our Lord Jesus, having undertaken to satisfy the justice of God, did it, by submitting to the punishment of the worst of men. And in every minute particular recorded about the sufferings of Christ, we find some prediction in the Prophets or the Psalms fulfilled.

### **Matthew 27:45**

**Vs. 45-50:** During the three hours which the darkness continued, Jesus was in agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness, and suffering his Father's displeasure against the sin of man, for which he was now making his soul an offering. Never were there three such hours since the day God created man upon the earth, never such a dark and awful scene; it was the turning point of that great affair, man's redemption and salvation. Jesus uttered a complaint from **Psalm 22:1**. Hereby he teaches of what use the word of God is to direct us in prayer, and recommends the use of Scripture expressions in prayer. The believer may have tasted some drops of bitterness, but he can only form a very feeble idea of the greatness of Christ's sufferings. Yet, hence he learns something of the Savors love to sinners; hence he gets deeper conviction of the vileness and evil of sin, and of what he owes to Christ, who delivers him from the wrath to come. His



enemies wickedly ridiculed his complaint. Many of the reproaches cast upon the word of God and the people of God, arise, as here, from gross mistakes. Christ, just before he expired, spake in his full strength, to show that his life was not forced from him, but was freely delivered into his Father's hands. He had strength to bid defiance to the powers of death: and to show that by the eternal Spirit he offered himself, being the Priest as well as the Sacrifice, he cried with a loud voice. Then he yielded up the ghost. The Son of God upon the cross, did die by the violence of the pain he was put to. His soul was separated from his body, and so his body was left really and truly dead. It was certain that Christ did die, for it was needful that he should die. He had undertaken to make himself an offering for sin, and he did it when he willingly gave up his life.

⌘ **Matthew 27:51**

**Vs. 51-56:** The rending of the veil signified that Christ, by his death, opened a way to God. We have an open way through Christ to the throne of grace, or mercy-seat now, and to the throne of glory hereafter. When we duly consider Christ's death, our hard and rocky hearts should be rent; the heart, and not the garments. That heart is harder than a rock that will not yield, that will not melt, where Jesus Christ is plainly set forth crucified. The graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose. To whom they appeared, in what manner, and how they disappeared, we are not told; and we must not desire to be wise above what is written. The dreadful appearances of God in his providence, sometimes work strangely for the conviction and awakening of sinners. This was expressed in the terror that fell upon the centurion and the Roman soldiers. We may reflect with comfort on the abundant testimonies given to the character of Jesus; and, seeking to give no just cause of offense, we may leave it to the Lord to clear our characters, if we live to Him. Let us, with an eye of faith, behold Christ and him crucified, and be affected with that great love wherewith he loved us. But his friends could give no more than a look; they beheld him, but could not help him. Never were the horrid nature and effects of sin so tremendously displayed, as on that day when the beloved Son of the Father hung upon the cross, suffering for sin, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Let us yield ourselves willingly to his service.

**Matthew 27:57**

**Vs. 57-61:** In the burial of Christ was nothing of pomp or solemnity. As Christ had not a house of his own, wherein to lay his head, while he lived, so he had not a grave of his own, wherein to lay his body, when he was dead. Our Lord Jesus, who had no sin of his own, had no grave of his own. The Jews designed that he should have made his grave with the wicked, should have been buried with the thieves with whom he was crucified, but God overruled it, so that he should make it with the rich in his death, **Isaiah 53:9.** And although to the eye of man the beholding a funeral may cause terror, yet if we remember how Christ by his burial has changed the nature of the grave to believers, it should make us rejoice. And we are ever to imitate Christ's burial in being continually occupied in the spiritual burial of our sins.

**Matthew 27:62**

**Vs. 62-66:** On the Jewish Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees, when they should have been at their devotions, were dealing with Pilate about securing the sepulchre. This was permitted that there might be certain proof of our Lord's resurrection. Pilate told them that they might secure the sepulchre as carefully as they could. They sealed the stone, and set a guard, and were satisfied that all needful care was taken. But to guard the sepulchre against the poor weak disciples was folly, because needless; while to think to guard it against the power of God, was folly, because fruitless, and to no purpose; yet they thought they dealt wisely. But the Lord took the wise in their own craftiness. Thus shall all the rage and the plans of Christ's enemies be made to promote his glory.

## CHAPTER 28

*Christ's resurrection. (1-8) He appears to the women. (9,10)  
Confession of the soldiers. (11-15) Christ's commission to his  
disciples. (16-20)*

### ◀**Matthew 28:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** Christ rose the third day after his death; that was the time he had often spoken of. On the first day of the first week God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. On this day did He who is the Light of the world, shine out of the darkness of the grave; and this day is from henceforward often mentioned in the New Testament, as the day which Christians religiously observed in solemn assemblies, to the honor of Christ. Our Lord Jesus could have rolled back the stone by his own power, but he chose to have it done by an angel. The resurrection of Christ, as it is the joy of his friends, so it is the terror and confusion of his enemies. The angel encouraged the women against their fears. Let the sinners in Zion be afraid. Fear not ye, for his resurrection will be your consolation. Our communion with him must be spiritual, by faith in his word. When we are ready to make this world our home, and to say, It is good to be here, then let us remember our Lord Jesus is not here, he is risen; therefore let our hearts rise, and seek the things that are above. He is risen, as he said. Let us never think that strange which the word of Christ has told us to expect; whether the sufferings of this present time, or the glory that is to be revealed. It may have a good effect upon us, by faith to view the place where the Lord lay. Go quickly. It was good to be there, but the servants of God have other work appointed. Public usefulness must be chosen before the pleasure of secret communion with God. Tell the disciples, that they may be comforted under their present sorrows. Christ knows where his disciples dwell, and will visit them. Even to those at a distance from the plenty of the means of grace, he will graciously manifest himself. The fear and the joy together quickened their pace. The disciples of Christ should be forward to make known to each other their experiences of communion with their Lord; and should tell others what God has done for their souls.

### ◀BIB▶ **Matthew 28:9**

**Vs. 9, 10:** God's gracious visits usually meet us in the way of duty; and to those who use what they have for others' benefit, more shall be given. This interview with Christ was unexpected; but Christ was nigh them, and still is nigh us in the word. The salutation speaks the goodwill of Christ to man, even since he entered upon his state of exaltation. It is the will of Christ that his people should be a cheerful, joyful people, and his resurrection furnishes abundant matter for joy. Be not afraid. Christ rose from the dead, to silence his people's fears, and there is enough in that to silence them. The disciples had just before shamefully deserted him in his sufferings; but, to show that he could forgive, and to teach us to do so, he calls them brethren. Notwithstanding his majesty and purity, and our meanness and unworthiness, he still condescends to call believers his brethren.

### ◀BIB▶ **Matthew 28:11**

**Vs. 11-15:** What wickedness is it which men will not be brought to by the love of money! Here was large money given to the soldiers for advancing that which they knew to be a lie, yet many grudge a little money for advancing what they know to be the truth. Let us never starve a good cause, when we see bad ones so liberally supported. The priests undertook to secure them from the sword of Pilate, but could not secure these soldiers from the sword of God's justice, which hangs over the heads of those that love and make a lie. Those men promise more than they can perform, who undertake to save a man harmless in doing a willful sin. But this falsehood disproved itself. Had the soldiers been all asleep, they could not have known what passed. If any had been awake, they would have roused the others and prevented the removal; and certainly if they had been asleep, they never would have dared to confess it; while the Jewish rulers would have been the first to call for their punishment. Again, had there been any truth in the report, the rulers would have prosecuted the apostles with severity for it. The whole shows that the story was entirely false. And we must not charge such things to the weakness of the understanding, but to the wickedness of the heart. God left them to expose their own course. The great argument to prove Christ to be the Son of God, is his resurrection; and none could have more convincing proofs of

the truth of that than these soldiers; yet they took bribes to hinder others from believing. The plainest evidence will not affect men, without the work of the Holy Spirit.

 **Matthew 28:16**

**Vs. 16-20:** This evangelist passes over other appearances of Christ, recorded by Luke and John, and hastens to the most solemn; one appointed before his death, and after his resurrection. All that see the Lord Jesus with an eye of faith, will worship him. Yet the faith of the sincere may be very weak and wavering. But Christ gave such convincing proofs of his resurrection, as made their faith to triumph over doubts. He now solemnly commissioned the apostles and his ministers to go forth among all nations. The salvation they were to preach, is a common salvation; whoever will, let him come, and take the benefit; all are welcome to Christ Jesus. Christianity is the religion of a sinner who applies for salvation from deserved wrath and from sin; he applies to the mercy of the Father, through the atonement of the incarnate Son, and by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and gives up himself to be the worshipper and servant of God, as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons but one God, in all his ordinances and commandments. Baptism is an outward sign of that inward washing, or sanctification of the Spirit, which seals and evidences the believer's justification. Let us examine ourselves, whether we really possess the inward and spiritual grace of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, by which those who were the children of wrath become the children of God. Believers shall have the constant presence of their Lord always; all days, every day. There is no day, no hour of the day, in which our Lord Jesus is not present with his churches and with his ministers; if there were, in that day, that hour, they would be undone. The God of Israel, the Savior, is sometimes a God that hideth himself, but never a God at a distance. To these precious words Amen is added. Even so, Lord Jesus, be thou with us and all thy people; cause thy face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.